

## MEDIA INFORMATION

*The Other Kabul: Remains of the Garden*

Kunstmuseum Thun, 3 September to 4 December 2022

Opening: 2 September 2022, 6:30pm

Press previews on request

**Both Afghan and non-Afghan artists present in *The Other Kabul: Remains of the Garden* lyrically compelling works that defy Western clichés about Afghanistan. The exhibition is dedicated to exploring the sensuality and beauty symbolically reflected in the microcosm of the garden and to insisting that another life can be possible, indeed will one day be possible.**

**Many of the works on view were made especially for the exhibition in Thun.**

Four of the Afghan artists participating were still living in Kabul until August 2021. And yet their works are not limited to images of poverty, war and oppression. Instead, they put the spark of beauty back into the world of Kabul. Even though this essence – like all beauty – is fleeting and fragile. Other artists living and working in Iran, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Turkey join in the portrayal of this ephemeral notion. Their works, too, help to keep beauty alive, without however ignoring the multifarious and intertwined crises of today's world.

*The Other Kabul* is a guest exhibition of the Treibsand association and has been curated by Susann Wintsch in collaboration with the Kunstmuseum Thun.

## Participating artists

**Arshi Irshad Ahmadzai** (New Delhi and Weimar) uses fabric and papier-mâché to portray Kabul's most renowned garden, *Bagh-e Babur* (2021/22). She encrypts its architecture by merging it with water. Likewise encoded are texts written on the canvas that reproduce, for example, the sound of the wind or snippets of conversation among park visitors.

**Latifa Zafar Attai** (Tehran) spent a year embroidering one thousand passport photos with yarn in shades both bright and sombre. The individual strands are so thin that people's faces shimmer through. The artist creates in this way a haunting narrative telling of light and dark moments in human existence.

**Jeanno Gaussi** (Berlin) likewise contemplates in her work individual differences. In the dishes displayed in on a festive table in her installation, she allows the voice of an Afghan dishwasher to be heard.

In his video work, **Baqer Ahmadi** (Zurich) shows himself being sprinkled with flour and doused with liquid honey – an ambivalent situation that cycles endlessly between seduction, punishment and self-control.

Kunstmuseum Thun  
Thunerhof, Hofstettenstrasse 14, 3602 Thun  
T +41 (0)33 225 84 20 / F +41 (0)33 225 89 06  
kunstmuseum@thun.ch, www.kunstmuseumthun.ch

Thun-Panorama  
Besuchsadresse: Schadaupark, 3602 Thun  
T +41 (0)33 223 24 62  
panorama@thun.ch, www.thun-panorama.ch

**Parastou Forouhar** (Frankfurt) demonstrates as well how beauty and cruelty may be inextricably entwined. Her digital drawings, reminiscent of Persian miniatures, evoke the lives of young women today.

**Pieter Paul Pothoven** (Amsterdam) spirits us away to an enchanting blue stone cave in which light is projected through cut platelets of the precious stone lapis lazuli. The world's largest lapis lazuli mine is located in Afghanistan and is repeatedly occupied by warring factions.

**Ursula Palla** (Zurich) shows the delicate roseby willowherb plant cast in bronze. As the plant is also known in the UK as bombweed because of its rapid appearance on the bombed cityscape after the Blitz, she has cast it here using melted weapons.

**Almagul Menlibayeva** (Berlin) sends out female figures to reconquer the Kazakh steppe, which was misused by the Soviet Union as a field for experimentation.

**Necla Rüzgar** (Ankara) fully dissolves in her watercolours and sculpts the physical differences and the emotional gulf between animals and humans.

The mural of plants created by **Monica Ursina Jäger** (Zurich) has been painted in chlorophyll and therefore fades more and more each day, but just like a garden it will be continually renewed for the duration of the exhibition.

Some of the figures by **Shahida Shaygan** (Zurich), fashioned from scraps of material found on the streets of Kabul and Zurich, were damaged on their journey from Kabul and are now shown alongside other objects that were completed in Switzerland.

## **Exhibition publication *The Other Kabul: Remains of the Garden***

In the catalogue for the exhibition, literary texts accompany images portraying the garden as an echo chamber and a place of longing and reinvigoration. Writer **Taqi Akhlaqi** (Berlin) and artist **Haleh Anvari** (Tehran), both intimately connected with their gardens historically and biographically, share their memories here. The literary scholar **Robert Pogue Harrison** (Stanford) has contributed the original manuscript of a chapter from his book *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*, in which he links the garden to concerns about friendship, nation-states and institutions.

Until very recently, French artist **Oriane Zerah** often photographed men in Afghanistan posing with roses, while artist **Latifa Zafar Attai** has contributed landscape photographs from Afghanistan to the catalogue.

Special thanks to the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, which provided significant funding for the project from concept to execution. And our heartfelt gratitude as well to the Max Kohler Foundation, the Ernst Göhner Foundation, the Else von Sick Foundation, the Ernst and Olga Gubler-Hablützel Foundation, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia as well as to numerous others who have accompanied this elaborate project and supported it financially and with their advice and assistance.

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## Artists

Baqer Ahmadi, b. 1995 in Ghazni (Afghanistan), lives near Zurich  
Arshi Irshad Ahmadzai, b. 1988 in Najibabad (India), lives in New Delhi and Weimar  
Latifa Zafar Attai, b. 1994 in Ghazni (Afghanistan), lives as a refugee in Tehran  
Iftikhar Dadi, b. 1961 in Karachi, and Elizabeth Dadi, b. 1957 in Seattle; both live in Ithaca  
Parastou Forouhar, b. 1962 in Tehran, lives in Germany  
Jeanno Gaussi, b. 1973 in Kabul, lives in Berlin  
Monica Ursina Jäger, b. 1974 in Thalwil, lives in Zurich  
Kubra Khademi, b. 1988 in Ghor Province (Afghanistan), lives in Paris  
Yerbossyn Meldibekov, b. 1964 in Kazakhstan, lives in Almaty  
Almagul Menlibayeva, b. 1969 in Almaty (Kazakhstan), lives in Berlin  
Ursula Palla, b. 1961 in Chur, lives in Zürich  
Pieter Paul Pothoven, b. 1981 in the Netherlands, lives in Amsterdam  
Neda Razavipour, b. 1969 in Tehran, lives in Lucerne  
Chantal Romani, b. 1971 in Lucerne, lives in Lucerne  
Necla Rüzgar, b. 1972 born in Turkey, lives in Ankara  
Mohsin Taasha Wahidi, b. 1991 in Kabul, lives in Marseille  
Shahida Shaygan, b. 1997 in Ghazni (Afghanistan), lives near Zurich

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## Selected events

11 September: Public tour with curator Susann Wintsch

23 October: Reading with Parastou Forouhar

26 October: Talks with the artists Ursula Palla and Baqer Ahmadi, moderated by Susann Wintsch, guest curator, and Helen Hirsch, director

4 November: Symposium on *The Other Kabul* – a cooperative project of the Treibsand association and the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation with the Kunstmuseum Thun and Bern University of the Arts (HKB)

4 December: Public tour with curator Susann Wintsch

For the full programme, see: [www.kunstmuseumthun.ch/agenda](http://www.kunstmuseumthun.ch/agenda)

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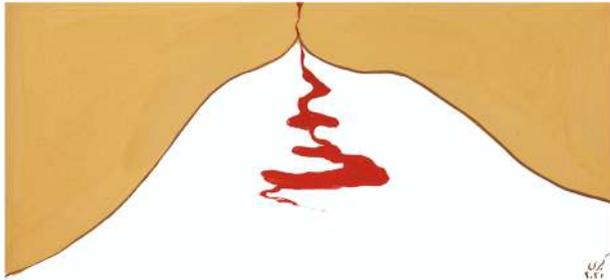
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## Photos

Printable images are available on request at any time.



Baqer Ahmadi  
*Appearance and Disappearance*, 2021  
2-channel video installation, 16:40/14:36 min, sound  
Edition 5/5  
On behalf of the Treibsand association  
Courtesy of the artist



Kubra Khademi  
*Untitled*, from the series *Female Crimes*, 2021  
Gouache on paper, 5 x 11 cm, framed: 30 x 30 cm  
Courtesy of Bertrand Hugues



Almagul Menlibayeva  
*Before the Solar Eclipse IX*, 2018  
Photo work, inkjet print on archival paper,  
71 x 107 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
American-Eurasian Art Advisors

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Latifa Zafar Attai  
*One Thousand Individuals*, 2021/22  
Passport photographs, embroidery, wood, paint,  
each 3 × 4 cm  
On behalf of the Treibsand association  
Courtesy of the artist



Parastou Forouhar  
*Domestic Suicide for All Seasons*, 2016  
October calendar page  
(production banned in Tehran)  
Courtesy of the artist

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# KUNSTMUSEUM THUN



## Media contact

Kunstmuseum Thun, Elsa Horstkötter, elsa.horstkoetter@thun.ch, T +41(0)33 225 82 07

## General information

Kunstmuseum Thun, Hofstettenstrasse 14, CH-3602 Thun

T +41(0)33 225 84 20, F +41(0)33 225 89 06, [www.kunstmuseumthun.ch](http://www.kunstmuseumthun.ch), [kunstmuseum@thun.ch](mailto:kunstmuseum@thun.ch)

Tue–Sun 10am–5pm, Wed 10am–7pm, closed Mon.

For opening hours on holidays see [www.kunstmuseumthun.ch](http://www.kunstmuseumthun.ch)

Admission: CHF 10/ 8. Children and young people up to 16 years free of charge, advance registration required for groups.

Special tours on request: T +41(0)33 225 84 20 or [kunstmuseumt@thun.ch](mailto:kunstmuseumt@thun.ch)

Food and drink: Café Artikum, [www.cafeartikum.ch](http://www.cafeartikum.ch), [info@cafeartikum.ch](mailto:info@cafeartikum.ch)

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