

The Glenkeen
Variations

Sister Weather

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with Susanne Bürner,
Ines Kaag, Annette
Kelm, and Alexandra
Leykauf

Glenkeen Garden
Residencies —
ArtNature/NatureArt

**Goethe-Institut,
Dublin**

Exhibition: 19.9.—24.10.26
Opening: Fri., 18.9.26, 6pm

**Uillinn: West Cork
Arts Centre,
Skibbereen**

Artist Presentations:
Sat., 19.9.26, 4pm

An exhibition and event
series with Glenkeen
Garden artists-in-residence

The Glenkeen Variations

Glenkeen Garden is a masterwork of dynamic composition. Over 20 years, it has been designed, cared for, and constantly revitalised. While general sketches set the garden's tones, stages, and scenes, flora and fauna take over and constantly form and re-form the land from within the pre-given frame. Carefully crafted by photographer, psychologist, and philanthropist Ulrike Crespo (1950—2019) along with her partner Michael Satke (1943—2024), this garden, nestled on the shores of Roaringwater Bay in West Cork, has welcomed artists since 2021 for an artist-in-residence programme, facilitated by the Crespo Foundation.

Under the title 'ArtNature/NatureArt', the garden has been a temporary home for artists working across various media, immersing themselves in this distinctive environment and the unique and welcoming social tapestry of West Cork. A specific emphasis is placed on scientific collaboration, facilitated in cooperation with the Environmental Research Institute at University College Cork and Frankfurt's Senckenberg Research Institute.

'The Glenkeen Variations' is an exhibition and event series focused on the artists' return to Ireland. Across events at the Goethe-Institut in Dublin and at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre in Skibbereen the former residents present their work to a broader audience and continue their discussions with research and community partners.

Sister Weather

It's a drizzly Sunday morning. Down by the Ballydehob community hall, cars and trailers gather. Boots opening like clamshells. On display, today's treasures: rusty garden tools, floral china sets, children's books softening in the damp air. From second-hand to freshly baked, much is to be found on the trestle tables sprawling by the riverside. The car boot sale in West Cork is a tradition with many possible origins. A Catholic priest from Stockport is said to have introduced it to the UK as a charity fundraiser after seeing a similar 'trunk fair' in Canada in the early 1970s. Others would claim it is really the descendant of the fair day — lá aonaigh. Markets and fairs in Ireland carry the memory of the aonach (fair) of the native Irish tradition and the margadh (market), a loanword from the Vikings. Aonach derives from óen, 'one'. Hence, the fair is a coming-into-one, a gathering. The fair day is where news from the next parish spreads, where matches are made, and where disputes are quietly resolved.

It was to this ritual that Susanne Börner, Ines Kaag, Annette Kelm, and Alexandra Leykauf kept returning during their residency in Glenkeen Garden, having arrived in the cool months and into near-constant rain. For 'Sister Weather', the group turns the Return Gallery at the Goethe-Institut into a car boot, against which the works lean and gather.

Having worked together before on themes of mimicry and empathy, the four artists bring individual works whose constellation carries lasting impressions of the time spent in and around Glenkeen and West Cork.

In Susanne Börner's photographs, garden and wilderness are hard to tell apart, while on supermarket notice boards, handwritten messages wink at you across the mundane. Alexandra Leykauf transforms unhinged refrigerator doors into stone circle stand-ins and tabletops into garden-like topographies by impressing everyday objects in vacuum-formed plastic. Annette Kelm composes and photographs findings from her surroundings with the cool precision of a sales catalogue, as iPhones left lying on the floor by Ines Kaag (one half of the design duo BLESS) play videos of the artists hiding in the garden, mimicking birdcalls. Kaag herself appears in a selfie, blending into the boglands, woven into a blanket. It's always good to have a blanket in your car boot.

It is worth noting that both sister and weather are also verbs. One (or more) can weather a storm, as a carpenter sisters a beam by fastening another alongside it, so they bear the load together. By noon in Ballydehob, the boots close and the tarmac empties. This car boot in Dublin stays open a little longer. A soft day, thank God.

The series is curated by Ben Livne Weitzman.



Glenkeen Garden

Glenkeen Garden is a large estate spanning 10 hectares located in Roaringwater Bay in West Cork, on Ireland's south coast. The garden was created by Ulrike Crespo, founder of the Crespo Foundation, and her partner Michael Satke over a period of 20 years. The garden is an inspiration for creativity and was also a significant source of influence for Ulrike Crespo's photographic experiments and series. The garden features sculptures by several artists, such as Peter Kogler, Gunter Damisch, Arie van Selm, David Nash, Gregor Eichinger, Laura Ford and Ulrich Rückriem. Piet Oudolf, who also designed New York's High Line, designed the central grass meadow. There are designated viewpoints within the garden that provide stunning views of the landscape and beyond. Nearby, the 'rough lands' are an untouched area owned by the Crespo Foundation, which has never been cultivated or farmed and was acquired by Ulrike Crespo to preserve its natural state.

Crespo Foundation

The Crespo Foundation, founded by the late Ulrike Crespo — a gifted photographer, accomplished psychologist and passionate philanthropist — is based in Frankfurt am Main. This organization supports the arts and artists, as well as various educational and social initiatives. The residency in Glenkeen Garden, in keeping with Ulrike Crespo's vision, has been set up as a place for artists to ruminate, reflect and create.

Goethe-Institut Irland

As the cultural institution of the Federal Republic of Germany, Goethe-Institut Irland promotes cultural exchange, education, and societal discourse in an international context. Since its opening in 1961, its main objective has been to convey a contemporary image of Germany and to focus on European opportunities and challenges. It endeavours to bring different perspectives into a dialogue based on trust in collaboration with partners from the cultural and educational sectors in Ireland.



crespo-foundation.de/
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glenkeen-garden-
residencies



goethe.de/
ireland

Partners:



UCC Futures - Sustainability
UCC Inbhuanaitheacht



Susanne Börner's artistic practice engages with the body and the surrounding architectural or natural space, most often in the form of the photographic image. Her works play with truth and illusion, presence and absence, and with references to the off-frame, the space beyond the image. Film and photography are particularly suited to this exploration, as they are still regarded as forms of evidence. In her text-based posters, Börner moves between intimate emotions and public space. Her works shift between different perspectives and raise questions about the perceptual and social systems in which we operate. She expands the frame of our perception away from hierarchical modes of seeing toward marginalised emotions, beings and objects that hold alternative possibilities. Her images convey the fragility of human identity and our complex search for orientation.

Ines Kaag has worked since 1997 as part of the duo BLESS (co-founded with Desiree Heiss), developing numerous transdisciplinary projects. BLESS describes its practice as 'situational design', combining fashion and art, design and architecture, business and social practice, and aiming to create a balance between intellectual and physical engagement. Based on the ambition to produce objects for everyday use, BLESS defines its practice and products as a way of life — grounded in the firm belief that the future can be actively and independently shaped.

Annette Kelm was born in 1975 in Stuttgart, Germany. She lives and works in Berlin. Annette Kelm studied at Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg. She received numerous awards and prizes, among them Camera Austria Prize (2015); Preis der Nationalgalerie, Audience Award (2009); and Art Cologne Prize for Young Artists (2005). Annette Kelm's photographic oeuvre offers a unique outlook onto the socio-cultural history of the material world. The artist uses a vast array of motifs as vocabulary to address specific moments in this history, whether it is the commodification of design objects, various forms of political critique or value systems such as money and finance. Kelm's exhibitions gather images of floral sculptures, landscapes, portraiture, photographed buildings, and ephemeral objects of all scales. Meticulously picked, the artist's subjects enter in collision and contrasts where the objective converges with the subjective, the every-day encounters the historical, and the impartial becomes political. Her practice draws from conventional studio photography techniques: employing a large-format camera and depicting her subjects in front of a backdrop. The arrangements that the artist sets up at her studio are often playful, retain an experimental character or are seemingly captured glimpses of time. Kelm's distinctive approach to the photographic medium made her a prominent figure of contemporary photography in Germany and worldwide.

Alexandra Leykauf lives and works in Berlin. In recent years, she has presented numerous solo exhibitions, including *Prospect*, Camera Austria, Graz (2024); *What We Do in the Shadow* (with Dominik Styk), GAK-Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen (2022); *Animus*, Kunstverein Springhornhof, Neuenkirchen (2022); *Window Shopping* (with Eva Berendes), Kunstverein Siegen (2021), and *Both Sides Now*, Villa du Parc/Centre d'art contemporain, Annemasse (2020). She has also participated in group exhibitions, including *Artocène*, Musée Alpin, Chamonix Mont-Blanc (2023); *La Friche la Belle de Mai*, Marseille (2022); *Galerie Bo Bjerggaard*, Copenhagen (2019); and *Künstlerhaus Dortmund* (2019). Her works are held in the collections of Piers Arts Centre, Orkney (UK); Centre Pompidou (FR); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (FR); and the Royal Dutch KPN Collection (NL). Alexandra Leykauf studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg (1996–2002), the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (1998–2002), and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (2003–2004) in Amsterdam.

