

ART OF THE GARDEN

The Role of the Garden in British Visual Culture
Conference, Friday 18th June 2004 at Tate Britain

(Supported by the Paul Mellon Centre)

Gardening is the most popular and widespread leisure activity in contemporary Britain. At the same time it has also occupied a place of prime importance in the poetics and politics of English nationalism. In the eighteenth century, the elevation of landscape gardening to a polite art, with contributions from painting, architecture, sculpture and literature was part of its conversion to a patriotic art. Yet, over the last two hundred years the concept of the garden and its cultural ownership has become an increasingly contested terrain. Moreover, the garden as a signal of aesthetic sensibility and intellectual sophistication has led to fierce style wars which continue today. This conference examines the impact and relevance of the garden to the development of British visual culture from the early nineteenth century to the present day. It is divided into two sessions. The first, entitled 'Nation', explores the representation of the garden as an expression of national culture; the second session focuses on gardens in relation to aesthetic and cultural discourses surrounding ideas about 'Nature'. Invited speakers include Stephen Bann, Brent Elliott, Anne Helmreich, Ysanne Holt, John Lucas, Jason Rosenfeld and Patrick Wright. The conference accompanies Tate Britain's major exhibition, *Art of the Garden*, curated by Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels, and Martin Postle.

Tickets are £25 (£20 concessions) To book call Tate ticketing on 0207 887 8888.



John Singer Sargent, *Carnation, Lily Lily, Rose* 1885-6
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