

ED206 20th and 21st Century Design

Henk Gerritsen

1948-2008

- Henk Gerritsen was born in Utrecht in the Netherlands, his interest in plants didn't commence until 1963 when he was asked to make a herbarium for the biology class at high school, this then developed into a lifelong love of plants but particularly wild plants.
- In 1968 he studied History and Politics at the university in Amsterdam and later he studied Art at the Rietveld Academy of Art. He went on between 1976 and 1985 to make his living as a painter.
- In 1977 he met the renowned landscape and garden architect Mien Ruys (Wilhelmina Jacoba (Mien) Moussault-Ruys) (1904-1999) and visited her garden at Dedemsvart it was then that he realised his future lay within garden design. Mien Ruys also influenced other designers such as Piet Oudolf and Jacqueline van der Kloet (bulb and perennial designer).
- In 1978 Henk with his friend Anton Schlepers (1945-1993) began to design the Priona gardens at Anton's family home in Schuinesloot. It was Henk's extensive plant knowledge together with his artist's eye coupled with Anton's self-taught artistry and photography that they created a very individual naturalistic style garden which contained humour and satirical slants at formality with areas dedicated to various styles of planting and types of plants from all over the world. Henk strongly believed that gardens should thrive by gardening without the use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides.
- The following years he collaborated as an illustrator on several garden books with fellow designer Arend Jan der Horst. He also liaised with Mien Ruys architecture office on several wild flower projects.
- In 1981 together with Anton and others they formed a pressure group to rescue the Oeverlanden an area rich in nature which was under threat for use for municipal buildings. They succeeded and the group still exists now as a recognised society which maintains the area.
- It was in 1982 that Henk first became acquainted with Piet and Anna Oudolf. He had received a plant catalogue at this home from the Oudolfs new nursery and he hadn't recognised many of the plants in it. He contacted the Oudolfs to thank them for the catalogue adding sarcastically that he would drop round in the spring to see how many of the plants had survived. That was the start of a 26yr friendship with them and a co-authored book with Piet called 'Dream Plants' originally published in 1990 and re-issued in 1999 with twice as many plants as the original and now titled 'Dream Plants for the Natural Garden.'
- He went on in 2003 to co-author a further book with Piet called 'Planting the Natural Garden' with his friend Anton providing the photography. This book deals mainly with plants that at that time were grown in the Oudolfs nursery and describes the conditions under which they will thrive.
- Henk went on to write a further book called 'Essay on gardening' which was published in colour in 2008 but it did not become translated into English until after his death in 2008. The book was republished in 2010 but this time it contained many black and white photographs and from reviews of someone who has seen both editions the original colour version is deemed far better.

Some quotes from the book which Henk originally wanted to title 'Playing Chess with Nature' as he likened gardening to humans playing a game of chess with nature. He said "They can only settle for a draw instead of being checkmated. Winning is not an option and cheating is altogether useless: at best, the latter will result in a Pyrrhic victory and ultimately a devastating defeat. The book itself is effectively a series of essays describing Henks philosophy on gardening; it is divided into three main sections: Inspiration, Garden ecology, and Building blocks of a garden. In the ecology section he advises against constant disturbance of the soil and effectively just grazing the weeds or as he puts it 'Gardening like a cow'.

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An observation from Amazon by a purchaser of 'Dream Plants for Natural Gardens. How does the saying go, 'You can please some of the people some of the time, but..... (That's gardeners for you)

"Mine is a densely planted, fully landscaped 5 acre garden which I started from scratch, single-handed, 23 years ago. I still manage it single-handed at 78, apart from a little help with the mile of hedge and 6 miles of lawn edge. This garden, and 27 years of previous gardens, are my credentials for reviewing gardening books.

This is a lovely book, written in a light, easy-readable style, with a pleasant wit, and generously and nicely illustrated. A pleasure to own, in fact, and an enjoyable bedtime read. However, despite their vast experience and unquestionable standing in the world of professional horticulture, the authors make blunt generalised statements about individual plants which are patently untrue, for example, recommending plants which in my garden have proved almost ineradicable pests on a par with Aegopodium (so much for "Dream Plants"), condemning as ungrowable others which flourish here without any help from me whatsoever, and making unwarranted declarations about soil requirements in individual cases. But many other gardening writers fall into the same trap. Buy the book by all means, but find out for yourself what does and does not grow for you. (Although do find out your soil's pH for the really obvious cases)

The authors condemn the use of weedkillers. The only problem with weedkillers is improper use, and without such aids, I would have no garden to comfort my old age."

Derek Jarman

1942-1994

- Michael Derek Elworthy Jarman was born in Northwood, Middlesex. His father born in New Zealand was an RAF Lancaster bomber pilot in the 2nd World war, his mother was of half Jewish descent. Between 1942-50 the family lived in England, Pakistan and Italy.
- From 1960-63 he studied at King's college London doing a BA in English, History and History of Art. This was followed by four years at the Slade School of fine arts.
- Jarman was vociferous in his public fight for gay rights and his own personal struggle with AIDS. On the 22nd of December 1986 he was diagnosed as HIV positive and it appears that this was what prompted him to move to Prospect Cottage, Dungeness in Kent, where he 'built' or 'evolved' the highly acclaimed 'Shingle garden' on the hostile doorstep of a nuclear power station.
- Before discussing the Garden at Prospect Cottage, his career prior to that had been a mix of, Film director, Stage set designer, Diarist, Artist, Author and latterly up to his death, a Gardener
- Whilst I have no detailed knowledge of his work in these fields, from the brief research carried out, specifically in relation to his film 'The Last of England' 1987, which told of the death of a country ravaged by its own internal decay. Jarman was no fan of Margaret Thatcher's policies, and this film was seen by many as a message to us to open our eyes to a world of greed and repression. Ring any bells! Banker's bonuses!
- It appears that his interest in gardening was a thread in his life which started as a young boy but only to the extent where he helped in the family garden, by the time he had gone on to higher education this thread appeared to lay unwoven until 1986, although some of his earlier art work in the 1960's shown in one of his books '**Derek Jarman a Portrait**' 1996, does depict scenes which could be linked simplistically to the location at prospect cottages
- He also wrote a book titled '**Modern Nature: The journals of Derek Jarman**' which seems at a glance on Amazon to be on the lines of an autobiography
- The last book that Derek Jarman wrote was about his garden at Dungeness, titled '**derek jarman's garden**' published in 1995. The photographs within it are the work of Howard Sooley a columnist with The Observer. Sooley met him in the spring of 1991, he visited him at Prospect Cottage, Sooleys description of his first trip to that location in Dungeness goes' *"There is something alarming about the 'ness for those unused to the horizon: it is endless, broken occasionally by telegraph poles pushing up from the verge only to be dwarfed by the magnitude of the sky above."*
- Sooley became a frequent visitor to Prospect Cottage over the next 3years and used to take Derek on trips to local nurseries to buy plants.
- Another renowned Gardener, author and Gardening correspondent for Country Life and the Guardian, Christopher Lloyd, whose acclaimed gardens at Great Dixter East Sussex were only some 15 miles up the road from Prospect cottage. Lloyd and Jarman had never met, but on the 24th June 1990 whilst out on a trip with Beth Chatto they were in the area of Prospect cottage when he had spotted some brilliant flower colour near to it this was his first introduction to Derek Jarman and they became friends both admirers of each other's gardens in their own right.

- It would be incorrect to place Jarman the 'gardener' in the same category as Lloyd because their individual knowledge on horticulture differed greatly, however they both shared a sharpness of wit and plain speaking with obviously a love of plants and nature.
- The garden at Prospect Cottage was in horticultural terms a direct challenge with the forces of nature ie the wind the rain the sun and also man made forces such as the radiation which the native Sea Kale seemed to absorb so readily. It seems ironic that whilst Derek Jarman was losing his battle with AIDS he appeared to be winning some of his battles with Mother Nature by evolving a garden in that hostile environment at Dungeness.
- It would be relevant at this point to draw a parallel with the previous designer Henk Gerritsen who also had that sharpness of wit coupled with a straight forward way of writing and that belief that Nature in all its forms should be allowed to take its course without the use by man and his created chemicals to shape Nature.

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Friday, June 27th, 2014 6PM Reception 6:30PM Gallery Walk Jane Prentiss and Jonathan Fairbanks from Fuller Craft Museum discuss
highlights from the auction Skinner Gallery 63 Park Plaza, Boston, MA RSVP 508.970.3240 or. In the early 20th century the field of
information visualization progressed little. Small efforts were made to refine existing models but overall â€“ while visualizations were still
being produced with regularity; the discipline seemed to fall from prominence and discoveries were few and far between. However, the
development of information technology in the latter half of the 20th century created a boom in information visualization which is still
continuing to this very day. The pace of change has been so dramatic in the 20th century that a detailed history would be next to
impossible to create. In 20th century design, a sense of beauty, usefulness, usability, delight, desire, and elegance were (and very often
still are) confused as outcomes. As a result, designers have ended up being co-conspirators in the rise of consumerism. These
characteristics actually represent qualities of a design that may help it achieve desired outcomes, but they are pretty shallow ends in
themselves.