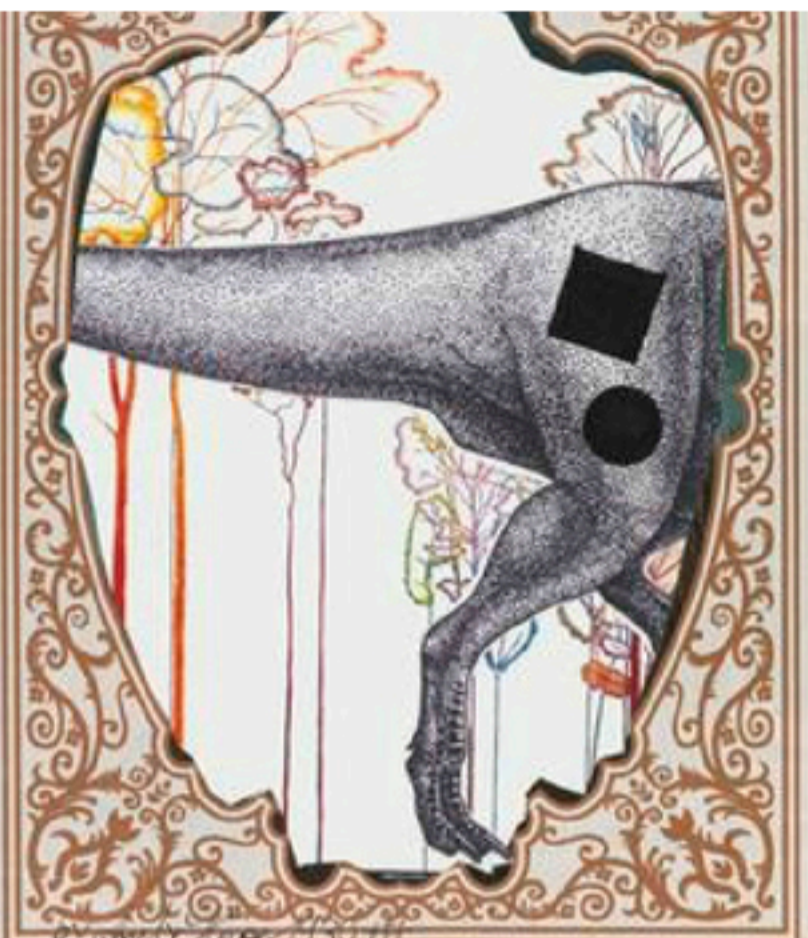


When dinosaurs become Modernists in the lost world of the Botanics



Andy Hope: dinosaur inspired exhibition on show at the Botanics.

Under a high glass roof in a jungle of greenery, where moisture drips from curling ferns, a man sits quietly.

Lost in a world of mountains, swamps and cities set within a universe of stars, as foliage explode their leaves like small fans of fireworks around him, dinosaurs draw near.

There are many people who will quite happily wander around a garden and gaze at pretty flowers and plants. And then there are people like Andreas Hofer.

Invited to visit the Royal Botanic Gardens in 2011, artist Andreas saw more than just the ferns and foliage of Edinburgh around him - he saw dinosaurs too.

Inspired by his time in the Fern House, surrounded by the plants that would have fed the very dinosaurs of his imagination 230 million years ago, Andreas found the spark he had been looking for.

“Imagine a place that is very hot, humid and dry at the same time,” says Andreas.

“It’s colourful, dark, with lights and crosses, flowers and illuminated landscapes and at the very end you come to a cinema.

“There you sit with dinosaurs and watch a very strange movie with squares, circles, triangles and cosmic patterns. If you like, you could sit there forever.

“You see the dinosaurs and the abstract shapes together and they become one.”

Describing his first Scottish exhibition on show at Inverleith House in Edinburgh, Andreas, pulled together his inspiration from his time at the Botanic Gardens into a collection of almost 40 works encompassing painting, drawing, collage, photography and sculpture.

The Berlin based artist who goes by the name ‘Andy Hope 1930’ has received international acclaim for his work which often features his interest in comic books, fantasy and science fiction.

“I’d never been to Edinburgh before,” said the 49-year-old.

“It was my first time and I really loved it, it’s really cool. The people who live here have been so lovely to me.

“I stayed in the city and I was very impressed with the Botanic Gardens and the strange plants there. Paul Nesbitt from Inverleith House invited me and he has a deeply profound understanding of my work.

“The show could work in other galleries but it fits perfectly to the surroundings and to the atmosphere in the gardens. I was trying to respond to the atmosphere at Inverleith House itself.

“I think the mixture, the views into the garden where my work is on show, is a very important part. It mixes with concept of ancient landscapes, nature and contemporary art.”

From an educational dinosaur movie hall to a large canvas portraying *Chief Red Cloud and Crazy Horse*, Andreas has produced a whole cast of characters where monsters and fantasies meet order and logic.

Cowboys and aliens coexist with legends and prehistoric creatures for “exploring, expanding and challenging the fundamentals of modern life”.

“There’re so many inspirations for me, even a sculpture I have produced comes from a story which I read about a human that transforms into a plant,” explains Andreas.

“I grew up with comics and I come from a storytelling family.

“My grandmother influenced me too with her tales. Today I see myself more or less as an adventurer and an explorer. But it’s not only that, my work - it’s a part of my life.

“I think people can understand what I’m doing. It’s a kind of surrounding that I create; an idea or image of an ancient world.

“I like the idea of bringing this into other more modern terms.

“Superheroes and dinosaurs are very closely related to social reality. The idea of superpowers is not really very far away from politics. These figures are more like a break down of superhuman concepts. They’re very dysfunctional characters and even my dinosaurs are a kind of icon today.

“From early movies and mass merchandising, dinosaurs have really affected our reality in a way. I like to play around with stuff and sometimes construct parallel worlds that still affect our reality.”

As part of Andreas desire as an artist to construct parallel worlds and characters, he has also created a persona for himself in the process.

“I took up the name Andy Hope 1930 because I wanted to not only be an artist, but to be a fictional character.

“Andy Hope allows me to go to another dimension, without limits.”