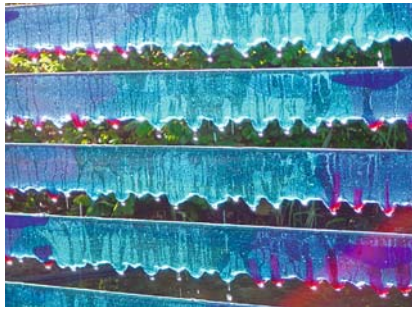


Festival des Jardins, Chaumont-sur-Loire

Glass droplets – water droplets. Movement and stillness sparkle together in light.



Through their polarities, glass and water have much in common.

The garden festival at Chaumont is known well beyond the boundaries of France. The daring innovation and design savoir-faire shown here over the last ten years has set the mark for all other garden festivals.

Themed each year, the director of the festival Jean Pigeat chose 'Chaos' for 2004. Herbert Dreiseitl was personally invited to participate, and as an artist and landscape architect, to conceive two gardens in response to this theme. Both gardens were also presented at the garden festival of 2005.

'Tohuwabohu' is a word from the Hebrew which describes a primordial, creative nothing-everythingness. It implies more than the contemporary definition of 'chaos' as confusion or disorder. 'Tohuwabohu' inspired the image of a raw, primeval earth crater, beaten and weathered by wind and rain, with the earth's first plants (horse-tails fern, Equisetum) sprouting from a life-giving mud sludge at the bottom.

A dark entrance corridor screens the garden interior from the outside. The visitor is momentarily immersed in darkness before stepping out onto a metal catwalk. Mist oozes up from the bottom and curls over the top edges of the crater. Suspended over the middle of the life-giving soup, the visitor is in a completely different world.

The second garden was titled 'Solid and liquid'. Bars of horizontal, blue glass are suspended one above another. Water quietly trickles down, droplets forming on the edges and dripping to the next glass bar. The bottom edge of each bar is cast so that the glass seems to drip like water. The border is blurred between where the solid glass stops and the liquid water begins. The whole sculpture has an irregular, chaotic and spontaneous feel. On closer inspection though, every drop of water follows the same path down the glass. The apparently hard glass is brought into a continuum of motion, the droplets

shining and sparkling in the light. The whole assembly is reflected in the water surface below, filling the otherwise empty space.



Erosion and decay in the Tohuwabohu crater. Primordial vegetation takes hold.

