

BLUE PHANTASMS IN THE PARK

Nicole Mollett



Ent-(Non Earthly Delights) 2024. Photo by Linda Ny Lind (courtesy of LindaNy Lind/ Frieze)

(AR) experience, which plays in real time overlaid onto what you see through your phone camera. This artificial reality begins with blue and golden tendrils growing outwards from a point. During this sequence, one notices another translucent layer, a ghostly hand wearing glamorous fake nails which can be seen gently touching the real sculpture in the park.

As I rotate the phone more 3D objects emerge from the periphery and float across the park. A sound track of organic sounds and strange music enhances the continuous visual transformations. A wall of tiles appears and then shatters into pieces. Then a cluster of rocks and elaborate alien plants appear, but they disintegrate as soon as I discover them.

Ent-(Non Earthly Delights) reimagines the strangeness of the Bosch garden but in a virtual world, presenting a very similar experience to that of the phantasmagoria. The boundary between the real and the virtual is blurred. The viewer is teleported into a fantastical world and the uncanny effect is the same. As the artist, Libby Heaney, states:

"This new installation thinks about life in the parallel realities predicted by quantum physics. It continues my exploration of quantum hybrid creatures; strange entanglements of human, animal and machine. It's so great for the work to be outside in Regent's Park, connecting with the unruliness of nature."

The strong palette of royal blue and gold references traditional religious iconography, and yet the imagery subverts this language with its modern game aesthetics and artificial surfaces. The overall effect of the artwork is both joyful and enticing. I feel that I am entering a dreamlike realm, one in which queer and non-earthly beings are able to exist freely and this in itself is a wonderful experience.

To visit the AR experience go to: heaneynonearthlydelights1.web.app/index2.html. Libby Heaney's website is at libbyheaney.co.uk.

In October I went to the Frieze Art Fair in Regent's Park, London on the hunt for exciting, new experimental art which is inspired by magic lanterns. Inside the exhibition there was an abundance of paintings, strange and opulent objects, but almost no projection. It was outside at Frieze Sculpture (a public exhibition curated by Fatos Üstek) where I discovered the curious artwork entitled *Ent-(Non Earthly Delights) 2024*, created by British artist Libby Heaney who has a PhD and professional research background in quantum information science. The title of the work refers to Hieronymus Bosch's most famous painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490–1500), a triptych masterpiece in which heaven and hell are depicted in a violent orgy of fantastical creatures and dancing naked humans.

What first meets the eye is a voluptuous and vivid blue headless body, embraced by what could be described as golden entrails. The figure is topped with a crown of iridescent glass petals. This hybrid form sits somewhere between an anthropomorphic sci-fi monster and a decadent drag act, with its giant blue belly unfurling onto the grass.

On closer inspection I see two QR codes fixed to two of the smaller forms. With the help of a smartphone, the codes allow the viewer to access an interactive augmented reality



The AR effects begin