

# GIARDINO BOTANICO ANDRÉ HELLER

*“A collection of world’s region”, Andre Heller defines his garden.*

*During the years, assisted by a climate that Heller calls “Air of Luck” he managed to transform this into a garden of Eden hosting plants from all over the world. Andre Heller opened the doors to his garden: the recipe for luck not as a secret and exclusive place, but as an invitation to all those that want to enjoy, that are ready to handle with care and attention a world of awareness. This incredible variety marries harmoniously with the artificial structures created in the garden and is enriched by contemporary sculptures and surprising scenic effects, a pleasant surprise for the visitor that can grab the opportunity for an unusual travel in a world that unites nature with art, both of international stature, among the sculptures of artists such as Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, Erwin Novak, Susanne Schmoegner, Rudolph Hirt*



*Several groups of plants are joined together by a criss crossing of paths accompanied by rest areas. The central part of the garden re-creates an Alpine valley with pines, northern trees, cliff, gorges, crevasses, where the water springs fall from the red dolomitic peaks in the background; a 13 meters tall rocky landscape, a bonsai simulation of the dolomitic landscape that made the garden famous already during the times of Hruska.*

*All around are grouped ponds covered by water lilies and lotus flowers, inhabited by gigant Koi carps, and trouts and the reflection of flying butterflies and dragonflies, creeks and Zen water plays that invite to meditation, falls that flow from the rocks and water gushes from bronze heads, the gurgling and rumbling of water allow forgetting the heat and noise of the outer world, carry freshness and calm. In the dry mediterranean climate, water is a very precious good. Water bestows on the garden a peculiar atmosphere, creates living landscapes always new and animated, refreshes and enchants with mysterious reflexes and sounds.*

A garden where different environments mingle, but where the objective of naturalness and environmental love becomes the unifying element. This is the most luxurius botanical garden in Italy and it’s so rich that cannot be summarized in a visit and changes skin every year and every season.

# ART AND NATURE UNITED

The botanical garden acquired by Andrè Heller to be transformed into a center for environmental awareness hosts several works of art either donated or commissioned by the Austrian artist. From the enigmatic snakes and symbols of day and night welcoming us at the entry gate, the whole environment indicates that this is not a common botanical garden. The ticket office is decorated by Susanne Smoegner, displaying colours and shapes that connect adult world with memories of childhood like Ferdinand's house built and decorated by Edgar Tezak, water plays and distant sounds. Several elements connect with multiple traditions and spiritualities: Buddhist and Tibetan symbols, Hindu statues such as the Great Ganesh by Rudolph Hirt, elephant-god of luck and wisdom, protector of education, coexist with symbols of metropolitan culture and modernity. Similarly find place works by Roy Lichtenstein, Keith Haring, Susanne Smoegner, Erwin Novak, Edgar Tezak, Rudolph Hirt and of the owner himself.

Monstrous elements recur by the Bridge of monsters, where the intolerance of contemporary man transfigures into two monstrous heads on pikes that spit at each other, then through a Chinese red door, Torii, you reach a purifying and cathartic path, which includes the water play Shishi-Odoshi: a sort of water clock that marks the fleeting time and beside a walkway several large bamboo canes invite to tickle them: striking one against the other they play like a xylophone. The link with this modern and cosmopolitan humanity is underlined by the works of Keith Haring, metropolitan artist, friend of Heller, member of the Pop Part, his characters walk, hug, dance, like the red man next to the tree/umbrella. Another important work by Haring is the Stele which remembers a cross, but the characters moving on it carry sexual references. Haring gifted us his peculiar and precious interpretation of the garden with a drawing that is represented on the tickets.

Other artists employed the tools that Nature and the Garden offer: Novak builds boardwalks, walls, pavements, with the 28 different species of bamboo present in the garden that provide colors and effect that no other material can grant and use a large stone suspended from rope to deviate water flow. These interventions blend harmoniously in the surrounding environment like the great wooden Praying Mantis that crops up between tufts of grass: so well hidden that is almost unseen: "of all arts, seeing is the hardest to learn". The union of Art and Nature is fully celebrated within the great figure of the Genius Loci, created by Andrè Heller. The great anthropomorphic bust with open arms, emerges from the grass and erects himself as protector and guide-spirit. The structure completely covered by ivy encloses the constant change of nature, every day leaves grow and are blown by the wind, but the great blue eyes, the nose and mouth are human intervention, the added value that comes from the artist.

