

# HUTOPIA GALLERY GUIDE

1) The title of this exhibition, *HUTOPIA*, was coined by the Scottish artist-poet **Alec Finlay** to name his long-form poetic contribution to the catalogue accompanying *Machines à Penser*, the exhibition organized at the Fondazione Prada's Venetian outpost during the city's 2018 architecture biennial, from which the current project derives. Finlay was one of the first artists to take an interest in the lore surrounding Wittgenstein's self-imposed exile in Norway, and he has been a deeply invested chronicler of the hermetic life ever since, always returning to the building and living traditions of his Caledonian homeland. (The son of Scottish installation artist Ian Hamilton Finlay, Alec spent a formative part of his youth in a self-styled Arcadian refuge in the Pentland hills south of Edinburgh; the estate was called Little Sparta.) In this newly conceived installation, a meshwork of language and imagery, Finlay continues his exploration of the Scottish cult of the bothy, a basic form of shelter scattered across the British north that is usually left unlocked and available for anyone to use free of charge.

2) *Adorno & Horkheimer: Lion and Marta Feuchtwanger's House (Villa Aurora), Los Angeles, California, USA, II* (2004) is taken from **Patrick Lakey's** *German Photographs (1724-2005)* series. Lakey's pictures document the places where German-speaking philosophers from Kant to Adorno lived and worked with the clinical precision of a certain idea of "German" photography. Traveling through Germany, England, Switzerland, and his adopted hometown of Los Angeles, the artist photographed the places where these thinkers wrote, thought, lived, and, in some cases, died. (Lakey's series also includes photographs of Heidegger's hut and Wittgenstein's spartan Cambridge office.) The image included here depicts the interior of the former residence of the revered Weimar-era novelist and playwright Lion Feuchtwanger, who would regularly host parties involving the *fine fleur* of Los Angeles's extensive German émigré community – the famed "Weimar on the Pacific" that counted the likes of Thomas Mann, Arnold Schoenberg, Franz Werfel, and Bertolt Brecht among its ranks, as well as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who co-wrote their landmark *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in sun-kissed exile.

3) The London-based Polish artist **Goshka Macuga** has long mined the history of ideas for the realization of complex installations that have enshrined her status as a leading practitioner at the intersection of art and knowledge production. These three vases modeled after the heads of *HUTOPIA's* three protagonists were first shown in the context of *Machines à Penser* at the Fondazione Prada in Venice. Adorno is rendered here in the earthenware shape of a Moche pot, Heidegger in a silicone rubber form faintly reminiscent of Renato Bertelli's well-known *Continuous Profile – Head of Mussolini*, while Wittgenstein's stern visage is shown here emerging from a tree trunk made in Parian ware, a marble-like type of porcelain. The vases are holding a bouquet of freshly cut flowers. What exactly might be sprouting from these mighty heads is (just as ideally) left to institutional discretion.

4) The German-Jewish photo-journalist **Digne Meller-Marcovicz** (1934-2014) famously visited Martin and Elfride Heidegger in their Freiburg villa and Schwarzwald mountain home in the fall of 1966 and summer of 1968 for an extensive photo shoot organized

in conjunction with Heidegger's notorious *Der Spiegel* interview—a conversation so candid, in the eyes of the embattled philosopher, that it could only be published after his death in 1976. (In the late 1960s Meller-Marcovicz also made a number of portraits of Heidegger's philosophical nemesis, Theodor Adorno.) Heidegger, the self-styled high priest of authentic *Dasein*, evidently appears to have enjoyed posing for Meller-Marcovicz's camera, playing the rustic hermit part with at times uncharacteristically jocular levity, happy to treat his fabled mountain hut as something akin to a stage set.

5) **Guy Moreton's** photographs of the landscape surrounding Wittgenstein's cabin in the village of Skjolden, at the far end of Norway's Sognefjord, were made in response to an invitation from the artist and poet Alec Finlay to collaborate on a project meant to shed light on the thinker's lifelong search for his place in the world, philosophical or otherwise. They first appeared in the context of the collaborative project *There Where You Are Not*, published in 2005, alongside Finlay's poetry and a biographical sketch compiled by Michael Nedo, director of the Wittgenstein Archive in Cambridge – the very place Wittgenstein sought to escape when first sailing for Norway in 1913. The photograph shown here, *LW118*, depicts the stone base of what was once Wittgenstein's Nordic refuge; the hut, completed in late 1914 in the philosopher's absence, was dismantled in 1958, seven years after his death, and rebuilt in the village center. For many years, efforts have been underway to rebuild Wittgenstein's hut on its original site, using the building's original materials; reconstruction appears to have started in May 2018.

6) An exhibition titled *HUTOPIA* would be grossly incomplete, of course, without actual huts, and the three structures built by Chicago-based artist **John Preus** form the undisputed centerpiece of this exhibition. The biggest of the three, built on the lawn to the east of the Neubauer Collegium, is a scaled-down replica of Martin Heidegger's cabin in the Black Forest village of Todtnauberg, still in the hands of the notoriously reclusive Heidegger family. Preus's reconstruction is a much more welcoming proposition: this installation actively welcomes visitors and can be put to cautious social use. The more modestly sized replica on the Collegium's west-facing terrace – a model rather than a monument – is of Ludwig Wittgenstein's hut in the remote Norwegian village of Skjolden, which is being rebuilt on its original site. A third structure, built in the Neubauer Collegium gallery and doubling as both a gathering space and device for displaying art, is loosely modeled after a sculpture by the Scottish artist-poet Ian Hamilton Finlay titled *Adorno's Hut*, crudely mimicking the idealized architectural outlines of a Greek temple – rendered in the weather-beaten wood of an ordinary garden shed. In the corner of the room, looking out, Preus has installed a domestic scene consisting of a rocking chair and reading lamp (the latter made in collaboration with Kevin Reiswig), titled *On the Impact of Social Mobility* and made out of materials salvaged from closed Chicago public schools.

7) This photograph by Scottish-born, LA-based artist **Ewan Telford** depicts a nondescript bungalow in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles. Only a handful of Critical Theory enthusiasts would recognize the address of 316 South Kenter Avenue as the wartime home of Theodor Adorno. There is no memorial plaque to be found anywhere, although the Korean-American family that currently occupies the house appears to have become accustomed to answering the door to occasional philosophy tourists. Telford went the extra mile of photographing Adorno's former

residence on a gloomy, cloudy day – a rare occurrence in Hollywood. The house is a twenty-minute walk from the former home of Arnold Schoenberg, and another fifty minutes on foot from Thomas Mann's villa in Pacific Palisades. It is likely, however, that these three titans of twentieth-century German culture would have preferred driving to one another's garden parties, during which the ideas that would give rise to Mann's magisterial *Doctor Faustus* must have first taken root.

## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

- 1) Alec Finlay, *Manifesto for Hutopianism*, 2019.
- 2) Patrick Lakey, *Adorno & Horkheimer: Lion and Marta Feuchtwanger's House (Villa Aurora), Los Angeles, California, USA, II*, 2004.
- 3) *Theodor Adorno, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein.*  
All by Goshka Macuga, 2018.
- 4) Photographs by Digne Meller-Marcovicz, 1966–68. Courtesy Art Resource, Inc.
- 5) Guy Moreton, *LW118*, 2005.
- 6) On the terrace: *On the Alleged Barbarism of Writing Poetry After Adorno: I. Wittgenstein*, 2019.  
  
On the lawn: *On the Alleged Barbarism of Writing Poetry After Adorno: II. Heidegger*, 2019.  
  
Gallery: *On the Alleged Barbarism of Writing Poetry After Adorno: III. Adorno*, 2019.  
  
Gallery: *On the Impact of Social Mobility*, 2019.  
  
All by John Preus (*On the Impact of Social Mobility* with Kevin Reiswig).
- 7) Ewan Telford, *Captive Audience (Scientific Experiences of an Exile in Los Angeles). Theodor Adorno House, 316 S. Kenter Ave*, 2018.

*All works courtesy of the artist unless otherwise indicated.*

# HUTOPIA

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