

# JAN SEBASTIAN KOCH

## MIDSUMMER IN YVES' GARDEN

**PREVIEW: SATURDAY 17 JUNE (1-4PM)**  
**EXHIBITION: 18 JUNE – 22 JULY 2023**

BEERS London is pleased to welcome Jan Sebastian Koch for his third solo exhibition with the gallery, entitled *Midsummer In Yves' Garden*.

The titular garden in the exhibition's title is The Jardin Majorelle: a one-hectare garden in Marrakech, Morocco, designed by (largely forgotten) French painter Jacques Majorelle, who began its construction in 1923. The gardens, which include a series of bright buildings painted with a special hue of cobalt known as Majorelle Blue, first opened to the public in 1947. Following this, French fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent purchased the (now overgrown) gardens in 1980 and restored them over the course of several years, making the villa his primary retreat until his death in 2002. The Jardin Majorelle was a source of profound inspiration to Saint Laurent and the gardens are still considered among the most beautiful in the world.

With this framework in mind, we introduce Koch's work, made in his secondary studio in Northern Norway, where, for weeks at a time, the artist would abscond himself in the absolute remoteness of nature to focus on his paintings. Koch himself stated the familiarity he felt with Saint Laurent; the sense of calm and inspiration evoked from nature, quietude, and isolation.

In addition to the completion of several new works, Koch breathed new life into a series of older paintings that he had previously worked on (but failed to complete) during his previous visit to the remote studio.

Koch explains this process in his own words:

*It's like having a conversation with a person for years  
To which you come back again and again  
You start with the same topic again  
But both are getting older and have learned  
You can always start the conversation where you left off  
And start something new  
That is based on the old*

As viewers, we are able to see how both the enigmatic spirit of creation surrounding a private retreat – but also how Jardin Majorelle itself – has had a profound personal impact on Koch. His own artistic practice has emulated that of Saint Laurent, but the works have drawn great inspiration from these botanical gardens, much like Monet or Derek Jarman also felt by the mysterious allure of the natural world, so much so that he was empowered to title this show after Saint Laurent himself. One imagines Koch (or oneself) at harmony in and within these magical botanical spaces and we are able to see how the natural world inspires and informs his exhibition.

The fact that these two different bodies of work found harmony together is a testament to the journey of the artist; how narrative threads are left to be restrung at later times. How ideas are, generally, cyclical, and how an artist's process can be inherently tied to their geographical environment. That these older works became revitalized for the artist speaks to that inspiration and his profound connection to and from the land; a tribute to his surroundings.



**Yves' Garden** (2017 - 2023)  
Oil and pastel on linen, 190 x 280 cm.



**Jardin Majorelle, Das Ist Der Frühling I** (2017 - 2023)  
Oil, oil pastel, pastel, charcoal and egg  
tempera on linen, 100 x 80 cm.



**J**AN SEBASTIAN KOCH (b. 1978 Monchengladbach, Germany) currently lives and works in Berlin. Koch graduated with an MA from the University of Art in Berlin in 2005.

Solo exhibitions include: 'If Mountains Could Sing', BEERS London (2020); 'Shelter from the Storm', BEERS London (2019); 'New Paintings', Avlskarl Gallery, Copenhagen (2013).

Group exhibitions include: 'paper.', BEERS London, London (2022); 'Lee Mingwei: Li, Gifts and Rituals', Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020); 'Roter Hirsch', codex-berlin, Berlin (2018); 'Black Box' Kunsthalle, Luneburg (2018); 'No More Heroes Anymore' Kreuzberg Pavillon, Berlin (2016).