

# THE HYBRID GARDEN

## *The Story of the Chimera*

The story of the Chimera, an old Greek myth about a creature part lion, snake and goat, highlights how the imagination and self can thrive when unexpected elements are brought together. With this installation, we sought to draw upon this notion and connect it to the history of the site in question. Copenhagen has a strong historic relationship to its waters. Once the province of fishermen and merchants, today they offer a way to confront the challenges the city and world face. How is it possible to produce energy in a sustainable, creative way? This installation explores this problem, juxtaposing and intertwining science, mythology, and nature.

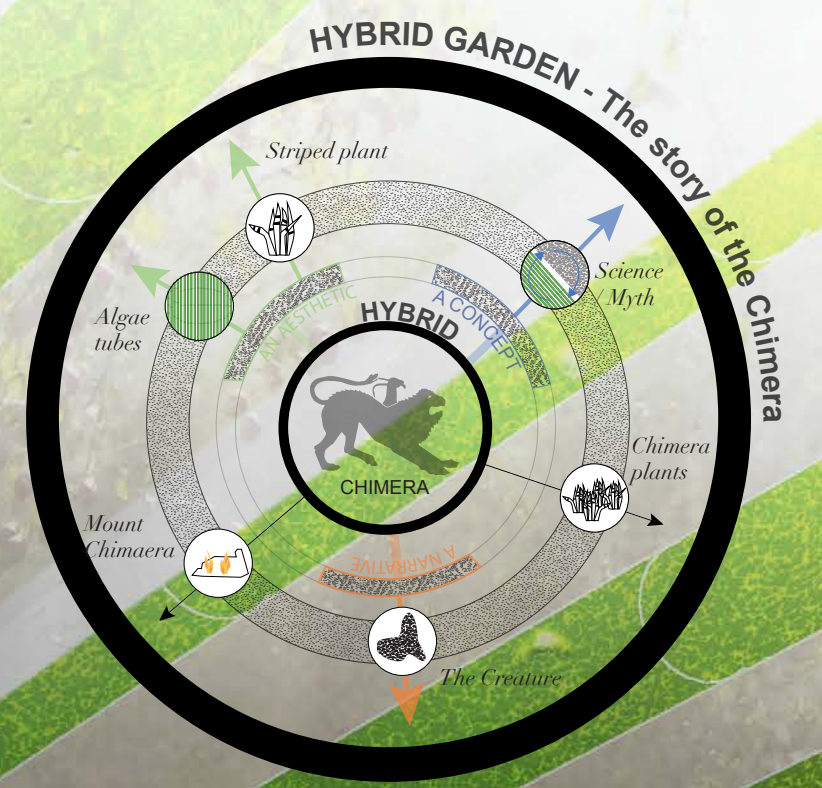
Science, Mythology and the Sea: their interaction and opposition.

Algae is at the heart of the installation. It covers a large canopy and forms the installation's centrepiece. The algae's growth creates a thriving, self-sufficient ecosystem. The technology employed acts as a catalyst, spurring on its growth. Though this form of bio-energy production is not the most efficient generator of electricity, it grounds the installation firmly in Copenhagen's water and its history. The algae's ecological universe unfolds in the installation's garden, a closed and ordered entity similar to the Greek cosmos. However, unlike a traditional garden, this garden is inhabited, alive. It is constituted by the ecosystem's different parts and therefore embraces the entropy, the chaos which such a space can possess. It represents and is occupied by the imaginary, mythical creature: the Chimera. There are also transient organisms living under the algae's surface. Science thus recalls an old myth through constructing this world.

How does this world function and to what end?

The environment is autonomous, complex like all living organisms, and is able to evolve and change in unexpected ways. The technique used, nonetheless, guarantees a high level of safety for the visitor. The unpredictable, shifting aspects of the installation are present in the development of new spaces, experimental hybridisation, the unforeseen growth and adaptation of different plants and the arrival of new insects and small mammals. A micro-climate exists between the ground and canopy. The tubes resemble a greenhouse, reheating the air below. Rain water is collected and recycled as a mist, producing a humid atmosphere for the plants. Light is also filtered through the tubes. Such a fertile environment provides the ideal conditions for plants to grow.

Algae therefore proliferates on the surface of the water. The visitor finds herself under an ocean of algae, placed above her head, light filtered through the algae and its water. She is submerged in an unrecognisable environment. The canopy is the sky and this sky is a moving, living sea. At each stage of the algae's life cycle, the algae proves to be of benefit to the installation and its ecosystem, in birth and death. It may be helped along mechanically, but the algae produces, refertilises, recycles and harnesses the sun's power.



What is the Chimera for us?

