



LOUDOLF FIELD • BRUTON, U.K.

AN EVOLVING ARTWORK BEYOND THE GALLERY

When Hauser and Wirth opened a gallery at Dursdale Farm in rural Somerset, it seemed only fitting that Piet Oudolf—the master of sculptural, painterly planting—was asked to be involved.

Eponymously named, Oudolf Field is an ever-evolving masterpiece, and the largest of three gardens that surround the gallery space. The two smaller gardens are more subtle and contained in their language, leaving space to respond to the buildings. The Cloister Garden is aptly named, forming more of a meditative space. The planting—a sea of muted greens and browns featuring grasses and perennials—floats around the feet of a Louise Bourgeois spider, and gently moves in an endless dance with an Alexander Calder piece.

Away from this, you are drawn to the explosion of planting that lies in the neighboring field. This is known as Oudolf's signature work: grasses and perennials play out a performance throughout the year, demonstrating Oudolf's well-known belief that the garden should hold as much interest in winter as in summer. The beautiful seed heads and skeletal remains of the plants in winter provide a stark contrast to the colorful drifts and swaying grasses of high summer. This is a garden free from the pressure of being its "best" at any one time.

There is not a single prescriptive route through the garden. There are multiple options, and many diverging and winding paths. This means the viewer is free to explore and experience the meadow from as many angles as they choose. Indeed, it positively encourages

you to take in as many of the dynamic planting compositions as possible, which deliver constantly shifting perspectives on the garden. Potential is lying around every turn. This garden is also a reminder that as an artwork, a garden is never truly the work of one person. Oudolf's composition is undeniably masterful, but how this space evolves is very much rooted in how its plants respond to conditions and seasons. This is a living, changing environment, and it reminds us that there is a huge element of letting go in a garden. We can control things to a certain extent, but there is much joy to be found in the unexpected results of time.