

VOGUE

MAY
£2-50

living

The Oxford Gallery is staging a daring exhibition that brings the **INSIDE OUT**.

Nonie Niesewand takes a balanced view

People who wouldn't give house-
room to a modern sculpture will happily
surrender their lawns to the avant
garde. *The Avant Garden* is a triumphant
celebration of this by the Oxford Gallery,
whose summer show is always an important
fixture for art collectors, rather than just
another listing in the gardening calendar.
This year the red brick of the Barbican is the
unexpected backdrop for the Gallery's
regular airing of British arts and crafts. The
work of fifty-five exhibitors will be shown in
what the Gallery describes as "a hidden
horticultural haven in the City of London" -
the Barbican conservatory and sculpture
court - where landscape designer Sally
Tarshish of Inscape Gardens has created a
theme park inspired by the four medieval
humours. According to the *Prologue* of Ben
Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, a
balance of the humours - phlegm, blood,
choler and bile - was indispensable for
wellbeing. The cornerstones of this well-
balanced garden are "humorously" themed
plantings, while materials used for the
walks are inspired by the five Chinese
elements: wood, fire, metal, water and
earth. A menagerie of carved crocodiles,
wooden crows and a pink flamingo flaunt
themselves among some giddy garden seats,
lanterns, sundials and bird baths. The
Oxford Gallery team works to blur the
distinction between fine and applied art,
between sculpture and craft. Some
examples of one-off pieces from artists exhibiting
are shown on the garden plan.

"*The Avant Garden*" is at the Barbican
Centre from May 16 to June 16

- 1, Matthew Burt playhouse. 2, Ann Christopher
Line from *Three Journeys* sculpture. 3, Clive
Bowen earthenware planter. 4, Monica Young
coiled stoneware pot. 5, Kate Mellors garden
lantern. 6, William Pye Snake Pyramid
fountain. 7, Sarah More stone inscription. 8,
Su Lupasco ceramic bird table. 9, Tania Mosse
stone seat. 10, Paul Amery flamingo sculpture.
11, Barry Mason Eclipse sculpture.
12, Tim Fortune mild-steel gate.
13, Clive Sanderson forged-iron rose arbour.
14, and 16, Nicholas Hodges garden seat.
15, Julian Dolphin Wilding found-wood
furniture. 17, Julian Shadbolt iron furniture

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