

GARDENING AT NIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHER **MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN** SHOOTS
NATURE IN A DARKER LIGHT

I spent the summer of 2002 on a residency in Monet's garden in Giverny, France. It was there that I began to think about the garden as a giant tableau. Monet designed his garden at Giverny to function this way—a virtual still life assembled in the outdoors. Nature was curated to excise decay, down to the soiled lily petals Monet had cleaned before he would paint them. I wanted to highlight this staging of the natural by focusing on the traces of labor that were not visible to the hundreds of tourists who cruised the grounds each day. This was coupled with a pictorial effect of flattened space, rendering an artificial and at times abstract quality to the image. Since that time, I have photographed the facsimile of Monet's garden in Japan and a European garden carved out in the middle of a rain forest in northern Thailand.

In this photograph, I am on the grounds of a garden I have been returning to since I was a teenager. My camera is turned away from the organized structure of the inner garden and focused on the coils of extension cords mingling in the frame with the wilting tiger lilies. It is a picture of my own staging—the production of a photograph in production. **Miranda Lichtenstein**

