

JARDIN THEMATIQUE

THEME GARDEN:

Contemporary expression made up of:

- Garden (from the Germanic fence) generally closed ground, where one cultivates useful or amenity plants.

- Theme (from the Greek the-ma: this one poses), topic.

The theme garden indicates, since about 20 years, a park reserved to walk and pleasure, whose organization evokes one or more phenomena, the nature of which is sensory, social, plastic, etc...

Each time and each civilization produced its own style of garden, with its own artistic rules. The hanging gardens of Babylon, most famous in Antiquity (approximately 600 BC), represent "the ideal paradisiacal garden, the supreme luxury, prerogative of power and fortune, just as the Alhambra gardens in Grenade in the 10th century".

During the early Middle Ages the abbeys preserve the art of the gardens through the medicinal herb garden, the kitchen garden and the cemetery plan-ted with fruit trees. The 18th century sees the birth of the French garden, with geometrical shapes, of which the most beautiful achievements are those by Le Nôtre, in Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles.

In the 18th century the romanticism inspired the gardeners the freer forms of the English garden.

In the 19th century, with the starting of the industrial town, the urban garden must answer new requirements. We attend a double current, on the one hand the allotment garden, of which the international promoter was Abbot Jules Lemire, on the other hand, the systems of parks and gardens in towns and cities, with G Haussmann and the landscape

"L'ère des jardins publics est dépassée. Il y aura des jardins de cités qui correspondront à des affinités électives... des jardins du silence, des jardins du bruit, des jardins de grand spectacle de sons et de lumière... des jardins pour les âges de la vie : la jeunesse, l'âge viril et la vieillesse".

Marguerite Charget

designers J C N Forestier and A. Alphand, who presided over the development of the public garden squares.

Modern town planning introduced a type of park, called "green space". The term made a fortune, but the garden is reduced to its hygienic and pageantry function. For want of finding an appropriate form for the democratization of this art and the requirements of a new society, it sank into banality.

The reintroduction of a topic in the design of the urban garden gives again to this space an artistic dimension. The garden renews the shapes and the types of parks by offering a larger variety and a multiplicity of possible appropriations. It evokes a topic by the choice of its composition, the plants, the decoration, as many elements which contribute to creating an environment. It attracts the visitor in different worlds where nature and artifice are combined to build a history each time different.

The gardens created by Albert Kahn in Boulogne-Billancourt are the precursors of the theme gardens. Since 1905 they offer to the walker the English garden and the blue cedar forest of the Atlas, along with the Japanese garden and the Vosges forest (1). It proposes a voyage through the world.

Others prefer to plunge us in the past, like the medieval gardens, characterized by closed spaces and the re-creation of "herb gardens".

The Garden Festival, installed

within the castle grounds of Chaumont on the Loire, also uses this organizing principle where each garden forms a bubble, each one of them being a variation on one theme (2).

In Paris, the Andre Citroen park, carried out in 1992 by the landscape designers Gilles Clement and Alain Provost, articulates itself partly around the topic of colors. In addition to the White garden and Black garden, there is a "serial garden" composed of six spaces laid out along a flower bed. They evoke various metals, associated with colours, which can be located by the choice of plants and the composition which emphasizes them (4).

In Lisbon, for the Tage park, finished in 2000, the Hargreaves agency worked the bank shape in relation to the flow of the tides and the direction of the wind (5).

It is by the establishment of stone works, like this gate (6), that Suzanne Wenger gives to its god garden a monumental treatment where the garden of Oshogbo (Nigeria) finds all the appropriate majesty. It thus projects in the forest, with the assistance of local artists, the faces of the gods, their residences and their spaces of rest.

Neck Chand, roadmender in Chandigarh (India), has arranged since 1965 the Rock Garden, a true kingdom populated by sculptures forming the Court of the King, his army, its ministers and its subjects, as well as a kingdom of the animals, both made of stone and recovered materials (7).

One can also use geometrical forms to support the symbolic system of the garden, as Gilles Clément does in the garden Live Earth (estate of Raud), made of theme closed fields, where the four elements take place. The circle symbolizes the hearth, whereas Earth is represented by a cross shaped terra cotta floor (8).

There is thus a multitude of topics put in scene by the art of the garden, be it in the serial Garden, as well as in the garden with a single topic. The Atlantic garden of François Brun and Michel Pena (9), open in 1994 in Paris, plays all along to evoke the ocean and the coast: a specific flora evokes the wind and the dunes (C), as well as an unloading dock with swaying paces (D), while the adventure playground resembles strangely to a beach (E) ...

Our large cities do not need symbolic parks systems but meaning gardens, able to guide the spirit through new experiments or more simply to tear it off from urban chaos. The theme garden makes new urban environments. The possibilities are infinite. The urban art 2000 competition on "the kitchen gardens of the 21st century cities" made it possible to imagine other suggestions.

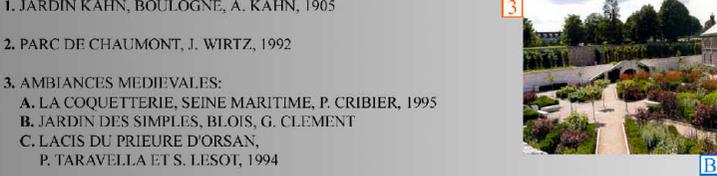
Cf. CEMETERY, FRENCH GARDEN, ENGLISH GARDEN, ALLOTMENT GARDEN, PUBLIC PARK, FLOWER PARK, GARDEN SQUARE, SYSTEM OF PARKS AND GARDENS.



1. JARDIN KAHN, BOULOGNE, A. KAHN, 1905



2. PARC DE CHAUMONT, J. WIRTZ, 1992



3. AMBIANCES MEDIEVALES:
A. LA COQUETTERIE, SEINE MARITIME, P. CRIBIER, 1995
B. JARDIN DES SIMPLES, BLOIS, G. CLEMENT
C. LACIS DU PRIEURE D'ORSAN, P. TARAVELLA ET S. LESOT, 1994

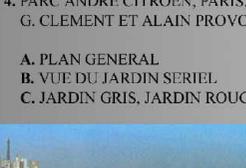


4. PARC ANDRE CITROEN, PARIS, G. CLEMENT ET ALAIN PROVOST, 1992

A. PLAN GENERAL
B. VUE DU JARDIN SERIEL
C. JARDIN GRIS, JARDIN ROUGE, JARDIN VERT



5. PARC DU TAGE, LISBONNE, HARGREAVES, 2000



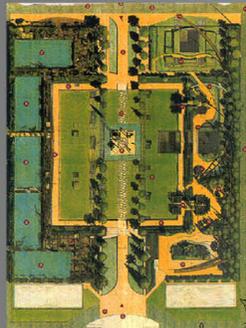
6. JARDIN D'OSHGOBO, NIGERIA, S. WENGER



7. ROCK GARDEN, CHANDIGARH, N. CHAND, 1965



8. JARDINS DE TERRE VIVANTE, RAUD, G. CLEMENT, 1994



9. JARDIN ATLANTIQUE, F. BRUN ET M. PENA, 1994

A. PLAN GENERAL
B. VUE DU JARDIN
C. PASSERELLE
D. DEBARCADERE
E. AIRE DE JEUX