

Zeitschrift: Anthos : Zeitschrift für Landschaftsarchitektur = Une revue pour le paysage

Herausgeber: Bund Schweizer Landschaftsarchitekten und Landschaftsarchitektinnen

Band: 50 (2011)

Heft: [1]: Scales of Nature : 48th IFLA World Congress

Artikel: Gardens

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-309252>

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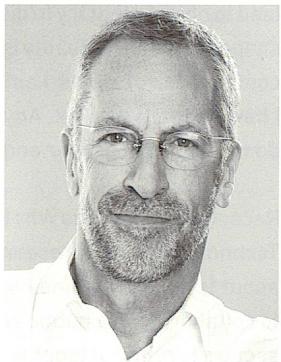
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GARDENS

Guido Hager



Garten H.-B. in Uznach, Schweiz, 2005

In the garden of the Hesperides, Hercules, as one of his twelve labours, uses cunning and guile to steal three of the golden apples that help the gods achieve immortality from under the guard of the dragon Ladon. As a reward for his courage Hercules is made a god, even though he indulged in all worldly appetites throughout his life.

Adam and Eve on the other hand, who lived quite without fear after their creation, forfeit immortality by taking a bite from the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Here, the snake did not have to be put to sleep. As the personification of evil, it forced the fruit on the biddable Eve. Expelled from paradise, Adam and Eve from then on had to live a life of care, and with the seven deadly sins. Not good prospects.

Priapus, the illegitimate son of the love-goddess Aphrodite and Dionysus, was punished for his mother's frivolity by being given a monstrous appearance by Hera, mother of the gods. Because of his well-developed phallic characteristics he was worshipped as a god of fertility and gardens. Priapus statues in orchards and vineyards were supposed to guarantee plentiful harvests, act as scarecrows, and frighten off thieves. There is no mention of dragons or snakes, and his death is not documented either. What is important is rather the legend that Priapus survived in the form of the garden gnome.

The gardens of the Hesperides and of Priapus as well as the Garden of Eden from Genesis were not described in any detail. Paradisiacal freedom or well-ordered calculation? If the notion of freedom is taken seriously, this OR is out of place. What could happen if an AND were put in its place? The issues of ecology, sustainability, and diversity of use are addressed in park designs. In their interplay with the location they produce a form. However, critics too rarely deal with the question of where the images that lead to the designs come from. Talking about designing today seems to be harder than ever.

The snake in the Old Testament seduces Eve to evil. The dragon of Greek mythology tries to prevent the theft. The gods seduce Hercules into becoming a thief. Another result of a seduction is Priapus, who, although disfigured, is worshipped as a god. They are themselves forms, Hercules tall, powerful and strong, Priapus small, crooked, yet just as strong. They live from deeds. And that is what marks us as designers. We have to take up the tradition of seduction, which also signifies fertility. Good design reflects nature, imitates it, idealizes and geometrifies it. Free from ideology, but with knowledge, openness and curiosity, the nature of nature constantly has to be explored anew. We need a discourse about what honest and sustainable design is. We, as designers, and no longer as gods or as Adam and Eve, have to pick the golden apples from the Tree of Knowledge, and in doing so feel the fertility of Priapus.