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Gustav Ammann and his Work

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by Hans Epprecht

Gustav Ammann became aware of his vocation at an early age and it was even against his parents' wishes that he served his apprenticeship as a gardener at the Zürich Botanical Gardens before joining the Froebel horticultural concern where he remained for many years as collaborator. At thirty he wrote: "The art of landscape architecture essentially resides in ... the will to bring order into nature's chaos." But this desire must be neither brutal nor a blind will to power; on the contrary there must be adaptation to the given facts of nature. While introducing order, G.A. shows respect for life – the life of plants and the needs of human beings. In this sense the garden becomes a symbol of profound and loving comprehension – and we are justified in thinking that this conception, no matter what its evolution, will remain eternally valid for the landscape gardener.

From 1910 to 1925 G.A.'s mastery became increasingly evident, both with regard to the combination of axes and the proportions of surfaces. Then came the great economic slump of the 30's, but this did anything but stifle the master's powers of expression. First the SWB initiated the construction of the Neubühl estate near Zurich, where new architecture enabled G.A. to create gardens equally new. Then, in 1933, it was he who designed the "Züga" (Zurich's garden exhibition) with its famous little railway. About the same time – something new in those days – he set up on his own as a landscape architect. The 1939 National Exhibition gave him a chance to show his mettle. Down to the last he continued his work (Allenmoos open-air bath, Interlaken Promenade) and shortly before his death he became the secretary general of the International Federation of Landscape Architects. His book "Landscape Gardens" is reviewed on p. 158* of WERK-Chronik.

Winterthur's "Town Garden"

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by Walter Leder

Winterthur's "Town Garden" could be called the Tour of the Town because it consists of a green belt arranged on the periphery of the old town. This improvement was effected in 1950 when the old Lyceum was promoted to the rank of a museum to house the Oskar Reinhart collection.

The Garden of To-day

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by Verena and Silvio Steiner

In the early phases of human history when mankind was still very near to its origins, the modifications we imposed on nature were dictated purely and simply by immediate needs: food and shelter. But when urban civilizations came on the scene, gardens came with them. Gardens then became essentially architectural and geometric, reflecting man's desire to dominate nature. Later, the opposite trend holds sway; the garden becomes romantic on the English model, a place where man – sentimentally – longs to fuse with "dear" nature, a desire which becomes all the more intense with the increasing artificiality of life and the mounting effects of the industrial revolution. Finally, in modern times, the human being, left to himself and faced with his own inner contradictions, tries to solve this double polarity, not by imposing his will on nature or by losing himself in her, but by establishing an intimate relation between the architectural and vegetable spheres. At the same time this vision of things on the "human scale" enables us to give due consideration to our vital needs and breeds respect for plant-life in itself, even if this respect is no more than feeling for a "material" substance. To achieve his aim, the landscape architect must nowadays possess the qualities of a gardener, botanist, technician, designer, and he must also be an artist who humbles himself before the facts as they are given.

Two Urgent Civic Duties

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by Wolf Hunziker

Two urgent civic duties involving two public tasks: planning on a national scale and the preservation of nature. Words will not suffice here, where modern conditions render practical steps essential. In the article under review, the author is mainly concerned with problems relating to preservation, even the creation of non-disfigured landscapes. In his opinion it is the function of specialists in landscape study (deciding on their nature, etc.), working in collaboration with architects, engineers, landscape architects, authorities, etc., to show us the direction we have to take in each case. Such a project on a grand scale would need

the sympathy of public opinion, especially of those citizens with the right to vote. Plans for the future should have their roots in school, while universities and other institutions should include the subject in their syllabuses.

Horticultural Establishment at Kempt Pool, near Winterthur

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Landscape Architect: F. Haggemacher, Winterthur. Construction: R. Spoerli, Architect SIA, Winterthur

Cubic structures intentionally in contrast with the garden and surrounding countryside. Excellent planting of the borders of the mere. In collaboration with the sculptor, A. d'Altri, Haggemacher has created a park which, with its exhibitions of sculpture, becomes an open-air museum.

Hermann Hubacher

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by Ulrich Christoffel

Born in Bienne, H.H. has been working in Zürich for 40 years, after travels which took him to Vienna, Munich, Paris, Geneva (friendship with Hodler) and Berne. In his case nature and spirit are in equilibrium, to the extent that we may speak (without becoming literary) of a classical art which always succeeds in harmonizing a piece of nature with the "eternal form". This offers some explanation for Wölflin's predilection for this artist whose eminently plastic sense can only be compared, in contemporary art, with that of Maillol. As a matter of fact it is to Wölflin's last will and testament that we owe the sculpture "Ganymede", now on exhibition at the Bürkli Terrace where Station Street meets the Lake of Zürich. There is nothing rhetorical about this sculpture; its monumentality stems from its proportion only. The works that followed (Woman Bathing, 1951, Girl Combing Herself, 1955) are in his true manner, i.e. he frees himself from merely objective reality in order to achieve plastic truth. Still his busts (Wölflin, Hermann Hesse, General Guisan, O. Schoeck, etc.) show he is sensitive to that which is human. This double sensitivity – human and cosmic – finds expression in his "Head of Pan", symbol of that symbiosis of the spirit and the senses which is the essence of all art.

Hermann Hubacher: From the Studio

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It is not possible to summarize the artist's views. We must be content with a few statements taken at random: "I am fully aware of the danger of losing oneself in classicism; the only things that can save me from it are the model, nature herself and, let us hope, my own sensuality." – "It is not only the statue that decorates the garden, but the garden the statue." – "A sculpture for a garden! I know of no more delightful task for a modern sculptor, no matter what his age ... And let him think of essentials only: to sculpture a work that will look good no matter from which side you regard it. That is by no means easy."