

## GARDEN

A place where plants (flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.) are grown primarily for decorative purposes, but also for use; as the term itself indicates, a garden is a fenced, i.e. separate (physically or conceptually) area in which humans tame and subordinate nature, making it perform various functions (aesthetic, recreational, economic) and carry various meanings (cultural, social, political).

A garden can also be understood more narrowly as a product of garden art (landscape architecture) opposed to a park. In this approach, a garden is identified with a geometric garden, while the park is identified with a garden in a landscape (sentimental) style.

The composition of a garden determines both the spatial relations between its elements, as well as the selection of these elements. The components of a garden are the topography, vegetation, small architecture, water. The composition of a garden depends on the function it is supposed to perform and the content it is supposed to convey; it is also influenced by general aesthetic tendencies characteristic for a given epoch and a given area (Ciołek, Majdecki).

In one form or another, gardens have appeared in most cultures. The first gardens were created already in the ancient East, as well as in Greece and Rome. We draw information about them exclusively from written sources. Descriptions of fictional ancient gardens are also known (e.g. description of the garden of Alkinoos in *Odyssey*). In the European tradition, the prototype of the garden was Eden, a biblical paradise. Many garden projects can be seen as an attempt to embody this ideal in accordance with the vision of nature and the relationship between nature and man (Grzelakowa). Gardens were also created in the Middle Ages, when they were mostly located near palaces and monasteries (cloister garths) – they are known not only from literary sources, but also from works of art. The intensive development of garden art occurred with the advent of the modern era. In the Renaissance, gardens complemented the palace architecture and were an inalienable element of villas. In the 17th century, garden art was most vividly present in France, where the type of Baroque (French) garden developed. In the eighteenth century, the most important contribution to this field was made by English designers, who developed the concept of a landscape garden (park), in many respects also dominant in the nineteenth-century eclecticism and numerous public gardens (parks) that have been built since then.

Gardens have also played an important role in the Arab culture (Arabian gardens) and China and Japan (Chinese and Japanese gardens). Arabic and Far-Eastern garden art – especially Chinese – has had an overwhelming influence on European artists (e.g. 18th century Chinese-English gardens).

Although garden typology can be created in a variety of ways, referring, for example, to their functions (botanical gardens, kitchen gardens, therapeutic gardens), users (gardens for the blind, children's gardens), senses affected (landscape gardens, fragrant gardens), stylistic and content typology is most commonly used for European gardens. A distinction is therefore made between geometric gardens, associated with French achievements in garden art

(gardens in Versailles), but with roots in the Renaissance, and landscape gardens (18th-century gardens in Great Britain, e.g. Stourhead), preferred by, among others, the Romantics. This division corresponds to some extent to the division into emblematic (representative) and sentimental gardens (Hunt, Lichaczow).

Geometric gardens are characterised by regular compositions, mainly using geometric shapes, which are also given to plants, selected in such a way as to emphasise the regularity of the project. The most frequently used elements are rows of evenly cut trees or shrubs, grassy and floral ground floors and garden cabinets (interiors). "Green Architecture" was supposed to be an extension of the palace architecture and be governed by similar rules. Landscape gardens, on the other hand, grew out of the fascination with the natural landscape. They were to offer picturesque views, creating the impression that the nature in them was not cultivated, but remained in a "wild" state. While geometric gardens grew out of a vision of nature governed by mathematical laws and harnessed by man, landscape gardens showed spontaneous and unpredictable nature, of which man is only a small element.

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most of the gardens were emblematic in nature, i.e. by means of the garden composition itself, as well as sculptures, inscriptions and buildings, they carried a symbolic message that should have been read. With the blossoming landscape gardens, the emphasis was placed not on intellectual content, but on emotions – the garden was supposed to affect feelings, spreading a certain atmosphere. This tendency was most strongly noticeable in sentimental and romantic gardens.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, public gardens (parks) and home gardens flourished. Both of them were supposed to be primarily for recreation, so the issues of their content remained a secondary matter. Although in the twentieth century there was no shortage (and there is still no shortage) of excellent garden projects created by renowned garden architects, the daily gardens, both in terms of quantity and social importance, have come to the foreground as a result of amateur activities (Gawryszewska). From this perspective, the 20th century can be called the age of gardens.

Regardless of its function, style or content, a garden is a close combination of culture (art) and nature. On the one hand, it is the creation of humans, on the other hand, its basic element is nature, which often resists humans. For this reason, gardens are sometimes called the "third nature", in opposition to both the "first nature", i.e. nature untouched by human hands, and the "second nature", i.e. town and village (Hunt). "Humans alone among the animals make gardens, and because humans are themselves an intricate mix of natural and cultural elements, the gardens they produce arguably come to represent that human condition more completely than other artifacts simply because of their involvement of cultural and natural materials (organic and inorganic)." (Hunt)

Despite their cultural and natural character, gardens are traditionally treated as cultural products. However, today they are increasingly often thought of in non-anthropocentric terms, being seen as places where a human-non-human community is formed, constantly bursting with various conflicts (Pollan). As Mara Miller notes: "Gardens are less product than processes, and less object than environments. As process, they thematise issues of

temporality, control and response, subjectivity and objectivity; they resist the power and authority of the viewing/making subject; perhaps most important, they mediate in a dynamic way the tensions within a given culture between the oppositions or dichotomies with which it is preoccupied: polarities between human and divine, living and dead, order and chaos, public and private, wild and domesticated, natural and artificial, internal and external, static and changing, animate and inanimate, subjective and objective, contingent and absolute, sacred and profane".

As spaces organised around these dichotomies, they are also interesting from an anthropological-philosophical point of view (Assunto, Gazda and Gołąb, Sosnowski, Salwa).

The ability to design, establish and cultivate gardens has become known as garden art (Miller, Ross, Turner). Although this expression is still in use, in the 19th century it was largely replaced by the term "garden architecture". Garden architecture is a field of landscape architecture (design), i.e. a discipline that emerged around the middle of the 19th century and has a much wider scope than the creation of gardens. The idea that the natural environment of humans can be composed with aesthetic and utilitarian considerations in mind was expressed in the art of creating gardens.

Research on gardens has a relatively long tradition, dating back to the second half of the 19th century and growing out of a very extensive body of literature devoted to the establishment of gardens, both theoretically and practically, created since the Renaissance. An increased interest in garden art was observed in the second half of the twentieth century and meant that gardens were no longer dealt with solely from the point of view of art history, developing an interdisciplinary approach characteristic of *garden studies* (Leslie and Hunt, Mosser).

The perception of the specificity of garden art and gardens compared to other arts and cultural goods has also contributed to the development of the theory and practice of their conservation. In 1981, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) adopted the Florence Charter, a document supplementing the provisions of the charters defining the rules of conservation of architectural works, which for the first time defined the concept of a historic garden and the rules of preservation of historic gardens. It is worth mentioning here the contribution of Polish scholars to research on gardens and their conservation (Bogdanowski, Ciołek, Majdecki, Szafrńska).

[M. S.]

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