



Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape

Peter Walker, Melanie Simo

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Invisible Gardens is a composite history of the individuals and firms that defined the field of landscape architecture in America from 1925 to 1975, a period that spawned a significant body of work combining social ideas of enduring value with landscapes and gardens that forged a modern aesthetic. The major protagonists include Thomas Church, Roberto Burle Marx, Isamu Noguchi, Luis Barragan, Daniel Urban Kiley, Stanley White, Hideo Sasaki, Ian McHarg, Lawrence Halprin, and Garrett Eckbo. They were the pioneers of a new profession in America, the first to offer alternatives to the historic landscape and the park tradition, as well as to the suburban sprawl and other unplanned developments of twentieth-century cities and institutions. The work is described against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the Second World War, the postwar recovery, American corporate expansion, and the environmental revolution. The authors look at unbuilt schemes as well as actual gardens, ranging from tiny backyards and play spaces to urban plazas and corporate villas. Some of the projects discussed already occupy a canonical position in modern landscape architecture; others deserve a similar place but are less well known. The result is a record of landscape architecture's cultural contribution - as distinctly different in history, intent, and procedure from its sister fields of architecture and planning - during the years when it was acquiring professional status and struggling to define a modernist aesthetic out of the startling changes in postwar America.

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