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KYOTO LECTURES

Tuesday, June 30th, 18:00h

Catherine Szántó

Walking in the Garden

Aesthetics
of Spatiality
in Versailles
and Murin-an

SPEAKER

Gardens are an invitation to aesthetic exploration through motion and contemplation. A wide range of spatial devices, defined by the formal vocabulary of each garden's style, is at work for this, and spatiality is structured by the morphological characteristics of the spaces as well as the visitor's culturally shaped spatial competency.

For Western visitors, Japanese gardens seem to address synesthesia more densely than the European ones. Yet French baroque gardens, and Versailles in particular, offer a variety of spatial experiences based on synesthetic perception at several temporal and spatial scales. These unfold through time into distinctive spatial narratives built upon perceptual discontinuities, bodily memory of movement and orientation, and culturally construed expectations and surprises. They gain meaning through the perceptual and directional choices made by the visitors during their strolls.

This talk will analyze some of the "devices of spatiality" proposed by two equally important but very different gardens: those of Versailles and Murin-an in Kyoto. Through such intertwined analysis, the aim is to explore how a reciprocal understanding of garden space may help delineate an aesthetics of spatiality.

Catherine Szántó is a landscape architect educated in the United States and France, and practicing in France and Hungary. As a researcher associated with the laboratory Architecture-Milieu-Paysage at the School of Architecture of Paris-La Villette, she is pursuing research on the experience of space through movement in gardens and landscapes. Recent publications include an introduction to Louis XIV's *Manière de montrer les Jardins de Versailles* (2013) and « La promenade comme quête esthétique d'intelligibilité morphologique. Regard sur les jardins de Versailles », in Kapoula and Lestocart eds., *Esthétique et complexité II* (2014). She is currently doing research on the spatiality of Japanese gardens at Chiba University with an AUSMIP (Europa-Mundus) research grant.

This lecture will be held at the Institute for Research in Humanities (IRH), Kyoto University (seminar room 1, 1st floor).

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