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The Swiss Horticultural Exhibition 1959 in Zurich

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Architectural Direction: W. Stücheli FAS/SIA and P. R. Kollbrunner, Zurich. Landscaping right bank: E. Baumann, Thalwil, and W. Neukomm, Zurich; landscaping left bank: W. and K. Leder, Zurich, and J. Schweizer, Basle

In his article on the Exhibition, Roland Gross states at the outset that, unlike similar exhibitions organized in Germany over the last few years, this show existed in and for itself and was less bound up with considerations of the future and of town-planning. It was laid out on the shores of the Lake of Zurich near the city and was divided into two areas: right (east) and left bank (west). The former, coinciding with a permanent renovation of the lake shore, was primarily experimental: "Poet's Garden", "Garden of Love", "Sand Garden", etc., and, among other things, displayed, in certain plots where the flowers were intended to serve a purely chromatic function, a kind of modern version of the old French formal garden. The latter, with less apparent formal unity, in addition to its purely aesthetic purpose, was intended to illustrate certain themes: the privately owned flat and the possibilities of providing it with gardens—garden and block of flats—week-end house—the cemetery, etc.—As for the buildings erected within the exhibition, they were carefully planned in such a way as to be subordinated to that other dimension of architecture which a garden ought to be (contrary to the usual practice). From the town-planning point of view, the "piazza", forming a raised platform above the two traffic arteries, realized to some extent Le Corbusier's idea of the "pedestrian level" and, moreover, it presented the Zurich Town-Plan Working Group with the opportunity of organizing partial exhibitions devoted to problems pertaining to their work, some of them already referred to above.

Remarks by the Landscape Designer of the Right Bank

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by Ernst Baumann

Entrusted with the assignment of the permanent renovation of the lake shore of the Exhibition grounds, we became inspired by the idea not so much of producing a series of exhibition objects as of creating a lay-out forming a unified whole. As for the large trees, they will from now on be more accentuated owing to the elimination of many bushes and allogamous plants.

Art in a Green Setting.—Remarks on the Sculptures in the Horticultural Exhibition in Zurich

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by Willy Rotzler

Like sculpture in general, sculpture envisaged for gardens originally had a religious function, and it was only gradually that it was degraded to the function of mere ornamentation. Its intelligent use ought in modern times to be in keeping with the spirit of our age. Now, our relationship with nature, in particular with the plant world, has become direct, immediate, and so we no longer need works of art that "beautify", anthropomorphize natural reality. On the other hand, we like natural shapes and created forms to be engaged, as it were, in "discourse" with each other. There are many possibilities open to us for doing just this: contrast or (with works which are, so to speak, vegetative) alliance and agreement. Even more perhaps than the sculptures themselves, it is their siting that plays an essential role here (among others, close inter-relationship of reflecting pools and fountains, and also the possibility of utilizing "mobiles" in the form of a modern kind of Aeolian harp to serve an acoustic function). Owing to the discretion observed in the use of sculpture, the Zurich Exhibition has succeeded in contributing to a solution of the above problem, which in our cities not only has an aesthetic import but also a civic and even moral aspect.

Block of Flats and Garden

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by Richard Arioli

A direct relationship between garden and dwelling is only rarely established in the block of flats, and as a general rule green zones between large buildings are too cramped to be considered as real gardens. It can only be hoped that the planning of new districts incorporate a solution to this problem and that, moreover, residents will have at their disposal a section of the gardens which thus could be created. This is one of the essential conditions called for by those most deeply concerned with this problem for making the residential district in the modern city a place where people can feel truly at home.

The Modern Cemetery

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by Wolf Hunziker

From the very beginnings down to the 16th century the conception of the cemetery has always reflected the religious beliefs of each successive period, and even nowadays, in rural districts, graveyards, which are generally found next to the church, preserve a due solemnity. However, the growth of great metropolitan areas has made the city cemetery in particular a mass problem, the 19th century having been only too addicted to monumental mortuary constructions, while the appointment of private tombs increasingly became a mere industry displaying the most execrable taste. Besides the happy counter-trend represented, e.g., by the cemeteries of the Bois de Vaux (Lausanne) and "Am Hörnli" (Basle), the general remedy ought to be sought for less in legal regulations than in an endeavour to confer a more apparent unity on the whole complex and also to advise families on the errors to be avoided; the tasteful sobriety of certain Scandinavian and Jewish cemeteries can serve as guiding examples in this matter.

Cemeteries and Town-Planning

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by Edi Lanners

The unceasing growth of cities has robbed our cemeteries of practically all their original meaning. The modern city-dweller, a passive creature if there ever was one who can with difficulty only be "activated" by mechanical and technical means, in all matters—like the burial of his loved ones, for instance—which should involve him on the deeper levels of his existence, relies on the administrative decisions of the public instances, the latter in most cases treating the cemetery rather as a park than in a properly reverential spirit. One way out of this distressing situation would be to create neighbourhood cemeteries while at the same time abandoning certain traditional notions of what a cemetery ought to be; in this way architects, sculptors and landscape gardeners could rediscover a means of restoring to the cemetery its proper affective value while integrating it aesthetically within the urban landscape.

Cemetery and Funeral Chapel at Järvenpää, Finland

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Architects: for the chapel, T. and E. Toivainen; for the cemetery, E. Sammalkorpi; landscape architect: E. Melaja

Most of the tombs are arranged in a circle around a rise. The chapel, on a wooded hill, is of a rational, airy design, its general lightness being said to prevent too heavily funereal an atmosphere; it is also used as a parish hall.

Chapel and Crematorium of the Liebenfels Cemetery, in Baden (Aargau)

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1957, arch.: E. and R. Lanners SIA and R. Wahlen SIA, Zurich

The architectural intention here was to unify in one whole the two elements while at the same time preserving as much contact as possible with the natural environs.

Chapel of the Weinfeld Cemetery

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1958, arch.: J. Hunziker, Zurich

The problem here was to arrange a new part of the cemetery and to construct a chapel and annexes so that the whole complex would constitute as organic a unity as possible. The chapel is planned so as to furnish optimum separation between the burial ground and the highway and the railway.