

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 2
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

Maintenance of a contemporary garden in Piedmont in the works by Pietro Porcinai

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In our research we had great difficulties due to the high quantity of material connected to the work by Pietro Porcinai since Porcinai's archives is still under restoration! Many thanks are due to the kindness of the owners of the villas who have agreed to give us drafts and original rough copies to study the evolution of his art.

In his really wide production, (it numbers more than 1,300 drawings counting both drafts and definitive projects), we decided to consider the conditions of the gardens only referring to Piedmont, where the landscape-gardener had been engaged for more than 118 projects (either carried out or not).

In the Sixties, he was called by an important industrial family from Biella, the Zegnas, to plan the garden of two villas belonging to them. They were: Villa "Al Roc", where we find typical elements of his way of working, that is respect for nature and for the surrounding landscape and, at the same time, the use of modern displays such as the winter garden; and Villa "Ca' Gianin", where he enters unusual elements coming from the Japanese culture.

In the Fifties, he was still in Biella, to adjust the entrance of Parco della Burcina, established by the Piacenza family and where he moreover studied different solutions for a picnic area, that would not be carried out.

In the area of Monterosso - in Acquiterme - Porcinai succeeded in mingling different characteristics in one single work, so to create an extremely original garden such as with the use of the "rocky" garden, for example. Important executions are to be also found at Lago d'Orta and Lago Maggiore, such as the garden for the Alessi family and the one for the Yucker family. In both gardens there is the wish to integrate the garden into the surrounding landscape, so to create a continuum with the lake and the house.

It has moreover been deeply analyzed the case study: "Villa Maggia", in Turin.

Through the direct knowledge of the project, we suggested an intervention for the preservation and maintenance both of the garden and of the architectonic complex.

At that time, Porcinai was working in a consolidated context, since the old house and the arboreal plant had been previously arranged taking into account their position in relation to the ground, to the features of the varying landscape in which they fitted and to the climate of the area.

The garden is formed by three distinct nucleuses, that build up the backbone of the building structure: in the area facing the house, he placed lime-trees, as a frame to the façade, while stone paths connect this part of the garden to the others. The rectangular swimming-pool, built on the other side, is the starting point of any view and it is inserted between the pergola of stone and the tennis courts, lined by a walk with birches along the side of the hill.

To solve the question of the arrangement of the hill north of the house, Porcinai planned a terracing on various levels, connected by sinuous, stone stairs.

The complete project aimed to see the house and the landscape as a whole, creating a close relation between architecture and nature.

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