Zen Landscapes: Perspectives On Japanese Gardens And Ceramics

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The essential elements of a dry Japanese garden are few: rocks, gravel, moss. Simultaneously a sensual matrix, a symbolic form, and a memory theater, these gardens exhibit beautiful miniaturization and precise craftsmanship. But their apparent minimalism belies a true complexity. In Zen Landscapes, Allen S. Weiss takes readers on an exciting journey through these exquisite sites, explaining how Japanese gardens must be approached according to the play of scale, surroundings, and seasons, as well as in relation to other arts—revealing them as living landscapes rather than abstract designs. Weiss shows that these gardens are inspired by the Zen aesthetics of the tea ceremony, manifested in poetry, painting, calligraphy, architecture, cuisine, and ceramics. Japanese art favors suggestion and allusion, valuing the threshold between the distinct and the inchoate, between figuration and abstraction, and he argues that ceramics play a crucial role here, relating as much to the site-specificity of landscape as to the ritualized codes of the tea ceremony and the everyday gestures of the culinary table. With more than one hundred stunning color photographs, Zen Landscapes is the first in-depth study in the West to examine the correspondences between gardens and ceramics. A fascinating look at landscape art and its relation to the customs and craftsmanship of the Japanese arts, it will appeal to readers interested in landscape design and Japan’s art and culture.

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages
Publisher: Reaktion Books; 1st Ed. edition (October 15, 2013)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 1780231903
Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1.1 x 10 inches
Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (2 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #972,874 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #137 in Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Japanese Gardens #302 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Ceramics #940 in Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Garden Design

Customer Reviews

This is a great book that covers Zen garden and ceramics in an interesting way...well written, but
have your dictionary handy as the author uses words seldom heard.

.....written with extraordinary insight. Allen Weiss makes brilliant associations between the ceramics and the gardens of Japan. He gives a fresh approach that helped me understand how Zen plays a major role in these creations with clay and earth.

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