



Zen Landscapes: Perspectives on Japanese Gardens and Ceramics

Allen S. Weiss

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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 theatre, these gardens exhibit beautiful miniaturization and precise craftsmanship. However, their apparent minimalism belies a deeper complexity. In *Zen Landscapes*, Allen S. Weiss takes readers on a 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, thus revealing them as living landscapes rather than abstract designs.

These gardens are inspired by the Zen aesthetics of the tea ceremony, manifested in poetry, painting, calligraphy, architecture, cuisine and ceramics. Japanese art favours suggestion and allusion, valuing the threshold between the distinct and the inchoate, between ?guration and abstraction, and Weiss argues that ceramics play a crucial role here, relating as much to the site-speci?city of landscape as to the ritualized codes of the tea ceremony and the everyday gestures of the culinary table.

With more than 100 stunning colour photographs, *Zen Landscapes* is the ?rst 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.

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