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**FROM INDUSTRIAL WASTELAND TO ITALIAN GARDEN:  
PETER AND ANNELIESE LATZES' APPROACH TO POSTINDUSTRIAL  
LANDSCAPES AND THE GROTESQUE LANGUAGE OF BOMARZO**

A Thesis in

Landscape Architecture

by

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## ABSTRACT

Peter Latz (b. 1939) repeatedly cites the Italian mannerist garden, the Sacro Bosco (Sacred Wood) in Bomarzo, Italy (c. 1560-1584) in connection with his masterwork, Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, (Duisburg North Landscape Park) in Duisburg-Meiderich, Germany (1990-2002). While there are immediate formal similarities between the daunting figures of mythical giants and beasts at the Sacro Bosco to the looming gas towers and rusted blast furnaces at Duisburg, the importance of the Sacro Bosco for Peter Latz goes beyond mere monstrous iconography. For Latz, the Sacro Bosco offered a conceptual language, a way to engage with the misunderstood monsters dwelling in twentieth-century postindustrial landscape. In order to understand the conceptual significance of mannerist Italian gardens for Latz, I argue we need to return to Peter and Anneliese Latz's (from 1990' Latz + Partner) earlier project the Hafeninsel (River Port Island) in Saarbrücken, Germany (1985-1989).

This thesis looks back into deep landscape history to argue that there is a conceptual parallel between the Latzes' "Syntactic" Concept for the River Port Island and the use of the mannerist grotesque at Bomarzo. The Renaissance discourse of the grotesque identifies designs that fantastically invent unexpected adjacencies, breaking down the hierarchical dualistic paradigms between the classically beautiful and their mundane other, challenging contemporary canonical paradigms of the beautiful. At the Sacro Bosco, this is manifested in the ways in which its design challenges sixteenth-century paradigms of the *giardino all'Italiana* found at Villa Lante and Villa Farnese. The Sacro Bosco creates a nexus between garden and *bosco*, blending designed and vernacular landscape types that break down the hierarchy between the formal orderly garden and the marginal disorderly *bosco*. Four hundred years later, the Latzes' design for the River Port Island explores a design syntax that challenges the 'natural' picturesque aesthetic of sylvan groves, pastoral open meadows, and meandering paths to transform postindustrial wastelands. The syntactic mingles *another* disturbing form of nature — found in the vernacular industrial wasteland — with *classical* geometric languages used throughout historic western garden design. Through the creative transformation of Renaissance landscape design, the Latzes produce a new postindustrial landscape that breaks down the hierarchy between classical geometric garden design and its marginal other found in the postindustrial wastelands of their native West Germany.

Ultimately, this thesis asserts the continuing relevance of historical landscapes to contemporary postindustrial landscapes and the grotesque as a way for landscape architects to imaginatively explore and represent marginalized postindustrial wastelands in new unfamiliar ways.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*“In the Sacred Wood at Bomarzo, I learned that the beauty of a garden — or landscape — develops from use and fables, which are in ones head, or can be found when we study a place.”<sup>1</sup>*

*-Peter Latz*

Peter Latz (b. 1939) repeatedly cites the Italian mannerist garden, the Sacro Bosco (Sacred Wood) in Bomarzo, Italy (c. 1560-1584) in connection with his masterwork, Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, (Duisburg North Landscape Park) in Duisburg-Meiderich, Germany (1990-2002).<sup>2</sup> In a 1996 interview with Udo Weilacher, Latz responds to a question about his relationship to traditional garden art:

I neither believe that we can copy the Villa Lante nor that we should attempt to do so. But it is possible to learn a great deal from the Villa gardens of the Renaissance. For me Duisburg North landscape Park has a lot to do with Bomarzo. This is not related to a particular object; anyway, I very quickly saw Bomarzo in Duisburg. Other projects have more in common with the serene seclusion of the Villa Lante or reflect the aloofness and anti-geometry of the palace gardens of Caprarola.<sup>3</sup>

In this quote, Latz does not just cite Renaissance gardens in general, he suggests that there is something specific about Bomarzo — as opposed to the Villa Lante and Villa

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Latz, “Pioneering New Territory,” (Frederick Law Olmsted Lecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, October 6, 2016) min. 0:11. Accessed at the Loeb Design Library at Harvard University on July 13, 2022. (GSDvr\_1729).

<sup>2</sup> In interviews and lectures Peter Latz has made reference to the Sacro Bosco in relation to his understanding and engagement with postindustrial landscapes. See notes 1 & 3.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Latz quoted from: Udo Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art* (Basel, Boston: Birkhäuser, 1996), p. 128.

Farnese at Caprarola — that he drew on in the design of Duisburg North. The New York Times journalist Arthur Lubow has pointed to the obvious formal similarities between the mythical giants and monsters at the Sacro Bosco to the looming gas towers and rusted blast furnaces at Duisburg.<sup>4</sup> [Fig. 1,2] But the importance of the Sacro Bosco for Peter Latz goes beyond mere monstrous iconography. For Latz, the Sacro Bosco offered a conceptual system, a way to engage with the misunderstood “fantastic landscapes” of industry that looked beyond ideal images of untouched nature found in the nineteenth-century picturesque.<sup>5</sup> In order to understand the conceptual significance of mannerist Italian gardens for Peter Latz, I argue we need to return to his earlier project at the Hafeninsel (River Port Island, 1985-1989) in Saarbrücken, Germany.<sup>6</sup> It is in Saarbrücken where the Latzes (Peter and Anneliese (b. 1940) Latz, from 1990 Latz + Partner) first develop what they refer to as their “Syntaktisches” Konzept (“Syntactic” Concept) a conceptual plan that melds marginalized postindustrial wastelands with classical Renaissance landscape elements.<sup>7</sup> [Fig. 3]

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur Lubow, “The Anti-Olmsted,” *New York Times* (online), May 16, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Udo Weilacher, *The Syntax of Landscape: The Landscape Architecture of Peter Latz and Partners* (Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2008), pp.112-114; Anatole Tchikine, “(Mis)understanding Bomarzo: The Sacro Bosco Between History and Myth,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed landscapes*, Vol. 41, no. 2 (2021): p. 79.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Latz and Udo Weilacher both state that the River Port Island served as the genesis for his conceptual approach to Duisburg. See, Peter Latz quoted in Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, “Adaptive Re-use, Layering of Meaning on Sites of Industrial Ruin [Interview with Latz],” *Arcade*, Vol. 23, no. 2 (2004): p. 30.; Weilacher, *Between Landscape*, p. 122. Additionally, although the River Port Island’s physical transformation into a public park starts in 1985, the Latzes started conceptual planning of the park in 1979.; Although the Hafeninsel directly translates to Harbor Island, Latz + Partner refer to the project as the River Port Island. The park also goes by the name Bürger Park in Saarbrücken.

<sup>7</sup> The name “Syntaktisches” Konzept (“Syntactic” Concept) comes from the Latzes’ 1981 planning document for the River Port Island, Peter Latz; Bartholmai, Gunter; Biegler, Nicki, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zur gestaltung eines citynahen parkes* (Saarbrücken: Druck und Satz Karl Stube, 1981)

The conceptual systems and layers of meaning found at the enigmatic Sacro Bosco have been widely debated by scholars, but all agree that its overall layout challenges contemporary paradigms of the *giardino all'italiana* format found at Villa Lante and Villa Farnese. Instead of creating a central formal garden of geometric terraces connected by a linear axis that gives way to a *bosco* (wood) that evoked vernacular landscapes of planted woodlands, the Sacro Bosco creates a nexus between garden and *bosco*.<sup>8</sup> This blending of designed and vernacular landscape types breaks down the hierarchy between the formal orderly garden and the marginal disorderly *bosco*. In so doing, the design of the Sacro Bosco was able to preserve the vernacular ‘wildness’ of its surrounding woodlands, steeped in Etruscan history and ruins. [Fig. 4] Four hundred years later, the River Port Island explores a design syntax which challenges the ‘natural’ nineteenth-century picturesque aesthetic of sylvan groves, pastoral open meadows, and meandering paths to transform postindustrial wastelands. Instead, the Latzes’ design syntax for the River Port Island mingles *another* disturbing form of ‘nature’ – the antithesis to the nineteenth-century picturesque found in the vernacular industrial wasteland — with *classical* geometric languages used throughout historic western garden design. [Fig. 5,6] The result is an incongruous assemblage of geometric gardens, clipped hedges, formal plazas shaded by gridded groves, and long axial promenades and allées sharply juxtaposed with raw piles of industrial detritus and degraded coal storage pavements overgrown with ruderal trees and weeds. [Fig. 7] In this thesis, I intellectually

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<sup>8</sup> Anatole Tchikine, “Among the wonders of Bomarzo: the sylvan landscape, the *paragone*, and memory games in the Orsini Sacro Bosco,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 41, no. 2 (2021): pp. 97-123.



draw parallels between interventions at the Sacro Bosco to actions made by the Latzes at the River Port Island.

### **Peter Latz and Bomarzo**

Peter Latz has referenced Italian Mannerist and Baroque gardens throughout his career, in both personal and professional projects. His own boxwood garden created in the early 1990's at his private home *Ampertshausen*, is a "tribute" to Villa Ruspoli in Viganello, the property of the daughter of Pierfrancesco "Vicino" Orsini, the duke of Bomarzo and the patron of the Sacro Bosco.<sup>9</sup> More pertinent, however, is the impact of Italian Mannerist Gardens on his public projects transforming postindustrial landscapes.

The Latzes vacationed in Italy in 1985 when they received a call from the city of Saarbrücken to realize their "Syntactic" Concept at the River Port Island.<sup>10</sup> Although it is not clear what they saw in Italy at this time, it is known that the Latzes' refer to images of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, the Boboli gardens in Florence, the Orto Botanico in Padua, Villa Ruspoli in Viganello, and the Sacro Bosco in Bomarzo within the 1981 conceptual planning document for the River Port Island. In a section outlining their "Syntactic" Concept, the Latzes refer to images of the *teatro* (theater) at Bomarzo.<sup>11</sup> They use an image of its overgrown *tuffo* stone walls as a model for a series of rubble walls and a cylindrical "barrel" for the Ruhegarten (Garden of Rest). Within the syntactic design

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<sup>9</sup> Weilacher, *The Syntax of Landscape*, p 20.

<sup>10</sup> Ilka Desgranges, "Der Park ist heute genutzt und akzeptiert." Saarbrucker Zeitung. April 23, 2019. p. 5. [Gespräch mit dem Architekten, der vor 30 Jahren den Bürgerpark entwarf \(saarbruecker-zeitung.de\)](https://www.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/lokal/2019/04/23/der-park-ist-heute-genutzt-und-akzeptiert/)

<sup>11</sup> Latz; Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, p. 27.

these walls give shape to a series of geometric public gardens inserted directly into mounds of found rubble and debris on the western half of the site. Although there is no other mention of the Sacro Bosco beyond this image and its caption in the planning document, it is clear that the Latzes were aware of the Sacro Bosco while developing their "Syntactic" Concept for the River Port Island.

The Sacro Bosco reemerges for Peter Latz when referring to his approach to the Duisburg North Landscape Park, quoted at the opening of this thesis. In this 1996 interview with Udo Weilacher, Latz makes it clear that he is not interested in the "impression of the objects".<sup>12</sup> What Latz finds interesting is a "syntax" that creates multiple "layers of information" and therefore a multiplicity of meanings depending on the viewer.<sup>13</sup> Latz in his book *Rust Red*, makes it clear in a caption for the River Port Island that the project "taught us (Latz + Partner) how to handle information layers, materials and vegetation on industrial wasteland."<sup>14</sup> This enigmatic layering of information, fantastically contrasting "alien elements" as "symbols and structures" are exactly the types of "aesthetic experiments" that Latz admires in Italian Mannerist gardens and would like to conduct in his own work.<sup>15</sup> It is important to underline that Bomarzo remains a point of reference throughout Peter Latz's career. Most recently during Latz's 2016 Frederick law Olmsted Lecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where Latz shared an image of the Dragon at the Sacro Bosco in between a slide

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<sup>12</sup> Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art*, p. 126.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Latz, *Rust Red: landscape park Duisburg-Nord*. (Munich: Hirmer, 2016). p. 157.

<sup>15</sup> Weilacher, *Syntax of Landscape*, p. 20.

of the River Port Island and Duisburg North landscape Park.<sup>16</sup> With this in mind, Italian Mannerist and Baroque gardens remain a consistent part of the Latzes' design language for postindustrial landscapes and their syntax first developed at the River Port Island. Through the creative transformation of Italian Renaissance landscape design, the syntactic produces a new postindustrial landscape that breaks down the hierarchy between the vernacular landscapes of industry and the idealized beauty of classical geometric garden design.

This dismantling of hierarchy between the classical and its other in western aesthetics, the natural and the unnatural, originates in theoretical discussions of the grotesque. Used widely in art, architecture, and gardens throughout sixteenth-century Italy, the grotesque at the Sacro Bosco functions beyond mere iconographic ornament. As argued by the landscape historian Luke Morgan, the incongruous and paradoxical design language found at the Sacro Bosco shares its “vocabulary, or syntax” with the widely used representational language of the grotesque.<sup>17</sup> It is this nexus between classical garden spaces and marginal disorderly vernacular landscapes at the Sacro Bosco and at the River Port Island that creates grotesque landscapes. They are not grotesque in a modern-day understanding as excessively ugly, but for how they fantastically invent unexpected adjacencies which break down the hierarchal dualistic paradigms between classically beautiful designed landscapes and their mundane other, challenging

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<sup>16</sup> Latz, “Pioneering New Territory,” min. 0:11. States, “In the Sacred Wood at Bomarzo, I learned that the beauty of a garden — or landscape — develops from use and fables, which are in ones head, or can be found when we study a place.”

<sup>17</sup> Luke Morgan, “‘Bizzarrie del boschetto del Signor Vicino’: the figurative language of the Sacro Bosco,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed landscapes*, Vol. 41, no. 2 (2021): pp. 80-96.AllText

contemporary canonical paradigms of idealized landscape. Understanding the Renaissance grotesque provides new ways of interpreting approaches to incorporate the disturbing and chaotic remnants of raw postindustrial landscape into a designed urban park.

## Literature Review

The literature on the Latzes' theoretical approach to the River Port Island starts with the Latzes' 1981 planning document for the project titled, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zur gestaltung eines citynahen parkes*.<sup>18</sup> This document outlines the genesis of the "Syntactic" Concept and is the basis for a series of journal articles published by Peter Latz throughout the 1980's during the River Port Island's construction. Udo Weilacher expands on the Latzes' approach to the River Port Island in his book, *Syntax of Landscape: The Landscape Architecture of Peter Latz and Partners*, situating the design of the park as the conceptual precursor to Duisburg, and as the place where the Latzes actively start to experiment with 'new expressive forms of landscape architecture' emerging out of twentieth-century theories of Structuralism in architecture.<sup>19</sup>

Through interviews with Peter Latz, Weilacher explores the Latzes' "structuralist approach" that transforms the industrial wasteland into a public park through an overlay of invented and existing "layers of information", as opposed to entirely realized representations of designed landscape. As a result, Weilacher sees the River Port Island

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<sup>18</sup> Latz; Bartholmai; Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*

<sup>19</sup> Weilacher, *The Syntax of Landscape*, pp. 82-101.

as an ‘open-work’ of landscape architecture, where the site is not authored or transformed through representations of static scenes but leaves certain elements of the industrial wasteland open to individual experiences and interpretation. Although Weilacher notes the design of the River Port Island as “evidence of the delight in technical and aesthetic experiment that particularly fascinates Peter Latz in Renaissance garden creations”, he does not expand beyond formal similarities to conceptual ones.<sup>20</sup>

Sanda Iliescu aligns the syntactic networks of the River Port Island with twentieth-century collage. In her article “The Garden as Collage: rupture and continuity in the landscape projects of Peter and Anneliese Latz,” she argues the seemingly unrelated anachronistic and material juxtapositions found at the River Port Island can be understood as a form of collage, relating to the artwork of Robert Rauschenberg and Georges Braque.<sup>21</sup> For example, the Latzes’ integration of found everyday objects such as old car tires and motorcycle helmets into park walls and pavements aligns with Rauschenberg’s combines, integrating found mundane objects such as umbrellas and pillows into his art to challenge existing aesthetic conventions. In so doing, the Latzes’ landscapes, like the examples Iliescu explores in twentieth-century abstract expressionism, challenge culturally defined binaries of the “natural and the constructed,” as well as the formal and the mundane, creating a multiplicity of meanings.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 94.

<sup>21</sup> Sanda Iliescu, “The Garden as Collage: Rupture and Continuity in the Landscape Projects of Peter and Anneliese Latz,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 27, no. 2 (2007): pp. 149-182.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 150.

The landscape architect James Corner has a similar understanding of the Latzes' syntactic networks, observing Peter Latz's approach to transforming postindustrial sites as a 'hybrid' landscape, again a type of collage where something that has little to do with the existing landscape is superimposed to create something novel and unfamiliar.<sup>23</sup> Corner has used the preserved industrial structures at Duisburg as an example, where the mundane infrastructure of industry is superimposed with the Latzes' formal garden overlays to create something new, blending the high-brow art of classically designed gardens with the everyday found objects of industrial waste.<sup>24</sup>

In sum, Iliescu, Weilacher, and Corner all underline the hybrid nature of the Latzes' landscapes, as well as its openness to projected meaning. Iliescu and Weilacher look to the open-endedness of twentieth-century collage and Structuralism as the primary sources for Latz's integration of the mundane and disturbing elements of vernacular postindustrial wastelands into a public park. Instead, this thesis will look to the historical Renaissance gardens that Peter Latz admires, and the grotesque languages used throughout them.

The grotesque allows landscape architects to imaginatively explore and represent marginalized postindustrial wastelands in new unfamiliar ways. The Latzes' use of the grotesque in postindustrial landscape looks beyond an idealized pastoral image found in nineteenth-century notions of the picturesque, and beyond the contemporary notion of

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<sup>23</sup> James Corner, "The Thick and Thin of It," in *Thinking the Contemporary Landscape*, edited by Christophe Girot and Dora Imhof (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2016), pp. 125-127.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 127

*Ruinenlust* that memorializes the industrial ruins as emblems to the ravages of modernity.<sup>25</sup>

The Latzes do not simply leave the raw gashes and scars of industry to be healed over by time to take on a picturesque ‘natural’ character.<sup>26</sup> Nor do their hybrid landscapes merely memorialize ruination and decay, preserving static outmoded industrial architecture juxtaposed to some pastoral ideal that erases the ‘naturally’ occurring landscapes in which they sit. On the contrary, the Latzes’ view postindustrial landscapes as places for invention and discovery to deal with certain immediate realities. As a result, their syntactic design of the River Port Island – like the Sacro Bosco in Bomarzo – challenges prevailing dualistic paradigms, playfully inventing layers that create a nexus between the logical classical geometric gardens and their anthesis found in the chaotic raw conditions of postindustrial wastelands. Ultimately, the Latzes’ syntactic designs (like the grotesque in the sixteenth century) develops a new perspective on the marginal and on the order of ‘nature’. To be clear, this thesis does not set out to prove the Latzes were directly influenced or informed by the use of the grotesque at Bomarzo. Rather, the comparisons made are used to bring to bear new interpretations of the Latzes syntactic

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<sup>25</sup> For an overview on the notion of *Ruinenlust* see, Caitlin Desilvey, & Tim Edensor, “Reckoning with ruins,” *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 37, no. 4 (2012): pp. 465-485.; Carlos Lopez Galviz, Nadia Bartolini, Mark Pendleton, Adam Stock, “Reconfiguring Ruins: Beyond *Ruinenlust*”, *GeoHumanities*, Vol. 3, no. 2 (2017): pp. 531-553.

<sup>26</sup> Paraphrased from Uvedale Price, quoted in Robert Smithson’s, “Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape,” *Artforum*, (1973), in *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings*, edited by Jack Flam (Berkely, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1996), p. 159.

design approach to postindustrial landscapes in relation to the historic language of the grotesque throughout Mannerist Italian gardens.

## Research Methods

Looking to a methodology proposed by the art historian Alexander Nagel in his book *Medieval Modern: Art out of Time*, this thesis reaches back beyond twentieth-century art and philosophy into the deep history of Renaissance garden design to better understand the Latzes' approach to postindustrial landscapes.<sup>27</sup> Taking an interpretive approach, I look to published primary sources found in Peter Latz's books, articles, and interviews, as well as archival video footage to draw comparisons between what the Latzes describe as their "Syntactic" Concept – a conceptual approach developed at the River Port Island – to the use of the grotesque at Bomarzo. Additionally, email correspondence with Günther Bartholmai – Peter Latz's assistant during the design of the River Port Island – provided a primary source for the construction of the park and the sites existing conditions. This thesis is not necessarily focused on citing specific formal quotations – although it does find those as well. Its primary argument is that there exists a deep conceptual parallel between the Latzes' "Syntactic" Concept and the use of the mannerist grotesque at Bomarzo.<sup>28</sup> The Latzes themselves may not have fully realized these conceptual linkages, nonetheless I argue that mannerist conceptions of the grotesque fundamentally contributed to the design of the River Port Island.

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern: Art out of Time* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> Nagel, *Medieval Modern*, p. 10.



Site visits also played a crucial role in this research. Similarities between design moves made by the Latzes to historical Italian gardens were observed by visiting the River Port Island in Saarbrücken, Germany in the spring of 2022. These observations were based on frequent visits to the Villa Lante, Villa Farnese, and the Sacro Bosco during a fellowship in Italy from 2018-2019 studying the contradictions of pleasure and peril found throughout Italian Renaissance gardens. Additional site visits were made to abandoned postindustrial harbor sites such as Lehigh Coal Pier in South Amboy, New Jersey and Graffiti Pier in Philadelphia throughout 2022. These visits provided an understanding of the vernacular languages of ‘wild’ untouched industrial wasteland that the Latzes would have encountered at the River Port Island in 1979.

### **Thesis Structure**

In summary, this thesis is organized into two primary chapters exploring how the Latzes look to the grotesque in Renaissance gardens in developing a conceptual approach to postindustrial landscapes. Following the introduction, Chapter Two focuses on the River Port Island in the context of nineteenth-century industry and postindustrial landscapes. First, this section will provide a brief physical and cultural history tracing the transformation of Saarbrücken’s once-prosperous industrial coal harbor into the industrial wasteland that met the Latzes. Secondly, it will outline the development of the Latzes “Syntactic” Concept for the River Port Island completed between 1979 to 1981, and provide a formal layout of the River Port Island’s design upon its completion in 1989. Thirdly, it will then place the design of the River Port Island within the historical context of transforming postindustrial wasteland into a public park. Here, I argue how it stands

out as a work which disrupts a binary contrast between an ideal untouched ‘nature’ and monstrous industrial landscape developed in the nineteenth century.

Chapter Three focuses on the River Port Island’s relationship with historical sixteenth-century Italian gardens. In the first section, I will outline how the Sacro Bosco uses the grotesque to preserve the vernacular languages of its surrounding woodlands into a designed garden. This section is followed with an exploration of overlaps between the design of the Sacro Bosco and the Latzes’ design at the River Port Island.

I conclude this thesis by making distinctions between the design of the River Port Island — originating in the grotesque — and the deployment of the sublime in postindustrial landscape. Ultimately, I suggest, the use of the Renaissance grotesque as a tool that allows the Latzes to remediate a misunderstood vernacular industrial landscape and provide a logical and accessible means of engagement that goes beyond aestheticizing decay and neglect.

## Chapter 2

### The River Port Island and Postindustrial Landscape

*“Old models cover the rubble field or traces and remnants penetrate the park form, the industrial wasteland becomes the genesis of new uses.”<sup>29</sup>*

*“The contradictions of such places (industrial wastelands) are frightening. The fear of not seeing the end, not knowing the outcome, can at the same time be fascinating and similar to the mythical forest...”<sup>30</sup>*

*-Peter Latz*

#### Saarbrücken's River Port Island

To fully understand the Latzes' approach to the River Port Island, it is important to understand the industrial legacy of the postindustrial site first encountered by them. Saarbrücken and the surrounding Saar region along the Saar River in modern-day Southwest Germany have been deeply rooted in the mining of coal for the past five-hundred years.<sup>31</sup> This created a historical cultural landscape strongly linked to industry

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<sup>29</sup> “Alte Leitbilder überdecken die Schuttfelder oder Spuren und Reste durchdringen die Parkgestalt, die Industriebrache wird Wurzel neuer Nutzung.” All translation by author unless otherwise noted. See back cover of Peter Latz; Bartholmai, Gunter; Biegler, Nicki, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zur gestaltung eines citynahen parkes*, (Saarbrücken: Druck und Satz Karl Stube, 1981).

<sup>30</sup> “Die Widersprüchlichkeit solcher Orte beängstigt. Die Furcht, das Ende nicht zu sehen. den Ausgang nicht zu kennen, kann gleichzeitig faszinieren und Ähnlich dem mythischen Wald...” in Peter Latz, “Industriefolgelandschaft als Aufgabe der Gartenkultur — Drei Annäherungen,” in *Historische Gärten Heute*, edited by Michael Rhode and Rainer Schomann, (Leipzig: Ed Leipzig 2003), p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> The first written records of coal mining in the Saar area date to 1429, with the last mine ceasing operation in 2012.

rather than pastoral ideals, which profoundly shaped the Latzes' understanding of landscape in the region.

References to a coal port in Saarbrücken known as the Kohlrech (Coal Scale) date to 1608. Between 1751 to 1754, this port was expanded by the court of Prince Wilhelm Heinrich von Nassau-Saarbrücken into a coal storage area, equipped with larger scales and a series of small structures to monitor coal shipping and tax coal trade throughout the Saar region.<sup>32</sup> Recorded on French Cassini Maps created in the late-eighteenth century, the coal port lay between the ancient and medieval Saar towns of Saarbrücken, St. Johann, and Malstatt that today make up the modern-day city of Saarbrücken.<sup>33</sup> [Fig. 8]

Between 1792 to 1815, coal operations throughout the Saar region expanded under French governance and a scientific mapping of the areas vast mineral resources, mines, and topography was commissioned, resulting in the Duhamel Atlas.<sup>34</sup> Plate 61 of the atlas surveys the Saarbrücken area with the coal port titled as the Kohlwaag just beyond the western walls of the medieval fishing and market village of St. Johann. [Fig. 9] On the left bank of the river, is the ancient town of Saarbrücken connected by the *Alte Brücke*, (Old Bridge) a stone bridge constructed in 1546 over the remnants of a Roman bridge. This area, today referred to as Alt-Saarbrücken (Old-Saarbrücken) dates to a

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<sup>32</sup> State Chancellery Saarland: "The Heritage: Mining in Saarland – Part I" Google Arts and Culture: Undated: <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-heritage-mining-in-saarland-part-i-staatskanzlei-saarland/UwVRIU3q25a-Lg?hl=en>.

<sup>33</sup> Cassini Maps were the first topographic and geometric maps established by the Kingdom of France in the eighteenth-century. They were compiled by four generations of the Cassini family using geodesic triangulation.

<sup>34</sup> The Duhamel Atlas, also called the Beaunier Atlas, took 2 years between 1808 to 1810 to complete and contains 61 plates at a scale of 1:2500 surveying the entirety of the Saar region. Given the precision of the atlas, it was used by coal mining operations in the Saar region for the next one-hundred years after its completion.

Roman settlement constructed at the intersection of two Roman roads along the river during the conquest of Gaul in the first century. Throughout the Middle Ages, these roads became European trade routes between the Paris Basin to Southwest Germany and Northern Italy to Flanders; as a result, Saarbrücken and St Johann established their economic power through trade during this time. Viewed on the far upper left-hand corner of Plate 61 of the Duhamel Atlas, west of the coal port lay the small medieval church village of Malstatt. By the time this map was completed in 1810, mining and the transport of coal for fuel and iron production was steadily rising throughout the region. Subsequently, Malstatt began to develop as an industrial area along the outskirts of St. Johann and Saarbrücken in the early nineteenth century. As shown in an etching overlooking Saarbrücken completed in 1840, the fuming smokestacks of early industrialization were already clearly visible near the coal port along the outskirts of the Baroque city. [Fig. 10]

From 1815 to 1870, under Prussian and Bavarian governance of the Saar region, coal trade once again expanded due to the completion of a vast network of railroads. In 1852, the St. Johann-Saarbrücken train station opened just a quarter mile northeast of the coal port and the Palatine Ludwig Railway was connected with the French Eastern Railway, broadening coal trade into France. Although the port was shipping roughly ten thousand tons of coal and coke annually in 1850, it was unable to meet the demands of a rapidly industrializing Europe.<sup>35</sup> As a result, a massive engineering project was initiated

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<sup>35</sup> Marco Reuther, “Als Saarbrücken noch eine eigene Insel hatte —Wie der Alte Hafen zum Park wurde,” *Saarbrücker Zeitung*. March 18, 2021, p. 5. [https://www.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/saarland/saarbruecken/als-saarbruecken-noch-eine-insel-hatte-alter-hafen-wurde-zum-park\\_aid-56026503](https://www.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/saarland/saarbruecken/als-saarbruecken-noch-eine-insel-hatte-alter-hafen-wurde-zum-park_aid-56026503).

in the mid-nineteenth century to expand the port into a harbor with a larger storage yard, and a series of rail lines to meet the needs of an expanding network of coal trade throughout Europe.

Around 1860, the Saar River was straightened with a 750-meter-long canal, piercing a bend in the river between Malstatt and St. Johann. This made the river navigable to increased barge traffic, and allowed the old bend of the Saar to be incorporated as a *hafen* (harbor). Recorded on a plan of the newly completed harbor in 1870, the land between the old bend of the river and the canal became a 22-acre *kohlenhalde* (coal yard). [Fig. 11] Along the northern edge of the coal yard a *pfeilerbahn* (pillar track or elevated rail line) was constructed on both edges of the old bend of the river to load coal barges below. Although the newly formed land mass was technically a peninsula, attached to the industrial town of Malstatt to the west by a freight rail line, this newly expanded transshipment facility neighboring the outmoded coal port acquired the name the *Hafeninsel* (Harbor Island or River Port Island).

Around the same time as the creation of the River Port Island, surrounding Saar mines in Dechen, Heinitz, Dudweiler, and Reden became rail based, significantly increasing the transport of raw coal in the environs surrounding Saarbrücken. Additionally, a mile west of the River Port Island in Burbach, just outside the Saar town of Malstatt, the Burbacher Hütte (Burbach Iron Works) opened its first blast furnace in 1856. With a rapid population rise in Malstatt and Burbach due to employment at the Burbach Iron Works and the River Port Island, the two towns joined in 1874 to become the industrial center of Malstatt-Burbach. With a vast interconnected network of new mines, ironworks, canals, and an expanded harbor, the coal and steel industry throughout

the Saar region grew into one of Germany's leading economic forces during the second half of the nineteenth century. The region quickly became the third-largest area of coal, iron, and steel production behind the Ruhr district and Upper Silesian Coal Basin.<sup>36</sup> By 1909, the Burbach Iron Works had grown into a sprawling facility with eight blast furnaces. In that same year, the three Saar towns of Malstatt-Burbach, St. Johann, and Saarbrücken (today Old-Saarbrücken) were merged to form the modern city of Saarbrücken.

At the heart of this new city, the River Port Island sat as crucial industrial transshipment hub for all of Southwest Germany, linked to larger coal transit networks making their way to France, the Rhine River, and the rest of Germany. [Fig. 12, 13]

### **The River Port Island Becomes an Industrial Wasteland**

The River Port Island continued to expand throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1920, after the First World War, a League of Nations mandate gave control of the mining and coal operations in the Saar Territory to French governance for a total of fifteen years. During this time, a new rail line and a series of cranes for loading barges along the canal were added to the southern banks of the island. Between 1923 to 1930, the port was filling roughly 200 ships a month with a loading capacity of 300 tons per ship.<sup>37</sup> [Fig. 14]

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<sup>36</sup> Francis Walker, "Monopolistic Combinations in the German Coal Industry," *American Economic Association*, 3rd Series, Vol 5, No. 3 (August 1904): 1-3. 6

<sup>37</sup> Reuther, "Als Saarbrücken"

By the end of the 1920 mandate in 1935, Saarbrücken citizens voted to reunify with the German Reich. As an industrial center contributing to the German war effort, Saarbrücken was bombed heavily by Allied air-raids throughout the Second World War. As a result, the old arm of the Saar River was partially filled with sunken barges and scattered debris: the eight rail lines, mobile rail cranes, waterworks, port administration buildings, service apartments, workshops, and laboratories were destroyed. At the end of the war, the River Port Island lay largely in ruin.

In 1947, given the areas vast coal reserves, Saarbrücken and the Allied-occupied Saar region of Germany was once again merged with France to form the Saar Protectorate. That same year, a major Saar River flooding event caused the old arm of the Saar River to silt over.<sup>38</sup> Due to the efficiency of rail transit, the French authorities never cleared the silting for water transit after the war. However, as seen in a 1953 aerial and post war photographs, the River Port Island was still partially used as a storage yard for rail transport during French control of the city. [Fig. 15, 16] In 1957, the Saar Protectorate was annexed to the German Federal Republic (commonly known as West Germany) with Saarbrücken as the capital of the eleventh federal state — the Saarland.

To commemorate the Saarland's rejoining to German control, federal funds for the reconstruction of the city and the construction of a congress hall were gifted to the state. With the eastern portion of the River Port Island and the old arm of the Saar dysfunctional, city officials chose the historical mouth of the River Port Island along the canal as the location of the new congress hall; the architect Dieter Oesterlen was awarded

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<sup>38</sup> The Saarhochwasser (Saar Flood) of 1947/48 caused the Saar River to rise 10.62 meters, the highest since 1784.



the project after a design competition held in 1959. [Fig. 17] Sometime between 1960 to 1961, the historical arm of the Saar River was completely filled in to make way for the Kongeßhalle (Congress Hall) completed in 1967. During construction of the building, the elevated coal railways were dismantled, but crane operations and limited coal storage on the western end of the River Port Island along the Saar River continued until the early seventies.

By the late 1970s, coal operations had ceased at the River Port Island, and the city of Saarbrücken proposed plans to utilize the now abandoned coal port for the location of a highway bridge over the Saar River through the center of the site. As seen in a panoramic photograph taken during the early stages of the Westspangenbrücke's (West Span Bridge's) construction sometime between 1979 to 1980, it is clear the rail lines, towering cranes, and coal yards found during the River Port Island's industrial hey-day at the turn of the twentieth century no longer existed. [Fig. 18] Looking at the northeast edges of the site in this image, an urban woodland of pioneer trees had sprouted following the filled in arm of the Saar River. Hidden within this urban woodland was the crumbling ruins of the concrete coal chutes once used to support the elevated rail lines that feed coal barges along the banks of the coal port. These ruins were the last remnants of substantial industrial infrastructure to remain at the River Port Island.

South of the coal chutes, the panoramic photograph depicts a parking area for the Congress Hall amongst a barren landscape dotted with scrubby trees covered in weeds naturally suited to the poor soil conditions of the site. [Fig. 19] Hidden just beneath the surface of this area lay a sea of uneven and washed-out limestone sett pavers, the result of flooding and the weight of the mountains of coal once stored there. The industrial

pavement had been filled in and leveled out shortly after the completion of the Congress Hall to make way for the parking area.<sup>39</sup> To the west of the bridge — historically where most of the River Port Island's buildings were located — stood an informal dumping ground for the city. Here, mounds of rubble collected since the Second World War had become overgrown with denser trees to the far west and fields of weeds nearer to the center of the site. [Fig. 5]

Throughout the late seventies as planning for the West Span Highway Bridge over the historic River Port Island was underway, the city proposed to transform the remaining areas of the historic coal port into a public park. To develop initial concepts for the future park, the city approached the local Saarbrücken landscape architecture office of Anneliese and Peter Latz in 1979. As the history of the site at this time makes clear, the Latzes were met with a postindustrial landscape that had lain fallow for the last decade, overgrown with ruderal plants, largely stripped of its industrial infrastructure. It had become a landscape discarded to the margins of the developing city, an outcast referred to by the Latzes as an industrial wasteland.<sup>40</sup>

### **Protecting Destruction from Destruction**

Approached by Anneliese and Peter Latz in 1979, the River Port Island could best be described as what Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubió would come to refer to as *terrain vague*: a marginalized urban non-space — a void — which through its abandonment had

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<sup>39</sup> Helmut Lühns, "Der Bürgermeisterpark Hafeninsel in Saarbrücken: Ammerkungen zur Anatomie einer Fehlplanung," *Bauwelt*, V. 81, Issue 39 (October 1990): p. 1978.

<sup>40</sup> Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*.

begun to undergo the early stages of natural urban succession. While others may have shown a certain degree of concern towards the disturbing nature of such a place, Peter Latz's upbringing had garnered an empathy towards what others saw as blots on the landscape, and his desire to recover industrial wastelands is deeply rooted in his early career.<sup>41</sup>

Born in Darmstadt just outside of Saarbrücken in 1939, Peter Latz was raised in the war-torn landscape of post-war West Germany, where the industrial quarries and abandoned war bunkers scattered throughout the Saarland fascinated him.<sup>42</sup> As an urban planner practicing in Aachen in the mid-sixties, working on urban development projects in Wattenscheid, he lamented as “modernization” erased postindustrial landscapes throughout the Southern Ruhr.<sup>43</sup> In a 1996 interview, Peter Latz states:

On the occasion of a lecture which I recently gave in Dresden, I called for the protection of destruction from destruction. The seemingly chance results of human interference, which are generally judged to be negative, also have immensely exciting, positive aspects and are, on closer inspection, ultimately even a contribution to nature conservation. These sites offer potential for the development of things which are completely different.<sup>44</sup>

For Latz the state of disharmony found in such places of devastation and destruction, altered by a puzzling array of chance human interventions presented a “different

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Latz interview in, Udo Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art*, (Basel, Boston: Birkhäuser, 1996), pp. 125, 128.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>43</sup> Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, “Adaptive Re-use, Layering of Meaning on Sites of Industrial Ruin [Interview with Latz],” *Arcade*, Vol. 23, no. 2 (2004):p. 30.

<sup>44</sup> Weilacher, *Between Landscape*, p. 129.

harmony”, one that can introduce novel opportunities for the profession of landscape architecture.<sup>45</sup>

The design of postindustrial landscapes would become a hallmark of the Latzes’ work. Sites such as Duisburg North Landscape Park (c. 1990-2002) and Parco Dora (c. 2004-2012) in Turin, Italy have become exemplary models in reclaiming postindustrial sites as public parks. But it is at the River Port Island in Saarbrücken where they formulate their hallmark “Syntactic” Concept that morphs into their structuralist approach later applied to these masterworks.

### **Genius Loci**

The Latzes began to formulate a “new harmony” through their first major attempt at transforming a postindustrial landscape into a public park at the River Port Island, interweaving geometric forms borrowed from historical European landscapes with the raw matter of the industrial wasteland.

In 1968, Peter Latz with his wife Anneliese started their own landscape architecture and urban planning practice in Aachen and opened a second office in Saarbrücken. From 1968 to 1969, the Saarbrücken office worked on the urban development of the “Nauwiesser Viertel” district in Saarbrücken near the historic medieval center of St. Johann. Additionally, from 1973 to 1978 they worked on the much larger regional planning project for the Saar-Hunsrück Nature Park in the Saarland. As a

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

result of these early commissions, the Latzes built a strong relationship with Saarbrücken's planning office. In 1979, as plans to build the West Span Highway Bridge through the historic coal port began, the city approached the Latzes to develop conceptual plans for the River Port Island as a public park. This opportunity presented Peter Latz with a chance to experiment with the unusual post-war industrial landscapes of his upbringing; as such a chief concern for Latz in the transformation of the River Port Island into a public park was to preserve the rubble and debris and ruderal vegetation that for him encapsulate the *genius loci* of his native postindustrial landscapes.<sup>46</sup>

In searching for ways to preserve the industrial vernacular of the River Port Island into a public park, three conceptual plans were presented to the city in 1980. Peter Latz, with his assistants Gunter Bartholmai and Nicki Biegler detailed these plans in a 1981 planning report entitled, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zur gestaltung eines citynahen parkes (The Harbor Island: Visions of Change, alternative for designing a park close to the city)*.

The first two concepts presented in the document, the Landschaftsgartenkonzept (Landscape Garden Concept) and the Geometrischem Konzept (Geometric Concept) read as applications of traditional park models, where traditional garden design based on nineteenth century 'naturalistic' and earlier classical geometric approaches were tested in relationship to the industrial wasteland. These were presented as a way to illustrate the need for a new approach to engage with and preserve the existing nature of the River Port

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<sup>46</sup> Pirzio-Biroli, "Adaptive Re-use," p. 122.

Island, laying the groundwork for the Latzes' third concept the "Syntaktisches" Konzept ("Syntactic" Concept).

In order to better understand the genesis of this approach, a review of the planning document and the three ideologies within it is needed. The first concept presented to the city planning committee, the Landscape Garden Concept, was modeled the site of the River Port Island as a naturalistic landscape park similar to Central Park. The planning document states that the Latzes had the historical models of Germany's eighteenth-century Englischer Garten (1789) in Munich and Saarbrücken's nineteenth-century Galhaus'sche Park (1865) in mind as precedents for the design.<sup>47</sup> [Fig. 20] The Latzes overlaid the site with meandering paths that led park-goers through a series of intimate woodlands to the west, and larger open lawns to the east, with a central serpentine lake below the proposed highway bridge. Along the sequence, industrial ruins from the former coal port would be incorporated as garden follies. Ultimately, the Latzes moved away from the concept due to issues with scale and soil quality.<sup>48</sup>

Given the size of the 22-acre site, the Latzes believed the open lawns and vistas in the context of the proposed highway bridge, and future development along the northern edges of the site would fail to have the same 'natural' effect found in larger nineteenth-century city parks. However, their main concern lay in the verdant planting needed to achieve the concept, which would not be possible without completely removing or amending large areas of degraded soils throughout the site. Ultimately, the idealized

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<sup>47</sup> Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

image the nineteenth-century picturesque scheme called for, and the planting required to achieve it, would result in the erasure of many of the sites existing landscape features.

Alternatively, the Geometric Concept looked beyond the eighteenth-century romanticism of English gardens to the rigid geometric forms found throughout earlier seventeenth century French gardens. The plan's euclidean language of long avenues, allées and gridded groves of trees, clipped hedges, trellises, and a long axial pool below the highway bridge extended the geometric language of the urban fabric into the future public park, providing a wide array of park uses that can be both open and secluded from the city. [Fig. 21] For the Latzes, these classical architectonic planted forms were better suited to create an escape from the city in a park of this size. The Latzes looked to the grid of pollarded plane trees at Mathildenhoehe (c. 1914) in Darmstadt, Germany and Paris' linear promenades and formal squares of *Tilia cordata* and *Aesculus hippocastanum* to showcase a wide variety of surfaces and surface uses below their canopies.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to the Landscape Garden Concept, the Latzes saw the geometric forms in this second concept as better equipped to handle future park amenities and camouflage future urban development along the northern edges of the site.<sup>50</sup> However, the Latzes moved away from the concept, believing it lacked sufficient exploration in integrating the naturally occurring ruderal vegetation found at the River Port Island.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the Latzes' dismissal of the Landscape Garden Concept and Geometric Concept is based on their

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 21.; Peter Latz, "'Visionen vom Wandel' = 'Vision de changement' = 'Visions of Change'," *Anthos*, vol 23. (1984): p. 21.

inability to engage with and expand the existing ‘nature’ found within the industrial wasteland.

After testing these traditional models and setting up a need for an alternate approach, the Latzes present their third and final “Syntactic” Concept. Following the narrative arc outlined in the planning document, this concept reads as an amalgamation of historic eighteenth-century English and seventeenth-century French models previously tested; it superimposed the classical formal language found in the geometric concept, over the existing ‘natural’ industrial wasteland. [Fig. 22] According to the planning document, the design of their “Syntactic” Concept:

...derives its formal language from a changed understanding of nature and landscape, landscape is not taken abstractly as a historical image, but from the existing image further developed.<sup>52</sup>

For the Latzes, the transformation of the River Port Island would not be driven by an artificial representation of landscape — or *image* — based on some ‘naturalistic’ pastoral scene or geometric garden planting. Instead, their “Syntactic” Concept understands landscape as an on-going process of human and natural interventions that defines images and meaning. Therefore, the design of the park is not seen as a cohesively authored image but transformed through an open-ended process, where new “layers of information” — or *structures*— merge with existing ‘naturally’ occurring layers to link the industrial wasteland to a variety of new uses and meanings.<sup>53</sup> The syntactic’s dismissal of pastoral images of landscape and the incorporation of raw industrial detritus resulted in critiques

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<sup>52</sup> Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Latz, “Die Hafeninsel — Visionen vom Wandel?” *Arcus*, (September 1984): pp. 214-215.; Latz, “Industriefolgelandschaft,” p. 63.



from his colleagues, referring to the design of the River Port Island as “junk aesthetics,” and a “chaos of materials.”<sup>54</sup>

### A New Syntax

Working within the bounds of structural linguistics as it relates to landscape, the Latzes understood the rubble heaps and ruderal vegetation by themselves would not be immediately understood by visitors. Therefore, these culturally disturbing elements would need to be energized through a new syntax as opposed to entirely erased for some new formal idealism. In Peter Latz’s own words, in order to reincorporate the existing industrial wasteland found at the River Port Island into a park:

A new syntax had to be developed for the city centre that would fit the existing urban structure back together again, tie in the varied manifestations on the site, but not throw memories away, trying instead to crystallize out of the rubble what had been thrown into the rubble, and lost; we produced a syntactical design for an urban space.<sup>55</sup>

In proposing these new layers of information, the Latzes continuously made references to utilitarian agricultural techniques and the enduring architectonic horticulture found throughout Western garden history.<sup>56</sup> Simple geometric patterns of plotted farmland found throughout the Saarland and formal garden parterres of clipped hedges were shown as precedents in the planning document to illustrate how humans have used geometric signs and symbols as a means to form a symbiotic relationship with a chaotic natural world throughout history. Thus, this new syntax, and the additional layers of information

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<sup>54</sup> Luhrs, “Der Bürgermeisterpark”.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Latz, “Die Hafeninsel in Saarbrücken,” *Garten und Landschaft*, (November 1987): p. 42.

<sup>56</sup> Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, pp. 23-24.

that came with it would link the existing arcane layers of the River Port Island with archaic geometric *structures* to signal new meaning, new uses, and a new cultural appreciation towards the *other* neglected nature found in the abandoned post-industrial landscapes that emerged over the course of the twentieth century. This approach was echoed decades later during the discussion portion of the Frederick Law Olmsted Lecture Peter Latz gave at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 2016:

We have to give a sign and present the value of this natural succession. And we did it through scattered hedges and similar techniques...and then everyone can understand, oh huh, this has value.<sup>57</sup>

After the three conceptual plans were presented to the city in 1980, they were shelved until construction of the highway bridge through the center of the site was completed.

When the West Span Highway Bridge was completed in 1984, the city of Saarbrücken reapproached the Latzes to develop the River Port Island into a public park. In applying the “Syntactic” Concept at the River Port Island, the Latzes devise what would come to be known as their “structuralist approach” over the course of the park’s construction from 1985 to 1989.<sup>58</sup> In other words, the “Syntactic” Concept is the precursor and root of what would become the Latzes’ structuralist approach. In an article published in November 1989, just four months after the park’s opening in June, titled “Saarbrücken: Die Hafeninsel” the Latzes expanded on this approach, outlining how they

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<sup>57</sup> This was part of a longer response to the question, “How do you make the repulsive beloved and understood?” In Peter Latz, “Pioneering New Territory,” (Frederick Law Olmsted Lecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, October 6, 2016) min. 0:59. Accessed at the Loeb Design Library at Harvard University on July 13, 2022, (GSDvr\_1729).

<sup>58</sup> Latz uses the term structuralist in reference to his layered structural approach, where he “understands existing structures as information systems” in his interview with Pirzio-Biroli, “Adaptive Re-use” p. 31.

achieved the “Syntactic” Concept at the River Port Island not through compositional images but through a series of four highly defined structural layers where, “the expression of the work should not be due to the meticulous rendering of an artistic design, but to the work of many within a rationally developed structure.”<sup>59</sup>

These four layers consisted, in brief, of a *geometric framework* adapted from urban planning; *gardens* adapted from the formal language of Italian Renaissance gardens; and then two additional layers of the existing ‘natural’ industrial landscape, namely, the *ruderal vegetation* and *extant industrial ruins*. The intent-of the Latzes’ design was to use these layers to interweave the industrial remnants into a revitalized web of meaning, as becomes clear through a more intensive examination of the Latzes’ design process. [Fig. 23]

*Layer one* of the design implementation uses a geometric framework to reknit the existing wasteland back into the urban fabric. Its form was driven by existing physical patterns and an abstracted grid taken from the Gauß- Krüger coordinate system – a gridded mapping technique found in historical nineteenth-century Prussian survey maps.<sup>60</sup> Although the Gauß- Krüger pattern is not a physical remnant of the industrial coal harbor, it exists as an abstract structure for the Latzes, applied to define a logical

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<sup>59</sup> “Der Ausdruck des Werkes soll nicht der minutiösen Weidergabe eines künstlerischen Entwurfs zu verdanken sein, sondern der Arbeit von vielen innerhalb einer rational entwickelten Struktur.” All translation by author unless otherwise noted. Latz, “Die Hafeninsel” pp. 46-47; Peter Latz describes the structuralist approach to the River Port Island in detail in Peter Latz, “Saarbrücken die Hafeninsel”.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Holden, “Hafeninsel, Saarbrücken,” *International Landscape Design* (London: Calmann + King Ltd., 1996), p. 23.

framework to engage with the mounds of rubble found in the western half of the River Port Island.<sup>61</sup> [Fig. 24]

This superimposed grid and the rest of the site was then linked by extending the existing physical urban fabric into the site. To do this, the Latzes broke the park boundary along its northern edge with a series of rapid straight routes deep into the site; additional long linear avenues through the site borrow views to surrounding hills and church steeples to make visual connections with the city. These diagonal cuts that crisscross the site are meant to reconnect the abandoned River Port Island physically and visually back into the city. [Fig. 25] The imposition of this first layer consisting of a geometric framework does not conceal but rather contributes to the revelation of industrial remains by proving a utilitarian means of access that echoes the industrial legacy of the site.

*Layer two* is an entirely invented overlay containing a series of public gardens inserted directly into the existing rubble and buried pavements of the River Port Island. According to the Latzes' assistant Gunther Bartholmai, the historically paved areas of the industrial harbor were exposed to insert formal plantings since the soil was less degraded beneath their surface.<sup>62</sup> [Fig. 26] Additionally, many of the plant species selected by the Latzes were chosen for their hardiness, able to withstand the degraded soils that existed.

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<sup>61</sup> Peter Latz states the "Gauß- Krüger grid ... was already on the ground plan," in his interview with Weilacher, *Between Landscape*, pp. 128-129. Udo Weilacher makes it clear that the grid did not formally exist on the site but abstractly existed in plan, see p. 90 in Weilacher, *Syntax of Landscape*.

<sup>62</sup> "Pollutant analysis and soil tests on the area of the former coal port (*Hafeninsel*) did not reveal any particularly contaminated or even health-endangering substances. Historically, coal was reloaded here and after World War 2 construction debris was dumped. Mainly paved areas were re-exposed and used for park purposes. One of the ecological principles was to adapt the plant selection to the existing situation. Soil improvement measures on a large scale were thus avoided." Gunter Bartholmai's Email response to the following questions: How were the degraded soils handled during construction? How much new soil was brought in for planting?

This approach allowed the Latzes to avoid large scale soil amendments for the proposed formal garden plantings. Throughout the park, geometric hedges, gridded groves, trellises, and fountains modeled on the harmony and reason found in classical European garden design accompany the framework set up in the first layer and are meant to signal a new cultural appreciation and value towards the neglected wasteland. The park itself is framed with a series of formal allées and clipped hedges, creating a series of garden rooms visitors traverse as they enter the park. The long avenues that extend the city into the park near the West Span Highway Bridge were lined with *Populus nigra italica*, while the promenade along the river is lined with *Platanus x acerifolia*. [Fig. 27, 28]

A few key garden features reinforce the geometry on this second layer and provide meaningful moments of engagement with the vernacular postindustrial landscape. On the eastern half of the site, clipped *Carpinus* hedges and trellises of *Wisteria* create a series of garden rooms to frame the urban *baumplatz* (tree plaza). The *baumplatz* consists of a dense gridded grove of *Tilia cordata* planted directly into the excavated limestone sett pavers of the former coal storage yard. [Fig. 29] While on the western half of the River Port Island, the gardens take on a more intimate character to meet the needs of the neighborhood to the northwest of the park. The gridded plots of the rubble field were transformed into a series of neighborhood gardens, where locals were advised to cultivate the found rubble flora with *Aster*, *Iris*, *Aquilegia*, *Syringa*, and *Rosa* taken from their personal gardens.<sup>63</sup> For the Latzes, these gridded plots set up a logical, simple structural framework for the surrounding neighborhood to engage with and

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<sup>63</sup> Latz, "Die Hafeninsel in Saarbrücken," p. 47.

expand the process of natural urban succession currently taking place. Additionally, the Latzes planted *Elaeagnus angustifolia* in this area, referred to as the ‘Italian Valley’, given its Mediterranean aesthetic.<sup>64</sup> [Fig. 30]

At the center of the western half of the park, the Latzes carved the *Ruhegarten*, (*Garden of Rest*) directly into the largest rubble mound. This two-story brick cylindrical walled garden did not exist as an industrial remnant, its walls were newly constructed as a *hortus conclusus* — modeled on enclosed Renaissance gardens found at the tomb of Augustus in Rome and the Orto Botanico in Padua – made accessible via the linear avenues cut through the surrounding rubble fields.<sup>65</sup> [Fig. 31] Within the garden walls, the Latzes planted parterres of concentric clipped *Buxus* and *Carpinus* hedges framing a series of formal flower beds. Surrounding the flower beds, the Latzes planted a ring of *Prunus* trees, and at the very center of the garden, a fountain was surrounded by a modest amphitheater for small neighborhood events. [Fig. 32] The Latzes envisioned this garden as a place of tranquility and seclusion from the noise of the city and highway bridge.

Within the rubble fields, the Latzes also retained a mature copse of existing *Aesculus hippocastanum* as the centerpiece of a garden featuring a secondary brick amphitheater. Named the *Chestnut Grove*, the Latzes constructed a substantial brick arcade using a mix of salvaged debris and new materials to form retaining walls laid out as a long avenue cut through the rubble field leading up to the semi-circle amphitheater; its solemn setting carved into the rubble fields shares similarities to notions of a classical sacred grove. [Fig. 33]

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<sup>64</sup> Latz, “Saarbrücken die Hafeninsel,” p. 2124.

<sup>65</sup> Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, p. 26; Weilacher, *The Syntax of Landscape*, p. 96.

Beneath the newly constructed six-lane concrete West Span Highway Bridge, the Latzes linked the neighborhood gardens in the west to the urban gardens in the east with a newly constructed lake. The water element here, like in the earlier Landscape Garden and Geometric Concept plans, was implemented to reflect light up beneath the immense six-lane highway bridge, standing forty-feet over the middle of the park. On the western bank of the lake, the rubble field and its gridded rubble walls cascade down directly into the water. [Fig. 34] While on the eastern side of the lake, the limestone sett pavers of the *Baumplatz* slope gently into the water. On this eastern edge the Latzes erected the *Wassertor (Water Tower)*, an entirely invented garden folly whose brick arched construction follows a similar mixture of Romanesque and industrial architecture found in the *Rhuegarten*. [Fig. 35] This constructed ruin doubles as a gateway for the footbridge traversing the lake and as a fountain to aerate the lake for wildlife. The next two layers outlined the existing structures embedded within the site the Latzes sought to preserve in the River Port Island next iteration as a public park.

*Layer three* consisted of the sites existing ruderal vegetation. The overgrown paved areas of the informal parking area populated with scattered scrubby trees, shrubs, and rubble flora north of the *Baumplatz* was incorporated into the park as an open flexible gravel lawn for festivals and market events. Additionally, large swaths of pioneer species found in the rubble hills and former harbor basin, containing *Betula*, *Alnus*, *Robinia*, and *Pyrus* trees were retained as an urban wild surrounding the formal serenity of the *Rhuegarten* and the ruins of the elevated rail line and coal chutes. Throughout the park, rubble flora was incorporated into the joints of the *Baumplatz* and the cracks of the rubble walls.

*Layer four*, the final layer incorporated the traces and monuments of the old industrial culture. This included the rubble and debris incorporated into the rubble walls and gardens throughout the park, the ruins of the elevated railway and coal chutes in the overgrown woodland to the northeast, and the vast array of limestone setts incorporated into the *Baumplatz* and gravel lawn recovered from the coal storage yard.<sup>66</sup>

Ultimately, the use of the structuralist approach to implement the “Syntactic” Concept at the River Port Island resulted in an enigmatic assemblage of classical geometric garden forms carved directly into a milieu of scattered industrial detritus and overgrown ruderal planting. Large portions of the existing industrial wasteland were simply left as a counterpoint to the new formal insertions added by the Latzes.

Despite the fact that by 1989, there was an over 100-year history of the revitalization of industrial sites — most recently Richard Haag’s intervention at Gasworks Park — there was an aggressive, critical response to the Latzes’ design. Peter Latz himself noted, with surprise, the intensity of those critiques, “Of course, I was aware that what I had done differed from a traditional park, but the violent, in some cases aggressive reactions on the part of colleagues was something I hadn’t anticipated.”<sup>67</sup> One of the most pointed critiques came from Helmut Lühns, in an article written the year after the River Port Island opened to the public:

Peter Latz’s unreflected attempt to depict the history of the River Port Island in the park concept...leaves nothing recognizable of the history of the coal port. The history-eliminating depiction...manifests itself in the arbitrary juggling of furnishings that come from the River Port Island area, from the city, from the Saarland or from elsewhere and, motley mixed up,

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<sup>66</sup> The concrete coal chutes were demolished to make way for a series of parking garages for the Congress Hall sometime after the park’s completion.

<sup>67</sup> Latz interview in, Weilacher, *Between Landscape*, p. 129.



are presented to the astonished viewer. In the "old" coal port walls made of concrete (brick-faced), which never stood where they were placed in the park concept, there are atomized parts of the perhaps old equipment in the form of individual stones and fragments of old building materials, which are now intended to suggest history. Car tires in dry stone walls can be found next to limestone curbs from Altsaarbrücken, as well as tiles in a cozy juxtaposition with old remains of cornices from former industrial buildings or Wilhelminian style villas. The chaos of materials, shapes and figural elements, disguised as a historical reference, can hardly be surpassed.<sup>68</sup>

What Lührs critique registers is not a rejection of revitalizing industrial wastelands, but a — violent — rejection of the Latzes' particular, syntactic design. Although the syntactic utilized the "invention of information systems that overlap with existing elements," that would come to define the Latzes' open-ended structuralist approach, it is clear from the precedents imagery used throughout the 1981 planning document that Peter Latz clearly looks beyond contemporary notions of Structuralism.<sup>69</sup> Arthur Lublow in his *New York Times* article on Latz, "The Anti-Olmsted," states that Latz himself says:

...that when he [Peter Latz] designed his first postindustrial park, in Saarbrücken, a city in what was then West Germany, he had never heard

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<sup>68</sup> "Peter Latz unrelektierte Versuch, die Geschichte der Hafeninsel in Parkkonzept abzubilden, zur Abbildung der Grundrente des Ortes mit Gärtnergrün, die von der Geschichte des Hafens nichts Erkennbares mehr übrig läßt. Die geschitseleminierende Abbildung des Verkehrswertes manifestiert sich beliebigen Herumjonglieren mit Ausstattungselementen, die vom Hafeninselgelände, aus der Stadt, aus Saarland oder von sonst woher stammen und, kunterbunt durcheinandergewürfelt, dem staunenden Betrachter vorgeführt werden. In "alten" Hafenmauern aus Beton (ziegelverblendet), die nie dort standen, wo sie das Parkkonzept placiert hat, befinden sich atomisierte Teile der vielleicht alten Ausstattung in Form vom Einzelsteinen und Bruchstücken alter Baumaterialien, die nun Geschichte suggerieren sollen. Autoreifen in Trockenmauern finden sich neben Kalkbordsteinkanten aus Altsaarbrücken ebenso, wie Kacheln in trauten Nebeneinander mit alten Gesimsresten ehemaliger Industriebauten oder gründerzeitlicher Villenbauten. Das als Geschichtsbezug verbrämte Chaos von Materialien, Formen und figuralen Elementen ist kaum mehr zu überbieten." Quote from, Lührs, "Der Bürgermeisterpar".

<sup>69</sup> Peter Latz, "The Idea of Making Time Visible," *Topos*, vol. 33 (2000): p. 95.

of Gas Works Park in Seattle. What he had in mind were Renaissance gardens.<sup>70</sup>

As outlined in the next section, this approach radically departed from the historical approaches to postindustrial landscapes — in ways that I will later argue register an appropriation of the Italian Renaissance discourse on the grotesque.

### The Industrial City as a Kind of Monster

*“At the farthest reaches of the world often occur new marvels and wonders, as though Nature plays with greater freedom secretly at the edges of the world than she does openly and nearer us in the middle of it.”<sup>71</sup>*

— Ranulph Higden

The River Port Island of Anneliese and Peter Latz can best be understood as a new solution to the nineteenth-century marginalization of industrial landscape. Namely, at the River Port Island the Latzes entirely disrupt a nineteenth century binary contrast between the picturesque aesthetic of pastoral ‘nature’ and monstrous industrial landscape. Throughout the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution in both Europe and America turned modern cities into a threatening force for their inhabitants – “a kind of monster.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Arthur Lubow, “The Anti-Olmsted,” *New York Times* (online), May 16, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ranulph Higden quoted in Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), p. 25. Quote on this page from Higden, Ranulph, *Polychronicon*, 1.34, in *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi cestrensis*, together with the English Translation of John Trevisa and an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century, 9 vols., London: Churchill Babington, Rolls Series 41, 1865-86, vol. 1, p. 361.

<sup>72</sup> Udo Weilacher notes that the landscape architect Adriaan Geuze suggested, “that in the course of the 19th century the city had developed into a kind of monster,” during a 1992 symposium called “The Park”, see Weilacher, *The Syntax*, p. 103.; Witold Rybczynski references a quote from Frederick Law Olmsted on unchecked urban growth in which Olmsted uses the term “monstrosity”. See Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Scribner, 1999), p 297.

In response, nineteenth-century urban parks in both Europe and America sought to foil the growing industrial city with idealized nature, influenced by naturalistic images of landscape found throughout the repertoire of English garden design and picturesque paintings of the previous century. Harmonious images of sylvan woodland, meandering paths, serpentine lakes and dramatic cascades, rugged stone outcroppings, expansive meadows and open lawns were overlaid atop the existing urban surface. In the process, raw existing features such as degraded topsoils, ruderal vegetation, utilitarian pavements, and vernacular structures resulting from the consumption and production of industry were either erased or concealed. By centering an idealized nature and pushing the physical landscape of industry to the margins, the nineteenth-century park sets up a binary between formalized naturalistic images of nature and the ‘unnatural’ modern industrial landscape as its monstrous *other*. This centering of a pastoral ideal, keeping the industrial city at bay continues throughout the twentieth century until the pivotal work of Richard Haag at Gas Works Park inverted it, incorporating industrial gas towers at the center of the park. However, at the River Port Island the Latzes fundamentally break down the juxtaposition that had been set up.

The design of Central Park is a classic example of the nineteenth-century approach to land that had been impacted by human industry. Centrally located in the island of Manhattan, the site that would become Central Park was in no way untouched by human hands when Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux began designing the park in 1857. During initial construction they encountered a barren wind-swept landscape dotted with rocky hills and marshland that had been deforested for farming, light industrial uses, small communities, and scattered dwellings. [Fig. 36] To realize their

vision for the “Greensward Plan,” an immense engineering operation was set in motion that displaced 225 residents of the free black urban community of Seneca Village and 1,375 other residents through eminent domain. Additionally, construction of the park filled marshes, sculpted hills and lakes, installed a vast network of hydrological infrastructure, amended soils, and planted dense woodlands. As a result, the existing communities, degraded topsoil, marshes, and structures that did not conform to the “charming bit of rural landscape” Olmsted and Vaux envisioned were removed from the design.<sup>73</sup> The majority of existing physical vestiges of the landscape to remain largely intact was the sites geological features. The ancient schist bedrock that runs beneath central Manhattan was revealed and blasted in situ to define the site’s dramatic topographic features, and incorporated into rustic bridges, walls, and grottoes throughout the park. These found raw materials ultimately did not disturb the picturesque ideal but enhanced the park’s rugged character. Stone outcroppings and scattered bits of stone décor that remain today exist as a microcosm for the wild landscapes found throughout the Catskill region of New York, romanticized by the Hudson River School painters of the early nineteenth century. Throughout the design, existing Manhattan schist was also used to camouflage the artifice of designed nature within the park, mainly the hydrological infrastructure that fed the parks streams and lakes. [Fig. 37] Stone walls and tunnels also concealed the Transverse Roads within the park and the city streets along its

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<sup>73</sup> Lisa Foderaro, “The Parks that Made the Man Who Made Central Park,” *New York Times*, Oct 30, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/30/travel/footsteps-frederick-law-olmsted-parks.html#:~:text=Five%20of%20them%20%E2%80%94%20Birmingham%20Botanical,both%20cityscapes%20and%20magnificent%20countryside>.

edges. Thus, found raw conditions incorporated into the final design were only chosen for their ability to conform to the picturesque scenes the designers had in mind, as well as conceal any traces of the industrial city. Instead, the city would rise on the margins, with the park as a green jewel at its center.

Within the same decade, arguably the first postindustrial landscape to be transformed into a public park, the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, (1864-1867) designed by Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand and his team of engineers utilizes a similar approach to its design, overlaying “picturesque illusions” on top of a significantly more disturbed industrial landscape.<sup>74</sup> As in the transformation of Central Park, an immense engineering endeavor at an industrial scale was undertaken. Alphand applied what he had learned from the recently completed Bois de Boulogne (1852-1858) to strip degraded topsoil, dig lakes, and sculpt the existing ground of a defunct gypsum quarry and landfill located to the north of the medieval walled city of Paris. Most of the existing degraded soil was stripped and transported away by railways constructed for the transformation of the park, but the bedrock and hollowed spaces of the defunct gypsum quarry that historically existed on the site were heavily incorporated and revealed in the final design. These preserved elements of roughly textured limestone crags again were chosen for their ability to evoke an emotive dramatized vision of picturesque nature, with all traces of polluted industry concealed. [Fig. 38]

It is important to note some differences in the way that this binary between picturesque ‘nature’ and the modern city was implemented at Buttes-Chaumont as

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<sup>74</sup> Ann Komara, “Concrete and the Engineered Picturesque,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 58, no. 1 (2004): p. 10.

opposed to Central Park. Unlike Central Park, the geological features found at the Buttes-Chaumont were the direct products of a long industrial history. The limestone bedrock at the Buttes-Chaumont had been consumed for raw building materials since the fifteenth century.<sup>75</sup> As such, the prospects, towering quarried limestone faces, and grottoes that were sculpted to achieve the picturesque images at the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont trace the industrial topographic remnants of the site. This signals an early example of the threatening forces of industry breaking through the designed surface in nineteenth-century parks. Still, this breach in the overlay does not disrupt the artifice since the geological features were exposed and sculpted for their ability to conform to the picturesque scenes the designers had in mind. Furthermore, many of the unsightly existing limestone faces were enhanced through the use of Portland cement — a modern industrial material.<sup>76</sup> [Fig 39] Therefore, any overt relationship between an image of idealized nature and the physical industrial landscape at both Central Park and the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont only occurs through sightliness within the park to the city beyond its borders. For visitors to the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont's inauguration during the *Exposition Universelle* of 1867, this relationship became abundantly clear when they reached the central prospect within the park at the Temple of the Sibyl, a folly modeled on the Roman Temple of Vesta in Tivoli. There, visitors were met with a scene that juxtaposed the picturesque landscape they just traversed with the immensity of the growing industrial city beyond the borders of the park.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For a site history see, Adolphe J.C. Alphand, *Les Promenades des Paris* (Princeton; Princeton Architectural Press, 1984) Facsimile reprint of the 1867-73 Paris publication, pp. 198-202.

<sup>76</sup> Komara, "The Engineered Picturesque," p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Roughly one hundred years after the design of the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, Richard Haag and Associates' design of Gas Works Park (1971-1975) in Seattle, Washington offered a new attitude towards industrial remains in a public park. Rather than removing all traces of industry from the design of the park, Haag centered the remaining traces of Seattle's historic gasification plant in his park design. Approaching the site for the first time, Haag identified the derelict gas towers of the defunct gasification plant as the heart of the entire design:

When I get a new site, I always want to know, figure out, what is the most sacred thing about the site? Well, this site, without the buildings, there was nothing sacred about it ... So I decided that this big tower, the one right behind me, was the most sacred, the most iconic thing on this site, and that I would go down to the wire to save that structure. Then as I got into it more, I thought, 'That's kind of silly.' Why wouldn't you save the one behind it? You know, husband and wife?<sup>78</sup>

Sanctified by Haag, curated elements of the existing industrial assemblage of rusted towers, tanks, and twisted pipes overlooking Lake Union were made the centerpiece of the public park through an unprecedented and rigorous process of public persuasion.

Still, given the toxicity of the landscape, Haag chose to frame the centerpiece of industrial architecture with a remediated landscape that ultimately preserved the binary between monstrous industry and idealized 'nature' inherited from the nineteenth century. Haag chose to manipulate the profane ground of industrial landscape in-situ through the revolutionary process of bioremediation. At the same time, he 'capped' the salvaged landscape with a more harmonious nature derived from the local topography of the

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<sup>78</sup> Quote from Haag in, Thaïsa Way, *The Landscape Architecture of Richard Haag: From Modern Space to Urban Ecological Design* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015) p. 150.

Pacific Northwest.<sup>79</sup> The result is a reformulation of the existing ground as a series of undulating landforms that operates as a repository for fifty years of industrial waste, concealing the contaminated elements of the site's industrial landscape below an abstracted image of native topography. [Fig. 40]

Although the overlay at Gas Works shares little resemblance to the rugged and deeply textured picturesque surfaces found in earlier nineteenth-century parks, it does operate as a continuous image to accommodate the unprepossessing scenery found in the industrial exploitation of the landscape. As Thaïsa Way argued, the design of Gas Works Park can be understood beyond the pastoral through a 'thick' reading of the knotted layers of industrial landscape below the parks surface.<sup>80</sup> However, the designed surface objectively conforms to a harmonious skin. The vast majority of industrial detritus never breach the overlay of Haag's abstraction, except of course for the rusted industrial architecture. Additionally, Haag's hallmark use of landform can be seen as a natural progression from nineteenth-century earthwork found at Central Park and the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont to twentieth-century design.

Take for example the view presented from the Great Mound, (also referred to as Kite Hill) the iconic prospect of Haag's abstracted landscape and a moment of reflection and contemplation for the remediated site. On the surface, it is a clear dialogue between a holistic reformulated overlay that contains (and conceals) the majority of the site's toxic soil, directly juxtaposed with the undisturbed rusted gas towers. [Fig. 41] The major

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>80</sup> Thaïsa Way, "Landscapes of Industrial Excess: A Thick Sections Approach to Gas Works Park, *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2013): pp. 28-39.



difference from earlier nineteenth-century parks being that the conversation between the threatening forces towards idealized nature has shifted from the margins of nineteenth-century parks to the very center in the late-twentieth century. A shift Way marks as a cultural willingness, “to consider the wastes of production as a part of our urban landscape rather than something to be made invisible.”<sup>81</sup> Ultimately, to reflect on Gas Works Park from on top of the Great Mound results in a similar conversation between idealized landscape and the threatening forces of the industrial city found in the nineteenth century.

Fourteen years after the completion of Gas Works Park in 1989, the Latzes’ design of the River Port Island in Saarbrücken, pushed back against the binary established at Central Park and Buttes-Chaumont in the nineteenth century, and later inverted at Gas Works Park in a new way. Whereas Haag contrasts monolithic industry at the center of the design with monolithic nature at the periphery, the Latzes’ approach dismantles any hierarchy between center and periphery all together. At the River Port Island, an archaic framework of traditional and long-established landscape forms consisting of geometric gardens, parterres, clipped hedges, gridded groves, and alleés were interwoven directly on top of the raw industrial surface of ruderal planting, degraded soils, vernacular pavements, and scattered bits of rubble and debris. [Fig. 42]

With this approach, two key differences from the design of Gas Works Park are established by the Latzes’ overlay of seemingly unrelated highly formal classical insertions. The first being that the River Port Island’s design is not driven by a continuous

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

skin or harmonious image of landscape that works to conceal monstrous images towards some desired ideal or abstracted nature. On the contrary, the Latzes' overlay is interwoven into the existing fabric of raw industrial landscape. This can be seen as a respect towards the vernacular industrial wasteland on the level with Haag's sanctification of the raw industrial architecture; and although Haag does work to save the industrial landscape, he must provide a new surface for movement given the sites toxicity. At the River Port Island, the Latzes were not faced with same level of toxicity, allowing them to reveal large swaths of the raw industrial landscape unhidden by the artifice one would find in the nineteenth century.

The second difference can be found in the lack of a clearly defined center given the chaotic nature between order and disorder found in the Latzes' overlay. As a result, unlike Gas Works Park, the hybrid surface created at the River Port Island establishes an aesthetic language that disrupts the hierarchy between formal designed nature and physical industrial nature. Thus, with these two differences in mind, the radical design of the River Port Island lies in its ability to dismantle the hierarchy between idealized landscape and its monstrous other.

### Chapter 3

## Bomarzo and the Grotesque

In 1979, Peter Latz was looking for a design vocabulary that would allow him to incorporate marginalized industrial landscape into a public park. While most contemporary scholarship on the Latzes' syntactic networks might look to immediate precedents in twentieth-century design and philosophy, linked to postmodern collage or structuralist ideologies, it is the contention of this thesis that there is a strong conceptual parallel to the use of the grotesque in Mannerist Italian gardens. In the Sacro Bosco, (Sacred Wood c.1560-1584) initiated by Pierfrancesco "Vicino" Orsini (b.1523-1583) at Bomarzo, he found a vocabulary capable of positively integrating the disturbing elements inherent to postindustrial wastelands. For Peter Latz, the dismantling of hierarchy between designed and vernacular landscape in Orsini's experiments throughout his Sacro Bosco presented a solution for his own vernacular post-industrial landscape in modern-day West Germany.<sup>82</sup>

Although separated by 400 years, Orsini and the Latzes were fundamentally faced with the same problem: to preserve the *genius loci* of a marginalized vernacular

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<sup>82</sup> Although the architects Pirro Ligorio and Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola have been attributed as designers of the Sacro Bosco, no concrete evidence or consensus has confirmed these claims. However, through Vicino's own letters scholars do know that he was interested in the design of his Sacro Bosco. Vicino's letters have been transcribed in Horst Bredekamp, *Vicino Orsini und der Heilige Wald von Bomarzo: Ein Furst als Kunstler und Anarchist*, 2 vol., Worms, Germany: Wernerische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985.

landscape in the context of a designed landscape in their own respective times. By the term *genius loci* I refer not to an inherent quality to the site but to Orsini and Latz's own perceptions of the essential qualities of landscapes they closely identified with. A large academic discourse has revolved around the Sacro Bosco's enigmatic iconography of grotesque monsters and mythical beasts carved from the living rock and its relation to literary sources.<sup>83</sup> However, at a fundamental level, Orsini's aim was equally to preserve the essential identity or mood of the wild landscape surrounding Bomarzo. One of the earliest scholarly articles about the Sacro Bosco by Arnaldo Bruschi, read it as an, "extension or distillation of the bewitching atmosphere of the surrounding region, a strange but ultimately natural product of the otherworldly landscape around Bomarzo."<sup>84</sup> More recently, Katherine Coty expands on Bruschi's logic, persuasively linking the inspiration for Orsini's *bosco* to the uncanny landscape and the Etruscan ruins and fragments of carved *peperino* — a grey volcanic *tufo* or tuff stone — scattered throughout the region surrounding Bomarzo. [Fig. 43] In Coty's article, "Nel cuore di tufo': vernacular architecture and the *genius loci* of Bomarzo" she succinctly describes

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<sup>83</sup> Referred to as Bomarziana, literature on the Sacro Bosco is vast. Luke Morgan provides an overview of scholarship aligning contemporary literary texts such as Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581) and *Floridante* (1587), as well as Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499) to the Sacro Bosco's iconography and layout in his 2021 article, "Bizzarrie del boschetto del Signor Vicino': the figurative language of the Sacro Bosco," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 41, no. 2 (2021): pp. 80-82. For a thorough overview of the Sacro Bosco's iconography in relation to literary texts see, Margaretta J. Darnell and Mark S. Weil, "Il Sacro di Bomarzo: Its 16th-Century Literary and Antiquarian Context", *Journal of Garden History*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1984): pp. 1-81. Darnell and Weil themselves hypothesize that Dante's *Divine Comedy* is replicated at Bomarzo.

<sup>84</sup> I rely on Katherine Coty's recounting of Arnaldo Bruschi's study, "L'Abitato di Bomarzo e la Villa Orsini," in "Nel cuore di tufo': vernacular architecture and the *genius loci* of Bomarzo", *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2021): p. 124.

the Sacro Bosco as an experiment with the local vernacular languages of carved *tufo* and a microcosm of the area's peculiar *genius loci*.<sup>85</sup>

### Orsini's Experiments at the Sacro Bosco

Located roughly fifty miles north of Rome, the region surrounding Bomarzo, today referred to as Tuscia, is a sub-region of modern-day Lazio, stretching from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west to the northern Tiber River Valley to the east. The uniqueness of Tuscia is defined by its dramatic, almost violent hills and valleys of impenetrable forest: populated with dormant volcanoes and volcanic lakes, scattered with *tufo* as a result of volcanic activity, Etruscan ruins, and rocky villages perched atop *tufo* mesas that seemingly grow out their natural surroundings.<sup>86</sup> [Fig. 44] Even today, traveling through the region it is difficult to get one's bearings in what seems to be an endless sea of *Fagus* and *Corylus* woodlands. In relation to the crystalline views and spaces found in the historically deforested neighboring regions of northern Tuscany or the lowlands of the Roman Campagna to the south, Tuscia is a disorienting and seemingly uncanny landscape haunted with the folklore of an archaic pre-Roman Etruscan past that has captivated scholars, artists, and landscape architects throughout history.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Coty, “Nel cuore di tufo”.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>87</sup> “Rarely are the characteristics of a people and the region they live in so inanimately linked as they are in Tuscia. In the silence, nestled between the copper-colored walls of the Forre (almost like churches excavated from tufo, whose vault is the sky), there resonates an arcane but unmistakably present air of subtle enchantment. The landscape, the rocks, the trees, the air itself, are impregnated with it.” Arnaldo Bruschi quoted in Coty, “Nel cuore di tufo”: vernacular architecture and the genius loci of Bomarzo”. Additionally, the poet and filmmaker Pasolini has stated the area near the village of Chia in Tuscia was, “the most resplendent landscape in the world,” choosing it for the setting for his movie, “The Gospel According to St. Matthew” (1964) and his home in the later years of his life. Furthermore, the American landscape architect Julie

In 1542 Vicino Orsini was bound to this region when he was made Duke of Bomarzo, a historical Orsini family fiefdom located ten miles northeast of Viterbo.<sup>88</sup> As a nobleman who had a feudal right to this land, his identity was bound up in the landscape. As the landscape historian John Dixon Hunt observed, Orsini's Sacro Bosco:

...was probably contrived and understood as an expression — sometimes arcane, always startling — of its patron's human nature and of the Etruscan locality to which he belonged. For like all garden-making in the Renaissance (and often since), Bomarzo was a means of declaring its creator's status, person and virtue: 'As is the Gardner', wrote Thomas Fuller in 1732, 'so is the Garden'.<sup>89</sup>

It is clear in Vicino's own correspondence that he was clearly enchanted by of the forests surrounding Bomarzo, describing to a friend his distaste for city life, preferring to stay in his woods, and "visit stones and trees" than endure "the falsities and vanities of the courts."<sup>90</sup>

Certainly, the design of Vicino's Sacro Bosco reflects these sentiments, since the sanctification of the wood places it at the center of the design. However, in order to center the *bosco* within his design, Orsini had to explore a design language that deviated from the contemporary paradigm of incorporating a *bosco* as a liminal space to blur the boundary between the formal garden and the surrounding landscape. Described by Sylvia Crowe, the *bosco*, or what she referred to as the *bosche*:

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Bargmann during a lecture at Harvard noted she preferred exploring and researching Etruscan tombs as opposed to creating measured watercolors of gardens during her time as a fellow at the American Academy at Rome. See, Julie Bargmann, "Modesty", (Daniel Urban Kiley Lecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, MA, March 4, 2021) min. 0:08.

<sup>88</sup> Lynette M. F. Bosch, "Bomarzo: A Study in Personal Imagery", *Garden History*, vol. 10, no. 2 (Autumn, 1982): p. 97.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in John Dixon Hunt, *A World of Gardens* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), p. 123.

<sup>90</sup> Katherine Coty, "Dream of Etruria: The Sacro Bosco of Bomarzo and the Alternate Antiquity of Alto Lazio," unpublished master's thesis, University of Washington, 2013, p. 25.

...is a subordinate space that gives scale and solidity to a central composition held within them, and a sense of mystery to the views along the terraces which disappear into their shade, but they also play an important part in linking the garden with its surroundings. For the essence of the Italian garden is that it is a meeting place of man's spirit with the countryside in which he lives. It takes the elements of the Italian landscape and transmutes them into the utmost possibilities of beauty.<sup>91</sup>

The 'central composition' exploring 'the utmost possibilities of beauty' that Crowe alludes to refers to the harmonious symmetrical sequence of cultivated geometric terraces, linked by a commanding linear vista that has come to define the *giardino all'italiana*.<sup>92</sup>

This typical paradigm between a central symmetrical geometric garden and 'subordinate' asymmetrical *bosco* along the margins is exemplified in countless gardens of the period; namely, at the neighboring and contemporary Villa Lante (c.1568-1579) at Bagnaia and Villa Farnese (c.1559-1587) at Caprarola. Both gardens would have been intimately familiar to Vicino Orsini during his life, owned by Cardinals within Orsini's own social circles and located within ten miles of Bomarzo.<sup>93</sup> However, Orsini's *bosco* has historically stood separate from these masterpieces in late-Renaissance garden design

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<sup>91</sup> Sylvia Crowe, *Garden Design* (London: Country Life Limited, 1958), p. 33.; Additionally Anatole Tchikine states the bosco served as an, "artificial wilderness that helped mitigate the transition between designed and vernacular landscapes, blurring the boundaries of a property to blend it with the natural surroundings," in "Among the wonders of Bomarzo", p. 97.

<sup>92</sup> Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto in, *Medici Gardens: From Making to Design* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 5-9 explores the *giardino all'italiana* as a modern invention, a reinterpretation of historical Italian gardens to define a national art whose genesis can be traced to foreign scholarship and expanded by a fascist regime for the Mostra del giardino italiano held in Florence at the Palazzo Vecchio in 1931. Morgan also reviews this exhibit and the contemporary reimagining of historical Italian landscapes following the *giardino all'italiana* format in his book, *Monster in the Garden: The Grotesque and the Gigantic in Renaissance Landscape Design*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. pp. 22-24.

<sup>93</sup> Cardinal Alessandro Farnese of Villa Farnese was Vicino's brother-in-law through his wife Giulia Farnese. Additionally Cardinal Farnese granted Vicino the village of Bomarzo and Chia when his father died. See Coty, "A Dream of Etruria", p. 19.

for its lack of symmetry and proportion that defined the typical garden of the period. Namely, there is no clear separation or hierarchy between garden and *bosco* legible within the Sacro Bosco.

Looking at a contemporary painting of the Villa Lante located within the *Casino Gambara* flanking the garden, the relationship between the orderly garden and disorderly *bosco* is clearly visible. [Fig. 45] The *bosco* is comprised of a series of non-linear asymmetrical pathways that do not follow a single axis. The garden however is an ascending sequence of geometric terraces, linked by a dominant linear axis that follows the flow of water. Similarly, at Villa Farnese, a wood was planted to contrast the geometry and scale of the medieval fortress that was converted into a Villa for Cardinal Farnese. The woodland sits between the lower main garden near the villa and the upper hidden garden near the *casino*. [Fig. 46, 47] It functions as a ‘natural’ void, or anti-space to the harmony and reason that defines the lower and upper gardens. The sense of contrast between these two worlds was poetically described by the landscape historian Georgina Masson as follows:

From here (the main garden at Villa Farnese) a path leads into what is now a wood, climbing gently up the hill; it gives the impression of having left all sign of human habitation behind and one expects it to lead deeper and deeper into the forest. With some surprise, after a turn, one comes upon a wide grassy avenue bordered with pine, that leads up to an astonishing vista of fountains and cascades sparking in the sunlight framed in a setting of golden-hued sculptured stone. No other garden in Italy, or probably in the world, contains a surprise as ravishing as this. The contrast is so striking between the shade and silence of the woodland and this sunlit open space filled with the ripple of water. In the astonishment of finding such a place, one recalls Vasari’s phrase that this magical garden was ‘born not built’.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Georgina Masson, *Italian Gardens* (Woodbridge, United Kingdom: Garden Art Press, 2011), p.194.



As Sylvia Crowe and Georgina Masson have pointed out, a major contributing factor in both gardens is due in large part to the disorderly marginal woodland that gives a heightened meaning to an orderly central garden. For Renaissance viewers, this paradigm that diagrammatically places orderly and disorderly spaces in a dialectic tension with one another finds meaning in ancient and medieval conceptions of the world.

Looking at medieval maps of the world (*mappaemundi*), such as the ‘Psalter Map’ and the ‘Hereford Map’, medieval thinkers looking to ancient texts visualized the world schematically as a hierarchical structure between a known center that gives way to disorderly unknown margins. [Fig. 48] These margins were depicted as a place of novelty and wonder, inhabited by marvelous monsters and combinatory creatures, signaling the inventiveness and variety of the natural world.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, these wonders worked to challenge and give meaning to the prevailing civilized order, typically represented as a rigidly geometric center within medieval world maps.<sup>96</sup>

The Sacro Bosco’s lack of a clearly legible orderly center and grand linear narrative represents a clear departure from this paradigm. This led Arnaldo Bruschi to also make the claim that the Sacro Bosco was perhaps a marginal part of a larger formal garden, similar to the *bosco* found at Villa Lante. However, these claims have been compellingly dismissed, since the supposed area for any formal garden between Orsini’s

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<sup>95</sup> For a discussion on conceptions of pre-modern wonders or marvels on the edges of the known world see Rudolph Wittkower, “Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (1942): pp. 159-197. Also, Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), pp. 25-39.

<sup>96</sup> Daston and Park, *Wonders*, p 34.; Karl Whittington, "The Psalter Map: A Case Study in Forming a Cartographic Canon for Art History," *Kunstlicht*, (January 2014): pp. 19-26

castle and the Sacro Bosco would have dwarfed any contemporary garden.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore there is no evidence of terracing, a substantial gravity fed water source, or any written or visual documentation of a formal garden by Vicino or his peers in this supposed area.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, designed without the accompaniment of a formal garden, Orsini's *bosco* deviates from the dialogue between *giardino* and *bosco* found throughout contemporaneous gardens. As Katherine Coty describes it, the Sacro Bosco is:

...devoid of a clear distinction between the 'out there' of the wild, untouched nature and the 'in here' of the orderly garden, the Sacro Bosco blends with its surrounding, not only blurring the lines between designed and vernacular landscapes, but also mobilizing the characteristics of the local topography in a way that playfully brings out and enhances the unique spirit of the place.<sup>99</sup>

In sum, in order to preserve the *genius loci* of his native landscape in a designed landscape, Orsini's *bosco* ignores contemporary paradigms. His *bosco* acts as a nexus as opposed to a transitional zone between the garden and the surrounding landscape.<sup>100</sup> This is achieved through an incongruous assemblage of discrete interventions woven into a matrix of raw physical woodland.<sup>101</sup>

The landscape historian Luke Morgan has argued that this incongruous and paradoxical design language found at the Sacro Bosco shares its "vocabulary, or syntax" with the widely used and theoretically discussed sixteenth-century representational

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<sup>97</sup> Anatole Tchikine, "Among the wonders of Bomarzo: the sylvan landscape, the paragone, and memory games in the Orsini Sacro Bosco," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 41, no. 2 (2021), pp. 102-103.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.; Coty, "A Dream of Etruria", pp. 2-3.

<sup>99</sup> Coty, "Nel cuore di tufo", p. 128.

<sup>100</sup> Tchikine, "Among the wonders", p. 119.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

language of the grotesque.<sup>102</sup> Specifically, its juxtaposition of contradictory spaces and iconography, mingling the classical and its other forms a combinatory world, a balance between garden and *bosco* that breaks down the hierarchy between the two found in contemporary landscape design. While grotesque images of monsters, giants, and combinatory creatures mixing humans, plants, and animals were widely used in Italian gardens throughout the sixteenth century, its use in Orsini's *bosco* goes beyond mere iconographic ornament.<sup>103</sup> [Fig. 49] Instead, its mixing of orderly and disorderly forms and enigmatic narratives penetrate into the underlying structure of the design, creating a 'grotesque assemblage' of spatial and temporal juxtapositions that operate to dismantle the hierarchy between the classical symmetry found in the garden and its *other* dwelling in the surrounding woodland. This dialectic between a *classical* harmony and its dissonant *other* as I will outline is a defining feature of theoretical debates surrounding the grotesque in Renaissance Italy.

### Sixteenth-Century Discourse on the Grotesque

The grotesque as a term and aesthetic discourse emerged towards the end of the fifteenth century, after a series of frescoes were discovered in a subterranean labyrinth beneath the ancient ruins of the Baths of Titus in Rome. Guided by torch light, visitors descended from the ruins above to observe a vast array of bizarre hybrid creatures blending humans, animals, and plants painted along the ceiling of what was referred to as

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<sup>102</sup> Morgan, "Bizzarrie," p. 82.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

‘the grottoes’.<sup>104</sup> The grottoes beneath the Baths of Titus in Rome were later identified as the remnants of Emperor Nero’s pleasure palace, the *Domus Aurea*, the ‘*Golden House*’ that once stood atop the Oppian Hill in ancient Rome. The palace had been buried in antiquity and used as the foundations for the Roman baths and largely forgotten. The strange images, depicting monsters, chimeras, sphinxes, beasts, humans, plants, and architecture intertwined by foliage and threaded among monochromatic voids would come to be associated with the location in which they were discovered and given the name *grottesche* (*grotto-esque*) — thus grotesque.<sup>105</sup>

The images themselves were a part of an established repertoire of ornamental fresco painting in ancient Rome, in which metamorphosis was a central theme.<sup>106</sup> Vitruvius in chapter 5 of book 7 in his *De architectura* condemns such paintings for their decadence, referring to them as a “depraved taste,” which contradicts the ancient principles that a “painting is an image of that which exists or can exist.”<sup>107</sup> Vitruvius states:

But those subjects which were copied from actual realities are scorned in these days of bad taste. We now have fresco paintings of monstrosities, rather than truthful representations of definite things. For instance, reeds are put in the place of columns...candelabra supporting representations of shrines...volutes growing up from the roots having human figures senselessly seated upon them. Such things do not exist and cannot exist

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<sup>104</sup> “so called from being found in the grottoes.” Giorgio Vasari quoted in *Ibid*, p. 83.

<sup>105</sup> Maria Fabricus Hansen, “Ambiguous Delights: Ornamental Grotesques and Female Monstrosity in Sixteenth-Century Italy”, in *Ornament and Monstrosity in Early Modern Art*, edited by, Chris Askholt Hammeken and Maria Fabricius Hansen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), P. 46.

<sup>106</sup> Luke Morgan, *Monster in the Garden: The Grotesque and the Gigantic in Renaissance Landscape Design* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), p. 50.

<sup>107</sup> Vitruvius, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960. p. 210. Republication of the first edition of the English translation by Morris Hicky Morgan, Harvard University press 1914.

and never have existed. Hence, it is the new taste that has caused bad judges of poor art to prevail over true artistic excellence. For how is it possible that a reed should really support a roof, or a candelabrum a pediment with its ornaments?<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, the Roman poet Horace in the opening lines of his work, *Ars Poetica* observes such monstrosities as a “sick man’s dreams...empty of substance,” where the only response is to find humor in “a woman, lovely above, foully ended in an ugly fish below.”<sup>109</sup> These ancient critiques of grotesque images view them as non-sensical and comical, a pursuit of creativity that is in poor taste because they display an excessive use of artistic license, audaciously mixing and mingling forms that contradict the laws of nature, while ignoring the pursuit of what would later be defined as “classical” beauty. In antiquity, according to the Greek artist Zeuxis, beauty was achieved by selecting the finest features from several models to create a composite harmonious, perfect figure. Inversely, images in antiquity that would later be associated with the grotesque combined images of unlike things, seemingly without reason or purpose.<sup>110</sup>

These critiques of the grotesque became known through translations of Vitruvius’ and Horace’s texts during the Renaissance and were reawakened when prominent Renaissance artists such as Raphael, Signorelli, and Michelangelo began incorporating grotesque images into their own work after the rediscovery of the *Domus Aurea* frescoes.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> See David Summers, "Archaeology of the Modern Grotesque," In *Modern Art and the Grotesque*, edited by Frances S. Connelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 21, for a discussion of Horace’s phrase.

<sup>110</sup> Frances Connelly, "Grotesque," in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), unpaginated. <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780199747108.001.0001/acref-9780199747108-e-344>.

[Fig. 50] Famously, Raphael's workshop under the supervision of Giovanni da Udine expanded the literal translations of the newly discovered grotesque motifs, aligning the metamorphic themes with the liminal corridors of the Vatican Loggias.<sup>111</sup> This use of the grotesque marks a moment in history when it takes a distinguished role in artistic discourse, championed as an exploratory visual language used to challenge the classical principles of harmony and reason reemerging throughout the Renaissance; elevating it as an established decorative motif explored by prominent artists.<sup>112</sup>

As a result, a theoretical discourse on the grotesque was reawakened in the sixteenth century. On one side, grotesques were seen as the profane invention of artists, dismissed as monstrous creations that were against nature and therefore seen as a non-art.<sup>113</sup> These views aligned with classical critiques of the grotesque, which observed it as antithetical to beauty – as excessively ugly and unnatural images that provoke shock and disgust. On the other side, it was argued to be a solemn art, resulting from the *bizzarrie* (strange or eccentric imagination) or divine intervention of artists and therefore of nature.<sup>114</sup> On both sides, the grotesque became synonymous with *fantasia* (the inspired invention of individual artists).<sup>115</sup> Additionally, both sides observed the grotesque for how it breaks down established boundaries and hierarchies between classical beauty

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Connelly, "Grotesque."

<sup>113</sup> Morgan, *The Monster*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>114</sup> Accounts of Renaissance debates on the grotesque can be found in Nicole Dacos, *La Découverte de la Domus Aurea et la Formation des Grotesques à la Renaissance*, London: The Warburg Institute and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969, pp. 121-135.

<sup>115</sup> Connelly, "Grotesque."

based on logic and reason and its illogical fantastical other, challenging conventions of representation during the Renaissance.<sup>116</sup>

These debates of the grotesque and its explosion as an immensely popular decorative motif unfolded throughout the sixteenth century during the time the Sacro Bosco, Villa Lante, and Villa Farnese were being constructed. Given the grotesques association with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a primary source of Renaissance garden imagery, and its themes dealing with objects in a state of change, the grotesque naturally progressed from the liminal spaces of architecture to the living and ever changing medium of the garden.<sup>117</sup> Grotesque images of anthropomorphic figures, monsters, and mythical beasts – including herms, harpies, sirens, satyrs, unicorns, dragons, grotesque masks, giants, and other combinatory creatures mixing unlike things – progressed from the margins and transitional zones of architecture three-dimensionally into the intermediate corridors and pathways between terraces, artificial grottoes, and marginal areas throughout sixteenth-century Italian landscape design.<sup>118</sup>

### **The Grotesque in the Gardens of Lazio**

The paradigm of the grotesque as a decorative iconography intermixing notions of harmony and reason, and disorder and peril, found its logical place in the liminal spaces between the regularity of the formal garden and the disorder of the exterior world. This use of the grotesque is exemplified at the Villa Lante and Villa Farnese near Bomarzo in

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Morgan, *The Monster*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>118</sup> John Dixon Hunt, "Ovid in the Garden," *AA Files*, no. 3 (January 1983): p. 6.

the modern-day Lazio region of Italy. The most significant zones for the grotesque's emergence were the peripheral *bosco* and other transitional spaces within the formal garden.

At Villa Lante, starting at the entrance to the *bosco*, visitors would have been greeted with a scene found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of Pegasus unleashing the spring of Hippocrene surrounded by the muses. [Fig. 51] This was a familiar iconographic motif found at Villa d'Este, Pratolino, the Villa Medici in Rome, and the Sacro Bosco; alluding to the earthly paradise of Mount Parnassus and the flow of artistic invention from the spring that inspired the muses.<sup>119</sup> At Villa Lante, the muses surrounding the fountain combine human and architectural forms, a motif used throughout the repertoire of grotesque paintings; and found within the grotesques frescoes framing the landscape paintings located in the casino at Villa Lante. [Fig. 52] From here visitors move freely up through the *bosco*, where a series of non-axial paths, statues and fountains allude to the *Golden Age* of antiquity, a primordial world before human intervention.<sup>120</sup> Many of the statues found throughout the *bosco* do not follow a linear narrative and often depict mythical beasts such as dragons, unicorns, and the centerpiece of the now gone *Fountain of the Ducks*, the *Four Grotesque Heads* (now in another fountain in the *bosco*).<sup>121</sup> [Fig. 53] As found in medieval *maapemundi*, these combinatory creatures lurking in the peripheral woodland, stand in a direct tension with the orderly world of the formal garden.

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<sup>119</sup> Claudia Lazzaro-Bruno, "The Villa Lante: An Allegory of Art and Nature," *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 59, no. 4 (December 1977): p. 555.; Hunt, *A World of Gardens*, p. 119.

<sup>120</sup> Lazzaro-Bruno, "The Villa Lante," p. 555.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 555-556.



At the top of the *bosco*, a gate leads to the *Grotto of the Deluge*, symbolizing the transition into the *Age of Jupiter*, or civilization, and the genesis of the garden's formal layout. Here the disorderly 'natural' world of the *bosco* transitions into a symmetrical and proportional geometrical garden through human art. The grotto itself is flanked by two herms, statues in antiquity used to mark a boundary, depicting the torso and head of a man combined with the base of a column similar to the grotesque muses found at the *Fountain of Pegasus*. [Fig. 54] Additionally, two loggias referred to as the *Loggia of the Muses* can be found on either side of the grotto. Within them we find typical grotesque frescoes, like those found in the *casino*, similar to Raphael's grotesques at the Vatican loggias. From this spatial and narrative liminal point of the grotto, the garden progressively formalizes as the flow of water descends its terraces following a long linear axis, culminating in the classically harmonious *Fountain of the Moors* at the base of the garden. Descending from terrace to terrace, grotesque masks can be found adorning urns along the edges of the terraces. Notably, grotesque masks are animated by the natural flow of water between terraces incorporated into the *Fountain of the Dolphins* and *The Table Fountain*. [Fig. 55-56]

Similar uses of the grotesque can be found at Villa Farnese. Looking back to the transitional moment between the wood and hidden upper garden described by Georgina Masson, visitors were first greeted with a grotesque mask at the base of the fountain. [Fig. 57] Its dissonant features represent a monstrous form in a state of change, again animated by the flow of water, thus mingling natural and artificial features. Ascending from the wood below to the *casino* above, visitors move along a linear axis through a series of enclosed terraces. Along the retaining walls more grotesque masks separate the

terraces from the surrounding landscape. Along the edges of the upper terrace near the *casino*, whispering herms combining architecture, human forms, and mythical beasts sit perched along the wall to “stand guard against the outer world”, marking the boundary between the symmetry of the parterre garden and the irregularity of the surrounding woodland.<sup>122</sup> [Fig. 58] Additionally, a grotto can be found inset within the walls along the edge of the lower garden near the main villa. Inside its interior is populated with horned satyrs, mythical combinatory creatures associated with nature, seemingly growing out from the pumice stone of the grotto. [Fig. 59]

At both Villa Lante and Villa Farnese, the grotesque occupies discrete liminal zones within a larger plan dominated by the archetypal *giardino all’Italiana* format. Whether in the *bosco* — a liminal zone itself — or in spaces between terraces, the grotesque is assigned to specific locales that reflects its signification of the juxtaposed unlike things or worlds. In contrast, at the Sacro Bosco, the grotesque is no longer one part of a larger designed whole: it offers the logic of the garden’s design itself. As Luke Morgan has suggested, the grotesque offers the very conceptual system that underlines the entire program.<sup>123</sup> The *bosco*, rather than serving as a transitional zone, functions as a nexus that contains and forms the essential context for key formal elements of the *giardino all’italiana*, resulting in a tension between classical symmetry and its monstrous other.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Masson quoted in, *Italian Gardens*, p. 194.

<sup>123</sup> Morgan, “Bizzarrie,” p. 82

<sup>124</sup> Tchikine, “Among the wonders,” p. 119.

The Sacro Bosco has historically been separated from contemporary gardens for its enigmatic layout of bewildering meandering pathways and stairs that must be retraced in order to obtain a full understanding of the wood's iconography and layout. Although the Sacro Bosco is often referred to as a *bosco* or park and not a garden, given its deviation from the classical *giardino all'italiana* format, both garden and *bosco* typologies can be observed within its design. Along these meandering paths, sculptures of giants, combinatory monsters, and mythical beasts are happened upon within the wood. This aligns with the layout of other *boschi*, namely the *bosco* found at Villa Lante. However, what sets apart Orsini's Sacro Bosco is both the absence of the formal sequence of the *giardino all'italiano*, and the absorption of geometric terraces within the matrix of the wood — spaces that are rarely mentioned in studies of Bomarzo. Although little is known about whether these terraces were cultivated with shrubbery and flowering plants, their geometry, scale, formality, and iconography match those typically reserved for gardens of the period.<sup>125</sup>

Take for instance the terrace for the *Fountain of Neptune* at Bomarzo, also referred to as the *Plateau of Vases*. This terrace is a rectangular space defined by two rows of vases complete with a gigantic, bearded man lounging in a cascading fountain on axis with the terrace. [Fig. 60] Its imagery mirrors the river gods found in the terraced gardens at both Villa Lante and Villa Farnese. In these neighboring gardens spaces, gigantic lounging river gods are reserved for the middle terrace of their grand linear

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<sup>125</sup> John Garton points out that “reconstructing the Sacro Bosco's Renaissance flora,” is an “almost impossible task,” in his article, “Botanical Symbolism in Vicino Orsini's Sacro Bosco,” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2021): p. 143.

narrative sequence, celebrating the flow of water that gives life to the garden.

Additionally, there is the *Hippodrome* at Bomarzo, a rectangular terrace measuring roughly 150 feet by 60 feet.<sup>126</sup> [Fig. 61] This is the largest formal space at Bomarzo and its scale rivals the garden terraces at both Villa Lante and Villa Farnese. Orsini even gives the *Hippodrome* a central place within his design, placing his family emblem at an entrance to the terrace.<sup>127</sup> He also chooses it as the location for arguably the grandest inscription within his Sacro Bosco. Carved into a large natural stone outcropping which partially forms the retaining wall for the *Hippodrome* overlooking the terrace, the text reads:

*MEMPHIS AND EVERY OTHER MARVEL THAT THE WORLD  
HAS HELD IN PRAISE YIELD TO THE SACRO BOSCO  
WHICH RESEMBLES ONLY ITSELF AND NOTHING ELSE.*<sup>128</sup>

While others have questioned the uniqueness of the Sacro Bosco in relation to other *boschi* of the period, what is unique is the dialogue between the garden and *bosco* taking place.

There was, however, an emerging trend in late Renaissance Italian gardens to invite ‘untamed’ nature into a dialectical relationship with the garden. The terraces found at Bomarzo, in relation to Villa Lante and Villa Farnese, are not laid out discretely in a

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid. The Hippodrome is also referred to as a *xystus* by certain scholars, and labeled as a *pizzale* on certain tourist maps.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> CEDAN ET MEMPHI OGNI ALTRA MARAVIGLIE  
CH’HEBBE GIA IL MONDO AL PREGIO AL SACRO BOSCO  
CHE SOL SE STOSSO E NULL ALTRO SOMIGLIA. Translated by, Jessie Sheeler, *The Garden at Bomarzo: A Renaissance Riddle* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), p. 108.

linear progression or sequence — rather they are interwoven and interspersed in the matrix of the *bosco* itself. Referring to a modern-day axonometric drawing of the Sacro Bosco's layout, these orderly terraces can be seen balancing the scale of the surrounding asymmetrical woodland to the east and west. [Fig. 62] However, they do not connect in any logical harmonious sequence, on the contrary they sit askew from one another, constantly interrupted by raw native woodland.

The Sacro Bosco disrupts the typically orderly experience of these formal spaces encountered in the *giardino all'italiana*. Absent the linear geometric axes of the classic format, the visitor encounters the formal terraces of the *Plateau of Vases* and the *Hippodrome* through the disorienting matrix of the wood, with multiple entry points, and no clearly delineated sequence. This lack of linear narrative or grand moment of arrival between garden and bosco dismantles the duality and therefore hierarchy between the two.

Any way one approaches the *Plateau of Vases* fundamentally challenges the programmatic expectations found in contemporary gardens in the late sixteenth century. There are multiple points of entry, and each of these sequences involves a series of troubling juxtapositions. For example, navigating from the *Hippodrome* to the *Plateau of Vases*, visitors would descend from the *Hippodrome* terrace above to an informal wood dotted with a bizarre assemblage of statues containing a giantess balancing a vase on her head, and the famous Hellmouth to name a few. [Fig. 63, 64] Looking at a birds-eye photograph taken in 1954 when the site was deforested for agriculture, one can see the relationship between these two terraces and the informal wood scattered with these statues. [Fig. 65] Diagrammatically, the two formal terraces and the woodland are three

rectangular spaces, with the woodland loosely defined by the placement of its statues in relation to the *Hippodrome* and the *Plateau of the Vases*. However, within this woodland space there is no formal cohesiveness, it is a transitional void inhabited with grotesque monsters, between two highly formalized terraces. Yet, this peripheral wood is not like the *bosco* at the Villa Farnese—because the moment of arrival at the formal terrace does not give way to the expected sequence of ascending or descending terraces. Instead, as one navigates out of the *Plateau of Vases* you are plunged back into one of two disorienting spaces. One choice visitors have is to descend next to or through the leaning house, inside of which the landscape itself is disoriented and reframed askew. The very inscription associated with the tower presents a paradox, promoting peace of mind, only to reward visitors with further disorientation.<sup>129</sup>

Another approach to the *Plateau of Vases* is through an exceedingly awkward pinch point between the Fountain of Neptune and the terrace wall that also functions as a theater below. [Fig. 66] Historically, a precarious set of winding stairs (now gone) would have hugged the wall from the theater below leading directly into this pinch point in the wood as opposed to any grand view of the Fountain of Neptune above. Moving through this narrow space visitors can move east along a meandering path through the wood where they would encounter a giant reclining female nude clutching to the very rock in which she was formed, an Etruscan tower, and towering wrestling giants. [Fig. 67, 68, 69]

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<sup>129</sup> ANIUMUS QUIESCENDO FIT PRUDENTIOR ERGO, “the mind which is quiet is thereby wiser.” Translated by Coty, “A Dream of Etruria.” p. 15.

As for the *Hippodrome*, again all approaches to the formal terrace fail to connect to a linear sequence of further formal terraces. Referring back to the axonometric drawing of the Sacro Bosco's layout, visitors may move west from the statue of wrestling giants through a woodland above the meandering path to the *Plateau of Vases* eventually arriving at a semi-circular space at the northern edge of the *Hippodrome*. On the opposite end, another semi-circular space leads in all three directions to a surrounding woodland. It is worth noting that although the *Tempietto* is often referred to as a moment of salvation within the disorderly wood, it sits askew to the formal *Hippodrome*, with its apse facing the stairwell to the terrace below. [Fig. 70]

Thus, all approaches to these terraces juxtapose the moment of arrival to a grand orderly space with whimsical disorder. Furthermore, even within the formal spaces themselves, huge, looming monsters shadow the orderly terraces, or are themselves made the focal point of the viewer's sightline. Observing this within the *Hippodrome*, in both semi-circular spaces at either end of the terrace visitors find monstrous combinatory creatures. To the South, in line with the axis of the terrace a statue of a woman whose lower half is a bench invites one to sit and observe the terrace. Near her, is a three-headed dog guarding the stairs to the *Tempietto* above. These two statues are often associated with Persephone and Cerberus, alluding to visitors and many scholars that the order found here may perhaps be a descent into the underworld, the beginning of some Dantesque journey.<sup>130</sup> [Fig. 71] On the opposite end, in line with the terrace's axis, giant

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<sup>130</sup> Darnall and Weil, "Il Sacro", p. 6.

harpies and siren statues combining female, fish, serpent and dragon, anchor the northern arrival to the *Hippodrome*. [Fig. 72]

Moving back to the *Plateau of Vases*, the giant lounging man (presumably Neptune) is given a central place along the terrace's axis. To reiterate this formal layout and the iconography align with central terraces within neighboring gardens. However, the terrace is flanked by gigantic statues of a dragon fighting lions, and an elephant carrying a castle with a soldier clasped in its trunk. [Fig. 73] These giant grotesques inhabit the wood beyond the boundary of the vases, but they are positioned facing the formal space; and their proximity to the terraces axial program go beyond mere ornament, challenging the formality and grandeur of the terrace itself.

Lastly, even the boundary markers of giant acorns and pinecones alternating along the eastern and western edges of the *Hippodrome* present a paradoxical tension between garden and *bosco*. [Fig. 74] The pinecone for Renaissance viewers would have been associated with the widely known Vatican Pigna, an ancient Roman bronze relocated from old St. Peters to the Cortile del Belvedere in 1562-65, within the Vatican.<sup>131</sup> This took place during or before the construction of all three Lazian villas, and was completed by Pirro Ligorio who Orsini had close ties to.<sup>132</sup> This ancient symbol of rejuvenation was often given a prominent place in designed spaces. Beyond its prominent location historically a top the Pantheon, within old St. Peters, and finally the Vatican cortile, pinecones also encircle the center of the culminating terrace within the *Fountain of the Moors* at Villa Lante. [Fig. 75] The acorn, on the other hand had strong ties to the

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<sup>131</sup> Garton, "Botanical Symbolism," pp. 144-145.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 141.



primordial world before civilization, described by Ovid as the diet of Arcadian man in the *Golden Age*.<sup>133</sup> This meaning explains the placement of the *Fountain of Acorns* within the *bosco* at Villa Lante. As a noted antiquarian, Vicino Orsini would have no doubt been aware of these symbols and their meanings.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, the alternation of pinecones and acorns along the boundary of the *Hippodrome* seemingly play with the iconography associated with the civilized and primordial worlds — or garden and *bosco*. This playful mingling, defining the grandest terrace at Bomarzo, aligns with the design language seemingly playing with the typologies of garden and *bosco* found within the design as a whole.

In sum, this paradoxical design language found throughout the Sacro Bosco is more than just a series of small interventions working to disrupt a classical ideal. Its use fundamentally breaks down the prevailing hierarchy of the *giardino all'italiana* format to center the *genius loci* of Orsini's native landscape. As a result, Orsini's idea of the garden incorporates the tame and the wild, the garden and *bosco*, or more broadly the classical and its *other* without any clear distinction between the two. As found in artistic theoretical discussion of the grotesque, the structure of the Sacro Bosco challenges the classical notions of beauty, defined by harmony and reason by creating a nexus with its antithesis, giving voice to the classical's other. Four hundred years later, the Latzes develop an identical language in their "Syntactic" Concept to give voice to the *genius loci* of the post-industrial wastelands inhabiting the margins of their native West Germany.

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<sup>133</sup> Lazzaro-Bruno, "The Villa Lante," p. 555.

<sup>134</sup> Garton, "Botanical Symbolism," p. 151.

## The Syntactic River Port Island and the Grotesque Sacro Bosco

The “Syntactic” Concept proposed for the River Port Island, like the grotesque conceptual language of the Sacro Bosco is at its core a design language used to preserve the Latzes’ sense of the *genius loci* of a marginalized vernacular space within a designed landscape. For Orsini, it was the wondrous Etruscan woods of Tuscia, while for Latz it was the wondrous post-industrial wastelands of West Germany. Both can be understood as monstrous landscapes, for their threatening presence towards a canonical paradigm of idealized nature in their respective time periods.

As discussed in the section titled, “The Industrial City as a Kind of Monster” in the previous chapter, in the century leading up to the design of the River Port Island, a tension between center and peripheral landscape was found in the relationship between the picturesque park and the industrial city growing along its margins. These opposing landscapes align with the binary between the idealized superior world of the garden and the subordinate vernacular world of the *bosco*. While the *bosco* in sixteenth-century landscapes discussed above was a liminal space, by the nineteenth century its function had evolved.

As I will lay out below, historically the *bosco* of sixteenth-century Italian gardens grew to become the footprint of the nineteenth-century picturesque park. Once this historical evolution took place, the *bosco* was no longer a liminal space but a canonical archetype of idealized beauty for nineteenth-century landscape architects; the anthesis to the industrial city. This sets up the binaries which the Latzes broke down. Moreover, the nineteenth-century binary unlike the historical Renaissance binary at Villa Lante or Villa

Farnese no longer included the marginal within the design but pushed it further to the edges.

Looking to the work of Stephen Switzer and William Kent, the typology and footprint of the Italian *bosco* forms the foundation of a new approach to idealized nature that would come to be known as the English Landscape — or Transitional — Style. At the turn of the eighteenth century, English tastes towards garden design began to adopt a ‘graduated’ sequence of garden and forest spaces found in much earlier three-fold layout of sixteenth-century Italian villas: between garden, *bosco*, and the surrounding landscape.<sup>135</sup> This tripartite sequence of landscape can be seen in an engraving at Eaton Hall from 1707, where formal geometric garden spaces of hedges, lawns, and pools were laid out near the house. [Fig. 76] These spaces gave way to an informal landscape of meandering paths within a sylvan plantation, with labyrinths and smaller formal spaces cut out of the woodland. Within the garden and marginal plantation, unbounded views expanded to the surrounding landscape.

### **The Picturesque Era**

Interest in the space between garden and the surrounding landscape, the transitional realm reserved for the historic Italian *bosco* was explored in the theories of Joseph Addison and Alexander Pope on gardens.<sup>136</sup> Joseph Addison, associated the transitional spaces of wooded plantations with the literary device of the uncommon found

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<sup>135</sup> Hunt, *A World of Gardens*. pp. 160-163.

<sup>136</sup> Katherine Myers, “Ways of Seeing: Joseph Addison, Enchantment and the Early Landscape Garden,” *Garden History*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Summer 2013): p. 10.

in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.<sup>137</sup> The landscape gardener Stephen Switzer practically expands on Addison theories, adopting the syntax of mythological and narrative emblems found in the Italian *bosco* to the design of *Wray Wood* at Castle Howard in the early-eighteenth century.<sup>138</sup> While Castle Howard and many other early-eighteenth-century English gardens maintained the basic formalism and emphasis on geometry of the sixteenth-century Italian gardens, this began to break down as focus was placed on the design of in-between landscapes in the designs of William Kent and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown over the course of the eighteenth-century. Looking to the development of Stowe as an example, Kent's design contributions throughout the 1730's converts earlier baroque gardens — utilizing the geometric paradigms — into a much more naturalistic language. As a successor to Kent, 'Capability' Brown further focuses on the transitional landscapes between the garden and surrounding landscape, perfecting an artifice that works to eradicate the human hand to create a seemingly natural landscape. As realized by Kent and Brown, English landscape design is an approach looking to balance art and nature

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>138</sup> "The Layout of Wray Wood, so praised for its imitation of nature, seems to have been nothing particularly new, let alone naturalistic. From other sources it is clear that it was much like classical Roman descriptions of country seats; much like the groves of Italian Renaissance villas — those at Villa Lante, at the Medici Villa of Pratolino, or at many Frascati villas. Scattered along the walks in the wood were fountains, pools, urns, statues of Diana, Apollo, syblis, and Neptune, and a summerhouse with marine and landscape frescoes. In short, what Carlisle and Switzer (client and designer) between them did was to represent nature by combining idealized "natural" from the old woodland which was such a prized feature of the estate, the fortification like walls shown on the the plan and which continue the castle theme of the estate, and, after the manner of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a whole range of mythological and narrative emblems, the common theme of which was nature's penetration by god and human alike. It was indeed an imitation or representation of nature, but with the full vocabulary and syntax of Renaissance forms mingling with the native, indigenous trees." In John Dixon Hunt's. *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), pp. 37.

rooted in the imitation and heightening of natural forms, rather than the revelation of a hidden, geometric divine order to nature found in classical Italian gardens.<sup>139</sup>

The style perfected by Brown would later be associated with the picturesque park, a middle ground between the classical beauty of the formal garden near the house and notions of the sublime found in the vast forests and mountains beyond the estate. This of course aligns with the transitional zone of the *bosco* in Renaissance villas. The beautiful as it pertained to designed landscape in relation to the picturesque was associated with the proportion, symmetry, and ‘smoothness’ of formal garden terraces and manicured lawns directly adjacent to a residence. On the other end of the aesthetic spectrum, the sublime was found in the boundless ‘wilderness’ that surrounded English estates. Landscape features deemed to be picturesque lay somewhere in between the two realms, in a state of transition failing to overwhelm the mind with a mix of awe and terror found in the surrounding ‘wilderness’ but were irregular and asymmetrical in form and therefore unfit for the formal garden. Gnarled deformed trees and deeply textured overgrown stone outcroppings are typical examples of picturesque landscape features described by Uvedale Price and William Gilpin in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In designed landscapes led by ‘Capability’ Brown, such uncommon scenery was reframed through the use of similar irregular landscape features in earlier historic landscape paintings, aestheticized as features seen as fit for a picture — thus, picturesque. However, with the repertoire of the picturesque park established by Brown and expanded by Humphrey

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<sup>139</sup> For a brief discussion on the use of geometry in the Renaissance garden to reveal the divine see, Luke Morgan. “Design,” in *A Cultural History of Gardens in the Renaissance (Vol. 3)*, edited by Elizabeth Hyde (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), pp. 17-19.

Repton at the turn of the nineteenth century, the once liminal landscape type becomes the epitome of idealized nature. As the landscape historian John Dixon Hunt states, even in the eighteenth century the picturesque was always about creating a culturally palatable conception of wilderness, reframing or refining raw nature rather than juxtaposing truly disturbing elements with the beautiful.<sup>140</sup> By the time Olmsted and Vaux adopt the picturesque language for the design of Central Park in 1857 in an urban setting, it is operating in juxtaposition to a new marginal landscape: that of industry. Furthermore, the use of the picturesque as an established repertoire of styles and compositions aligns it with Zeuxis' classical definition of beauty, where a selection of ideal models (clumps of irregular trees, serpentine lakes, and moss-covered stones) creates a composite perfect figure. As a result, the use of the picturesque to camouflage, cover, or entirely erase the unsightly scenery of an urban industrial wasteland, sets up the twentieth century binary between a classical pastoral ideal of Arcadia and the monstrous industrial city along its edges.

### **The Latzes Look Beyond the Picturesque at the River Port Island**

While the picturesque in relation to designed landscape in the eighteenth century emerged as a means of blending the sublime and the beautiful, by the twentieth century it had lost its liminality as an aesthetic category and had become static through a repertoire of established images. This reflects the evolution in ideas about what beauty in nature is — from the revelation of a geometric order in the Renaissance to the imitation of the

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<sup>140</sup> Hunt, *Gardens and the Picturesque*, p. 4.

‘natural’ during the eighteenth century. This shift re-establishes a new binary between classical beauty and grand untamed industrial landscape. This is the new binary that the Latzes are breaking down, and they had to look elsewhere beyond the picturesque for a new vocabulary to preserve the marginal monster challenging the ideal. They found it by looking into the deep history of designed landscape – in the grotesque used throughout Renaissance gardens.

Looking back to the initial three concept plans presented by the Latzes in 1981 for the design of the River Port Island, it is clear that their intention, as in Orsini’s experiments at Bomarzo, was to create a nexus between the classical and its other. [Fig. 20,21,22] Both the Landscape Garden Concept and the Geometric Concept represent canonical design approaches used throughout Western Garden history, what the Latzes refer to as “accepted models” and “cliches”.<sup>141</sup>

As stated in chapter one, the Latzes’ 1981 proposal for the River Port Island outlined three possible design formats for the public park. The Landscape Garden Concept uses rolling topography, densely planted woodlands, and serpentine lakes with meandering paths. This plan exemplifies the ‘natural’ aesthetic of the nineteenth-century picturesque park, as used by Olmsted and Vaux. As in these nineteenth-century examples, the Latzes’ plan idealizes nature as untouched wilderness in urban cities, representing a “*Golden Age*” before human intervention, civilization and the industrial age tarnished paradise. As discussed above this alludes to historic Ovidian ideals in

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<sup>141</sup> Arthor Lubow, “The Anti-Olmsted.” New York Times. May 16, 2004. <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/16/magazine/the-anti-olmsted.html>; Peter Latz, .“Die Hafeninsel in Saarbrücken.” *Garten und Landschaft*, (November 1987), p. 42.;

Renaissance *boschi*.<sup>142</sup> However, it is dismissed for its inability to interact with what the Latzes see as a ‘new’ nature, the post-industrial wasteland. The Geometric Concept on the other hand is characterized by a linear sequence of symmetrical and geometric spaces, which links the east and west ends of the site with a linear axis—deploying, in essence, the orderly language of the *giardino all’italiana* format. Viewing these archetypal approaches through a historical lens, the Latzes see these two ways of treating nature as the binary in many late-Renaissance gardens, between the geometric garden and primordial *bosco*.

In contrast, their “Syntactic” Concept mirrors the grotesque language found at the Sacro Bosco. It deviates from a canonical ideal, in this case the pastoral ideal of the picturesque park by blending these two worlds of geometric garden and threatening primordial *bosco*, now redefined as the wild industrial wasteland. Just as in the design of the Sacro Bosco, the Latzes achieve this through a series of highly classical geometric insertions into a matrix of raw vernacular landscape. In a later article published in 2000, Peter Latz describes his design approach — one with its genesis at the River Port Island — in terms that suggest the grotesque’s combination of unlike things:

Our new conceptions must design landscape along with both accepted and disturbing elements, both harmonious and interrupting ones. The result is a metamorphosis of landscape without destroying existing features, an archetypal dialogue between the tame and the wild.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> “Die historische Landschaftsgarten versuchte die Darstellung von Natur; er ist zunächst das Produkt der menschlichen Sehnsucht nach dem verlorenen Paradies und verkörpert ein ideal der Freiheit.” “The historical landscape garden tried to depict nature; it is first of all the product of the human longing for the lost paradise and embodies ideal freedom.” Opening sentence for the section on the landscape garden concept in Peter Latz, Gunter Bartholmai, and Nicki Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zur gestaltung eines citynahen parke* (Saarbrücken: Druck und Satz Karl Stube, 1981), p. 13.

<sup>143</sup> Peter Latz, “The Idea of Making Time Visible”, *Topos*, vol. 33, (2000): p. 97.



The “tame and the wild” referred to in this quote can more broadly be read as the classic formality found in the Latzes’ orderly geometric insertions and the ‘naturally’ occurring vernacular postindustrial landscape. These are not binary for Latz but “interrupting” to form a nexus, a hybrid landscape whose “metamorphosis” breaks down the hierarchy between the harmony of classical beauty and its dissonant mundane other. Ultimately these “new conceptions” challenge contemporary notions of idealized landscape found in the canonical paradigms of the nineteenth-century picturesque park.

The Latzes deploy the grotesque in ways that allow them to preserve the *genius loci* of their native postindustrial Saarland, while making the unwanted wastes of industry accessible to a contemporary audience. In a later article, Peter Latz makes this motivation explicit, and describes its genesis at the River Port Island when he states, “there (Saarbrücken) I learned how the *genius loci* can be fixed to ruins of the past and linked to new elements and new uses.”<sup>144</sup> For Peter Latz, the “spirit” of the Saarland was manifested in the overgrown coal fields and rubble mounds that preserved the physical traces and memory of Saarbrücken’s industrialized past.<sup>145</sup> The Latzes’ experiment with ruderal plants and the ‘natural’ topography of industrial detritus to preserve the *genius loci* of the misunderstood industrial cultural landscape of the Saarland. In regard to the approach to the River Port Island, Peter Latz has stated:

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<sup>144</sup> Latz quoted in: Lucia Pirzio-Biroli, “Adaptive Re-use, Layering of Meaning on Sites of Industrial Ruin [Interview with Latz],” *Arcade*, Vol. 23, no. 2 (2004), p. 30.

<sup>145</sup> Lubow, “The Anti-Olmsted”.

I have never felt that I wanted to do something new or what I was doing was new. What I did want to do was develop something which was appropriate to the place in question.<sup>146</sup>

Since Alexander Pope's call to "consult the genius of the place in all" landscape gardeners and architects have followed a foundational principle in which designed landscape should be in tune with their region and natural processes. Peter Latz simply uses different cultural 'filters' to define what is 'natural' or in tune in the context of a postindustrial landscape. Where proponents of the nineteenth-century picturesque style may only associate the *genius loci* with natural features that reflect their nostalgia for untouched wilderness, such as geological features and mature woodlands, the Latzes engage with elements that challenge this aesthetic, found in a disturbing topography comprised of industrial detritus overgrown with naturally succeeding scrubby trees and weeds. [Fig. 77]

To enhance such features, the Latzes do not look to the images of pastoral nature that would erase them, but to the vernacular languages of agriculture, industry, and local stone construction found throughout the Saarland to preserve them. In preserving the ruins of the industrial past, the Latzes echo Orsini's preservation of the wildness of the Lazian landscape. Orsini's horticultural experiments with native woodland and natural stone outcroppings, which mirror the cultural landscape of an ancient Etruscan past in the woodlands surrounding Bomarzo, continued the vernacular landscape of Tuscia within the context of his Sacro Bosco. Similarly, the Latzes' experiments at the River Port Island amplify the vernacular landscape of the Saarland's industrial past, namely by

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<sup>146</sup> Latz quoted in Udo Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art* (Basel, Boston: Birkhäuser, 1996), p. 128.

incorporating the existing ‘natural’ features of pavements, rubble, and debris in-situ, and creating faux ruins that point to that history.

The initial models for the gridded rubble walls cutting through the existing rubble fields at the River Port Island looked to the overgrown retaining walls found at the Sacro Bosco.<sup>147</sup> As in the *tufo* construction at Bomarzo, the rubble walls at the River Port Island utilize a vernacular language, deploying a local “brickbat” technique for stone wall construction found throughout Saarbrücken.<sup>148</sup> Similar to a farmer delineating their land using excavated stone from plowed fields, local community members, students, and local masons excavated granite blocks, bricks, concrete, tiles, even motorcycle helmets buried beneath the surface and reformulated them in-situ following a simple gridded system of retaining walls and paths. [Fig. 78, 79] Reminiscent of the striations of natural geological outcroppings exposed at Central Park, the courses of varied salvaged materials found in the River Port Island’s rubble walls interact with a novel industrial geology, exposing the site’s long and complex industrial history, while still providing logical grounds for movement within the wasteland. [Fig. 80]

On the eastern half of the site, the degraded industrial pavements that made up the coal storage yard and were later used as informal parking areas become urban plazas. Through discrete interventions, overgrown degraded pavements were made accessible by resetting limestone sett pavers. At the same time, a gridded grove of *Tilia* trees framed by a series of clipped *Carpinus* hedges were planted directly into the utilitarian surface. [Fig. 81] In both, the retaining walls and site pavements, like the Sacro Bosco, existing

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<sup>147</sup> See image 55 in Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, p. 27.

<sup>148</sup> Latz, “Die Hafeninsel in Saarbrücken,” pp. 46-47.

landscape features undergo a metamorphosis through local vernacular design languages in-situ.

Beyond reformulating these existing ‘natural’ features, the Latzes also constructed faux industrial ruins to continue the myth and memory of an industrial culture. Similar to the faux Etruscan ruins found at the Sacro Bosco, the ruins at the River Port Island do not hearken back to a distant unseemly construction like the folly found at the Parc des Buttes Chaumont; nor are they existing ruins like the gas plant at Gas Works Park. Instead, they are constructed ruins, emulating a past that has an immediate relationship to the place and its culture. Designing the *Wassertor (Water Tower)* and the walls of the *Rhuegarten* the Latzes looked to the historic architecture of industry.<sup>149</sup> [Fig. 35]

Preserving the cultural landscape of the Saarland through relics of the coal works, and vernacular insertions, the Latzes’ “Syntactic” Concept also juxtaposes these informal local elements with highly formalized geometric design elements, in a manner that recalls the grotesque’s mixing of high and low, or simply the classical and its mundane other.<sup>150</sup> Instead of using compositional *pictures* of landscape to realize the park’s final form, the Latzes overlay a series of geometric patterns and gardens, what they refer to as structures or layers of information. These structures function in the same way geometry was used in sixteenth-century Italian gardens, not as crystalline forms to tame or dominate nature, but

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<sup>149</sup> See images 2 and 3 in, Latz, “Die Hafeninsel in Saarbrücken,” p. 46.

<sup>150</sup> Wendy Firth’s suggests that the grotesque can “refer to the mixing of high and low, and thus to the collapsing of culturally constructed binary oppositions and hierarchies,” see Wendy Firth. “Sexuality and Politics in the Gardens at West Wycombe and Medmenham Abbey,” in *Bourgeois and Aristocratic Cultural Encounters in Garden Art, 1550-1850*, edited by Michael Conan (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), p. 304.

to *reveal* a hidden unseen order within it.<sup>151</sup> One can think of Vitruvius's study of human proportion, where geometry reveals the unseen order of the human form and thus of nature. At Saarbrücken, this revelatory geometric language is communicated through the insertion of a circular walled garden, the Gauß-Krüger coordinate system, long linear promenades, allées and gridded groves of tree, and clipped hedges. These are placed cheek-and-jowl alongside elements such as the rubble field, coal storage yard, and coal chutes. This nexus between the classical and its other creates what are grotesque landscapes. They are not grotesque in a modern-day sense as excessively ugly, but for how they break down the hierarchal dualistic paradigms between classically beautiful designed landscapes and their other. Looking back on critiques of the park, it is paramount to note that debates of the design align with ancient and Renaissance critiques of the grotesque. One side seeing the Latzes' experiments as a blatant use of artistic license, a non-art, in poor taste labeled as 'junk aesthetics', while supporters observed it as an inventive, fantastical approach that broke free and challenged the outmoded nineteenth-century picturesque park.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Morgan, "Design," p. 19.

<sup>152</sup> Weilacher, *Between Landscape*, p.121.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

The River Port Island echoes Bomarzo not only in this overall grotesque program, but in specific design choices and insertions made throughout the park. Similar to the *Plateau of Vases* and the *Hippodrome* found at the Sacro Bosco, the *Ruhegarten* on the western half of the River Port Island and the *Baumplatz* on the eastern half serve as two main arcane geometric insertions within the design. Both of these significant spaces create unexpected adjacencies across classical design elements, and the raw materials and spaces of industry.

At the *Ruhegarten* a pure circular walled garden is carved down into a mound of industrial detritus. The viewer's encounter of this garden space is framed by fields of rubble, the bombed-out remains of the old industrial harbor. Instead of concealing these fields, substantial remnants of concrete, rebar, even car tires remain wholly exposed on the surface. Furthermore, the natural succession of *Betula* and *Pyrus* trees, and ruderal weeds atop the rubble remain in the final design. After having walked through the bombed out remains of industry, the viewer walks into a hyper-formalized, circular walled garden modeled on historic enclosed gardens such as the Tomb of Augustus in Rome and the Orto Botanico in Padua.<sup>153</sup> Once inside, they find themselves transported

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<sup>153</sup> These enclosed garden models are described in Peter Latz, Gunter Bartholmai, and Nicki Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zur gestaltung eines citynahen parkes* (Saarbrücken: Druck und Satz Karl Stube, 1981), p. 26.; Udo Weilacher, *The Syntax of*

from the stony and arid rubble fields to a highly cultivated garden, of fruit trees, clipped hedges, and flowering perennials. [Fig. 82] Both during the visitor's approach and theatrical encounter with the *Ruhegarten* and within the *Ruhegarten* itself, the Latzes stage the encounter between vernacular wasteland and high-geometric order.

The *Baumplatz* stages similar unexpected encounters. A substantial gridded grove of *Tilia* trees, framed by rows of clipped *Carpinus* hedges, is inserted directly into the overgrown pavement formerly used as a parking lot and historically for coal storage. To enter the plaza from the north during the park's opening in 1989, visitors move adjacent to a wooded area that had been filled in in the previous decade, containing the ruins of the concrete coal chutes.<sup>154</sup> Between the remains of the coal chutes and the *Baumplatz*, large portions of the informal parking area comprised of degraded pavements overgrown with weeds and scrubby trees are incorporated as an open plaza for city events. Thus, a similar design approach is found at the *Baumplatz* as at the *Ruhegarten*. These two elements dominate the two halves of the River Port Island's composition.

Finally, in the layout of the *Ruhegarten* itself, the Latzes offer a self-conscious meditation on the larger rhetoric of the River Port Island, and its genesis in early modern conceptions of the marginal. The circular layout of the *Ruhegarten* forms an archetypal dialogue between center and periphery, order and disorder that echoes that found in the *hortus conclusus* and medieval world maps. The internal layout of the garden with its

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*Landscape: The Landscape Architecture of Peter Latz and Partners.* (Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2008), p. 96.

<sup>154</sup> These concrete coal chutes no longer remain within the park, they were demolished sometime in the 1990's to make way for a parking garage for the Congress Hall along the northern edge of the park.

three axial points of entry, as opposed to the symmetrical four found in the Orto Botanico on which the Latzes say the garden is modeled, creates a ‘T’ inscribed within the circular space.<sup>155</sup> [Fig. 83] This alludes to the T & O format of the medieval *mappaemundi*, in which a perfect T inscribed within the circle of the world indicates the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa.<sup>156</sup> [Fig. 84] At the perfect center of the *mappaemundi*, is found the city of Jerusalem, the single point from which the entire medieval world order originates.<sup>157</sup> In a pointed inversion of the medieval paradigm, the Latzes seemingly dispel order from the garden, placing a ruin of a fountain at the *Ruhegarten*’s center.<sup>158</sup> [Fig. 85] This once again echoes a similar move made at Bomarzo, at the *Hippodrome*. The *Hippodrome* is lined by the monumental sculptures representing both pine cones and acorns, with the pine cones recalling classical formal spaces such as the Vatican and Pantheon — as discussed above — while the acorns recall the liminal space of the *bosco*. Thus, the *Hippodrome* performs a similarly theatrical staging of the Sacro Bosco’s design logic, with its undoing of the conventional hierarchy between center and periphery.

## In Summary

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<sup>155</sup> Earlier iterations of the plan for the “Syntactic” Concept show the layout of the *Ruhegarten* with a symmetrical cross pattern as in the layout of the botanic garden in Padua. See image 41, Latz, Bartholmai, Biegler, *Die Hafeninsel*, p. 22.; And image 1 in Latz’s, “Die hafeninsel in Saarbrücken,” p. 42. By 1987 the revised T&O layout of the garden can be found in Latz, “Die hafeninsel in Saarbrücken,” pp. 44-45.

<sup>156</sup> Karl Whittington, “The Psalter Map: A Case Study in Forming a Cartographic Canon for Art History,” *Kunstlicht* (January 2014), p 22.; David Woodward. “Reality, Symbolism, Time, and Space in Medieval World Maps,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 75, no. 4 (December 1985): pp. 510-511.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> The ruin fountain at the center of the *Ruhegarten* as of 2022 was under renovation.



Unlike in Central Park where the industrial wasteland is pushed to the edges of the design, the liminal landscape type is provided a central place within the syntactic design of the River Port Island. On the one hand, the Latzes' River Port Island responds to the concerns of their contemporary world, expressed in projects like Gas Works Park, which attempt to rehabilitate the remnants of industry based on views of nature in the twentieth century. And yet, the Latzes' approach is also markedly distinct from Haag's solution: at Gas Works Park, the grand, looming industrial monster is staged against a reformulated harmonious nature. Haag appeals to a *sublime* language here, in how he deals with the industrial monster — by which I mean, the looming remnants of industry provoke the same subjective reaction of typically sublime images like viewing a storm over a mountain.<sup>159</sup> The viewer is overwhelmed, the image of an immense natural — or unnatural and industrial — power is something that surpasses the reasoning function itself. Thus, Haag fundamentally reaches back to the nineteenth-century sublime in his particular solution at the Gas Works Park. The industrial monument provokes admiration, awe, and fear, powerful emotions, but it fundamentally remains beyond the viewer to either grasp or engage with its remnants.

Instead, the language of the River Port Island is the language of the late-Renaissance grotesque: where the industrial monster is inscribed in a series of paradoxical spaces, and the languages of cultivated Renaissance gardens are constantly

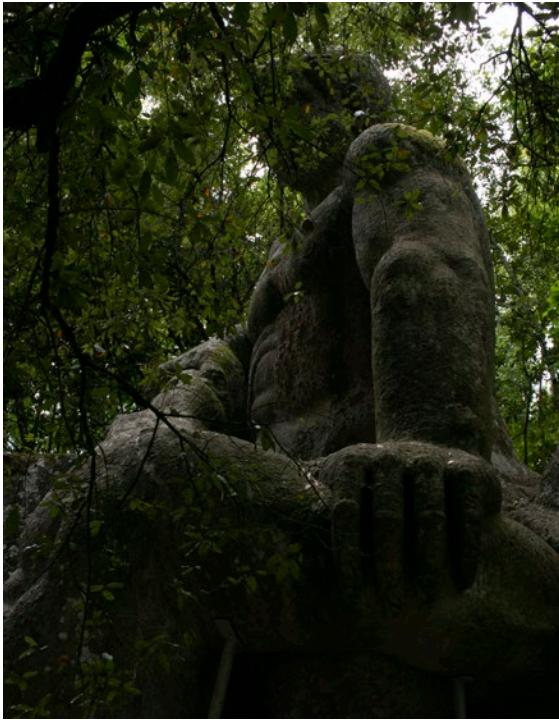
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<sup>159</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the aesthetics of eighteenth-century natural sublime to twentieth-century post-modern sublime and the postindustrial landscapes of Richard Haag see, Elizabeth K. Meyer. "Seized by Sublime Sentiments: Between Terra Firma and Terra Incognita," in *Richard Haag Bloedel Reserve and Gas Works Park*, edited by William S. Saunders, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), pp. 5-44.

interrupted by the vernacular languages of an industrial wasteland. Like the Sacro Bosco, this incongruous assemblage creates a nexus between center and peripheral landscapes, the formal garden and the chaotic industrial wasteland. In doing so, like the language of the grotesque in the Renaissance, the hierarchical categorization between the beautiful and its antithesis collapses. But even more than this, this language of the grotesque achieves the Latzes' higher goal — of creating a space that makes the threatening vernacular landscape of industry open, accessible, and usable. This is in line with how the grotesque operates, challenging the reason of the viewer through its juxtaposition of unlike things, but does so only to encourage them to develop a new perspective on order in nature, not to frustrate and overwhelm the reason of the beholder.

Thus, in spaces like the *Baumplatz* at the River Port Island, the limestone sett pavers recalling the remnants of a coal yard do not dwarf or threaten the beholder — in fact, they are literally placed at the visitor's feet and encompassed in their field of view — they are merely placed in challenging juxtaposition with the geometric language of the plaza and gridded *Tilia* trees. Paradoxes are set up to encourage new thought, not to disarm or overwhelm. In opting for the language of the grotesque, the Latzes seek a solution to rehabilitating the industrial wasteland that is open to new uses and narratives.

## Figures



**Figure 1** - *View Below Fighting Giants*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



**Figure 2** - Latz + Partner, *View from Slag Rock Towards Blast Furnaces and Chimneys*, 1990-2002, Duisburg North Landscape Park, Duisburg-Meiderich.



**Figure 3** - Latz + Partner, *View of Italian Valley*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 4** - *View of Tufo (local volcanic stone) Outcropping, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.*



**Figure 5** - *View of Rubble Field at the River Port Island c. 1979-1981, Saarbrücken.*





**Figure 6** - Latz + Partner, *View of Path Through the Rubble Fields*, River Port Island, 1985-1989, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 7** - Latz + Partner, *Detail View of Baumplatz*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





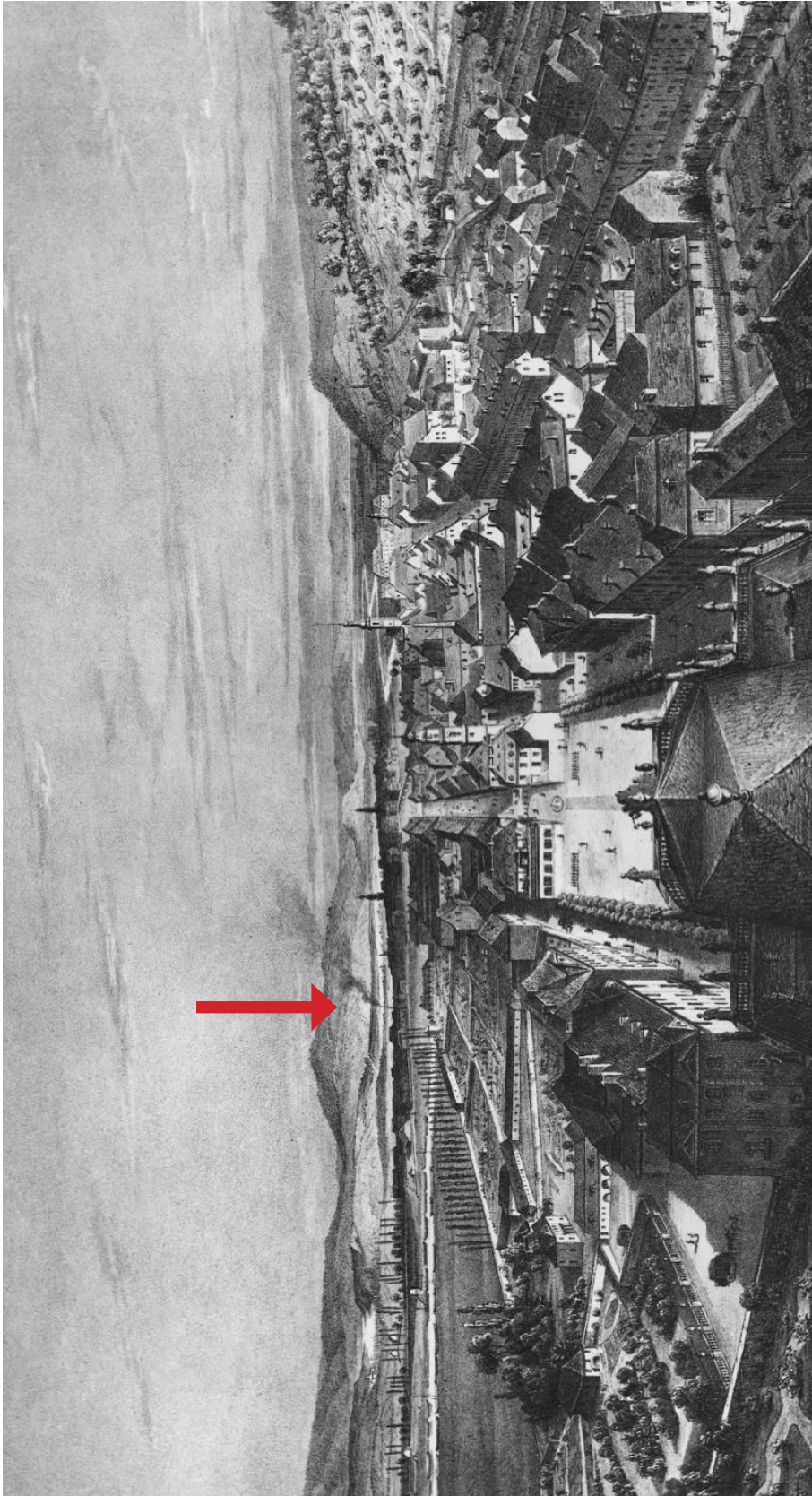
**Figure 8** - Section of a "Cassini Map" along the Saar River, c. late-18th century. The Kohlwager (coal scale) port is marked just outside of Sarrebruck (Saarbrücken) on the northern bank of the river (highlighted in yellow),



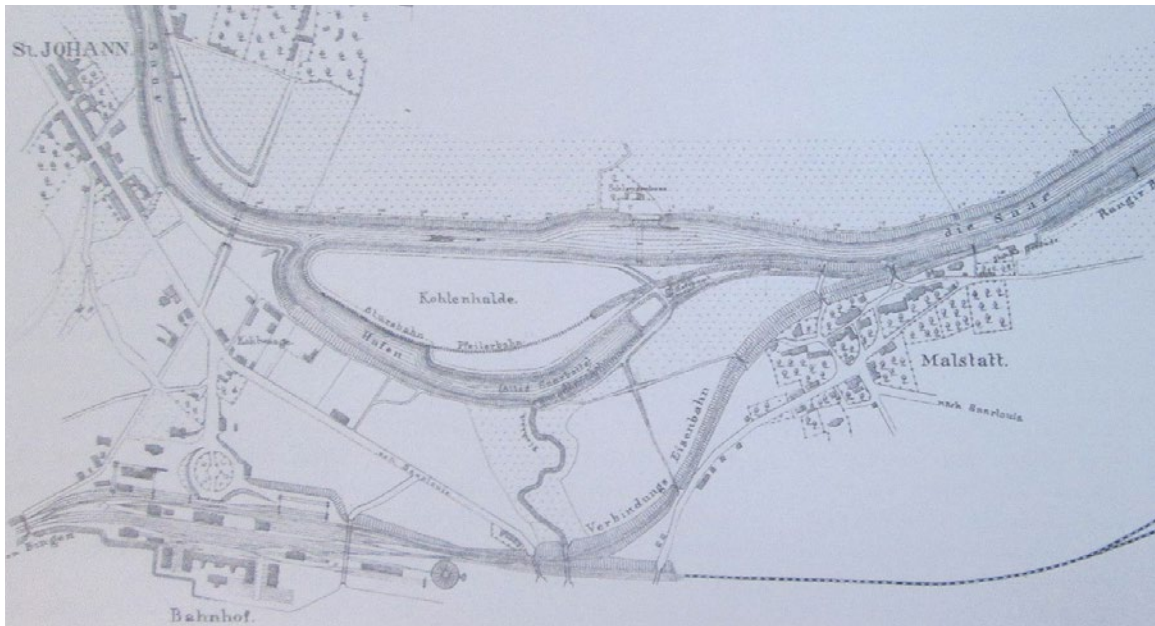
**Figure 9** - Jean-Pierre Guillot-Duhamel, Plate 61 of the "Duhamel Atlas", 1810. Expanded coal port facility now labeled the Kohlwaag (circled in red).







**Figure 10** - *Etching of Birdseye View of Saarbrücken, 1840.* Smokestacks near the approximate location of the coal port can be seen in the distance (red arrow).



**Figure 11** - River Port Island Plan, 1870.

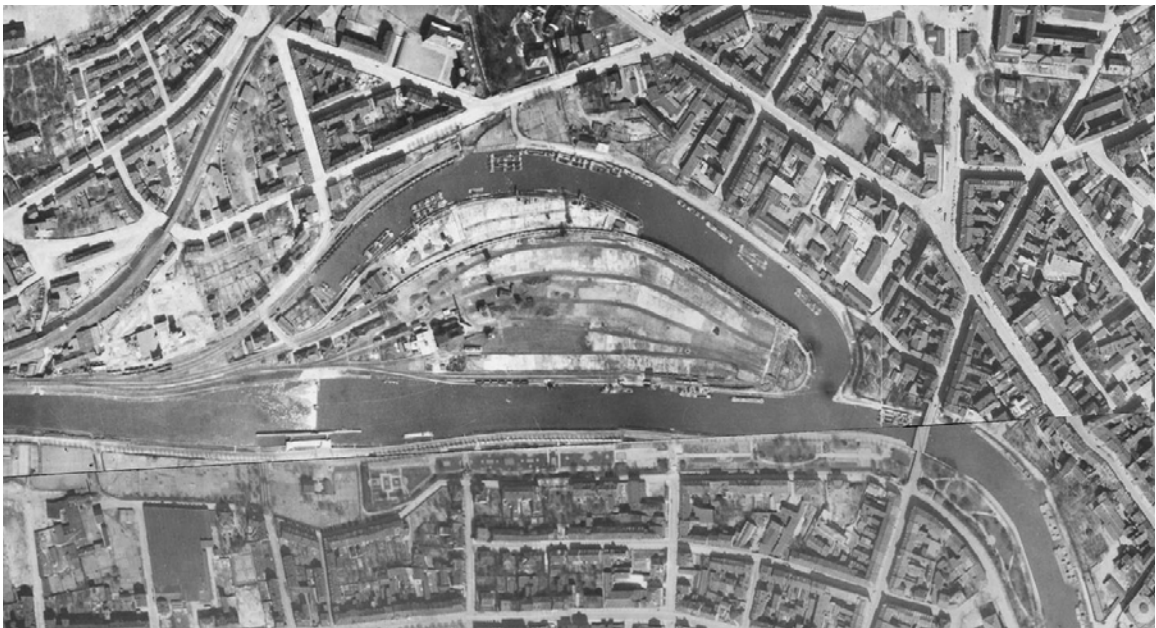


**Figure 12** - View of the Mouth of the River Port Island, c. 1870's, Malstatt-Burbach. Elevated rail lines and coal chutes used to load barges along the northern edge of the harbor located in the background.





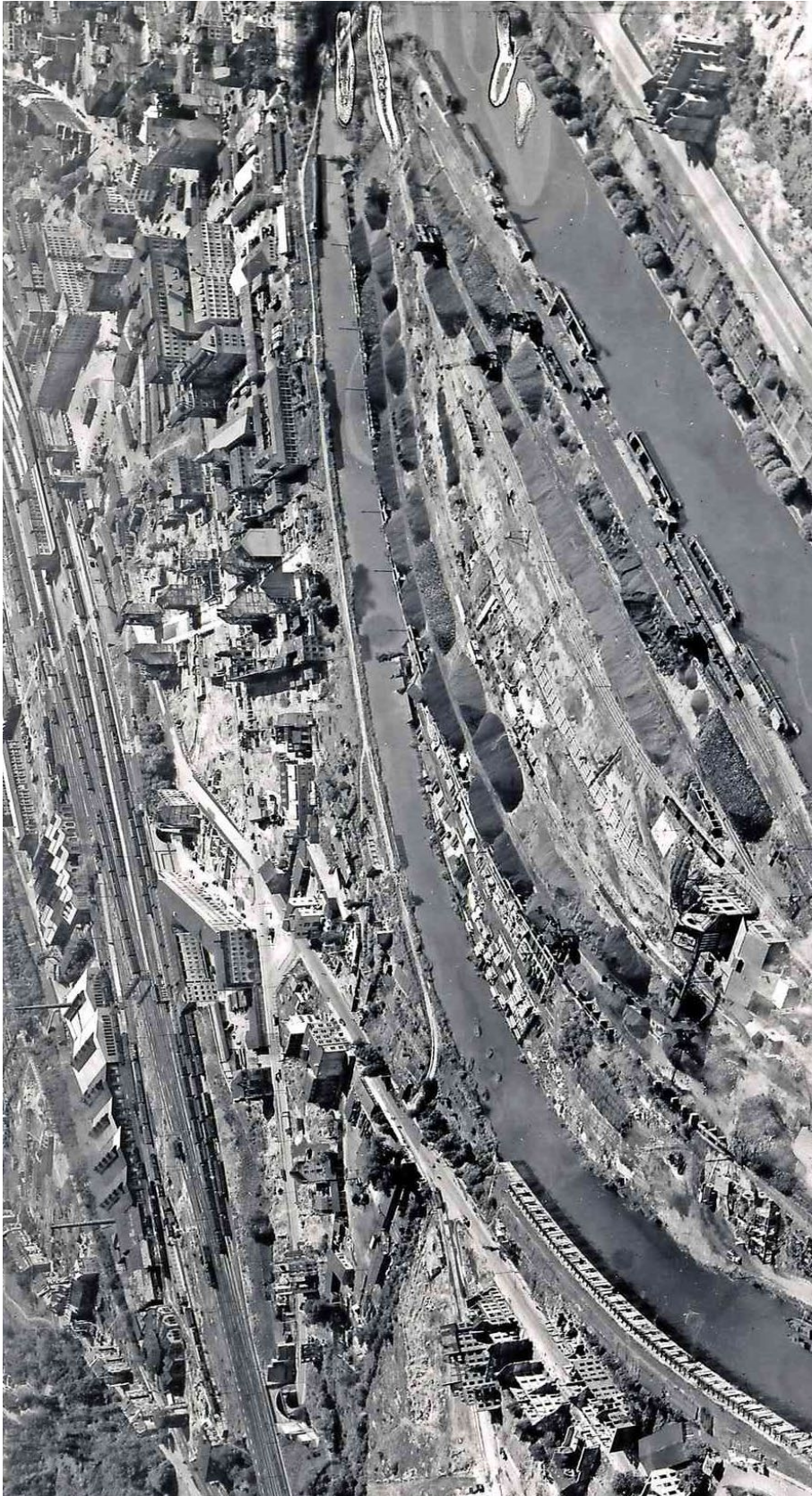
**Figure 13** - View of Inner River Port Island, 1888, Malstatt-Burbach. Elevated rail lines and coal chutes used to load barges along the southern edge of the harbor to the left of the image.



**Figure 14** - Aerial View of the River Port Island, 1929, Saarbrücken. Added rail lines and cranes are visible along the southern edge of the River Port Island along the straight canal.







**Figure 15** - Aerial View of the River Port Island, c. 1953, Saarbrücken. Coal operations are already up and running, but the level of devastation is visible in the buildings surrounding the port.





**Figure 16** - View of River Port Island from Malstatter Bridge, c. late-1950's - early-1960's, Saarbrücken. Towers of the Burbach Iron Works in the distance.



**Figure 17** - View of Silted Over Mouth of the River Port Island, c. 1960, Saarbrücken. Remains of the elevated rail lines and concrete coal chutes to the left of the image.



**Figure 18** - Panoramic view of the River Port Island, c. 1979-1981, Saarbrücken. The informal parking area is visible to the right of the bridge construction and the informal dumping ground is to the left. This image was used for the cover of the planning document published by the Latze in 1981 titled, *Die Hafeninsel: Visionen vom Wandel, alternativen zuegestaltung eines citynahen parkes*

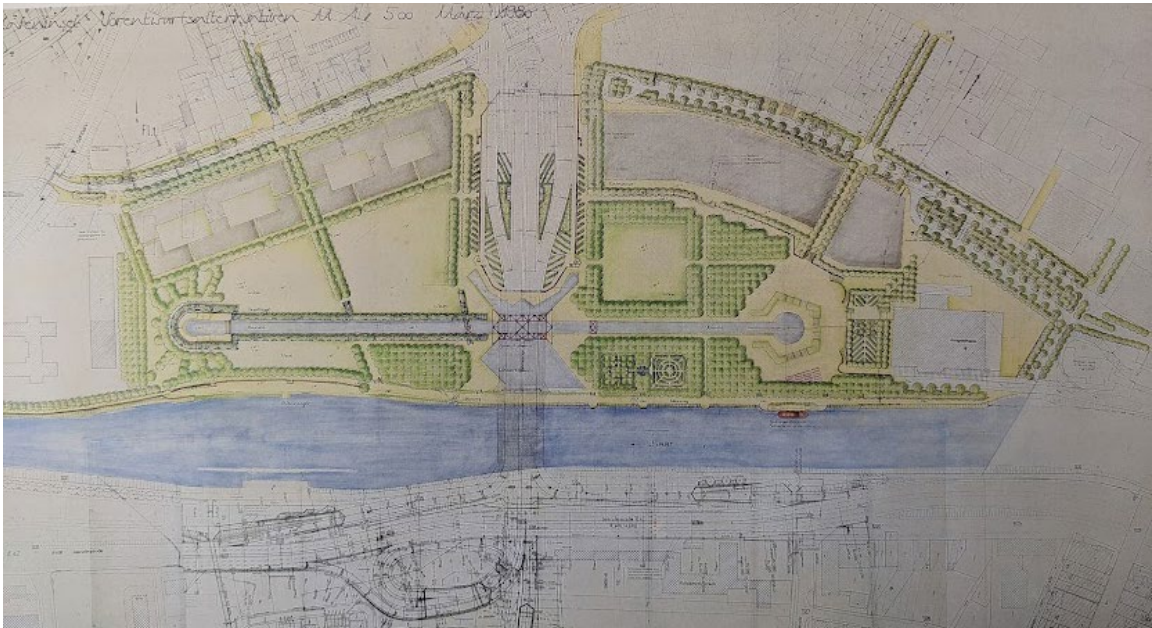




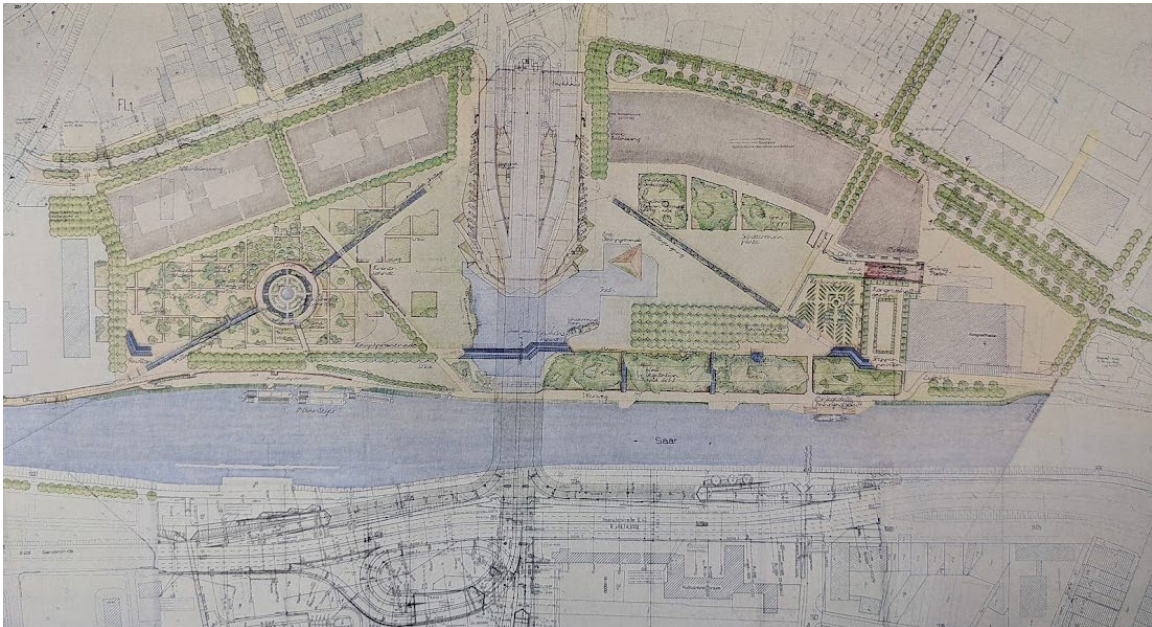
**Figure 19** - View of Peter Latz Site Visit to the River Port Island, c. 1985, Saarbrücken. The woodland following the old arm of the Saar River basin conceals the remains of the elevated rail line is to the right of the image with the newly constructed highway bridge in the background. The remains of the coal storage yard (recently used as a parking area for the city) is behind and to the left of Peter Latz (middle, fur coat).



**Figure 20** - Latz + Partner, *Landscape Garden Plan for the River Port Island*, 1980.



**Figure 21** - Latz + Partner, *Geometric Plan for the River Port Island*, 1980.



**Figure 22** - Latz + Partner, *Syntactic Plan for the River Port Island*, 1980.





Figure 23 - Latz + Partner, *Syntactic Plan for the River Port Island*, 1986.





**Figure 24** - Latz + Partner, *Gauß- Krüger Grid Through Rubble Fields*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 25** - Latz + Partner, *Rubble Field Overlook Towards Altsaarbrücken*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 26** - Latz + Partner, *Baumplatz Southeast Entry*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 27** - Latz + Partner, *Poplar Allée Northern Entry*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 28** - Latz + Partner, *River Promenade*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 29** - Latz + Partner, *Baumplatz*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 30** - Latz + Partner, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* in the Italian Valley, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 31** - Latz + Partner, *Aerial View of Ruhegarten*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 32** - Latz + Partner, *Ruhegarten*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 33** - Latz + Partner, *Chestnut Grove*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 34** - Latz + Partner, *Western Bank of Lake*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 35** - Latz + Partner, *Wassertor*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.

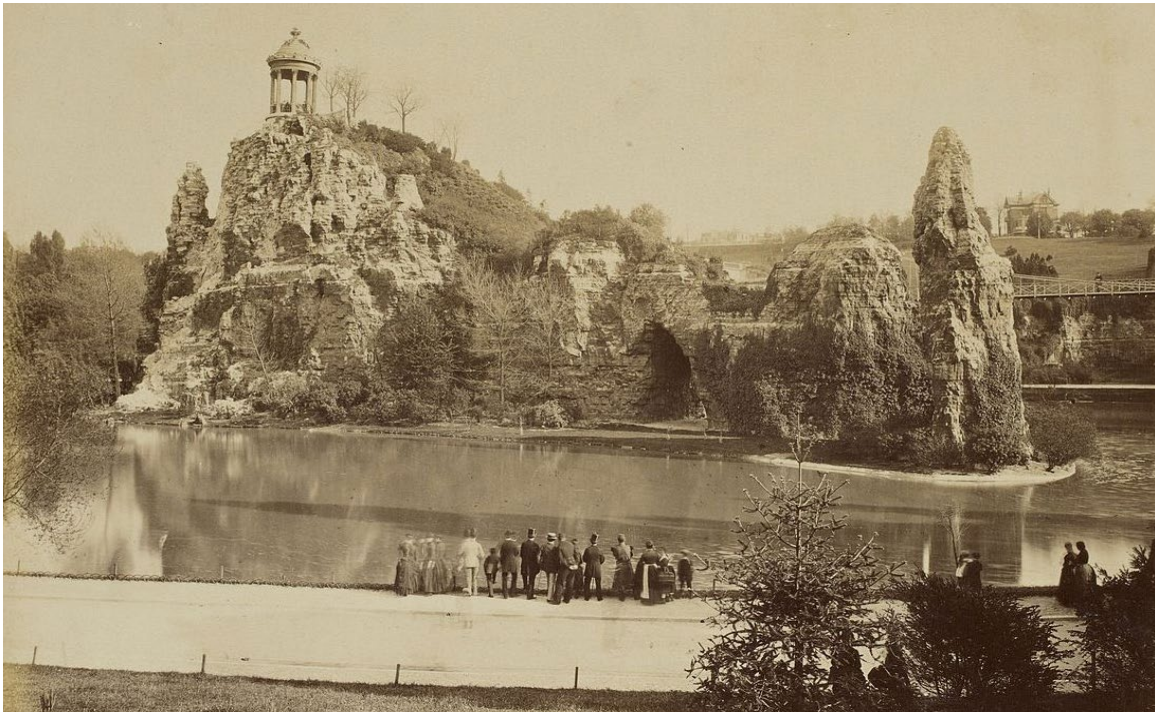


**Figure 36** - Frederick law Olmsted & Calvert Vaux,  
*Greensward Plan Presentation Board No. 5*, 1858.





**Figure 37** - Frederick law Olmsted & Calvert Vaux, *Grotto Covering Water Pipe at Gill Stream*, 1857-1859, Central Park, New York City.



**Figure 38** - Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand, *View of the Temple de la Sybille* c. 1890, 1867, Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, Paris.





**Figure 39** - Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand, *Sculpted and Non Sculpted Quarry Faces*, 1867, Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, Paris.



**Figure 40** - Richard Haag Associates, *Landform and Gas Towers*, 1971-1975, Gas Works Park, Seattle.

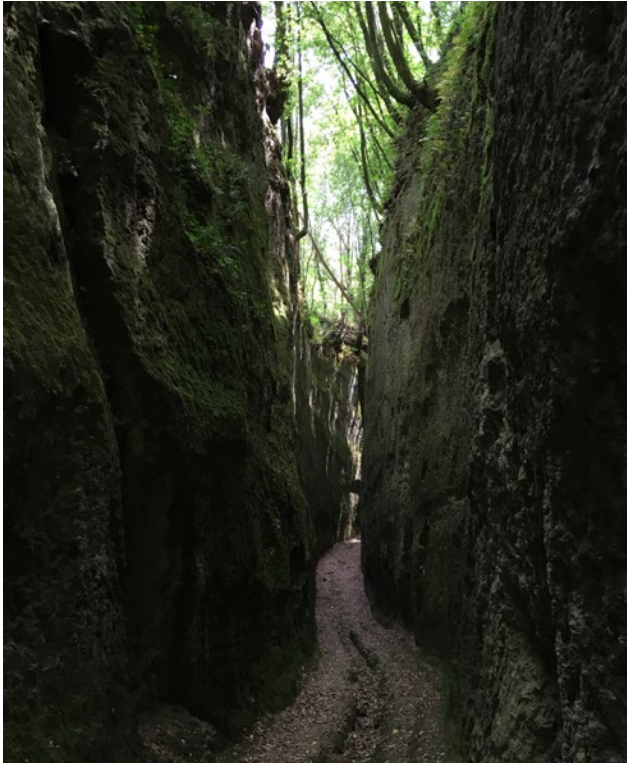




**Figure 41** - Michael Birawar, *Cartoon Art of Gas Works Park*, 2019.



**Figure 42** - Latz + Partner, *Entry to the Ruhegarten*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 43** - *Sculpted Tufo, Vie Cave, Pitigliano.*



**Figure 44** - *View Overlooking Bomarzo from Palazzo Orsini, Bomarzo.*





**Figure 45** - *Fresco of Villa Lante on wall in Casino Gambara, 1578, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.*



**Figure 46** - *Entrance to Upper Casino Garden Looking into the Bosco, c.1559-1587, Villa Farnese, Caprarola.*



**Figure 47** - *Entrance to Upper Casino Garden,*  
c.1559-1587, Villa Farnese, Caprarola.



**Figure 48 - Psalter World Map, c. 1265.**





**Figure 49** - *Detail of Harpie Statue*, Boboli Garden, c. late-16th century, Florence.



**Figure 50** - Luca Signorelli, *Detail of Grottesque Fresco Cycle*, 1499-1502, Chapel of San Brizio, Duomo, Orvieto.





**Figure 51** - *Pegasus Fountain Surrounded by the Muses*, c.1568-1579, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.



**Figure 52** - *Grotesque Frescos in Casino Gambara*, 1578, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.





**Figure 53** - *Four Grotesque Heads*,  
c.1568-1579, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.



**Figure 54** - *Grotto of the Deluge*, c.1568-1579,  
Villa Lante, Bagnaia.





**Figure 55** - *Detail of Fountain of the Dolphins*, c.1568-1579, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.



**Figure 56** - *Detail of Water Table*, c.1568-1579, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.



**Figure 57** - *Grottesque Head at Entrance to Upper Casino Garden*, c.1559-1587, Villa Farnese, Caprarola.



**Figure 58** - *Upper Casino Garden Terrace*, c.1559-1587, Villa Farnese, Caprarola.



**Figure 59** - *Satyr in Lower Garden Grotto*, c.1568-1579, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.

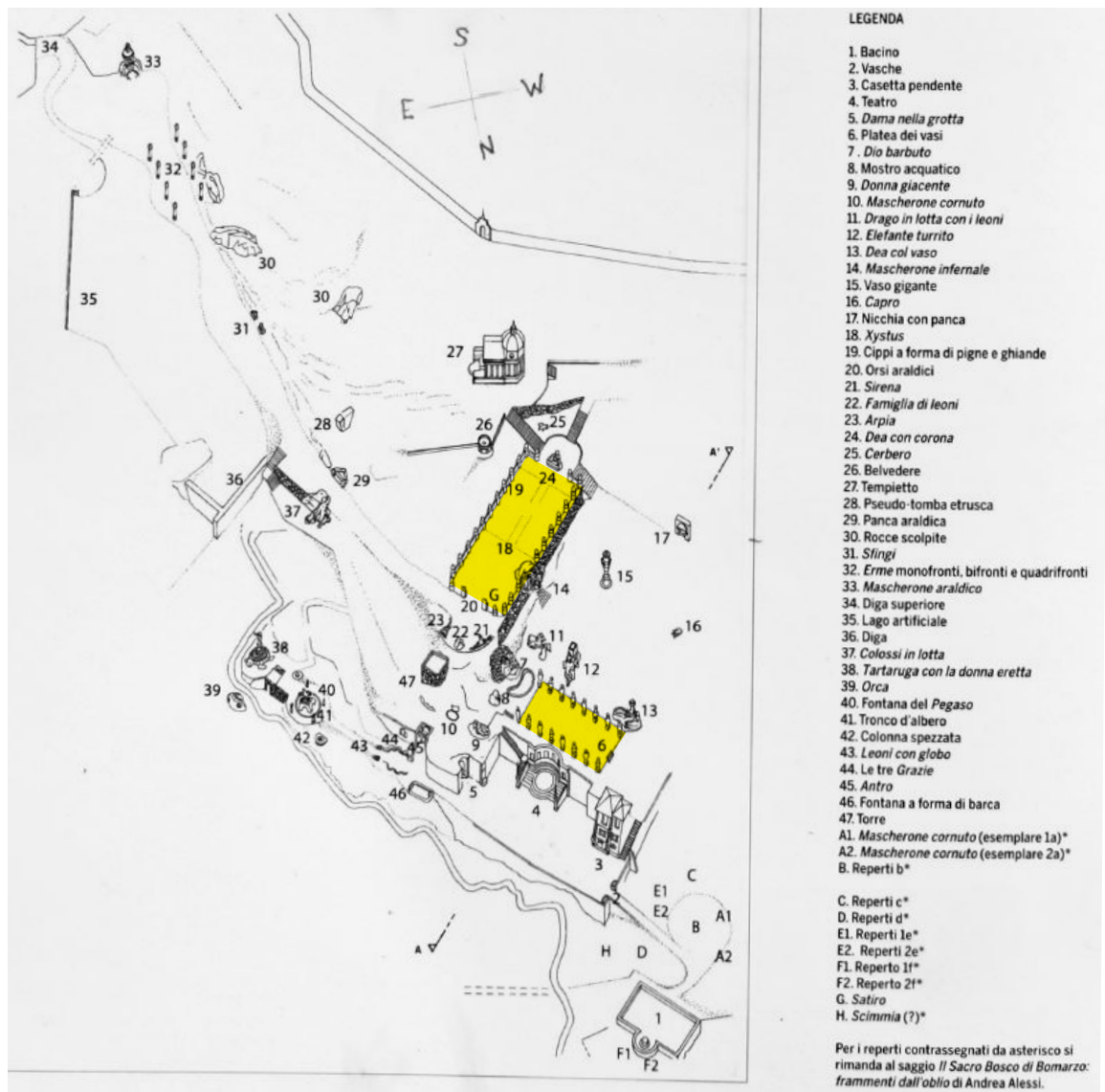




**Figure 60** - *Plateau of Vases*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



**Figure 61** - *Hippodrome*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo. Orsini bear sculptures holding the family emblem can be seen on far end of the *Hippodrome*.



**Figure 62 - Modern Axonometric Drawing of the Sacro Bosco.**  
 (6) Plateau of the Vases and (18) the Hippodrome highlighted in yellow.





**Figure 63** - *Giant Female Balancing a Vase on Her head*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



**Figure 64** - *Hell Mouth*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.





**Figure 65** - John Bryan Ward-Perkins, c. 1954 *Birdseye Photograph Sacro Bosco Cleared of Trees, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo*



**Figure 66** - *Remnant of Teatro Stair to Plateau of Vases, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo*

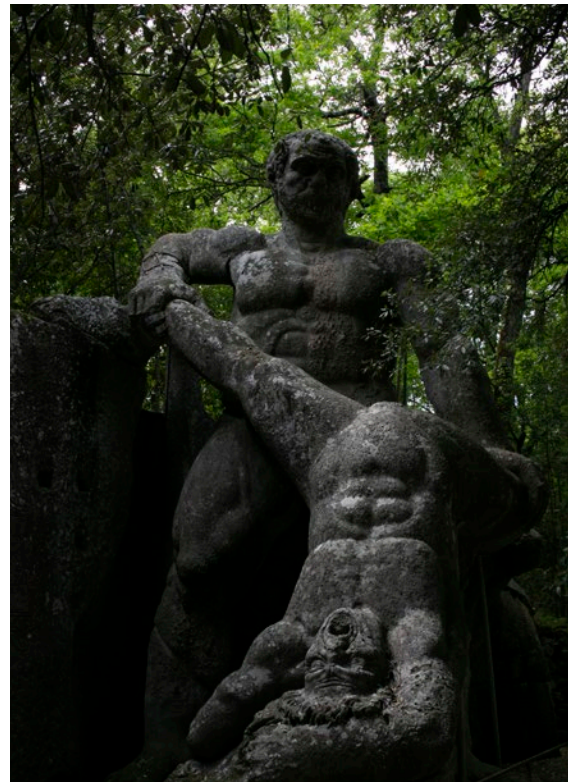




**Figure 67** - *Giant Reclining Female Nude*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo. Etruscan Tower in Background.

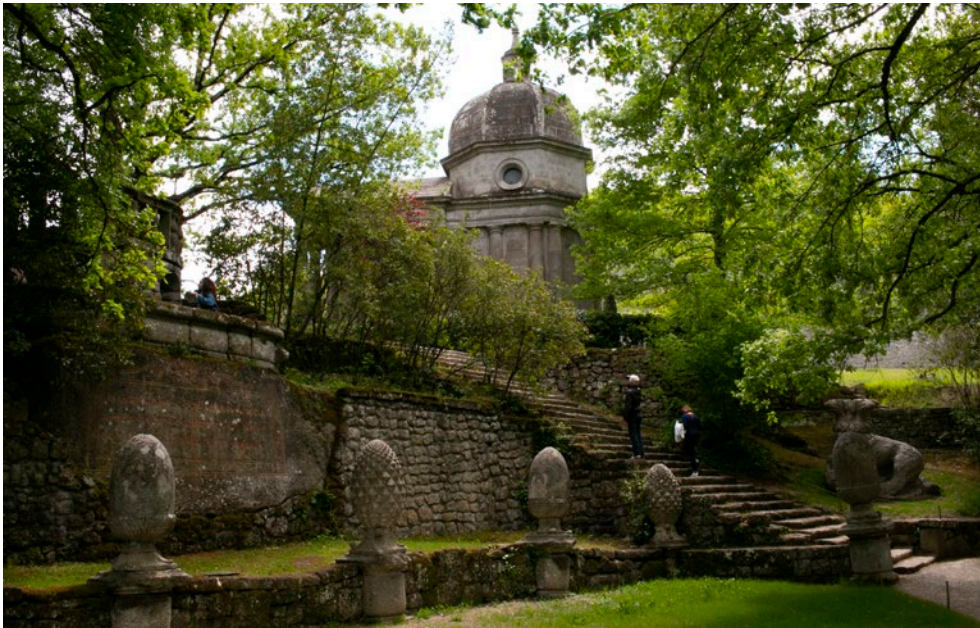


**Figure 68** - *Etruscan Tower*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



**Figure 69** - *Fighting Giants*, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.





**Figure 70** - *View of the Tempietto from the Hippodrome,*  
c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



**Figure 71** - *Persephone and Cerebus Statue,*  
c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.





**Figure 72** - *Giant Winged Harpie*,  
c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



**Figure 73** - *Elephant and Dragon Adjacent to the Plateau of Vases*,  
c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



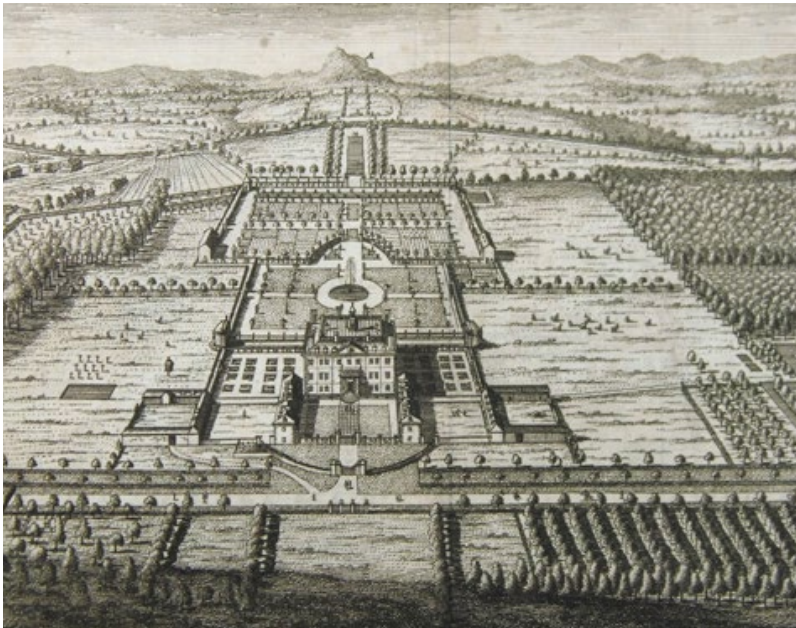


**Figure 74** - *Acorns and Pinecones Marking East and West Boundary of the Hippodrome, c.1560-1584, Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.*



**Figure 75** - *Pinecones Surrounding the Center of the Fountain of the Moors, c.1568-1579, Villa Lante, Bagnaia.*





**Figure 76** - *Engraving of Eaton Hall, 1707.*



**Figure 77** - *Raw Industrial Detritus on the Surface of the Rubble Fields, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.*





**Figure 78** - Latz + Partner, *Students and Volunteers Constructing Rubble Walls*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 79** - Latz + Partner, *Detritus in Rubble Walls*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.





**Figure 80** - Latz + Partner, *Detail of Rubble Walls*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.

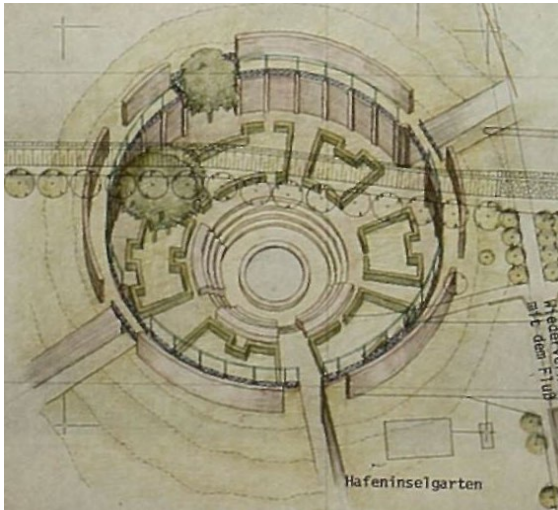


**Figure 81** - Latz + Partner, *Baumplatz Construction*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.

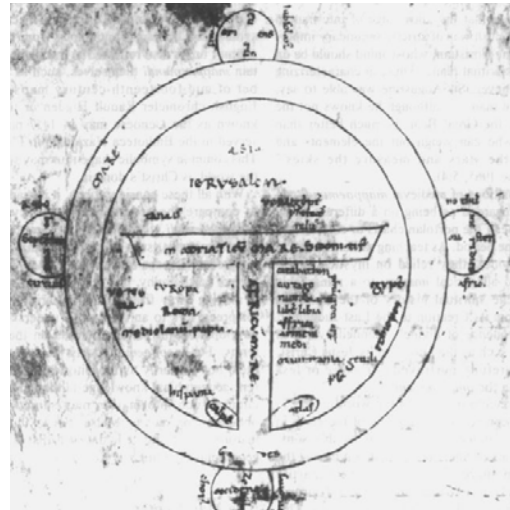




**Figure 82** - Latz + Partner, View of *Ruhegarten* Planting, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



**Figure 83** - Latz + Partner, Axonometric of *Ruhegarten*, 1986.



**Figure 84** - T&O Medieval World Map, c. 11th-century, Sallust manuscript.



**Figure 85** - Latz + Partner, *Constructed Ruin at the Center of the Ruhegarten*, 1985-1989, River Port Island, Saarbrücken.



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