

Symbolism in 18th cent gardens (Schwetzingen, 28-29.9.2006)

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SYMBOLISM IN 18TH CENTURY GARDENS

The Influence of Intellectual and Esoteric Currents, such as Freemasonry.
28-29 September 2006, Schloss Schwetzingen, Germany

Organizers

- OVN, foundation for the advancement of academic study of the history of freemasonry in the Netherlands.
- Vermögen und Bau Baden-Württemberg, Amt Mannheim
- Dr. Monika Scholl and Prof.Dr.Jan Snoek

During the 18th century, freemasonry provided a social network for men of different walks of life, including many aristocrats, intellectuals, artists and architects. Membership of a masonic order was socially accepted at the time and it was even fashionable to make one's membership subtly known to others, for instance through the use of domestic objects with symbolic decorations. Also the decoration of houses could be used in this respect. In the same time period, garden design and landscape art incorporated classical, mythological and religious symbolism, and gardens became an expression of the status, personality and learning of their owners.

It was not uncommon for a garden design to include 'hidden' symbolism, for the path through a garden to reflect a journey of initiation, or for architectural follies to be built in the shape of masonic temples. This symbolism was purposefully 'hidden', meant to be discovered by the initiated or to enlighten the visitor with new insights.

Today, we are no longer familiar with common 18th century iconography and unable to read the visual clues to the meaning of such gardens. Art historical approaches and heritage preservation policies are traditionally based on Christian iconography, and have largely overlooked the importance of masonic and esoteric symbolism to art, architecture and garden design. Recent academic studies, however, have shown the importance of masonic heritage to our cultural collective heritage and brought the hidden symbolism in historical gardens to the centre of attention.

This conference aims to provide an introduction into the masonic and esoteric symbolism in 18th century garden architecture, provide an overview of

recent academic research into the subject, and raise awareness of the importance of preserving the remaining sites as a part of our cultural heritage.

The conference takes place at the summer residence of 'Kurfürst' Carl Theodor in Schwetzingen, the location of one of the eldest, most intricate and best preserved masonic gardens in the world.

Call for papers:

Students and scholars of all disciplines are invited to submit paper proposals (in English or German) of max. 350 words, accompanied by a short c.v. of the speaker, before 15 June 2006.

Registration:

The conference will take place at Schloss Schwetzingen, Germany. Due to the limited number of seats available, registration in advance is required.

Registration fees: €25,- for students / PhD students (proof/photocopy of college or university registration required); €25,- for members of OVN and ESSWE; €50,- for other participants. Registration fees are to be payed on arrival and include tea/coffee and conference hand outs. (Lunch is excluded. Participants can have lunch at a café or restaurant of their choice near the venue.) More information on the registration procedure and location will be made available to participants at a later date.

For more information, submission of proposals, and registration, please contact one of the following representatives of the conference organization:

- drs. Monika Scholl, Schwetzingen <heinz.p.frey@t-online.de>,
- dr. Jan Snoek, Univ. Heidelberg <Jan.Snoek@urz.uni-heidelberg.de>,
- drs. Andrea Kroon, OVN <info@stichtingovn.nl>.

Reference:

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