

European Garden Heritage Network - Award 2019 Award ceremony at SCHLOSS DYCK / JÜCHEN

Laudation for category: INNOVATIVE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN OF A PARK OR GARDEN

**By Lieneke van Campen, Karres en Brands, the Netherlands
Member of the jury, EGHN**

Winner: “Barcelona Botanic Garden”

created by Bet Figuaras, Carlos Ferrater, Josep Lluís Canosa, Artur Bossy and Joan Pedrola

Botanical gardens are of great value for cities. While I was doing some research for this laudation I learned that the earliest botanical gardens were founded in the late Renaissance at the University of Pisa (1543) and the University of Padua (1545) in Italy, for the study and teaching of medical botany. Many cities today have botanical gardens for student teaching and academic research. A botanical garden gives us a clear insight into the world of plants. We see all the wonderful versatility that plants spread across the globe. Nowadays at the botanical garden it is about two important things: enjoyment and scientific research. You can visit the botanical garden to leave the hustle and bustle of the city or daily life behind you and enjoy the special flora in an oasis of greenery and tranquility. In addition, the botanical garden is a source of knowledge for research into the application of plants and it is often about transferring knowledge. Fitting the centuries old tradition of botanical gardens, time and money are spent to combine the research part with a beautiful design to make the garden even more attractive, and so they did for the botanical garden of Barcelona.

The botanical garden in Barcelona is built on the Mount Montjuïc, as part of the development for the Olympic Games in 1992. Between 1940-1970 there was a slump on this side of the hill; the Can Valero. By building the garden, the city wanted to beautify this neglected part. The construction of the infrastructure for the Olympic Games in 1992 caused damage to the historic botanical garden, causing it to temporarily close. It was then, that they proposed to construct a new larger botanical garden. After 8 years of construction the new and improved botanical garden re-opened.

Bet Figuaras, the landscape architect of this beautiful project, worked in an interdisciplinary team comprising the architects Carlos Ferrater and Josep Lluís Canosa, the horticulturalist Artur Bossy and the biologist Joan Pedrola. Two fundamental considerations were taken into account when creating the garden; First how the vegetation was to be structured. It was important to plant the layout according to geographic criteria,

grouping the plants according to the world's five Mediterranean regions. Second objective was to relate the planting to the local topography.

The architects designed very precise, a network of paths on this gently sloping terrain and avoiding large earth moving operations as much as possible.

This network offers visitors a different walk in each season of the year and it ensure that you can wander through the garden. Thanks to the elevation of 140 meters you have a beautiful view of the grounds of the Olympic Games and large parts of Barcelona

Several activities and exhibitions are organized during the years in order to increase the understanding and knowledge about specific topics related to the natural sciences. These exhibitions focus on a wide range of themes: scientific and social, history of science, biodiversity, nature, and other fields, such as art, history, photography, etc. The temporary exhibitions are installed at the Salvador Gallery in the Institut Botànic building.

The work of Bet Figuaras and team for the Botanical Garden in Barcelona is outstanding. Unfortunately Bet Figuaras died of cancer in 2010. As stated on the website of Santa Cole for her, a project is 'the reorganization of a place in which new uses and forms are inferred. An ideal of nature is sought through the garden'. This is exactly what you can see in the botanical garden. And of course, it won several awards in the past. It's a bit strange actually that this project never appeared on our list of nominations before. But now it is and it deserves to be a winner!

The jury is very enthusiastic about the project. The architects have been able to create a very coherent design that looks great to this day, 20 years after construction. The design is very strong and looks 'simple', but it's well thought. It's clearly visible that the architects had the same ambition for the project, they have brought out the best in each other. The architects designed, very precise the routing in the park. The walkways with it sharp corners gives you from time to time a different view over the garden, over Barcelona and sometimes a focus point to special plants. The sometimes luscious and fluffy planting is a wonderful combination with the robust network of paths. It reinforce each other. The level of detailing is very high, with only a couple of materials (mainly corten steel and concrete) are used for the building and the semi-public space. Even the furniture and signing is in the same style and well thought. I assume that there is a high level of maintenance to keep the design sharp and strong and give the plants the conditions and stage to shine.

Regardless of the design, we think it's great to see how the botanical garden, with the enthusiasm staff, knowledge can transfer about the fascinating world of plants and care for our earth.

On behalf of EGHN I would like to congratulate the Botanical Garden Barcelona with this award. We would like to ask mister Carlos Ferrater on the stage to receive the award.