



Bench in the Garden: An Inquiry into the Scopic History of a Bench

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- A remarkable foray into a niche subject, this book will transform your opinions of the humble bench
- Discover the ways in which benches orient, teach, create emotions and direct our 'ways of seeing' in the garden

The bench: a functional object that rarely features at the forefront of our minds, even when we are sitting on one in a garden. And yet (as this book will reveal) benches have surprising significance, regarding the specific places where they operate, and in a more general sense. The bench is more than a convenient sitting point. It is the domain where aesthetics, garden history, architecture, spatiality and subjectivity interfere. The bench acts as a powerful visual machine and regulates the reception of surrounding landscapes to its visitors. By transmitting verbal messages (through inscriptions), citing other benches and being part of a complex walk circuit, by providing rest and inviting its users to discover new aspects of the site, the bench is a highly polysemic element of a garden, which orients and disorients the visitor simultaneously.

Michael Jakob is Professor of History and Theory of Landscape at Hepia (Geneva) and EPFL, Lausanne as well as Professor of Comparative Literature (Chair) at Grenoble University. His teaching and research focuses on landscape theory, aesthetics, the history of vertigo, contemporary theories of perception and the poetics of architecture. He is the founder and head of COMPAR(A)ISON, an International Journal of Comparative Literature. He has produced several documentary films for TV, and has long-standing experience as a radio journalist.