



Premio Internazionale Carlo Scarpa per il Giardino

2nd edition, 1991

Special Prize to Rosario Assunto

Italian philosopher (1915-1994)

Carlo Scarpa Prize
1991
Jury report

The jury of the International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens has unanimously decided to award the thirteenth Prize to Rosario Assunto for his war of ideas on behalf of the proper supervision, care and protection of gardens, and for his affirmation of their irreplaceable value as patrimonies of historical awareness and sites to be well thought out and arranged so as to afford contemplation an existence of its own.

This long and unrelenting battle sprang from his esthetic reflections on landscapes and gardens, reflections that in turn make up the arena of what has been termed “Rosario Assunto’s stubborn philosophy”, an example of far-reaching and insistent determination. Rosario Assunto is, in fact, a scholar with an incredibly wide field of interests, from esthetics in medieval thought to the romantic universe in its broadest and most problematic terms, from the Age of Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century, all linked by his untiring attention and commitment to the realities of our time.

His work as “teacher-writer” – as he himself has often noted – is not addressed, then, just to philosophers. His articles and essays are both explicit and eloquent, elegantly crafted but always alert to the rationale for an enlightened and passionate dialogue involving a public composed of laymen as well as experts. His choice of Kantian texts, presented under various circumstances in an Italian translation accompanied by impressive commentary – principally in the thick anthology entitled *Critica del giudizio* – is no less significant than his concentration on eighteenth-century esthetics and, with subtle precision, above all on Schelling and on Schiller, his favourite of favourites.

Within this spacious framework, the theme of the relationship between nature and art is that which is represented with greatest consistency and “stubbornness”. It is this subject to which Rosario Assunto has made such an utterly original contribution – because he continues to prevail as the one thinker in this century (and not only in Italy) who has systematically posed and articulated the question of the specific value of landscapes, to the very extent of clarifying motives behind “the modern cult of the garden”.

The writings, which wed his thesis-like essays to conjecture on particular subjects, range from the “opus magnum” of *Il paesaggio e l’estetica* [The Landscape and Esthetics] in 1973 to the more recent *Giardino e rimpatrio* [Gardens and Repatriation]. This important contribution to the esthetic analysis of gardens and landscapes represents a truly fundamental reference point whose lucidity and authority are indispensable to the field of protection – be it related to operational norms or to each and every concrete work commitment.

The awarding of the International Carlo Scarpa Prize for Gardens to Rosario Assunto thus intends to give recognition to theoretical merit of immense import, merit which has never been separate from work in the field. And that such work has been passionate, rigorous and uncompromising can be illustrated by his presence at countless conferences, debates and official discussions, in addition to his authoritative judgments on what has been accomplished in this field, on what can yet be done and must be done, and on what must not be done.

In extending this recognition, the jury hopes to draw attention to the extraordinary variety of weapons – from those particular to culture and art, to science and economy, and to “pure speculation” – weapons that one may wield while helping fashion for mankind a deeper and more critical sensibility toward nature.