



The garden of resounding rooms - via Felicina, 1

The amazing garden, adjacent to a house built around the time of last war, is located in the western countryside of Bologna, in a rural territory very near the city where some historical-landscaping features of the ancient Olmetola community are still recognisable (villas, rural areas, historic roads, ditches, hedges and tree-lined rows). In the XVIII century, the land on which the garden is located was part of the great estate of the Senator family Scappi, whose centre of gravity was in today's Villa Bernaroli, and in particular of the farm of a nearby rural area, still existing, which on the map of the Water and Road Office (1774) was called Fabbreria Scappi and later Fabbreria vecchia. Via Felicina, whose name reminds another Senator family of Bologna, Felicini, which had properties in the area before Scappi, represents a thistle of the Roman centurionship, which crosses the decumanus in via Olmetola not far from the garden, at the point where a votive niche still signals the ancient crucifix.

The current owner, the symbolist artist Patrizia Merendi (www.patriziamerendi.it), began the renovation of the building about 20 years ago, creating a first garden shape, according to an extension with no longer recognizable blocks. The access is through a high corridor of mixed and informal hedges that isolate from the context: you immediately perceive the invitation to discovery. It is a private garden, which is gradually unveiled, as you advance in the many green rooms that make it up, linked one another by as many prospective channels and vanishing points for the attentive eye that, after having discovered unusual and fascinating sets of shapes and green shades in the very rich undergrowth, runs naturally farther, beyond a strip among the fronds of Japanese maple, beyond a gate, toward a far field, among the branches that frame a glass stele or to an over-hanging bird trough.

Born without a comprehensive project but following the passion, curiosity and research, it is today a complex garden that needs interpretation with corners of great naturalistic balance and strong symbolic inserts. A biolake (80 cm deep) was created that welcomes particular species such as *Ceratophyllum demesum* and *Iris pseudocorus*, as well as a succession of cascades created with bamboo canes. A large bright space opens in the central part where the owner built a Karesansui, a Japanese garden (improperly called Zen). Shortly farther, there is a maze that reproduces, with a halved size, that one of the famous cathedral of Chartres. Closer to the building, immersed in the vegetation and really unobtrusive, there is the only pre-existing tree specimen, a large lime symbol of the garden, surrounded by a soft edge of *Brunnera macrophylla*. The flowers, however, are not the main elements of the garden, hence the formalism and the leaf colouring are most important, although the garden gives a real olfactory path in the period of flowering.

Garden care is done daily by the owner without resorting to irrigation, lighting and mowing systems, so as to support its natural evolution.

Among the many plant species there are silver maple, hazelnut tree, elder, lombardy poplar, Japanese red maple, roses, ferns, hoste, hydrangeas, water lilies, hellebores. Recently, among the many species of the present birds, some pairs of ring-necked parakeets took possession of this little oasis in the countryside, an elegant and cute parrot now present in several Italian cities (from Genoa to Palermo) and Europe, with exponential growth in recent years.