

A large, abstract, dark red graphic element on the left side of the page, resembling a stylized letter 'A' or a similar shape. It has a small, irregular, lime green shape nested within its upper-left portion.

christian préaud
landscape & architecture

portfolio 2021

insight

Michel Racine

Garden historian, landscape designer, urban planner and architect, writer, author of numerous works about garden history and art. Director of the “département de formation continue” at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage of Versailles.

There's something new yet eternal in how Christian Préaud conceives and creates a garden. It comes down to his journey which is reminiscent of garden designers who manage to draw on the skills they have gained over the course of life experiences. That's why I'm convinced that Christian Préaud uses his insight as a landscaper, architect, painter and gardener to bring together the expertise and knowledge of a 21st century landscape architect.

Yes, I've visited a lot of gardens, I know a great many landscapers and many architects too. Good ones too – each in their own field. However, training in the late 20th century was such that everyone

learned to design their own professional space without considering other trades working alongside them. Yet, if you look at some successful references, you cannot think of a Tuscan Renaissance garden without its villa, a Baroque garden in Ile-de-France without its country retreat or Gertrude Jekyll's cottage garden without its connection to her friend Edwin Lutyens' architecture. And vice versa.

Christian is among those who have understood that the garden, architecture and graphic arts must be conceived in synergy like a happy space. A professional and a friend. A rare bird nowadays.



« It is what I do that teaches me what I seek. »

Pierre Soulages

Collonge Bellerive

Switzerland

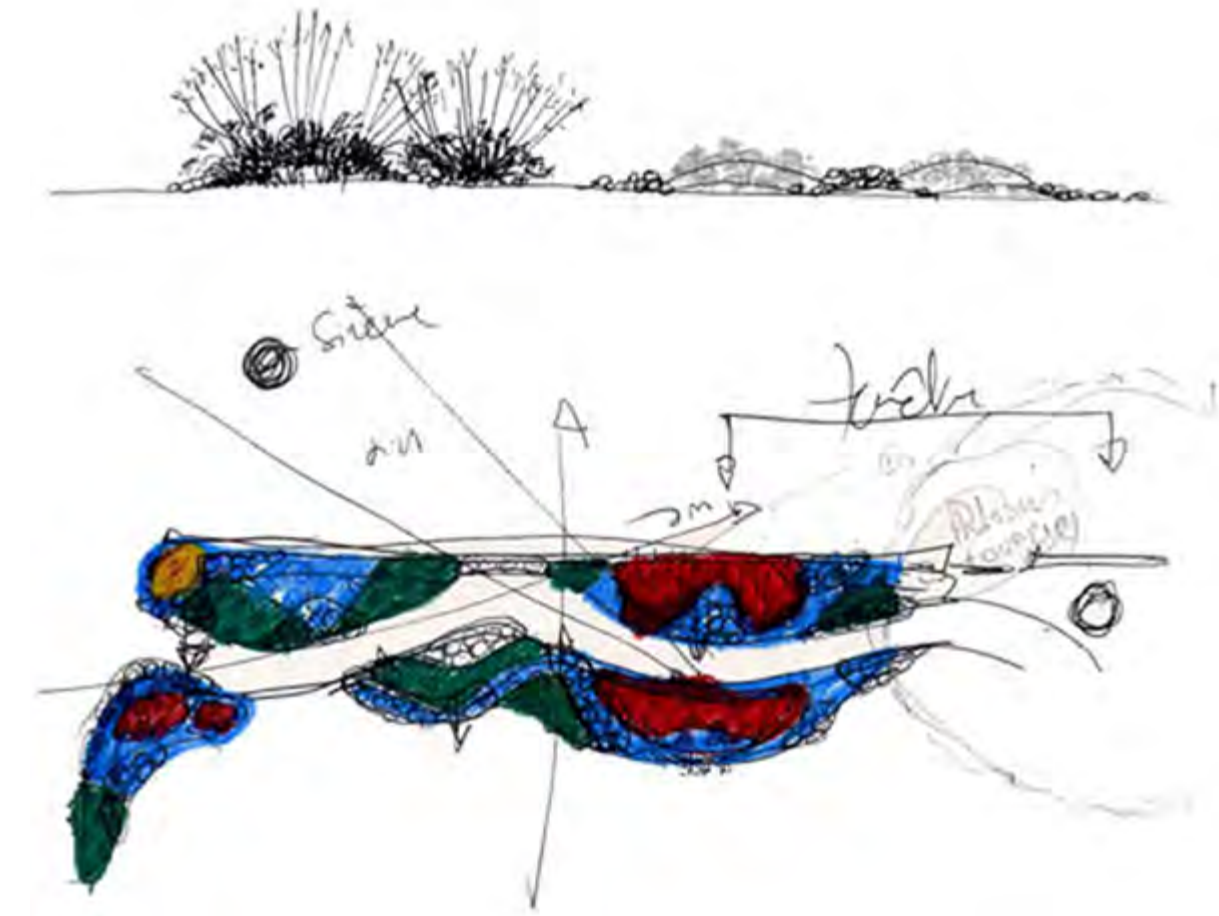
2005-2009

6000 m²

Private client

Contractor : AB Jardin

Nursery : Van Pelt S.A.



A transition must be created between the end of the garden, the stretch of the lake and the sky reflected into it, to marry the land to the water, to unite the garden and its environment. Both screen and transparency are aligned with the strong lines and to the beautiful horizontal landscape on the other bank, to create an intimate walk by the water.

Mounds of pebbles from the Rhone create an undulating terrain on which giant grasses grow in two sizes: the shorter, more dense and opaque, forming a cushion to the taller ones, light and translucent. These grasses remain all winter, dry, forming a reed catching frost spray from the lake.

...

A garden on the banks of the Geneva Lake. A space to be connected with the powerful elements of the great surrounding landscape.







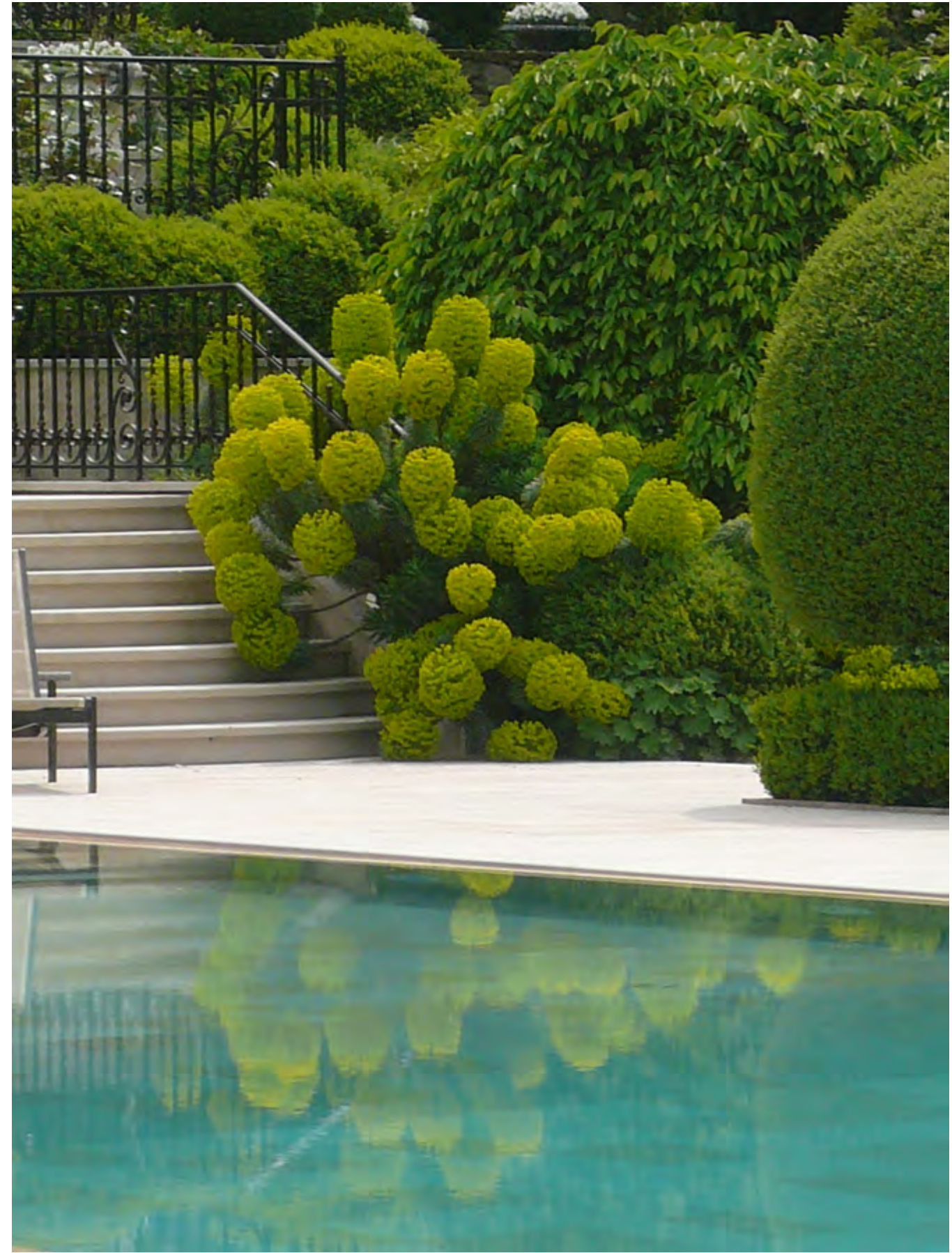
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Several meter thick boxwood 'tables' include in their center a large swath of lavender and create a frame in which the pool is set. A "window" in the boxwood in the lake's direction , and an other "table" arranged in the slope of the land allows the eye of the swimmer to be taken directly from the pool water to the lake, stealing from his view the part of the garden between the two. An olive tree finds its place among the lavender and makes a vertical transition in the foreground of the hundred-year-old oak grove at the foot of which lies a sea of white daffodils and hydrangeas 'Annabelle'.



A swimming-pool «lost» in the middle of a vast lawn to be turned into a comfortable looking space and an intimate area.







It is surrounded by high walls which shelter it from the desert's arid wind. The water that springs to the surface is trapped and channelled, running into multiple rivulets watering the beds. The water bursts from fountains whose babbling brightens and freshens the setting. You can wander amid the flowers and delve deep into the groves to taste many fabulous fruits. The most beautiful birds have made it their home. Every hour of the day and night exudes a parade of subtle scents and fragrances. You can sit in the leafy lounges to play music and read poetry. Spiritual communion with tamed nature instils tranquillity and peace conducive to elevating the spirit, heart and soul. The Persians aspired to its peace and refinement more than anything. They called it **paradise**.

Goult

France

2016

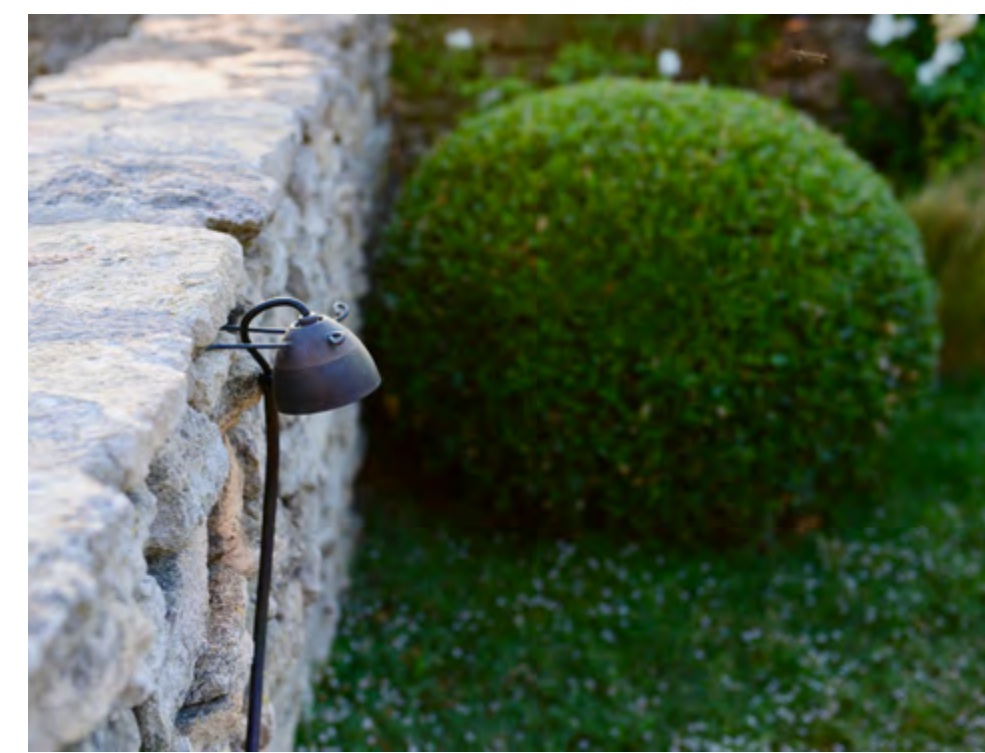
Private garden project overlooking the
Luberon Valley

Private client

Project completion : June 2017











The style of the garden may have significantly evolved alongside civilisations, cultures and climates but its functions and the aspirations it achieves have barely changed. The expert transcription of nature and the idealised portrayal of the world and the universe is the ultimate exercise in which the settled man is closest to imitating the story of Creation.

Vesenaz

Switzerland

2007

600 m²

Private client

Contractor: AB Jardin

Nursery : Van Pelt S.A.

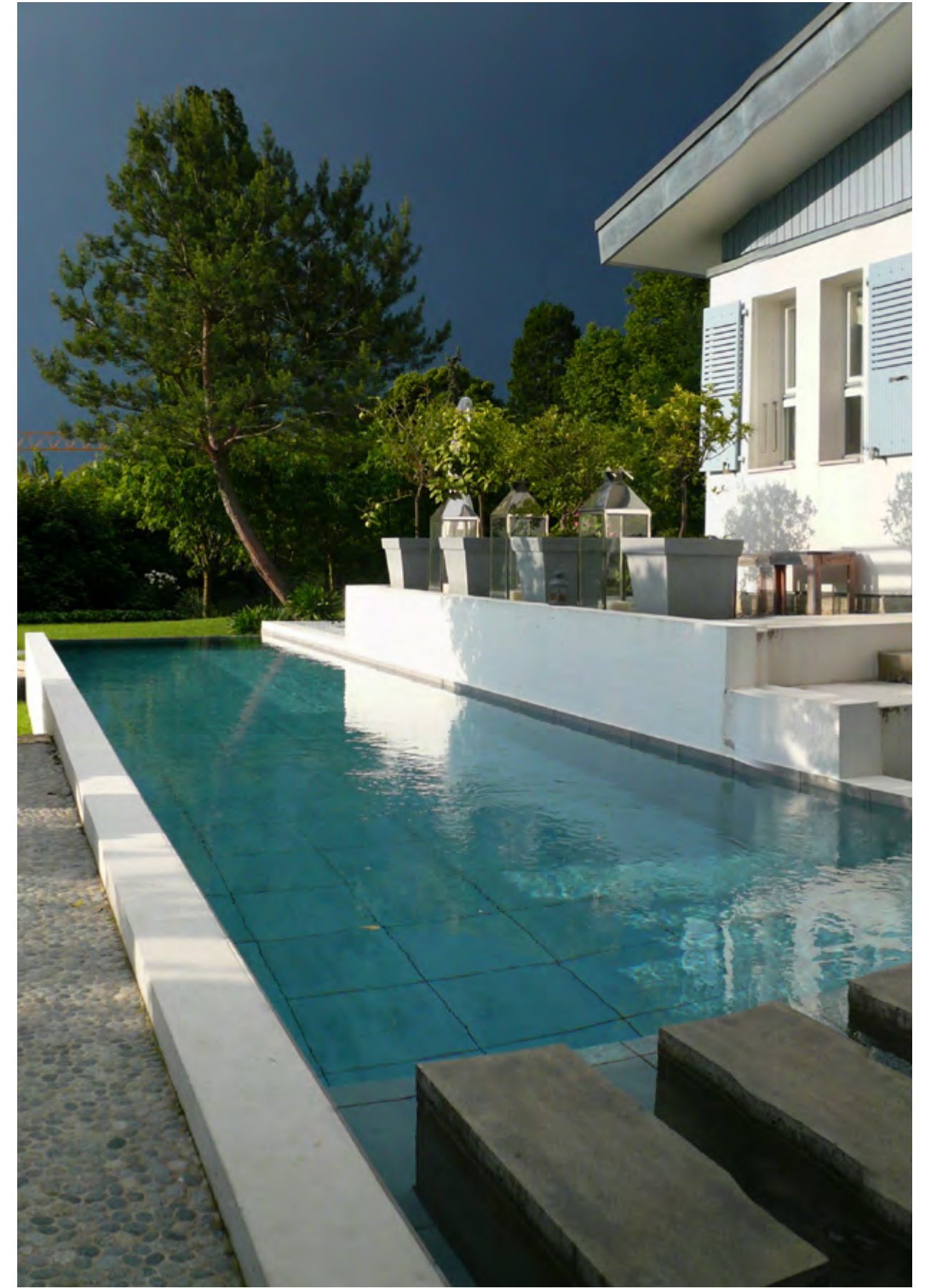
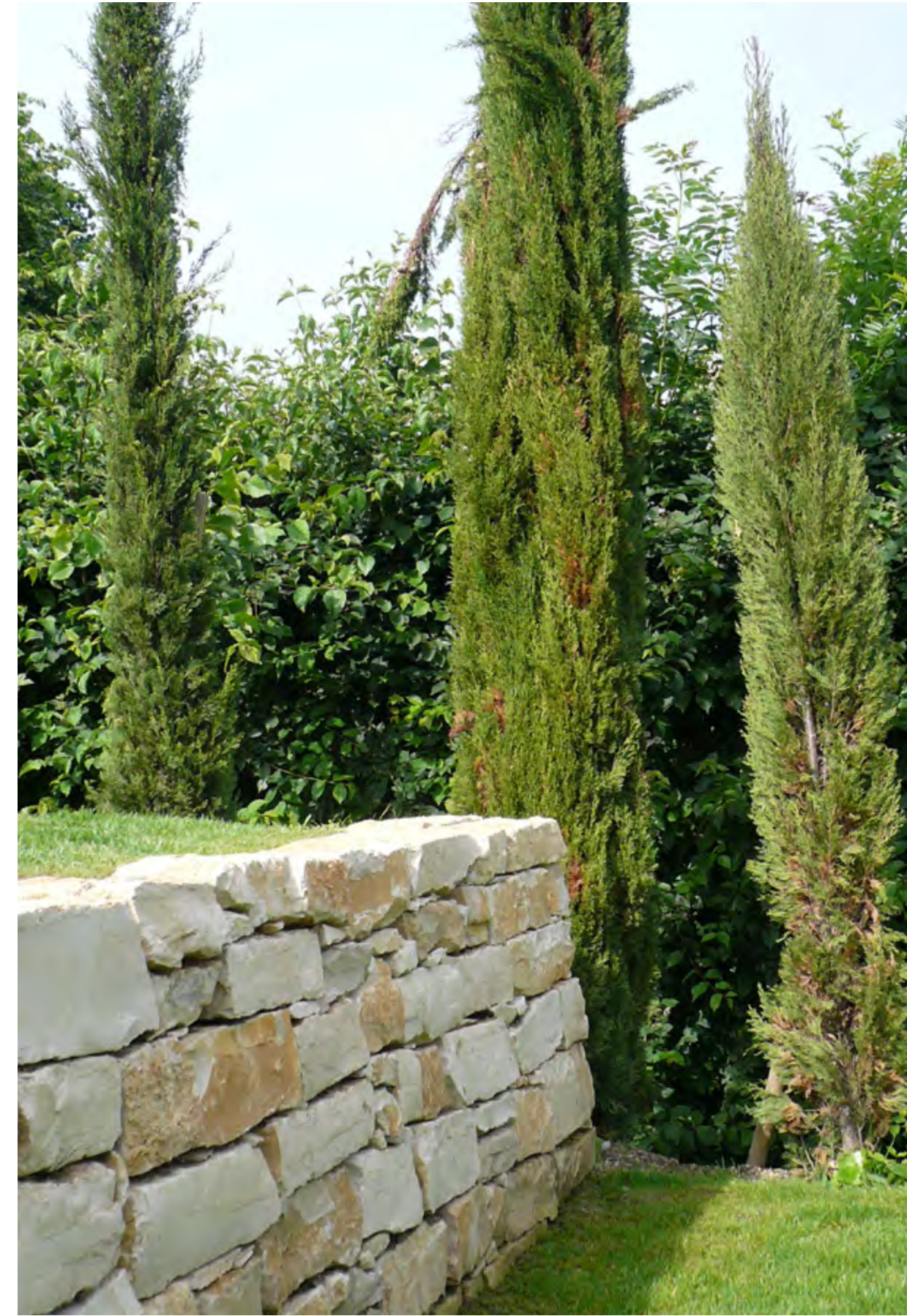


The concept of this project was to develop a garden by extending the pure and contemporary architecture of this magnificent villa designed by Boris Buchet and locate on the swiss shore of the Geneva lake. A series of four terraces supported by white, dry stone walls, three of the terraces covered in grass, the fourth in gravel, these four terraces are joined by black polished concrete footboards. At the end of each wall, groups of three Florence cypresses frame the view towards the lake.

• • •

A garden designed to highlight the pure and contemporary architecture of this magnificent villa, located on the south bank of the Geneva lake.







• • •

A very “Sud de la France” feel with these trees at the foot of which grow annual cistus that reseed at their discretion.

A waxed black concrete bench occupies the gazebo surrounded by osmanthuses and a bed of lavender surrounded by ‘Faulkner’ boxwood. Roses, hydrangeas, lemon trees and wisteria complete the decor.





The garden isn't just a pretty piece of land on which a house is built. It is an outdoor extension of the inner space. Like any inhabited space, it fulfils a function. A form matches this function: it is the architecture of the setting. The landscape architect's work initially involves defining what role the garden will play in the owners' lives. Next, the designer must conceive the appropriate form by drawing inspiration from the soul of the setting to finally produce a style true to Atelier Jardins' values: classic in its principles yet resolutely modern in its process.

This style uses evergreens for structure so that the garden's architecture can be seen throughout the year. Perennials and annuals are then layered into the design which unfold and change with the seasons. The colours of the foliage and flowers are categorised into monochrome masses where white and blue are often favoured. Water, no matter the form, is always present.

Vandoeuvres

Switzerland

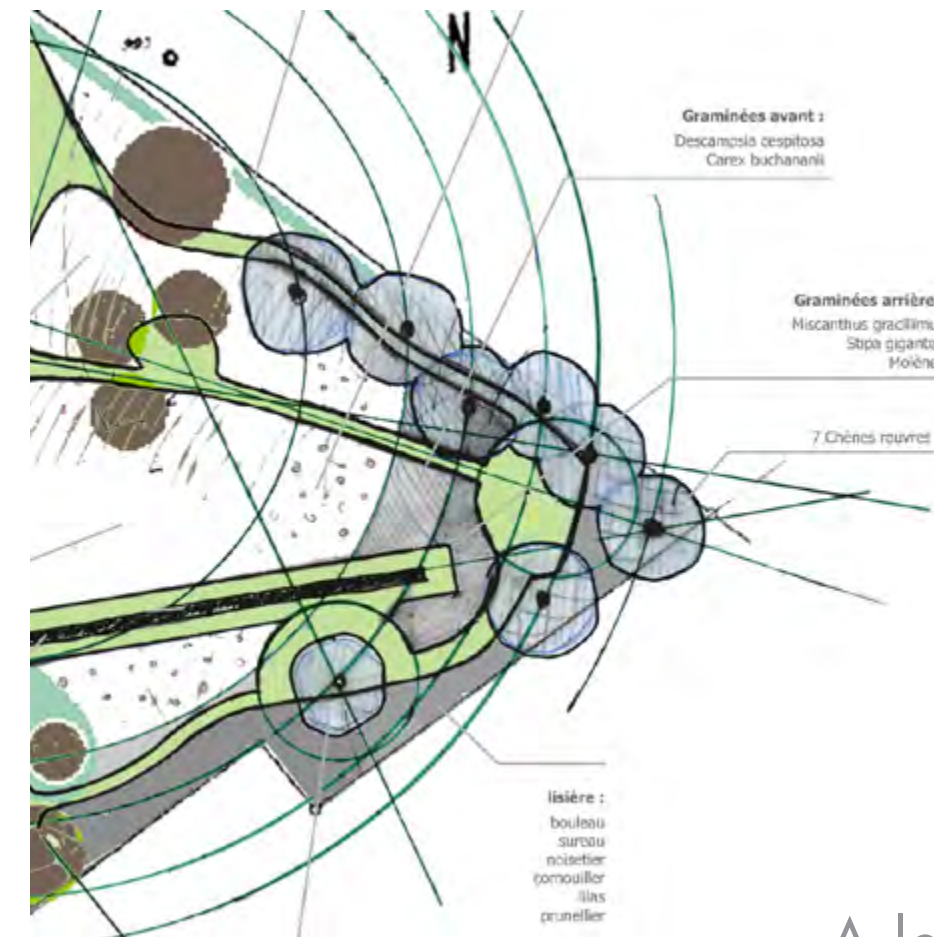
2007

1 ha

Private client

Contractor : AB Jardin

Nursery : Van Pelt S.A

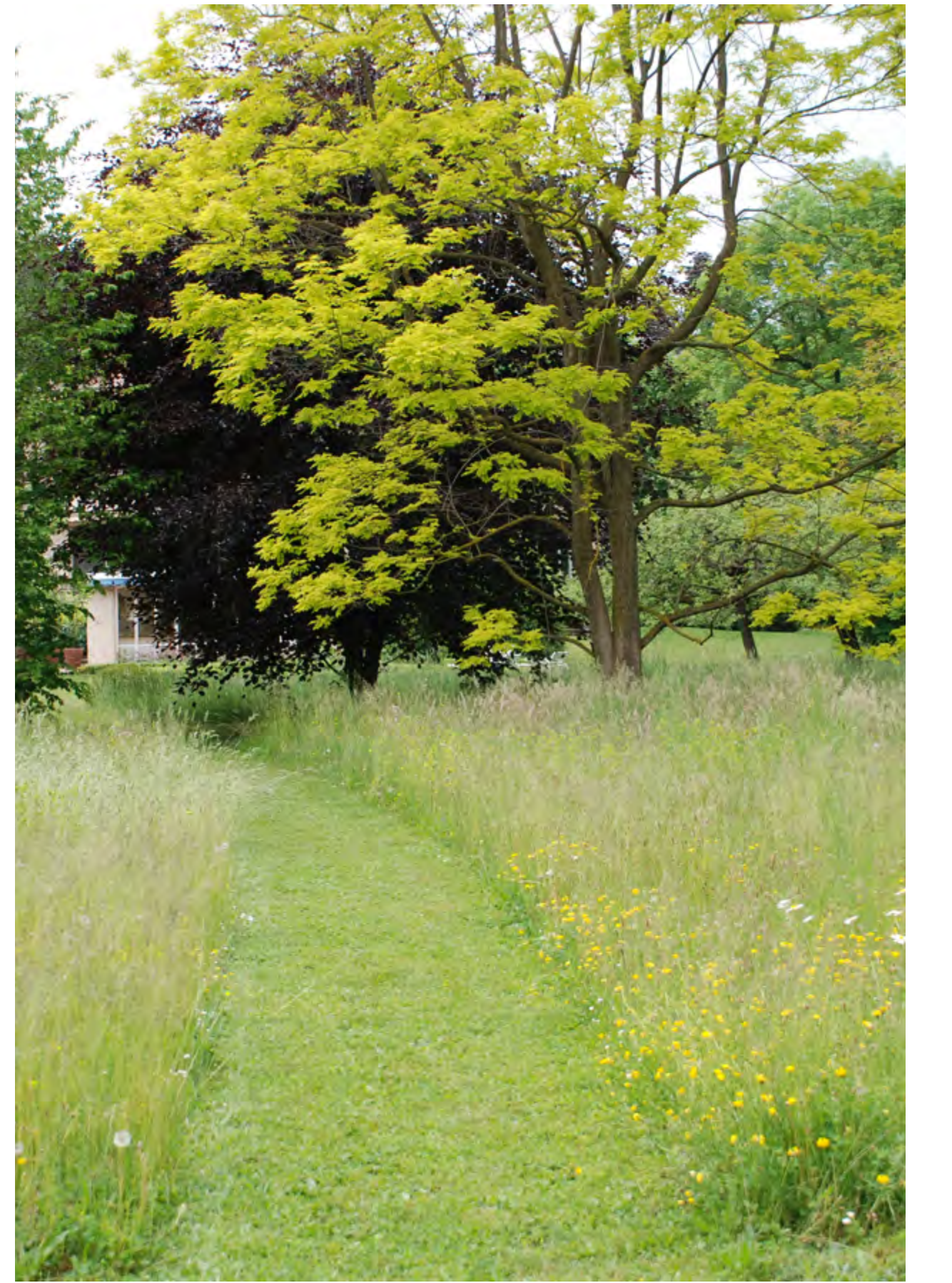
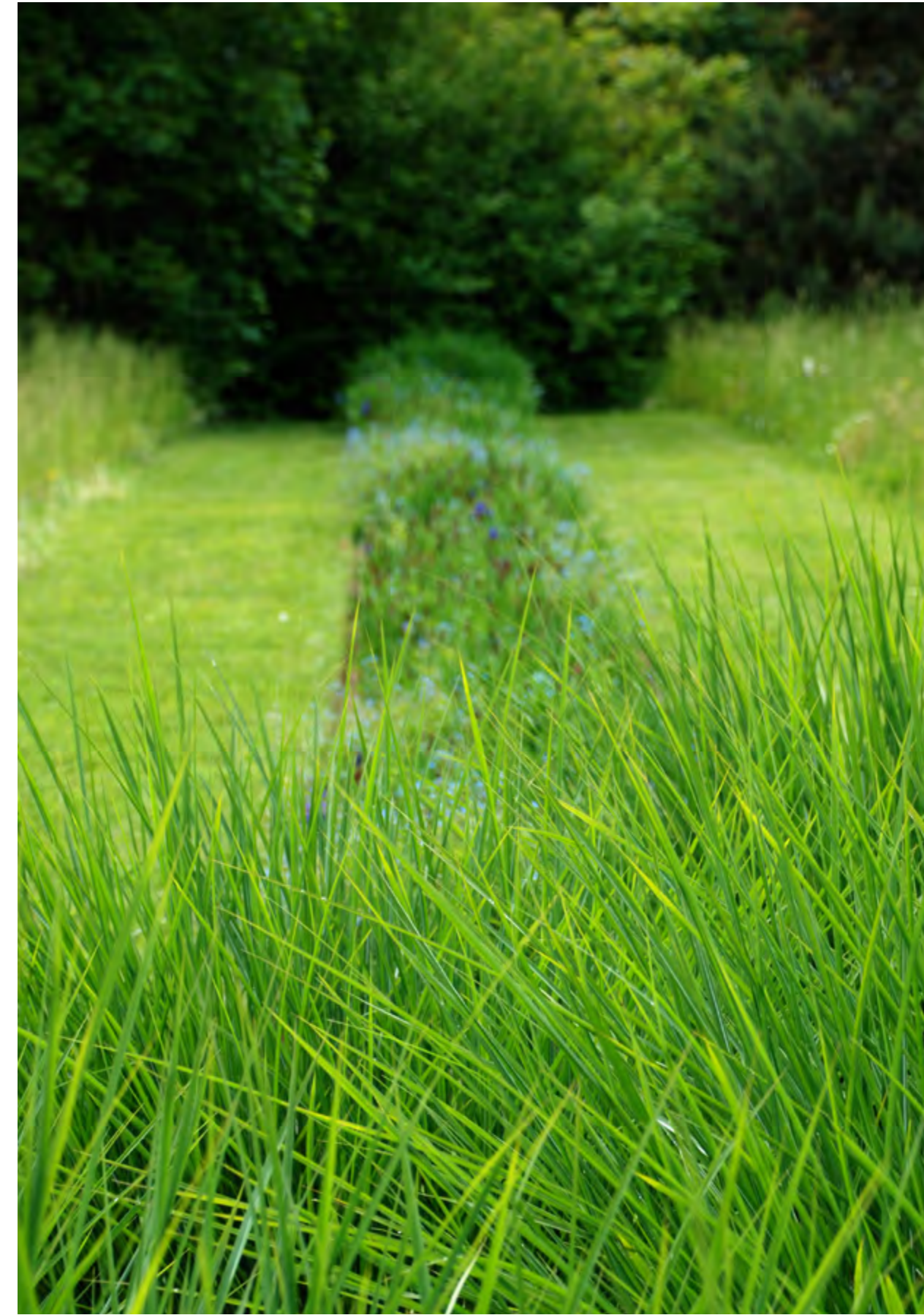


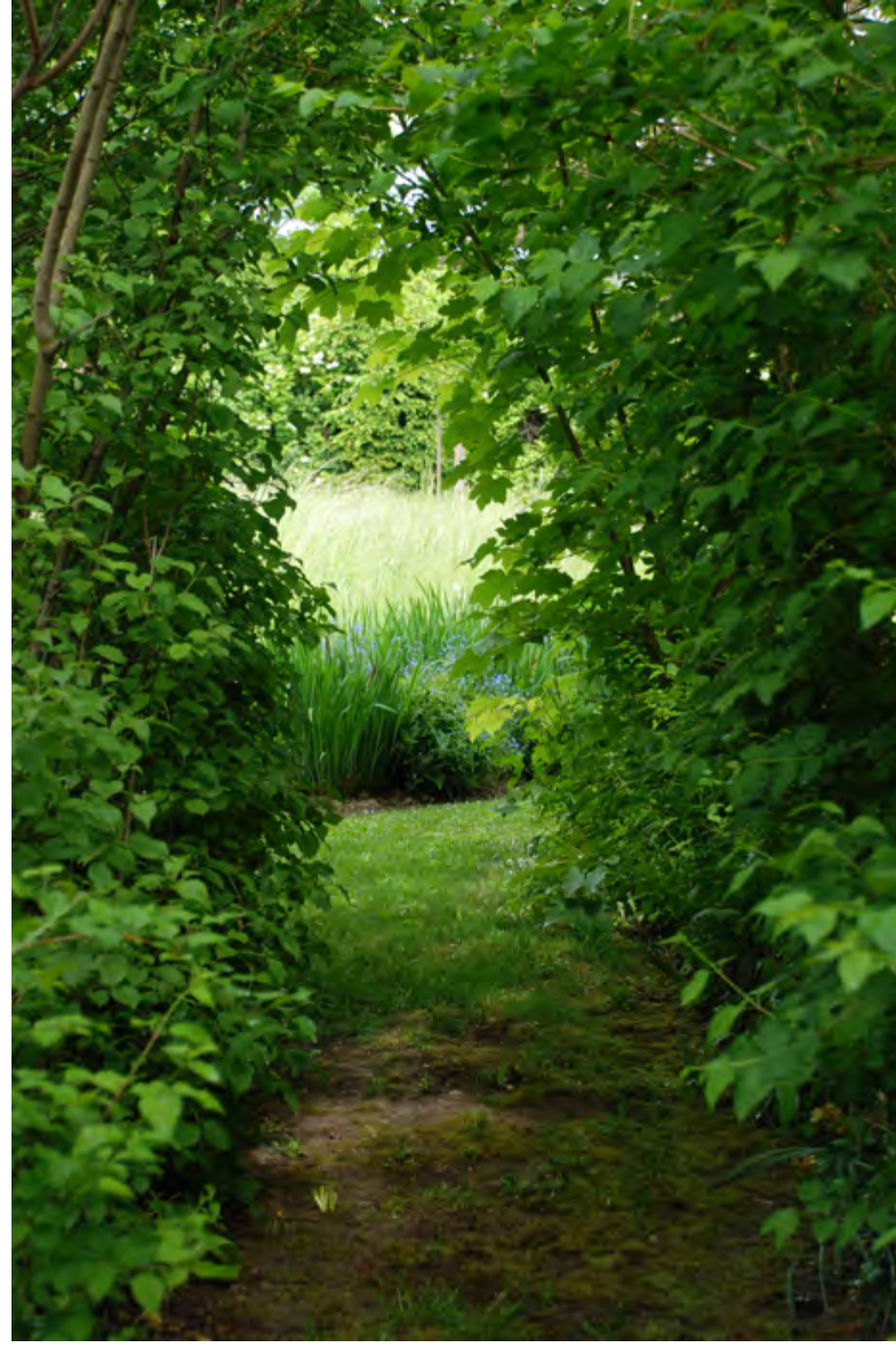
This flat expanse dotted with a few ornamental trees and apple trees wasn't very inviting. The garden was confined to the surroundings of the house. The entire plot had to be reorganized to waken the urge to discover, to walk, to hide. Close to the house, a vegetable garden, a bed of flowers, a rose garden, a bed of ivy from which emerges the structure of a beautiful hundred-year-old apple tree,

• • •

A large flat and open meadow dotted with a few ornamental and old apple trees, and the Mont Blanc as the background picture.







• • •

and beyond, grassed alleys, clumps of grass, shrubbery and undergrowth all built around a "channel" of flowers, of Myosotis perennials, iris and gauras.



Jardin des Tuileries

Paris

2008

20 m²

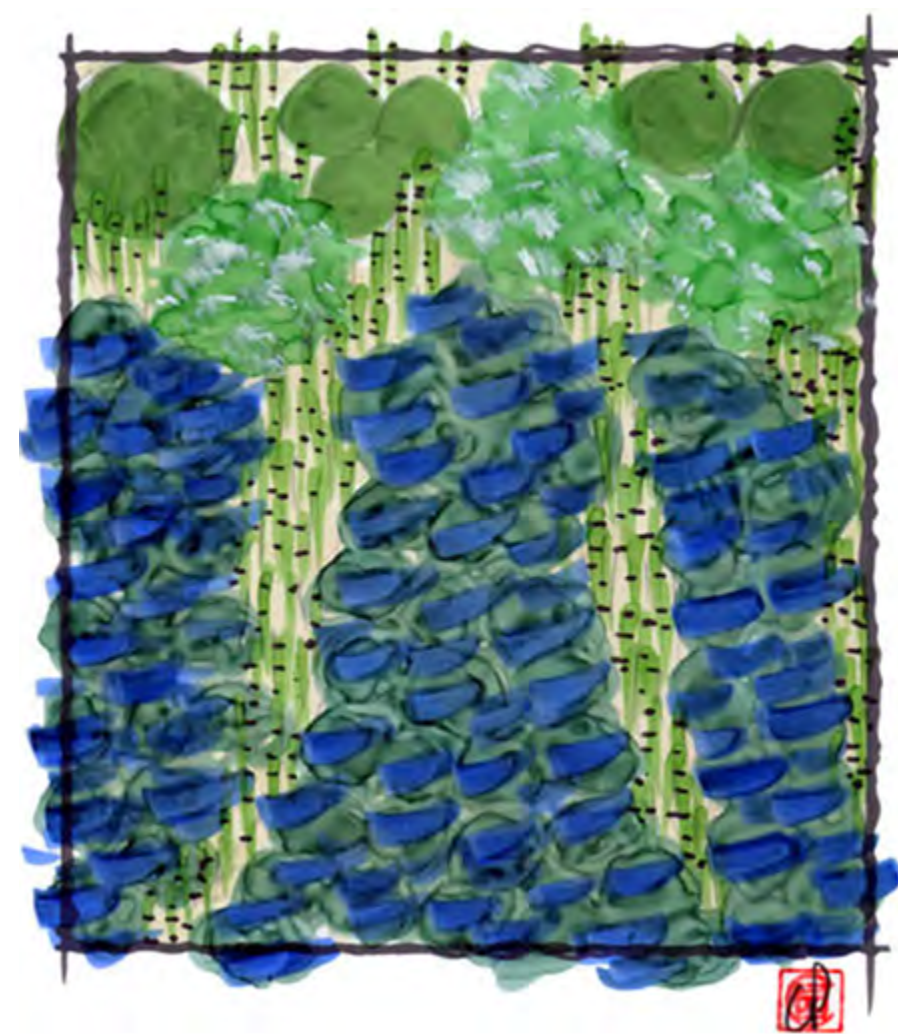
Ephemeral garden

Contractor: GestiVert Environnement SAS

Nurseries : Les Hortensias du Haut-Bois /

Verte ligne

Basketry : Jean-Pierre Hardouin



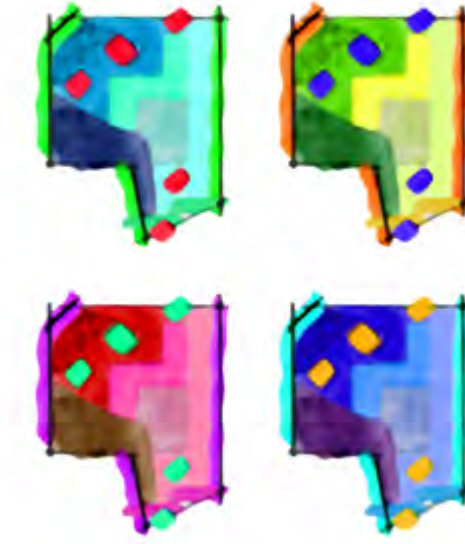
Hydrangeas, "the temptation of the West."

They were believed to be Bretons, cousins, from our ocean regions, but they come from Asia, Japan, China, on the edge of the Himalayas, as this prehistoric horsetail, equisetum hyemale, and from the Americas, in the foothills of Andes, the hydrangeas, travelers of the world, love of the St Malo and Nantes sailors.

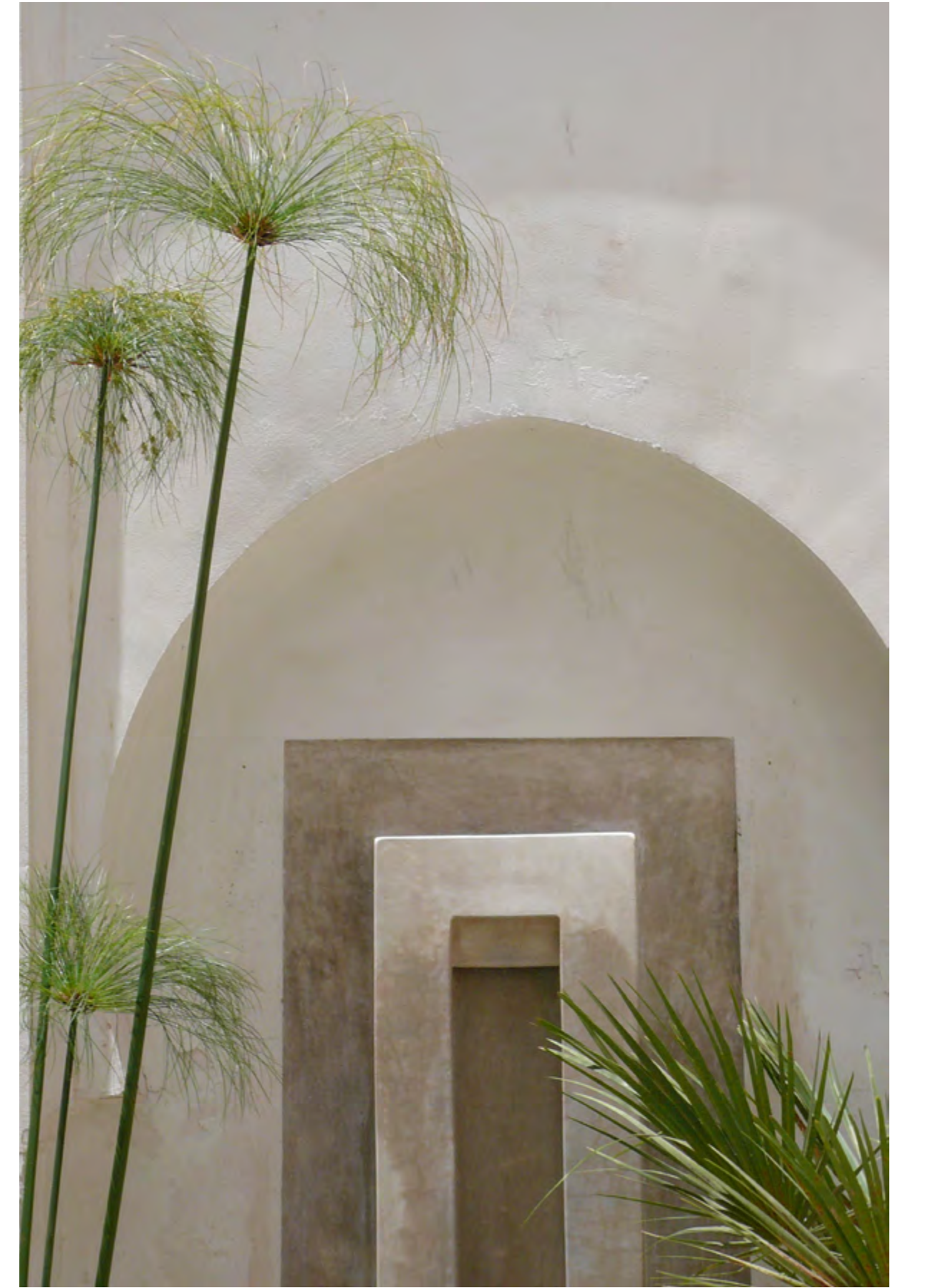
Ephemeral garden of the Tuileries, yes, but kept in mind is the wellbeing of the plants: this design is also a sustainable project that takes into account the basic needs of the plants staged. It is transposable as such or adapted, on a terrace or in a garden.

Ephemeral garden created for the 2008 edition of «Jardins Jardins» in the Tuileries gardens.

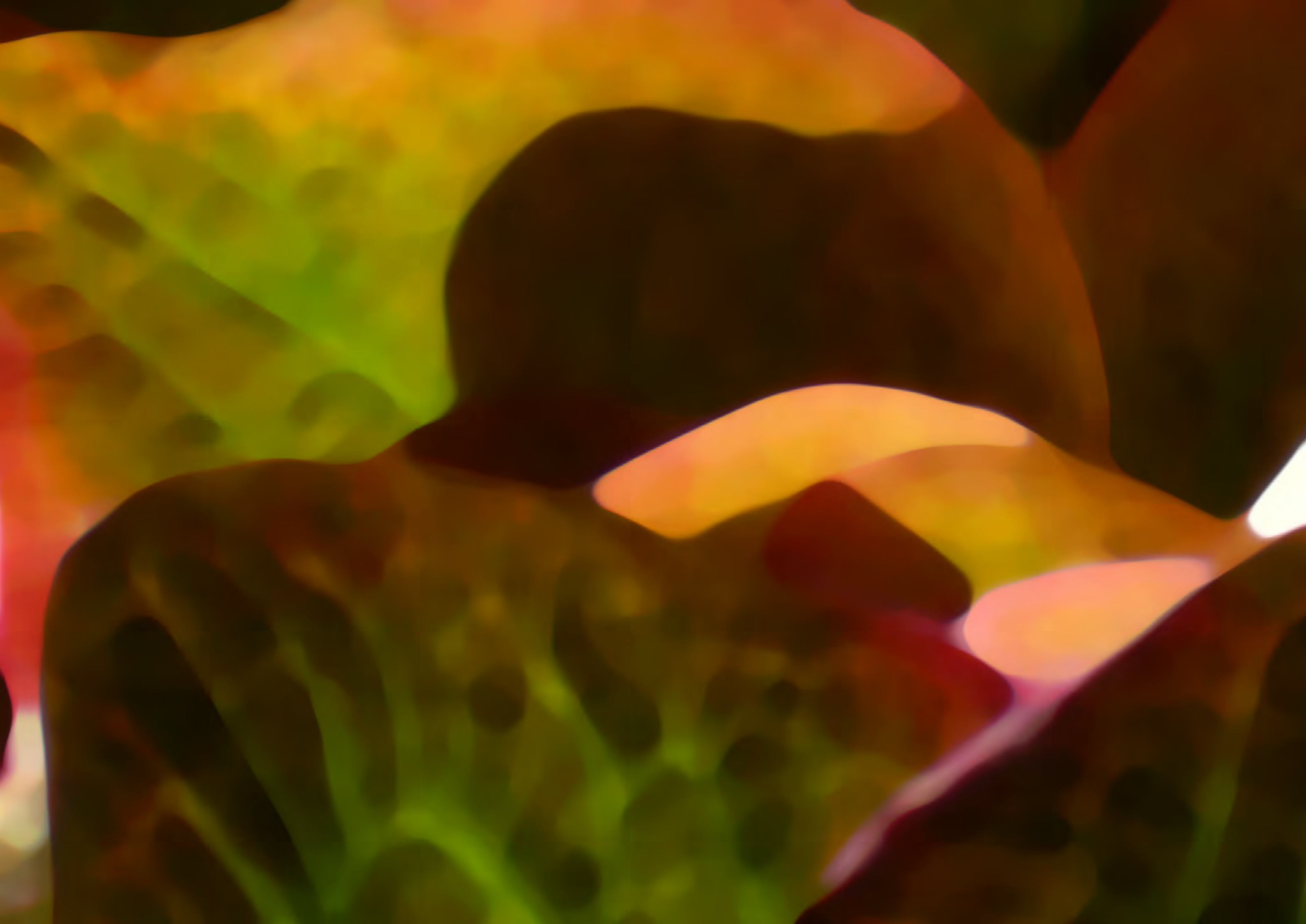




As I see it, what makes this practice as fantastic as it is complex is that I am both the artist who creates and the artisan who makes. I have to split the process so that the intuition and spontaneity involved in design isn't held back by indispensable technical expertise of the field. If a musical analogy was required, you could say that the landscape architect is simultaneously the composer who writes the music and the instrument maker who creates the only instrument this score can be played on. Every garden is both a composition and the instrument that brings it to life.







Whether functional or decorative, public or private, rural or urban, sacred or profane, symbols of power or secret havens, the gardens created today meet the same deep-seated, functional, social or spiritual aspirations as those of the Persian paradises. Our time has transferred the values and practices but the dream remains.

Fontainebleau

2008-2010

8000 m²

Private client

Contractor : Gestivert Environment

Nursery : Verte Ligne & Van Pelt S.A

Maintenance : Jardins & Lumières.



The first courtyard was designed as the main entrance to the house, providing a bright and organic atmosphere to the confined space shaded by a magnificent lapsed magnolia: concordance between the restored mineral walls, the gravel and cobblestones and the massifs offering a cushion and frame to the magnolia. The design expresses a choice of harmony and simplicity between materials and plants.

...

A full redesign of both courtyards and natural surroundings of a traditional farmhouse in the Gâtinais.



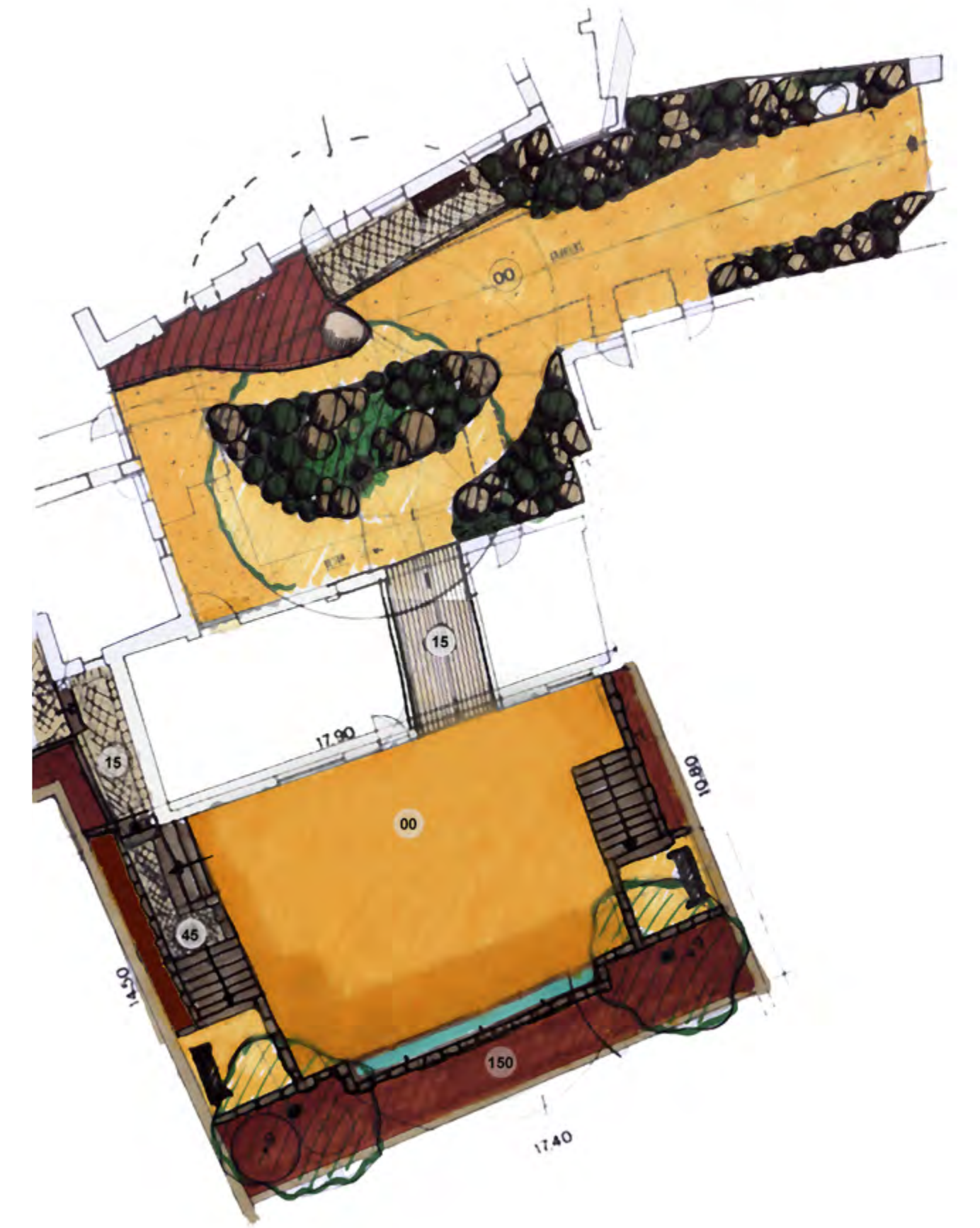


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The second courtyard is a true outdoor room :
an esplanade shelters a long tadlakt fountain
overhung by two plane trees and a cascade of
oak leaf hortensais. Two small risen terraces
accommodate naps, reading, concerts...

The main area resembles a village square.

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On the garden side, gravel terraces are extended by a terraced lawn. The most beautiful trees have been preserved, the driveway and paths have been redesigned, birch groves have been planted, and a kitchen garden

lined with beech hedges gives onto the oak pathway, lined with blueberries. The house has now found its meaning along with a natural environment which provides serenity and peace of mind.





« The *encounter* with space is primarily intuitive ... »

Paris

2006

75 m²

Private client

Contractor : Décoparc

Nurseries : Domaine des Rochettes, Ghyslaine Carlo / Van Pelt SA



An ancient mansion courtyard transformed into a city garden. The “greenhouse kitchen” opens onto this green oasis.

The use of old granite curbs creates a staircase and higher the garden’s level and allows this enclosed space to be softened of it’s feeling of depth. Florence cypresses also contribute to this effect by offering their vertical lines that lead the eye to the sky. The adult japanese maple and the ancient wisteria seem to have always been in this courtyard. Ground covering perennials, evergreen ferns, hydrangea quercifolia and ‘Faulkner’ boxwood coexist around the white slate fountain in the garden.

75 m² in the middle of the thirteenth arrondissement of Paris to turn into a cosy town garden overlooked by a green-house style kitchen.







*« The garden is the smallest parcel of the world,
and it is also the entire world »*

Michel Foucault

Perche

France

2013-2015

10 ha

Private client

Contractor : Alex le Jardinier

Nursery : Domaine des Rochettes / Van Pelt / Robin

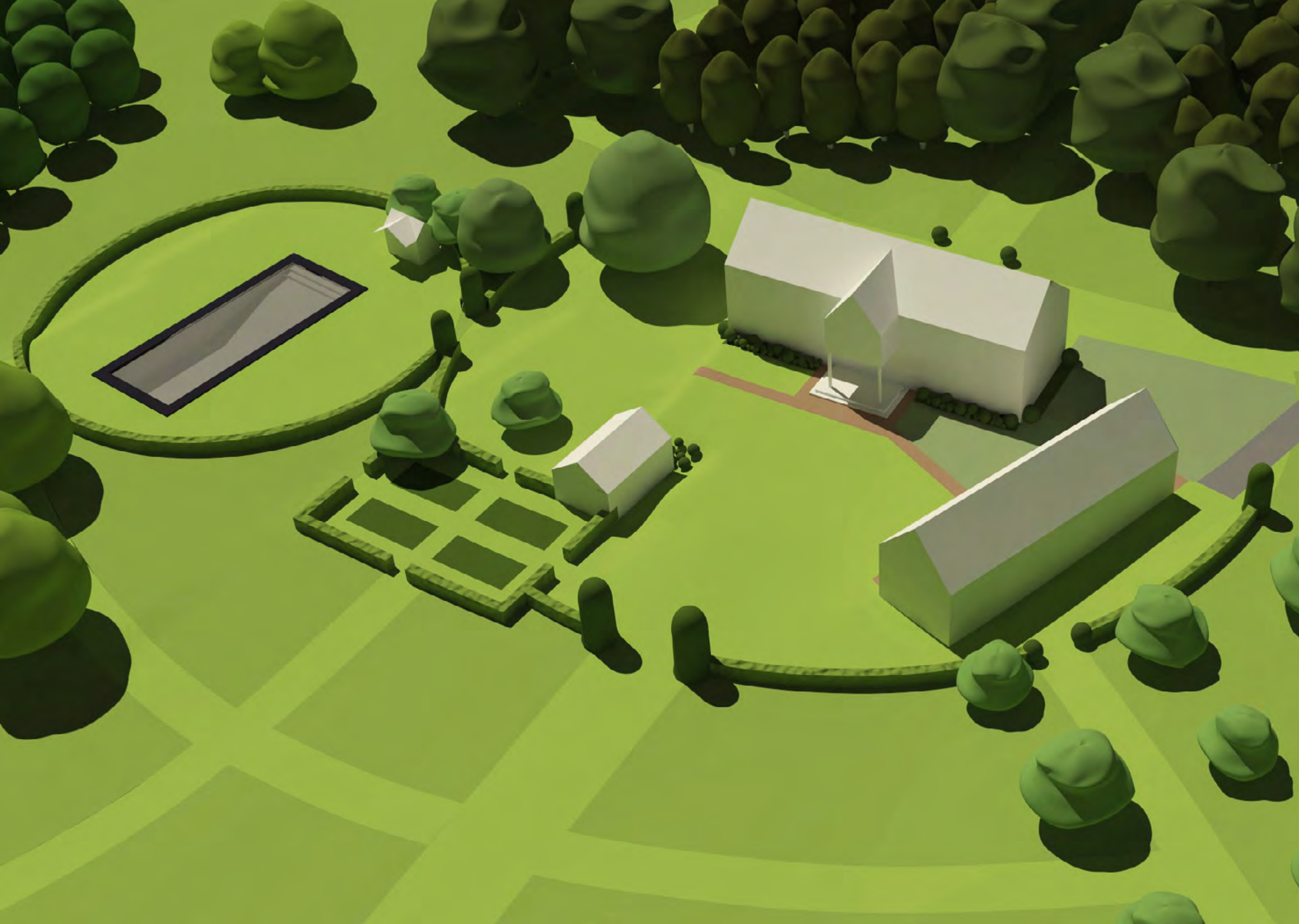


This Scandinavian looking hamlet is located along a stream in the Perche valley. This project consisted of defining and building the houses' "vital space"; designing a pool and fitting it into its countryside surroundings; structuring the rural space by building on river banks and damp areas and planting a row of trees criss-crossed by woodland paths ideal for walks.

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This small and scattered hamlet's immediate surroundings have been designed to create an intimate and cosy garden atmosphere. A safe haven within the larger rural territory.





...

The stunning columns of Portuguese laurel frame the views while simultaneously acting as the garden's gateways. Osmanthus hedges demarcate the land. The deep green perennials compliment the building's red glow all year round. The harmony of colours enhance the harmony of the setting. The pool's dark water reflects the whims of the sky, like a watery mirror in a slate frame.

Everything contributes to recreate a world which takes you back to childhood memories and emotions.









« Architecture by its collective form, sculpture by its moulding of the land, painting by the effect of matter and vegetation, music by the rhythm of its composition and poetry by its flowers' radiance, the art of gardens is a blend of all artistic expression. »

René Pechère

Ile de Ré

France

2012-2013

2000 m²

Private client

Contractor : Alex le Jardinier

Nursery : Van Pelt / Filippi / Ripaud



The villa is located in a pine-trees, live-oaks and poplars wood, growing in a sandy soil on a carpet of giant ferns.

We decided to go for a «dry garden», with a selection of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees that would need no watering whatsoever except for the rain and the natural moist of the seashore. In that particular case the sandy soil being very draining, and not able to retain much organic matter, it would have been crazy to imagine planting anything else but species liking poor and dry soils. The lawn is not grass but a dry climate ground-cover called phyla nodiflora that requires neither watering nor mowing.

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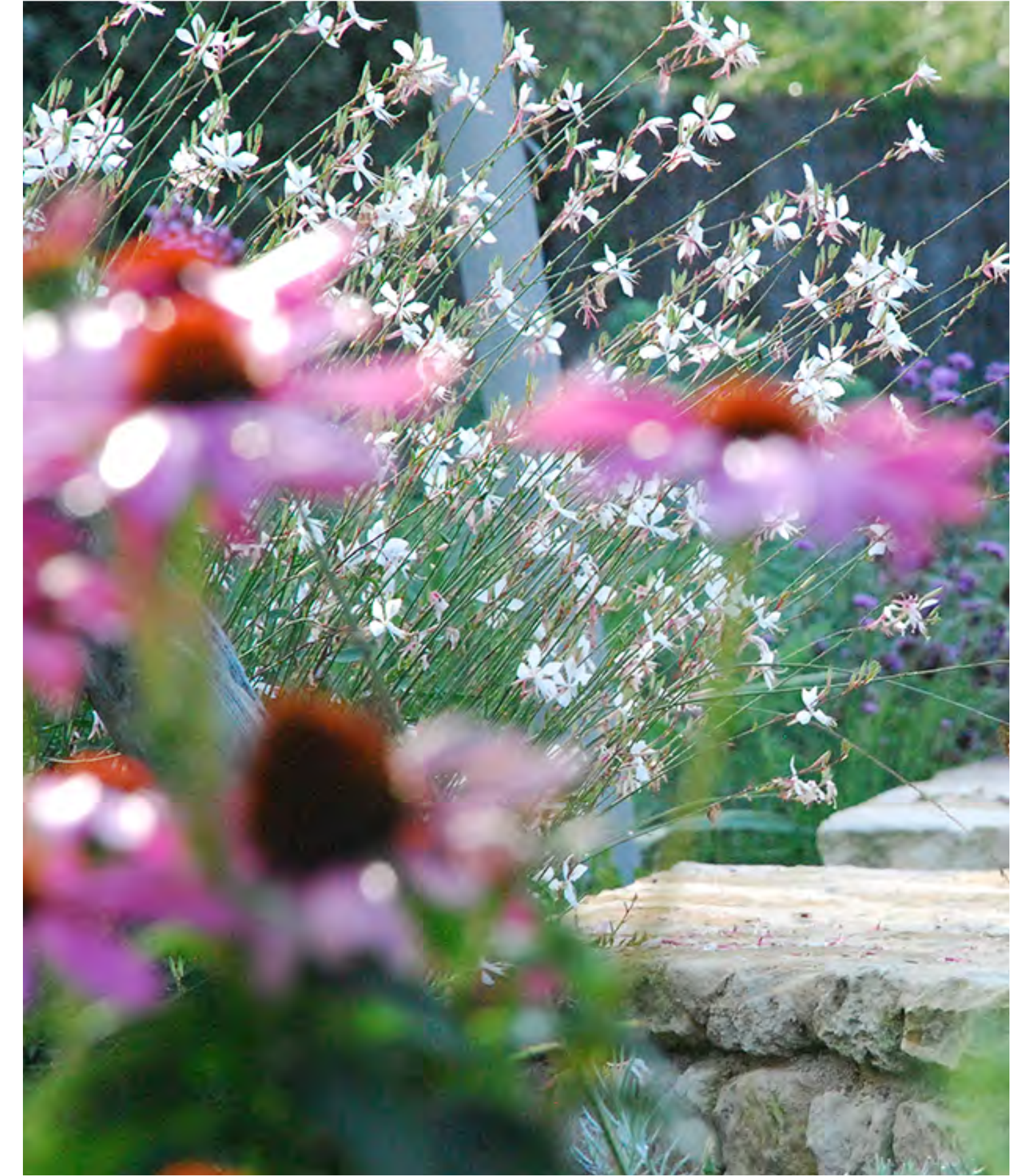
A no-watering no-mowing dry garden.





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We redesigned the front of the house, creating large workshop-like windows opening on wide Ipé wood terraces bordered with low dry-stone walls. The idea was to double the impression of available living space by creating the same surface outdoor as indoor. In the summer when the windows are opened it is just one big indoor/outdoor floor plan. In the winter, even with the windows closed, the inside of the house is still fully connected with the garden and the garden remains part of the indoor.





Provence Khao Yai

Thailand

Work in progress, started in 2014

5 ha

Real estate developers & private clients



Bangkok's residents flock to valleys of this rocky mountain range to build their second home. The region has a far milder climate than the capital, at an altitude of approximately 500m. The seasons are pronounced and the vegetation has numerous species of deciduous trees blended with local varieties of pine and cypress. It's a surprising idea but when you see the vines and rosemary blooming at the foot of the limestone escarpments, you can see why the project by this duo of Thai promoters, who love the South of France, works.

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The Green (Khao Yai)
www.provencekhaoyai.com

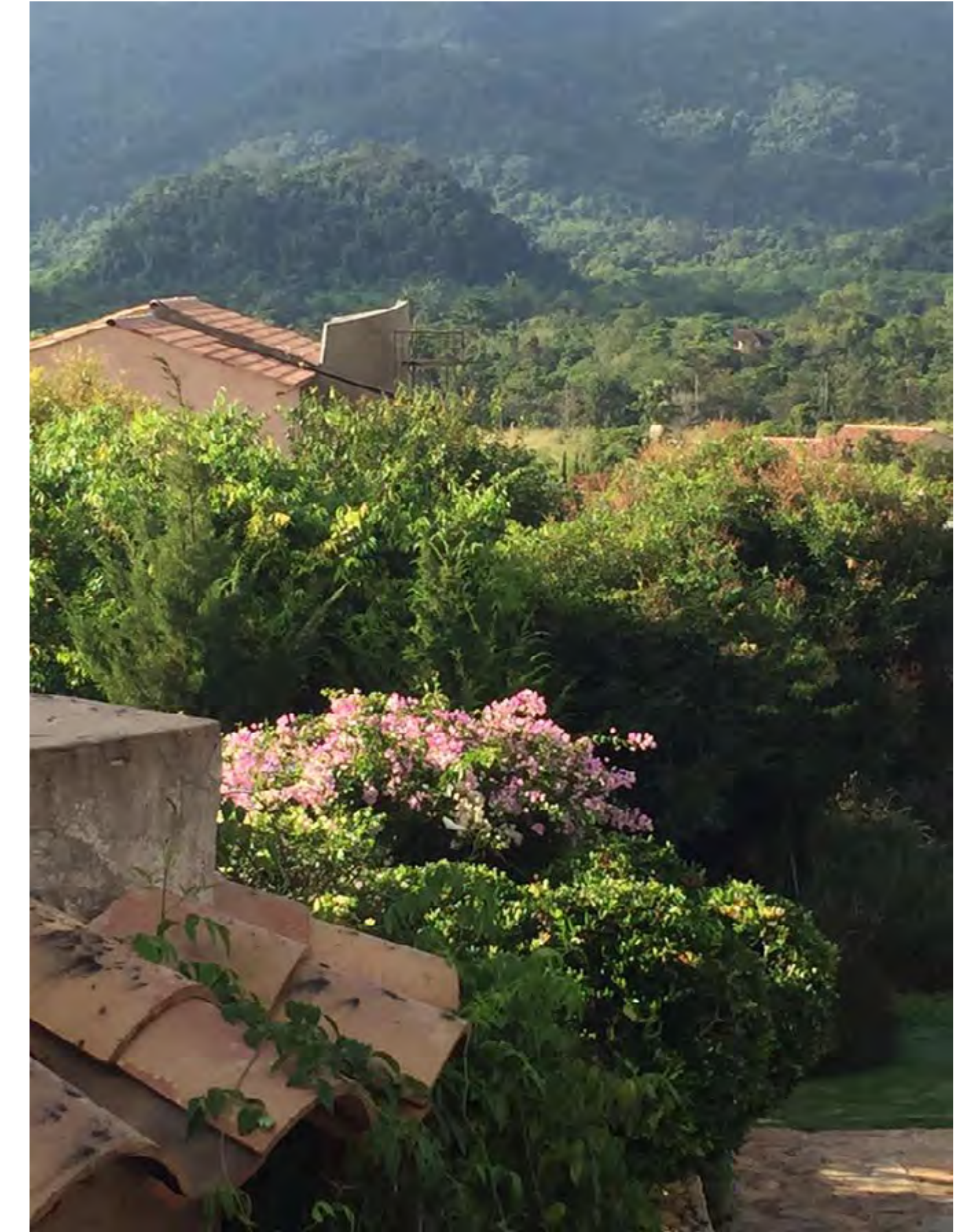
A small piece of Provence in Khao Yai National Park hills, two hours' drive north-east of Bangkok





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Atelier Jardins is involved in the general public planning and private gardens of this 25 house project which is based around a village square. There is also a consultancy and artistic direction aspect as the architecture is adapted to suit every buyer based on four house models. The plot is at the foot of a rocky overhang on a slope with a difference in altitude of approximately 20m. The grounds have been entirely terraced in drystone in which the multi-stage plots stand. The entire landscape has been treated as one large consistent landscape punctuated by tall cypresses and local species similar to evergreen oak. Rosemary, sage, helichrysum and lavender add the finishing touches to this setting.







*« Then one can stand by the spring, under the box tree,
because it is there that one comes upon the soft air which
smells of running water and leafs. »*

Henri Bosco

Moscow

Russia

2014

380 m² rooftop

Private client

Design concept



The stiff, slightly pompous and cold building is broken down with a curvaceous and rounded structure using warm materials. The plot features a batten teak bench which snakes around the terrace, alternating with tall potted plants bursting with birches and 'Fire Glow' maples creating windows to look out to the horizon over the city's rooftops.

A small birch wood blocks the north view from a room made entirely of glass beneath a passageway in a very rustic style. This cosy little haven can be a summer lounge or a fireside escape, reminding the owner of his beloved Russian countryside.

This organic and smooth design contrasts in its shape and its materials with the neo-classical architecture of this Muscovite building.





Saint-Briac

France

2007

1400 m²

Private client

Contractor : Heol Paysages

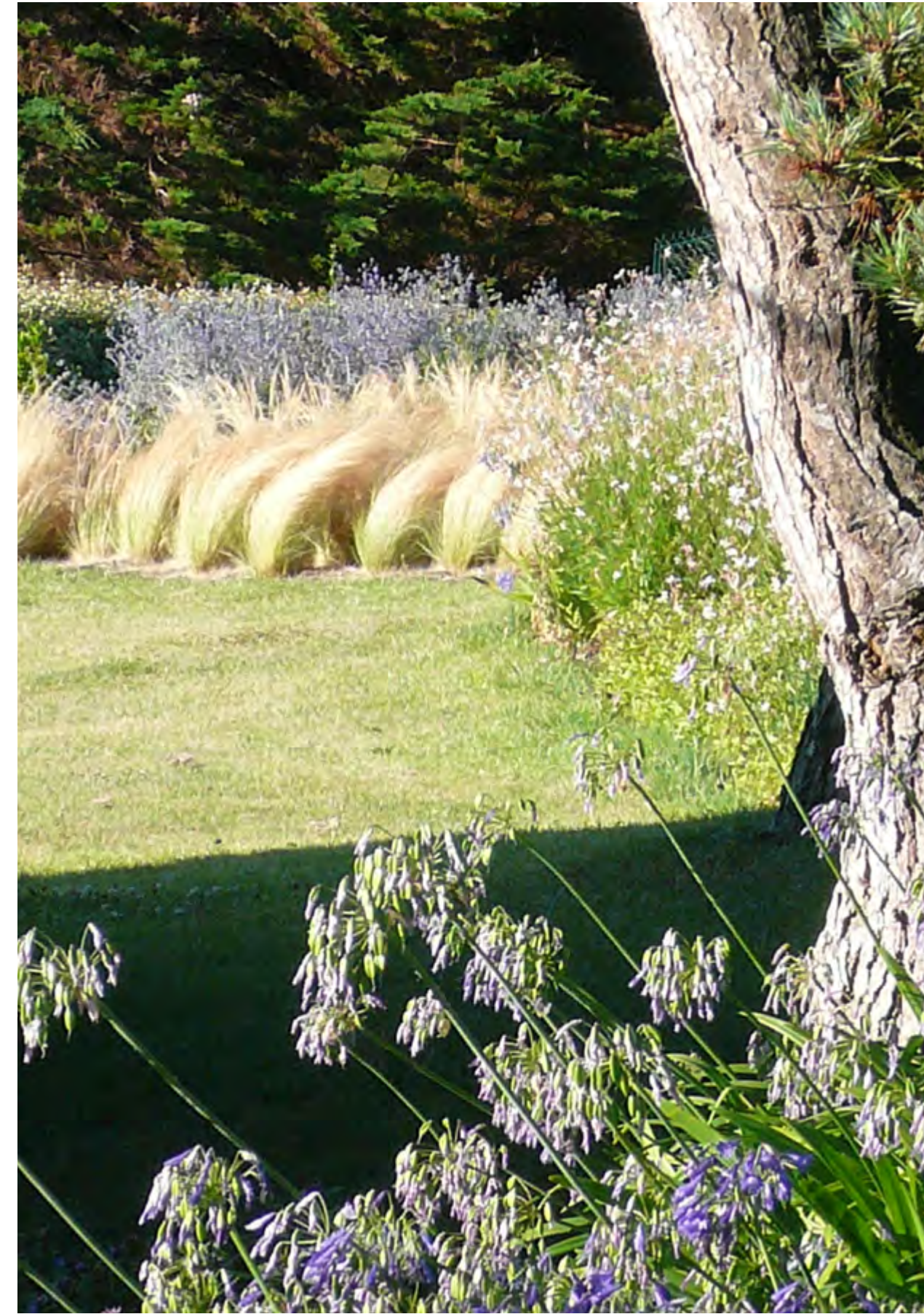
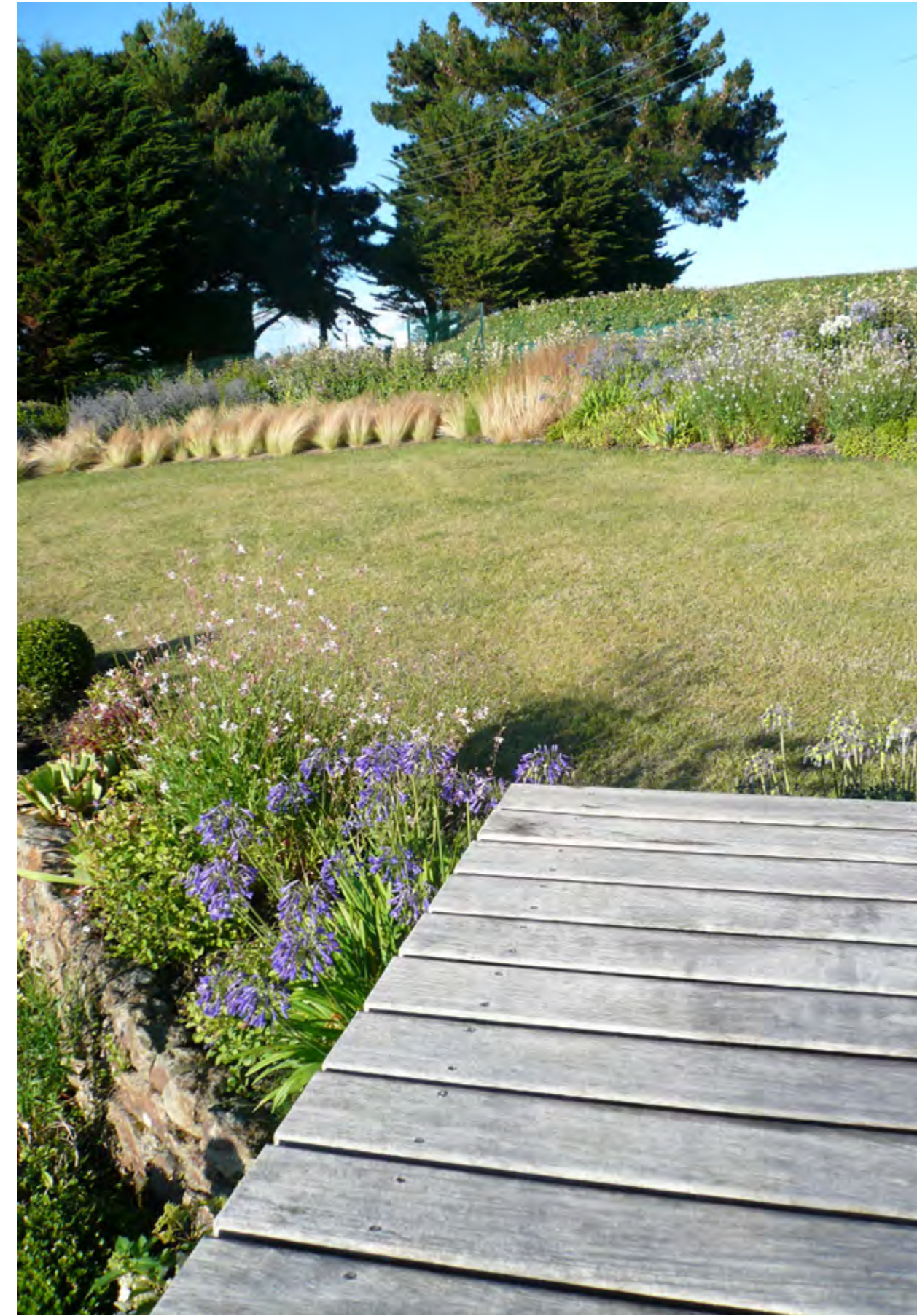
Nursery : Van Pelt S.A.



To find comfortable and flattering spaces to open the garden on the horizon, the principle of terracing was imposed, not in the shape of successive steps, but irregular and rounded like lines of the coast. Dry stone walls remind us of the coastline and create sheltered terraces. Tallgrasses come as a translucent screen in front of the sea view in which greenery “windows” organize the view of the surrounding islands and the Cap Frehel. A blue and white garden composed almost entirely of Mediterranean vegetation, benefits from the pleasures of the Gulf Stream and sea air.

The large sloping lawn hit a high hedge of Eleagnus which hid the view of this seaside garden.





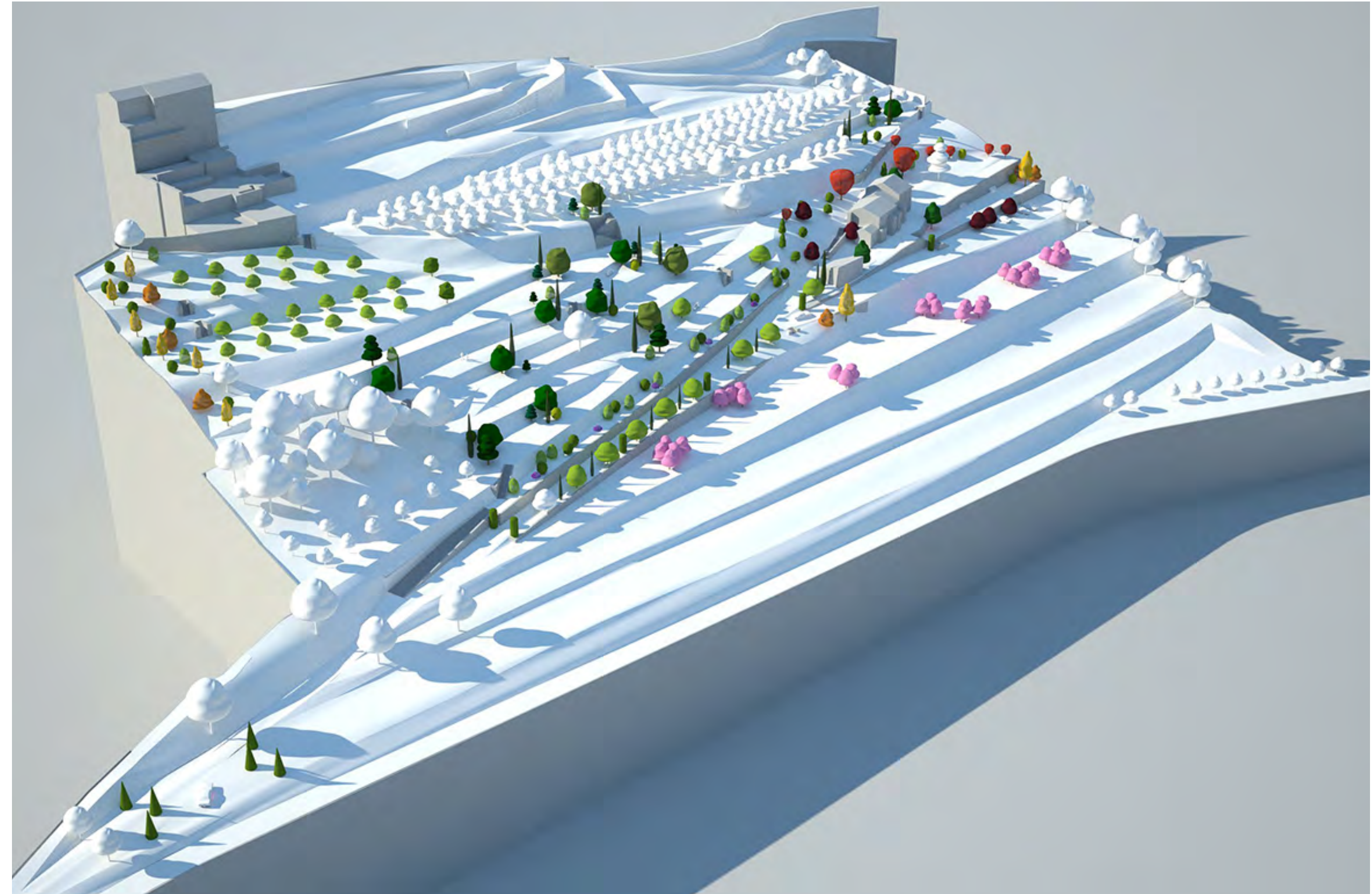




Ongoing



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Creations

Pots

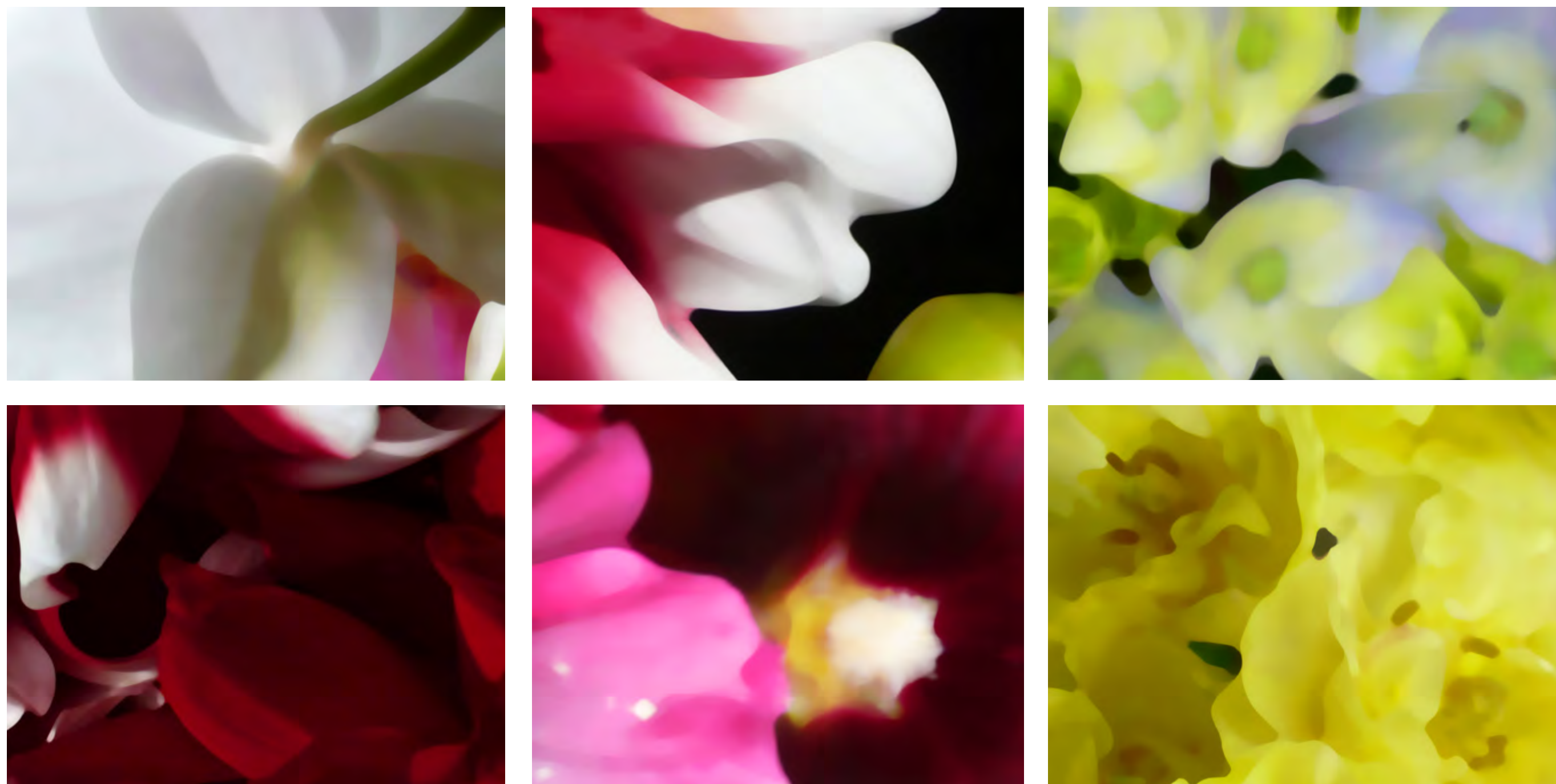
Extending garden design to the objects that furnish it and participate to its structure.

A contemporary line of terracotta pots hand-made in Italy, in Impruneta.

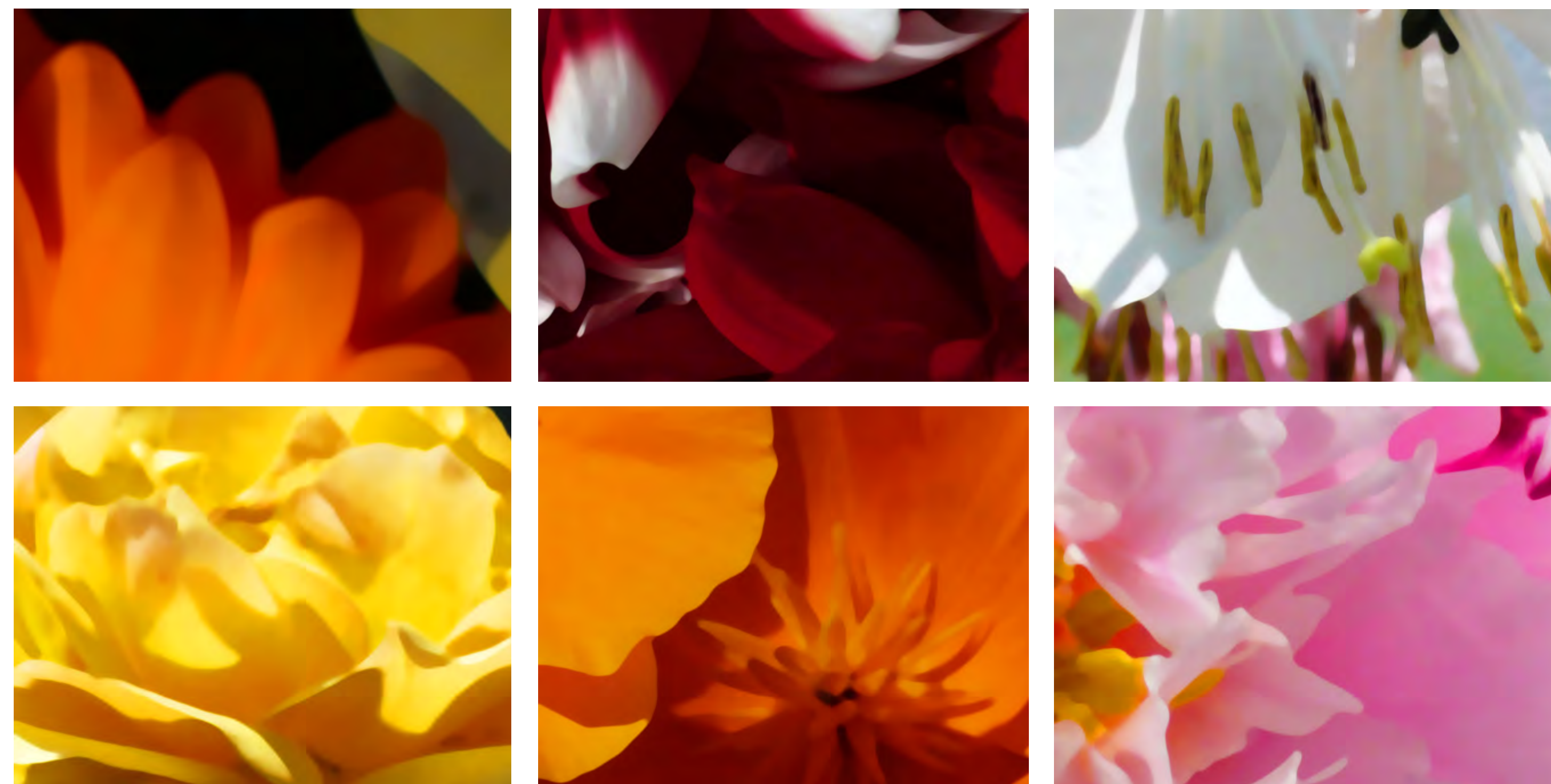


Photography

At the limit of figuration and abstraction, photography work about light, energy, colour and matter at the heart of flowers: ignoring the subject to capture its essence, forgetting the envelope to only express the soul.



Large format prints (120 x 160 cm), aluminum support or Diasec.





Born in Paris.

Childhood spent in Morocco then Paris and Versailles.

Summers spent in Brittany between Carnac and Dinard.

Adolescence in a boarding school in the Alps.

Architecture studies at ESA Paris.

Decorator, assistant director and advertising film producer for 15 years.

Graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage de Versailles in 2001.

Founded Atelier Jardins.

Currently lives in Paris, Barcelona and Aubrac

Designs and executes private gardens, hospitality and residential projects in Europe, Africa, Middle-East and Asia.

Partners with architects and interior designers to build or renovate private residences, as well as to conduct urban and spatial planning projects.

About

The path that Christian Préaud took to becoming a landscape architect has unfolded like a long journey into the deep emotion produced by his discovery of nature, landscapes bearing the mark of man's work or half-tamed, in the depths of the city, as in the edge of the deserts.

His childhood took him from Morocco to Versailles and the Alps to Brittany, from gardens to landscapes and from landscapes to gardens. His grandmother's garden in Dinard gave him a passion for plants, observing nature and working with the land.

As well as his training as an architect, his work as a decorator, his work as an advertising film producer and photographer, his many travels, life in touch with the land on the banks of the Mayenne river and the years he spent in Brussels gradually led him to the Ecole du Paysage de Versailles. All the vision and intuition that he has subconsciously gathered since

his childhood enabled him to dive into the world of gardens that always lived in his heart.

How do you make a career out of your penchant...your passion? A slow and uncertain sublimation process whose impulses escape us? Maturing is related to the earth, seasons, slow speed and splendour of life that bursts from a garden.

A garden is also a confrontation with matter that demands expert handling and a keen grasp of techniques, the humble apprenticeship under masters past and present before being able to unleash inspiration and creativity.

If Eden is the most heavenly garden, if the beauty of the world made by Creation can never be equalled, perhaps it is a sign of humanity that, like Sisyphus rolling his rock, we cannot resist the temptation to find or try to recreate, if not paradise, a few plots of harmony on earth. The philosopher tells us to imagine Sisyphus happy.

Press



Press





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