



The Slender Margin Between the Real and the Unreal

Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724) comments that 'art is something that lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal'. This is the origin of a discussion which recalls the experience and associated imaginings of the European gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth century and their distant cousins, the stroll gardens of the Tokogawa and Meji periods of Japan. The shared use of the borrowed landscape or 'shakkei' allows for further enquiry into the similarities and difference. The three authors, through discussion, correspondence, and visits to particular gardens, built a relationship through the sharing of references and experiences. The garden reveals itself as a bountiful source of inspiration, a place of escapism, a cultural and social signifier, and as a place for thinking.

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