

Tea with Glenn Lewis Transcript

February 5, 2023

Artist Talk Transcript

Glenn Lewis 0:00

I guess, at some point, in that interest in topiaries, and so on, I realized that gardens were a very common thing, everywhere. It seemed. I mean, everywhere from Japan, to China to Europe, Vancouver, everywhere. And why did people create these gardens in front of their houses or in parks? And, you know, public gardens and estates and so on? I realized that there was something going on here that, there was something every day about it. On the one hand, I mean, they're very common. And then on the other hand, they all had odd things in them that seemed to have some kind of historical resonance about them. Like there might have been a building in the garden, like a kind of a temple perhaps. And then, of course, in India, you find gardens that are temples, they seem to go together. Temples seem to go together with gardens.

So I started doing research and all this. I came up with ideas about the garden, as a kind of a work of art, if you'd like, or maybe it was like an assembly of art. I kind of think maybe it was, like in a garden, it's a bit like going to a museum, you go from room to room, and you go, you see something in the room, you know, and so I broke it down into nine categories.

In the garden, or the pre-garden, if you'd like, like the wilderness, I called it "bewilderness". And that's where you see where man hasn't had such an influence on it, where everything is wild, and everything's growing together, in a sense. And out of that, out of that bewilderness, you come into the garden through a gateway.

So that's the second category, there's a gateway. And then because the gateway in many respects, the garden was enclosed might have had a wall around it. Usually that's the case, especially in more drier countries, like, like Iran or Persia, where they would enclose the garden in an enclosed space. Or even before that, maybe in Babylonian times that that kind of thing, where the ruler would have a hunting park, and it would be enclosed. So, all these things contributed to the idea of, of the garden.

And then after the gateway, you might have some guardians of the gateway. Like in the Garden of Eden story, you have the seraphim, right, those kinds of little pooties with anyway, these had swords, and so on. If you weren't supposed to come into the garden, you would be scared away by these fearsome protectors of the gateway. Or you might find those images, if you like, or sculpture type image imagery throughout the garden. And I kind of thought, well, maybe these are memories of the people and animals that used to live in paradise. You might see them throughout the garden in some way.

And then there was the pathway through the garden, which led from the gateway all the way through to the end of the garden. And all the things that happened along the pathway, the next one would be the kind of an open space or a closed space, like the field, or the courtyard. And then you would come after that. And sometimes in that courtyard, you'd have a maze or a - what's another name for a maze? Anyway, Labyrinth.

Melanie O'Brian 4:30

I'm going to interrupt by saying Glenn is walking us through these groups, from the wilderness or bewilderment. Now we're at the cloister. So, you can sort of follow along as he's talking through these.

Glenn Lewis 4:44

Yeah, actually, that's good. I hadn't really realized that you'd done that. That's great.

Melanie O'Brian 4:52

And then you end up with the water.

Glenn Lewis 4:53

Yeah, yeah. You can put the trees before the water or water after the trees. It doesn't really matter. I mean, sometimes you get everything in one picture. So there are the trees, the sacred trees after the things and then you get the waterways too.

The waterways have three components. There's the source, or the waterfall, where the water is coming out of, and then you have the river or the stream, and then you have the pool or pond. The pond is interesting in that it's got this surface, which some people think of as the earthly paradise, then you get the underworld, and then you get the heavens reflected in the surface.

And then you come to the sacred mountain, after the trees. Sometimes you'll notice that temples, they'll have the dome. And then on top of the dome is the - I'm not sure - Charlie might know what it's called. It's like the symbol of the tree, the sacred tree on the very top. Anyway, I think that the temple is the sort of manifestation of the mountain, the sacred mountain.

Then you finally come to the grotto. The cave in the mountain, and sometimes that's the source of the water. And then the cave, again, is sort of, in a way like another opening, like another gateway. And the whole process is like from birth till death, basically. The picture of life as you as you go through it.