

Ferruccio Vitale. Landscape Architect of the Country Place Era



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出版者:

出版时间:2001-10

装帧:

isbn:9781568982908

Ferruccio Vitale is America's forgotten landscape architect. Though his works like Skylands and Longwood Gardens are well known, his name has been eclipsed by his contemporary, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Yet Vitale's influence on the modern direction of landscape design and his promotion of it as a profession is arguably more significant than Olmsted's. His unique designs and philosophy, which challenged the then-dominant pictorial mode of landscape architecture, influenced generations of followers, and is still felt today. Vitale (1875-1933) developed his rationale designs, based on the principles of composition from the fine arts and architecture, in both civic commissions and, most notably, at the country estates of captains of industry and finance. He introduced an idealized and abstracted type of formal design that created beautiful spaces, structured large sites, and reflected informal and relaxed plant compositions. Ferruccio Vitale tours over 40 of his masterworks, photographed by

some of the best landscape photographers of the time, including Samuel Gottscho. It recounts the compelling story of a life in the early twentieth century, influenced by immigrant dreams, social clubs, and professional connections, and its culmination in some of the greatest landscapes of the 20th century.

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