

# Discreet Austerity

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## Notes on Gabriel Guevrekian's Gardens

### Abstract

Gabriel Guevrekian is best known as the first secretary general of the CIAM, launched in 1928, however his contribution to the Modern Movement and early twentieth century avant-garde architecture is fairly unexplored. As a young practitioner who had recently moved to Paris, Guevrekian participated in the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris 1925 with a garden installation called *Jardin d'Eau et de Lumière*. The project was an architectural manifesto that fostered the theory and practice of landscape and garden design. The project was criticized right after its execution, but gradually became well-received by many critics. It was conceived as one of the first applications of the modernist and cubist principles on landscape design. However as the architect and the curator of the exposition expressed, it was designed according to the idea taken from Persian Gardens, a concept that remained present throughout Guevrekian's later projects. This article will revisit the garden projects by Gabriel Guevrekian, not only in light of aesthetic principles of Modern art and architecture, but also in relation to their inherent concept: the idea of the Persian Garden. It will be argued that, deriving from the idea of the Persian garden, Guevrekian's projects manifested no imitation of nature; instead they stood in opposition to nature. They offered a definition of garden fully stylized through architectural forms and principles.

### Keywords

Abstraction, Architectural Form, Garden, Gabriel Guevrekian, Landscape, Persian Garden