

# Symmetry and Asymmetry in the Gardens of Versailles

**Catherine Szántó**

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Architecture, Paris

**5:30 pm on Nov 9, 2016**

**CEU—FT 409**

**Budapest, Nador u. 9**

**Reception to follow**



Today's growing social importance of gardens and gardening brought with it a renewed interest in historical gardens and their restoration. Apart from a few well-documented examples, however, there is relatively little archeological and documentary evidence about the creation, and successive transformation of the gardens of the past, and even less about their maintenance history. Thus the restoration (for gardens that are still extant) and reconstruction (for gardens that have disappeared, and exist only (if at all) as archeological sites) necessarily imply a combination of research-based and ad-hoc design decisions. The lecture will present a hypothesis on using historical garden treatises and descriptions not as sources for factual knowledge about a given garden but as resources to understand the period's culturally-shaped « spatial competency » shared by all those involved (owner, designer, visitors).

**Catherine Szántó** is a landscape architect, associate researcher in the AMP (Architecture-Milieu-Paysage) laboratory at the Paris-La Villette School of Architecture in France, where she is presently teaching. Her research interests center on the aesthetics of spatial experience through movement. After completing her PhD on the experience of walking in the gardens of Versailles, she was the recipient of several scholarships to study spatiality in the lagoon of Venice, an experimental forest in Sweden, and Japanese gardens. The present lecture develops a theme discussed in her doctoral research.