

From Dangast to Colorado Springs

CGI.-STUDIES 24


Irma Franzen-Heinrichsdorff 1892-1983. Notes on the Life and Work of the First Woman Graduate in Landscape Architecture

Irma Franzen-Heinrichsdorff was a 20th century landscape architect, who was not widely known in Germany. Her creative horticultural work included not least her impressive „landscape ideas“ for private gardens, some of which are presented and paid tribute to here for the first time. In this book, Franzen-Heinrichsdorff's remarkable biography is traced using information from previously untapped sources. Franzen-Heinrichsdorff studied at the horticultural institute „Lehr- und Forschungsanstalt für Gartenbau“ in Berlin-Dahlem and became the first woman to gain the qualification of „Staatlich diplomierte Gartenbauinspektorin“, i. e. horticultural inspector, in the subject of landscape gardening. She thereby attained the highest academic honour there was in this profession at the time. Influenced by expressionism and with an interest in music and dance, the accomplished illustrator and designer had a promising career as a landscape architect ahead of her. Rather than marrying the distinguished solo flutist Alfred Tibursky, the father of her two children, she tied the knot with landscape architect Gustav Heinrichsdorff, only to divorce him several years later. Family-related and professional difficulties forced Franzen-Heinrichsdorff to give up her career, and she went on to run a children's home in the North Sea resort of Dangast for twenty years instead. Undeterred by intermittent harassment from National Socialists, she also cared for three foster children there over the years. It was not until later in life that she had the opportunity to work as a landscape architect once again in Colorado Springs in the United States of America; two of her former foster children and her son were instrumental in paving the way for her.

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