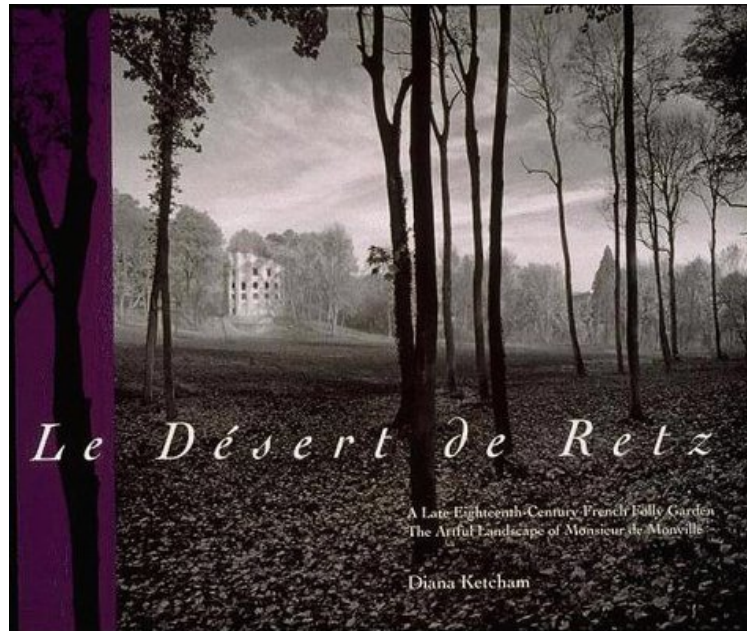


Le Dsert de Retz

Diana Ketcham

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Diana Ketcham : Le Dsert de Retz before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Le Dsert de Retz:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. amazing garden follyBy nicBeautiful place I was so happy to visit, beautiful book!

The Dsert de Retz, the supreme surviving example of the folly garden, is one of the most amply and beautifully documented of France's historic gardens. Since 1990, when the Arion Press published the first book on this garden outside of Paris, the Dsert de Retz has been transformed by an ongoing restoration. That limited, fine-press edition is long out of print and much sought after. This new edition reproduces in a smaller oblong format the material in the original book. Diana Ketcham's text has been expanded and updated to reflect recent scholarship and physical changes to the site. There are also new photographs that show the restored landscape and the complete restoration of the folly known as the Broken Column to its original state as a false ruin. The 100 illustrations consist of views of the construction of the park (1774-1789); models from antiquity and analogues in contemporary gardens; facsimiles of the 26 engravings of the garden that appeared in Georges Le Rouge's *Dtails de nouveaux jardins a la mode: Jardins anglo-chinois*, the most important illustrated book on gardens of the eighteenth century; and photographs of the buildings and grounds taken by the British photographer Michael Kenna. These beautiful photographs, together with Diana Ketcham's carefully researched text, capture the haunting atmosphere of the place during its transition from the romantic, overgrown state of benign neglect, which so intrigued the Surrealists, to the clearing and building that today preserve a balance between the encroachments of unruly vegetation and disintegration.

"Diana Ketchum's magnificently researched and beautifully accomplished text, with its accompanying images, is not a

book for mere specialists. It is a book of interest to garden enthusiasts, to art historians, to surrealists to anyone with a taste for fantasy, architectural metaphor, the poetry of vision, the aesthetics of stone and leaf." Arthur C. Danto, Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

About the Author Diana Ketcham is the staff architecture critic and book review editor for the Oakland Tribune. Her architecture criticism appears in the New Criterion, The Nation, and the New York Times.