

2017–present

# Marnas: A Journey Through Space, Time, and Ideas

[www.marnasgarden.com](http://www.marnasgarden.com)

## SPONSORS

MIT Libraries

MIT HASS Fund

“MarnasGarden.com models the transformative power of the digital humanities as a tool for understanding landscapes across space and time. Image, text, and sound take us on an exquisite journey that cuts to the heart of dilemmas driving twenty-first century practice—given the dynamic nature of landscapes, how do we design for inevitable adaptation? How do we preserve that which must necessarily change? Anne Spinn’s masterful work connects points in time, linking theory and practice in a provocative living expression that breaks new ground in landscape architecture research.”

PHOEBE LICKWAR, FORGE

*Marnas* provides the first public access to the garden laboratory of the master designer/theorist, Sven-Ingvar Andersson, who documented his experiments there over the course of fifty years through thousands of photographs.

This unique documentation made possible the interactive website ([www.marnasgarden.com](http://www.marnasgarden.com)), designed as an immersive, three- and four-dimensional experience of the place. It is now possible to journey through the garden in space and time: to walk down leafy tunnels, through diverse spaces; to travel across time in successive views of the same space from morning through evening, from winter through spring, summer, and fall, across decades. The goal was to create a visit to Marnas as it existed throughout Andersson’s lifetime.

The website transports the visitor, not only through space and time, but also through a series of ideas, to arrive at new insights. It aspires to evoke the magical quality of Marnas and bring alive the ideas that shaped it. Like the garden itself, it has both a clear formal structure and one that is freely growing, with no one beginning, and no single end. The homepage unfolds via a vertical scroll through a series of gateways. One gateway invites you to take a guided tour of the garden, others, to explore on your own, meet Sven-Ingvar Andersson, or travel in time. The goal was to stimulate exploration and interaction, the viewer an active participant.

*Marnas* extends my exploration of photography, multimedia, and website design as media of inquiry and expression. In 1995, I was an early adopter of the Web as a creative medium for publishing and teaching. The Marnas self-guided tour takes my prior experiments to a new level. It is no substitute for being in the place, but it permits a peek into gardens that once were, an experience now only possible through digital media.

The homepage unfolds via a vertical scroll through a series of gateways. One gateway invites you to take a guided tour of the garden, others, to explore on your own, meet the designer, or travel in time.



## MARNAS:

### A JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE, TIME AND IDEAS

Take a tour through the garden with Sven-Ingvar Andersson. Hear the stories behind the garden's many rooms. Watch the garden change through seasons and years. Follow the ideas that drive the form. View the full-length tour above (20 minutes) or plot your own path through the short episodes below.



A Green Den



The Patio



The Gazebo



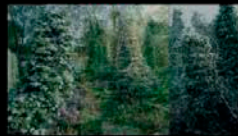
The Treehouse



The Willows



The Garden Rooms



The Hens



A Path to Renewal



Hawthorns



Flowers



The Portal of Death



Fire



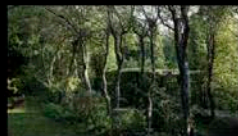
The Pyramid



The Black Eye



Mysteries



Portraits in Time



Transformation

## Take a Tour: Multimedia Videos

Take a tour through the garden with Sven-Ingvar Andersson as guide. Hear the stories behind the garden's many rooms. Watch the garden change through seasons and years. Follow the ideas that drive the form. You can plot your own path through seventeen short episodes or view the full-length tour (20 minutes).

The scripts for the videos are in Andersson's own words. I selected and translated texts where he reflects on Marnas, its precedents, origins, elements, composition, plants, and meanings. I composed these excerpts into seventeen parts, which originally were intended to be viewed separately, encountered in the self-guided tour as the visitor wanders around the virtual garden. Ultimately, I realized that the short videos could be sequenced to create a story arc, beginning with the dream of a green den and ending in transformation.

Script in hand, it was then a matter of selecting and sequencing photographs, video, and sound to support and extend narrative and tone, establish rhythm, portray meaning, and evoke feeling. The viewer should feel like SIA is showing them around his garden. Images give substance to the words. Music was used sparingly, the preference was to add sounds, like those of digging, clipping, birdsong, and wind, which were implied or alluded to by the images or text.

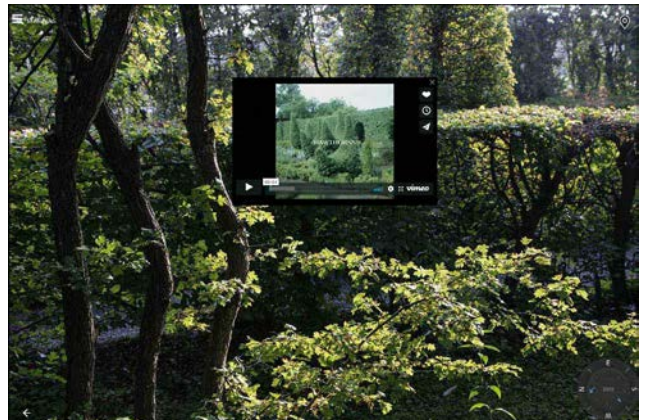
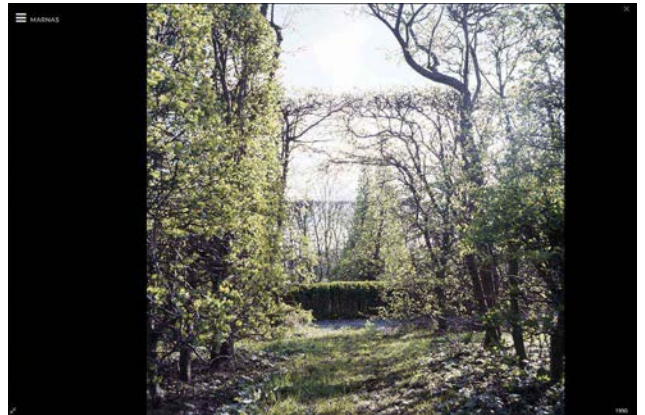
"Marnasgarden.com intertwines two sensitive and reflective "design minds," that of Sven-Ingvar Andersson, the master designer who conceived and developed the garden, and that of Anne Whiston Spirn, who has revealed that world of aesthetics and ideas, interpreting theory, deepening meaning, and evoking feeling."

ELLEN BRAAE, University of Copenhagen

*Left* Take a tour through the garden with Sven-Ingvar Andersson as guide. Plot your own path through seventeen short episodes or view the full-length tour, which takes 20 minutes.

*Right* Multimedia videos take you on journeys across time. In "The Patio" (00:30), composed from photos of the 1950s to the 2000s, Sven-Ingvar Andersson constructs the patio wall in 1957.





## Explore the Garden: The Self-Guided Tour

The self-guided tour begins at the driveway. Four features draw your attention. Each affords a choice. Touch the symbol at the upper left, and it expands into a navigation bar. The compass on the lower right tells you that the year is 1992. Its three arrows point in different directions. Touch one arrow to choose your path. Touch the pulsing square in the center of the screen and see the same view in 1979: the tall willows that lined the driveway in 1992 are saplings; the hedge at the garden's western boundary does not yet exist.

Touch the symbol at the upper right to call up a plan of the garden, which notes your position. Small squares on the plan mark different locations; touch one to move there directly.

As you wander around the garden, you slip in time, across years. At times, you encounter a pulsing square or rectangle, which provides the same view at an earlier time or different season or a video story about the ideas behind the place where you find yourself. If you get lost, call up the plan in the upper right to see where you stand. Occasionally, you encounter Sven-Ingvar Andersson: planting, weeding, sitting in the gazebo, in his house.

The slippage in time, experienced in the interactive tour, mirrors the experience that I have at Marnas, and which Andersson himself most certainly had. When I look down a passage or into a garden room, I see not only what is there before me in the present, but also remembered glimpses of past appearance.

*Left* Wander around the garden. Choose your path by clicking on the compass arrows. As you move you slip forward and backward in time. In certain places, you encounter photographs of the same place at a different time or video stories.

*Right* Meet SIA is a portal to Sven-Ingvar Andersson's work: a selection of his essays, landscape designs, and drawings, as well as commentary by others.

