

T MAGAZINE

## Nine Artists on the Gardens They'll Never Forget

Hiroshi Sugimoto, Irene Neuwirth, Umberto Pasti and others share their impressions of mesmerizing plots all over the world.

By Michael Snyder

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[EXCERPT]



A shady lane, with a fountain running down its center, at Fin Garden in Kashan, Iran. Petr Maderic/Alamy

KASHAN, IRAN

### Fin Garden

**Bahar Behbahani, 53, interdisciplinary artist, Brooklyn**

In Iran, we learn to crawl on carpets, and many of our carpet designs are modeled on Persian gardens. Gardens are in our DNA. If you're from Tehran, one of the first places you go for a field trip is the Fin Garden in Kashan. You drive for hours through an arid landscape, and then you get to this green space with blue fountains, tall cypress trees and shade everywhere. Just a magical beauty. This garden also has an infamous history: In the 1800s, the progressive minister Amir Kabir was exiled there and assassinated in his bathhouse. You learn early on that there can be a harsh side to beauty. Persian gardens aren't about a particular layout or design. They're about how you manage water, how you control temperature, how you direct the wind. It's the most intricate way of making an ecosystem; it's the identity of a people and the whole notion of how we lived. Today, when [U.S. and Israeli forces] strike a garden, the headline might say "historical garden bombed," but that garden is not *only* a garden. It's rooted way deeper than that.