

# Ha-ha



Stanley Kubrick, Barry Lyndon, shot Somerset, 1975

The ha-ha is a ditch stretching across the entire width of an estate, one to two metres deep, to keep the animals away from the house without disturbing the view. With a vertical retaining wall on the house side and a gentle grassy slope on the other, this ancient invention was re-used in the eighteenth century as the first frameless window of modern architecture and fundamental to the picturesque naturalism of the English garden that may be the most radical idea of modernity; to create an invisible barrier between nature and culture.

We shall visit the great English gardens that captured the artistic and philosophical imagination of the Enlightenment and sowed the seeds of our contemporary culture; Stourhead, Bath, the glass and iron botanical garden at Kew mirrored by pre-history at Stonehenge and the recent inheritance of Alison + Peter Smithson. The English landscape did not only create Arcadian gardens for the aristocracy, it framed modern perception. It is the ancestor of public space and has structured modern society from planning, science, art, law, economics and warfare. With friends and experts we shall unmask the most beautifully disguised duel between nature and culture.

23–30 October 2016  
max. 800 CHF, includes transport and accommodation  
min 16; max 21 students