Architects, philosophers and others have attributed the enigmatic appeal of the dry rock garden at Ryoanji temple in Kyoto, Japan, to either philosophical or cultural motifs, or explicit order, such as the golden ratio. Here, I would like to show how a computational model of abstract shape perception enables new understanding of the complexity and order in this garden design. The analysis reveals an intentional, naturalistic structural organization in the composition of Ryoanji, reminding us of one of the great tenets of classical Japanese gardening, namely, that a skilled designer is able to capture the essence of nature in their landscape creations.