



The Horizon Between my Being and the Landscape

Didi van der Putte
Rietveld Fine Arts
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Introduction



This thesis is a text where I explore how even though I have the desire to blur horizons, I realize without it there is no landscape. I research what the 'scape' means in landscape and what else the meaning holds. This text will trace perspective and gaze the inner-landscape. It will guide the reader to the curves of imaginary boundaries. And aspires to unfold landscape to a different way of understanding of what is around us and what might be beyond. I start with asking the question -

What do we know of our relationship to landscape and what did we forget?

While writing this body of text, there were a view things that I could not articulate in words. In my practice I researched next to writing that a horizon cannot be translated in a physical material persé, but maybe when you want to know what is beyond, by folding the picture exactly where the horizon is and carefully rip the paper in half it is an act of coming

closer to what might be beyond. Or if I zoom in the digital file of a captured horizon and there I have found that the horizon is indeed not a line but a blurry grey area, or a concept as foggy as fog.

While writing this body of text as an act of communication I have re-written poems or, send back letters or made poems for certain artists that I consider my communication partners throughout this research.

Empty Corners



A landscape as an expanse where a fragment of it appears to the eye. Landscape is what surrounds us but we can only always see a fragment of all what surrounds us. 'It is the territory that extends as far as the eye can see.'¹ states Antoine Furetière, but I think it does continue to the point where the eye can no longer see. This kind of view I would like to call the scape. The meaning of the word 'scape' is a view or a scenery². For example scape's could be in any surrounding: moonscape, cityscape or seascape. Another key aspect of the scape is time and space. The duration or the 'depth' of the scape becomes a bodily perception. When the eye gazes upon the view it touches the scape and the scape is reflected in the gazers eyes.

Past experiences feed into the present, anticipating the future.

Our temporal experience 'colours' how we understand the present from the lived perspective of the body. As Sara Ahmed writes about the spatiality of the background as a temporal dimension:

¹ Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* Preface by Pierre Bayle (The Hague and Rotterdam, Posthumous publication, 1690)

² Another meaning of scape could be: to avoid or to escape.

'For instance when we tell a story about someone, we might give information about their background. The background would be about what is behind. It refers to what happened in the past.'³ A background is something what explains the state of how things arrived or emerged to what appears to be in the present. For example, when we speak about family background, we are referring to both an individual's history and other types of histories that influence how people come to be in the world.

The division of our limit called gravity (land) and what is above (sky) is always around us and we are in it. It constitutes a material in which we live, move and think. Somehow we are neither outside of it, nor contained by it; landscape is part of us. Therefore, landscape is both inside and outside our bodies. People and landscapes are entangled in a web of material and social relationships. To use Bruno Latour's ⁴ term, It

³ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, p38 (London, Duke University Press, 2006)

⁴ Bruno Latour, *We have never been modern*. trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993)

⁵Quasi-objects are objects that are neither quite natural nor quite social. They are methods that draw people together in particular relations as well as drawing people into relations with other nonhuman objects while being invisible social constructs within the semiotic and humanistic sense.

is a quasi-object⁵, something constructed and made; a cultural product, but having an independent existence with its own rhythms and purposes. The dynamics between space, the body, and emotion are outlined in the book called *An Antropology of Landscape* by Christoph Tilly and Kate Cameron-Daum in where they analyse aspects of landscape in a humanistic discourse. The main point that came across and relates much to what happens when the landscape enters us

‘We are touched by this material world of landscape and in turn touch it.

In the process we transform ourselves. We expect nature to be natural but in fact it was never separated from artefact.’⁶

This is how we see the world argues René Magritte while explaining his painting; *La Condition humaine* in a lecture 1938. ‘We see it outside of ourselves even though it is only a mental representation of what we experience from the inside.’⁷ This painting

is a visual explanation how representation works. We see the outside world from our window, that we see the landscape outside of ourselves, but we see the landscape from our perspective. a painter paints the balance between of what they see and their emotion, that is what holds in the strokes of paint.

How we perceive things in our daily lives, which involve our bodily, cognitive, and emotional capacities in contemporary western culture. How we experience what is near or far, to the right or left of us, behind or in front of us, above or below us. How we explain those experiences could be through metaphors in both our verbal and visual methods. They help to shape certain perceptions of the environments we live in. Metaphors form the basis of our, taken-for-granted, pre-reflected every day and represents the ‘real’ in language.

⁷René Magritte, *La Condition humaine* in a lecture, 1938

For example the foot or brow of the hill, the crown of the tree, the legs of the table. Tilly and Cameron describe in there research about a particular understanding of the landscape we inhabit in chapter *Embodiment* how metaphors are an ever-present part of our language. What is the real in language? Reality is the totality of all things, structures (actual and conceptual), events (past and present) and phenomena, whether observable or not. It is what a world view (whether it be based on individual or shared human experience) ultimately attempts to describe or map

‘Even the simplest topographical features are the result of political decisions’ states Martin Warnke. They are invisible borders that you cannot cross. I see in those invisible borders that Chinon the painting of Gerhard Richter. The painting’s classical appearance is tempered by the pictorial treatment: the shaded-off contours may evoke a blurry photograph, creating a distancing effect. With my eyes I can travel over the blurred varnished oil paint, I can travel to the dark trees

René Magritte, *La Condition humaine*, 1933.



⁶Christopher Tilly and Kate Cameron-Daum, *An Antropology of Landscape* (London, University college London, 2017)

⁸Gerard Richter,
Centre Pompidou,
1987

in the background, but If I would stand there, really I couldn't just walk through the farmland, I would find myself on private property, and in mud.

Somehow when I perceive the landscape painting Chinon It seems to be very familiar to me. I feel I have seen this view, but I have never been in Chinon. Richter explains about this painting: "My landscapes are not just beautiful, nostalgia, romantic or classical in their soul, like lost paradises. They are above all deceiving."⁸I think this painting has not much to do with the French village. It could be a vague memory of mine. I would like to re-name it to Dejavu. It would mean that

the landscape dwells within me. It becomes an inner-landscape.

An inner-landscape could be a dream, a visual landscape made in the process of before falling asleep. This was the main inspiration of the surrealist painter Salvador Dali for example. Those images are

landscapes that may not exist in the physical world. Who knows if they are actually referring or extracted from the reality? They could be memories or made up memories. Or they could reference/predict the future, like a utopia.

Many myths in different cultures arise from landscape and the horizon. We are accustomed to separate nature from human perception. In the book *Landscape and Memory* by Simon Schama he describes well what we may remember and forgot about our relationship to landscape; 'Before landscape touches our senses it is already a work of the mind. Its scenery is as much from layers of memories as from rocks.'⁹ I think the familiar feeling I have with Richter's landscape painting Chinon - (Dejavu) is the beginning of my question for this thesis - What do we know of our relationship to landscape and what did we forget?

Gerhard Richter, *Chinon*, 1987.



⁹Simon Schama,
*Landscape and
Memory*, p7 (Lon-
don, HarperCollins
Publishers, 1995)

The Edge of Everything

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The Horizon Between my Being and the Landscape

‘There is obviously, no such thing as an objective gaze, no horizon is the same for everyone.’¹⁰

The Greek word “horizon” means “bounding (circle)” It was formed from the Greek verb “horizein” which means “bound, limit, divide, separate” The Greek word “horizein” is derived from the Greek noun “horos” which means “boundary, landmark, marking stones”

The horizon is the line that appears to separate the sky and the ground when viewed from a particular angle. It is the perimeter of our field of vision, where things are located. The horizon is the frame which surrounds the field of vision. perception is not only about what is in view (say, the front and the back of the object), but also what is “around” it, which we can describe as the background. We single out this object only by pushing other objects to the edges or “fringes”

of vision. Because of this, Janneke Wesseling explains in her book *The Perfect Spectator*, ‘the horizon and the observer’s position are inextricably linked.’ But we will never reach the horizon and it will always stay in perspective.

The starting point from which something materializes is a concept that is explored in Asian philosophy thoroughly. Lee Joon states in his essay; ‘All under the sky grow out of being, and being grows out of nothingness.’ encapsulated in this statement, ‘nothingness’ is not simply the origin of being, it coexists with being and becomes the dynamic, functional aspect of being.’¹⁰ It unfolds as how everything comes and goes like spring and autumn, like waves on the beach and how outer space expands and condenses again. This relates to how Magritte explained how we see the world. It is an inner experience how we see the world. The moment when we see something, we create the view as a mental representation. A object, person, or idea is represented when it is written, depicted

performed, or spoken. We select our representations using the language that these modes provide. The goal of representation can be to communicate the essence of people, things, experiences, and ideas in a more abstract way, or it can be to mirror the natural world as accurately as possible. Since context and culture shape our perception, there are a diversity of perspectives on the world. This implies that while representations cannot perfectly capture actual reality, they can all convey unique interpretations of the universe and human experience within it. Representations are not neutral. All representations carry personal and cultural meanings and have personal and social effects. These meanings can be created by a composer intentionally using language and structure, or they might be the result of unintentional repetition of attitudes, values, and beliefs within the limitations of the real world.

The horizon is what is “around” as the body does its work. Without a horizon, there would be no

scale, no above nor under, no direction, and no means of systematising the world. The horizon signifies what can be defined and what is immeasurable, endless, and yet close by and far away at the same time. We are aware of what we can see and cannot see when we perceive the horizon. We acknowledge that what we see is just a piece of a larger whole, because of the limit of our field of vision. Everyone experiences that section differently since the horizon shifts with us and is continuously receding. The title of the painting from Genevieve Asse *I want to frame* as a question. What is beyond the horizon? The painting depicts a horizontal canvas a white line, that separates two equal spaces filled with blue. Genevieve Asse explains: ‘When I draw a line it is never completely straight.’¹¹ She writes in one of the lines of the poem included in this thesis.¹²

‘There are two sides to the horizon. We can see the world on ‘this’ side, but we are blind to what lies beyond.’¹³

¹¹ Genevieve Asse, *Working Notes*, Centre Pompidou website, ¹⁹⁷⁴

¹² She painted multiple paintings like this one, in different but similar shades of blue. Genevieve Asse is primarily identified today by an incomparable colour, the “bleu Asse” In her working notes she poetically expresses the appearance of the world: “Beyond the horizon, the dawn, the shadowy greys, black-blues of clear seas, whites which disappear in the texture of the canvas, nothing external beyond time.”

¹³ Janneke Wesseling, *The Perfect Spectator* chapter 4 *Verticon*, p124 (Amsterdam, Valiz 2017)

It depicts visibility It depicts visibility; I will explain this with a description of the painting of Chinon – (Dejavu). The road that is split by the many wagons that it transferred and the brown and yellow fields that are next to it like a quilt, and the dark silhouettes of trees that are formed in the background and the overcast white sky above, and non-visibility; the animals that are hiding in the forests and the destination of the road that is depicted. Whatever might be beyond the horizon, it is beyond our reach. We might wonder what is there, imagine, would it be different? But in the end the horizon is bound like a circle. And we may only see fragments of it. The horizon of the endless wide fields that I have been gazing through my window there is the highway A9 that goes to Amsterdam. Roads or highways could also be horizons, they go somewhere and since mostly every road is connected they could be bound lines, where people walk or cycle, drive or wait and dream, listen to music and stay in line.

Geneviève Asse, Beyond Horizon 1970.



The Ear Being Supposedly the Seat of Memory

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The Horizon Between my Being and the Landscape

¹⁴. Martin Warnke, *Political Landscapes*, p12

Throughout history we can understand that the body collects memories; Starting from the notion remembering experiences through gestures of the body in recollection for example that collected wartime histories means dealing with tales of the body, the body is a vital site of memory. Because of landscape and its dynamics it explains that people are materially entangled and entwined with landscape and precisely because of that they are emotionally bound up with its past, present and future. It reflects the complicities of their lives. It reflects on how people engage with the material world, on what kind of effect human choices have in landscape. In the modern west, nature is a resource that is there to be used, exploited, and bound up with land ownership. Capitalism has benefited greatly from a logical scientific approach to nature, which dehumanizes the natural world and removes humans of moral responsibility for its destruction. What did we lost on the way to where we are now? The book *Political Landscapes* helped me

understand what effect peoples choices made in the landscape and how they are intertwined, by Martin Warnke: ‘Finding a single untouched area, at least in Europe, is unlikely unless it has been preserved from the start as a “natural monument.” Any normal landscape almost certainly always reveals a physical characteristics shaped by men.’¹⁴

Philip Descola reminds us in his book *Beyond Nature and Culture*; ‘Treat certain elements in the environment as persons endowed with cognitive, moral and social qualities analogous to those of human’ and thus to incorporate, within the category of persons, It does not lie in things themselves; it is constructed by an arrangement that makes it possible to discriminate between them.’¹⁵ Animals, plants and spirits as part of a cosmology do not discriminate between human beings and non-human beings. Fishes obviously ignore the distinctions between time zones in the

¹⁵. Phillippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, p77

Pacific Ocean states David Horvitz in his installation: somewhere in between the jurisdiction of time.

¹⁶. David Horvitz, *somewhere in between the jurisdiction of time, E-flux*

This work illustrates the invisible border in the Pacific Ocean divides time zones. It consist of thirty-two glass vessels carrying seawater collected in the at longitude line 127.5° west of Greenwich, placed north to south in a line. It speaks about the illusion of borders. How time zones emerged in 1870 was out of a need for the trains to keep schedules across long distances and for the consistency of weather reports.¹⁶ Every country and territory now falls into some imaginary space of time.

Borders are imaginative horizons, to structure the landscape. I found a tale of the body how these invisible borders became, in the chapter of Warnke’s book. It tells a story of how the ear of young ones are tweaked at the site of a boundary stone. These marked stones were used in the fifteenth century if rulers or landowners could afford it, by architectural elaboration.

David Horvitz, *somewhere in between the jurisdiction of time (detail)*, 2014.



To use for protecting borders before there were land registries or maps that documented local bounds. They had engravings and numbers to identify them. Preventing forgetting the placed boundary when it would be moved or damaged, children participated in rituals around the because the ear is said to be the seat of memory in order to pass on their wisdom to future generations, folk memory was assisted.

Inner- Landscapes

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The Horizon Between my Being and the Landscape

My search is about the gazing of the scape, but what happens when the landscape enters the senses and the mind? The sublime is a notion that became out of landscape painting but is also present in contemporary art. For me the sublime is an experience through art. Immanuel Kant cites: 'The sublime may be described in this way: it is an object (of nature) the representation of which determines the mind to regard the elevation of nature beyond our reach as equivalent to a presentation of ideas.'¹⁷ The word 'sublime' comes from the Latin word *sublimis*. It means threshold, a boundary or limit. It is modified into a verb, *sublimare* that means to elevate. Do you know this feeling of 'wow' experiencing an artwork and are lost for words? Because everything about it is so other, so boundless, that trying to put those breathless moments into words of that encountering is entirely beyond our capacity. I think this relates to how my horizon is connected to my personal visual perspective in a physical landscape and not to some-

one else's or to what is beyond our capacity to see beyond. And understanding that the horizon is not a line it is a division between things. This aspect of the horizon is something beyond the capacity of language to explain just like the sublime is to be experienced, it feels like how I will never be able to catch up with my horizon.

Since the classical era, the sublime as a concept has developed in art it gained significance in the eighteenth century. When it was used in the context of the arts to depict awe-inspiring landscapes like mountains, avalanches, waterfalls, stormy seas, or the endless expanse of the starry sky. It is the ultimate passion and a profoundly transformational event. The balance between structure and chaos, as well as a disturbance of the static coordinates of space and time. When the line separating an interiority from the outer is crossed, the intimate is created.

I experience the sublime as a transformational event. I know this through experiencing the scapes Lucas Arruda paints. His depictions are not "what he sees before him, but what he sees within him." They are transferred from memory and the imaginary. They are landscapes that border towards abstraction. Between light and deep introspection. When I see one of his paintings hanging at the wall, it seems like a portal, an inner-vision. The placement of the horizon in his paintings are significant because it becomes the structure of balance and a chaos moment. The perspective and deepness of the placement of the horizon that gives the viewer the effect of being out of balance. The scratched paint represents rain and the wind and plays with my emotion. Each of the paintings are a metaphysical territory devoid of human presence, outside of space and time. It feels like a breath, when I see these paintings I feel I can finally breath.

The wind is such that we feel its breath but we cannot see. It is what filters in through the smallest opening snakes through the slightest crack, and pervades all things equally. 'The study of trigrams offers a deep dive into the wisdom of ancient Chinese philosophers, revealing a sophisticated system of symbolism that transcends time and culture the trigram Xun in the I-Ching. Xun, the ancient Chinese character is depicted as a broken line over two unbroken lines, signifies the wind element. It encapsulates the essence of wind: gentle, unceasing, and with the capacity to penetrate every crevice and corner. Just as the wind, with its persistent touch, can influence everything from the fluttering leaves to the formidable mountains, Xun symbolizes change initiated through gentle consistency and determined persistence.'¹⁸ Wind is the reactive dimension that passes through the structural elements, the solid or firm elements.

¹⁸ Internet website on: *xun wind trigram in I ching*: www.divinate.org/ (June 22 2023)

It maintains structural ethics, forming the framework of everything.

The physical experience of the feeling when the landscape contains me could be like the wind.

The inner-landscape becomes to be when it unravels like a day dream in front of your eyes. When our brains have little to do for a while, like looking to the silence of the painting of Lukas Arruda for example, the daydreaming network starts immediately. A number of areas are then triggered, allowing to recall memories and the ability to imagine feelings and thoughts. For a moment, attention is shifted from the outside world to ourselves. It is a source of imagination that questions: how would it be to stand in the middle of that scape? How would it feel? Could I feel the wind on my face? It untangles us from the daily reality. It sources creativity and new original perspectives.

*Lucas Arruda, Untitled (from the Deserto-Modelo series), 2021,
Oil on canvas (24 x 30 cm)*



Daydreaming a certain situation gives a chance to prepare challenges that lie in the future, to mentally prepare for them.

It helps regulate our emotions, because by imagining an event, you can outline new ideas better.

Blurring Horizons

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¹⁹ Jose Esteban Munoz, *Cruising Utopia* (Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press 2010)

Fatamorgana is one of the myths that arises from the horizon. It is the queen of the undersea she can rise her crystal castle until it hovers till the clouds. It is an optical illusion that is possible to see from a certain point of view, it could be even documented on a camera. When this phenomenon happens it looks like the horizon blurs and is distorted.

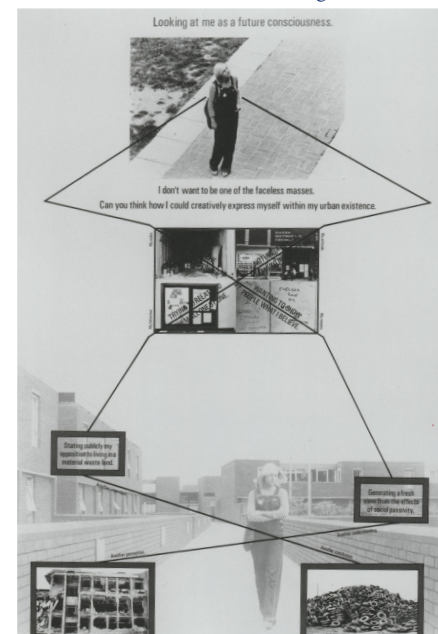
The horizon creates a space that allows for speculation and imagination. In other words, a space for making a different world than within our field of vision. The book *Cruising Utopia* argues: 'We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality.'¹⁹ I think the horizon is queer because it is bound and like Asse describes in her poem, it is never straight. Queerness is a doing for and toward the future, it is primarily about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibilities for another world.

The future is a blurred image with tales of memories of the past lingering like an invisible layer that transforms and could be transferred from the 'real'. Sometimes I feel translucent as if others can look through me that I am myself not real. Maybe it is because I am female that is why I identify with Fatamorgana. She is a objectified myth by sailors that tried to come closer to what they saw glittering in the distance.

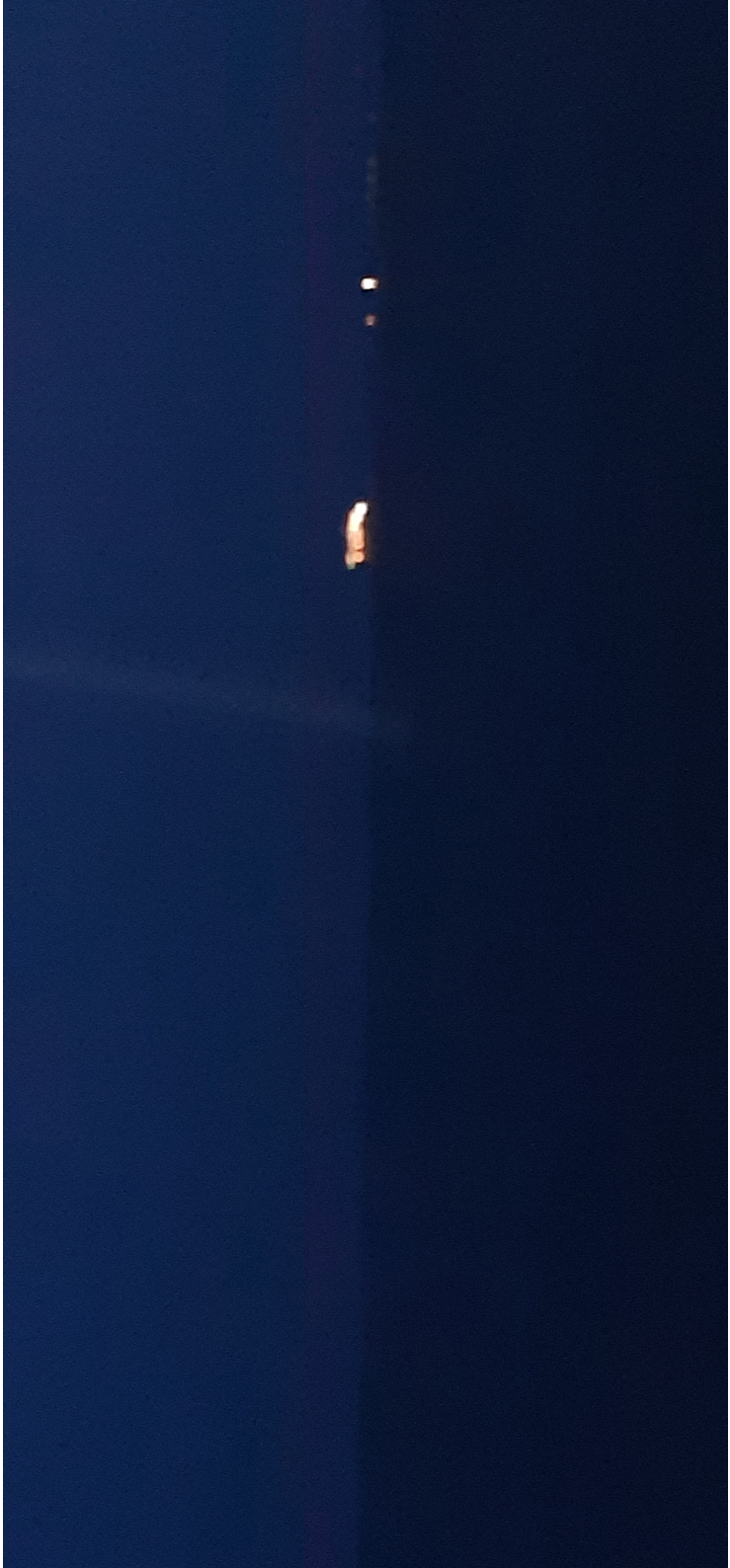
Dear reader, I have an exercise for you it is an experiment to try to blur borders. Where ever you sit and read this text. I would like to ask you to put the text down, to close your eyes and rub your services with your hands. By slowly making circulating movements or back and forth movements over your legs/arms/sides. Concentrate on what it sounds like when you blur your borders.

Let this sound create an image in your mind. Create your own inner-landscapes. Listen if you can make a harmony between the senses.

Stephen Wallits, *ART SOCIETY FEEDBACK* "sorting out other people's lives" collage series, 1978.



The Magic of Arriving



If a horizon was a line like a direction might be, then you have arrived. When I look upon the scape, my mind travels to other things, It searches and recognizes things while I am unaware. You see what you want to see. When there is a silence, it means there is space for something. And if nothing is the beginning of something, maybe the way I see the horizon says something about my identity. It traces back to where I came from and what I am used to seeing. If you grew up and had a view on mountains, water or stretched out fields. If you could see the stars at night, or not.

In the time span where we are in now, the sense of seeing, is very important. What if it (hypothetically) is the reason that made us stand up straight in contradiction to our ancestors? When we started to walk on two feet, maybe the consequence is that we are more aware of what is around us. Instead of what is going on inside us, we are now facing our surroundings. But how can I reflect my

view as an identity in my urban existence? Where did the horizon go in the big cities? The horizon is distorted. How can we find our ways in this material waste land? We transform the scape and the scape transforms us. But what if there is not much left to reflect on or remember from the past?

The correlation between the “self” and the “world” refers to the physicality and interiority. Landscape arises from feeling, at the same time as I perceive. It forms a moment. Though we cut lose from the landscape, we turn away our eye. As the philosopher François Jullien writes so convincingly in the Living off landscape edition;

‘Landscape holds the promise of possibility.

To embrace that promise we must not keep constructing and “going beyond”.

We must delve further beneath the conditions of the possibility and into the folds of our thoughts, so as to unfold it- and thereby open it up to landscape.’²⁰

²⁰ François Jullien, *Living Off Landscape: or the Unthought-of in Reason*, trans. by Pedro

Conclusion



A brief conclusion to wrap it up to fold it and to be able to hold it. And look back at it from over your shoulder. A last glance before the memory of the horizon washes away by so many other things that surround us and may be in the way or even in front of yet another horizon that circles back to how I still can't put a finger on what this familiar but free-ing feeling is when I look up on the horizon.

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Illustrations

La Condition Humane, Rene Magritte,

Chinon, Gerard Richter, 1987

Beyond the Horizon, Genevieve Asse,

Somewhere in between the jurisdiction of time, David Horvitz, 2014

I don't want to be like anyone else, Stephen Willats, 1977

Poems

In conversation with Fleur Bourgonje

Letter to Vincent van Gogh

In conversation with Etel Adnan

In conversation with Genevieve Asse

I see what I want to see.

Yoko Ono

^{De Horizon}
Bij het kind ben ik begonnen:

haar stappen op het zandpad
bang om niet aan te komen
om terug te gaan
stil te staan;

^{Begin}
met het kind kom ik niet ver.

Het water haast zich van de bron,
valt op eigen kracht
in de diepte.

^{Eind}
Waarheen liep het kind die dag,
naar wie en
weg van waar.

It's endless wide stretched fields...
That I used to see through my window
I couldn't escape it
One day, they asked me:
Who is the most important person you have ever met?
I said:
It was the endless wide stretched fields

- Last recorded interview with Etel Adnan
the word 'mountain' I re-scripted to:
endless wide stretched fields

A poem to with Etel Adnan

Did I tell you about the storm I watched recently? The sea was yellowish, especially near the shore; on the horizon a strip of light, and above it immense dark gray clouds from which the rain poured down in slanting streaks. The wind blew the dust from the little white path on the rocks into the sea and bent the blooming hawthorn bushes and wallflowers that grow on the rocks. To the right were fields of young green corn, and in the distance the town looked like the towns that Albrecht Dürer used to etch. A town with its turrets, mills, slate roofs and houses built in Gothic style, and below, the harbor between two jetties which project far into the sea.

air has no colour
the horizon : it grabs whatever comes its way
horizon is a call. a sentiment of depth and hope.
a language.
with my horizon, I break out of the format, I gain
a vaster dimension. the landscape has a rhythm that drives
me on.
it feeds a frame and another horizon: the perspectives
respond to each other
When I perceive a line, it is never perfectly vertical: the
horizon
balances it out.
landscapes contains me.

The horizontal line separates the sea, the sky, sometimes
shade, sometimes air.

I re-wrote this poem to:

Horizon : blue

Landscape : colour

Frame : canvas

Perspective : picture

Horizontal : vertical

A poem to Genevieve Asse

gaze upon the horizon
follow the horizon as a direction might be
until the end of it
is a reflection in your eyes

A piece for Yoko ono

It is nothing
The beginning of something
I think I see things more
purple than others
I see seals and dolphins in rough waves
I see the wide stretched fields coming
towards me
I see the horizon tearing
I see the horizon in a blur
I see the horizon mirroring itself
I wonder who is doing that
I wonder what might be on the other side?

I see what I want to see.

Colophon

Didi van der Putte
BA Thesis
Rietveld Fine Arts
13.04.2024, Amsterdam

Teachers
Frank Mandersloot
Dina Danish

Thesis supervisor
Alena Alexandrova

Design
Koza Otmar