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WHAT IS THIS WORLD?



PARK

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One to One

Why do precisely these objects, which we behold make a world?
Precisely these objects make a world.
They reveal the difficulty or even impossibility
of both seeing “precisely these objects”
and saying “I know”

Landscape painting is not a genre but a medium.
To a practice, artistic
to materials, used
to the world, natural
and to spaces, transformed

In the 19th century it was the medium to powerfully express
the great concerns of that period,
of constructing national identity,
of testing imperial boundaries,
of retaining harmony between nature and the divine

As a portrait of a property, Eugene von Guérard painted Tower Hill in 1855.
A botanist with the eye of a geologist
depicting in photographic detail all the vegetation
as the Aborigines knew it and just before the Europeans were to ruin it.
A precise record of the details of the vegetation, the landscape,
Volcanic,
how it was before its destruction

Most of the trees were taken for fuel
exotic plants and animals, like cattle and grasslands
were introduced to the colonies, to copy the homeland
from a belief that the local fauna was deficient or impoverished;
and from nostalgia, and a desire to see familiar species.
Thus accelerating the decline of the landscape
globally

Tower Hill was destroyed like that.
In 1961, people realized that its value for wildlife would be enhanced
if its native flora was returned.

So a decision was made to replicate pre-European flora as purely as possible.
But
how to know what the original flora and fauna consisted of?
Records were sparse.
The extent and thoroughness of the clearing in and around Tower Hill,
left the planners with a dearth of remnant vegetation,
insufficient to guide them

The pictorial record helped
to restore the site as closely as possible to its original state.
The painting as proof, a model, a map,

a guide.

Mining the canvas as an archive.

Dozens of species

in almost photographic detail.

Staying alive—for every species—requires livable collaborations.

Over 250,000 trees and shrubs, herbs, and grasses and rushes were planted between 1964 and 1984.

With the help of hundreds of school children and volunteers, native animals were re-introduced.

Why do precisely these objects, which we behold make a world?

Precisely these objects make a world.

A landscape painter should have the eyes of a botanist, geologist, scientist.

Every detail detailed, and refusing to dissolve in paint or effect.

Paint, as material, must be forgotten.

A landscape architect should have the mind of a landscape painter,

painting with the objects themselves.

Moving beyond the limitations of the canvas and the constraints of pictorial composition,

rethinking scale,

processes

and visual experiences

while engaging with pressing ecological questions,

and working with the spatial and material specificity of the site.

To make more and better landscapes now,

revealing the difficulty or even impossibility

of both seeing “precisely these objects”

and saying “I know”

To see in detail is to examine the world.

Seeing details, not wholes nor the shadow of the whole.

To see in detail is to pursue knowledge only to discover, instead, the strangeness of seeing.

Why is this painting so detailed?

Why this dizzying proliferation of botanical specimens?

What does detail mean?

How does seeing in detail take form?

When do details complicate or challenge a larger narrative,

and how do details acquire, or resist, meaning?

What are the cultural norms that define ideas of ‘significance’ or ‘insignificance’?

How do details contribute or undermine?

Ignoring the landscape, abstracting it, is dismissing and erasing it.

Is the detail then,

what modernism implicitly and explicitly

acts against?

Mapping the oceans and landmasses,
distances and boundaries, trees, plants and people,
are processes of calibration.
acts of noticing and naming,
of fixing and describing.
After the observer is done,
he and the machinery of observation move on.

While painting inspires a fantasy of possession,
landscape is the dream of imperialism.
To see is to own,
with your eyes.
This is property, it says, I own you.

Planting trees is not only to form and shape pathways and scenery,
but individual objects for contemplation and thought.
The distant mountains provide the background.

The detail is the minute, the particular, the microscopic
Zoom in, and zoom out...
between the field of the microscope
and the expanded vision from above,
views as wide as heaven's scope.

Details always point away from themselves to something else.
When something is cropped and reproduced as detail,
we understand: here is a piece,
perhaps even magnified, of something larger.
We also understand: what we see here is not everything.
There is much that we are not seeing.

A detail is a cut.

Sight is an inherent power, seeing an art. Where to look from?

Details as the product of labor implies - as well -
the labor involved in seeing the painting,
of looking closely,
of understanding its visual demands,
and of asking what history may have erased or diminished.

While the painting works to make the spectator forget space and time,
to see, and only see,
the physical landscape is literal.

A remaking in terms of sculpture, visualizing aspects of the environment
on the page, on the canvas, in the world.
Not the representation of the landscape, but the making of one.

-An observational practice
a system constantly in flux.

Observations almost immediately mandate eradication.
Where details are lost to a general effect of destruction,
one cannot own, possess, freeze or protect.

Return, pay back, resurrect, replant, redo
remake the world in terms of earth sculpture.
The world cannot afford to wait until the slow and sure progress
of sciences have taught it a better economy.

If man cannot take upon themselves their responsibility,
then perhaps art can and should.
Precisely this makes a world.

One to One, Bik Van der Pol, video 17 min. with a script built on a variety of sources (listed below), reflecting
and speculating on what it means to see in detail.

With gratitude to Max Delany, who pointed the artists to Tower Hill.

The painting *Tower Hill* by Eugene von Guérard is in the collection of Warrnambool Art Gallery, Warrnambool,
Victoria, Australia. Eugene von Guérard reportedly made this painting between Wednesday, August 15, 1855
and Friday, October 5, 1855.

Visual Regimes of Seeing: European and Aboriginal Seeing in Australia, Terry Smith, in *Empires of Vision, A
Reader*, Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy eds. Duke University Press, 2014

Frederic Church: The Art and Science of Detail, Jennifer Raab. Yale University Press, 2015

Church, Humboldt, and Darwin, Stephen Jay Gould, in: *Frederic Edwin Church*, ed. Franklin Kelly. National
Gallery of Art, Washington, 1989

The Collected Writings, Robert Smithson. University of California Press, 1996

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La Trobe Journal*, nos. 93-94, 2014

Not Lost, Just Hiding: Eugene von Guérard's First Australian Sketchbooks, Ruth Pullin, in: *The La Trobe Journal*,
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The Museum as Archipelago, Anna Sophia Springer, 2013

Discover Historic Victoria, Mary Ryllis Clark. Viking, 1996

The Tower Hill Experience, Randal Anderson. <https://www.towerhill.org.au>

The Colonial Earth, Tim Bonyhady. Melbourne University Publishing, 2003

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A Brush With Fidelity: Three Works by Eugene von Guérard, Michael Varcoe-Cocks. <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au>

The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World, Andrea Wulf. John Murray Publishers, 2015

Walden, Henry David Thoreau. Originally published 1854

The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing.
Princeton University, 2015

La Rabbia (1963), geregisseerd door Pier Paolo Pasolini en Giovanni Guareschi, 104 min.

La Rabbia (Woede) is een Italiaanse documentairefilm, geregisseerd door Pier Paolo Pasolini (eerste helft) en door Giovanni Guareschi (tweede helft). Zij stonden lijnrecht tegenover elkaar - de een was een rechtse monarchist en de ander een communistische militant, beiden gebrandmerkt als "ketteren" door hun eigen achterban- en gaven elk hun eigen antwoorden op één enkele vraag: wat was de oorzaak van de ontevredenheid, van de angst en van de conflicten die de samenleving van die tijd door elkaar schudden? De film, die de sociale conflicten van de moderne wereld op een kritische en controversiële manier analyseert, bestaat uit een montage van oude beelden uit journaals, archiefmateriaal uit verschillende landen, foto's uit kunstboeken en tijdschriften. Maar hij werd al enkele weken later uit de zalen gehaald. Pas op het 65e Filmfestival van Venetië in 2008 werd Pasolini's deel van de film opnieuw vertoond gerestaureerd en in een "extended director's cut" versie van Bertolucci; de volledige film met zowel Guareschi's als Pasolini's deel, werd het jaar daarop vertoond, in 2009.

La Rabbia (1963), directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini and Giovanni Guareschi, 104 min.

La Rabbia (Anger) is an Italian documentary film, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini in the first half and by Giovanni Guareschi in the second half. Being diametrically opposite – one a right-wing monarchist and the other a communist militant, and yet branded as "heretics" by their own constituency, they gave their own answers to a single question: what was the cause of the discontent, of the fear and of the conflicts shaking the society of the time? The movie, analysing the social conflicts of the contemporary world in a strongly critical and controversial way, was made through the montage of old footage from newsreels, archive material concerning different countries, pictures from art books and magazines. But it was withdrawn from theatres just a few weeks later. It was not until the 65th Venice Film Festival in 2008 to see Pasolini's part of the film being brought back into the light, restored and in an "extended director's cut" version by Bertolucci, while the complete film with both Guareschi's and Pasolini's part, was shown the following year, in 2009.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYnmrN77oil>

SCORES

What Is This World? What is this world?

Thinking aloud is shaping. This activity identifies and addresses a relevant aspect of a situation in the real world, and can use the object to better understand these situations and thus initiate a transformation. It is a collective activity that aims to shape and transform the understanding or perception of certain parts or features of the world by reflecting on existing and commonly accepted knowledge and unknown or invisible knowledge. It is an additive process and invites open, topical conversation. It builds on exchange of knowledge, speculation, imagination and dialogue from the idea that thinking together is essentially a process through which insights grow.

It allows for purposeful simplifications and abstractions of reality to harness the power to simulate, visualize, gain intuition and speculate on problems that require transformative thinking.

This is a conversation about past, present and future, about opportunities and challenges, related to a physical object.

Any discussion of past, present and future assumes that we all see the world in the same, or at least a very similar light. This, of course, is not the case.

Everything we think is good about the world is true, but everything we would rather ignore is also true. Good things but also any tragedy or injustice can also be found here somewhere. Each perspective contains a different layer of the story and teaches us more about ourselves and the time and place we live in.

What Is This World? What Is This World, wants to set in motion new ways of seeing oneself-and ourselves. This is an invitation to create -together- new stories about known and unknown places. As we reflect on existing, unknown and invisible knowledge, we can gain the collective power to think creatively about the difficult questions the world faces.

With this object, we can try to understand our world and each other or try to transform it, which begins with imagination.

This form of "reading" considers the object as a form of text. It prompts exploration and speculation in interaction with the object, the ball, the world, shaped by prior knowledge and experiences. Informal gatherings around the object, from which topics and actions can emerge to identify and negotiate the meaning of unknown worlds, by sharing information and ideas, and thinking aloud. To the sharing of known and unknown stories and histories, in open conversation, a process that cannot be controlled or limited, since there are no laws of interpretation.

HISTORY

There is so much more to see here.

Look closely and see if you can imagine going deeper into time.

What does this object reflect?

What pieces of history lie just beneath the surface?

Can this object represent the soul? How would you describe this soul?

How has the history of the world, this model, brought us to our present historical moment?

Where do we go from here? What now?

PRESENT

Share and personally describe what matters to you in the world.

What brought you here, and when?

Where do you live/live?

What do you see when you read this object as a world? What do you not see?

What do you miss?

What do you value?

Can you think of a specific example that relates to how you see the world?

What makes the world "yours"? Does it?

What does this object have to do with today in an age of globalization, capitalization and loss?

How does your object, this world, in this particular period, this moment of crisis come across in the public shared space, today?

What does this have to do with us, you?

How are we, as citizens, affected by changes that affect us daily?

What do you consider positive changes? What are negative changes for you? (this has to do, for example, with (sense of community), inclusivity or exclusivity, density, opportunity, labor, having a political voice, housing, noise, rules, pressure)

What would you like from the world?

Why today?

Where do we stand today?

Using this object, how can we think about change?

Where are we headed? What now?

FUTURE

What will life be like in the future?

What legacy will we leave for future citizens?

What do you hope for the future of the world? What kind of world do you imagine?

What are the things you would like to see happen to make you feel like a citizen, part of the world?

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

What are the challenges? What are the opportunities?

What do you want, expect or hope for?

What would you like to do or see happen to make that happen?

Can you come to a consensus and create a list of suggested actions?