

# Landscape. Landscape?

Pep Agut

Peter Downsbrough

Andreas Fogarasi

Raphaël Zarka'

**02.02.10 > 17.04.10**

Opening: Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 20h.

**angels barcelona:** c. pintor fortuny, 27 – tuesday > saturday 12 > 14 / 17 > 20:30 h.

**espai 2:** c. dels angels, 16 – tuesday > saturday 17 > 20:30 h.

Landscape and its representation – perhaps we should say that of Nature – have been central to Asian reflexions and cultural organization. Beyond the clichés, in these cultures, the construction of a human being has been, before anything else, the construction of his inner landscape, and this impulse remains within the gestural dimension of his life, whether a Tai-Chi session, or the execution of brush strokes that will end up representing bamboo stalks.

The anthropocentrism of our Classic world, however, took our culture on a different path. The intersection different monotheisms, above all Christianity, situated the representation of an anthropomorphic God and of man in the center of the Universe.

We can agree, for the sake of brevity, and because it is certain, although imprecise, that the presence of landscape structure in our imaginary does not cease to be subordinate to these representations until Giorgione, or until the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the triumph of certain bourgeois taste and genre paintings. The push that occurs then, which is established in Romanticism, has survived until today, where preoccupations about the health of the planet and satellite images bring us a totally renovated concept of landscape.

We may also accept, within this same context, that an essential part of this renovation is constituted in the definitive understanding of the urban within the concept of landscape. After all, is not this new “urban-centrism” the superstructure that best registers the new forms of the imposition of dominating financial powers, which allows these powers to organize a set of diverse landscapes – natural, urban, human – as if globalization was, above all, a result of worldwide urban real estate speculation.

However, it is clear that, in any case, all forms of submission generate, to an equal degree, resistances. In the space of art - as always - these have become visible, and - as always - they have become visible as well in urban space in the most lacerating manner.

Continuing along parts of this path, parading on and crossing some of the many gazes that we can project from this corner of time, we may imagine, for example, the scene of a plain in the Netherlands with a small church bell tower, or a tree by Van Ruysdael, painted to console the yearning of some bourgeois from Rotterdam, the Dutch city that, today, has adopted the image of a mosque as its icon, while, at the same time, minarets are prohibited in nearby Switzerland. Or, we consider the use that we give to the images of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* – only the images, because we have never seen it, nor have we been there – and the use given to Vedutisti paintings. Now we will take a huge leap to call forth into our imagination Friedrich's *The Wreck of Hope* in front of *Chute d'eau* in the Duchamp's *Étant Donnés*.

Thus, we continue to uncoil the rope of time and of our interminable associations, until constructing an eternal before and after of the possible readings of landscape, envisioning *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Grosstadt [Berlin: symphony of a great city]* by Walter Ruttmann next to *Vergleich über ein Drittes [Comparison via a third]* by our friend Harun Farocki.

While often landscape has been seen and shown as an innocuous place, or as a mere background canvas in which to locate any scene, and while often it has been used as a pretext, landscape – the natural and the urban – constitutes a touchstone in contemporary society and it is an essential nucleus in the construction of the text with which contemporary art practices are inscribed in society, giving it potential to point us towards the most critical visions of ourselves and our culture. Which is to say, it has the capacity to shed some light on this disorder that frequently is denounced as an unfortunate circumstance in which we happen to live.

We could say that landscape has stopped being the background or the natural environment (in order to introduce the basic concept of the most simplistic ecological thinking) in order to establish itself as cultural landscape, becoming a crossroads in the construction of the future of Humanity. Effectively, landscape can be understood today as a sort of carbon paper that registers the text of all human actions, and which contains, at the same time, the questions and answers that we formulate so many times about our past and our future.

From the territory of those who work as artists, Pep Agut (Terrassa, Spain, 1961), Peter Downsbrough (New Jersey, USA, 1940), Andreas Fogarasi (Vienna, Austria, 1977) and Raphaël Zarka (Montpellier, France, 1977) interrupt and, at the same time, question the traditional notion of landscape in order to extract capital that allows them to define parts of their discourse, whether from critical analysis, documentalism or the desire to construct a personal or social identity.

With the collaboration of: **foro cultural de austria<sup>mad</sup>**

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## Pep Agut

*Partes de*, 2006 > 08

5 series of 80 black and white negatives + 5 slide projectors

The artist presents 5 series of photographs, projected as transparencies, that travel through the ascents and descents of the banks of a riverbed, with the artist's city as a backdrop. They constitute the text over which he intends to allegorically introduce us into another crossing, from that which alludes to his position to that in which a spectator appears.

Pep Agut (Terrassa, Spain, 1961) Lives and Works in Terrassa. Agut has had solo and group exhibitions in large events such as the Venice Biennale, the Sidney Biennale or Prospekt, as well as in museums such as the Tel Aviv Museum of Contemporary Art or the MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona, among others. He has coordinated and participated in seminars, conferences and debates about art and his work is represented in well-known private and public collections.

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## Peter Downsbrough

*N/T*, 1978 > 2008

Black & white photographs, silver gelatin prints, 30 x 40 cm.

Downsbrough's work reflects on the traditional use of space and of language as an object. Through displacements, discontinuities and ruptures, he generates a dialogue between space and the public. His video and photographic work corresponds to the exploration of how space is structured and organized. His photographs emerged as a documental register of his investigations with vertical metal tubes, capturing the negative spaces present in urban settings.

Peter Downsbrough (New Jersey, USA, 1940) has had individual shows in the US and in Europe at: MAMCO (Geneva), SMAK, Stedelijk Museum van Aktuele Kunst (Gent), Kent Institute of Art and Design (Canterbury), Musée d'Art Contemporain (Lyon) or the Palais de Beaux-Arts (Brussels). He works with galleries such as Àngels Barcelona, Barcelona, (2008), Erna Hecey (Brussels) or Barbara Krakow Gallery (Boston). He was selected for the Venice Biennale (2006). In addition, he has participated in group exhibitions in MNCARS (Madrid), MOCA (Los Angeles) or the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), among others. His public work can be seen in several European cities, such as Rennes, Warsaw, Lodz, Brussels or Lyon.

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## Andreas Fogarasi

*Barcelona Sights (Architecture)*, 2010 | *Support Surface (cube de Pierre)*, 2008 | *Public Brands-La France*, 2008  
6 collages on paper, 68 x 48 cm. each | color photograph, lambda print, 142 x 100 cm. | DVD 3'

In his work, Fogarasi systematically explores the development and transformation of urban spaces. Included among the pieces shown in this exhibition is a series of collages titled, *Barcelona Sights*. The series shows different logos that pertain to unique buildings from the city's architecture. Taken out of context, with no guide, the almost empty image that remains "follows the form in which information is becoming condensed and acquiring the mere condition of sign through the relatively new and growing phenomenon of creating a brand"<sup>1</sup>. Continuing with this reflection on the use of the brand is the video: *Public Brands-La France*. Using modern icons of the city, it creates a contemporary map of France.

Andreas Fogarasi (Vienna, Austria, 1977) Lives and works in Vienna. He was awarded the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale (2007) for his project in the Hungarian Pavilion. He has shown in the gallery Georg Kargl Box and in the MAK, Vienna, as well as in Grazer Kunstvereinen, Gratz, the Ernst Múzeum, Budapest or MNCARS, Madrid (in the program *Cine y casi cine*), among others.

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## Raphaël Zarka

*Cretto*, 2005 | *Les formes du repos n°11*, 2006 – *n°12*, 2008  
DVD 6'30" | Color photographs, lambda print, 70 x 100 cm.

*Cretto* is a monumental sculpture by the painter Alberto Burri, constructed in the '80s yet left unfinished. It covers the ruins of Gibellina (Sicily), a town destroyed by an earthquake. *Cretto* is a giant cement labyrinth, a network of cracks converted into the streets of a strange town. To document the site, Zarka follows the wanderings of a person blinded by a strange, red, brick helmet, a reduced model of a sculpture by the artist. In addition, the artist shows two photographs from a series begun in 2001: *Les formes du repos (The forms of repose)*. Zarka collects cement objects lost in nature or deserted areas, and their geometric forms, more or less recognizable, always make us wonder about their use. They are isolated, in waiting, in repose. They suggest a movement that doesn't take place, they are like fossils of movement.

Raphaël Zarka (Montpellier, France, 1977) Lives and works in Paris. He has recently shown in the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, Palais de Tokio, Paris, École Regionale Des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Galeria Michel Rein, Paris. He has taken part in group shows at Le Plateau FRAC (Ile de France) and the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon (France). In 2007 he was selected for the Lyon Biennale (France).

<sup>1</sup> Hock, Beata. *Andreas Fogarasi. Informació*. Exit Express 37. Junio-Septiembre 2008. p. 50, about *Dusseldorf Sights (Architecture)*