Looking at Landscape

Mémoire

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Résumé

Ce mémoire examine l'exploration du paysage et de la perception dans ma pratique artistique. Mon travail concerne principalement les représentations du monde naturel, la manière dont les images sont incorporées dans le quotidien et les façons dont notre perception de ces images façonne notre relation aux paysages réels. Cette étude du paysage et de la vision se manifeste par des explorations du dessin, de l'estampe et du collage numérique; ma pratique est également centrée sur une recherché du paysage dans la culture populaire, notamment au cinéma et à la télévision. Enfin, ce mémoire retrace la structure de ma démarche artistique en logique de la décoration, une logique qui fournit à mes images une certaine organisation et une cohérence visuelle, tout en déplaçant simultanément les objets du paysage commun dans le domaine du spectaculaire et de l'extraordinaire.
Abstract

This dissertation examines the exploration of landscape and vision in my artistic practice. My work is primarily concerned with representations of the natural world, how these images are incorporated into the everyday, and the ways in which our perception of these images shape our relationship to landscape. This investigation of landscape and vision is executed through explorations in drawing, printmaking, and digital collage; my practice is also centred on an investigation of landscape in popular culture, notably film and television. Finally, this dissertation outlines how my artistic process is structured by a logic of the decorative, which provides visual coherency and organization to the images I create while simultaneously displacing objects of the banal landscape into the realm of the spectacular and the extraordinary.
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Introduction

Looking At Landscape

My practice is primarily concerned with representations of the natural world, and ways in which these images are incorporated into our everyday lives. The use of landscape in painting, photography, and film are perhaps the most evident examples of the kinds of nature imagery that interest me, but a list of my visual interests would also include botanical illustrations, topographical and survey images and maps, interior ornamental imagery, and the decorative use of houseplants. In my practice, these various depictions of landscape are catalogued, modified and re-presented in a way that underscores the inherent relationship between landscape and vision; I am interested in the way our vision shapes our reception of and relationship to real or imagined natural spaces.

Landscape as mediated and documented space

W.J.T. Mitchell defines landscape as a medium as opposed to a specific genre of art, one that is intimately tied up with notions of “exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other.” While landscape describes a natural scene, it is a scene mediated by culture: “it is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a commodity and the commodity inside the package.” Landscape is also a space onto which value and meaning is assigned and projected. A good view, for example, can add real estate value to a property, and interesting and breathtaking landscapes are actively sought out during travel and in periods of leisure. Despite its role as “commodity and potent cultural symbol,” landscape’s actual value seems to be quite intangible: it “is good for nothing as a use-value, while serving as a theoretically limitless symbol of value at some other level.” Mitchell’s definition of landscape makes clear the relationship between landscape and representation, and the way that landscape

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2 Mitchell 5.
3 Mitchell 15.
4 Mitchell 14.
is a slippery, finicky phenomenon that is constantly shifting between the description of real spaces and our expectations of these places. Aside from the obviously pictorial nature of its use in art, landscape itself is already a sort of artifice: it is a construction created during the primary act of beholding a scene, even before it is made into a secondary image. Mitchell explains that landscape is “not only a natural scene, and not just a representation of a natural scene, but a natural representation of a natural scene, a trace or icon of nature in nature itself.”

Since it also symbolizes the mediation between the human and the natural, landscape also signs for our desire for nature. Mitchell asserts that while “traditional eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape conventions are now the repertory of kitsch, endlessly reproduced in amateur painting, postcards, packaged tours, and prefabricated emotions,” landscape as a concept is perhaps more relevant than it has ever been. In view of widespread environmental degradation and our increasing estrangement from natural spaces, we desire landscape now more than ever.

Mitchell’s explicit description of landscape as a culturally mediated medium provides an adept introduction into the way I treat images of landscape in my practice. It goes without saying that I am primarily interested in representations of nature (what Mitchell would describe as landscape), and not necessarily the act of going and being in nature itself. Despite any longing for the contrary, our primary experience of nature is visual, and is often mediated through a document such as a photograph, a navigational tool, a map, a movie, or an encyclopaedia. I am fascinated by what I perceive as a certain lack that exists between these documents of landscape (an image, a diagram, a map, etc.) and our physical experience of being in a landscape. This was something I would regularly experience while I worked seasonally as a tree-planter. Tree planting necessitates long and repetitive passes through large areas of land in order to replant a cut-block. There was always a stark difference between what my land for the day would look like when shown to me on a topographical map, what it would look like from the road or vehicle, and what it would actually be like when I had to spend all day walking back and forth through it. This discrepancy also brings up questions of scale and the resulting use of the landscape document: one of my favourite stories by Jorge Luis Borges, *On Exactitude in Science*, illustrates this problem between the territory and its representation. The one-paragraph story describes a map that is perfectly exact, created on a scale of 1:1. For

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5 Mitchell 15.
6 Mitchell 20.
obvious reasons, the map’s function is negated by its precision, and it is left to the whims of the weather, although parts of it exist as relics in the “Deserts of the West.”

Documents created with the function of representing natural spaces in order to provide us with information about these sites, such as maps, can never be wholly accurate, not only due to impossibilities in exact representation, but due to the fact that these documents also require a human interpreter to come into fruition. Artist and professor in architecture Laura Kurgan describes the relationship between data and the author in the introduction of her book Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology and Politics. For Kurgan, there is no such thing as raw data; the simple presentation of information in a visual form entails a translation from what the interpreter observes to what they provide as their interpretation. Maps, charts and diagrams can never be empirical because they are rooted in interpretation; they “are not irreducible facts about the world, but exist as not quite, or almost alongside the world: they are para-empirical.” Considering our reception of ‘authoritative’ images, such as maps, diagrams, and in recent years, satellite images, Kurgan stresses the fact that we routinely accept these representations as fact. However, “the interpretation of such images is an art, as well as a science – because it inherently involves imaginative leaps – the putatively scientific and objective interpretations at the service of governments and commercial institutions tell only a story, not the story, of what is going on in these images.”

Both Kurgan’s concept of para-empirical data and Mitchell’s notion of a culturally mediated landscape connect neatly with the way I consider landscape, and the way I treat images of landscape in my work, because they underline the often murky relationship between the way we see landscape and the way it is presented to us, and the way its existence often signs culturally for something else. For me, this indefinite relationship between a physical landscape and its representations is an appropriate space for artistic intervention; it is inherently malleable, allowing me to co-opt and transform these images for my own use. In my work presented in earlier semesters, I often worked with visual representations of highway landscapes found online and in public platforms such as Google Maps. I would collect these landscapes in the form of notes, photographs, and digital screen captures that I then translated

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9 Kurgan 31.
into different forms (screenprints, collages, drawings, etc.). I would work with the ’data’ about these landscapes to create my own visual archives of roadside spaces (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. *Roadside; 1 - 12*, digital collages, 2014
While I currently work with different kinds of landscape images (focusing on interior landscapes as opposed to real, outside spaces), my methods are still the same. I collect all the information regarding the composition of a landscape (for example, all of the different plants in a filmic scene, and all the arrangements of these plants), and rearrange this information in such a way so that all the information is accessible on the same surface, similar to a map. My interest in landscape is motivated by my ability to manipulate this visual information, and present these spaces in ways that run counterintuitive to a perception of nature as undisciplined chaos.
Landscape in the Everyday, Landscape in the Archive

It is also apparent that there are particular types of landscape imagery that interest me, and that I seek out this imagery in specific circumstances. While landscape is often relegated to the realm of the outdoors, of being in nature and experiencing it in the real, my interest in representations of landscape has led me to seek out its trace in our lived interiors. The work presented for my dissertation deals with representations of landscape and nature that are found primarily indoors, via the homes’ décor and the on-screen presentation of nature and landscape in television and cinema. I look for landscape in the ordinary instances when it enters, often undetected, into our domestic space: this affinity between landscape and ornamentation, and landscape and the screen, will be discussed in further sections of this dissertation.

In a previous set of definitions I outlined in my text for the examen de projet, I presented various characteristics illustrating the types of landscape imagery that interest me. Peter Galison’s concept of wilderness and wasteland was particularly useful in illustrating the type of landscape that was not of interest to me. Galison establishes wilderness and wasteland as two seemingly dichotomous spaces of landscape that he also describes as “zones of exclusion.” These two spaces exist in separation from human contact. Wilderness obliges human absence in order to maintain its status as a site uncontaminated by human intervention. Wasteland exists as wilderness’ opposite extreme: a natural site spoiled by human activity to the point of prohibiting human presence. However, Galison explains that our conception of these two spaces as opposite and separate is not necessarily true, demonstrating the relationship of these two zones of exclusion as “something more like a bent-metal bracelet that brings the two ends into contact.” I situated the types of landscape imagery that interests me as representative of sites that find themselves in between Galison’s two definitions of landscape, or at the opposite end of his bracelet. They are generally not spaces of exceptional sublimity or destruction, and are instead images of rather normal spaces that exist in close proximity to human activity. I describe the landscapes in my work as spaces that are not only sited in our interiors, but are generally ordinary, ubiquitous and placed squarely in the everyday. That is not to say that my treatment of these spaces is also ordinary: I would argue that my manipulation of the visual


11 Galison.
representations of these ordinary landscapes is interested in revealing their hidden extraordinariness. By extrapolating these spaces over large-scale surfaces through reinterpretation and repetition, I place them in the realm of the speculative and the imaginary.

My interest in information and data, and the way my projects unfold methodologically also reveal an underlying interest in the archive. As mentioned previously, all of my projects have engaged with a method that involves a period of observation and tabulation, where all the parts of a landscape found either on-screen or in the real are recorded in the form of note-taking. Instead of sorting and culling this information, I try to find a way to present all of the information simultaneously. The landscape is presented as an archived set of information, but in an extended format. These spaces are wholly described in an effort to pay attention to all of its parts: I try to imagine an archived landscape in which all the possible elements and permutations could be shown. The relationship between my work, landscape and the archive will also be discussed in later sections of this dissertation.

Some Key Questions about Landscape

The projects presented in my dissertation ultimately respond to questions related to the nature of landscape that are posed by Dianne Harris and D. Fairchild Ruggles in their introduction to the book Sites Unseen: Landscape and Vision:

Herein lies one of the perplexing ironies of landscape: it is regarded as natural and eternally present, and yet it is also ignored as if it did not matter. How then can the study of landscape and vision illuminate cultural discourses that are essentially spatial, yet normalized to the point of invisibility? How does one study such an elusive, unstable object? One strategy entails focusing on mechanisms that are not easily seen, such as the frame, the controlling perspective, illusionism, the lens or screen through which we are induced to look, and the wall or landform that intentionally conceals.\(^\text{12}\)

In concluding this introduction, I would like to underline that this dissertation deals primarily with a question of vision: my primary concern in relation to landscape is the role

vision plays in the way we consume it. How does vision mediate our relationship to nature? How do our interior views of landscape, embodied in the decorative and on-screen, shape our understanding of nature? What role does attention and the gaze play in the way landscape is absorbed and experienced? While W.J.T. Mitchell underscores the fact that the relationship between landscape and vision has historically been used to disseminate imperialist ideology, underscoring capitalist consumption and a conquering colonial mindset, I am interested in what vision and landscape can also offer in terms of personal reprieve and a restructuring of our attention in the everyday. By modifying, extending, and confusing the way we see landscape, can attention be brought back to our ‘need to nature,’ and can past and current tools of reproduction be used to change the way we receive images of landscape? Finally, I am interested in questions of access that are brought up when landscape is offered as a catalogued, albeit confusing, archived space; one that takes work to understand visually, that is not instantaneously accessible, but that requires attention and searching.

This dissertation will be divided into four chapters examining the relationship between vision and landscape. The first, ‘Landscape, Gazing and Film’ will discuss the use of the spectatorial gaze in film, and its activation of landscape on screen. The second chapter, ‘A Beautiful View: Landscape and the Screen,’ extends this discussion of landscape and the view to a consideration of the screen in the proliferation of landscape’s image. It will also feature a brief discussion of artists working within this theme of landscape and the screen. Chapter three, ‘Repetition, Order and the Decorative,’ will elaborate upon the use of pattern and repetition in my work, the use of wallpaper in contemporary art, and the relationship between order and the decorative. The fourth and final chapter of this dissertation ‘Landscape and Desire, Perception and Attention’ will elaborate upon the types of viewing discussed in previous chapters, and how our desire for landscape can be manifested and subverted through the manipulation of visual perception and attention. This question of attention will bring us back to a brief reconsideration of the archive, and its relationship to the attentive gaze. The artistic and theoretical corpora underlining my work will be elaborated through this dissertation, providing a framework of reference for the ways in which I handle landscape and vision in my own practice.

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13 Mitchell 5, 18-23.
Chapter 1

Landscape, Gazing and Film

A first aspect of the interior landscape explored is that found on-screen, particularly in film. This investigation is centred on the 1978 remake of the film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. An adaptation of Jack Finney’s 1954 science fiction novel *The Body Snatchers*, the film details the arrival of a plant-borne alien life form that quickly invades San Francisco by duplicating and destroying its unsuspecting victims. The film’s antagonist first makes its appearance on planet earth in the form of pods that quickly bloom into small flowers, which are in turn admired or taken home by passerbyes. Thus, the aliens are quickly absorbed into the narrative’s backdrop; indistinguishable among the greenery found in manicured parks, backyard gardens and indoor décor, the aliens are at-once invisible and ever-present.

My first visual exploration of the film, *Snatching Bodies: 84 Tableaus with Plants*, involves a detailed enumeration of all the interior and exterior spaces where the aliens may be present in the form of plants. The greenery in each scene is tabulated, creating a basic legend of twenty types of plants found in eighty-four screen captures from the movie. A symbol and accompanying colour is assigned to each plant, and their arrangement in each scene is then noted (see Figure 3).

These arrangements are then transferred onto a screen-printed pattern on paper resembling a decorative tile. All the corresponding symbols representing each plant in the scene are drawn onto the tile in an effort to replicate the approximate arrangement of plants, creating a sort of map of the scene. These paper tiles are arranged grid-like on a wall, placing the miniature landscapes in chronological order; the resulting wallpaper provides, effectively, a visual recapitulation of the narrative of the film (see Figures 4 and 5).
Figure 3. Preporatory notes for the project *Snatching Bodies: 84 Tableaus with Plants*, 2015

Figure 4. *Snatching Bodies: 84 Tableaus with Plants*, screenprint and drawing on paper, 2015
Figure 5. *Snatching Bodies: 84 Tableaus with Plants (Tiles 21-25)*, screenprint and drawing on paper, 2015
My second visual exploration of the film involves the creation of five stereograms using screen captures from Invasion of the Body Snatchers, and highly stylized sketches of botanical patterns and imagery (see Figures 6, 7 and 8).

![Figure 6. Petals, stereogram, 2015](image6)

![Figure 7. Ivy, stereogram, 2015](image7)

![Figure 8. Sutherland Doubled, stereogram, 2015](image8)

From the eighty-four film stills taken during the first exploration of the film, five were chosen for the stereograms. Each still was modified in Adobe Photoshop, and used as a background for a secondary drawing on tracing paper that was then scanned and digitally
merged with the original still. The resulting image is doubled and offset slightly to create a stereogram. Unlike the stereoscope, which creates an image with illusionary depth using a device that fuses almost-identical right-eye and left-eye images, the stereogram relies on the viewer manipulating their own vision in order to create a new, three-dimensional image.

With both of these projects, the processes used in their execution and the subsequent visual interaction provoked in the viewer are reflective of a particular process of gazing; a sort of visual wandering that I often experience while watching film. This type of gazing and its relationship to film, art history and landscape is discussed in-depth in Martin Lefebvre’s essay ‘Between Setting and Landscape in the Cinema’, whose analysis I will discuss in the following pages.

**The Landscaping Gaze in Film**

In this essay, Lefebvre is concerned with the role of landscape in film, specifically the difference between instances in which landscape functions as setting and when it functions autonomously as “the primary and independent subject matter of a work.” The author explains that this difference finds its roots in art history and the development of painting, noting the change from landscape as scenery or as “spatial ‘accessory’ to a painted scene” prior to the seventeenth century, to the emergence of landscape “as a completely distinct aesthetic object.” Lefebvre states that “the birth of landscape should really be understood as a birth of a way of seeing, the birth of a gaze (...) by which what was once in the margin has now come to take its place at the centre.”

Lefebvre explains that this difference between landscape-as-setting and landscape as autonomous object is potentially ambiguous in film due to the oscillation between story and spectacle that is inherent to cinema. This ambiguity is amplified by the resulting tension between a film’s story and spectacle that is ultimately the result of what happens when we watch a movie. He speaks of two modes of “spectatorial activity: a narrative mode and a spectacular mode.” The viewer is constantly shifting between these two modes, from following

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15 Lefebvre 23.
16 Lefebvre 23.
17 Lefebvre 27.
18 Lefebvre 29.
the story of the film to contemplating the visual spectacle on screen. According to Lefebvre, “the interruption of the narrative by contemplation has the effect of isolating the object of the gaze, of momentarily freeing it from its narrative function.”\textsuperscript{19} This shift in the gaze, however brief, is crucial to landscape’s emancipation from the film’s narrative: “for one instant, the natural, outdoor setting for the action is considered in its own right, as a landscape.”\textsuperscript{20} Nevertheless, since it is dependent upon this switch between viewing in narrative mode and contemplative mode, landscape effectively appears and disappears throughout a film’s duration.

This exploration of setting and landscape in film and its relationship to different modes of viewing brings Lefebvre to question which conditions in particular “can produce – or at least encourage – viewing in the spectacular mode,”\textsuperscript{21} and thus, the emergence of landscape in narrative film. He distinguishes between two different interpretations of landscape occurrence in film. The first he calls the \textit{intentional landscape}, scenes of landscape that are brought about by directorial decisions and cinematic conventions, and which are interpreted by the viewer as intentional.\textsuperscript{22} The second interpretation is that of the \textit{spectator’s landscape}: incidents of landscape in film that are brought about by the spectator’s own cultural awareness of and predilection for seeing landscape.\textsuperscript{23} Both of Lefebvre’s definitions of landscape emergence, the intentional and the spectatorial, are important to understand the specific way that I treat landscape in my own explorations of the film \textit{Invasion of the Body Snatchers}, and how I interpret landscape in film in general.

In his analysis of the intentional filmic landscape, Lefebvre points out that certain directorial decisions create an ideal environment for the emergence of landscape, if even for a brief moment. According to the author, “any strategy for directing the spectator’s attention toward the exterior space rather than toward the action taking place within it…can be attributed to an intention to emphasize landscape.”\textsuperscript{24} Strategies used to emphasize landscape include the use of transition shots (where changes from one landscape to another indicate a spatial or temporal change in the narrative), \textit{temps morts} (where landscape appears during lulls in

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{19} Lefebvre 29.
\bibitem{20} Lefebvre 29.
\bibitem{21} Lefebvre 30.
\bibitem{22} Lefebvre 30.
\bibitem{23} Lefebvre 30,45.
\bibitem{24} Lefebvre 33.
\end{thebibliography}
the film’s narrative), and instances when landscape appears in such a way that it “gives way to another space, a space that is ‘displaced’ or arbitrary in terms of the narrative progress.”

In contrast, the spectatorial landscape emerges due to the efforts of the spectator. Lefebvre connects this rather subjective emergence of the filmic landscape to the art historical evolution of the landscape image over the past four centuries. Resulting in the creation of a cultural sensitivity to the reception of these images, this historical development of landscape has created a “capacity to bring a ‘landscaping gaze’ to bear on images that do not immediately derive from the genre (e.g., obviously, filmic images).” Lefebvre’s discussion of this spontaneous on-screen emergence of landscape speaks directly to my experience of film, especially since he emphasizes the fact that it is essentially the viewers interest in landscape that brings about this type of looking: “for spectators, various shots evoke the pictorial art of landscape (and its gaze), which serves as a mediation between the film and the landscape. In other words, it is landscape art that makes certain spectators work in the spectacular mode when they could just as well remain in the narrative mode.”

**Creating the Landscape Spectacle**

I would argue that my film-viewing habits and the projects that result from my experiences of film engage with both types of filmic landscape emergence. The images used for my initial stereogram studies were created from a collection of screenshots taken from various films, including *The Omen* (1976), *The Amityville Horror* (1979), and *There will be Blood* (2007) (see Figure 9).

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25 Lefebvre 33, 38.
26 Lefebvre 48.
27 Lefebvre 50. I openly acknowledge that Lefebvre’s concept of the landscaping gaze is also culturally specific, and that’s its relationship to a sensitivity to art historical tropes of landscape brings up questions of access that I will not delve into in this dissertation.
Figure 9. Modified screenshot of the film *The Amityville Horror, 2014*

My movie-viewing process for choosing which scenes to capture as screenshots follows the process outlined by Lefebvre in his discussion of the emergence of the intentional filmic landscape. I would take advantage of instances where landscape was intentionally featured in the narrative, pausing the film during instances where there were transitions between scenes and two landscapes would blend into each other, and during lulls in narrative when the landscape in a scene would be emphasized. In films that were what I would describe as landscape-heavy, it was easy enough to find these instances of intentional landscape, but in other films where most of the narrative occurred indoors, I would have to look for and frame landscape in scenes where it wouldn’t have necessarily been found. I would purposely pause a film for a quick instance in which the narrative’s background was all-foliage, or when there was an interesting arrangement of houseplants, or when a landscape could be seen outside of a window. In these cases, I utilize Lefebvre’s “landscaping gaze” in order to bring about landscape in the image.

In my projects exploring *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, I also utilize the landscaping gaze to create images secondary to the film in which the observer’s eye is left to wander throughout
a scene and reconsider any potential landscapes. The process I have used to create the mapped mural isolates the more decorative aspects of the film (in this case, the houseplants and landscaped greenery), and arranges them in such a way that they become the main focus of the film’s narrative. By subtracting the rest of the film’s visual information, the mural forces the viewer to consider the plants featured in each scene as important characters in their own right, essential to the narrative of the film. I consider the stereograms as embodiments of the process of viewing in the spectacular mode: I have isolated particular characteristics of a setting (a plant, or an interaction between a character and a plant), and rendered them autonomous through my manipulation of the image (my secondary drawing over the image with tracing paper). The creation of the stereogram forces the viewer to continue this process of viewing in the spectacular mode: their manipulation of their own stereoscopic vision forces them to concentrate on the autonomous landscape I’ve provided, and the resulting small-scale spectacle this viewing entails.

I believe this triad of landscape, viewing and spectacle also attests to a certain desire for landscape, one that I mentioned in the opening sections of this paper, as described by W.J.T. Mitchell in his discussion of the way value in landscape is culturally mediated. Lefebvre underlines that the act of seeing landscape in the spectacular mode is not innate. He explains that the emergence of the spectatorial landscape is learned culturally, and that the viewers understanding of conventional landscape tropes is what inclines them “to grant the space in question the value of landscape.”28 For Lefebvre, it is also apparent that the visual emergence of landscape is linked to a desire for landscape in our lives:

This way of gazing at images of the natural world …, the sensibility that it attests to, is the source of our desire to speak of them, to analyze and interpret them either with regard to the qualities they exhibit on their own or in the way that we project onto the narrative in order to connect them with themes of symbolic concerns, that is, to find some meaning in them that goes way beyond their narrative function as setting.29

As an individual whose personal experience has moved them from ephemeral work environments sited in actual landscape to a daily experience of life indoors, I try to make

28 Lefebvre 30.
29 Lefebvre 49.
landscape apparent in my work due to a personal need to see it manifested. Seeing landscape, thinking about it and manipulating it either physically or imaginatively, is for me an act of self-care and wellness. By presenting landscape in a form that can be visually manipulated by the viewer if enough attention is given, I try to extend this experience of landscape to the viewer, however briefly.
Chapter 2

A Beautiful view: Landscape and the Screen

This discussion of the cinematic experience of landscape unearths the question of the role of the screen in shaping our understanding of the landscape in our present age. The images of landscape that I encounter in the preparation of my work are almost always mediated by a screen of some sort: the screen intrinsic to film and television, and the mediation of the photograph or digital still through the screen of the computer. The screen itself is tied up with notions of vision. It denotes a view bound by a frame, a view that is simultaneously impeded by and delivered through a slick, transparent surface.

A Window View

The framed view is a perfect parallel for landscape: the wide, panoramic vistas of nature we call landscapes also imply a certain physical or cultural framing of view. In his essay “Four Views, Three of Them through Glass,” historian of architecture Sandy Isenstadt describes the relationship between the postwar suburban expansion of American domesticity in the 1950’s and the development of desire for the interior landscape view. Isenstadt asserts that the development of this relationship was mediated through advancement of glass technology: “The postwar emphasis on private landscape views existed within a larger trajectory of domestic vision that includes also hearths, television, and the automobile; the American landscape became modern not through any particular motifs but by routinely being seen through glass.”

The author sites the origin of this trajectory in nineteenth-century principles of interior design, which describe the hearth of the home, and its extension the chimney, as symbolic of the home’s gathering place and the family’s solid, ethical framework. The window, on the other hand, was representative of the family’s relationship to the outside world. The relatively equal value of hearth and window became increasingly unbalanced in response to developments in plate glass technology, which allowed for larger windows in the home, thereby augmenting the importance of the relationship between the domestic space and

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31 Isenstadt 217.
the outside. “Glass in the 1930s was quickly embraced in the United States as an icon of modernity in the home,” and “by the late 1940s, landscape views had come to dominate many discussions of house design.”

With the introduction of television into the domestic space and the explosive rise in popularity of the automobile, the importance of the landscape view developed beyond the relationship between home and the outside world. In the same way that the view displaced the hearth, television soon came to replace the landscape view as “domestic focus. By the end of the 1950s, families gathered around the television more frequently and more earnestly than the view.” Television became emblematic of the private relationship between the viewer and the outside, and was “absorbed within the home in accordance with a logic of looking pioneered by the view. The fascination with viewing distant vistas without leaving home is common to both.” The window view and the television were both also emblematic of a quality of vision that was defined by stasis, a position that differed wildly from traditional notions of the picturesque that tied landscape to the discovery of new views through movement. Diminished labour and ease were absorbed into the rhetoric of landscape and vision: according to Isenstadt, “repose did not just take place in a landscape – it was visualized as a landscape.

These transformations of our understanding of vision and landscape and how they relate to concepts of domesticity was further challenged by the introduction of the automobile. The automobile reintroduced a certain mobility to the static landscape view, affording the individual “leisurely movement through a landscape, …and a pleasurable paradox between movement and stasis.” The automobile not only provided the driver with seemingly unimpeded access to more landscape, it also cemented the link between glass and the landscape view, as “modern views were increasingly obtained through glass: windshields became commonplace, wipers were invented and then automated, and …by the 1920’s, the majority of flat glass in the United States went either to homebuilders or to Detroit.”

32 Isenstadt 225.
33 Isenstadt 231.
34 Isenstadt 231.
35 Isenstadt 234.
36 Isenstadt 235.
37 Isenstadt 236.
For Isenstadt, these continual shifts in the visual reception of landscape in the everyday owe their evolution to the increasing incorporation of slick, glass surfaces in the domestic space. He asserts that in order to understand the historic development of the landscape view, “seeing it through glass must also be counted as one of the ways landscape became modern.”

I believe this view through glass can be likened to our reception of the view on screen, as made apparent by Isenstadt’s discussion of television’s tie to the landscape view. Our current technology has made the screen, and its corresponding landscape view, more mobile than ever, as evidenced by the role of personal GPS systems, smartphones, and our almost constant connection to the Internet via online mobile platforms. While my work is principally manifested in analog forms, I believe my process belies landscape’s relationship to the technological screen. Online viewing platforms such as Netflix and Google Maps facilitate my access to landscape, photo and graphic editing programs such as Photoshop allow me to create and transform images of landscape, and free-access computer programs allow me to manipulate landscape in order to create various optical illusions. Not to mention that most of the raw material I use to make my work (for example, screen captures of landscapes in movies and from Google Maps) are saved in digital form in an instantaneously accessible personal archive. Although I avoid the direct use of the screen in the physical presentation of my work, I would argue that my use of repeated prints and drawings and my arrangement of images over large surfaces allows the viewer to access all the visual information I have provided about these landscapes in an instantaneous manner, mimicking our current rapport with the screen.

**Landscape and Screen: A Short Artistic Corpus**

This question of landscape and the screen, and in particular, landscape on or through the screen, is the topic of artist and researcher Dan Hays’ PhD thesis *Screen as Landscape*. In his introduction to the topic, the artist underlines the slippery task of defining this notion of landscape as screen. Landscape can be conceived as a screen that can physically or metaphorically veil, obscure or hide something from view. Landscape can be “screened by culture,” and vice versa, hiding and revealing various cultural meanings. It can also act as an subjective screen, coding for interpretations of beauty and aesthetic value, or as an objective screen, coding for scientific views of nature and landscape as a medium to be exploited.

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38 Isenstadt 240.
economically and technologically. These manifold meanings of ‘landscape as screen’ are for Hays reflective of the elusive nature of the concept of landscape itself. According to Hays, an analysis of the screen can “reveal forms of imaging analogous to, but not identical with, human perception of landscape, which is exactly defined by its continual formation and disappearance, its dependence on separation and memory alongside vivid, corporeal experience.”

*Screen as Landscape* presents an overview of artists whose works engages with this relationship between landscape and the screen. In the first section entitled ‘Floating Islands,’ Hays introduces the idea of the vignette, “a form of pictorial composition where the object, a group of objects, or the central area of a scene, are contained within a non-rectilinear shape, often following the outline of forms.” The vignette, according to Hays, is reflective of our own vision: it mirrors the way we can only focus on one particular area of a scene at a time, and it reflects how this area of focus is arranged in a oval shape similar to the physical structure of our visual apparatus, the eye. This idea of the vignette, which presents “dream-like, floating islands, dislocated from the habitual frame-as-window metaphor,” recalls the visual arrangement of motif and image in the *Snatching Bodies* mural, with relevant information of each scene of the film being focused within the central, circular blank space created by the motif of each tile (see Figure 10). The vignette is a also a visual strategy strongly featured in ceramic decoration, notably in the Portuguese and Spanish form of tile work Azulejo, which was an inspiration for the decorative motif featured in the *Snatching Bodies* mural. This section in Hays text focuses on the video work *Everglade* by artist Marion Coutts (see Figures 11, 12 and 13).

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40 Hays 8.
41 Hays 9.
42 Hays 9.
43 Hays 10.
44 Hays 10.
Figure 10. *Snatching Bodies: 84 Tableaus with Plants (Tiles 12 and 13)*, screenprint and drawing on paper, 2015

Figure 11. Marion Coutts, *Everglade*, film still from video projection, 2003
The project features a series of recorded landscapes cut out in vignette form, looped and projected on a white, portable screen. Hays explains that the videos effectively collapse the
distinction between landscape and still life: “it is clear that these are real scenes, filmed with a video camera, yet they constantly insist on being seen as isolated and floating worlds-in-miniature…they are both objects and landscapes.”\textsuperscript{45} In the instance of Coutts’ installation, the screen acts as a “(replacer of) landscape,” serving as a digital relic and endlessly looping reminder of lost landscapes, according to Hays interpretation.\textsuperscript{46} In both \textit{Everglades} and the \textit{Snatching Bodies} mural, the vignette serves as a way drawing focus to and eternalizing an otherwise fleeting and ephemeral image; the landscape presented on screen.

\textit{Screen as Landscape’s} section ‘Mists’ focuses on Helen Sear’s series \textit{Inside the View}, a collection of composite photographs marrying portraiture, landscape photography and digital drawing in a sort of superimposed digital collage (see Figures 14 and 15).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image1}
\caption{Helen Sear, from the series \textit{Inside the View}, photograph, 2006}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{45} Hays 11.  
\textsuperscript{46} Hays 11
Inside the View draws clear parallels to the Body Snatcher stereograms, which themselves are composites of film stills and my own drawings. In his discussion of Sear’s work, Hays describes the final compositions of the superimposed stills as ambiguous images in which “landscape seems to be emerging and dissolving.”47 Sear uses a third element in her compositions, a “hand-drawn (though digitally interpolated) net of looping marks,” to selectively erase components of one of the layers featuring a landscape photograph, revealing “another landscape as a foreground mesh through which the original landscape is seen.”48 Much like Coutts’ vignettes, this veil of hand-drawn imagery signals human vision and perception. Hays explains that “they have the appearance of ocular aberrations, the shadow of floaters in the eye’s vitreous humour, or the sparkle of tiny bright dots, known as Scheerer’s

47 Hays 40.
48 Hays 40-41.
phenomenon." Most importantly, Sear’s use of drawing in her images works towards the same visual effect that I sought to instil in the Body Snatcher stereograms (see Figure 16).

Troubling the surface of the image and the integrity of the original photographs, ‘these distinctive visual anomalies invite inspection of the intricate surface, working to activate curiosity in their construction.’

The third and final artist I would like to discuss that has been featured in Hays’ overview of landscape and the screen is Susan Collins, whose projects Fenlandia and Glenlandia could be described as web-cam screen shots in chronological composite (see Figures 17 and 18).

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49 Hays 41.
50 Hays 41.
Figure 17. Susan Collins, *Glenlandia*, timecoded digital still, 2005

Figure 18. Susan Collins, *Fenlandia*, timecoded digital still, 2004
Collins’ projects feature the use of images collected from web-cameras installed in rural, often roadside settings with the original purpose of providing traffic and meteorological information to the public. Collins collects and manipulates the recorded data from the camera in order to build photographs that extend the image in the camera’s frame over the course of a day: “starting at the top left corner, the pictures are built, pixel-by-pixel, in horizontal rows, moving slowly over many hours, down the digital raster until the bottom is reached.” Each final image acts as a visual archive of the landscape, demonstrating the technological screen’s propensity to flatten and convolute both space and time. While Collins’ web-camera projects differ from my work in regards to her exclusive use of the found digital image, the simultaneous presentation of discrete moments in time echoes the role of duration in my own practice. In *Fenlandia* and *Glenlandia*, time advances chronologically over the surface of the screen; in the *Snatching Bodies* mural, time advances over the surface of the paper, which in turn can be seen as an analogue to the digital screen on which the scenes of the film were originally seen and captured.

I have chosen to discuss these three bodies of work presented in *Screen as Landscape* because they feature a blurring of artistic strategies that parallels my own practice. The three artists mentioned engage in a marrying of and exchange between archaic and current visual strategies, for example, the use of the vignette and the projected image in Coutts videos and the use of drawing and photography in the work of Sear. Termed the *after-effect* by the art historian Andrew Benjamin in his text *Disclosing Spaces: On Painting*, Hays describes this reciprocity between imaging technologies as a strategy that draws attention to the way we see and treat the screen as a contemporary visual trope:

One of the primary aims of Screen as Landscape is to locate examples of artworks that in various ways present *after-effect* relations between media: reciprocities and exchanges between the hand-made, static, and material media of painting and printmaking, and the mechanised, immaterial surfaces of the filmic, electronic, or

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51 Hays 76.
52 Hays 37. The author makes reference to Andrew Benjamin’s concept of the *after-effect*, a term originally used to describe the historical relationship between painting and photography: ”(The) concern is to position the question of painting as one that has to be posed after photography, though equally it turns this position around such that any interpretation of contemporary photography has to position it as occurring ‘after’ painting. One occurs after the other.” *Disclosing Spaces: On Painting*, (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2004) p 9.
digital image. Benjamin’s *after-effect* has the virtue of being reciprocal and mutual, not bound to a sense of historical development – in which one medium absorbs and makes obsolete an older one. All media can reveal the limitations and paradoxes of visual perception, out of which metaphors for human experiences of being-in-the-world through being-in-the-medium can emerge.⁵³

My practice engages in a similar series of exchanges between different mediums: specifically the use of digital technologies to collect information that is then transformed from a digital format to an on-paper format, and a reciprocity between hand-led technologies of reproduction like printmaking and digital imaging interfaces such as Photoshop and online image translators. I relate to Hays assertion that “all media can reveal the limitations and paradoxes of visual perception,” and would argue that the simultaneous use of multiple technologies of reproduction in my practice also seeks to reveal the multiple permutations and uses of the screen in our daily lives. This discussion of screen and surface in relation to different visual media and artistic strategies brings me, finally, to a brief reflection on the role of printmaking in my practice, and promotion of the surface and screen in my work.

**A Last Look at the Screen: Printmaking and Surface**

Ruth Pelzer-Montada’s article *The Attraction of Print: Notes on the Surface of the (Art) Print* offers a succinct examination of the relationship between the medium of printmaking and the quality of the physical surface of the print. The author positions the print as an intermediary between the ‘visceral’ surface of the painted image and the ‘enervated’ surface, “represented by the preponderance, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century, of images on screens and screenlike images.”⁵⁴ Pelzer-Montada notes that “printmaking processes are characterized by a flat surface” that appears mechanical in contrast to the painted image, but can “yield a tactile, ‘fleshy’ surface in comparison to the mean slimness of the digital print.”⁵⁵ This comparable robustness of the surface of the print in comparison to photography and digital technologies is owed to the process of printmaking, which requires different colours and layers

⁵³ Hays 37.
⁵⁵ Pelzer-Montada 77-78.
of an image to be printed in separate passes. This physical build-up of ink, and the interaction between these layers and the substrate onto which they are printed, lends microscopic physical depth to the surface of the print that is not attainable with the digitally printed image or photograph.\textsuperscript{56}

In describing the way we visually interact with the surface of images produced by printmaking processes, Pelzer-Montada evokes the notion of the haptic. The haptic finds its origins in the writings of art historian Alois Riegl, and Pelzer-Montada uses further elaborations of the concept by film and video critic Laura U. Marks to buttress her argument of the role of the haptic in the surface of the print:

Haptic \textit{perception} is usually defined as the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies. In haptic \textit{visuality}, the eyes themselves function like organs of touch. Haptic visuality, a term contrasted to optical visuality, draws from other forms of sense experience, primarily touch and kinesthetics.\textsuperscript{57}

This idea of haptic visuality is extended to the surface of the art image: the activation of the haptic involves drawing the viewer into the physical quality of the images surface, encouraging the physical movement of the eye and evoking a sense of touch through the use of various effects such as texture or a lack of sharp focus.\textsuperscript{58} Pelzer-Montada asserts that printmaking invokes this haptic mode “for it is this kind of ‘caressing’ or ‘step-by-step’ look that the printed surface, more often than note, also attracts…viewers press up close to the prints, their eyes roaming the surface, scrutinizing its concatenations, delighting in its variegated fabric, puzzling as to its sensuous fusion (‘How is it done?’).”\textsuperscript{59}

This haptic visuality triggered by the surface of the screenprint invites the viewer into a closer relationship with the images surface, in turn amplifying the sense of attentive perception I wish to engage in the viewer. I would argue that even the digitally printed stereograms activate this sort of haptic viewing. Although the quality of these images’ surfaces may not activate the same desire to touch stimulated by the surface of the screenprint, they do require

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{56} Pelzer-Montada 80.
    \item \textsuperscript{57} Pelzer-Montada 80. Here, the author is quoting Laura Marks in her work \textit{Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media} (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 2.
    \item \textsuperscript{58} Pelzer-Montada 82.
    \item \textsuperscript{59} Pelzer-Montada 85.
\end{itemize}
the viewer to engage physically with the image in order to adequately mobilize their stereoscopic vision in order to see the three-dimensional forms these images hide. While some viewers can suss out the 3D image fairly easily, stereograms often force the viewer to move towards and away from the image in order to activate the optical focus required to see the hidden image. The fact that the hidden images are seen as three-dimensional also activates haptic visuality, since this three-dimensionality evokes a sense of being able to physically interact with the image. The tiny-hand drawn symbols found in the *Snatching Bodies* mural and the ‘invisible’ pattern of the House Hunters relaxation motif in the project *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* (see Figure 19 and 20) draws the viewer into a similar position of close inspection, where the viewer must physically approach and negotiate with the surface of the image in order to examine its details. Pelzer-Montada adequately describes my interest in this concentrated type of vision, explaining that the “haptic could be considered as a kind of looking that makes the embodied aspect of vision more obvious. Its volitional quality, or its attribute of progressing step by step, highlights vision’s performative or constitutive, provisional character.”

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Figure 19. *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure: Puerto Cayo*, screenprint on paper, 2015

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60 Pelzer-Montada 91.
Figure 20. *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure*, screenprint on paper, 2015
Chapter 3

Repetition, Order, and the Decorative

Repetition figures strongly in my work, both in the use of pattern and motif in the imagery I create and in the repetitive, procedural aspects of choosing and refining these images before they are presented in their final form. *At Home*, a drawn wallpaper of my houseplants, is a prime example of the use of repetition in both my process and in the final work (see Figure 21 and 22).

![At Home (Part 2), drawing on archival carton, 2014](image-url)
Figure 22. *At Home (Part 2)* (detail), 2014

Figure 23. *At Home (Botanical Poster)*, digital collage, 2014
Last year at the end of August, which also happens to be the tail end of the prime growing season on my apartment balcony, I took portraits of every houseplant I own. These photos were modified and re-sized in Photoshop, and then turned into a 22 by 30 inch digital poster featuring my plants arranged in a grid-like repeated pattern (see Figure 23).

This poster was the inspiration for the final wallpaper, whose pattern was created by assigning each plant a number, picking a number at random from a bag, and copying the corresponding plant portrait onto the wallpaper by hand. The digital files of the plant portraits were used a second time to create the accompanying autostereogram wallpaper borders (see Figure 24 and 25).

Figure 24. At Home (Wallpaper Border), autostereogram, 2015
Similar to the *Invasion of the Body Snatcher* stereograms described in the last section, autostereograms rely on the viewer’s manipulation of their binocular vision in order to reveal a hidden three-dimensional object. One of the most popular autostereograms is the single-image random dot autostereogram, which were heavily featured in the popular book series *Magic Eye* of the 1990s. This type of autostereogram is created using a computer program that combines a repeated pattern base (often an image or texture) with the depth-map of the secret image hidden in the autostereogram. The wallpaper border I’ve created is actually ten different autostereograms stacked one on top of the other, with each one featuring one of the ten plant...
portraits. The autostereograms were created using an automatic autostereogram generator featured on the website www.easystereogrambuilder.com, which allows the user to upload their own depth-map image and pattern, creating an original autostereogram. The creation of the pattern that I uploaded to the autostereogram generator involved further recycling of the ten plant portraits I took in August; using a cut and paste technique in Photoshop, I combined sections of each portrait into one image that I then further modified using a filter. Each plant portrait was then turned into a depth map of the original image and uploaded onto the online generator with the plant pattern, resulting in ten autostereograms which look almost identical until the hidden plant portrait is revealed by the viewer.

The use of repetition and pattern, combined with the wall-sized dimensions of the Plant Portrait project, makes a very obvious allusion to wallpaper, while the autostereogram pattern brings to mind the type of all-over pattern found on fabrics. The Snatching Bodies mural manifests itself along the same thread, referencing the use of patterned tiles as a wall covering. I am interested in these ornamental manifestations of the decorative image; the repeated motif arranged in a grid-like or all-over fashion and blown-up on a large scale. I am also interested in the use of repetition and pattern as a way of visually structuring an image or idea. In order to understand my propensity for the use of ornamentation and the decorative image in my work, I will be addressing Ernst H. Gombrich’s The Sense of Order, a tome exploring the psychological underpinnings of decorative art and ornamentation as a form of order.

**The Logic of Pattern and Effect**

Similar to Envisioning Information, Edward Tufte’s anthology of practices in information design, Gombrich’s Sense of Order was useful in helping me sort out my aesthetic decisions in relationship to notions of visual ease and perception. Much of the work I presented in the preceding sessions mimicked visual aspects of mapmaking and information design, and these characteristics have carried forward into more recent projects. For example, I use colour in the Snatching Bodies mural as a kind of code, with particular colours used as labels for different types of foliage featured in the film. This is similar to the use of colour in cartography; a method that Tufte describes as the use of colour as a noun.61 It is also interesting to note that another approach to colour illustrated by Tufte is the use of colour to enliven or decorate, what he calls

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“colour as beauty.” This is also an important aspect of my practice: when not working in line drawing and using colours outside of the photographed greens of my plants, my use of colour is highly influenced by personal preference. I enliven and decorate with soft, muted colours, often in similar families. Tuft notes that this use of delicate colour, or colours similar in tone and shade also aids the viewer in deciphering visual information in a way that is visually pleasing as opposed to jarring, much like the reduction of visual noise in an image. The use of delicate lines and subtle grids in information design, and the sequencing of images “over time like the frames of a move” places information “within the eyespan so that viewers make comparisons at a glance “ allowing for “uninterrupted visual reasoning.” Both the Snatching Bodies and At Home wallpapers function in a similar manner, allowing the viewer simultaneous access to a series of interpretations or visual permutations.

Gombrich’s Sense of Order continues along this same line of comprehensive study; the second section of the book, The Perception of Order is particularly useful in its examination of the relationship between the viewer’s perception and order in the decorative arts. Gombrich asserts that our preference for pattern and repetition is an innate biological response to our surroundings; that in order to go about in the world, our vision is automatically attuned to physical regularities in the environment. Stressing that “we could never have gathered any experience of the world if we lacked the sense of order which allows us to categorize our surroundings according to degrees of regularity, and its obverse,” the author explains that our eyes are constantly monitoring for continuity. Our visual expectations of order and regularity make it easier to see, and thus physically react to, disorder in our environment. This “continuity-monitoring” transfers over to our reception of pattern and motif in the decorative arts. Gombrich evokes the idea of ‘repose,’ that the haphazard arrangement of shapes on a ground creates a sense of visual restlessness. Since the eye is constructed so that we can only focus on one limited area at a time, when “many signals compete for our attention we will not know where to look first and again feel pulled about, without our gaze ever finding rest.” However, once the shapes are arranged in an ordered manner, such as a grid, this feeling of

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62 Tuft 81.
63 Tuft 67.
65 Gombrich 110.
66 Gombrich 120-121.
restlessness subsides. In addition to the grid, Gombrich points to the border or frame as an ordering technique “that delimits the field of activity both for the decorator and viewer.”67 The border or frame creates a disruption in regularity that alerts the viewer and sets up a certain level of visual expectation: according to the author, in “discovering such an enclosed field we expect an area that repays scrutiny.”68 In this way, the use of the grid, the border, and the framing pattern in my work allows the viewer to travel along the images surface, mimicking chronological sequencing (like that in a film), or allowing the viewer to follow along in the enumeration of parts or details.

**Wallpaper: Illusions in the Interior**

It is interesting to note that this all-over, linear repetition can also, according to Gombrich, bring up inefficacies in vision, and therefore attention. He argues that when looking at a repeated pattern, constant visual monitoring for continuity in an image can become difficult because a “highly redundant design of identical elements offers no easy anchorage…on which to 'lock in'. (The eye) drifts and loses its place.”69 In addition, the author notes that “the larger the area and the more elusive its features, the more it will exhibit this subjective kind of restlessness, fluctuating in front of our eyes and offering any number of readings…”70 Gombrich stresses that there is a “compulsion for our eyes to run along the established rails of redundant repeats,”71 but that a certain unease is created when that regularity is suddenly shifted; either by how the viewer is looking at the image, or by how the individual elements of the motif are arranged. Interestingly, Gombrich alludes to wallpaper to demonstrate his point. He invokes a poem by the German mystic Christian Morgenstern, which describes an uneasy encounter with wallpaper. The poem “describes what happens when we attempt to counter the pull of existing continuities in gazing at a repeat pattern such as a flowered wallpaper but trying to use it for an imaginary game of chess.”72 Gombrich asserts “what drives the victim of the wall paper crazy is not the redundant pattern but his vain attempt to read it for once in an unexpected way.”73 The viewer attempts to read the motif as

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67 Gombrich 125.  
68 Gombrich 125.  
69 Gombrich 131.  
70 Gombrich 131.  
71 Gombrich 132.  
72 Gombrich 132.  
73 Gombrich 132.
singular images as opposed to scanning the image as continuous lines of information and is led in a visual chase all over the paper’s surface. In this way, the order proposed by wallpaper’s motif or pattern is unstable, revealing “complex forces which the interaction of order and meaning brings into play.”

Gombrich’s examination of wallpaper’s manifestation of the potentially uneasy gaze is not a new idea. In her introductory essay to the book *Walls are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture*, Christina Woods notes that while the use of wallpaper was an extremely popular in late nineteenth-century interior design, great care was taken in its placement in the home. She cites turn-of-the-century design texts imploring readers to avoid wallpapers featuring fantastical motifs or “small, distinctly outlined patterns” in areas of repose. Their use in the bedroom might over stimulate the sleepy brain, resulting in restlessness. Worse, they could “act furiously upon the mind, distracting feverish patients and giving rise to delirious fancies.” Woods also mentions the famous short story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Gilman’s story, published in 1892, describes the manifestation of this very fear, recounting the nightmarish experience of a women’s descent into madness, which is precipitated by her “obsession with a wallpaper pattern while she is confined/imprisoned in her room at the top of the house.” Woods underscores the perceived double-edged sword of wallpaper’s popularity in nineteenth-century décor: “repetition of floral trails and trellises allowed the Victorian consumer to bring the outside inside, to create an indoor Garden of Eden, a ‘home beautiful.’ But, paradoxically, their paper might have made them physically or mentally ill.”

In ‘How Wallpaper Left Home and Made an Exhibition of Itself’, the second essay featured in *Walls are Talking: Wallpaper, Art and Culture*, Gill Saunders provides an overview of the historical use of wallpaper in the avant-garde, tracing its development from its adoption in pop art all the way to contemporary uses in current art practices. Saunders stresses that since

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74 Gombrich 145.
75 Woods 16.
76 Woods 16.
77 Woods 16.
78 Woods 22.
“wallpaper occupies a position of intimacy in our lives,” it “can be readily co-opted by the artist to any attempt to explore the relationship between ourselves and the spaces we live in.”

Wallpaper has been used by artists to bring issues of economic and social unrest and disparity into the domestic space, as well as challenging architectural notions of exteriority and interiority by bringing elements of the outside world in. Gill describes the work of two artists who engage in this confounding of interior and exterior space. The first is Thomas Demand, whose installation *Ivy/Efeu* features a wallpaper of ivy “derived from the paper cut-out leaves illustrated in one of Demand’s own photographs” (see Figures 26 and 27).

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Figure 26. Thomas Demand, *Ivy/Efeu*, installation, 2006

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80 Saunders 69.
These photographs “appear to be records of real places, but in fact his practice involves the painstaking construction of life-sized models of real places, using only commercially available paper and card.”\textsuperscript{81} This doubly illusive construction of Demand’s ivy imagery engages directly with the fictitious nature of wallpaper, which “has been in the business of production illusions ever since it was invented.”\textsuperscript{82} In addition, \textit{Ivy/Efeu}

\textsuperscript{81} Saunders 69
\textsuperscript{82} Saunders 69.
simultaneously brings the natural world outside of the gallery into the interior experienced by the viewer, “turning the space inside out.”

Artist Lisa Hecht’s installations utilize wallpaper to a similar effect: her “wallpapers often explore the relationship between interior and exterior, sometimes exploiting the dramatic potential of bringing outdoor motifs into a ‘domestic’ context.” Her installation *Space Contains No Threats* features a wallpaper of chain-link fencing, which Saunders describes as “the urban counterpart to the ivy-covered trellis pattern so popular in the 19th-century wallpaper design” (see Figures 28 and 29).
She also notes that the use of the chain-link fence as a wallpaper motif troubles the notion of viewing inherent to wallpaper, because the fence is normally used “for demarcating boundaries and defining spaces, to contain or exclude.” The way Hecht’s wallpaper signals being fenced-in functions contrary to the traditional relationship between wallpaper and landscape:

The idea that wallpaper should offer the illusion of a seductive view – as the 19th-century French panoramic papers did with their scenes of the elegant streets of Paris or Rome, or exotic tropical landscapes – is drastically subverted here. The view is one of blank nowhere-ville, and the wallpaper is no longer a decorative

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86 Saunders 74.
background but a confining screen that the artist herself has described as ‘camouflage’.87

Hecht and Demand’s use of wallpaper troubles the question of the view in relationship to landscape by confusing our expectations of how we sign for interior and exterior spaces. Their projects also demonstrate how the sense of order implicit to the decorative can be turned on its head through the manipulation of its various visual elements. This subversive use of the decorative is reflected in my own work. The relationship between landscape and view established by the decorative order of wallpaper is troubled by my conflation of this space with that of the archive; a space that tabulates landscape within a logic of exhaustive enumeration. This question of the archive will be addressed in the following section of this paper. For now I would like to briefly return to this question of the perception of order in ornamentation and the decorative, and its subversive potential.

A Last Look at Ornamentation: The Subversive Decorative

Jacques Soulillou’s essay Ornament and Order offers a second reading of this compulsion towards ornamentation and our desire for the decorative. He describes the effect the relationship between ornamentation and the perception of order has on our understanding of visual form, and ultimately in the creation of social hierarchies. As echoed in the introduction to his text Le décoratif, 88 Soulillou remarks that there is an inherent relationship between ornament and social order and structure. Ornament denotes a sense of propriety in that the ornament is always suitable to the subject, or that surface (the building, the cloth, or the body) which it decorates. The ornament signifies their place in a social hierarchy: “ornament is born under the gaze of another… It is the mark of socialization…it is not the individual that appropriates the ornament but, on the contrary, the ornament that appropriates the individual with the purpose of assigning a place in a social or cosmic order.”89 However, Soulillou asserts that this sense of order is always a stone’s throw away from unraveling into chaos, and that, while ornament allows order to appear, this relationship is tenuous: “ornament is essentially chaos that threatens to subvert order if the latter does not pay attention.

87 Saunders 74.
ornament, order will always be on guard.” Even in our use of ornament as a signifier of social relations, it is always, somewhere, slipping out of order. This slipping is what Soulillou describes as the decorative: “the logic of ornament, as the illuminated space at the heart of which order appears, serves to establish oppositions (man/women, free/not-free, appropriate/not-appropriate, etc.), whereas the logic of the decorative serves to displace and endlessly re-divide them, by intercalating additional terms.” He posits the decorative as an excess of ornamentation, an excess that is illogical because it falls outside of the register of a socializing order that ornamentation serves: “The decorative constitutes that which escapes the encoding that order practices on ornament, a kind of wild outgrowth that order seems unable to tame.”

The “wild outgrowth” of the decorative signs for a kind of excess in ornamentation that manifests itself in the existence of the visually superfluous. My work falls within this register of excess as well. My wallpapers not only offer an examination of real and cinematic landscape spaces, they present these spaces in a state of visual excess. There are too many plants and sometimes too much pattern. While there is an order and logic to the processes used to convene information about these spaces, the final decorative arrangement of pattern and image deny the order implicit in the traditional viewing of landscape. For example, perspective is replaced with an all-over arrangement of natural forms, and the logic implicit to colour-coding symbols to represent different elements is denied because there are no legends present. I am interested in this denial of order through the proliferation of the decorative as a way of subverting the logic of the view through which we have come to know landscape: a view from an imaginary window, or the view through the technological screen, as described by Daniel Hays in the previous section. By subverting this logic of landscape’s relationship to the view, I am ultimately trying to reveal how this process of viewing is bound up with our desire for landscape, and how this desire is manifested through the proliferation of the landscape image in popular culture. This brings me to the final section of this paper, which examines this question of desire for landscape in relationship to the role attention plays in our consumption of the landscape image.

90 Soulillou, “Ornament and Order” 87.
91 Soulillou, “Ornament and Order” 95.
92 Soulillou, “Ornament and Order” 89.
Chapter 4

Landscape and Desire, Perception and Attention

The third project presented for my dissertation is *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure*, a series of screenprinted patterns reminiscent of those featured in optical illusions, and which reveal a hidden “relaxation pattern” when looked at from a certain angle. (see Figure 30 and 31).

![Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure: Pattaya, screenprint on paper, 2015](image)

Figure 30. *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure: Pattaya*, screenprint on paper, 2015
This project is, once again, based on an enumeration of landscapes found on-screen, in the reality television series *House Hunters International*. This series focuses on the experiences of individuals, usually North American, in their effort to find and purchase real estate property overseas. These individuals travel to their desired destination and are taken on tours of potential properties by a real estate agent; the show presents three of these tours, and by the end of the half-hour, the individual’s final choice of property is revealed. While *House Hunters International* features locations all over the world, *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* focuses on five locations characterized by a primarily tropical or sub-tropical climate: Los Cabos, Mexico, Pattaya, Thailand, Peurto Cayo, Ecuador, Léon, Nicaragua, and Mission Beach, Australia. The pattern for this project is divided into five corresponding rows: each row of pattern represents one episode of *House Hunters International* and its featured location.

The length of each row is determined by the ‘amount’ of landscape presented in each location, an amount that corresponds directly to the number of palm trees counted in each episode; the pattern is divvied up among locations based on each episode’s correlating percentage of the total number of counted palm trees (see Figure 32).
The palm trees are incorporated into the hidden relaxation motif printed over-top of the optical pattern; a different palm tree pattern is created for each location and screen printed over the visible green and pink pattern using an acrylic varnish. Like the images in the autostereograms, the hidden relaxation motif requires effort on the part of the viewer to be seen; by shifting from side to side and by approaching and retreating from the rows of screenprints, the palm trees are revealed.

Landscape as Fantasy in the Domestic Space

*Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* deals with themes of desire and fantasy in relation to landscape, ideas that are reflected in the premise of *House Hunters International*. The homes presented in these episodes are often valued in terms of their proximity to locations that code for leisure and relaxation; their proximity to the beach, the ocean-front view afforded from their windows, and the seclusion and purported repose the surrounding terrain provides. The desires of the house hunters are reflected in the overall theme of the show, in which the desire
for travel to exotic locales is equated with the acquisition of physical property. The relationship between landscape and exchange-value is made clear: in the words of W.J.T. Mitchell, here “landscape is a marketable commodity to be presented and re-presented in ‘packaged tours,’ an object to be purchased, consumed, and even brought home in the form of souvenirs as postcards and photo albums.”

93 The locations travelled to are also sites of fantasy. Michael Taussig examines the evolution of the beachfront as fantasy in his essay “The Beach (A Fantasy).” He notes that the historic “revaluation of the sea” from a space of the working class and less-than-picturesque commerce to one of play and repose is a “testimony to the force of the archaic in modernity, a coming into fullness of a ‘second nature’ in which objects and landscapes, along with indigenous people, acquire radically intensified meaning as the physical melts into virtual reality.”

94 What is interesting is that House Hunters International fuses these sites of fantasy with the domestic space of the home. The series depicts a search for the home that is located within the trope of tourism and the globetrotting traveler, however it also places this search within the real home of the viewer, who is in turn taken along in the house hunter’s search for their fantasy residence. The series can be interpreted as the reality television version of the amateur travel footage and the home-move. Heather Nicholson notes “the making of amateur films, like the social uses of other camera technologies, was often a deliberate memorializing act. Typically, when enthusiasts used their cameras to record such specific domestic events as birthdays, family gatherings, or anniversaries, … they also included situational details including landscape.”

95 In House Hunters International, it is the purchase of the home that is memorialized, albeit in an explicitly public way that is also intimately tied up with notions of consumption of both property and the landscape. Sarah Browne sheds light on the consumption of the landscape image in the domestic space in her examination of the role of landscape painting in the suburban home. Browne’s definition of the use of landscape painting can be likened to that of the home movie; paintings “purchased directly as souvenirs of a holiday… become transformed into a kind of large-format, ‘classy’ and more permanent version of the postcard.

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93 Mitchell 15.
(to the self) to be savoured and enjoyed vicariously after the end of the tourist experience.”

Like both the landscape painting and the amateur home movie, *House Hunters International* activates what Browne calls “suburban spectatorship.” These images create an “imagined space … a point of departure for escape into nostalgic memories of childhood or holidays.” They also constitute “an alternative window to the architectural one, providing vistas that would otherwise be denied to the suburban dweller.” In a similar vein, *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* functions as one of these imagined spaces, “a surface that can be dreamed into,” in the words of Browne.

Artist Vaughn Bell’s project *Personal Biospheres* is reflective of this domestic desire for landscape, a desire that is manifested physically in the construction of landscapes for personal use within the home. Her project can be described as the indoor garden gone rogue, consisting of structures constructed of clear acrylic that are outfitted with small-scale gardens; a real biosphere with its own climate and humidity generated by a diverse collection of plants growing in real soil and moss (see Figures 33 and 34).

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97 Browne 35.
98 Browne 35.
99 Browne 35.
100 Browne 36.
The project was executed in two states. The first is a portable version called the PPB (Portable Personal Biosphere) that can be worn over the head like a helmet, allowing the wearer to go about their day in the city. PPB created “an artificial horizon of green right in front of your nose, and it allowed you to smell the forest instead of the fumes, and it muffled the noise of the city.” The second incarnation of the project is a home version: according to Bell, “when you got home from work, you could take off the PPB and spend time in your Personal Home Biosphere. You could sit inside while watching TV, relaxing, whatever…effectively creating an alternate environment for yourself.” Bell’s biosphere projects are a physical embodiment of the desire for landscape in the home that also calls into question our visual relationship to elements of the natural world. In her essay Manifest Destiny to Global Warming: A Pre-Apocalyptic View of the Landscape, Denise Markonish notes that the subversive perspective established by

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102 Bell 45.
Personal Biospheres proposes “an intimate way of being in the landscape that one would never experience in the outdoors. For Bell there is a sense of protection here, a sense of being able to escape from the world into your own personal biosphere.” While her project deals with the physical constituents of landscape, Bell is essentially interested in the association between fantasy and landscape, one that she challenges by reconfiguring both our physical and visual relationship with landscape in a domestic context.

**Attention, Perception and Reverie**

The use of pattern in *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* revisits questions of attention and reverie reflected in the *Snatching Bodies* and *At Home* projects; the installation of the visible green and pink patterns over an extended area activates the same unstable, wandering gaze established in the viewing of the other wallpapers. I posit that the activation of this wandering gaze functions much like the landscaping gaze described by Martin Lefebvre in the viewing of film; the breakdown or build-up of visual attention affords the viewer a prolonged consideration of the real or imagined landscapes presented. This question of attention is thoroughly examined in Jonathan Crary’s book *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture*, in which Crary investigates the problem of attention and distraction in modernity in relationship to theories and technologies of perception established in the late nineteenth-century. For Crary, this question of attention is important because of its implication in the creation of social order and control: attention is essentially a double-edged sword that defines our state of productivity in relation to social structures:

(The) realization that attention had limits beyond and below which productivity and social cohesion were threatened created a volatile indistinction between newly designated “pathologies” of attention and creative, intensive states of deep absorption and daydreaming. Attention, … was an inevitable ingredient of a subjective conception of vision: attention is the means by which an individual observer can transcend those subjective limitations and make perception its own,

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and attention is at the same time a means by which a perceiver becomes open to control and annexation by external agencies.\textsuperscript{104}

Crary underlines the fact that attention also “contained within itself the conditions for its own disintegration, haunted by the possibility of its own excess.”\textsuperscript{105} The more one concentrates on something, the easier it is to lose grip of an essential understanding of the object or situation, like when a word is repeated to the point where it loses its sense. Increased focus can also mutate attention into “states of distraction, reverie, dissociation, and trance.”\textsuperscript{106} This idea of reverie brings us back to a consideration of attention in the present-day, in light of our increased interactions with the technological screen of the television and personal computer. Crary notes that because these technologies are constantly vying for our attention, any “swerves into inattentiveness” that may produce alternative states of temporality or dissociation are “fundamentally incompatible with capitalist patterns of flow and obsolescence.”\textsuperscript{107} The author questions the contemporary role of states of attention that are effectively in competition with these technologies, most notably the daydream, “which is an integral part of a continuum of attention, (and) has always been a crucial but indeterminate part of the politics of everyday life.”\textsuperscript{108} Although Crary acknowledges that the daydream remains a “domain of resistance internal to any system of routinization or coercion,” he asserts that in our present condition, “what once might have been called reverie now most often takes place aligned with preset rhythms, images, speeds, and circuits.”\textsuperscript{109} States of attention/inattention such as reverie are in danger of being fundamentally transformed in the face of our dependence upon the technological screen, while at once being a means of resistance to their own displacement. Crary posits a question important to my own work, “of how and whether creative modes of trance, inattention, daydream, and fixation can flourish within the interstices of these circuits. It is particularly important now to determine what creative possibilities can be generated amid new technological forms of boredom.”\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{105} Jonathan Crary, “Modernity and the Problem of Attention,” \textit{Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture}. (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001) 47.
\textsuperscript{106} Crary 46.
\textsuperscript{107} Crary 77.
\textsuperscript{108} Crary 77.
\textsuperscript{109} Crary 77-78.
\textsuperscript{110} Crary 78.
By disrupting the visual structure of the reality television series, replacing the technological screen with pattern and effect, *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* offers the viewer an alternative entrance into their own desire for landscape. This attempt to evoke a state of visual reverie via pattern and colour contrasts sharply with the often-inattentive way we watch television, and struggles against the aesthetic boredom inherent to the television series. The landscapes featured in the episodes of *House Hunters International* are restored to a state of spectacular effusion; taken out of their accessory role of the oceanfront view or exotic property, the landscapes explored in *Patterns for Relaxation and Leisure* are transformed by the logic of the decorative.

**Attention and the Aggregate: Final Notes about the Archive**

In earlier writing about my work, I had positioned an interest in the archive at the foundation of my practice. The body of work I had developed in the previous year involved the creation of a repertoire of physical space; the interstitial islands of forgotten greenery located between the on-ramp and main artery of the highway from Quebec City to Oshawa, Ontario (see Figure 35).

![Figure 35. Roadside #10, digital collage, 2014](image-url)
This activity of recording and tabulating has become a regular part of my artistic process; as already described, this archiving process usually defines the primary stages of a project, and the collected screen shots, notes, films stills and photographs are the material I use to mold the project into its final visual form. I would now argue that this interest in the archive is motivated by not only by my desire to demonstrate and describe all of the possible elements of a thing (whether it be a film, domestic space, or landscape-in-the-real), but by my interest in the archive’s form.

Rosalind Krauss and John Tagg investigate the relationship between the image, the archive and its form in their respective essays *Photography’s Discursive’s Spaces: Landscape/ View* and *The Archiving Machine; Or, the Camera and the Filing Cabinet*. Both authors establish the structure of the archive as essential to our understanding of it as a tool of knowledge. Tagg examines the historical development of the archive in relationship to the proliferation of stereoscopic images and systems of photographic identification in the nineteenth century. Krauss’ essay focuses on the work of photographer Timothy O’Sullivan and his contribution to the Clarence King geographical surveys on the late 1860’s and 1870’s (see Figure 36).

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

Figure 36. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, *Shoshone Falls, Snake River Idaho, View Across Top of Falls*, albumen print, 1874
In his text, Tagg describes the relationship between the historical evolution of the photographic archive and the pressing need for the creation of efficient methods of storage. “As an apparatus of rationalization and social management,” Tagg explains that in order to ensure the utility of documents contained within the photographic archive it became impossible to handle them or access their collective record without an expandable system of storage and without what (was) called a ‘proper arrangement’ - by which they meant ‘a systematic order.’ In reference to Krauss’ essay, he reiterates the inherent relationship between the archive and physical space. By way of Krauss’ analysis, Tagg concludes “the cabinet…marked the semantic space in which the singularity of the view was inserted into a more complex representation of the world that, in its aspirations at least, offered a glimpse of a kind of topographical encyclopaedia.”

The physical space of the cabinet stands in contrast to the ordered placement of the photographic landscape image within the space of the art exhibit, a placement that is established as the space of aesthetic discourse in Krauss’ essay. While O’Sullivan’s survey photographs are often seen as a purveyor of modern landscape photography, Krauss’ analysis of his work places it squarely within the discursive space of science, due to the scientific nature of their original purpose. In defining these two spaces of discourse, Krauss describes the creation of a dialogue between the depictions of space within these landscape images and their presentation. Mimicking the “horizontal extension of the wall,” serial images of landscape hung sequentially implied a “synonymy of landscape and wall,” conflating the space of exhibition with the space imagined in the image. This spatiality is contrasted with the accumulation of stereographic images within the filing cabinet, which creates a “compound representation of geographic space,” where there is the “possibility of storing and cross-referencing bits of information and of collating them through the particular grid of a system of

113 Tagg 30. The ‘they’ Tagg refers to here are Gower, Jast and Topley, in their discussion of the structure of the archive.
114 Tagg 27-28.
116 Krauss 312.
117 Krauss 315
knowledge.” Placing the artistic image of the exhibit against the scientific image of the archive, Krauss explains that “one composes an image of geographic order; the other represents the space of an autonomous Art…constituted by aesthetic discourse.”

Tagg and Krauss’ analysis of the space of the archive arouses questions concerning the efficiency of its form, and the characteristics inherent to the archive that places it in a situation of potential unmeaning. Tagg explains that “the functioning of the archive – to wit, the signification of the evidential document and the computation of the archiving system – is always both excessive and inadequate in relation to itself: The instrumentalized record is simultaneously to big and too small for its discursive frame, saying less than is wished and more than is wanted.” This problematic of space and information, and the simultaneously excessive and inadequate archive relate back to my practice in terms of the archival structures I choose to use in my work. My projects fit into the aesthetic space of discourse elaborated by Krauss in her text: the arrangement of images on the surface of the wall, either chronologically or sequentially, or in an order chosen at random, conflates not only the image of landscape with that of the wall, but consolidates the represented landscapes within the decorative order of the wallpaper. In addition, I would argue that this format subverts the potentially ‘useless’ aspects of the archive’s structure. The format of the filing cabinet, or online database, makes it almost impossible to access its information either due to physical inability or a lack of desire due to constraints in practicality. My use of the wallpaper’s surface as an archival space is reflective of my desire to make a subject wholly apparent, enabling the perception of landscape through the proliferation of pattern and image over a large surface, which in turn activates a particular type of intense attention in the viewer.

This diffusion of the archival space over planar surface is reflected in text work of Fiona Banner (see Figures 37 and 38). The artist is known for her in toto transcriptions of films such as Lawrence of Arabia, Top Gun, and Apocalypse Now. While watching a film, Banner transcribes everything that happens on screen: the precise details of the landscape, the minute facial expressions and movements of the actors, and their dialogue, effectively creating a textual archive of the cinematic space.

118 Krauss 315.
119 Krauss 315.
120 Tagg 32.
Figure 37. Fiona Banner, *Apocalypse Now*, drawing on paper, 1997

Figure 38. Fiona Banner, *Black Hawk Down*, installation, 2010
The transcriptions are configured as large-scale paper works, as wall drawings, or as bookworks, as is the case in her 1997 project *The Nam*, a transcription of six Vietnam War films, *Full Metal Jacket, The Deer Hunter, Hamburger Hill, Platoon, Apocalypse Now,* and *Born on the Fourth of July*. In her discussion of Banner’s drawings, Linda Ruth Williams describes an activation of the gaze similar to reverie or daydreaming, generated by “letters and words (that) melt into the grey-on-white minute patterning of the whole.”[121] The wandering gaze activates a sense of rapt attention; the viewer’s eyes run along the words, turning the textual archive into a living, active space of recognition and unfamiliarity, where the eye, and thus the viewer, bounce between the identification of discrete moments in the film and the visual static created by the proliferation of text on surface. Williams describes this at once active and tedious task of viewing: “Bored, perhaps, you will stand back, and then significance will melt again into image, and you will slip, and fall, somewhere between reader and viewer, viewer and spectator. Book becomes picture, and back again. Banner presents her viewers with the impossibility as well as the possibility of reading.”[122] By conflating the totalizing, expansive space of the wall with the narrative of the technological screen, Banner’s work proposes the exhaustive surface-as-archive as a potential answer to Crary’s question regarding the role of attentive reverie in the face of imposing screen technologies.

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Concluding Remarks

My work addresses several concerns regarding the inherent affinity between landscape and vision. Throughout this paper, I have examined how our perception of nature is mediated through the flat surfaces present in our everyday lives, most notably, the surface of the technological screen, the image or document of landscape, and the decorated surfaces of the interior. When thinking about landscape, we often resort to a traditional conception of its image; the perfectly framed view of the postcard, or the picturesque paintings and sublime photographs that embody late-eighteenth and nineteenth century landscape conventions. Instead, I am interested in representing landscape as a space of both active perception and interaction, by instilling a sense of movement (both visually and chronologically) to representations of landscape as they exist on flat, two-dimensional surfaces.

I use specific visual strategies in order to stimulate and maintain a two-sided stream of attention in the viewer. First, a kind wandering gaze is activated through the use of repeated patterning and the all-over arrangement of quasi-decorative elements, simultaneously leading the viewer’s eye through these spaces in a chronological manner and opening up space for mental reverie. Secondly, certain works employ visual strategies that engage in a simultaneous hiding and revealing of the image. The use of transparent patterns and various incarnations of the stereogram force the view into a state of prolonged visual attention, which they must work through to ‘see the landscape’. While artists such as Vaughn Bell have sought a solution to the problematic lack of nature in our lives through the creation of landscape ‘in-the-real,’ I am more interested in our encounter with the representation of landscape and its translation on the screen or the paper’s surface, because that is often our most common experience it.

My treatment of the decorative in my work allows me to recast the relationship between ornamentation and landscape by creating a sort of inverse logic. As opposed to using isolated units of the natural in order to effect an ornamentation of space, the decorative is used to bring the focus back onto the space of landscape; landscapes that we encounter on a daily basis, landscapes that are tangible, even if it is only through our relationship with their represented images.
This consideration of the role of the decorative in my work brings me to the question of pleasure; the pleasure of looking, and the particular pleasure of looking at landscape. Dianne Harris and D. Fairchild Ruggles assert that while “landscape historians…remain reluctant to engage visual desire”\textsuperscript{123} in their consideration of landscape, this visual pleasure is particularly important:

The pleasurable aspects of looking at the landscape deserve greater attention. Landscapes are visually and intellectually compelling not just because they are complex and replete with visual subtleties, but also because they are in many cases quite beautiful. When not conventionally so, they are at least aesthetically intriguing, and there is pleasure to be gleaned in the visual examination of a complex setting or its representations.\textsuperscript{124}

For the authors, “the very power of vision to provide pleasure is another dimension of its strength as a toll for enforcing dominant cultural constructs,”\textsuperscript{125} however, they avow that the “pleasure of viewing can be acknowledged without allowing it to limit the analytical format and prevent alternative landscape narratives from emerging.”\textsuperscript{126} In my work, it is visual pleasure, and its connection to the decorative, the wandering gaze and perceptual focus, that allows landscape to appear in forms distinctive from their ordinary on-screen counterparts. Visual attention and pleasure thereby create a space where the viewer can reconsider monotonous, everyday representations of landscape from the standpoint of the spectacular and the extraordinary.

\textsuperscript{123} Harris and Ruggles 21.
\textsuperscript{124} Harris and Ruggles 21.
\textsuperscript{125} Harris and Ruggles 21.
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