

**THE BEE WHO  
FORGOT THE HONEY**

curated by  
Aurélien Le Genissel

# Things we'll never own

*The bee who forgot the honey* aims to offer a new approach to the concept of landscape starting from a perspective that wishes to go beyond the simple question of representation, environment or nature. Through a fragmentary, complementary and delocalised vision, this proposal presents different ramifications and themes spread through different venues of the city like Casa Vicens –with David Claerbout-, Reial Cercle Artístic -Hans op De Beeck-, Museu Frederic Marès –with Jennifer Douzenel-, Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona –Michael Sailstorfer and Emilio Vavarella-, and Museu d’Història de Catalunya –with the collective exhibition *Linies de fuga*, a reflection more focused on the historical-political and social dimension of the concept of landscape.

The exhibition starts from this idea of “inappropriable”, developed by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben in his latest book *Creation and Anarchy. The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism*, in order to rethink the metaphysical idea of a world-at-hand (Vorhandenheit) and transparent to the knowledge of mankind. Through a critique of the very status of the image - its ontological reality and its symbolic function -, the subversion of the comforting story of Progress or the return to a more existential and phenomenological temporality, the artists on display propose a new, more spiritual, humble or sensorial way to *be-in-the-world*, that is to say to enter into a relationship with the landscape, understood as that natural environment that man has often considered as a backdrop or a deeply anthropocentric scene.

In this case the landscape, historically represented as an external setting by the history of art, becomes the paradigmatic space where are confronted issues such as interiority/externality, the consumption of natural goods or our way of projecting our fantasies and our memory. The exhibition is the first act of a wider reflection that aims to analyse the concept of use -of things, of the world, of ourselves- and *désœuvrement*, a central notion in our contemporary condition, according to Agamben.

Experts say that the idea of landscape did not exist in the Middle Ages. The word was used for the first time in 1530 in some notes where Marcantonio Michiel described Giorgione’s *The Tempest*, which was later considered to be the first painting of a landscape. Until then, paintings referred to human or divine beings serving a narrative logic of great storytelling or ancestral myths, instead of

<sup>1</sup>Gombrich, Ernst. *La théorie artistique de la Renaissance et l’Art du paysage* in La Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1953

being a simple naturalistic observation. Perspective, the invention of the printing press and Reformation's iconographical debates transformed the way of seeing nature to the point that "we would almost be tempted to overthrow the formula and affirm the anteriority of landscape painting on the feeling of the landscape itself", as Ernst Gombrich says in a famous boutade<sup>1</sup>. From there to affirm that the landscape is "an invention", there is only one step, which Anne Cauquelin takes without hesitation in her reference<sup>2</sup> book.

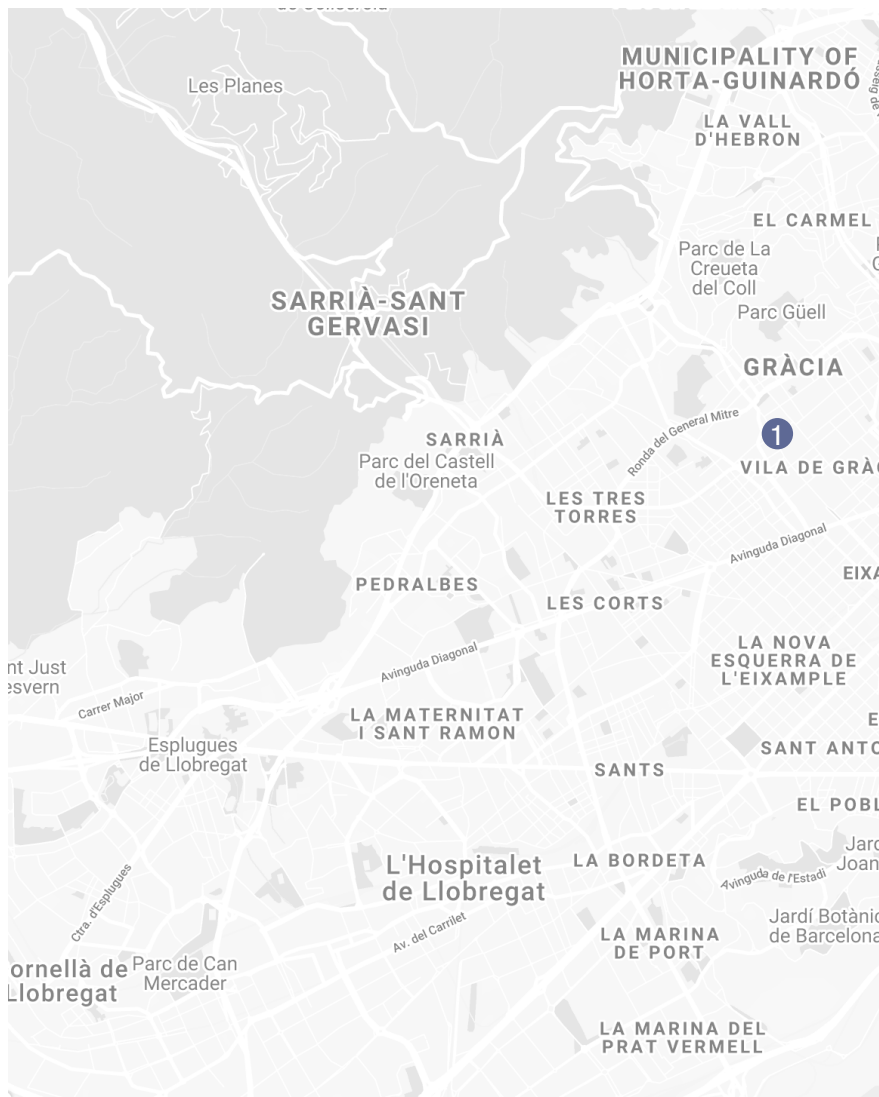
Anyways, it seems undeniable that the appearance of the landscape is contemporary - and intimately connected - with the emergence of a Modernity in which nature is at men's service, culture tends to dominate the environment and the rational subject lives apart from an external world that is perceived as distant and autonomous. Thereby, there are many invisible and latent problems hidden behind this construction of landscape that the Renaissance conceived- and the Enlightenment then consolidated.

Agamben reflects on the idea of use value, a concept defended, among others, in the Middle Ages by Franciscan monks, to fight against the (pre) capitalist idea of private property that was being built at that time. However, says Agamben relying on a Walter Benjamin's fragment, this "poor" relationship to the world, as described by Martin Heidegger, should not be understood simply as an act of renouncing to legal ownership - hence its articulation with capitalism - but rather as a fundamental relationship with what he calls the "inappropriable".

What then is the inappropriable then? Agamben uses three examples: body, language and landscape. In the latter case, the landscape -as paradigm of the outside world- appears as what we can't acquire. And that whether in the economic, aesthetic, sentimental, moral or visual sense. Landscape is no longer a scenario or a horizon to be explored, a whole different to man or a reserve of assets to exploit, but a symbol of the ontological significance of a state of the world (and of the being).

A world that is no longer "at our disposal" but, on the contrary, inaccessible and untouchable, beyond the realm of use and utility in which we tend to categorize everything in our age of consumption and obsolescence.

<sup>2</sup>Cauquelin, Anne. *L'invention du paysage*, Plon, Paris. 1989



### 1. Casa Vicens

12-24 November 2019  
 Carrer de les Carolines, 20,  
 08012, Barcelona  
 Monday, 10:00 to 15:00h.  
 From Tuesday to Sunday,  
 10:00-19:00.

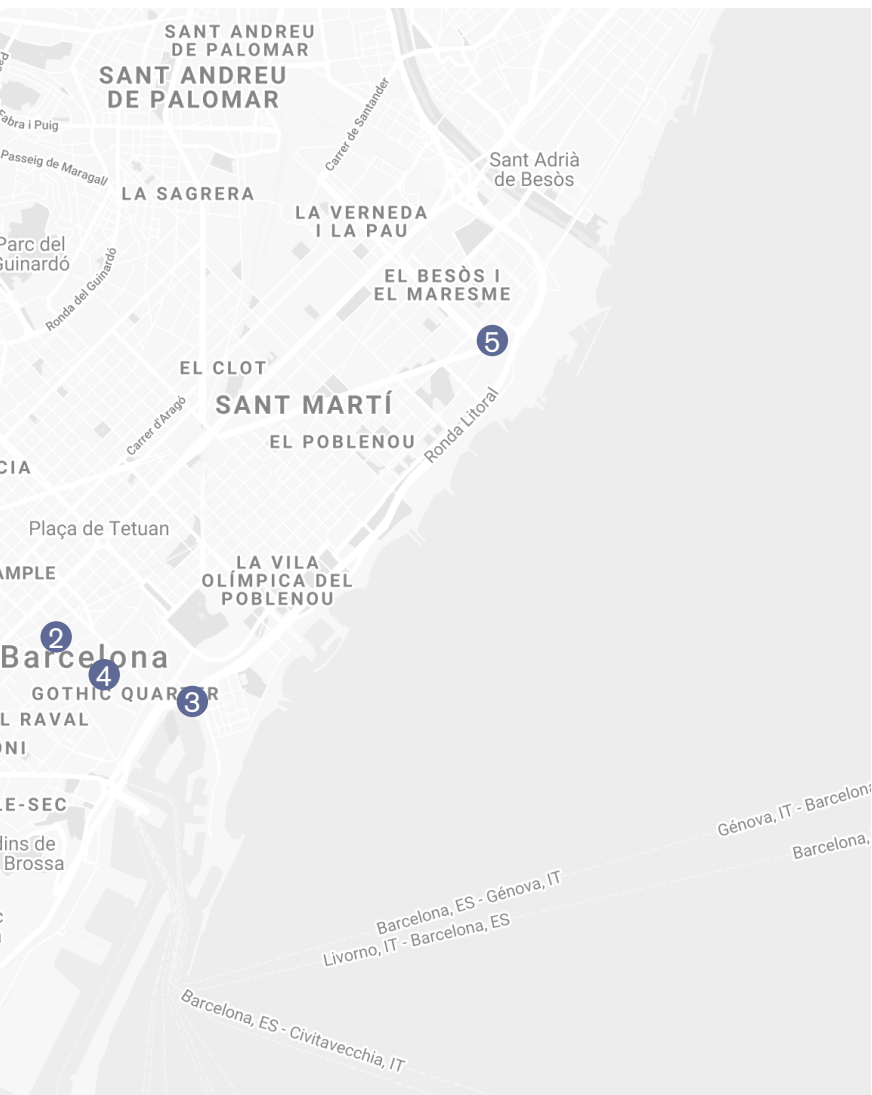
### 2. Reial Cercle Artístic

12-24 November 2019  
 Carrer dels Arcs, 5, 08002  
 Barcelona  
 De 10.00 a 13.00 i de 15.00  
 a 19.00

### 3. Museu d'Història de Catalunya

12 November  
 Plaça de Pau V  
 Barcelona  
 From Tuesday  
 10.00 a 19.00  
 Wednesday, de  
 Sundays and F  
 a 14.30

Casa Vicens<sup>1</sup>: David Claerbout Reial Cercle artístic<sup>2</sup>: Hans Op de Beek Mu  
 Arraiano, Serafin Álvarez, Gelare Khoshgozaran, Marcin Liminowicz, Justin Ba  
 Santamaría. Museu Frederic Marès<sup>4</sup>: Jennifer Douzenel Museu Ciències Natu



## Història de

January 26th  
Vila, 3, 08039

to Saturday,

10.00 a 20.00  
Festives, 10.00

## 4. Museu Frederic Marès

12-24 de November  
Plaça Sant Iu, 5, 08002  
Barcelona

From Tuesday to Saturday,  
from 10:00 to 19:00h.

Sundays and Festives  
from 11:00 to 20:00h.

Mondays: Closed except  
Festives

## 5. Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona

12-24 November 2019  
Parc del Fòrum

Plaça Leonardo da Vinci, 4-5  
08019 Barcelona

Tuesday to Friday from 10.00  
to 18.00

Saturday from 10.00 to 19.00  
Sundays and Festives  
from 11:00 to 20:00h.

Museu Historia Catalunya<sup>3</sup>: Guido van der Werve, Taus Makhacheva, Paulo  
arton& Mark Fisher, Saïd Afifi, Jon Rafman, Ariane Loze, Mit Borràs i Mario  
als<sup>5</sup>: Michael Sailstorfer i Emilio Vavarella



## David Claerbout

### *The Pure Necessity*

2016, 50'

Casa Vicens

*The pure necessity* is based on David Claerbout's idea of returning their original behavior to the animals in *The Jungle Book*. This allows the Belgian artist to deconstruct the anthropocentric dimension of Disney's story while offering a reflection on traditional narrative mechanisms. The work plays with the idea of cause and effect, plot and action, creating a 50- minute film that seems suspended in time, in a kind of contemplative limbo in which the expectations of the viewer are always denied or postponed. Like Claerbout's other works, *The Pure Necessity* subverts the classic relationship -established by painting- between content and form to criticize the simplifying reduction of the jungle and its inhabitants to a setting and sidekicks for its human protagonist.



The landscape is no longer presented as a functional context, full of signs whose meaning is given by human rationality, but as an open world in which events overcome the simple subject/object approach, posing an existential openness -of that which cannot be grasped- that resonates throughout *The bee who forgot the honey*, the larger exhibition that includes this installation at Casa Vicens. Over a period of 3 years, David Claerbout and a team of professional artists painstakingly redrew the frames of the original movie by hand, one by one, and then assembled them to create an entirely new, lifeless animation, which stands in raw contrast to the lively and rhythmical original. Now devoid of narrative, the animals move amidst the jungle as if the story were of their own making.



**Hans Op de Beeck**

*Staging Silence (3)*

2019, 44'

Reial Cercle Artístic

*Staging Silence (3)* is the third and final instalment in a series of autonomous art films by Hans Op de Beeck, all of which have been directed according to the same principles. Two pairs of anonymous hands construct and deconstruct fictional interiors and landscapes on a mini film set of just three square meters in size. These anonymous hands, like a double Deus ex Machina of sorts, decide on the life and death, growth and blossoming or decay of the places that are conjured up. It is a reflexion on how landscape, and nature in general, has been seen as a metaphysical object by mankind, a world-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*)





as Heidegger calls it, and the way in which man 'humanises' open space in an attempt to create meaning, identity and control. Intimate surroundings become open landscapes in a visual journey through depopulated, enigmatic and often melancholic territories, which are built up and taken down before the eye of the camera. This theatre of landscape acquires its full meaning against the backdrop of the magnificent stage of the Reial Cercle Artistic, in a sort of ironic and beautiful *mise en abyme*. The installation is part of the exhibition *The bee who forgot the honey*.

# Línies de fuga

As part of the broader and delocalized proposal *The bee who forgot the honey*, the Museu d'Història de Catalunya presents the collective exhibition *Línies de fuga*, a reflection that focused on the historical-political and social dimension of the concept of landscape, understood in this case as a common imaginary, an element that at the same time builds us and that we build as a society and as a citizen. Landscape turns here into the reflection of our incomplete condition whether it is symbolizing our preconceived ideas -as in Taus Makhacheva's humorous videos-, our personal memories - Jon Rafman's work- or historical and environmental issues -for example Guido van der Werve or Gelare Khoshgozaran.

Like a line of escape, always visible but unattainable - ideal but impossible -, landscape is presented in these works as what we destroy but we must protect, what we seek but we can never find, that obstacle that limits us but that, from time to time, without knowing very well why, can be surpassed. Making us feel like the character that moves a titanic rock in Makhacheva's *Walk*, an ironic reference to our condition as modern Sisyphus.

An idea that Guido van der Werve and Marcin Liminowicz recover, with transcendence and dramatism, in an antagonistic and complementary vision, in their two fascinating and revealing videos, in which the destructive hand of men is complemented by its fragility, opening a discussion on human utility, its scale and the dangers that await us. All these questions are then put in perspective, either in a symbolic or real way, in a curious reference to the idea of perspective as a perfect vision of

# S ga

reality that was so important in construction of the idea of landscape. The way in which men look at the landscape - and represent it - is a reflection of the hermeneutical and aesthetic paradigm of each age, from the invention of the Renaissance perspective to virtual reality or the Impressionist landscapes. "They say, or at least so they told me, that things look better from the top of a hill", explains the character of Inner Landscape, Ariane Loze's video, recalling the position of domination in which man has always stands in front of nature. Something we also see in Mario Santamaría's *Cloudplexity*, a compilation of drawings of Internet's "cloud", as if it were essential to draw or show something in order to own it. But how do you own the virtual or the transcendent?

The same goes for Paulo Arraiano's and Mit Borrás' videos that move away from that modernist idea in which nature is at the service of men, culture tends to dominate its environment and the rational subject lives apart from an outside-independent world that is perceived as distant and autonomous. There is a blind spot, a black hole - a vanishing point? - that turns the landscape into something transcendental, in which we project our interiority and seek a lost sense, whether is through an image of our loved one - Rafman - the memories of our childhood's land - Khoshgozaran- or an existential etymology, as Saïd Afifi calls it. In the end, maybe Serafín Alvarez is the one who's right -with his collection of imaginary and imagined landscapes- and, deep down, to look at a landscape is nothing more than looking into "another world," as the title says. Maybe it's a lost world - Mark Fisher & Justin Barton's sound environment- or maybe it's a desire yet to come.



## Guido van der Werve

*Nummer acht, everything is going to be alright*

2007, 10'10"

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

A frozen sea with nothing on the horizon, except for a large ship that is forcing its way through the ice. A tiny figure is walking a few metres ahead of this icebreaker, as if it has to lead the way. A more monumental image could hardly be imagined. Van der Werve, wearing an ordinary coat that hangs loosely around his body as if he has just left his house, has ventured onto thin ice. The distance between his footsteps on the ice and the channel opening up behind him is sometimes so slight that it makes you hold your breath. But looking behind him could be fatal. The sight of that colossus of a ship and the knowledge that it could swallow him up at any moment could suddenly make his knees go weak. Reality, with all its disasters and terrifying tricks, could be breathing down his neck. Walking on imperturbably is his only chance, and as long as he keeps up his pace, everything is going to be alright.



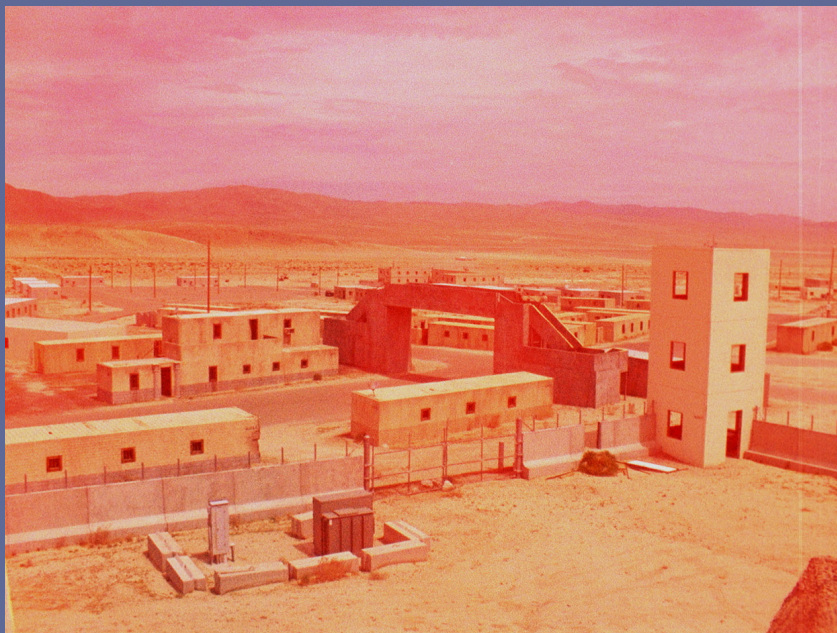
**Ariane loze**

*Inner Landscape*

2018, 7'

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

*“Inner Landscape* seeks to fill up the void opened with *Impotence*. This video somehow reverses the previous one: it is shot in an open landscape, with a chilly breeze and a clear sky; the characters wear heavy coats and winter caps or fur hats. Instead of wondering and brooding, they seem to be seeking a path. They walk. The key sentence is the ever-repeated program of all revolutions, though extended from humans to Life on Earth : “Nothing of what lives will ever again be subjected to the will, the desire, the hunger of another living being”. The enemy is identified, he is familiar: it is domination, under all its forms and under all its hypostases. Power is evil, a well known topos of what used to be called, in the 1980s, the « theology of liberation ». *Abstract of The Spirit of the Eye* by F. Donini Ferretti



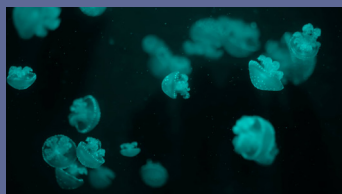
## Gelare Khoshgozaran

### *Medina Wasl: Connecting Town*

2018, 31'

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

*Medina Wasl: Connecting Town* glances at the history of orientalist traditions, landscapes and imagination, as it has developed and persisted over time in the California Mojave desert, and as the lineage of today's militarization of the Middle East. The introduction of date palm to the US around 1902, led to the Indio Date Festivals of the 1940s-1980s. Only a short drive from Indio are several simulacra of Middle Eastern towns at U.S. military training centers. The film studies the role and history of fiction and speculation in the constructs of the Middle East, and the continued violence enacted through conflating languages, landscapes, cultures and geographical territories in relation to the War on Terror. *Medina Wasl: Connecting Town* was shot in the small towns of Mecca and Thermal, CA, as well as US the Fort Irwin National Military Training Center or "The Box." Also known as "Little Afghanistan" or "Medina Wasl," The Box houses multiple Middle Eastern combat towns, providing simulated battlefields in a climate resembling that of Iraq's.



## Paulo Arraiano

*As, Always Just a Matter Of Perspective & Sensorial Divinities*

2017, x' & 2019, 5'43"

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

"*Sensorial Divinities* functions as an apparatus for a new spirituality. (...) During five minutes images of nature and technology are merging, while a voice recites what unconsciously resembles a pre-paradigm change mass. (...) When thinking about the Anthropocene effects - extinction, possible humanity relocation to never before habitable areas of the world - one must wonder how does change affect the environment and how does the environment affect human essence. The artist plays on the field between reality and the digital as a means to archive what once was and may not be, resulting in a dystopian view of post-humanism or trans-humanism [as seen in the second work presented, *As, Always Just a Matter Of Perspective*]. Moreover, Arraiano questions what is sensorial today and how are our senses activated, as we must assume that how we communicate has shifted into a visual paradigm, hence our connection to nature is being mediated by images". Abstract from the text "*Sensorial Divinities*" by Catarina Vaz (Art Research Map)



## Mit Borrás

### *Neo Serenity*

2019, 8'40"

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

*Neo Serenity* is an expanded 8.40 minutes meditation video by A Harmony Corp ®. 2019, an international corporation dedicated to the physical and emotional well-being. A space for relaxation inspired by traditional transcendental meditation and advanced techniques. A center of studies for the recovery of sensory stimulation and wellness. A video that offers a technological approach to the concept of nature and landscape, proposing a reflection on the role of new technologies in our way of looking at the world and opens perspectives on problems related to transhumanism.





## Said Afifi

### *Etymology*

2017, 15'56"

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

*Etymology* is a hybrid and experimental film that aims to create an imaginary link between mental and other physical spaces, namely abandoned ruins Gallo-Roman, it is a real invitation to the contemplation of emptiness and silence, he is based mainly on the major experiences of urbanism and architecture of the sixties and seventies in, namely the Japanese metabolism or the French utopians, citing among others Claude Parent, Paul Virilio or the Italian architect Carlos Scarpa. A philosophical reflexion on landscape that reminds us that "something is missing to the consistency of the world", as the work explains.



## John Rafman

### *You, the World and I*

2010, 06'24"

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

When Orpheus' beloved Eurydice dies, he cajoles his way into the underworld with his musical charms and his lyre. Wanting her but not her shade, he cannot forbear looking back to physically see her and so loses her forever. In this modern day Orphean tale, an anonymous narrator also desperately searches for a lost love. Rather than the charms of the lyre, contemporary technological tools, Google Street View and Google Earth, beckon as the pathway for our narrator to regain memories and recapture traces of his lost love. In the film, they are as captivating and enthralling as charming as any lyre in retrieving the other: at first they might seem an open retort to critics of new technology who bemoan the lack of the tangible presence of the other in our interactions on the Internet. This technological infinite landscape, as the classical one, become the playground of an emotional and existential quest.



## Marcin Liminowicz

*In landscape Mode*

2018 7'17"

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

When taking a photo, do we influence the natural environment? Raw video registration outstretches a view on short cruise to the ice-covered northern part of Bay of Bothnia. This natural phenomena can be seen as meaningful and unique for times overtaken by global warming. Thick layer of ice cracks under heavy body of a ship as the sun slowly rises. What we investigate directly is an icebreaker trip-tourist attraction. Taking on a role of participant, author observes the active-passive relation between other tourists and surrounding they are immersed into. Steady, endless space stays in contradiction to the constantly moving boat which finally moors in "the middle" of the sea. At this point we can notice change in humans position. From tourists experiencing landscape through smartphone lenses they mutate into innocent invaders of an uncharted, empty land. A work that can be seeing as a dialogue -or the "other point" of view- of Guido van de Werve's *Numer acht, (everything is going to be alright)*.

09/09/2014 16:28:13  
GLOBAL



## Taus Makhacheva

*Walk - Endeavour - Untitled*

2010, 3'01" - 2010, 2'15" - 2010, 9'

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

This three videos made by Taus Makhacheva are presented as an arbitrary and subjective triptych in which each one of the works independently offering an absurd and entertaining vision, but, at the same time, deep and significant, of our relationship with him landscape. In *Untitled* we see how an anonymous and banal woman manages to move a giant rock in a humorous and unrealistic scene that deconstruct the classical point of view of a nature always indomitable and transcendent. In *Walk*, a distant figure - Taus herself - walks along the edge of the abyss of a Dagestan's mountain. Hardly visible, the figure dissolves in background, forcing us to peer in search for the human presence against the backdrop of the indifferent nature. There is no possible contact between the observer and the walker, in a scene that refers to the history of art and the way some old masters - like the Hudson School- have use the concept of landscape. In *Endeavour*, again, a static mountain landscape is animated by a small human figure, barely noticeable, which attempts to move an enormous rock that seems as unstable as unmovable. For 9 minutes, the character strives in an action as absurd as necessary, showing the immensity of what is natural and the ambiguous presence of men in this context.



## Mario Santamaría

### *Cloudplexity*

2019

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

How do we represent a landscape that does not exist? Or a landscape that exists everywhere, in a different place, whose fragile virtual reality has become, today, the most real we can in fact experience.

This is the question that is made by the artist Mario Santamaría whose work *Cloudplexity* presents a series of representations of Internet's "cloud", taken from the US Patent Database.

An ironic and profound approach to the landscape of the digital world that could not be missed in an exhibition that aims to reflect on the world around us. One way to demonstrate also that, although there only exists as data, links, pages and images, man uses the concept of landscape to represent an imaginary universe.

A cloud, a heaven that is also intangible, inappreciable but profoundly representative of the current socio-economic system, trying to possess it through the concept of a patent.

A perfect echo to that concept of "inappropriate"; - by Giorgio Agamben - who nourishes the exhibition *The beewho forgot the honey*.

Mark Fisher & Justin Barton  
*On Vanishing Land*



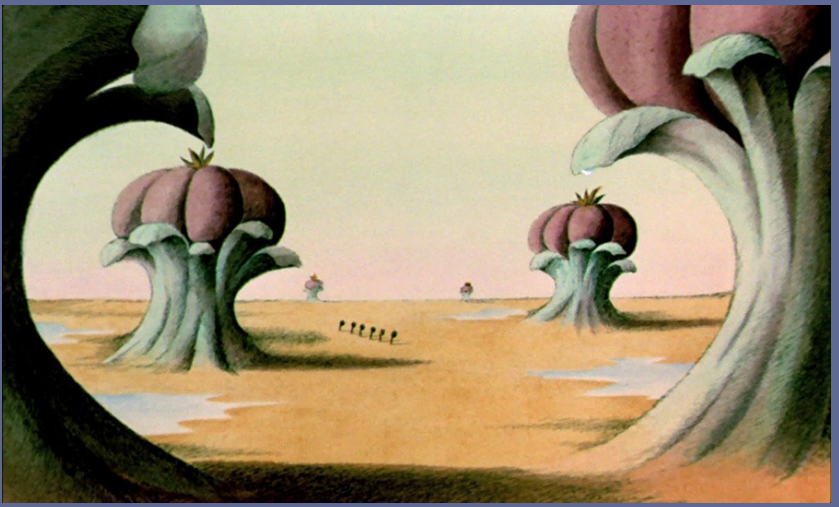
## Justin Barton & Mark Fisher

*On Vanishing Land, Vinyl*

2019

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

*On Vanishing Land* is an audio-essay by the sound-artist Justin Barton and the theorist of 'hauntology', Mark Fisher. This sound piece evokes a walk along the Suffolk coastline in 2006, from Felixstowe container port ("a nerve ganglion of capitalism") to the Anglo-Saxon burial ground at Sutton Hoo. A walk under immense skies, through zones of deep time and within sunlit, liminal terrains, into the eerie. *On Vanishing Land* is about following the lines of terrains and dreams. It is about a micropolitics of escape, of disappearance. In the work "washes of unquiet ambient sound accompany voices relaying the features seen by the pair (referred to only as 'they'), the transitions in the landscape they record, and the cultural resonances they note", as Adam Harper explains in *Frieze*.



## Serafín Álvarez

### *Landscapes from another .world*

2015

Museu d'Història de Catalunya

Serafín Álvarez's work focuses on how concepts associated with liminality, non-human otherness, the journey into the unknown and changes in the perception of reality are represented in contemporary audiovisual media such as cinema and video games.

*Landscapes from another .world* is a repository of visual references for *Umbral*, an undergoing artistic project. The images it contains depict fictitious landscapes. Most of them are snapshots taken from science fiction films, although a few are from non science fiction films and other media like TV series and video games. They have been gathered as part of an artistic research project about places of otherness in fiction.



## Jennifer Douzenel

*Monarques,*

2016, 50'

Museu Frederic Marès

Jennifer Douzenel conceives her videos as pictures that are inscribed in the continuity of the pictorial tradition and where temporality is embodied as a plastic element. Within the framework of the multiple exhibition *The bee who forgot the honey*, the young French artist presents *Monarques*, a work in which stands out, as in many of her other videos, the importance of the fixed plane, the framing and a visual texture full of an impressionistic phenomenology.





A poetic 4-minute work whose circular structure captures what Douzenel calls “ephemeral moments of grace”, suspending the narration and the action to focus on what is around, the pure sense of composition and an image that transcends the simple projection frame. In the silent, intimate and almost spiritual context of the arches of the Museu Frederic Marès, the work invites to a contemplation of the useless, which is no more, deep down, than the reflection of the complex arbitrariness of existence.



## Emilio Vavarella

### *Animal Cinema*

2016, 50'

Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona

The Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona presents *Antiherbst*, by Michael Stailstofer, and *Animal Cinema* by Emilio Vavarella, as part of the delocalized The bee who forgot the honey exhibition, which can be visited in several locations around the city. Both videos, which have been temporarily integrated into the permanent collection of the center, reflect on the limits of an anthropocentric approach to the landscape, questioning the way in which men have traditionally related to it, often putting it away or using it as a beautiful backdrop or a place to be colonized or invaded. In *Antiherbst*, Sailstorfer collect the leaves that fall from a tree in autumn to paint them green again and return them to their original place. The result is an ironic trompe-l'oeil in which the leaves change, move



**Michael Sailstorfer**

*Antiherbst*

2016, 50'

Museu de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona

and seem increasingly unreal and artificial, but, in contrast to the trees in the background, do not fall to the ground. A reflection on the footprint, the responsibility of men in the landscape and, in general, in the idea of caring for nature.

On the other hand, antagonistically, *Animal Cinema* - made up from fragments of YouTube videos in which you can see animals manipulating a camera - proposes a completely different relationship to the environment, much more fusional and direct, based on the famous analyses by German biologist Jakob Johann von Uexküll whose notion of *Umwelt* (the world of the perception of animals in relation to their environment) has influenced many contemporary thinkers on issues of ecology or sustainability.

**LA VANGUARDIA**

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Fundació



**MUSEU  
FREDERIC  
MARÈS**



A project by LOOP Festival Barcelona 2019

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