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## See and Seen

### Seeing Landscape through Artistic Practice

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*See and Seen*

*Seeing Landscape through Artistic Practice*

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# *Table of Contents*

<i>Abstract</i>	.....	<i>p. 4</i>
<i>Roadmap</i>	.....	<i>p. 5</i>
<i>Preface</i>	.....	<i>p. 8</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	.....	<i>p. 9</i>
<i>Seeing Landscape through Artistic Practice</i>	.....	<i>p. 11</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	.....	<i>p. 12</i>
<i>Scene One</i>	.....	<i>p. 15</i>
<i>Scene Two</i>	.....	<i>p. 33</i>
<i>Scene Three</i>	.....	<i>p. 40</i>
<i>Scene Four</i>	.....	<i>p. 55</i>
<i>Scene Five</i>	.....	<i>p. 64</i>
<i>The Sun</i>	.....	<i>p. 69</i>
<i>Sources</i>	.....	<i>p. 72</i>
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	.....	<i>p. 77</i>

## *Abstract*

The point of departure for *See and Seen* (text, website and exhibition) is the conventions of the Ideal Landscapes painted in Rome during the 17th century by artists such as Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin. In 18th century England this translated into a particular gaze that became the fashion for how, and the parameters within which, the landscape was to be seen and that subsequently gave rise to landscaped parks, poetry and painting, and consequently had a significant role in shaping theories of the Picturesque. These ideas gathered currency outside Europe partly through the pathways opened by British colonialism, which still to a certain extent determine the Western notion of landscape and landscape architecture. This is part of a narrative relating to the popularity of landscape as a subject, that is also embedded in and produced by the discipline of art history and a model that I worked with in my art practice from the beginning of the 1990s.

In *See and Seen*, the focus is on studies of landscape and landscape painting, for example through copying a painting by Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41, and photographing a real view of an existing historical landscape seen from the United States Military Academy at West Point, in the Hudson Valley, New York. My method is to research the different historical accounts and the contexts of the representations of these landscapes. I am not so much interested in the accumulation of knowledge but in how I can put it to work in general to reproduce the landscapes through various artistic techniques and strategies. I adopt different roles when I approach the landscapes through mimicry – the copyist, the tourist and the art historian – used in *See and Seen* as routines for seeing.

What are the implications for what is becoming a new kind of viewer of landscape today, and how could this be addressed in my work? These are two of the issues my research aims to open up. My way of working is a hybrid form that embraces both academic methods and art practice. I have approached my research through art practice and my art practice through research, with the understanding that in the process the material will undergo further changes. In *See and Seen* I find myself seeing my own art practice from the inside.

## *Road map*

This roadmap summarises projects, events and shows as well as conversations and seminars which have all been important to me in order to formulate my ideas and visions in thinking about seeing landscape and painting.

From May 2003 to September 2006, I painted an ‘after-image’ after Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. This work is at the core of both my text and visual presentation of *See and Seen*. Painting, copying, thinking, writing and reading in relation to this painting by Claude have formed an art practice important for this research. This work was shown for the first time at Nationalmuseum, in the group show *True & False*, Stockholm, February 26th - May 26th, 2004.

The next significant project is an installation of two field scopes, May 30th - June 14th, 2003, in the local art museum at the Palace of Culture in Iasi, Romania. The title of this work is *City of Iasi 1842 (Back to the Future)* and it was made for *Periferic 6 – Prophetic Corners*. This was the first work where I used field scopes as looking devices for the viewer to use in a museum context. The project made me more aware of the bodily experience of seeing which later on came to be important for my research.

From June 2003 to November 2005 the project *View*, two public binoculars fitted with coloured filters to mimic the 18th century instrument, the Claude Glass, to look at the landscape area around United States Military Academy at West Point, were installed in the Hudson Valley, New York State, US. *View* helped me to visualise the relationship between thinking about history, politics, landscape painting, and the mimicking act of taking on the routine as the tourist searching for the Picturesque. The public work of *View* along with a book was produced by Minetta Brook, New York, US. As part of this project I made a series of photographs from West Point that became part of *See and Seen*.

From the beginning of 2002 until the end of 2004 I was part of a group of curators, writers and artists; the collective was entitled the “Sputniks”. We were connected to Kunstverein München, Munich, Germany, during Maria Lind’s directorship. As a Sputnik, one was invited to follow and comment on the programme of the curatorial team during these years, as well as to do a project for the institution. I did a partly performative project that lasted for two days only, November 13th – 14th, 2004. The title was *Reflections of Space*, and here I could connect three spaces (the Residence Museum, the Diana Temple in the Hofgarten with

Kunstverein München's lobby) with experience to see painting in space and relate this to thoughts on the conditions of space itself. This project and what I learnt from it became very important for finding different forms of display, and experimenting with media for my next project, *Grand Tour*.

*Grand Tour* is an ongoing exhibition project that started in 1997 as part of the group exhibition *Deposition* on the occasion of the Venice Biennial. It was re-thought and extensively built out in 2005 in a completely new form at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm, and Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee, Scotland. The exhibition also travelled to Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, Sweden and Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, Liechtenstein. In relation to this somewhat retrospective exhibition, I found a way to work with my material as an archive and, for every new venue, produce new work related to the act of looking at landscape and paintings. This project is related to travelling, seeing landscape and cultural places of Italy, as well as dealing with a gay cruising gaze. Here I produced a system of how to show my works, a kind of architecture for seeing, that will be used for the *See and Seen* exhibition as well. Here my achievement in using space to show forms of seeing, as well as many of the last years projects, came together. I also started to work with text in a completely new way, producing artworks relating to the provenance of paintings as well as painters' biographies, two notions within the world of the museum. Some of these works are also part of *See and Seen*.

This body of e-mail conversations helped me to identify issues in seeing and being seen that were to prove important for my research.

Two e-mail conversations with professor Peggy Phelan: "On Returning to the Returns: An E-mail Conversation Between Peggy Phelan and Matts Leiderstam", *Matts Leiderstam Works 1996-2001*, Antenna, Stockholm; and "Taking in the View: An E-mail Conversation between Matts Leiderstam and Peggy Phelan", *View*, Minetta Brook, New York, 2005. The latter forms part of my research and it was maintained in relation to works included in *See and Seen*. I also mention the conversation we had in 2001, since in retrospective I see it as an important starting point for many of the thoughts that I have dealt with in my research.

Over a period of four months in 2002 I conducted an e-mail conversation with artist Philip Metz, published in *Fall 02 Drucksache Kunstverein München*, Kunstverein München, Munich, 2002; *Gesammelte Drucksachen/Collected Newsletter Kunstverein München*, Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2004, and on [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net). This conversation is part of

an artwork with the title *Selbstbildnis* (“self-portrait”), where Philip Metz, a student from the Art Academy in Munich, was sitting in front of a portrait in the Schack-Galerie in Munich every Sunday for one hour over four months. Philip Metz and I agreed that he would not shave during this time and that he would continuously communicate with me by e-mail regarding his experiences as a participant in the piece. The situation that formed this work was reminiscent of a scene from Alfred Hitchcock’s film *Vertigo* – a scene that I write about in my dissertation text.

I also mention e-mail conversations held during 2003-2004 with curator and art critic Erden Kosova and artist Serkan Özkaya, published by *Modern Talking*, Stockholm, 2004, and on [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net); Summer-Autumn 2005 with art historian and art critic Kristoffer Arvidsson, published on [www.grandtourexhibition.com](http://www.grandtourexhibition.com) and [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net); during 2005-2006 with museum director Dr. Friedemann Malsh, published on [www.grandtourexhibition.com](http://www.grandtourexhibition.com) and [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net); from 2003 - ongoing – with curator Mikael Ahlund, published on [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net) (in Swedish). All these conversations are important as they have provided me with the opportunity to try out ideas on other scholars and colleagues regarding seeing painting and landscape.

In these seminars and lectures I presented my research and discussed artistic practice in relation to research. For every time I formulated myself regarding these questions, it contributed to other insights and to taking my research onto another level of reflection.

Seminars and conferences: May 14th - May 18th, 2004, *Artistic Research*, the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki, Finland; October 27th, 2005, *The Artist as Historian*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; April 21st, 2006, *Art and Research*, Kalmars Konstmuseum, Kalmar, Sweden. Lectures in selection: March 16th, 2004, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Sweden; March 8th, 2005, University College Södertörns Högskola, Huddinge, Sweden; January 26th, 2006, doctoral programme, Valand School of Art and School of Photography and Film, Göteborg University, Gothenburg, Sweden.



## *Preface*

This text forms one part of the triangle that constitutes *See and Seen*, the others being an exhibition and a website. At the core of the text's structure are five scenes, each attempting to negotiate the complex mechanisms of seeing in relation to landscape and landscape painting. In each scene I describe or recall events that hold within them some profound significance for my art practice. These events are experiences that are held in an oblique relation to the development of my research into the art-historical and theoretical discourses on landscape; however, my main concern is not to explain the origins of 'landscape' through its history or its subject matter, but to 'mine' my sources to other ends. For example, these same sources are present in the exhibition to be held at Lunds Konsthall,<sup>1</sup> where they manifest a kind of archive through the presentation of books, catalogues, paintings and historic viewing instruments, while the website exploits its own archiving and viewing capacities to embrace the exhibition and this text.

It is important to register my process of writing as it is at the core of the development of this text. My writing grew initially out of diary notes, proposals for new works, as well as from the many thoughts and ideas exchanged and formulated in e-mail conversations. The reading and research process for me could only come after this. This process also carries with it the implications and complexities of translation: from one language to another or from the format of the fragments that constitute the 'private' discourse of a diary into a text. I am also aware that my reading and practical labour in creating the visual components have also been subjected to a complicated process of translation: from text to image, from painting to physical installation, then into virtual space – in a long and transformative process. What evolves from this for me is another kind of knowledge, one that is embodied in *See and Seen*.

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<sup>1</sup> The exhibition will be held from September 8th – 17th, 2006.

## *Acknowledgements*

My thanks are due firstly to professor Sarat C. Maharaj, who as my first supervisor has been an invaluable guide throughout my doctoral study and whose advice has kept me focused with stimulating and sensible suggestions, and of course Gertrud Sandqvist, the dean of Malmö Art Academy, who persuaded me to apply to the programme, and who has been an irreplaceable second supervisor. I would also like to thank Mikael Ahlund, Kristoffer Arvidsson, Peggy Phelan, Friedemann Malsch, Philip Metz, Erden Kosova and Serkan Özkaya, all of whom have engaged me through their stimulating and rewarding e-mail conversations, all published on *See and Seen*'s website.

I would like to direct my sincere thanks to the team working at Lunds Konsthall for being a most professional collaborative team, facilitating all works in connection with the *See and Seen* exhibition: director Åsa Nacking, acting director Anders Kreuger, project co-ordinators Anna Johansson and Madeleine Malmsten, technicians Anders Malmström, Terje Östling and Alfredo Pernin.

Many individuals have helped in the realisation of *See and Seen*. David Neuman, director of Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, invited me to produce the project *Grand Tour*, and through his invitation I was able to rethink my work from 1996 up to the present time and to use *Grand Tour* as a test site. Tessa Praun and Elisabeth Millqvist, along with David Neuman, formed the curatorial team for *Grand Tour*. The institution Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall generously loaned work of mine from their collection to be exhibited in *See and Seen*. My warmest thanks also to Katrina Brown, curator of Dundee Contemporary Arts, co-producer of *Grand Tour*; Diane Shamash, director of Minetta Brook, New York, who invited me to produce my public work and book, *View*, which gave me a unique chance to develop a project related to landscape and landscape painting on a site charged with pictorial, historical and political connotations: the United States Military Academy at West Point and its surroundings, the Hudson Valley Highlands; Görel Cavalli-Björkman, director of research and curator of Nationalmuseum, who invited me to the group show *True & False*, which gave me the opportunity to work with *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father* by Claude Lorrain, at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm; former director Helena Persson and director Lene Crone Jensen from Göteborgs Konsthall; Friedemann Malsch, director of Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, who exhibited *Grand Tour* and assisted me in producing new works related to my research subject, that are part of both *Grand Tour* and *See and Seen*.

I also extend my gratitude to Michael Thomas and Reinhard Koch from Bureau K in Hamburg, who are the designers for <http://www.seeandseen.net>, *See and Seen* CD-Rom and [www.grandtourexhibition.com](http://www.grandtourexhibition.com); Björn Fredlund, former director of Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Håkan Wettre, curator of Göteborgs Konstmuseum, and Michael Ahlund, curator of Nationalmuseum, who helped me to find relevant documents and whose conversations have been invaluable; Anders Ljungman & Johan Melbi, who designed the book *View* and assisted me with the design of text for a slide show that is part of *See and Seen*; Debbie Thomson, director of Falkenbergs Museum, who brought to my attention the Claude Glasses; carpenter Hans Berge who constructed the furniture for my installation; John Rothlind, former senior restorer of paintings at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, who helped me with crucial information about the Claude picture; Erik Cornelius, photographer at Nationalmuseum, who took the X-ray photograph of my painting; Marcel Röthlisberger and Per Bjurström, two of the leading art historians in their field, who both responded to my questions; and my fellow PhD students Sopawan Boonnimitra, Miya Yoshida and Anders Kreuger for the stimulating discussions during our seminars.

There are others who have contributed as my work developed: Maria Lind, who read my text and provided valuable critical responses; Peter Samuelsson, Brian Manning Delaney and Mats Stjernstedt, who translated parts of my writings; I would like to forward my warmest thanks to Ana Ransom, who has functioned as an excellent and meticulous fine editor of my text in its final stages; Mako Ishizuka, my assistant during 2006, whose support and multi-talented competence proved to be key for both the practical work connected to *See and Seen* and the time-consuming, endless fact-checking of the text; Céline Kopp, who helped me to get in contact with Musée Flesch, Ajaccio in Corsica; and Cilene Andréhn and Marina Schiptjenko, my gallerists in Stockholm, who have been most helpful and involved in both the production and support of my art practice.

I am also grateful to my dear friend Denise Robinson, who took on the difficult task of being the editor of my English, in addition to which she has been an excellent critic, challenging and extending my thoughts through different projects I have undertaken from 1997 until now. Last but not least, I would like to thank my partner Mats Stjernstedt, whose support and perceptive critique has always been crucial to my work.

## *See and Seen*

### *Seeing Landscape through Artistic Practice*

*Nu skall vi se vad vi ser!* (“Now we shall see what we will see!”)<sup>2</sup>

The orthodox art historians of the old school had, as their main task, to restore the picture to its origins, to maintain the social and cultural context of its first appearance in the world. The essential problem for this kind of scholar was to establish how the picture came into existence, and what forces made it assume the form that it did. The word ‘recognition’ was often used to mark an understanding of the intention behind the picture. In *Vision and Painting* Norman Bryson provides an example of how this recognition is formed by a comparison between the moment/act of creating the picture and viewing the picture in the present. To recognise a picture is, according to Bryson, an act of recollection: “Now I understand, looking at the *View of Toledo*, what El Greco meant by divine retribution,” and “Now I see what Grünewald understood by humiliation ...”<sup>3</sup> I agree with Bryson that no such recognition can occur because it could only be the artist that could claim that their work reflects their original vision or intentions. As we are distant from this vision in many ways, no such knowledge is available for the viewer encountering this picture. Add to this Marcel Duchamp’s idea that the work of art is created out of two reverse positions, with the artist at one end, and at the other end the viewer, the one that eventually completes the work. My relation to this is somewhat strange as I find myself at an even greater distance from any recognition of the artist’s intentions when I look at a painting. For when I stand in front of a landscape painting by Claude Lorrain it is as if I am the one who feels recognised. This is the starting point, it’s where my desire to know arises, this is the point of departure for my work.

Chantal Akerman writes:

*To write in order to close...*

*To write the letter to the father...*

*I went, then I write...*

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<sup>2</sup> *Nu skall vi se vad vi ser!*, translated into English: “Now we shall see what we will see!” I overheard this expression or comment made by a father to his young son on a train journey from Copenhagen to Malmö. This expression was cried out in a stressful situation: the child was hard to handle when the train drove out on the bridge and the beautiful view over the water opened up.

<sup>3</sup> Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: the Logic of the Gaze*, 1983, Palgrave Macmillan Press, London, p. 39.

*visions in passing...*  
*Travels...*  
*On the way I still passed [the place]*  
*where my mother comes from...*  
*and slowly you realize that*  
*it is always the same thing*  
*that is revealed,*  
*a little like the primal scene...*  
*there is nothing to do;*  
*it is obsessive*  
*and I am obsessed...*  
*Despite cinema.*  
*Once [it] was finished*  
*I said to myself,*  
*so that's what it was:*  
*that again,<sup>4</sup>*

## *Introduction*

On June 2nd, 1994, I wrote a letter to the director of Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. In this letter I asked if I could place “a work of mine” in the museum's collection. I wrote: “The installation should be presented in such a way that the scene suggests a common sight in a museum; a skilled artisan who copies in order to study a masterpiece. The work will however – with its small displacements – make the attentive viewer aware that there is something else happening but, concealed.” I also described in the letter that “my copy” would be painted “in a darker palette as if it were night in the painting”, the size would be slightly smaller and there would be a couple of objects placed in connection to it: a bat and a ceramic cup. I ended the letter: “I would be happy if you could react instantly to my suggestion as I am anxious to begin this work, but cannot begin without your response”.<sup>5</sup> A couple of days later a polite refusal arrived.

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<sup>4</sup> Quotation from Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion*, who quotes Chantal Akerman, audio recording from the installation ‘Bordering on Fiction: Chantal Akerman's "d'Est"’, org. by Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis exhibition at Jewish Museum NY 1997, pp. 420-421.

<sup>5</sup> Matts Leiderstam, letter sent to Olle Granath, Director of Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, June 2nd, 1994. The idea was to copy Claude Lorraine's *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41, and leave my copy beside the original. The installation in the Nationalmuseum was to be shown at the same time as my show *The Shepherds* was on at Olle Olsson-Huset Hagalund in Solna, Stockholm.

The viewer of landscape today may be of a new kind; globalisation has accelerated the extension of the mobile phone to now becoming a viewing aid; our familiarity with the reach of modern surveillance technologies, the World Wide Web, the travel industry, and the American cultural hegemony through the apparatus of global mass media, together compels us towards a common gaze. There are, and always have been, however, new eyes/Is outside this hegemony. In the contemporary scene there have been queer and feminist positions as well as those challenges from the margins that read against the colonial enterprise that we find commonly embodied in representations of landscape. These new eyes/Is in relation to landscape painting is where I locate my practice: to propose a gaze, perhaps of resistance or parallel to, yet different.

*See and Seen*'s primary references are the pictures of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), for these paintings became 'the' model for landscape painting that has taken many different forms in the context of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of viewing landscapes from the 18th century until today. It is a convention of seeing exported throughout the British Empire, transformed and filtering through to current representations and understandings of what a landscape is – for example as it appears in contemporary Western popular culture.

Since the end of the 1980s, in my own artistic practice, I have returned to pictures by Claude ("Claude" for Claude Lorrain) and some of his contemporaneous landscape painters. My artistic method has been symptomatic in relation to Claude: to emphasise in practice the process of seeing by painting copies/paraphrases (repetition and mimicry) and through this my desire to see these pictures again, but also the possibility and necessity of fantasising about what might take place in these landscapes.

Both the visual and textual dimensions of *See and Seen* focus on seeing landscape undertaken by me as a contemporary artist as well as a viewer. One significant occasion for this project is my viewing of Claude's *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41 (on view in the collection of Nationalmuseum, Stockholm), a viewing that is constituted both by and through painting a copy, but also something other than a 'copy': it is, for the purposes of my art practice, in fact an 'after-image'.<sup>6</sup> (All references to my copies in this text are referred

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<sup>6</sup> In art-historical terminology the copy is described as being made "after" the original image. "An afterimage is an optical illusion that is created in our brains when looking away from a direct gaze on an image." Quotation from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afterimage>. My motivation for using this notion for my copy relates to the fact that this delusion shows itself as a reversal of what is seen. For example, when

to as “after-images”, and Claude’s original is abbreviated to *Landscape with Rebekah*.) After each period of working on the after-image, both in my studio and at the museum, I documented the developments on the canvas with a digital camera. I have published these pictures on the *See and Seen* website.

Another occasion for seeing landscape that is part of *See and Seen* took place on 30th April 2003 (for approx. 2.5 hours) at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York State. There I acted as the ‘tourist of the Picturesque’ and photographed the most famous view, the Great Chain Overlook, through three instruments for vision from the early 19th century: two sets of Claude Glasses and a Claude Mirror. A few months later I had an e-mail conversation about this work with Peggy Phelan, which was published in the book *View* in the spring of 2005. I also produced an installation and a number of photographs.

My method within *See and Seen* proceeds from two different traditions about how to approach an historical painting, namely the artist’s and the scholar’s. I should point out here that it is those conventions that identify and give meaning to the artists and art historians I refer to, for these terms are utilised in this work as two ‘routines’ to consider when approaching landscape and landscape painting. The first routine is that of the artist who remakes the picture in a desire to learn about its coming into being; the other is that of the art historian who reveals the subject by analysing and gathering information about it and its context. *See and Seen* takes a step further by letting these attitudes mix and affect one another, but in an impure way – through the agency of mimicry.

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looking at a green figure, the brain creates a red after-image. My after-images deals with difference rather than likeness.

## *Scene One*

### *Seeing (landscape, history and model)*

In the artist Ann Böttcher's exhibition *Yosemite National Park (A Recollection of Wilderness)* from 2003, an outlook was constructed and from this platform she presented slides, shot in the summer of 2002 during a visit to the national park in Yosemite, California.<sup>7</sup> The projection showed a mix of private tourist snapshots as well as general landscape pictures and places taken from outlooks in the park. Böttcher's project shows that small displacements in the compositions of the well-known landscape shift our focus on the image as well as the narrator in the pictures. By directing the camera in different ways – so that sometimes she includes herself and other viewers and sometimes not – she creates stories about the construction of the landscape with simple means, pairing a violent political history and its beauty. In this way her work clarified for me my role/place as a viewer in this space: both in this landscape turned into a National Park, as well as in her exhibition, all of which underscores the double message embedded in all landscape.

Raymond Williams proposes in his book *The Country and the City*: “A working country is hardly ever a landscape. The very idea of landscape implies separation and observation.”<sup>8</sup> Williams goes on to say that to turn land into landscape requires a set of socially negotiated ideas, a decision to apply a way of seeing onto a place, and that this is “... not a kind of nature but a kind of man.”<sup>9</sup> This framing of land as landscape that Williams points out underscores the significance of addressing the way in which we see landscape, and that our relation to memory, culture and history are main players when forming such a view. Part of my method is to reflect on the contemporary by looking back – using memory and historic narratives as a field that I can move in, so as to form contemporary narratives.

In my practice an historical landscape painting could be referred to, say, as a site for gay-cruising fantasies as well as a reference point for significant current political events. For example, another painting by Claude that I have been working with, *Ideal View of Tivoli* (1644), shows a group of people crossing a stream in front of a view of Tivoli outside Rome.

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<sup>7</sup> I saw Ann Böttcher's exhibition at Malmö Art Academy's student gallery Peep, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1973, p. 120. Lynne Cooke also used this quotation from Williams as the opening of her essay "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then..." from Matts Leiderstam, *View, Minetta Brook*, New York, 2004, p. 3. It was through this essay that I came across Raymond Williams' book.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.



This painting is currently hanging in New Orleans Museum of Art. It was possible, given my practice, to both reflect on this painting in relation to a 'gay gaze' while registering it as a possible connection to a contemporary event – in this instance the suffering that resulted from Hurricane Katrina which occurred in New Orleans in 2005 – and then to implicate it within the context of the museum. After studying the provenance, I decided that my new work, to be made after the original, should build on the picture's journey.<sup>10</sup> In this work I research the painting and its stories to allegorise them for other narratives.

Norman Bryson makes an important comment on what a painting is: "The fact that works of art occupy a different kind of space from the space of other objects in the world – a space which in the case of painting is marked by the four sides of the frame – means that the work is built to travel away both from its maker and from its original context, carried by the frame into different times and places."<sup>11</sup> My way of using texts like this (and the way of many artists, I believe) is to keep those parts of it – as opposed to taking up its overall argument – where I found a sense of recognition, for it voices what I myself could not formulate in words. The beauty of this particular quotation for me is that it takes a form as clear as any image.

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<sup>10</sup> In discussion with Helena Persson, Director of Göteborgs Konsthall, I learnt that Björn Fredlund, former director of the Göteborgs Konstmuseum, could provide me with more information about the Claude painting. Göteborgs Konstmuseum was highly involved in Nationalmuseum's acquisition of the painting. He also supposedly had information about another landscape by Claude that has passed through the museum earlier. Fredlund told me a story that directed me to further research: At the end of the 1960s, Ernst Cohen contacted the museum director, Karl-Gustaf Hedén, to show him a painting. Together with his wife, Ernst Cohen had fled Berlin and the Nazis via Copenhagen. The painting was said to be a genuine Claude Lorrain, and there was a notation by a famous art historian on the back that certified its authenticity. However, the museum doubted the authenticity. After their first viewing of the painting, Fredlund and Hedén saw the exhibition *Art Treasures from Dresden* at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. There they began to change their opinion because what they saw were similar paintings, all made by Claude. The painting was brought to the museum for further examination. The museum arranged for Marcel Röthlisberger to come and see the landscape, and now he affirmed that it was genuine. Since the couple wished to sell the painting, the museum arranged to sell it through the auction house Christie, Manson & Woods in London in 1971. The couple decided to divide the profit in four equal parts, one part being bequeathed to the museum. The letter of donation enclosed with the cheque was signed *Zwei Emigranten, die anonym zu bleiben wünschen. Dezember 1971*. The museum has entitled the donation "The Unknown Emigrants Donation Fund". With the fund, the museum was able to purchase works from the "Golden Age" of Danish painting. In the next few years, the following paintings were bought with money from the Fund: two works by Constantin Hansen, *Group of Trees on a Hill*, c. 1832, and *Portico in Christiansborg Castle*; Martinus Rørbye (1803–1848), *View of the Roman Campagna*; and Christian Købke (1810–1848), *Marina Piccola at Capri*, 1839–40. All the paintings but one were painted in Rome, just like Claude's landscapes.

<sup>11</sup> Norman Bryson, "Mieke Bal", *Key Writers on Art: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Chris Murray, Routledge, London & New York, 2003, pp. 15–16.

In *See and Seen* I focus on a model of landscape that was adopted in 18th century Britain, especially the practice of building both public and private parks to mimic the 17th century “Ideal Landscape”. The term “Ideal Landscape” is used to label the painted landscapes made in Rome during the 17th century by artists like Nicolas Poussin (c. 1594-1665) and Claude.<sup>12</sup> This was a way of seeing that included painting, poetry, fiction, travel literature, and landscape gardening. Maybe the most peculiar (for modern eyes) expression of this gaze took the form of an activity undertaken by members of the upper classes, “The Search for the Picturesque”, whereby they travelled to look for landscapes that reminded them of paintings.<sup>13</sup> The model for this “Picturesque” was found in the Ideal Landscapes, as well as descriptions of Arcadian landscapes from Roman pastoral poetry. Beginning in the 17th century, the sons of the European as well as the British elite made their Grand Tour to Italy, following “... a humanist education based on reading ancient Latin and Greek texts, and by the uniformity of itineraries as laid out by guidebooks.”<sup>14</sup> It was through the Grand Tour that the tourist gaze was formed at a time when travel was seen chiefly as an educational tool. Malcolm Andrews<sup>15</sup> points out that this eye that came to form the Search for the Picturesque was filled with paradoxes: these travellers wanted to find nature untouched by man, and to improve it at the same time. It was made by “men of class” with a cosmopolitan ideal who, for example, set off for Naples to look for Virgil’s tomb, to look for the perfect view of Vesuvius, and to discover the newly unearthed Pompeii and Herculaneum. At the same time, they were shocked that this “paradise” was inhabited by “devils”, the “noisy barefoot inhabitants” living in the centre of “the chaotic city” of Naples – the place the Grand Tourists returned to in the evenings.<sup>16</sup>

Back in Britain, analytic models and compositional theories were developed in order to explain how Ideal Landscapes were created and where they could be found in their national countryside. Malcolm Andrews writes: “The Picturesque tourist is typically a gentleman or a gentlewoman engaged in an experiment in controlled aesthetic responses to a range of new and often intimidating visual experiences”,<sup>17</sup> feelings the local national landscapes were

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<sup>12</sup> See Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990, pp. 17–21.

<sup>13</sup> See Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> Melissa Calaresu, “Looking for Virgil’s Tomb”, *Voyages & Visions, Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, eds. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, Reaktion Books, London 1999, p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> See Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1989.

<sup>16</sup> Melissa Calaresu, *Looking for Virgil’s Tomb*, p. 138.

<sup>17</sup> Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p. 67. Andrew describes how the picturesque tourist’s search was analogous to the sport of hunting. “There is something of the big-game hunter in these tourists, boasting of their encounters with savage landscapes, ‘capturing’ wild scenes, and ‘fixing’ them as pictorial trophies in order to sell them or hang them up in frames on their drawing-room walls”, p. 67.

expected to offer. The tourist developed a special vocabulary for the Picturesque and became highly skilled at capturing quickly the image they desired in drawing and painting with watercolour. One of the ideologists, William Gilpin (1724-1804), writes about the Picturesque gaze: "But the picturesque eye is not merely restricted to nature. It ranges through the limits of art. The picture, the statue, and the garden are all the objects of its attention."<sup>18</sup>

This was in short the narrative about what was called the "Ideal", "Arcadian", "Beautiful", "Pastoral" landscape. This story of creating the model is of course much more complicated and involves many more variables than my examples, such as the Dutch landscape tradition and its existence in other cultures outside Europe; designed landscape was produced in China, Egypt and Mesopotamia long before it occurred in Europe. Raymond Williams points out that "pleasing prospects" (a characteristic phrase of the time that is associated with both seeking out and reproducing Picturesque views of landscapes) had specific results in the 18th century, "Yet as always, in such cases, the particular application, in real social context, had a new and particular effect." This effect began to develop a certain ideology, which then formed a man who was dividing his observations into the "practical" and "aesthetic".<sup>19</sup>

These 18th and 19th century travellers in search of the Picturesque – for example, those who went to the Lake District, the Scottish Highlands or North Wales – included the more prosperous tourists as well as intellectuals, connoisseurs and artists, all of whom used various viewing aids for landscape.<sup>20</sup> One of the best known, and that has become important for my practice, was an optical instrument called the Claude Mirror, the Gray Mirror or the Claude Lorrain Mirror. According to Deborah Jean Warner, the mirror was first connected to the British poet Thomas Gray (1716-1771), adding that it was in the 19th century, and for "unknown reasons", that it came to be associated with Claude.<sup>21</sup>

In the early 19th century there were over eighty Claude pictures in English collections; therefore Claude was a relatively well-known artist, and using his name for the instruments was possibly also a means of marketing them.<sup>22</sup> Claude's style of painting landscape was distinguished by J.M.W. Turner as "Pure as Italian air, calm, beautiful and serene [...] The golden orient or amber coloured ether, the midday ethereal vault and fleecy skies, resplendent

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<sup>18</sup> William Gilpin, from *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, 2nd edition (1794). Essay II, "On Picturesque Travel", here found on a website from University of Alberta, Canada:  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~dmiall/Travel/gilpine2.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 121.

<sup>20</sup> See Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, pp. 67-82.

<sup>21</sup> Deborah Jean Warner, "The landscape mirror and glass", January issue of *Antiques*, 1974.

<sup>22</sup> Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p. 26. Claude's paintings were also popularised through engravings.

valleys, campagnas rich with all the cheerful blush of fertilization, trees possessing every hue and tone of summer's evident heat..."<sup>23</sup> This description is made by a painter who had both seen and painted the Roman landscape and therefore knew something of what it meant to translate the complexity of memory and perception of a landscape into a representation, and is a perfect quotation as both a portrayal of what has become known as the "Claudian" model and as providing a language for what the Picturesque eye should look for in landscape. Here I would like to state that I am aware that the "Picturesque", the "Sublime", the "Beautiful" and the "Romantic" are categorising different emotions as well as functioning as formal expressions in relation to landscape painting.<sup>24</sup> However, this dissertation (and my work) is not dealing with these distinctions so much as with my own focus on Claude's paintings and their process of becoming 'the' model for landscape painting. This search for the Picturesque, a Claudian landscape illuminated by a perfect light, must have been difficult, so the "travelling 'knick-knacks'",<sup>25</sup> these instruments, must have been the only way to catch a glimpse of the perfection that the searcher was seeking.

Warner gives a more practical theory for the naming of the Claude Mirror, other than Claude's pictures pleasing the picturesque eye: "A Claude Lorrain sunrise or sunset, with the sun at the perspective vanishing point would, of course, be blinding if viewed directly. However, reflected in a dark mirror it can be enjoyed with safety."<sup>26</sup> This mirror was convex on black foil with the surface turned towards the landscape by its user. The size of the instrument corresponds roughly to a small paperback book. It was a miniaturized version of the larger convex studio mirror used by painters.<sup>27</sup> On its surface the view was reduced and concentrated in such a way that it was transformed into a manageable picture. "They reduced

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<sup>23</sup> Quotation from Helen Langdon, *Claude Lorrain*, Phaidon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell: "It is clear that landscapes can be deciphered as textual systems. Natural features such as trees, stones, water, animals, and dwellings can be read as symbols in religious, psychological, or political allegories; characteristic structures and forms (elevated or closed prospects, times of day, positioning of the spectator, type of human figures) can be linked with generic and narrative typologies such as the pastoral, the georgic, the exotic, the sublime, and the picturesque," from the introduction to *The Power of Landscape*, p. 1. Another quotation by Mitchell from the same book clarifies my point even further: "The familiar categories that divide the genre of landscape painting into subgenres – notions such as the Ideal, the Heroic, the Pastoral, the Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque – are all distinctions based, not in ways of putting paint on canvas, but in the kinds of objects and visual spaces that may be represented by paint," p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> This expression is used by Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> Warner, *Claude Glass and Mirror*.

<sup>27</sup> See David Hockney, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2001. David Hockney claims that mirrors were used as lenses to project images onto paper or canvas, and demonstrates experiments with convex mirrors. His theory is controversial and challenges much art-historical scholarship as he argues that mirror lenses were widely used by artists.

the variety of natural colors to shades of the monotone and their convex surface enhanced the perspective lines.”<sup>28</sup> The effect may be compared to that produced by a wide-angle lens, while at the same time the Mirror flattened the motif into an image that lost all its depth, just like an image viewed through a pair of binoculars. When reading the different experts on the Claude Mirror, I find slightly different information on how they were practically used. It strikes me that with the disappearance of the use of these mirrors, the facility of using them – the skill – is also gone. I had to reconstruct how to use them. When using my own Claude Mirror, I found that it was hard to hold the mirror still in front of the view to fix the composition as a picture, and I constantly moved to see the image from a frontal position, thereby invading the view with my own reflection. One has to imagine a world without any images other than those representations made by artists to understand how this instrument could intrigue the spectators of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Another optical device of the time, the Claude Glasses, were round, tinted glass discs with a diameter of approximately 2.5 cm (1 inch), mounted like magnifying glasses, in sets of 3 to 8 discs mounted on the arms of a fan-shaped protective frame and usually made of horn.<sup>29</sup> When showing my Claude Glasses to my 92-year-old grandmother, she told me that she once saw the filters as a girl, in a chest of drawers in her parental home, but no one could tell her what they were used for when she asked, and here too the skill is gone.

In the past it was considered that the landscape should be transformed so as to resemble the paintings of the master, Claude. The light golden-brown glass, for example, gave an illusion of dawn light; the dark pink-brown glass created twilight; and the blue one produced a picture of a landscape apparently illuminated by the moon, or a snowy landscape. William Gilpin says in 1776 of his Claude Glasses: “The only picturesque glasses are those, which the artists call Claud Loraine glasses. They are combined of two or three different colors; and if the hues are well sorted, they give the object of nature a soft mellow tinge, like the coloring of that master.”<sup>30</sup> According to Deborah Jean Warner, literary references of the time suggested that these filters were widely known. She quotes from a British play from 1798, where the heroine, viewing a landscape through her gold-tinted glass, cries out, “How gorgeous glowing!”, through a dark glass, “How gloomily glaring”, and finally through a blue glass,

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<sup>28</sup> Warner, *Claude Glass and Mirror*.

<sup>29</sup> Arnaud Maillet, *The Claude Glass Use and Meaning of the Black Mirror in Western Art*, Zone Books, New York, 2004, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Maillet’s footnote: “William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, on Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the Highlands of Scotland*, 2 vols. (London: Blamire 1789), vol. 1, p. 124.”

“How frigidly frozen!”<sup>31</sup> This, to my contemporary ears, seems somewhat silly. However, it shows that Claude Glasses were mainly used as conversation pieces that enabled an alternative interpretation of the surroundings, being an instrument made to show something else, similar to the distorting mirror, in front of which we act, fully aware that what is being reflected are our bodies – still we remain fascinated with its distortion.

These two instruments can be looked upon as forerunners of other instruments for the eye that became popular in the early 19th century. Jonathan Crary argues that modes of viewing, in the context of modernity in the early 20th century, in part originate from the late 18th and early 19th centuries with the development of the use of viewing aids/instruments,<sup>32</sup> such as the stereoscope, kaleidoscope and phenakistiscope, stating that the practice of using these affected the act of viewing to the extent that the viewer adjusted not only the gaze but their perceptions in relation to these new ways of seeing. Crary speaks of a technology that allows us to see what is not really there; rather it triggers/awakens something in us. Seeing is never direct, it is always negotiated. We become knowing about this manipulation of our senses; without this knowingness one would not be able to register the visual phenomenon initiated by these instruments. Nevertheless, somewhere in all this, it seems, is the desire to see differently, and after all, the nature of desire is that it cannot be fulfilled. Most of the instruments Crary refers to are more or less of the same kind, that is, they were made to trigger the perceptive apparatus, for example in the stereoscope to create depth, or the phenakistiscope to create movement. Crary proposes that this heralds a new kind of spectator, with a subjective vision, one who is now prepared to accept “... a new model of visual representation and perception”, one that “... constitutes a break with several centuries of other models of vision, loosely definable as Renaissance, perspectival, or normative.”<sup>33</sup> Vision was no longer assumed to be unmediated, “natural”: “Vision, as something that could be rationalised, thus became compatible with modernisation”<sup>34</sup>

Landscape artists and tourists used the Claude Glass and Mirror in a desire to control and fix the view. In a sense this new kind of spectator travelled through the landscape and ‘took pictures’ in the same way we do today with our digital cameras. The landscape was, in a way, produced, developed and captured through the use of these instruments. What in the 18th

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<sup>31</sup> Deborah Jean Warner, “The landscape mirror and glass”, where she quotes from Norman Nicolson, *The Lakers*, London, 1955, pp. 110–111.

<sup>32</sup> See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1990, and *Suspensions of Perception, Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1999.

<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Crary, “Visual Technologies and the Dispersal of Perception”, essay from the catalogue *Jurassic Technologies Revenant*, 10th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney 1996, p. 19.

century was a sophisticated hobby for the upper classes has today become an activity characteristic of the modern-day tourist. World famous tourist attractions such as Mount Fuji, the Niagara Falls, the Taj Mahal or the Bay of Naples have been viewed, and photographed (and painted) from the same viewpoints for generations. This idea of repeating the image that has been taken by others before them is interesting in that it is a kind of proof that they were there, and to achieve this their image must look the same as others’.

W. J. T. Mitchell gives us a number of “theses on Landscape” in his essay “Imperial Landscapes”, two of which are: “Landscape is a medium found in all cultures”; “Landscape is a particular historic formation associated with European imperialism”, and then he argues that these two theses do not contradict one another.<sup>35</sup> This is an interesting statement for me and is further developed by him, where he argues against the idea that landscape painting was a uniquely European genre – he states that this-“... falls to pieces in the face of the overwhelming richness, complexity, and antiquity of Chinese landscape painting. [...] Is it possible that landscape, understood as the historical ‘invention’ of a new visual/pictorial medium, is integrally connected with imperialism?” He argues that the representation of landscape is not a mere tool of imperialism, saying this notion carries hybrid forms, paradoxical in that landscape is both imperial and anti-colonial. For him, “Landscape might be seen more profitably as something like the ‘dreamwork’ of imperialism... images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance.”<sup>36</sup> I would apply this idea of the “dreamwork” to the Picturesque model adopted by those travellers in foreign lands. This model, embedded in the British colonial enterprise, becomes a way of looking at all new landscapes, such as American, African and Australasian. What is gained from this way of seeing and filtering landscape that blocks out and frames everything that is not clearly Picturesque can also become a loss of sight – it is not only what is described in these pictorial landscapes, but also what is ‘not’ there and what leaks in from other places.

In Sweden, English landscape traditions were introduced through the landscape painter Elias Martin (1739-1818).<sup>37</sup> An interesting example of how the model came to dominate Swedish landscape painting in the early 19th century is that of Carl Johan Fahlcrantz. Fahlcrantz was one of Martin’s students and came to use this model in the most perverse way, by painting the Swedish landscape with the perfect Claudian light – and all the other distinguishing features of a Claude – without ever having seen an original painting by Claude. A story is revealed:

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<sup>35</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape", *Landscape and Power*, Ed. W.J.T. Mitchell, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2002, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-34.

<sup>37</sup> In the winter 2006-07 Mikael Ahlund’s dissertation about Elias Martin will be presented: *Landskapets röster. Studier i Elias Martins bildvärld 1760-1810*. See this dissertation for more on Elias Martin.

Elias Martin's best students<sup>38</sup> in landscape painting were Fahlcrantz and Per Nordqvist. In 1802, Nordqvist received a grant from the Swedish state (i.e. the King) to undertake his Grand Tour. He travelled through Paris and Rome, ending up in Naples. There he died of tuberculosis in 1805, and all his paintings were destroyed due to the concern that his canvases could be contaminated. Fahlcrantz received the same grant just after his friend's death and set off on his travels to the south. When he came to the Danish border, he turned back, afraid that he might fall ill, so he returned to Stockholm, where he asked the King whether he could keep his grant if he promised to tour Sweden instead – to produce landscape paintings of the Swedish National Landscapes. Fahlcrantz only saw prints of Claude's work in Stockholm, yet he became the most dedicated follower of the Claudian model in Sweden.<sup>39</sup>

Seeing his paintings, they are not really recognisable as Swedish landscapes. I can recognise some of the views in the painting as sites of a particular city or a palace, but the Claudian model then blurs all topography and the landscape elicits an alien place. Fahlcrantz came to dominate the Swedish art of landscape painting for 40 years. The development of a national landscape coincided with the discovery of a Swedish national history which incorporated the effects of a disappearing peasant culture, all of which was a subject for painting, which was also informed by the contemporary political realities of the 19th century, with the rise of the new ruling class, the bourgeoisie, among whom this type of painting was popular. The fact is that it was first through the Düsseldorf School's method of working with landscape that the national Nordic landscape was found.<sup>40</sup> Again this shows that landscapes have to be negotiated as interesting to be looked at, to be seen. The Nordic landscape with its lakes, dark pine forests, summer nights illuminated by the midnight sun, and the contrasting long winters, was not a subject of interest and was not romanticised before the subject of "The Nordic Light" was introduced by the end of the 19th century.

A speculation: if Claude's *Landscape with Rebekah* had been available to Fahlcrantz in the early 19th century, would his paintings have looked different? If he had had the chance to see Claude's study of a Mediterranean dusk and dawn, would he then have been able to distance himself from the model and create something else?

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<sup>38</sup> According to Mikael Ahlund, who is writing his dissertation on Elias Martin, Martin was not really an active teacher at the Academy. However, he was very influential through his own painting – importing the Claudian model to Sweden.

<sup>39</sup> Bo Lindwall, "Det tidiga 1800-talet", *Konsten i Sverige 2: från 1800 till 1970*, ed. Sven Sandström, Norstedts, Stockholm, 1974, 1988, pp. 41-45.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.



Now I move on to two examples of landscapes, where I establish the histories and narratives related to two sites: the *Landscape with Rebekah* by Claude, and the view from the United States Military Academy at West Point that will form the core of the exhibition. I start with West Point, located in the Hudson River Highlands – a place known for military victories during the American War of Independence. One of the main reasons for the victory over the British is to be found in the fortifications around West Point. In 1778, an enormous chain was laid across the river between Constitution Island and West Point.<sup>41</sup> It was an ingenious scheme, that stopped the British from sailing further up the river. Here, America's first and most important military academy was established in 1802 to commemorate the victories over the British.<sup>42</sup> In 19th century Europe, the ideas of the Picturesque developed into nostalgia for a recently lost landscape, a desire for the cultivated landscape that was disappearing with industrialisation. In spite of this, the Picturesque was to have a great influence on how people were to see landscapes in America, because here the landscape that ideally is, in William Gilpin's words, "unexplored wilderness, primitive forests, rugged mountains, impetuous rivers",<sup>43</sup> was to be the experience of all who actually moved to America from the Old World.

One of the places on which the Europeans and the descendants of European immigrants projected their Claudian gaze was the Hudson Valley, and in particular the Hudson Valley Highlands, where the mountains of West Point surround the river passage, all of which was cloaked in memories from the recent War of Independence. The evocation of an idealised past was very important for the Picturesque viewer and was also to serve the dynamic of a rising nationalism. But the landscape was also able to be idealised due to it being comparatively untouched by habitation compared to Europe. In fact, the Hudson River was in some places wild and in other places developed in the early 19th century. The river, which was once dominated by the Dutch Knickerbocker class – via their agricultural estates on each side of the river – had begun to be industrialized.<sup>44</sup>

The artists went into the valley and sought out the not yet conquered landscape in order to depict it for the lucrative market of growing populations in the cities.<sup>45</sup> This way of working became a method for the first home-grown school of art in the US, the Hudson River School. The patrons of these painters had made their fortunes largely from commerce and banking in

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<sup>41</sup> Frances F. Dunwell, *The Hudson River Highlands*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991, p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>43</sup> William Gilpin, quoted from Earl A Powell, *Thomas Cole*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1990, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> See Frances F. Dunwell, *The Hudson River Highlands*, Columbia University Press, New York 1991.

<sup>45</sup> See Annette Blaugrund, *The Tenth Street Studio Building, Artist-Entrepreneurs from the Hudson River School to American Impressionists*, The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York, 1997.

New York City and they felt connected to the Knickerbockers. “So they were not especially eager to have views of the Hudson that celebrated its prosaic business: steamboats and coal barges chugging along the Hudson; wharves loaded with dry goods and backed with rickety taverns and warehouses.”<sup>46</sup> These painters of landscapes had to navigate carefully to block out the clutter of the industrial river, to underscore what was fantasised as the wild virgin nature of the Americas.

The leading representatives of this artistic movement were Thomas Cole (1801-1848), Fredric Edwin Church (1826-1900) and Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902). The Hudson Valley Painters, as they were also called, were a generation of landscape painters who described the Western gaze’s conquest of the US. It was a colonization of the new country, later to move beyond the West and further across the border to Latin America’s mountains and jungles.<sup>47</sup> The virgin soil is seen as conquered by an imperial gaze, which we recognise from other portrayals of ‘discovered’ landscapes in Africa, Asia and elsewhere outside Europe. On the other hand, these American artists depict landscape as idealised, ignoring the fact that industrialisation and a shifting population had changed it forever. In fact, Cole and Church assumed the responsibility for publicising the necessity of preserving the Hudson Valley landscape.

Just as in Europe, the tourists in US were to follow in the footsteps of artists. After the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, boat trips such as the fashionable “Northern Tour” became popular. A steamboat started out from New York and went to what was called “America’s most scenic spots”. The route went via the Hudson Valley to the Great Lakes through this canal. Some of these tourists probably used Claude Glasses and mirrors in their pursuit of the Picturesque. In fact, a caption for an illustration in Deborah Jean Warren’s essay shows that the reproduced Claude Mirror was once owned by the United States Military Academy at West Point. To a great extent these views still remain and are today even more charged with associations to painting, military history, myths of nature and environmental struggles.

I will now focus on Claude’s *Landscape with Rebekah*, where I begin with the painting’s prehistory, the history of its acquisition before it entered the museum context in Stockholm in

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<sup>46</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1995, p. 364.

<sup>47</sup> See Fredric Edwin Church’s painting *The Heart of the Andes* (1859), the great painting of Mount Chimborazo in Ecuador, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. “In April 1853, Church and his friend Cyrus Field set forth on an adventurous trip through Colombia (then called New Granada) and Ecuador. Church’s first finished South American pictures, shown to great acclaim in 1855, transformed his career; for the next decade he devoted a great part of his attention to those subjects, producing a celebrated series that became the basis of his ensuing international fame.” Quotation from: <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/C/church.html>

1974. When Nationalmuseum considered buying a Claude painting in the early 1970s, two reports were written, which are held in the archives of the museum. These documents became important to me as witnessing how this picture was seen – and thus influenced my own way of seeing and painting the picture.

Both texts focus on the authenticity of a painting and its condition. However, the texts are different in style and set themselves different tasks. In the first document, which was written in 1972 by two of the museum's restorers, they examined and formed an opinion about the surface of the painting as well as what might be found beneath it.<sup>48</sup> The painting was scrutinized for its condition, not for its subject matter. However, in one passage, a specific goat from the painting is mentioned from the perspective of another viewer of the painting – not the restorers – “the one that the King showed a particular interest in”, revealing that King

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<sup>48</sup> “Examination of painting, Claude Lorrain

Examination made in May 1972

Oil on canvas, wax-resin doubling

An X-ray of the painting reveals that apart from a few small holes and damages, the canvas is intact. We cannot determine whether the painting has been doubled before in connection with the mending of these damages, because the latest doubling with wax-resin conceals the back of the picture-bearing canvas. The damage behaves like a lead-bearing material in the X-ray, but part of the cementing might also have been done in connection with the last doubling, which is probably not very old. One gets the impression of the painting as a foreground side-scene in front of a background set piece. This is probably due to the fact that the foliage above the wall has been retouched so that the sky, which can be discerned in the foliage, has been completely painted over. Under the over paintings, it is possible to discern a light, tender verdure, which, however, has been somewhat washed away, and this is the reason for the touch-ups. The same kind of traces of cleaning is found everywhere in the thin and light shades, brown and green. The rock on the right in the foreground has also lost some of its nuances and been touched up so that a more indifferent shade dominates. The paints that best stand washing are, as is well known, such paints that contain white pigments. In the foliage on the left, one can see, in ultraviolet light, both light as well as dark touch-ups. The light touch-ups probably contain zinc white, which in this light appears strongly as yellowish-white. White lead, on the other hand, turns dark violet depending on its purity and does not therefore lighten up a shade. Earth colours just become dark. It is hard to determine whether these touch-ups were made on the same occasion, since we have not got back any solvent tests of the painting. We have also closely examined the goat on the right beneath the cattle, the one that the King showed a particular interest in. It is secondary in the composition and is painted in a thin brown umber, as some of the animals on the left in the painting. The brown shadows in the mountains in the background are also a bit worn. Our final judgement about the painting is that it is in good condition considering its age, as to its material and technique. We estimate that the touch-ups affect about 15 percent of the painting, but it is possible that some of the touch-ups can be reduced and in this way to increase the original. If the touch-ups in the foliage above the wall are removed, a lot would probably be gained. It would be of great help in the assessment of this painting if there was a possibility of getting access to the documentation from the last restoration. The painting has been photographed with X-ray, infrared light, ultraviolet light, black and white, colour, macro. The macro photography, which was done in colour, has been limited to seven areas in the painting which might reveal something about the genuineness. No section samples have been taken or chemical analyses have been made so as not to damage the painting with new operations. Stockholm in May 1972. Åke Petterson Mathias Pehrson” (Translation Peter Samuelsson)

Gustaf Adolf VI of Sweden had seen the painting. This must either have been reported to them, or the King was with them when they viewed the painting.

Two years later, the director of Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Karl-Gustaf Hedén, writes another report.<sup>49</sup> The painting has now been restored by a well-reputed restorer in London. Hedén received the “very honourable task”<sup>50</sup> of looking closer at the painting for Nationalmuseum, and it is in this report that there are references to the subject matter – although the figure of Rebekah is never identified as the subject of the picture. Mount Soracte, outside Rome, is pointed out as recognised, and Claude is identified as the artist through various types of evidence, such as the X-rays, the fact that there is a drawing and a print with the same motif made in “Claude’s own hand”, and that the provenance can be traced back to the person who ordered the painting, Cardinal Angelo Giorgio. Furthermore, Hedén bears witness to John Brealey’s skill in restoring the work by pointing to the satisfaction of previous clients, Queen Elizabeth II and Paul Getty. Hedén also says that he knows Brealey personally and can thus

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<sup>49</sup> “On the 26th of this month, after a request from the Director of Nationalmuseum, I, the undersigned, inspected an oil painting ascribed to Claude Lorrain and representing a wide view of a landscape with, in the foreground, a road coming from the left, a figure in the mid-distance and two shepherds, one sitting and one standing up in the foreground on the left. Format 59 x 79 cm. The painting, which belongs to Agnew and Sons in London, has been cleaned by restorer John Brealey, whom I have known personally for many years, and about whose superiority concerning Claude paintings the agreement is unanimous. As restorer to the English Queen and having done much arduous work for, among others, Paul Getty and the Duke of Westminster, Brealey has confirmed his capacity in restorations of paintings by Rembrandt, Claude and Titian, all of which I am familiar with. Bradley distinguishes himself with an extraordinarily careful and sensitive hand, especially in the touch-up work. In the present case I have been able to fully confirm the perfection of his touch-up through direct inspection and a three-dimensional inspection of the greater part of the surface through stereo-macroscopic inspection.

Fluorescence photographs taken in connection with the examination record the limited faulty places in the doubled pictures (old doublings, probably 18th century according to Röthlisberger).

The X-rays convincingly confirm the impression of an original: a forcefully inserted impasto sun to the right above the mountain top (Mt. Soracte) as well as clear petimenti (for example the right shepherd’s staff in two positions and the cattle on the wooden bridge as well as the touch-ups of the temple in the mid-distance) strengthen the impression of an original. Of the Claude paintings that have appeared on the market recently this is one of the best that I have come into contact with. The existence of both a drawing and a print by Claude’s own hand, as well as the possibility of linking the original buyer to the picture, that is (the future) Cardinal Angelo Giorgio, give it an established position within Claude Lorrain’s oeuvre.

The technical examination that I have made shows a picture with a low percentage of substantial loss in the painting’s surface and apparently careful cleanings, and it also shows all the signs of being an original by Claude Lorrain.

Dated to 1642 it has the qualities of this incomparable landscape painter’s first maturity in his forties.

Göteborgs Konstmuseum, September 29, 1974.

Karl-Gustaf Hedén” (Translation Peter Samuelsson)

<sup>50</sup> According to Björn Fredlund, in a conversation on August 15th, 2005.

vouch for his cleaning and retouching abilities.<sup>51</sup> The whole letter is an argument in favour of buying the painting – which is done in 1974. Marcel Röthlisberger is also mentioned as the expert who has seen and assessed the painting. However, a number of questions arise for me, concerning the method through which a painting ‘comes out’ as authentic, as a masterpiece worth having for a museum. These documents are wonderful examples which show that behind the façade of a museum there is a game of donations, purchases, research, production of reports and assessments, all serving to increase the value of the collection through establishing authenticity.<sup>52</sup> Another question I had was: why did two years elapse between the two documents? The painting is sold at an auction in London in 1973 and the museum buys the painting in 1974.<sup>53</sup> The first document gives the impression that the restorers and the King travelled to see the painting – or perhaps that the painting was in Stockholm at the museum in 1972? When I had a meeting with the former director of Nationalmuseum, Per Bjurström, I received the unexpected answer that these documents did not refer to the same painting. The first document deals with another painting considered for purchase in 1972. Somehow this has been forgotten and the document has been registered in connection to the *Landscape with Rebekah*. So easily is history distorted – a paper placed in the wrong file in the museum’s archive. When the people involved in the purchase of the painting are gone, then parts of the history disappear forever, for memories cannot be archived.

In this first document written by the restorer, what was mentioned was the observation made by the King: “... a goat on the right beneath the cattle”. A wall, water and foliage is mentioned too, and I recognise it all as features of the picture in the museum, so I believe that it is *Landscape with Rebekah* that is being described. This led me to reconsider the goat in the Claude original I am copying and I started to look more closely at it, recollecting my own memory of the old King from my childhood through television programs. I recall his specific

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<sup>51</sup> See the translated letter, note 49.

<sup>52</sup> There is an interaction between the market, i.e. the art dealers and auction houses, and the experts, restorers and scholars who are involved in getting paintings into a museum.

<sup>53</sup> The painting’s provenance according to the museum: “Cardinal Angelo Giori (1585–1662); Palazzo Riccardi Florence; Lucien Bonaparte, Principe de Canino, c. 1800; his sale, London, Stanley, 16 May 1816, no.172 (bought in); Lord Ashburton, London, c. 1837; Gallerie Brunner, Paris, c. 1928; private American collection; Sotheby’s, 12 Dec. 1973, bt. Agnew; Thos. Agnew & Sons, London; purchased 1974 with the aid of a contribution from The Friends of the Museum.” From the museum’s catalogue. The information can also be found in the museum’s Friends protocol from April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1974, where the painting is talked about. The picture was sold on auction at Sotheby’s, December 1973, for 50.000 guineas to art dealers Agnew and Sons. The painting was then under restoration and the museum started a negotiation about the price. In the protocol from September 1974, they have a suggestion for a price of £125,000 (SE Cr. 1.296.000) and it is later negotiated down to £100,000 (according to a statement of account from SEB, October 4<sup>th</sup> 1974). Per Bjurström told me the price was a very good one because of the decline of the art market in the aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis.

way of looking closer at the surface of an object as he pushed his round glasses up on his forehead – my visual memory of this was so strong and the first document's description of the painting so much in line with the Claude model (goat, cattle, foliage), the document influenced me so much that I missed the fact that in the Claude original *Landscape with Rebekah* that I was looking at the goat was on the left side, that these were not the same. My interest in all this is the power of the model of Claude's painting.

To gather more information about the purchase of the painting, I contacted the Friends of Nationalmuseum who administrated the financial part of the purchase of Claude's *Landscape with Rebekah* in 1974. Looking through the files gave me an insight into how significant the gaze of the King was for the museum. Gustaf Adolf VI (1882-1973) was the founder of the Friends of Nationalmuseum in 1912 and was its Chair until he became King in 1950, and after that the Honorary Chair until his death. I was also curious that the board of directors of the Friends was preoccupied with garnering the support of the crème de la crème of the Swedish aristocracy and businessmen. Recognising the importance of the Museum's associations with this powerful elite, I imagine the King took advantage of this powerful network and that he therefore perhaps came to the museum when the Claude picture was due to be scrutinized by the experts.<sup>54</sup> Suddenly I understood the gulf between this and other art museums of the time. These events around a search for an authentic Claude painting were happening at the same time as the other national museum of art in Stockholm, Moderna Museet, was celebrated for its experimental programme and radical exhibitions.

Here I take a pause to consider how the narration of these events relates to my association with history. However much these historical details feed my practice, it is not my focus, which instead has to do with how the information that I have gathered concerns that moment of seeing in front of the painting. The references to the various professionals who look at the painting, such as the restorer, the expert on the history of art and the King (the latter actually also acts as the ordinary viewer), all affect my way of looking. The two reports also reveal a kind of before and after of a picture, i.e. before the painting receives its history (however fantasised it may be), before it is cleaned and restored, and after it has been brought back to

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<sup>54</sup> From the archive of the Friends of Nationalmuseum I find the information that the document from 1972 is connected to a painting owned by A. Squadrilli from Switzerland. It was taken to the museum because the director of the Museum, Bengt Dahlbäck, wished to buy the painting. After it had been scrutinized at the museum, Dahlbäck got cold feet and it was decided not to buy the painting. Information found from protocols from the Friends of Nationalmuseum, April 26 and June 2 1972. Regarding the King's influence, I know from my family history that it was great. My grandfather, Stig Åsberg, was a printmaker whose prints were purchased by the King, an act that provided a spur to his career.

history by being allocated a place in art history, through the new conservation and the verdict of the expert.

It is interesting for me to look closely at how art historians have written about the painting, and the most established scholar on Claude's work is Professor Marcel Röthlisberger from Geneva in Switzerland, who through his 1973 text *Burlington Magazine* establishes that *Landscape with Rebekah* is a genuine Claude. Already in Röthlisberger's book from 1961 – which deals with all known paintings by Claude – the painting is mentioned, but it is in an “unknown place.”<sup>55</sup> He also says that he has only seen the painting as a photograph, yet from this he concludes that the painting is authentic. Otherwise he bases his arguments on the drawing from *Liber Veritatis* (Claude's own record on his paintings) and an etching made after the painting by Claude himself. According to the provenance that he accounts for in the same book, the painting disappeared from art history in 1928 (returning from an unknown American collection in 1973), and as a consequence the photograph that he has seen must have been taken in 1928 or earlier. That the theme of the painting is Rebekah's leave-taking is something that Röthlisberger guesses, and hence the title: *Pastoral Landscape (the Voyage of Rebekah)*. In a footnote, he launches an alternative interpretation, that the painting is supposed to represent Tobias and Sarah. Röthlisberger quotes the Bible: “... her father Raguel arose and gave Tobias and Sara and half his goods, servants and cattle... and sent them away”. He proposes this because he does not know any other paintings that portray this scene, and hence assumes that the story of Rebekah is more likely.<sup>56</sup>

What Claude himself provided as information about the painting is to be found in his *Liber Veritatis*, now nesting in the British Museum in London.<sup>57</sup> *Liber Veritatis* (henceforth referred to as *LV*) was a bound sketchbook that Claude used for recording his different motifs. This acts as a kind of proof, so as to prevent any forgery or copying of his work. In the early 18th century, *LV* was dismembered by a collector in Britain and reconstituted as an album.<sup>58</sup> Claude began to draw in this book around 1635, and it is an almost complete inventory from 1637 until his death in 1682.<sup>59</sup> It contains 195 drawings, with two indexes, and is used as the main source for research around Claude's work. In *LV* no. 52, the drawing is connected to *Landscape with Rebekah*, and Claude writes that it was commissioned for “Cardinale Giori”.

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<sup>55</sup> Marcel Röthlisberger, *Claude Lorrain: The Paintings, Volumes I and II*, Hacker Art Books, New York, NY, 1961, p. 188.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188, footnote 2.

<sup>57</sup> See Michael Kitson, *Claude Lorrain: Liber Veritatis*, British Museum, London, 1978.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

The patron was Angelo Giorio (1585-1662), who became a Cardinal in 1643. It is the fifth of seven pictures (possibly eight) made for this patron in Rome.<sup>60</sup>

It is interesting for me to compare the original painting with the drawing in *LV* because of their difference: the figures in the middle ground, Rebekah, Abraham's servant and her father, are bigger, and other features like their body movements are given more emphasis, while levels and relations between different parts of the painting are clarified. There is a strong wind depicted as going from left to right. It carries a flock of birds and affects the vegetation and the clothes of the standing shepherd. All in all, the glorious morning is represented in the painting through a schema of shadow and light. All movements in the drawing are exaggerated, making the painting appear to be a bit staged in comparison. Bearing in mind that *LV* was used privately by Claude for recording and making a *post hoc* sketch of the painting, its interest for me relates to the fact that this drawing is a 'looking back' over all the work he has done on the painting. The *LV* is important for me as I witness Claude seeing himself seeing. At the same time, I acknowledge that the drawings in *LV* could be looked upon as a device for remembering the specific features of the motif that differ from his other paintings. There is another important aspect that brings us closer, as if Claude is aware of the fact that, given that drawing cannot depict light within landscape, it is the light that is his real subject and the stories told in these landscapes are peripheral. They are only significant in relation to what is required for a work to be commissioned.<sup>61</sup>

I am trained as a painter, and when I look at a picture the process of making it is always included in my way of perceiving it. My knowledge of the picture I am looking at combines different professionals' expertise, all with different specialities and gazes. As an interested viewer in the context of the museum, I am affected by this gathering of information, in as much as it affects the context – context in this instance meaning biography, bibliography and provenance; art historical research; the curators' hanging of the picture in relation to other pictures, the information on its plate that mediates its meaning, information sheet, audio guide and the conservation report – all of which informs and influences the presentation of the picture. I am therefore affected by this as it is a covenant, an international system, a language between museums to be used for research and making exhibitions.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 71, and Marcel Röthlisberger, *Burlington Magazine*, #115, 1973, p. 652.

<sup>61</sup> Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf describes in her *Ideal Landscape* Claude's relations to his commissioners as "purely commercial": "Most of his work was commissioned; he also sold to an art dealer who acted as his commissioning agent. And yet there is nothing to contradict the supposition that the paintings are an authentic expression of his own world-view and attitude to life. Perhaps his patrons simply gave him the opportunity to paint the kind of pictures he already wanted to make", p. 74.



When I see *Landscape with Rebekah* in the museum, I am in fact looking at an object mediated through generations of art-historical research and exhibition practice – including all misunderstandings, mistakes and manipulations. Aspects of this mediation include the actual change in the appearance of the painting. The picture was re-canvased in the 18th century – this method involved gluing the canvas to a new one by stretching it under pressure, which had the effect of flattening out some of the brushstrokes on the surface of the painting. This, along with the varnishes applied, the changes to the colour pigments over time, multiple washes, restorations and touch-ups, contributes to and affects how it is seen. It is a different painting to the one that left Claude's studio to begin its journey to its first owner.

## *Scene Two*

### *Seeing (studio, grid and perception)*

“To see an object is either to have it on the fringe of the visual field and be able to concentrate on it, or else respond to this summons by actually concentrating upon it. When I do concentrate my eyes on it, I become anchored in it, but this coming to rest of the gaze is merely a modality of its movement: I continue inside one object the exploration which earlier hovered over them all, and in one movement I close up the landscape and open the object.”

Maurice Merleau-Ponty<sup>62</sup>

In the Japanese artist Ritsuko Hidaka’s video *Pythagorean Audio Guide*, she posed a number of questions to me while I was viewing a Victorian painting that portrayed a building and a garden.<sup>63</sup> Her questions concerned the way the viewers perceived various sizes and distances in the painting. I was questioned, for example, about the distance between the gate and the front door, the height of a tree, the height of the windows, etc. In my answers, I used my experiences of real doors, trees, windows and buildings as reference points. Eventually she asked a question that awoke me from my illusion: “What is the distance between you and the door?” And I found myself tumbling headlong out of the painting.<sup>64</sup> In this way it became clear to me that the pictorial space was related to the room I found myself in.

It is significant, then, that the space I believed I had fallen into was the department of European Painting in any classical art museum, a public space on whose walls a collection of historical paintings from the Middle Ages to Modernism were presented and stored. The National Gallery in London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre, the Galleria degli Uffizi and Nationalmuseum in Stockholm are just a few examples of the same model, whose form was created in the 18th and 19th centuries. Like other spaces where things are on

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<sup>62</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge Classics, reprint 2003, p. 78.

<sup>63</sup> The title of Hidaka’s work was *Pythagorean Audio Guide*. The paintings which were on display on the wall depicted some local buildings. In order to get the actual measurements of the building, Ritsuko Hidaka visited the location, and sometimes went into the house and measured the windows and so on, or in the case of public buildings, she obtained the architectural records from the local government office. The show was *Summer Collection '97*, South London Gallery. I am referring to a video with interviews with people who looked at one of the paintings showing one of these buildings. One was thus observed while trying to see [to see what?]. Most of the artists who took part in the same exhibition as Hidaka appeared in her video; I was one of the artists. Link:

<http://www.southlondongallery.org/docs/exh/exhibition.jsp?id=49&view=past>

<sup>64</sup> The artist claimed that Japanese viewers would have related their estimations to the surface of the canvas. So the illusion of falling out of the painting would never have arisen in a Japanese context.

display, for example department stores and the modern press, the museum (in this case the European model) deals mainly with the presumption that their viewers are passive.<sup>65</sup> In fact I fell into the room of the South London Gallery, a contemporary art space, which is where I was questioned and filmed. Although not a museum, I felt that due to the nature of this picture, standing in front of it recreated a classic museum situation. In the museum space paintings are presented as framed, restored, exhibited and preserved, and carry many narrative layers about their history and origins. Here they are shown as fine art, separate and distinct from characteristics that are traditionally associated with artefacts, such as function, skill, craftsmanship, or as objects that are seen to be of magical or ritualistic significance. They are shown in sequences in well-lit and guarded galleries, specifically designed for their display. Despite this attempt at containment – collected and arranged according to style, period, cultural context and artist/authorship – the paintings collectively also form other kinds of narrations between themselves, stories informed by the visitor's fantasies. Despite the seemingly complex relations that create the contexts, this is a public space just as negotiated as a supermarket or a hospital. We know, and our bodies recognise, how to act in these kinds of spaces and we bring our eyes to focus on the subject suggested by the context. To look at paintings in a museum is, as the scene with me falling out of the picture shows, an active bodily experience. It becomes clear that to interpret what is going on in this sense and to undertake even the simple task of calculating a distance within a pictorial space, is a complex meeting of the cultural and the subjective.

When I begin to copy the composition from Claude's *Landscape with Rebekah* onto my canvas, I have to do a number of calculations. To outline the drawing I use an old technique learnt from art school, a method coming from generations of artists and also used by Claude

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<sup>65</sup> Chantal Georgel writes in her essay 'Museum as a Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century France': "The press, the museum, and the department store can thus be understood to have played complementary roles within a single ideological system. The association between seemingly disparate institutions that I am suggesting here is justified not so much by external similarities of vocabulary or display, or by similarities between spatial organization of the journal (the visitor/reader peruses the halls of the museum just as he or she peruses the table of contents...); it is justified most of all, I would argue, by the strong complementarity of their functions. The museum, the department store and the press, all born during the century of industry, were each in their own way and in complementary fashion 'machines' of capitalism. While the department store offered its clients the pleasure of consuming the products of private accumulation, the press sold its readers the pleasure of accumulated information – an image of mastery that justified the title of 'museum' and, indeed, represented the ideal museum. For its part, the museum allowed the visitors symbolically to possess objects that were inaccessible – objects that could neither be bought, since they were inalienable, nor fully understood, except by an elite of *amateurs* or art appreciators – and as such invested with high cultural prestige", from *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, editors Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, Routledge, London, 2001 (first published by Regents of the University of Minnesota, 1994), p. 119.

when he transferred his drawings to canvases: the grid. With the help of this tool, which Rosalind Krauss calls “a linguistic matrix”<sup>66</sup>, I draw a grid on the surface of a photograph of the original and draw a grid on my empty canvas.<sup>67</sup> The grid is drawn first diagonally from corner to corner, then vertical and horizontal lines through the cross that was formed by the diagonal lines. Proceeding methodically, I repeat the procedure until I have created 16 x 16 squares, all with diagonal crosses. With the help of this grid, I come to understand the structure behind the construction of Claude’s composition. With the grid, the skeleton of the painting becomes clear, distinguishing the foreground, mid-distance and background, making it possible to find the horizon, the composition, forms, lines and organisation. Angles hook onto one another in the different planes of the picture and the directions in the painting are revealed. I bring all this into my canvas with a carbon pen.

This photograph of the painting is something I go back to again and again, looking through the grid to be able to see new details and aspects, all of which raises new questions. However, the drawn grid on the canvas slowly disappears for every layer of paint I apply.

In front of what will become my after-image made after Claude’s, I photograph my canvas: this is to keep the look of each stage of the work and to be able to use the series of photographs for my research. I am also aware that in taking a step back to distance myself from the activity of painting the after-image, I become a viewer of it – in the same way as Claude when he made his drawings for *LV*. I also archive these stages on my website, where for me they become memories of lost stages of the after-image (or lost paintings). In fact every phase of the drawing and painting is a witnessing of the process of seeing. I cannot work from one corner to the next – it is not in my instinct to work like that – rather, my method is to draw and paint the place my gaze finds. When I find a kind of pleasure in

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<sup>66</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “The/Cloud/”, essay from the exhibition catalogue *Agnes Martin*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1993, p. 155.

<sup>67</sup> E. H. Gombrich writes in *Art & Illusion* about the grid technique: “But if we superimpose a regular grid on the painting, we become aware of those objective relationships within the picture that our reading ignores. This is indeed what a painter would do if he wanted to make a facsimile of Constable’s painting...” This statement is illustrated in his book with a white grid laid over a reproduction of Constable’s *Wivenhoe Park*. I find myself in the same situation as Gombrich’s “artist” who needs to put the grid directly on *Landscape with Rebekah* to be able to see; however, for me it is impossible because I am dealing with the original. I ask myself how artists made copies before the invention of photography? After all, Constable made several copies after Claude. I would like to think that he conceived of the grid, that he imagined it. Yet I have to stay with the reproduction I have on hand and accept this version made by the technologies of the camera – with its inevitable distortions. E. H. Gombrich, *Art & Illusion, A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Phaidon, Sixth edition, 2002 (first published 1960), London & New York, 2003, p. 257.

Claude's *Landscape with Rebekah*, I will always go back to that point in the grid to look again. When looking, I have no place or point of view that is ideal, as I always shift places according to where it is the most pleasurable. I shoot partial rapid glimpses on to the subject of my attention and then back to my canvas, always following my hand movement to mimic the line I thought I had seen. It is the experience of what was 'seen' and then what could be drawn that I attempt to translate. My drawing and what I see cannot be perfect in relation to my after-images; they are always slightly out of place. I have to continuously calibrate and move lines to come closer to what has been seen inside the frames of the individual squares, within my grid.

My way of writing in my diary in relation to *Landscape of Rebekah* focuses upon both the distances within the painting and my physical closeness or distance to the original painting. When I take on the routine as the copyist, my physical relation to my painting, and therefore to the original, and thereby my identification with the gaze, is closer than when I am researching and writing through my study of art history and theory. In the latter instance, I am in the archives of museums or in my studio writing on my computer. It does not mean that the immediacy of copying/painting is somehow closer than my act of recollection of the work as I write; neither is more nor less true than the other.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes: "The picture is a flat thing contriving to give us what we would see in the presence of 'diversely contoured' things by offering sufficient diacritical signs of the missing dimension, according to height and width. Depth is a third dimension derived from the other two."<sup>68</sup>

In Western art-historical theory, the discussion of the perspective of the viewer and artist in relation to the ideal point of view in front of the painting has been central. Already by the 15th century, Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) states that the viewer needs to stand opposite to the vanishing point in the painting to see the motif correctly.<sup>69</sup> This means that the painting

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<sup>68</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" (from *Primacy of Perception*, pp. 159-190 in the 1964 translation), here printed in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, edited by Thomas Baldwin, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, p. 304.

<sup>69</sup> See Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, on the "Albertian Gaze", pp. 102-131. See also Tony Phillips' informative text on Sony Brook State University of New York's website: "One-point perspective is the most common systematic method for representing space on a surface. The idea is that the picture in its frame should give the illusion of being a window through which the immobile eye of the observer looks at an outside 3-dimensional world. (Alberti speaks of the canvas as 'an open window through which I see what I want to paint'.) Each spot visible through the window gives a spot in the picture, located at the intersection with the picture plane of the straight line joining it to the eye."  
<http://www.math.sunysb.edu/~tony/whatsnew/column/alberti-0102/alberti1.html>

has to be hung at a perfect height in relation to the viewer, and that the viewer should correct his or her body, both vertically and horizontally, to find the right point of view.

To look at a painting is a physical experience that includes both our approach to the painting and our leaving of it. When I visit Nationalmuseum, I always aim to find Claude's picture first, jogging up the famous steps to the second floor, and I head into the galleries with a definite idea of where I am going. I have to locate the picture, as it is often moved to different locations within the same part of the museum, and most of the time it is hung alongside two other paintings, *Landscape with Huntsmen, Mountains and a Lake* (undated) by Gaspard Dughet (1615-1675), and *Bacchus-Apollo* (1624) by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665). To look at a picture is never a direct experience, for a direct experience assumes that all motivations, aspects and associations would be erased from the act of seeing. Henri Lefebvre makes a connection between the experience of looking at a painting and a face or façade, saying that the face of the painting always meets the viewer with the same logic, "... the painting turns in the direction of anyone approaching it..."<sup>70</sup>. Therefore the museum/gallery is a place like no other, in the sense that we move in this space in relation to this – most often unconscious – encounter.

When I enter the gallery, then, the picture would 'notice' that I step back and forth in relation to the breadth and length of the canvas; sometimes I move closer and then I step back, moving my feet, head, and hands, shifting positions. Sometimes my hands move to my face to support a cheek or scratch my nose, my eyes look up, down, left and right across and over the surface – it is a scrutinizing eye/I that sees. This may appear to be the way I look at an object that can't look back, but my experience is that there are some pictures that do look back, that "... a painting has to call on someone, bring me to a halt in front of itself and hold me there as if spellbound and unable to move."<sup>71</sup> And this is what my looking at the *Landscape with Rebekah* does. Could this be the recognition from the painting I find when standing in front of the Claude, a recognition that registers in my body and is revealed by my body's response where I am temporarily unable to move? What is significant is my encounter with the Claude – I leave the room.

In the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston there is a wonderful painting on display from the workshop of Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516), showing what appears to be a 'close-

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<sup>70</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.

<sup>71</sup> A quotation from Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980, p. 92. Quoted by W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?*, p. 36. I have changed a small part of the sentence, from "bring him to a halt" to "bring me to a halt".

up', a portrait of Christ carrying the cross, or I also wondered if it might be a fragment of another painting as only the head and shoulders and top of the cross fill this frame. This is not an ethereal Christ, it is a Christ that looks more like a man. He is not looking straight at the viewer, his gaze is searching for something outside of the painting and his mouth has a very sensual form, with the beginning of a smile, and on his chin one can see a tear. For me this is a man who knows that he is being looked at, and he shows that he likes it.<sup>72</sup> Its fascination for me is all the more compelling due to the fact that the painter retains the model's narcissism – which in fact makes it contemporary to the making of the painting; this figure then is more than a representation Christ. In the guide to the museum I read about this painting: "*Christ Carrying the Cross* is a lucid, vivid stimulus to meditation. The beholder of a religious image in early sixteenth-century Venice was prepared to a much greater degree than is for instance the modern viewer to enter into the unfolding drama, to employ the image as a vehicle toward interior visualization." And further down the text: "The lack of any painted context allows the viewer's imagination to place the event anywhere. In its sensitivity to soft modeling and its evocation of the tactile surface – flesh and tears – enhances the spiritual impact."<sup>73</sup> This in a sense describes what I describe, but the significance of the man is not the same.

The collector Isabella Stewart Gardner, who was also the founder of the museum, decided to show this painting mounted on a small table by one of the windows in a room lined with rich red fabric that she titled "the Titian Room", where the window sheds daylight on the painting. The installation invites us as viewers to take an intimate position while regarding the painting. We are supposed to sit on a chair to view it and she, the owner of the house, has also placed a vase with flowers on the table, on the right-hand side, in the direction of the gaze of Christ. In my view, it is a very interesting installation which converts the table into an altar. However, given the design of the table and chair, it could also indicate 19th century bourgeois domestic taste rather than the display furniture of a museum. In my view it could in fact be a vanity table.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See my two e-mail conversations with Friedemann Malsch, published on [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net), about Bernardino Licinio da Pordenone (c. 1489-1565), *Portrait of Young Man*, c. 1525.

<sup>73</sup> Hilliard T. Goldfarb, *The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum – A Companion guide and History*, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston & Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1995, pp. 125-126.

<sup>74</sup> In fact there is a more private message/act embedded in Stewart Gardner's installation. According to the catalogue, "The painting arrived in late 1898, shortly before her husband suddenly died. In front of it she set a Norwegian silver cup in which she placed violets when in season. Both the cup and violets carried associations of her husband. Jack Gardner had bought her violets on a trip to Rome, and she had placed a cross of violets on his coffin. Years later she requested that violets, if in season, be placed on her own coffin. The museum has returned to the custom of placing freshly cut flowers – violets of similarly colored blossoms – in the cup." Quotation taken from Hilliard T. Goldfarb, *The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum – A Companion guide and History*, pp. 125-126.

As a visitor to the museum today, I encounter the presence of Isabella Stewart Gardner as I walk through its hallways and rooms. She installed her paintings and furniture in such a way that I can still trace her movements within these spaces. Here in “the Titian Room” I imagine her sitting in front of the painting by Bellini, meditating on Christ/the man. However, today I cannot sit in front of her table as this is prevented by museum practice in order to preserve the furniture; a ribbon is stretched over the chair to prevent us sitting on it, and the glass placed in front of the painting also hinders my gaze and prevents me from coming close to its surface. These modifications made by the museum to the practice that she established distances me. The founder’s desire to keep everything as she left it has necessarily generated another kind of experience.<sup>75</sup>

This example shows that ideal viewing positions may collapse in the process of installation. In this case, the display of the picture underlined a certain aspect of the portrait and then the loss of this intention through the insertion of the ribbon and the glass, all of which alters the initial invitation (by the artist, Isabella Stewart Gardner, and the museum of today) for the spectator to look at the painting.

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<sup>75</sup> My reaction to the context of the painting in Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum became a suggestion for a piece for the group show (*Influence, Anxiety & Gratitude*, MIT-List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA, 2003). The suggested title of this piece was *See and Seen*, and the proposition was as follows: I suggested to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum that I install a video camera on a tripod in front of *Christ Carrying the Cross*. From this camera a broadband-cable was to be positioned so that what happened in the museum would be transmitted directly to a screen placed on a table installed in the exhibition at MIT. This would be the site where the spectator sat in front of the image of the painting made by Bellini’s workshop, as shown in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. And here the viewer both comes close and moves further away from it – it was physically far away from the original painting but closer to the image. In the Museum the camera was on the tripod, placed in such a way that the spectator would still have space to stand behind the chair to see. At MIT, the spectator would sit on a chair and look into a screen placed on a table, not unlike how a computer is installed. When a spectator at the Stewart Gardner Museum approaches the painting, he or she stands in front of the camera. The spectator sitting in front of the screen at MIT will be able to witness this meeting. The video camera is filming the painting at the museum through the glass in front of the painting of Christ. This set-up will make it possible to see the face of the viewer looking at the painting at the Gardner museum – the face of the painting will meet the face of the spectator, and the spectator at MIT-List Visual Arts Center would be able to see this. In this work which was never realized, I created a situation where the painting/screen is seeing the viewer.



## *Scene Three*

### *Seeing (museum, gaze and painting)*

A scene from a museum in *Vertigo* (1958) by Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980), as I recall it.<sup>76</sup> Actually it is a number of sequences without dialogue, where a man (John “Scottie” Ferguson), played by James Stewart, tails a woman (Madeleine Elster), played by Kim Novak, to a flower shop, a cemetery, and finally to an art museum. In the last scene, he finds her in a gallery, sitting on a bench in front of a portrait – she has still not noticed him. I see them first from outside, then inside the gallery. Then she is presented to me through his eyes, facing away from him, in front of the portrait, which she in turn is looking at. The camera focuses on – and therefore we are brought closer to – the bouquet that she has just bought in the flower shop, then on a bouquet in the painting. Then the camera compares the hairstyle of the woman looking with that of the woman in the portrait. Finally, the camera zooms in on a necklace worn by both women. Now, through the set of different comparisons, I understand that the woman on the bench and the woman in the portrait are connected to one another. But it is also obvious that they are not the same person; they are not identical – the painting is historical, whereas Madeleine is present, or present through her representation in Hitchcock’s film. It is through the similarities between the bouquets, the necklaces and the hairstyles, and through the dissimilarity between the historical painting and the museum spectator that I, at that moment, think that Kim Novak’s character (Madeleine) is influenced and transformed by the painting.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> I know that music plays an important role in this film; however, my memory fails to register the sound: I remember it almost as a silent film. However, the Scottish artist Douglas Gordon’s *Feature Film* (1999, Artangel, 81 mins) is focused on the music in *Vertigo*, a work that examines the structure of the suspense created by Bernard Herrmann’s score for the film.

<sup>77</sup> I made a work inspired by this scene in the museum in 2002, *Selbstbildnis*. Short description: Two portraits of the collection of the Schack-Galerie in Munich were hung opposite each other, with a bench in between, in an exhibition space in the gallery. One of them was *Youthful Self Portrait*, by Franz von Lenbach, made in 1856, when he was 20 years old and still a student at the Art Academy of Munich. The second one was *Portrait of a Man* (after Andrea del Sarto), painted by Lenbach in 1865, a copy of what he believed was a self-portrait by del Sarto (1486-1530). Throughout the entire four months of the exhibition, Philip Metz sat on the bench for an hour each Sunday and observed one of the paintings. For the duration of the project he agreed not to shave his beard. The artist and the student also agreed on conducting an e-mail conversation during the same period. See catalogue *Selbstbildnis*, Schack-Galerie Kunstverein München, Munich 2002, essay by Sören Grammel. See also Matts Leiderstam & Philip Metz, “Selbstbildnis – a conversation”, *Fall 02 Drucksache Kunstverein München, Gesammelte Drucksachen/Collected Newsletter Kunstverein München*, eds. Maria Lind, Sören Grammel, Katharina Schlieben, Judith Schwarzbart, Ana Paula Cohen, Juleinne Lorz, Tessa Praun, Revolver, Frankfurt am Main 2004, pp. 128-133, and on [www.seeandseen.net](http://www.seeandseen.net)

Laura Mulvey proposes that the subjective camera (the active male gaze) dominates in *Vertigo*, and that the viewer is forced into Scottie's voyeuristic desire through his or her projections onto Madeleine.<sup>78</sup> He falls in love with this image and the mystique that Madeleine's figure engenders – in the second part of the film he is back in the museum to look, to remember or recall her, for she has died – and here, due to Hitchcock's positioning of the viewer, and the presence of another woman on the same bench, both Scottie and I/the viewer are deceived into believing that she has returned from the dead. This enervates something in the melancholic Scottie, who then seeks and finds a woman (Judy Barton) who looks like the dead Madeleine and whom he 'reconstructs' to become Madeleine. Mulvey points out that he is changing her into the perfect fetish for his sadistic voyeuristic desires through Barton's preparedness to be reconstructed – through her masochism and exhibitionism, she becomes Scottie's perfect opponent; her role is as an object, and it is through this that he in fact controls her; it is here that his desire is aroused. In the end, the deceit of Scottie in all this is revealed. I am disturbed, for my response is one of wonder, shock – and satisfaction.

Mulvey argues that *Vertigo* focuses on the consequences of a split between active and passive looking – shown as the difference between man and woman – where she performs as “the perfect to-be-looked-at-image”<sup>79</sup>. What then is the painting's role in the film, this portrait that I assume as part of the story? For Scottie, Madeleine is a picture (woman) that comes alive as in a dream, and he resists anything that will interfere with this fantasy, until it is memory that ultimately reveals Madeleine as fantasy.

After seeing the film several times, I realise that there is an important scene to juxtapose to the scene from the museum. It is an act of Scottie's high-school love (Marjorie 'Midge' Wood), who is an illustrator (an artist), a working woman. She is the loyal friend who is still in love with him, and she is the only one in the film who calls him “John”. In a motherly way, she takes care of him after Madeleine's death and decides to make a paraphrase/copy of the portrait from the museum, and to propose herself as the object of his desire. She does this by changing the portrait, painting her own face over the other woman's face. It is now Marjorie's 'self-portrait' that seeks the gaze of John/Scottie through a happy, loving, open face instead of the original woman who was bowing her head slightly with a seductive look. Scottie is shown walking to the easel to see the painting in her studio, while I am seeing the back of the painting and his reaction of discomfort, if not disgust. It is only after this approach that I am

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<sup>78</sup> Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (written 1973 and published in 1975 in *Screen*), from Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989, pp. 14–26.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

shown the painting. By this act of copying, she reveals both his desire and her own. Like Madeleine, I too spend a great deal of time in a museum looking, and like Midge copying paintings, and like both women, I do this for my own desire.

I bring my draft copy of *Landscape with Rebekah* – my after-image – to the original painting in Nationalmuseum. Here I work two to four times a week from early morning to noon – sometimes longer, sometimes less. Every time, after my shift, I lock my canvas into an office located behind one of the walls of one of the big galleries – there it nests and dries until I return to continue. It is a room full of books and catalogues, and here and there lay papers referring to works for an upcoming show about the Grand Tour<sup>80</sup> – my canvas becomes an oil colour smelling alien in this room, a room intended for art-historical research.

While copying, I study the original at a distance of approximately one meter, sometimes leaning closer, inspecting as near as I dare to. I am looking at the picture for a longer time than a normal museum visitor would. How close I can get to the painting's surface is decided by the security system. If I work during the museum's opening hours, I often have onlookers who watch me in turn, and who see a painting and a man who copies at an easel in the museum. It is a recognisable impression – something a museum visitor would expect and relate to (and so can I), despite the well-known fact that copying is no longer part of an artist's training.

Every museum I have worked with has had different rules regarding how to deal with copyists. The Louvre is perhaps the museum that has housed this activity for the longest period (over two centuries) and has an entire department to take care of the copyists. When the museum first opened, the policy was "Each visitor should be able to put his easel in front of any painting or statue to draw, paint and model as he likes."<sup>81</sup> The present head of the office, Maiten de Ferrier, believes that the artist who copies in the Louvre galleries today "... like[s] to follow in the footsteps of all the great painters who have copied here".<sup>82</sup> I like this statement as it brings me into a line, a tradition where I can disappear and become an image of the copyist within the museums walls.<sup>83</sup> The canvas is stamped with the museum's stamp

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<sup>80</sup> *Drömmen om Italien – Nordiska resenärer i Södern 1750-1870*, Nationalmuseum, October 14th, 2004 – 16th January 2005, curators Mikael Ahlund and Torsten Gunnarsson.

<sup>81</sup> Quotation from Joseph A. Harriss, "Master Class", an article on the subject of copying in the Louvre, published in the *Smithsonian* magazine, October 2002, pp. 76-81.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> When I was copying in the Louvre, I was anonymous and it was a great feeling. One day I heard a voice behind me saying "And here stands the Swedish artist Matts Leiderstam." It was the curator for the Skånes

on both front and back when it enters the institution for the first time. The size of the canvas has to differ by at least 20% from the original, and the copies are stamped again on the way out. The Art Institute of Chicago had 10 % difference as their rule, and in that instance they wanted me to carry my canvas with me in and out every day. That was an impossible demand as it had to be dry before it could be moved. In the end I was able to leave my canvas in a storage space close to the gallery. At Nationalmuseum in Stockholm I have to sign a document that gives me permission to copy the painting. Here the rules state that the painting has to differ from the original size by at least 30%; and when the copy is ready, the head conservator stamps the picture on the back of the canvas with the word “Copy”.<sup>84</sup>

When working with *Landscape with Rebekah*, I think about the place from which the scene is seen in Claude’s original, not from the museum where I am sitting, I mean the scene in the painting. I imagine that the landscape is seen from a height not far from the shepherds on the left. Rebekah’s leave-taking takes place at about the same distance that we normally are to a film screen in a cinema. Who is looking at the scene? Is this viewer part of or outside the events? I’m not thinking of the artist, Claude, who is outside the picture, at arm’s (brush’s) length and 355 years away at the same time. Helen Langdon comments on the fact that in Claude’s pictures we are, as spectators, placed outside the image in another space, a description I find accurate for *Landscape with Rebekah*: “The device of the framing trees, the spectators as though in the wings of a theatre, heighten the sense of looking at an enchanted land.” The assumed viewer of this painting is a visitor to a theatre who is there to witness a play against the backdrop of a skilfully constructed stage design.<sup>85</sup>

Lorrain’s colleague, Nicolas Poussin, sometimes built models to try out his compositions. They looked like stage designs in which coulisses and figures could be moved both in depth and width. Poussin’s “grande machine”<sup>86</sup> was a box that consisted of two parts. The first one was called the “planche Bargongue”, a stage structure that the artist built his compositions in, using wax figures, architecture and landscape models. The second part of the “grande machine” consisted of a cubic or prismatic box with an open base.<sup>87</sup> The box was placed on top of the “planche Bargongue” with the open side down. Through a hole in the middle of the

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Konstföreningar who recognised me and presented me to the members. I had to step out of my role and tell them why I was there.

<sup>84</sup> Document signed by Matts Leiderstam, and Mikael Ahlund from Nationalmuseum, September 9th, 2003. The copying time given is from September 22nd – December 31th. Read (Swedish) Louise Lyberg’s essay about the history of copying at the museum, from Nationalmuseum catalogue no. 634, *Falskt & Äkta: Kopieverksamheten på Nationalmuseum*, pp. 123-135.

<sup>85</sup> Helen Langdon, *Claude Lorrain*, Phaidon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 94.

<sup>86</sup> Oskar Bätschmann, *Nicolas Poussin: Dialectics of Painting*, Reaktion Books, London, 1990, pp. 28-29.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

short side of the box, Poussin/the viewer could see the tableau at a distance and try out the painting beforehand.<sup>88</sup>

When I am looking at the painting standing there in the gallery, I look closer at the figures in relation to their surroundings, the trees, grass and stones. The figures, that is those who play the principal part in the mid-distance, look like Lilliputians. It is as if the landscape and the figures are seen at different distances, through different optical instruments and narrated by different narrators, with different stories in mind. One of the stories is about the landscape, and another about Rebekah's fate. Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf gives different reasons: "The pattern of relationships in Claude's landscapes, both within the picture and in the relation to the spectator, are based on certain special dimensional conditions. In an article on the perspective in Claude's painting, Per Bjurström (1962) makes many interesting observations. He points out that Claude's work contain echoes of lessons learnt from perspective paintings of his teacher, Tassi, intended for palace walls at a great distance from the spectator. In Claude this vastness of distances is often combined with a closeness at ground level, as though a motif infinitely far away had been brought close – or as Bjurström puts it – as though we were looking through a telescopic lens.<sup>89</sup> [...] His [Claude's] sense of distance-cum-closeness evolved as a result of the kind of training he had received and of the practical method he adopted in his studies of nature in the open air. Bjurström points out that Claude's drawings from nature clearly show how his eye has ranged from very close – he would sit on the ground – to distant view."<sup>90</sup>

The landscape and figures are painted in different styles and are disproportionately small in relation to the landscape, as if man is subordinate to nature. It is as if the figures are inserted into the landscape, as if convention forced Claude to populate the landscape with these (strange) inhabitants. According to Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, this feature might be explained by the fact that it was common for buyers to ask for a particular Biblical or classical story whose leading characters would inhabit the pastoral landscape.<sup>91</sup> In addition to

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid. It is also interesting to think of this hole as corresponding to an imagined focal point in the planned painting.

<sup>89</sup> Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin och Claude Lorrain*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990, p. 91.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 74. Rossholm Lagerlöf says that there are speculations that two different pairs of hands painted the figures and the landscape in Claude Lorrain's landscapes, that he in fact gave the task of painting the figures to another artist or an assistant. For my part, I think of another artist who painted in two different styles, Gustave Courbet, who painted people with a brush and the landscape behind them with a knife. According to Marcel Röthlisberger, Claude's negotiation with the commissioner of the painting concerned the subject, size and price of the painting; sometimes material

this, Claude's choice was to depict – in fact this was what he painted for, his real subject – light. Most of his paintings did not represent a specific place of the Roman campagna; he takes fragments of landscapes from different places and then brings them together, fragments that he had recorded through his drawings. His work represents the nature of the Roman countryside but seldom points out a specific site.

Contrary to Claude's technique, I work with oil colours from tubes – an invention from the late 19th century – and I work in the museum gallery. Sometimes I turn around from my position and meet those gazes that compare my after-image with the original. Sometimes, someone says that he/she thinks my version “looks just like the original”. From my position, I can only see the differences and the lack of skill, that in fact I am off-target again. But when I place myself where they stand, I can see that it is not as different as I might have thought. Here I stand exposed to the gazes and glances of the museum viewers – Claude's painting is guarded, and all viewing conditions, including the strength of the lighting on the painting, are monitored. My presence was controlled every time I was in the museum to paint and I had to show my permission to be there. Each new day's work meant that I became more and more part of the activities of the museum, so the procedure went from suspicious control to formality. However, now I am part of the museum, and not only as the image of the copyist. My after-image is guarded when I leave my place to go to the bathroom – I am helped in and out of the office with my painting – I sometimes go for lunch with some of the curators and now and then I chat with employees. Despite all signs of belonging, I feel that I am alien – maybe I do not fit in after all: for in this context I am neither a contemporary artist nor an amateur, neither an art historian nor a museum viewer. I am uncertain about my role as I act through mimicry and conceal my desire – my reasons for being there in front of the painting are layered and not evident. I am here, like Madeleine, playing my role in front of the picture – like Midge painting myself into a ‘copy’.

Looking at Claude's *Landscape with Rebekah*, first my gaze hooks on to the shepherds in the foreground: one is sitting and the other is standing and pointing from right to left; they appear to be involved in a conversation and totally unaware of what is happening behind them. Röthlisberger calls them “two ruddy herdsman”.<sup>92</sup> It is interesting for me to read his description of the picture. He starts with the landscape and ends with the figures. His text indicates that he has seen them all and is able to compare the motifs of adjacent pictures of Claude's hand. It is a dense text, precise and specific. The landscape descriptions I read as

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might be discussed, for example different colour pigments, depending on cost. Röthlisberger, *Claude Lorrain – the Paintings*, p. 21.

<sup>92</sup> Röthlisberger, *Burlington Magazine*, p. 655.

written with great love for the picture: “It is a painting of great charm, at the same time spacious and intimately composed, delicate in design and firmly painted. [...] The overall effect is that of a peaceful verdant landscape under a blue sky which has pale warm planes alternate in the trees, so as to accentuate depth. [...] The left is an open view, lightly bound together at the top by the foliage and the clouds; the horizontals of the luminous distance stand against the dark framing tree of the foreground.”<sup>93</sup> For me it is the landscape as a stage that he describes; this is an idea that could be applied to all Claude’s landscapes.

Röthlisberger actually makes a reference to the theatre; however, this reference is partial as it is in connection to the figures only, which he divides into “main actors” and “bystanders”.<sup>94</sup>

The pastoral landscape inhabited by shepherds and goats is a constellation that art history indicates as concealing an erotic message, and that this is naturally connected to classical pastoral poetry and whatever activities occurred in these kinds of landscapes. Two sides of Arcadia that is “... shaggy and smooth; dark and light; a place of bucolic leisure and a place of primitive panic.”<sup>95</sup> In classical Arcadia Pan ruled, half-goat and half-man. Pan’s pleasure does not discriminate: it is a figure that took pleasure with no distinction between humans and animals. He could enchant those who approached his forest with wild melodies from his pan flute, inducing them into a state of “pan-ic or pan-demonium.”<sup>96</sup> The fact that the Arcadian landscape was a place of amusement and mortal fear has been central to my interest. The practice of gay men – including myself – cruising in parks, with the drama of their darkness and light, in a landscape architecture that took its cue from the ideal landscape, formed the basis of many of my works during the 1990s. *The Shepherds*, 1994-95, and *Returned*, 1997-99, are just some examples of a series of works that came about out of the connection between historical paintings and the cruising park.<sup>97</sup>

To return to my gaze in relation to *Landscape with Rebekah*, my eyes seamlessly glide to the mid-distance; here I witness a movement happening: Rebekah’s departure along the winding

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1995, p. 517.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 527.

<sup>97</sup> Cruising, an activity in male gay culture that is a dying art here in Stockholm, has traditionally taken place in parks. I speak of this in the past since I think that the act of picking up casual partners anonymously has largely moved here in Sweden from a real to a virtual space. I find support for this claim in the remarks of Jon Voss, managing director of QX, who called my Grand Tour exhibition “nostalgic” at the press showing at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. He thought that my works showed the “good old days when one could pick up casual partners in parks”. He is the director of possibly the largest gay site in Scandinavia, so he is probably right. See the e-mail conversation between Matts Leiderstam and Kristoffer Arvidsson on <http://www.grandtourexchibition.com>

road, as if I were reading lines of a page from a text from left to right. The father, Bethu'el, gestures farewell to the servant, who turns around, together with Rebekah, glancing back towards her father whom they leave behind them. The servant points to the unknown and new and Rebekah follows. They are, in my view, dressed in modern clothes, provincial clothes, not historic but contemporaneous with the making of the painting. Yet the father, whom I think of as a patriarch, is dressed in Biblical clothes. Röthlisberger states that he is shaped after God the Father in Raphael's *Creation of Man* (located in the Loggia at the Vatican Palace.)<sup>98</sup> The father points in the direction of the cattle crossing a bridge, and at the end of the road camels loaded with goods rest and will presently move on and be driven home. The figures belong to the world of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). Röthlisberger refers to Claude's first biographer, Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688), when he argues that the colour of the dress symbolises different moods and characteristics as well as being symbolic of the figures and landscapes: "... divinity and serenity are rendered in blue, power or love in red, splendour in yellow, subjection in violet, hope and servitude in green, purity in white."<sup>99</sup> According to this system, her father Bethu'el would represent grandiose pureness; the servant that leads Rebekah along the road, dressed in yellow and red, could show that he is strong and reliable in his task of delivering the bride to the bridegroom, Isaac; and Rebekah is dressed in white and pink, a virgin that may potentially fall in love with the man she is yet to meet?

It was necessary for me to read the Bible so that I could grasp the story behind the iconography of the painting, for it is a story that I, as a secular person in an increasingly religious world, had very little knowledge of. I would not have recognised the story from the Bible in the art historian's iconographic reading provided by the museum. The whole narration in the Bible is a description of submission, executed throughout several generations. A short summary: Master Abraham gives orders to the oldest servant in his house to go to his birth town in Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor,<sup>100</sup> to find a woman from his clan for his son Isaac to marry. The servant brings ten of his master's camels and costly gifts, and an angel is sent before him to find the right woman – the angel finds Rebekah. It is through her apparent willingness to serve, by offering water to the servant and the camels, that her wifely qualities are measured. When she is taken from her family, it is revealed that her father is

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Röthlisberger, *Claude Lorrain: The Paintings*, p. 26

<sup>100</sup> *Genesis*, Ch. 24:7, The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spoke unto me, and that I swore unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. 24:8, And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.  
<http://www.bartleby.com/108/01/24.html>



Bethu'el, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother. With the gifts that the camels carry on their backs, Rebekah starts her journey together with her wet-nurse, the servant and his men. The journey goes from Abraham's hometown to his new land, Canaan.

The Nationalmuseum's catalogue (*French Paintings I, Seventeenth Century*) states: "The hint at the journey and 'things to come' after Rebekah has left this serene valley is rendered more significant – as Röthlisberger has pointed out – by the parting blessing she is receiving: 'Be the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.'"<sup>101</sup> On close inspection of the figures through a magnifying glass, I believe that silence rules in the painting – I cannot sense that anyone is saying anything in the mid-distance, nothing that is evident in their faces. But a closer look at Rebekah's and the servant's postures reveals that something has made them turn around in mid-stride, perhaps something that someone has said. When studying the grid, Rebekah's centre of gravity, the direction of her right leg that runs up to the crown of her head, is placed exactly on one of the lines in the grid. Along the seventh square, counted from the left, the vertical line, her foot is placed four squares from the bottom. A diagonal line passing above her head shows the direction of the servant's head and attaches to a tree on the far right on the picture. There, between their heads, there is a field to where the father's cry might carry. Her walk is determined, shown in the stride that she has just taken, and the centre of gravity in her bodily posture is attached to a line that goes through her body, a line that strikes both the sticks on the ground and the cloud formations in the sky, and in this way it reverberates throughout the painting.

The course of events unfolds relentlessly: Rebekah is caught in her own destiny, represented by her being 'caught' between the dark trees on each side in the painting, a metaphor of her entrapment? It is the moment when she has just left her father's, Bethu'el's, power in order to conform to that of Abraham and Isaac through the protection of the servant. The two outstretched hands, belonging to the father and Abraham's servant, indicate the handover of control. And the distance between them shows the liminal state that Rebekah has just passed through. Rebekah is taken away, and following the road through the landscape until the bend, is led into the darkness of the verdure. Her reaction is not visible since her face is hidden from view. In the painting, the light comes from the left and sweeps the scene in the same way as a set may be illuminated on a stage.

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<sup>101</sup> Pontus Grate, *French Paintings I Seventeenth Century*, Swedish National Art Museum, Stockholm, 1988, pp.33-35. When I check in the Bible, I notice that it is actually Rebekah's brothers who pronounce the words (*Genesis 24:60*): "Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies."

During the first month, as I studied the passage of Rebekah, almost every day at ten in the morning, as I stood by the painting in Nationalmuseum, a woman passed through the room, from left to right. She was one of the museum curators. I recognised her gait from afar since she walked with a crutch. Each time, I turned and saw her leave the room limping. Sometimes our eyes met and confirmed our mutual sense of recognition. When she was cured and got rid of her crutch, I didn't pay attention to her passing by behind me, since she sounded like everyone else.

In this situation I come close to the painting's surface, examining, inspecting, absorbing, as part of the act of learning by copying, to the extent that I mimic the brushstrokes. Or I might take up a position a few steps away as a viewer sitting on a bench in the museum gallery, educating myself, taking pleasure in its beauty and being affected.<sup>102</sup> These are two roles that I try to merge in my artistic practice, two roles played out in the drama of the 'museum', something that I think concerns two kinds of desire.<sup>103</sup> The first desire is related to my aspiration to acquire control of the object through knowledge, and in the second, another aspect of my longing in relation to my practice is to let myself be overpowered by the object, just as we are led to believe happens to Madeleine in *Vertigo*.

I have been asked several times if I've ever had the desire to make "a real copy", or if I plan to execute one in the future. Along with such a question, the person asking seems to want me to be more exacting, that I should imitate the entire preparation process in relation to preparing the canvas, the grid, the development of colours from pigments, all of which could reproduce the technique of the old masters within my copies. My interest, however, was never to be found here, as this would erase my desire and pleasure in seeing, and my pleasure in and for painting. So up until writing this text, I have had no reason to scrutinize my own painting practice, as my practice has always served my purpose and led me towards what I was aiming for. However, when reading that Claude would paint his pictures from "... the distance towards the foreground, finishing every section completely before starting the following one"<sup>104</sup>, I started to doubt my way of painting somewhat. Firstly, this was astonishing news for me

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<sup>102</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell writes: "Everyone knows that television is bad for you and that its badness has something to do with the passivity and fixation of the spectator. But then people have always known, at least since Moses denounced the Golden Calf, that images were dangerous, that they can captivate the onlooker and steal the soul." *Picture Theory*, University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> Desire might concern possessing as well, and with regard to this desire another character enters the stage, the collector.

<sup>104</sup> Røthlisberger, *Claude Lorrain: The Paintings*, p. 11. If one believes that Claude's 'real subject' was the light, then this way of starting his

– and I couldn't really imagine how this could be done – and secondly, it raised a question as to whether my painting technique has been too informed by conventions.

I learnt to paint in the 1970s and the early 1980s, according to a pedagogy that came out of a modernist tradition grounded in early 20th century Paris, and was then developed in Swedish art schools through a generation of painters from about 1920 to the late 1980s. It was a formula relating to artists such as Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and the Swedes Karl Isakson (1872-1922) and Ragnar Sandberg (1902-1972).<sup>105</sup> We were taught in the context of studio practice, where the teacher circled around us to correct our 'mistakes'. It was a system, a language that served to provide a way of seeing where the canvas became a space for what was considered a personal study of the object (the motif of the day). This kind of school was involved in teaching to observe: a nude, apples, a vase, to look as one should look at any non-seeing object (including the nude), and to translate what is seen through form and colour. This was presented to us as a way of reading reality through the act of painting and the object of our attention was claimed to originate out of 'nature', existing for us to be translated into 'pure' painting. Looking through some of my old textbooks, for instance *Måla och Se*/"Paint and See", I found notions like "form", "line", "sign", "expression", "recognition", "colour motion", "levels" and "clearance", and suddenly I remembered the specific language that I developed with my peers. My way of painting changed dramatically during this period, from naïvely realistic with surrealistic undertones into an analytic use of facets of clean, pure colour – no white or black pigments were used when mixing my oil colours to define the seen object as form and space and to activate the whole canvas in the tradition of the masters. In reading Merleau-Ponty on Cézanne, I recalled this manner in which I was taught: "Then he began to paint all parts of the painting at the same time, using patches of color to surround his original charcoal sketch of the geological skeleton. The picture took on fullness and density; it grew in structure and balance; it came to maturity all at once."<sup>106</sup> I believed that I had left this process entirely behind. However radical the shift in my work is from this, I still like to work across the whole canvas, and use the process of painting as a looking device, but now with different intentions and contrary results. Peggy Phelan, in our e-mail exchanges, referred to the writing of Samuel Beckett to convey the difference between habit and repetition: "Beckett wrote, 'Habit is a great deadener.'" Phelan goes on to

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paintings, with the sky and horizon, could be seen as starting his dinner with the dessert.

<sup>105</sup> Teachers important for me during this time were Birgit Ståhl-Nyberg and her husband Hendrik Nyberg, both students of Ragnar Sandberg at the Royal Academy in Stockholm in the early 1950s.

<sup>106</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt" (from *Sense and Non-Sense*, pp. 9–24 in the 1964 translation), here printed in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, edited by Thomas Baldwin, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, p. 281.

say, “and sometimes I think we want to make things a little bit dead, a little bit still. [...] Repetition is related to habit, but they are not the same. Habit relieves me from thinking; repetition focuses my attention.”<sup>107</sup>

When working in a museum with my after-images, I find that I often have formed habits in terms of the times of the day I paint, how I enter and leave the gallery with the painting, and for how many hours I will work. When I am in place in the gallery, I enter a state of mind that I could only describe as a ‘retreat’ – time spent with the original painting. However, I am also conscious that I am on display, that I am performing, that I am seen seeing, as the copyist. Phelan continues, “Repetition is distinct from habit, in part, because repetition involves the recollection of the previous time.”<sup>108</sup> My act of painting in copying is a repetitive act, and in my case its significance is doubled as I return to the same kinds of Ideal Landscape over and over again.<sup>109</sup> For example, the ‘recognition’ I feel in front of *Landscape with Rebekah* cannot be fully explained or satisfied, so I have to return to learn more about it, and this accumulation of knowledge does not resolve my desire to return, quite the contrary, it enervates it.

A paradox arises in my attitude towards the painting that shows itself in my role as an artist, as opposed to my role as a viewer, both of which I try to fuse in my practice. The Chilean writer, artist and filmmaker Raúl Ruiz describes a scene from a Lisbon museum.<sup>110</sup> It is about a civil servant who spends his nights copying a painting by Hieronymous Bosch. All his copies are many times larger than the original, and they only show parts of the painting. Ruiz writes, “... but because he added other details, his version is more exact”.<sup>111</sup> Another example connected to the desire for copying can be found in the Louvre of today, where one of the museum’s own security officers returns to the museum during his holidays to copy masterpieces in order to create his own collection.<sup>112</sup>

Obsession, for the artist, has many facets; the differences perhaps can be related to the notions of original and imitation, where the artist as genius represents the first term and the craftsman,

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<sup>107</sup> Peggy Phelan, *Matts Leiderstam Works 1996-2001*, p. 38.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> See *Matts Leiderstam Moderna Museet Project*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1999, here work in relation to Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), *Spring or The Earthly Paradise*, 1660-1664.

<sup>110</sup> Raúl Ruiz, *Poetics of Cinema*, Editions Dis Voir, Paris, 1995, p. 43. Ruiz has taken the scene from the novel *Requiem* by Antonio Tabucchi.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>112</sup> Joseph A. Harriss, “Master Class”, *Smithsonian magazine*, October 2002, pp. 76-81.

imitator, forger and amateur represent the second term.<sup>113</sup> Here we find the basis for our traditional view of the object of art in the West. Without this division, the museum would not exist in its present form.<sup>114</sup> Here I would like to stress that my way of working with vision in relation to the museum relies upon the context of these traditional conventions of the museum. For example, 'the art museum' as institution has been the focus of critique by artists, in particular throughout the 20th century, with contemporary artists inhabiting the museum to alter/mediate/affect the displays.<sup>115</sup> My work is often made in relation to the 19th century model, still stored in my mind as the 'museum'. For me it is where paintings have remained in the context of their time, and therefore stayed more open to the forms of mimicry I work with. Where there is the instance of the museum itself questioning its role, this steady context is lost and the focus of my work could be compromised. Conversely, the stability of the museum (however much a fantasy it is) means that I do not have to consider my material again for every presentation, as it is based on the relation to the original, the institution.

What I did not know when I started my project was that Claude's pictures often related to another canvas beside it. He made his pictures in pairs, often with two different décor settings in two different lights.<sup>116</sup> Röthlisberger writes that "just over a hundred pictures or slightly less than half the whole oeuvre, including all important work, were made in pairs – a concept found in all Schools from the Middle Ages to the 18th Century and originating in topological thinking."<sup>117</sup> The two that formed the Claudian pair were often the same size, with a horizon on the same level yet with contrasted compositions, and often a cool morning light from the painting on the left and a warm light from the painting on the right to depict evening.

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<sup>113</sup> According to Larry Shiner, handicraft, science and art were separated in the late 17th century. This separation was the condition for the development of aesthetics and the notion of "fine art" and "handicraft". Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001.

<sup>114</sup> Larry Shiner claims that the modern Western artist's role grew out of the 'liberation' of the artist from the role of the artisan: "Whereas the ideal qualities desired in an artisan/artist in the old system combined genius and rule, inspiration and facility, innovation and imitation, freedom and service, these qualities were finally pulled apart in the course of the eighteenth century. As it happened, all the "poetic" attributes – such as inspiration, imagination, freedom, and genius – were ascribed to the artist and the "mechanical" attributes – such as skill, rules, imitation, and service – went to the artisan." Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001, p. 111.

<sup>115</sup> See the work of artists such as Andrea Fraser, Hans Haacke, Louise Lawler and Guerrilla Girls. See also artists' own writing on the subject, *The Museum as Arena: Artists on Institutional Critique*, ed. Christian Kravagna, Kunsthauus Bergenz, Walter König, 2001. See also *Art and Its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, ed. Nina Möntmann, Nifka, Helsinki 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990, writes particularly about Claude's light, pp. 78–80.

<sup>117</sup> Röthlisberger, *Claude Lorrain – The Paintings*, p 27.

There is no known pendant to *Landscape with Rebekah*; however, my work is involved in making a comparison with another painting, but one that is its copy, located in Musée Fesch in Ajaccio, Corsica.<sup>118</sup> This copy was interesting for me to research, as I see it as a witness of an earlier state in the original's 'life', and in addition, the differences between the two could reveal something about the copyist/spectator of the time – the 18th century.<sup>119</sup> Röthlisberger writes in his book about Claude's paintings: "Canvas, 71 x 96 cm. Good copy, corresponding exactly to the original but larger and less fine in detail." When he writes from having seen the copy but not the original, he probably compares a memory of seeing the copy with a photograph of the "lost" original (the owner for the period between 1928-1973 was not known).<sup>120</sup> Röthlisberger also takes up another aspect of the relation between the original and the copy in his text in *Burlington Magazine*: "To relegate a painting to the status of a copy is usually more difficult when the original itself is missing. The situation, though, is common. In their collections, copies are almost invariably considered to be by the master. The reappearance of the original becomes a test case. Recently, two works of Claude have emerged, each of which had until now been known by two old copies."<sup>121</sup> This is significant for me in that it shows that in the absence of the original, the copy becomes a witness of its presence in the world or can, if it is well made, 'pretend' to be the original. When the original arrives into the (art) world and is catalogued, proven to exist, the copy's role will be forever changed.<sup>122</sup>

At a late stage in my project, a photo of this copy arrived from the museum in Ajaccio and I compared the two to reflect on likeness and difference (as Röthlisberger did). The landscape

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<sup>118</sup> In the Nationalmuseum's (Stockholm) catalogue of Claude's paintings, Pontus Grate writes, "The only known copy of the picture (Musée Fesch, Ajaccio) was probably done much later, in the early nineteenth century when it belonged to Lucien Bonaparte in Rome."

<sup>119</sup> According to Röthlisberger, *Burlington Magazine*, #115, 1973. It looks like I am the first one that has requested the painting after Röthlisberger's basic research about Claude in the 1950s, early 1960s.

<sup>120</sup> In an e-mail, Marcel Röthlisberger writes to me that he does remember having examined the painting on a visit there and noted it as an Italian 18th-century copy in his book.

<sup>121</sup> Marcel Röthlisberger, "A Painting by Claude", *Burlington Magazine*, 115, 1973, p. 652.

<sup>122</sup> A copy's status depends on the quality, when it was painted, who made it, and who owns it – the original and the copy together form a history and a narrative. For example, Rubens' copy after Titian's *Adam and Eve* and the original today hang side by side in the Prado Museum in Madrid. This invites the viewer to compare the two masters. A totally different situation, this time connected to memory and colonial politics, is told by Constable's copy hanging at The Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, in relation to the original by Claude at National Gallery in London. The distance between the original and the copy for me illustrates the Claudian model's success and transformation to a British landscape tradition exported to the colonies of the Empire. See Lynne Cooke's essay for *Matts Leiderstam No Different at all*, Nunsku, 1996. In the case of the historical painting of the dead Swedish King Karl XII, made by Cederström, they even switched ranks: i.e. copy becomes original and original becomes copy.

echoes the original; however, the trees that frame the image are more dense and the foliage on the left side covers a greater part of the canvas and now leans out over the scene with the shepherds and Rebekah. It is as if time has gone by in the scene. The light looks as if it is later in the morning and that Rebekah has moved with the servant closer to the bridge. The shepherds look like different men; some of the strange scale of the figures has here been 'corrected', and other parts are sketchily painted while others are more detailed. Through the differences I can follow this copyist's gaze and make guesses about his/her obsessions. The author of this copy is anonymous, the title is *Passage*, and it is now not exhibited or written about and is left stored in the museum's storage facilities. No effort is made to maintain it, such as cleaning and restoration, and slowly its surface is being destroyed. Meanwhile, the original is treasured and scrupulously preserved and protected by the museum in Stockholm.<sup>123</sup> From serving as a witness of a lost original, this painting is now forgotten because of the presence of the returned original.

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<sup>123</sup> It was hard to track down this copy, as the only image could be found in Röthlisberger's book, *Claude Lorrain – Paintings*, and initially the museum did not find the paintings in their records nor in their storage. I had help by the French freelance curator Céline Kopp, who insisted that the copy was the museum's possession. After they searched their storage area, they found the painting and photographed it, saying that it was in bad shape as it has not been restored. Source e-mails from Céline Kopp regarding her contact with the museum.

## *Scene Four*

### *Seeing (display, queer and instruments)*

In the spring of 2006 I visited an exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum about the Italian fashion icon and designer muse Anna Piaggi. The first thing I encountered in the exhibition was a picture of Piaggi sitting at a light table studying a slide through a magnifying glass.<sup>124</sup> The title of the exhibition was *Fashion-ology* and showed Piaggi's private archives and collection, at the same time as it underlined Piaggi's importance as a fashion critic – for example, in her former role as the editor and one of the founders of the avant-garde magazine *Vanity* in the 1980s. And in 1988 she created her famous “Doppie Pagine” (double-page spread) for Italian *Vogue*, which were collages of visual and cultural references sweeping around a current trend.<sup>125</sup>

In the picture, Anna Piaggi holds the slide in her gloved left hand while lifting the magnifying glass to her left eye – her right eye is covered by a ringlet of hair. The whole scene is lit up from beneath by the light box which is covered in slides. She wears a remarkable hat on her head, which is actually made up of five hats stacked on top of each other and forming an arch, and her seeing eye is exaggeratedly painted, even further emphasizing her act of seeing.

In the museum guide for the exhibition,<sup>126</sup> Patrizia Calefato describes Piaggi as a “female dandy” and depicts her special way of dressing as the display of a “grotesque body”. Calefato thinks that Piaggi presents herself as if she is standing on a stage playing the part of the semiotic nature of fashion. “Fashion always implies a spectator. This is what turns it into a semiotic system, a system of signs. In this sense what Anna draws our attention to is fashion's practice of dressing up and of disguise, in which the ‘dress’ itself has no function, is not useful other than showing itself to be a creator of new and unexpected information which both for its spectators, and often itself, remains incomprehensible. It is carnivalesque, for the spirit of the masked event and of carnival consists in destabilising certainty and institutional systems, using risky combinations brought into being by rhetorical strategies and the poetics of emphasis, exaggeration, quotation and parody.”<sup>127</sup> This is a description that is also relevant to the way that drag exaggerates femininity, but the great difference is that Piaggi does not

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<sup>124</sup> The photograph is taken by Bardo Fabiani, 2005, and in the exhibition guide it is called *Fashion-ology*. On the home page it is stated that the picture was shot by the same photographer in 2004 and shows Anna Piaggi selecting pictures for Italian *Vogue*.

<sup>125</sup> See exhibition catalogue, *Anna Piaggi Fashion-ology*, V&A, London, 2006

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Patrizia Calefato, “Anna Piaggi: Signs of Fashion”, *Anna Piaggi Fashion-ology*, V&A, London, 2006, p. 6.



emphasize sexuality; she does not refer to her body, other than the fact that she conceals it. Calafato writes that Piaggi is transformed by her extreme styling and make-up into a "... transgendered icon, while not questioning her biological sex or sexual preference."<sup>128</sup> In this picture another aspect of concealment is intriguing: the fact that she wears a white coat that hides her usual extraordinary dress. Together with her white gloves, this reinforces an image of Piaggi as the director of her own museum, someone who has chosen to present herself as a viewer of her own archive (the slides). Shown in this context, they will undoubtedly include pictures of garments or displays that she will write about, as well as possibly pictures of herself. I fantasise that in looking at pictures of herself, the picture changes into a mirror, where she sees herself in the position of someone closely scrutinizing her own memory. It constitutes multiple layers about the conditions for viewing, where the presentation of the self becomes a form of aesthetics and exhibition: "... her appearance is the scene of ritual in which she is the 'officiate' and all others tacit spectators."<sup>129</sup>

This layered, or perhaps knotted, aspect in the conditions of viewing, is recognised as evident in *See and Seen*; significantly, the complex place of desire when it is the landscape that is the object of our gaze. It is my own desire, as it relates to my history as a cruising gay man in public parks, that I wish to underscore as a primary element in my approach. It is important to register here that I do not view my sexual orientation as a private concern, but as a valid starting point for critical consideration. The elaborate, humorous playing out of the gaze in gay culture is compelling, especially as it is played out in the act of cruising, an act that defines the site as 'the beat'. Don Kulick writes about 'the beat': "Gay men impose a communicative grid of their own design on public spaces like parks, and those who know the signals, those who sense the signs – those who share the culture – can intercept the messages and, perhaps, if the mood is right, interface and interlock."<sup>130</sup> This cruising attitude is used by me in the museum, where I act under disguise, as the spectator, or the copyist. It is just one of the grids I hold in front of the painting.

Calum Storrie writes about a series of drawings made by Edgar Degas, showing fellow artist Mary Cassatt with her sister in the Louvre. The drawings demonstrate Cassatt as a museum spectator, often showing her back so that the viewer is looking at pictures and objects in the museum over her shoulder. Storrie writes about one of the drawings with the title "At the Louvre: Mary Cassatt in the Etruscan Gallery": "... her sister Lydia's attention is drawn away from the guidebook in her hand to gaze at Mary or beyond her. From a vitrine, the two faces

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Don Kulick, "Cruising Culture", a short text written for the catalogue for the show *Se hur det känns*, Rooseum, Malmö, 1996.

of reclining, dead Etruscans gaze out beyond the edge of the picture. Lydia may be a little distracted but Mary seems engrossed in the act of looking. Thus, the viewer of the picture is engaged in a myriad act of looking that involves Degas, Mary Cassatt, Lydia Cassat and the Etruscan figures. It is tempting to describe this as ‘just looking’ yet the looking provides the way into the experience of the museum and its objects. There is a particular kind of looking going on here; it is both looking at and looking through. It is also about reflection; the reflection of the glass and the reflection generated by the relationship between objects and their context. In order to get more out of this experience it is necessary to make some kind of imaginative leap, as it is when gazing out, like Baudelaire’s man of the crowd, through the shop window.”<sup>131</sup> I find this a beautiful description. I recognise it from the perspective of both gay cruising and from strolling around a museum looking at the ‘faces’ of the paintings, a bodily activity where one uses both the gaze and the glance when looking at the objects (both people and paintings). Sometimes I believe that the object looks back – not in the sense that the painting takes power over Madeleine in *Vertigo* – but more like a reaction of curiosity.

Maybe this ‘gay gaze’ connected to the classical connoisseurial behaviour for gallery and museum space is a way of looking that is possibly now on its way to being changed forever? We carry mobile phones and iPods in our pockets – instruments that carry sound and visual information and that act as supplements – and pleasures – to our bodily perceptions. We are online and can, on immediate demand, connect ourselves to other kinds of spaces – forming a complicated mix of spatial/image/sound/visual experience – meanwhile, we still stroll around the old space called the museum.<sup>132</sup> The museum’s answer to all this is both to ban the use of these instruments within its galleries and to provide this new viewer with their own selection of technological aids containing their own information.

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<sup>131</sup> Calum Storrie, *The Delirious Museum: A Journey from the Louvre to Las Vegas*, I.B. Tauris Publishers, London & New York, 2006, pp. 22–23. I also read the following statement by Norman Bryson as being not only about looking at paintings, but could also apply to cruising – or other pursuits – where the pictures become subordinated to other reasons for looking: “... gaze, prolonged, contemplative, yet regarding the field of vision with a certain aloofness and disengagement, across a tranquil interval, from that of the glance, a furtive or sideways look whose attention is always elsewhere, which shifts to conceal its own existence, and which is capable of carrying unofficial, *sub rosa* messages of hostility, collusion, rebellion, and lust.” Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, as part of the series “Language, Discourse, Society”, editors: Stephen Heath & Colin MacCabe, Palgrave, 2001, p. 94, first published 1983 by MacMillan Press Ltd, Hampshire and London.

<sup>132</sup> For more about the implications of mobile phones and artists’ practice in our time, see curator Miya Yoshida’s dissertation *Invisible Landscapes – The construction of new subjectivities in the era of mobile digital networks*, Malmö Art Academy, University of Lund, Lund 2006.

May 19th, 2006: an article is published in the *New York Times* (*NYT*) with the title *At Museums: Invasion of the Podcasts*.<sup>133</sup> *NYT* tells us that already in 1958, the National Gallery of Art in Washington embedded transmitters under its floors and handed out radio receivers so visitors could listen to a guide showing the museum's masterpieces. A more recent development is to guide through "podcasting", "the wildly popular practice of posting recordings online, so they can be heard through computer or downloaded to tiny mobile devices like iPods and other MP3 players."<sup>134</sup> Museums like the Victoria & Albert in London, the Met in New York, and Walker Art Center in Minneapolis provide its visitors – via their websites – with this new service. Here one can find interviews with artists and scholars, and curators' comments on the show. *NYT* writes: "... widely available to people who have never visited, and may never visit, the museums that are making the recordings. If, for example, you do not manage to make it to the Met to see Kara Walker's show *After the Deluge*, you can still hear her talk about it while sitting on the subway or walking down the street." The article continues to describe what she calls the museums looking for the "Mr. Museum Voice", how museums today offer discount on admission to anyone showing an MP3 player with the museum's podcast on it, how Brooklyn Museum of Art provides audio guides through mobile phones, and how the Museum of Modern Art<sup>135</sup> is considering the use of their extensive archives of recorded interviews; for example, a famous one with Marcel Duchamp from 1962. This means that the world outside the museum leaks into the space and the museum leaks out, and the space becomes more and more undefined, neither public nor private.

When seeing a painting in a museum through a certain grid/matrix, I would always miss other aspects. This also occurs in art history with the conceptual grids it applies to its objects of study. I would like to give you an example I came across when I produced a new work for a show in St. Petersburg:<sup>136</sup> Gustaf Cederström's (1845-1933) *Le corps de Charles XII porté par ses officiers à travers la frontière norvégienne 1718* (*The Funeral transport of Charles XII*) was shown at the Salon in Paris in 1878. For generations of Swedes, this was one of the best-known paintings, showing Swedish officers as pall-bearers bringing their dead King home from the Norwegian frontier in 1718. The picture was awarded a medal and sold in St. Petersburg to the Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich of Russia, where it was mounted on one of the walls of the Marble Palace. As a reaction to the event, a group of Swedish

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<sup>133</sup> Randy Kennedy, *New York Times* website:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/19/arts/design/19pod.html?ei=5070&en=192651a25c4b5917&ex=1148961600&adxnnl=0&adxnnlx=1148818257-Us/tmMpHkIxxweYCrXOJuA&pagewanted=print>

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. MOMA started their podcasting not long after a professor and group of students at Marymount Manhattan College made them known by creating their own unauthorized MP3 audio tour for MOMA in the spring of 2005.

<sup>136</sup> Made for a group show: *Russia: Significant Other*, Anna Achmatova Museum, St. Petersburg.

artists started collecting money to pay Cederström to paint a replica of his own painting to give as a gift to Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. The reason was that it was considered a big scandal in Sweden that a Russian Grand Duke, representing the sworn enemy, owned a picture showing the defeated, dead King of Sweden. Cederström did paint a replica that was larger in scale, lighter in tone, and where some of the officers' hair colour was changed to blonde – it was a more nationalistic version compared to the original painting.<sup>137</sup> This was, in short, an historical and art-historical narration that was complicit with – and is still present in Sweden – the implication of a political and nationalistic grid, albeit different to its 19th century overtones.

Was the Grand Duke's purchase of this painting a manifestation of Russian chauvinism? I believe that it was probably one of the reasons. However, when I study the history of the Grand Duke, I find that it was very likely a more complicated matter. The painting was hanging in a room in the Marble Palace that had been specially made for him. He turned the palace into a centre for cultural life in the city and the intellectuals of St. Petersburg gathered in the palace in his famous salons to listen to music and poetry. The Grand Duke himself was a poet who translated Goethe and Schiller into Russian and was a well-known intellectual figure in the city. So the painting could also very well have been installed because of its artistic qualities.

Grand Duke Konstantinovich of Russia was also a closet gay, a well-known customer at the city's male brothels. A 'reference book' on the web tells the story: "Had it not been for the publication of K.R.'s [Konstatinovich of Russia's] strikingly candid diaries long after his death, the world would have never known that this most prolific of Grand Dukes, the father of nine children, had strong homosexual tendencies. K.R.'s first homosexual experiences occurred in the Imperial Guards."<sup>138</sup> Could this nationalistic Swedish painting, which I connected so much with a melancholic longing for when Sweden was a Great Power, have been used for gay fantasies in another context? I consider this as I would in applying a grid; however it would work, it would be a projection, for how could I know about Konstantin's desires? If we then add the historical facts of what occurred later – that the original painting came back to Sweden after the Russian Revolution – at this point it re-contextualises the

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<sup>137</sup> Lena Holger, "Karl XII:s likfärd: Gustaf Cederströms två målningar med samma motiv", *Kopior Förfalskningar Parafraser Plagiat Pastischer Repliker Original Reproduktioner*, Göteborgs Konstmuseum, Gothenburg 1989, pp. 16–19. The first version stayed in Russia until, due to the Revolution, it was brought out of the country. The painting was bought by the antique dealer Martin Molvidson in Stockholm and was exhibited in Sweden for the first time in 1935. Four years later, the businessman Gustaf Werner donated the painting to Göteborgs Konstmuseum.

<sup>138</sup> Quotation from:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand\\_Duke\\_Konstantin\\_Konstantinovich\\_of\\_Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Duke_Konstantin_Konstantinovich_of_Russia)

original painting, turning it into a secondary painting. (Because of the Russian background?) The original back from Russia ended up in the Göteborgs Konstmuseum in Gothenburg, and the replica is still hanging in Nationalmuseum.

My experience of Cederström's painting at Nationalmuseum is forever changed by this story. I look at the painting in another way, or rather I add new matrix/grids to my old ones. The same is happening in my relation to the *Landscape with Rebekah* or other pictures I have been working with; for every new aspect, I find new layers are added. This is something I try to bring into my exhibitions to show that they are made 'after', while simultaneously retaining the appearance and the atmosphere of the original.

My method involves an attempt to find a form of complexity within historical representations, through a schematic, clear, lucid presentation in my installations – simultaneously providing me with the possibility of changing the focus and the narrator. With this method, the gay man's gaze paradoxically mimics the amateur's love for paintings in a museum, as well as the art historian's research, all of which intersect in my installation in the exhibition space.

By juxtaposing pairs of paintings, it opens up the space between parody and mimicry in my artistic practice. I have often tried to create images of the negotiation process that constructs the way we perceive pictures in art history. I use the original paintings as a starting point since they often relate to an existing canon within the history of, in this case, Western art, that is, the designated masterpiece as style and norm, a formula that I would like the viewer of my installations to scrutinize.

My method with *See and Seen* also makes use of objects as ready-mades, for example books, binoculars, websites and magnifying glasses, experimenting with different ways of displaying, for example on tables, walls or easels. As I research and continually look back on my visual material by reading them against different analytic methods from the academic world, there is no resolution, and it is the nature of this continual unfolding that is built into my work, including, importantly, the fact that I will 'miss' something. It is here in some way that the work opens up to the viewer. My work is 'perverse' in the sense that I deviate from the assumptions about the point of view of the historian – my work is an obsession knowingly disguised as, and through, research.

Håkan Nilsson argues that artist's attitude to the masterpiece has traditionally been described as an act of learning or borrowing, inspiration or theft. On the other hand, to copy is also to

appropriate, paraphrase and plagiarise. The copy is expected to threaten the original through its likeness (forgery is always close at hand). It is of course also a question of ownership, about the right to look/interpret, and about who has the right to have access to the original sources.<sup>139</sup> In a way, to make a copy is doomed if absolute likeness is aimed at, since it relates to acts that have already been performed,<sup>140</sup> and will necessarily miss the target.<sup>141</sup> It is this act of being off-target that I oppose to the expected 'eternal truth' of the original.

The moment we set our minds on comparing two pictures that are 'similar', we soon begin counting the differences, as in a fault-finding game. To look at the copy of a painting and the original side by side can also be compared to the way we use meta-pictures, where the eye looks for two ways of perceiving a picture or figure (the "duck-rabbit" is the most common example of this and often made use of by art historians.)<sup>142</sup> When we compare the original and the copy, look for the true and the false, or determine skill as opposed to clumsiness, it is convention that rules, not just how we see but what we focus on at the moment of seeing.

Until now, my method has been not only to display one vision beside another but to accumulate many juxtapositions of objects, paintings, viewing aids to create parallel visions. I have often played with the presumption of 'objective truth' in art history as it meets the gaze of the subject. The mastery to be seen and appreciated in the original is contrasted with the amateur nature of the after-image, which is often rougher, more colourful and contains other differences. Through them the viewer is asked questions about similarity and dissimilarity, depending on the way one directs one's gaze. It raises the question as to who the narrator is in the different versions.

To pursue further my fascination with the relation between sexuality and 'the copy', I looked to Judith Butler: "If heterosexuality is an impossible imitation of itself, an imitation that performatively constitutes itself as the original, then always and only the imitative parody of 'heterosexuality' – when and where it exists in gay culture – is an imitation of an imitation, a

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<sup>139</sup> Håkan Nilsson, "Originella kopior: om bruket av andras bilder i den moderna konsten", *Falskt & Äkta*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm 2004, pp. 205–221.

<sup>140</sup> Brushstrokes whose width, pressure and exact position are largely impossible to remake. Consequently, similarity is an illusion.

<sup>141</sup> The originals, which are made from the inner layers out, unlike copies, which are made from the outside in.

<sup>142</sup> The original, which can be traced to a German humour magazine, *Fliegende Blätter* (1892), became an important tool in American cognitive psychology. The figure has also appeared in a painting by Jackson Pollock and been discussed at length by Wittgenstein (*Philosophical Investigations*), Gombrich (*Art and Illusion*) and W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, pp. 35–82.

copy of a copy, to which there is no original.”<sup>143</sup>

I would say that my process has also brought me to the point where my after-image too denies the “original”. Butler uses the notion of the “heterosexual matrix” to describe one of the filters before us that determine the way we experience the world. This implies an assumption about what is natural, for example the idea that there are two genders. Those who fall outside are deviating and will be “punished”. This takes the form of violence, prejudice or making invisible those who have not adapted to the norm. Contemporary Western society, in the form of its institutions and structures, and the impact of these on the formation of subjectivity, are permeated by norms that maintain the interpretative precedence of heterosexuality. This effort to leave out everything that is not the matrix does not only concern gender and sexuality, but also race and those cultures regarded as outside the Western norm. It is therefore possible to consider a whole range of different matrices (grids) that we use to judge whether something conforms to the norm or is deviating. Mimicry, the missed target, is in a way the deviant’s defiant response to the oppressive forms these grids may take. By simulating a likeness through mimicry, my intention is to produce an image in response to my gaze, my fantasy in front of the original; it is this that creates any difference.

My way of using my body as present in my art is contrary to Piaggi’s: I am not presented as a visual object in my work. I do not normally like to be looked at as an object (piece of art). This may be read as a paradoxical statement, given that my work mimics cruising. I have never been a very frequent cruiser, so my reference to this activity relates to memories from certain parks during summer nights in my youth. This is close to Don Kulick’s “communicative grid”; it is this that I project onto different contexts. It is therefore not my body incorporated in the work but my act of seeing: I become part of my installation. I am also present in my exhibition in a similar way to Isabella Stewart Gardner’s presence in her home/museum – both of us have re-furnished a place, re-formed it into a place for looking.

My exhibition *See and Seen* at Lund Konsthall embraces my ‘projections’ while it also buries them within the conventions of display. In the same way as the famous Swedish Kitchen was created through research developed through the study of – and assumptions about – normal Swedish housewives, one could say that I lure the viewer into believing that they are entering a space that looks like a hetero-normal neutral public space, when in fact it is a mimicry of a public space, with all that mimicry implies. This exhibition is presented, not in a museum but

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<sup>143</sup> Judith Butler *Könet brinner – texter i urval av Tina Rosenberg*, Natur och Kultur, p. 75. The English original is found in “Imitation and Gender Subordination”, from Diana Fuss, ed, *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 13–29.

a contemporary art gallery while at the same time reflecting upon and invoking the experience of the institution of the museum.

However, I do deviate from a generic museum display, for unlike the museum I refuse to fix my objects on the tables or to protect them behind glass. This means that the viewer has the possibility of moving magnifying glasses, turning the pages in the books, altering the view-points on the field scopes and taking hold of a painting or an object. They are not invited to do so but my installation doesn't hinder them. It is an ambiguous gesture on my part. My work develops a system through which the desire of the viewers to look can no longer be taken for granted, and at the same time when the viewer, say, decides to move the instruments or look at other pages in the books, they alter my vision. It forms a crack in the smooth logic of display and is deeply embedded in my work. It is a paradox that can't be solved – it remains a problem that has to be negotiated by the institution and the spectator together. I do, however, require the gallery to put things right after the visitor has moved the elements of my installation – to return it to its beginning: my vision and my body's movement. Yet each time this is done there is unavoidably a shift of some kind and any return is incomplete.

I would say then that the exhibition *See and Seen* becomes a portrait of me; all is established in relation to the embodiment of my gaze: the scale of the objects, the way the objects are spread on the tables, the height of objects in relation to my own height. In fact the supports, such as stools and chairs, are there to help the viewer to see from where I see. I know that I can never know what the viewer sees; however, in past exhibitions that make use of a similar system, I have seen myself seeing, a kind of spectre of me appears when the viewers are in my installation, and when I install the work I am also imagining the viewer leaning over my tables, looking into my field scopes. I am, then, there with the unknown.



## *Scene Five*

### *Seeing (viewer, instruments and future)*

“The vanishing point is a gaping of the world as it rushes to meet us, as we fall into it.”

Michael Newman<sup>144</sup>

When speed, time and space is re-negotiated by the concept of the virtual space, this will have a profound effect on our experience of space and of how we will perceive images, including historical images such as paintings in the museum and gallery, and Claude’s landscapes will once again be seen in new ways. Paul Virilio argues that reality is “... produced by a society’s culture, it is not given. A reality that has been produced by one society will be taken over, and changed by another, younger society, producing a fresh reality. This happens first by mimicry, then by substitution, and the original reality will, by that time, be totally forgotten. Take, for instance, the reality of the ancient Egyptians, of the Chinese of thousands of years ago: we cannot make any sense out of it, we are clueless about what it looked like, about what it sounded like.”<sup>145</sup> Virilio believes that art as a concept as we know it today will disappear and that humans in a future society will have forgotten what our art was made for. But meanwhile, in this period of transition between two ways of seeing, how can I be involved with the contemporary viewers viewing and their view in my work, and at the same time deal with what amounts to a contemporary loss of memory? I believe that in using historically recently outmoded instruments for viewing, such as the Claude Glasses, magnifying glasses, and field scopes, and my act of copying through painting – along with a range of more contemporary instruments such as the website, slide show or computer screens – we are approaching the territory that Virilio discusses, as mimicry and substitution. My use of these instruments then can work as a kind of catalytic converter to address this new way of seeing the contemporary.

To address this from a more embodied position, I will describe an experience of displacement that occurred after reading Virilio, which surprised me as it would otherwise have been so ordinary. The last time I visited my dentist, as you do, I found myself moved into a lying position in the chair. There I noticed a newly installed flat screen on the ceiling above me. It was brightly lit and framed by the dentist’s instruments, and while his hands were working on

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<sup>144</sup> Michael Newman: “Horizonlessness”, an essay from the catalogue for the exhibition *Terra Incognita*, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen and Edition Braus, Heidelberg, 1998, p. 42.

<sup>145</sup> Paul Virilio in interview with John Armitage, *Virilio Live Selected Interviews*, edited by John Armitage, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 2001, p. 35.

my mouth I was able to follow a flow of images on the ceiling that were explicitly produced to be seen from this position. Virilio proposes that we live in a time that he calls “Speed-space” and that reality and the image of reality are no longer necessarily connected. “Perception is no longer limited by a location in space and time, but by the limit speed-of-light as a maximum of transmission (in, for example, fibre-optic cables): ‘it is not so much *light* that illuminates things (the objects, the subject, the path); it is the constant nature of light’s *limit speed* that conditions the perception of duration and of the world’s expanse as phenomena.’”<sup>146</sup> Virilio refers to the television screen as a new window, a new frame that generates an artificial light in contemporary architecture: “Everything is always perceived through a frame, and it’s certain this frame existed from the moment the first eye opened upon the visible field. This process continued with the framing of paintings, the frame of the photograph, and the frame created by the television camera eye [...] a new frame, a sidereal frame, since with communications satellites and live re-broadcasts, the problem of the window becomes a macrocosmic phenomenon. But, this all stems from the very first window, the porthole drilled in the megalithic tomb. In these tombs there was a tiny hole to let the sun shine in.”<sup>147</sup>

Virilio’s contention is that the contemporary gaze is influenced by new technological devices that are in fact generated by military research as well as by time-based cinematographic developments that have led to something he calls “an aesthetics of disappearance”. He also states that the image is edited in musical rhythms, a sort of “speed composition”: “Today I believe we are about to enter a time of compositions in optical speed and special effects. These are the rather spectacular aspects of this music of the eye.”<sup>148</sup>

There in the dentist’s chair I had the experience of being trapped in a virtual space as described by Virilio, although for me it was even more involuntary than usual for I was flooded with images of a landscape that I travelled in and across. Given that I was lying in the chair (fixed) and looking up at the screen, I was astonished that my experience was one of looking down on a landscape and moving forward at low altitude. The height above the ground was that of a cruise missile, the speed was that of a helicopter or small airplane. I was travelling at an even speed across an open landscape of lakes and mountains and felt that I was being completely manipulated. The landscape was both recognisable and strange at the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., Michael Newman’s quotation of Virilio comes from: Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose, Verso, London, 1997, p. 13.

<sup>147</sup> Paul Virilio in interview with Chris Dercon, *Virilio, Live Selected Interviews*, edited by John Armitage, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 2001, p. 69.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, p. 78.

same time – as if it had been constructed based on scientific findings. The distant mountains, lakes and deep valleys were kind of minimalist, bare and very beautiful, yet I felt alienated, for this landscape in its diversity was strangely generic. It was a landscape that appeared to be constructed (computer-generated?), yet so skilfully made that I could not detect its “unreality”. I was presented with a kind of “visual muzak”, where the speed, the rate of the cuts and the form of the landscape seemed to be based on a science that had worked out how to bring down my heart rate, get my body to relax and change a situation of vulnerability to an illusion of me being in control.

Michael Newman suggests a new kind of landscape image with a horizon with no finitude, and this is in fact what I think I experienced at the dentist – a landscape without a beyond, with no limits. This is the opposite of Claude’s picture, where the horizon is present (however blurred it is by a body of hazy light). Newman writes about the old landscape image: “If the limit is that beyond which one cannot or must not go, the boundary, by contrast, is always constituted in relation to a beyond. The project of Romanticism was to turn limits into boundaries. The Classicist preoccupation with the delimiting contour, expressing the idea of an essence that would expose itself in a way that transcended time, is replaced by the boundary, which is always a provocation to go beyond and which assumes the form of a temporal self-surpassing. Typically, the vanishing point of a Romantic landscape is obscured by mist, cloud, or raging seas, collapsing the viewing point into the dissolving horizon.”<sup>149</sup>

I was thinking of the Claude landscapes in this context when I was heading home from Madrid on June 4th 2006. It was in the evening after nine o’clock and the light was turned into a perfect Claudian pink, a haze that affected the view over distant mountains (too good to be true), and it became evident to me, after having seen Claude’s paintings that same afternoon at the Prado Museum, that this was and is his light. As the aircraft was heading for the runway and the stewardess went through the expected preparations before take-off, I decided to avoid these distractions and to concentrate on my view from the aircraft window, keeping Claude’s paintings in mind. Once up in the air, it became clear to me that I was able to see something the creators (and imitators) of the Claude model were never able to perceive: Claude’s characteristic hues from high above without any fixed horizon: looking down at a haze turning the whole landscape into a mix of pink, mauve and green covering a slightly burned mountain landscape. After a while this image shifted for me from being about landscape painting to science fiction film – when the plane entered a higher attitude, the surface looked like an alien planet. The plane was speeding over the planet’s surface and we

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<sup>149</sup> Michael Newman, “Horizonlessness”, *Terra Incognita*, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen and Edition Braus, Heidelberg, 1998, p. 41.

moved from evening into night, whilst on the screen in front of me I could follow the aircraft's exact geographic location on an animated map over Europe.

The moment of travelling from one point to another in an aircraft is described by Marc Augé as taking place in a “non-place” that is produced by what he calls “supermodernity”.<sup>150</sup> He defines a non-place: “If a place can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.”<sup>151</sup> It is a place for transition where no organic social life is possible and where we are united by our mere uniform use of it. We stay in a place as long we need. The term “non-place” is taken from the writings of Michel de Certeau, as is the concept “anthropological space”, and refers to “... spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces.”<sup>152</sup> These then are types of space that are formed more or less by an international language. Augé argues that non-place turns us from individuals who come from somewhere and are going somewhere to becoming customers, passengers and users as opposed to the possibility of us being spectators and listeners. Could this traveller be the contemporary spectator of landscape, that through a system of transit points they enter the historic space of landscape?

Regarding *See and Seen*, the questions of ‘what’ and ‘how’ remain, at the stage before my exhibition is installed and my website is updated, for these are questions seeking my response in the absence of the viewer. If the focus of my practice is on seeing myself seeing, it is because the viewer too is doing the same. I am speculating that this ‘new viewer’ (including myself) of landscape is one who has a greater consciousness of the preconditions that exist in the moment of the act of seeing. The accumulated experience that results from contemporary so-called ‘new technology’ has accelerated to the point where we can see ourselves seeing, placing ourselves in the image at the moment of seeing.

Working at the United States Military Academy at West Point on April 30th, 2003 (the “last day of the Iraq war”, according to George W. Bush’s declaration on May 1st), my job on the site is to unfold the Claude Glasses and hold them one by one in front of the large-format camera lens. Kelly, the photographer, is controlling the shutter, and our assistant, Jay, is recording the different exposure times and colours and mixtures of filters. The view I observe reminds me of a stage set from classical theatre, the mountings like screens framing the stage of the Hudson River. When the round shape of the Claude Glass is held in front of the camera

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<sup>150</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London & New York, 1995, pp.75-115.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

lens, the gaze is drawn to the centre, as if the form of the glass is placed on top and makes clearer the penetration into the landscape. I look at the photographs just taken: I see the river flow towards me and the shape of the instrument makes its movement clearer. A horizon is clearly there, at times taking on more clarity and at other times more diffused, depending on the colour of the filter: Yellow Dawn, Rose Twilight and Moonlight Blue. While looking, I am aware of eyes that see me and the view in the same moment, the system of surveillance of the Military Academy, the tourists with their cameras that go in and out of the vista, and all the registering eyes of the satellites high above this beautiful landscape.

## *The Sun*

“The word ‘image’ is in bad repute because we have thoughtlessly believed that a design was a tracing, a copy, a second thing, and that the mental image was such a design, belonging among our private bric-a-brac. But if in fact it is nothing of the kind, then neither the design nor the painting belongs to the in-itself any more than the image does. They are the inside of the outside and the outside of inside, which the duplicity of feeling [*le sentire*] makes possible and without which we would never understand the quasi presence and imminent visibility which make up the whole problem of the imaginary.”<sup>153</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty

While reflecting on the light in Claude’s oeuvre, I started to think about *Landscape with Rebekah* as a theatrical stage with Claude as both its scenographer and illuminator. My intentions for my after-image became even clearer when I looked at the Nationalmuseum’s X-ray of *Landscape with Rebekah*. The X-ray revealed that “inside of the outside” of the painting there was another sun in the sky, right above the two parties of figures populating the painting. This other sunlight hit both parties from behind, while also shedding light on the two men’s meeting in the foreground. I then decided that for my after-image the sun would be painted as it was in the X-ray, with the aim of mimicking Claude’s initial intention.

If this – today – invisible other sun had shone on the scene, then Rebekah would have parted from her father a few hours later that morning. The mere act of painting moves the sun in my after-image, turns time into past tense, into past time, from inside of the outside of *Landscape with Rebekah*’s own painting history. By proceeding with this act, time has jolted forward, for that day and in that landscape. This act made with a brush and white oil colour produces a set of perplexing histories about both the historical time of painting the pictures (mine and Claude’s) and about the sun’s travelling over the sky in both landscapes.

My next decision was to move the sun again in my after-image, triggered by what the X-ray had revealed to me. I altered the sun’s position in several stages from left to right, documenting it at each shift until it had disappeared behind the horizon. Technically, from a painter’s point of view, the brush drew a new sun for every repositioning and another painted over the old one. In this way I created a whole set of new suns that remained shining on the inside of my painting. This act carried consequences – it meant that the painting went through a continuous change, gradually becoming darker on the outside and lighter on the inside.

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<sup>153</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind”, from “The Primacy of Perception”, pp. 159–90 in the 1964 translation. *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, edited by Thomas Baldwin, Routledge, London and New York, 2004, p. 296.

By unfixing Claude's sun, I changed the form and the shapes of trees, figures, cattle, clouds, mountains and the land beyond the horizon, and kept the history of this change through my documentation. It meant that my painting, in the process of being executed, increasingly departed from the Claudian landscape model. I started to see my after-image separate from Claude's painting more and more, approaching the condition of becoming a painting in its own right while I could only fantasise about what kind of landscape would take form on the inside of the outside. Looking back at all the documentation I also understood how I, at an earlier stage, by changing the light, had removed Claude from his position in relation to his theatre. With my proposal to Nationalmuseet from 1994 in mind, I planned to end up with a painting where the darkness has finally taken control. As a last act, I had planned to take an X-ray photograph of my after image/painting, one that should reveal 'its' light, its "inside of its outside".

Per Bjurström points to the fact that Claude possibly slept overnight in the landscape he would make his preparatory drawings from.<sup>154</sup> At first I didn't think so much about this information as it was not my interest to relate to/copy exactly Claude's methods, nor his biography. Joachim von Sandrart, writing in the 17th century, described Claude's methods of observation from the two artists' meeting in Tivoli: "... he tried by every means to penetrate nature, lying in the fields before the break of the day and until the night in order to learn to represent very exactly the red morning sky, sunrise and sunset and the evening hours."<sup>155</sup> This text envisioned for me an image of someone waiting all day for a sunset, and then throughout the long night for the sunrise. I then checked the following contemporary sun data for Claude's Rome: civil twilight 04:17, rise 04:50, set 19:42, end of civil twilight 20:15, moonrise 23:18.<sup>156</sup> I tried to imagine the act of staying out in the dark Mediterranean summer nights in a landscape where the only available source of light is a moon and a starry sky, and to await the sun there. I have imagined this from a geographical position where my experience has rather been of white nights, in an age where darkness never really seems to envelop you due to the constant emission of urban electric light. It drew me towards considering another way of completing my painting, other than my previous plan which was

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<sup>154</sup> As I remember it, a comment he made during a coffee-break conversation we had at Nationalmuseum: we were talking about Claude's little sketch book owned by the museum. See also *Claude Lorrain: Sketchbook*, Owned by Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, introduction by Per Bjurström, (translation, Patrick Hort), Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1984.

<sup>155</sup> Helen Langdon, *Claude Lorrain*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1989, p. 33.

<sup>156</sup> Data taken from the website of US Naval Observatory Astronomical Applications Department, link: [http://aa.usno.navy.mil/cgi-bin/aa\\_pap.pl](http://aa.usno.navy.mil/cgi-bin/aa_pap.pl)

to end with a painting that saturated the light with darkness.

I am now closer to the end of my research, and through the process of painting that I have undertaken I have arrived at a point where the darkness that I imagined would complete the work will now be infused with another form of light. For now I will introduce moonlight, and it will enter from the left side of my painting so that Rebekah leaves her father illuminated by a moon, this time under a light not of Claude's imagining. This new light for Rebekah does not so much leave me with a painting that is more 'mine' but with the 'duplicity' of feeling that infused it from the beginning. And

“I said to myself,  
so that’s what it was:  
that again”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Excerpt from my introduction to this text, taken from my quotation from Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion*, who quotes Chantal Akerman, audio recording from the installation.



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***Film:***

Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980), *Vertigo*, 1958, Paramount Pictures Corporation, Los Angeles.

## *List of Illustrations*

### **Roadmap:**

- 1: Detail, "After Gustave Courbet, The Meeting or Bonjour Monsieur Courbet", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam
- 2: Installation view, Mattis Leiderstam, *After Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Landscape with Rebekah taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41, installation. Photo: Erik Cornelius
- 3: Installation view, Palace of Culture, Iasi, Mattis Leiderstam, *City of Iasi 1842 (Back to the Future)*, 2003, installation. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam
- 4: Mattis Leiderstam, *View (Boscobel)*, 2003-2005, binoculars with fitted coloured filters, Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, New York. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam
- 5: Installation view, Kunstverein München, Mattis Leiderstam, *The Reflection of Space*, November 13th - 14th, 2004, a project made for three sites, Kunstverein München, the Residence Museum and Diana Temple in Hofgarten. Photo: Siegfried Wameser
- 6: Installation view, Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, *Grand Tour*. Photo: Dorota Lukianska
- 7: Installation view, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, "The Shepherds", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*. Photo: Heinz Preute
- 8: Mattis Leiderstam, *View*, Minetta Brook, New York, 2004.
- 9: Mattis Leiderstam, *Selbstbildnis*, c-print edition 6 + 2 AP, 2002. Photo: Wilfried Petzi
- 10: Installation view from "Minigalleriet", Mattis Leiderstam, *View (West Point)*, 2004, slide projection. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam
- 11: Installation view, Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, "After Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Spring, or, The Earthly Paradise, 1660-64", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Dorota Lukianska
- 12: Detail, "After Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Spring, or, The Earthly Paradise, 1660-64", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Dorota Lukianska
- 13: Claude Mirror, early 19th century. Photo: Andrzej Markiewicz

***Preface:***

14 -15: Vertigo by Alfred Hitchcock shown on a laptop. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam

***Introduction:***

16: After-image, 1. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam

17: Temple in Forsmark Park reflected in a Claude Mirror. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam

18: Installation view, Dundee Contemporary Art, Dundee, Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Ruth Clark

19: Landscape seen through field scope at Dundee Contemporary Art, Dundee, Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam

20: Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41, oil on canvas, 60,5 x 80 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.  
Photo: Nationalmuseum

21: United States Military Academy at West Point, April 30th, 2003. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam

22: Installation view, Dundee Contemporary Art, Dundee, Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Ruth Clark

***Scene One:***

23: Installation view, Änkehuset, Stockholm, Ann Böttcher, *Yosemite National Park (A Recollection of Wilderness)*, 2002.

24: Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Ideal View of Tivoli*, 1644, oil on canvas, 117 x 147 cm, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans. Photo: New Orleans Museum of Art

25: Detail, Mattis Leiderstam, *Provenance*, 2006, installation. Photo: Mattis Leiderstam

26: Installation view, Royal College of Art, London, Mattis Leiderstam, *Provenance*, 2006, installation. Photo: Royal College of Art

27: Detail, "After Galvin Hamilton (1723-1798, The 8th Duke of Hamilton with Dr. John and Ensign Moore, 1775-77", Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Mattias Givell

28: Claude Mirror, early 19th century. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

29: Reflection in a Claude Mirror of Baldersnäs Park. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

30: Detail, "After Alexander Nasmyth (1758-1840), Castle Huntly Perthshire, c. 1810", Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Ruth Clark

31: Claude Glasses, c. 1830, set of three colours. Photo: Anna Kleberg

32: Temple in Forsmark Park seen through Claude Glasses. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

33: Alp landscape seen through Claude Glasses. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

34: The Copper Tents in Haga Park seen through Claude Glasses. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

35: Installation view, Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Dorota Lukianska

36: Carl Johan Fahlcrantz (1774-1861), *Landscape with Town in Background*, 1814. Photo: Göteborgs Konstmuseum

37: Detail, "After Carl Johan Fahlcrantz (1774-1861), *Landscape with Town in Background*, 1814", Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

38: View from Great Chain Overlook, United States Military Academy at West Point. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

39: Detail of Map, Frances F. Dunwell, *The Hudson River Highlands*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991.

40: View from Boscobel, Garrison, New York State, US. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

41: Matts Leiderstam, *View (Boscobel)*, 2003-2005, binoculars fitted with coloured filters, Minetta Brook, New York. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

42: Yellow filter, Matts Leiderstam, *View (Boscobel)*, 2003-2005. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

43: Blue filter, Matts Leiderstam, *View (Boscobel)*, 2003-2005. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

44: Black and white photograph of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Nationalmuseum.

45: X-ray of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Nationalmuseum.



47: Claude Lorrain, *Liber Veritatis no. 52*, 1640-41, drawing, 19,8 x 26,5 cm, British Museum. Photo: British Museum

48-49: *Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock shown on a laptop. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

**Scene Two:**

50: Installation view, South London Gallery, London, Ritsuko Hidaka, *Pythagorean Audio Guide*, 1997, installation. Photo: South London Gallery

51: *Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock shown on a laptop. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

52: Grid on a black and white photograph of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

53: After-image, 2. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

54: Sketchbooks, Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Ruth Clark

55: After-image, 3. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

56: Installation view, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41, oil on canvas, 60,5x80 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Photo: Erik Cornelius

57: Circle of Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516), *Christ Carrying the Cross*, c. 1505-1510, oil on wood, 49.5 x 38.5 cm. Photo: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

58: Installation view, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516), *Christ Carrying the Cross*, c. 1505. Photo: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

59: Hilliard T. Goldfarb, *The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: A Companion Guide and History*, the Isabella Stewart Gardener Museum, Boston, and Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1995, pp. 125-126. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

*Scene Three:*

60: Matts Leiderstam, *Selbstbildnis*, 2002, c-print 1, 48 x 38 cm, edition 6 + 1 AP.  
Photo: Wilfried Petzi

61: Matts Leiderstam, *Selbstbildnis*, 2002, c-print 2, 48 x 38 cm, edition 6 x 1 AP.  
Photo: Wilfried Petzi

62: *Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock shown on a laptop. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

63: After-image, 7. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

64: After-image, 14. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

65: Matts Leiderstam copying at the Louvre, 1999. Photo: Yves Breton

66: After-image, 20. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

67: Matts Leiderstam copying at the Art Institute of Chicago, 2000. Photo: Robert Lifson

68: After-image, 22. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

69: Matts Leiderstam copying at Nationalmuseum. Photo: Erik Cornelius

70: Details, Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Nationalmuseum

71: Detail, "After Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41", Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Dorota Lukianska

72: Detail, Grid on a black and white photograph of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

73: Detail, Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Nationalmuseum

74: Matts Leiderstam copying at Nationalmuseum. Photo: Erik Cornelius

75: After-image, 28. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

76: Installation view, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Matts Leiderstam, *After Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father, 1640-41*, 2004, installation. Photo: Erik Cornelius

77: Installation view, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, Matts Leiderstam, *After Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father, 1640-41*, 2004, installation. Photo: Erik Cornelius

78: Detail, Matts Leiderstam, *After Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father, 1640-41*, 2004, installation. Photo: Erik Cornelius

79: Pendant painting, "After Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father, 1640-41", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Mattias Givell

80: Anonymous, *Passage*, c. 18th century, copy made after Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), "Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father", 1640-41, oil on canvas, 71 x 96 cm, Musée Fesch, Ajaccio. Photo: Jean-François Paccosi

81: Detail, Anonymous, *Passage*, c. 18th century, copy made after Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), "Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father", 1640-41, oil on canvas, 71 x 96 cm, Musée Fesch, Ajaccio. Photo: Jean-François Paccosi

#### **Scene Four:**

82: Victoria & Albert Museum catalogue *Anna Piaggi: Fashion-ology*, 2006

83: *Spartacus international Gay Guide 1992-93*, Bruno Gmülder Verlag AG, 1992-93, Berlin, pp. 492-493. Photo: Mattias Givell

84: Mattis Leiderstam, *Returned, Hampstead Heath*, 1997, oil on canvas, 40,5 x 55,5 cm. Photo: Per Hüttner

85: Mattis Leiderstam, *The Shepherds*, 1998, installation, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein. Photo: Heinz Preute

86: Bernardino Licinio da Pordenone (c. 1489-1565), *Portrait of a Young Man*, c. 1525, oil on canvas, 45 x 37,5 cm, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein. Photo: Heinz Preute

87: Gustaf Cederström (1845-1933), *Karl XII:s likfärd*, 1878, oil, 259 x 365 cm, Göteborgs Konstmuseum. Photo: Göteborgs Konstmuseum

88: Installation view, Malble Palace, St. Petersburg, Gustaf Cederström (1845-1933), *Karl XII:s likfärd*, 1878, oil on canvas, 259 x 365 cm, Göteborgs Konstmuseum.

89: Gustaf Cederström (1845-1933), *Karl XII:s likfärd*, 1885, oil on canvas, 265 x 371 cm, Nationalmuseum. Photo: Nationalmuseum

90: Spectator at *Grand Tour* at Dundee Contemporary Art, Dundee Photo: Ruth Clark

91: "After Canaletto (1697-1768), The Grand Canal from the Piazzetta, Looking West, 1746", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Mattias Givell

92: "After Pierre-Jacques Volaire (1729-1792), Eruption of Vesuvius by Moonlight, 1774", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Mattias Givell

93: Detail, "After Gustave Courbet, The Meeting or Bonjour Monsieur Courbet", Mattis Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation. Photo: Mattias Givell

94: Detail, "After Gustave Courbet, The Meeting or Bonjour Monsieur Courbet", Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation. Photo: Mattias Givell

95: Installation view, Dundee Contemporary Art, Dundee, Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Ruth Clark

96: Installation view, Dundee Contemporary Art, Dundee, Matts Leiderstam, *Grand Tour*, 1997-2006, installation, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. Photo: Ruth Clark

***Scene Five:***

97: Kelly Bugden and Matts Leiderstam photographing with Claude Glasses at Great Chain Overlook, West Point. Photo: Jay Battle

98-104: Matts Leiderstam, *View (West Point), April 30, 2003, 2004*, projection. Photo: Matts Leiderstam and Kelly Bugden

***The Sun:***

105: Detail, X-ray of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Landscape with Rebekah Taking Leave of Her Father*, 1640-41. Photo: Nationalmuseum

106: After-image, 32. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

107: After-image, 38. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

108: After-image, 52. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

109: Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), *Sun*, drawing from the "late sketchbook", 18,5 x 12,9 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Photo: Erik Cornelius

110: After-image, 59. Photo: Matts Leiderstam

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