

Title “ The landscape is the message: A photographic dialogue on landscape as a two dimensional image vs landscape as a multidimensional experience”

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Abstract

“To paint a tree one should meditate in front of the tree until they become the tree.”

Zen anecdote

Landscape as an art genre and a concept appeared around the 14th century and flourished as humans began to inhabit industrialized environments thus the need for bonds with nature emerged. At the same period, earth sciences gradually replaced prehistoric cosmologies and ancient myths about the origin of nature. Landscapes were no longer dwellings of celestial beings, but rather grids of coordinates to be conquered.

The first case study is American West landscape and the first National Park, followed by the Alps and Himalaya where landscape photography served science, tourism, national expeditions and, subsequently, art. The focus moves to Mount Olympus and the photographic expedition of the first ascent which framed the end of Balkan Wars, the deconstruction of the Arcadic landscape and the cultural and political landscape of modern Greek state.

The paper concludes with a 2021 photographic experiential experiment, from the tectonics of Mount Olympus to the volcano of Santorini. The bias for landscape we have inherit during the last centuries can be traced from early photography archives up to representations of instagram, yet, landscape is not an image nor a container but an amplifier. Through the study of geology, biology, cultural heritage, everyday life, art and imaginary of landscapes, our relationship with them is transformed. In the footsteps of cultures that do not explore phenomena with the dualistic mentality of "man-and-the-other", but through holistic observation, we meditate with our instincts and senses to become the landscape and re-inhabit our body and subsequently our planet.