

Imagine that we must rid ourselves of our vision of the world as it has been illustrated until now. How would we deconstruct the points of reference that have, until recently, constituted our representations of the territory? What approaches would we adopt in response to the changes and disruptions of uncertainty? Donna Haraway, a philosopher and a biologist, places great importance on vision in scientific doctrine, which she calls situated knowledge.¹ Wanting to upend the claim of infinite and unique vision in narratives of Western thought, she points out that only partial visions may be said to be objective. The exhibition *Regards situés* attempts to contribute new representations of what may be termed denaturalized nature,² of the constrained and limited framework of our relationships with territory. It is a matter of broaching landscape according to our own corporality, in order to change the framework, the perspectives, but also of becoming aware of our space-time in a world of constant change.

At first glance, situating one's gaze on the world seems to relate to closer connection with the intimate. This impression is manifest in Charlotte Guirestante Ghomeshi's photography, in which physical proximity conjures the sensibility of one's interactions. Yet this proximity does not lead back to preestablished structures of portraiture or landscape. Human figures, like the surrounding nature, are blurred, faceless, like distanciations from the subjects. Guirestante's gaze is not on the emotivity, but on the deconstruction of the framework of our representations. For Bruno Latour, it is about "designat[ing] what is no longer the 'human

in nature,' nor the 'human out of nature,' but something else entirely, another animal, another beast, or, more politely put, a new political body yet to emerge."³

In her photographic triptych, *You are Not Aware of Darkness When You're Asleep*, the central figure seems threatened by the shadow of a power over its body adorning the cross. The composition leaves our own conception of truth in doubt by the representation of faith surrounded by scientific representations and nature on fire. Do these three juxtaposed images not constitute the primordial elements of the modernist thought we must deconstruct?

This deconstruction of the dominant framework of representation cannot be carried out outside our physical relationships and our subjective point of view. As in Karine Locatelli's work, the artist illustrates boreal flora of the northern landscape in order to restore its complexity, to bring a situated point of view on her "incorporated" objectivity. The viewing angle is deconstructed through a downward movement, forgoing the usual landscape framework, the horizon line, for a new point of view unequivocally related to the body.

The same enactment is rendered in Pamela Breda's video work *Landscape Becoming Landscape*. In her allegorical gesture of tearing away the fixed representation of landscape and building a new, more supple one in its place, in direct interaction with nature, Breda shows that this formal and figurative reversal occurs through our immediate interactions, in our direct relationship with the Earth. Could the very gesture

Centre des arts
actuels Skol

SKOL

372, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, Espace 314,
Montréal, QC, H3B 1A2
www.skol.ca / skol@skol.ca / 514.398.9322



Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec



Montréal



Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Canada Council
for the Arts

esse

of bringing this old representation to the ground represent the recognition that our world has the capacity for acting within representation and knowledge, of being an active subject of it? ⁴

While the representation of a situated gaze frees itself of the norms of modernity, it operates in a dual movement both within and outside of abstraction. It reproduces both form and the will to reach truth, but it rejects the unicity of universality in order to grasp a composite, multiple truth based on our corporality and our space-time. This dimension is prevalent in the monochromatic images of Julie Roch-Cuerrier who isolates World Atlas pigments on her canvases. These pigments, which she produces in studio for abstract representations, are nonetheless situated in their creative space. The same pigmentation procedure is used in the work *Corespiration I*, which highlights the temporal action of breathing as a vital function. Situated side by side, the two entities share the same reality, like establishing a relationship, but draw on distinct colour solutions that mark their at-once differentiated and parallel development.

The situated gaze forgoes above all the ideological allegories of Western culture, that is, any distancing between body and mind. Francys Chenier, in *Observer le ciel – Navigateur solitaire la tête opaline*, illustrates the different variations arising from his long performative process that refers to the development of a mind attached to a body. In his monochromes, representations of landscape no longer appear, but they reveal the artist's relationship with the sky. Through a meditative process, Chenier lets his being experience the elements and she represents

this relationship. With its spherical form, could his work not symbolize the intertwining of the Earth with the form of the eye? At once symbolic and abstract, would this representation not be more significant of our interaction with the environment? Our situated gazes, and the knowledges that arise from them, could answer our uncertainties about the future, since, as Haraway said: "It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see." ⁵

¹ Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn 1988), 575-599.

² Bruno Latour, "L'Anthropocène et la destruction de l'image du Globe," in Emilie Hache (ed.), *De l'univers clos au monde infini* (Paris: Éditions Dehors, 2014), 14. In English, "Fourth Lecture: The Anthropocene and the destruction of (the image of) the Globe," in Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climate Regime*, translated by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 117.

³ "Bruno Latour: The Anthropocene and the Destruction of the Image of the Globe • Form and Rhetoric in the Discourse of the Anthropocene," recorded lecture given by Bruno Latour, online at <https://www.artandeducation.net/classroom/video/66319/bruno-latour-the-anthropocene-and-the-destruction-of-the-image-of-the-globe>, 10:32 – 10:47 (accessed Jan. 12, 2022).

⁴ In "Situated Knowledges," Haraway points out that ecofeminists had "perhaps been most insistent on some version of the world as active subject, not as resource to be mapped and appropriated [...]" (593). Such a conception is especially disturbing to humanists, for whom the Earth is a resource.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 583

- **Marie-Hélène Toutant** is a candidate for a master's in art history, specializing in feminist studies, at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Her research is focused on representations of gender social relationships, mainly in connection with femicides, and their spatial characteristics in contemporary art.

Centre des arts
actuels Skol

SKOL

372, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, Espace 314,
Montréal, QC, H3B 1A2
www.skol.ca / skol@skol.ca / 514.398.9322