

3.Encounters with Landscape3x (2012)

Technical details

HD video, 16:9, color, stereo sound, 29 min., Portugal

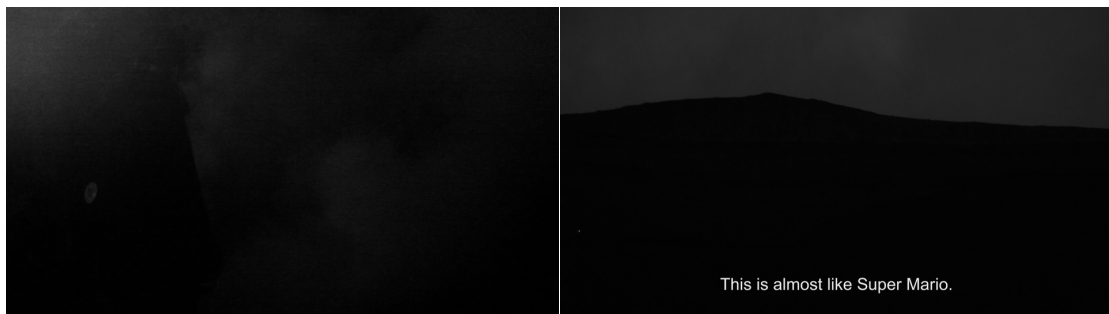
Synopsis

In late 2011, I arrived in Sete Cidades, Azores. I recalled Immanuel Kant's ideas on the sublime. We experience the sublime when our imagination fails to comprehend the greatness of natural events, in the process of determining concepts of understanding, and supplants this failure with a delight stemming from its ability to grasp these aspects of nature by virtue of an idea of reason. That idea appropriates the supersensible and human moral nature.

To experience the sublime sensibility: a body, being human, and being finite are preconditions. Was it a lack of sensibility?

While filming I felt the urge to formalize landscape through language games. It is the sight that makes things valuable. Encounters with Landscape 3x happens to be this exercise. Landscape becomes a dangerous playground.

When one is young, one is daring and stupid. As you grow older, you tend to lose the daringness and become less stupid. We change the rules as we go along.



Encounters with Landscape3x (2012)

Credits

Written and directed: Salomé Lamas

Production: Salomé Lamas

With: Salomé Lamas

Cinematography: Luísa Homem, Frederico Lobo, Maria Clara Escobar

Sound and mix: Bruno Moreira

Editing: Salomé Lamas

Color correction: Pedro Paiva

Support: Galeria Zé Dos Bois, Corredor Associação Cultural

Distribution: Collectif Jeune Cinema



Encounters with
Landscape3x (2012), Art
by Silvia Prudêncio, 2012

Diary notes on *Encounters with Landscape 3X* / The Real as a playground



December 2011

For me, Azores was the vague memory I had of São Miguel island, where I remember having hitchhiked together with Cristina (my mother) and a friend. I was eight years old. When we would get lost, they would follow my instincts, since there was not much else to do.

In 2010, I arrived to Sete Cidades. I recall Kant's ideas on the sublime. He argues that the sublime is the comprehension of the body; prior to the mathematic measure there is the aesthetic measure (measured by the body). The sublime takes place when the human measure is overcome — i.e., when the body experiences the idea of being hit by an imaginary mountain. To experience the sublime: sensibility, a body, being human, being finite are necessary. Attempting to film the landscape, I realized that I could intellectually preconceive the sublime but I couldn't feel it. I question: Was it a lack of sensibility?

When one films there is an attempt to formalize landscape through language games. It is the sight that makes things valuable. We change the rules as we go along.

How to capture landscape? Benjamin sets a difference between the concept of copying and reading. When you fly over the landscape on a plane, you control by sight geometry, climate and the geography of a region. When you walk on the landscape the landscape comes to you without you dominating it, you are not the landlord and the landscape "hits you in the face". It is different from walking.

You walk the landscape and you encounter a river that you must cross, your feet get wet, you continue and there is a crossroad you have to pick a way, you follow it and you reach a dead end, a mountain that you must climb, it is unpredictable.

It has to do with knitting. This is to copy, to be obedient and faithful to it. If you try to understand you are reading and that is an enemy to the copy.

To claim authenticity between translation and its original, a criterion must be utilized, analogous to the reflexive processes where the critique of knowledge has to prove the impossibility of an image-copy theory. If knowledge contains neither objectivity, nor even the exigency of objective, if he is constituted by an image-copy. Therefore it is demonstrated that no translation has the possibility to aspire, as its ultimate essence, to a similarity with the original - it will, instead, be a metamorphosis.

But lets go back to an earlier paragraph. Parallel to the lack of sensibility, I felt the crushing size of the landscape. I grew interested in the dimensions and it's translations on film: the possibility of generating layers of farness and proximity (by the means of sound and visuals).

I was born small, not extremely small, but short. Being for several years a lonely child I loved to draw. They would give me an A3 piece of paper, and I would represent what was in front of me shrank to the scale of an A7, leaving most of the canvas empty. They told me to represent it bigger and bigger so that it wouldn't fit in the A3. I managed to do it, so I could please. But it was my intention to represent it as small as I could and in detail. I thought of the idea shrinking the landscape so I could fit in it. I created the idea of a precise shot that would play with dimensions.

When one is young I believe one is daring and stupid, you grow older and you tempt to lose the daringness and get less stupid.

I thought of a way to experiment the landscape with daringness and stupidity. Language: To name the unnamed; to transform the language of things into the language of humanity. Let's name it — a rock, a mountain, a river, the mist, the grass, etc. — These elements generate the name landscape. If to capture the landscape is to translate this language into a cinematic language. Then, wouldn't a fall into landscape be a fall into language? "Encounters with landscape 3x" happens to be this exercise. Landscape becomes a dangerous playground.

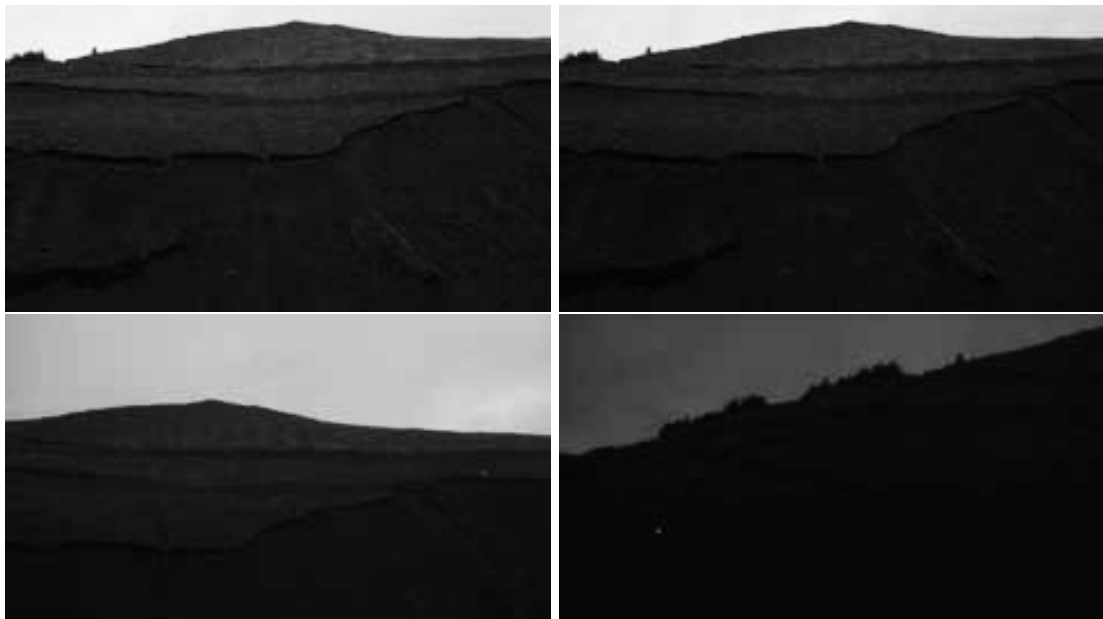
1X = A fall from a tree into the lagoon. Landscape becomes 2D, and the body is the medium of vertical measure. The expectation of the body submerging in the water doesn't occur since the lagoon is not deep enough. The fall turns into irony.





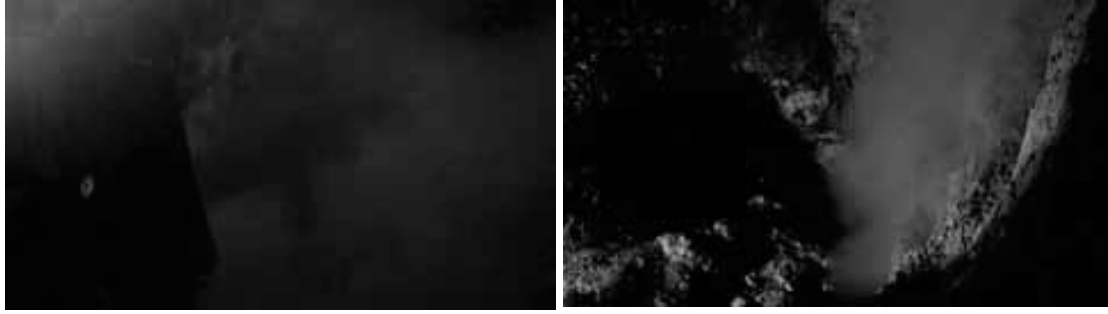
Encounters with Landscape3x (2012)

2X = The body draws a line in the mountain following its geography from X to Y. There are two different scales. a) The sound is recorded live by the body that walks; the spectator feels the proximity and the accidental terrain. b) In juxtaposition the framing of the shot is distant and contemplative; the light starts to fade till it gets pitch dark. Now one can only observe the mountain's silhouette, and an intermittent flashlight dot. The image disappears when the accidental fall takes place. The body falls into the landscape (again) the action takes place triggered, not by the body, but by an unknown force. In this situation the solid framing has no place to be. The soundtrack continues because what is beyond language can only be communicated through language. The resonance of the fall in 1x turns into a bad joke.



Encounters with Landscape3x (2012)

3X = The setting is Dantesque, if the other tableaux contained fragile connections to the volcano here its presence is inescapable. Am I decoding or encoding reality?



Encounters with Landscape3x (2012)

Text

Salomé Lamas: Encounters with Landscape 3x (Video, 29 min., 2012, Portugal) The Impossible Duel

By Javier h. Estrada

Shot on São Miguel, the largest Island of the Azores, Encounters with Landscape (3X) is divided into a prologue and three acts. Salomé Lamas embraces a three-act structure to wage a war of mythical proportions, culminating in a reaffirmation of the inferiority of humans with respect to nature. During a car journey we are led into a lush and highly threatening environment. The wind rustles the trees and the camera. Everything we see next is an attempt to take the reins of a situation, the ancestral fantasy of interacting with the wild, struggling against its energies.

The first of these exercises is next to a river. We see Lamas in a tree on the riverbank, climbing along its branches. This static shot, dominated by the sound of the water, portrays the insignificance of the artist in relation to her surroundings. Without exactly knowing whether to go forwards or backwards, she finds herself awaiting an inevitable outcome: her defeat. The second encounter is with a lofty hill. Lamas is a microscopic dot, rendered visible by the intense red colour of her coat that contrasts with the dark shades of the earth. Now the objective is to hurl herself into the gorge; although, she seems to be ensnared in doubt. When and at exactly which point? As the minutes pass, night falls, the camera loses focus, and the object leaves the frame. The sound of the filmmaker's convulsive breathing is amplified. Control over the situation proves to be impossible and once again the forces of nature prevail. By virtue of its extremity, her predicament finally becomes laughable. Lamas verges on self-parody during her distressed monologue: "Salomé, you wanted to have an experience in the mountain and now you're screwed." The third and final segment is the only one in which we see the young filmmaker from a close distance. She is inside a cave, observing the gases it emits. In the end there is no challenge, only the act of surrendering to the intangible impulses of nature, an emotion not unlike transcendence, as ultimately her experiences are the source of a valuable lesson. Salomé Lamas was only 24 years old when she began working on this germinal and intuitive work that incorporates elements of performance art and reaches an illuminating conclusion. One can assume that it is the courage and audacity of youth, its physical spirit and conceptual recklessness, which makes Encounters with Landscape (3X) a fascinating work.

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