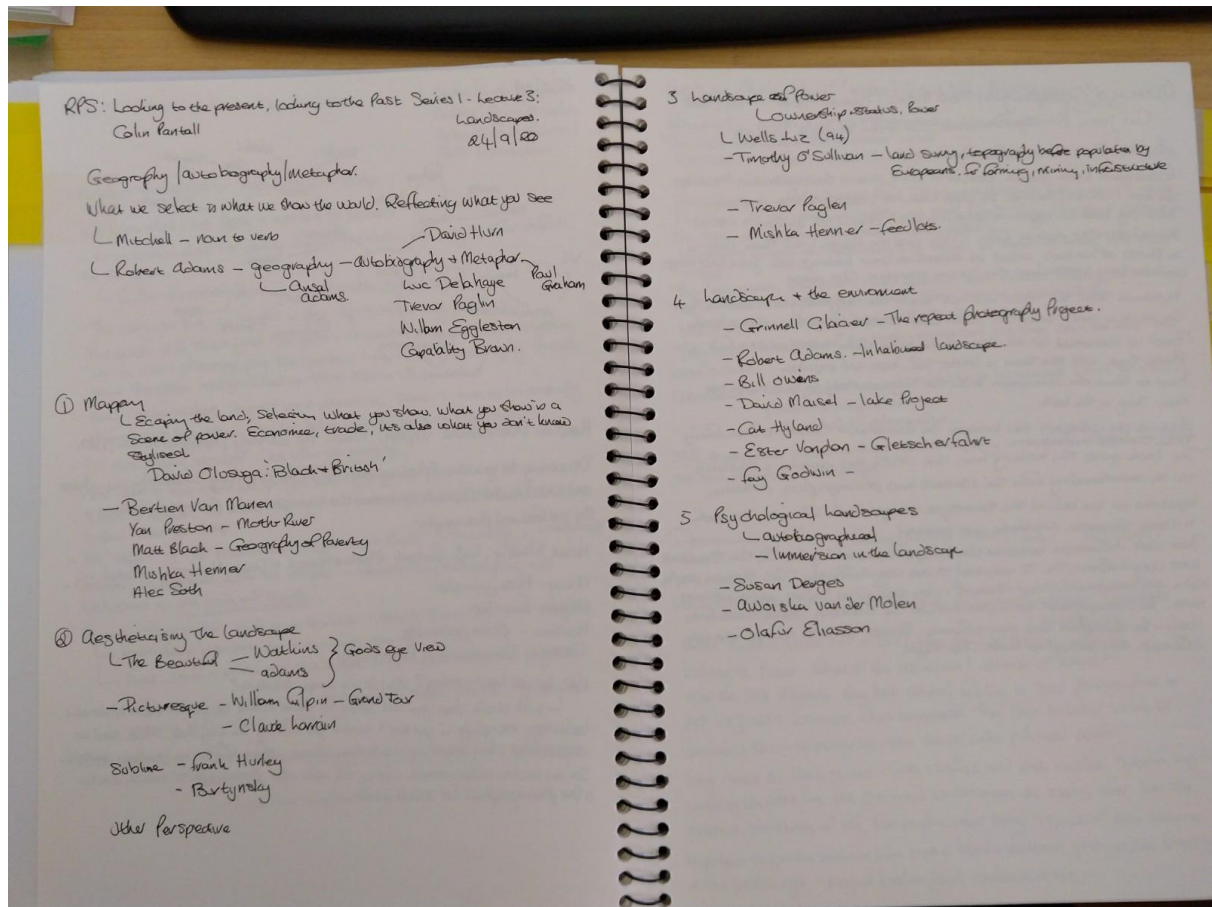


RPS: 'Looking to the present, looking to the Past' Series 1 -Lecture 3: Landscape



## Lecture 3: Landscape

### Where we look and what we show



In *Landscape and Power*, WJT Mitchell talks about escaping the genre of landscape and changing ' "landscape" from a noun to a verb. It asks that we think of landscape, not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed.'

- "Landscape pictures can offer us, I think, three varieties – geography, autobiography, and metaphor. Geography is, if taken alone, sometimes boring, autobiography is frequently trivial, and metaphor can be dubious. But taken together ... the three kinds of information strengthen each other and reinforce what we all work to keep intact – an affection for life.

- Robert Adams (1996) *Beauty in Photography* New York:Aperture p. 14

1. Mapping the Landscape
2. Aestheticising the Landscape - The Beautiful, the Picturesque, the Sublime
3. Landscape and Power
4. Landscape and the Environment
5. The Psychological Landscape







Tabula Rogeriana, an ancient world map drawn by Muhammad al-Idrisi for Roger II of Sicily in 1154







A. Cresques, the Catalan atlas, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, known as "Atlas catalan de 1375."

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3200m.gct00215/?sp=1&st=list>

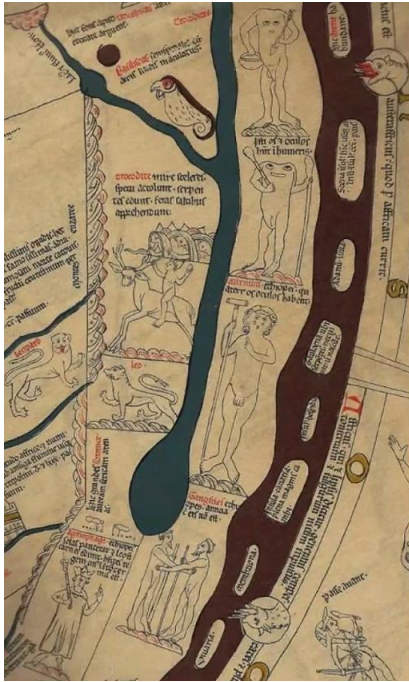


## Mappa Mundi, 1300 (Hereford)

- 3 continents
- Stylised
- Fictional creatures in the unmapped places



# Blemmyes and Monopods



See also David Olusuga: Black and British

<https://www.themappamundi.co.uk/mappa-mundi/>



c. 1710, map of Africa by Daniel de la Feuille.

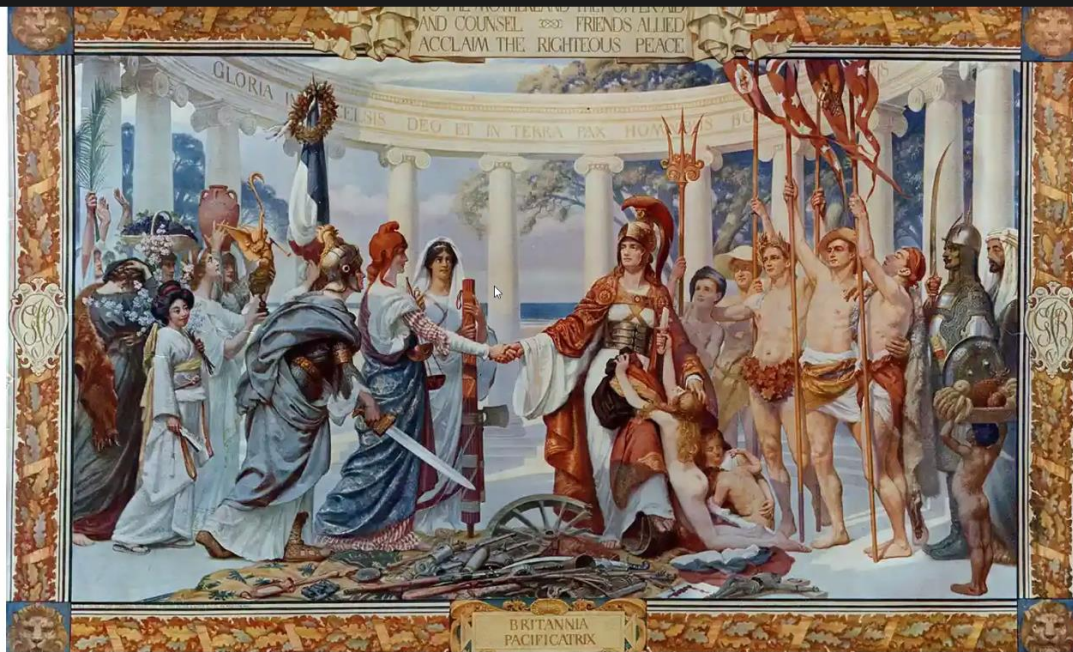
Berlin Conference – 1884-1885

Divided Africa into spheres of European influence.  
Countries were divided accordingly

Congo confirmed as the private property of King  
Leopold of Belgium







Sigismund Goetze - Britannia Pacificatrix , Foreign Office mural, 1921



## Questions

What maps do you use now?

How do they affect how you see and experience a place?

Can you think of any photographic projects that use maps?

## 2. Aestheticising the landscape

The Beautiful

(The Picturesque)

The Sublime

### The Beautiful

Burke associates qualities of "balance," "smoothness," "delicacy" and "color" with the beautiful, while he speaks of the sublime in terms such as "vastness" and "terror" (Burke, 1757). For Burke, the terms work almost in opposition to each other; the sublime is certainly not part of the beautiful in the Burkeian world.

Burke, Edmund. 1756. *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.

 <https://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/beautifulsublime.htm>



## Carleton Watkins, The Vernal Fall, from the Yosemite Book, 1868



Carleton Watkins 'The Half Dome, 4,953 feet, Yosemite, Cal.' 1882



# Ansel Adams



The Tetons and the Snake River, Grand Teton National Park, 1941

‘the birth of the park also marked the death of truly wild nature [...] because after all once a fragment of wilderness has been designated a park it can’t truly be said to be wilderness any longer’

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b017755r/art-of-america-1-looking-for-paradise2011>).



# The Picturesque

This is between the beautiful and the sublime.

The idea originated with William Gilpin.

It connects to domestic tourism, the idea of the ideal viewing position, and a considered asymmetry.

Carefully positioned ruins help (especially if they are Greco-Roman)

The idea is connected to western exposure to Asian ideas of composition)



Claude Lorrain - Capriccio with ruins of the Roman Forum, 1634



William Gilpin – from Six landscapes, engraved by S. Alken, London 1794, [no.3]

## The Sublime

Nature that is vast and terrifying!

Burke, E. (1757) A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful



# Philip James De Loutherbourg

## An Avalanche in the Alps 1803



# Casper David Friedrich Wanderer over the sea of fog



## Frank Hurley



HMS Endurance, 2015



# Edward Burtynsky The Contemporary Sublime



<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime>

## Zhang Kechun - Yellow River



# Other perspectives

## Ukiyo-e (Floating World)

Ukiyo-e pictures (pictures of the floating world – the ‘floating world’ was the world of leisure and pleasure in Edo Japan)

In cities, focused on pleasure, leisure (and pornography – shunga)

Also focused on animals, on nature, on seasonality, on water, on ordinary people

Hokusai and Hiroshige broadened view to landscape, including naturalistic views of people working in the landscape

## Hokusai (1760 -1849)

- Made Ukiyo-e pictures (pictures of the floating world – the ‘floating world’ was the world of leisure and pleasure in Edo Japan)
- Most famous for 36 views of Mount Fuji (1831)
- Also made shunga pictures (illustrated porn)
- Japanese illustrated scrolls were a precursor to anime





Hiroshige, Shōno-juku, from Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Hiroshige, c. 1833–34



Hokusai – The Great Wave from 36 views of Mount Fuji





Jeff Wall – A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)

<https://publicdelivery.org/jeff-wall-gust-of-wind/>



# Hamaya Hiroshi



From Snow Country, 1955

# Shomei Tomatsu



## Questions

Do you enjoy taking beautiful/picturesque/sublime landscapes?

Are there any problems with making beautiful landscapes?



### 3. Landscapes of power

- Power of ownership
- Power of emptiness
- Survey Photography
- Limit Telephotography

## Mr and Mrs Andrews, c1750, by Thomas Gainsborough



# Landscape paintings

English landscape paintings were quite explicitly about territory ownership and control.

‘The pictures were made for display, to reassure the owner of the extent of his landed property and to impress upon visitors his prowess at estate management and productivity’ (Wells, 1994).

‘women’s historical relation to land is ambiguous, mediated through her relation to men’ (Wells, 1994)

Wells, L. (ed.) (1994) *Viewfindings Women Photographers: ‘Landscape’ and Environment*, Peterborough: Available Light.

## Timothy O’Sullivan



Timothy O’Sullivan, Camp at Shoshone Falls, Idaho, 1868



A member of Clarence King's Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel is surveying from a rock. Shoshone Canyon and Falls, Idaho Terr., in background.



Timothy O'Sullivan 'Shoshone Falls, Idaho' 1868



# Timothy O'Sullivan: King's and Wheeler Surveys 1867 - 1874

The purpose of the surveys 'were straight forward... to map the region and to collect information of benefit to travellers, miners and farmers' (Davis, 2007: 232)

Landscape photography then is not neutral. It's connected to mapping and mapping is a representation of power.

Davis, K. F., Aspinwall, W. C., & Wilson, D. F. (2007). The origins of American photography: from daguerreotype to dry-plate, 1839-1885. London: Yale University Press

## Trevor Paglen – Experimental Geographer

Trevor Paglen has likened O'Sullivan to a 19th-century surveillance satellite, making photography that brought '...symbolic and strategic order to blank spots on maps through surveillance, imaging, and mapping'.

[https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/views-from-a-height-technologies-of-surveillance-fro/#!](https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/views-from-a-height-technologies-of-surveillance-fro/)

# Emptiness is power

Landscape photography of the American West has historically been about showing what is there (natural resources, available land, sublime geomorphology) and what is not there (no cities, no people, sublime vacancy).

The installation of bombing ranges, experimental research facilities, test sites, waste dumps, and all the paraphernalia of advanced military-industrial power in the West makes use not only of abundant, under-populated space but also of the notion of 'emptiness' itself, which is mobilised as a resource in the concealment of military activity.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/21/the-purloined-landscape-photography-and-power-in-the-american-west>



NSA/GCHQ Surveillance Base, Bude, Cornwall, UK, 2014

- National Reconnaissance Office Ground Station (ADF-SW)
- Jornada del Muerto, New Mexico;



Chemical and Biological  
Weapons Proving Ground

Dugway, UT

Distance approx. 42 miles





# Trevor Paglen: Limit Telephotography

A number of classified military bases and installations are located in some of the remotest parts of the United States... Many of these sites are so remote, in fact, that there is nowhere on Earth where a civilian might be able to see them with an unaided eye.

Limit-telephotography involves photographing landscapes that cannot be seen with the unaided eye. The technique employs high powered telescopes whose focal lengths range between 1300mm and 7000mm.

Limit-telephotography most closely resembles astrophotography... In some ways, however, it is easier to photograph the depths of the solar system than it is to photograph the recesses of the military industrial complex. Between Earth and Jupiter (500 million miles away), for example, there are about five miles of thick, breathable atmosphere. In contrast, there are upwards of forty miles of thick atmosphere between an observer and the sites depicted in this series.

<http://paglen.com/?l=work&s=limit>

## Mishka Henner -Feedlots



Henner uses the... God's Eye view to make images of American feedlots—feedlots that due to US 'ag-gag' laws are not readily available for viewing.

Examples of this legislation include West Virginia prohibiting 'access to "nonpublic areas" for reasons other than intent to perform authorized work, including capturing photographs and videos' or Kansas criminalising "enter(ing) an animal facility to take pictures by photograph, video camera or by any other means."

<https://witness.worldpressphoto.org/a-guide-to-landscape-power-and-climate-change-767c2fe08087>

# Questions

Does wilderness still exist?

Can a landscape be tamed?

## 4. Landscape and the environment

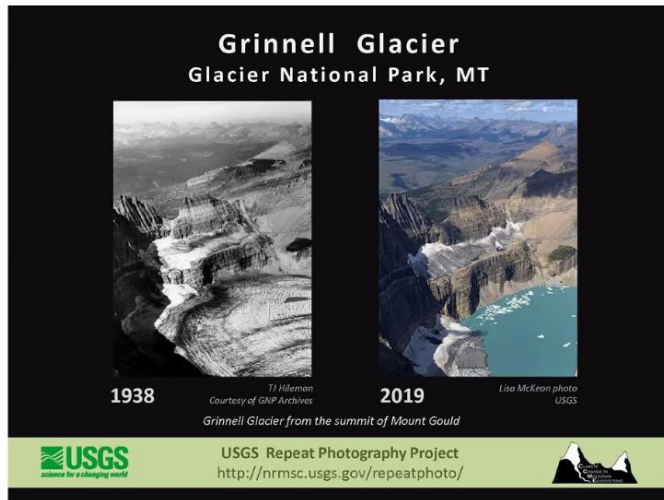
Rephotography (also see Mark Klett)

From Ansel Adams to Robert Adams

Mining perspectives

Sound and music

# The Repeat Photography Project



[https://www.usgs.gov/centers/norock/science/repeat-photography-project?qt-science\\_center\\_objects=0#](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/norock/science/repeat-photography-project?qt-science_center_objects=0#)







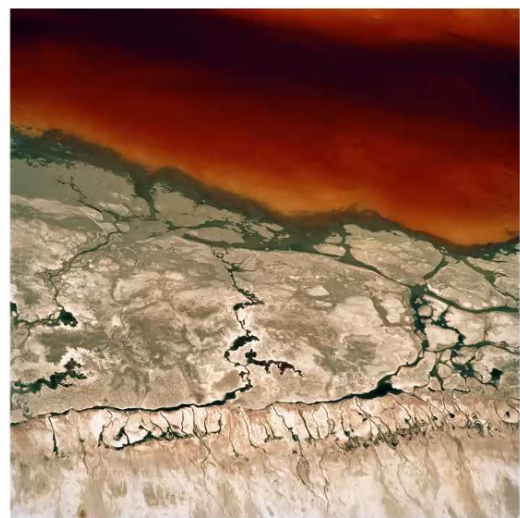
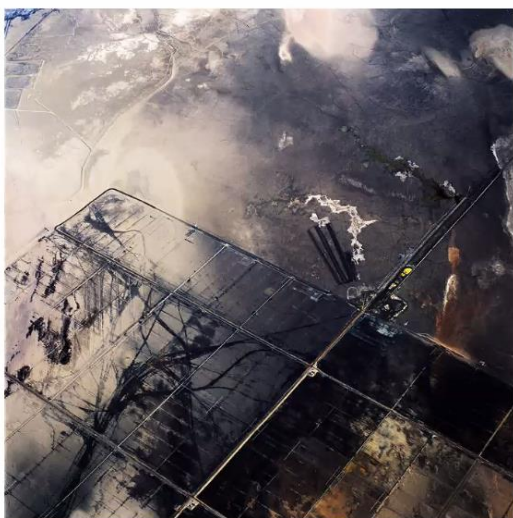
## Robert Adams

- Photographs the transition of the land
- Especially photographed in the West, around Denver
- Shows how land is transformed from rural to suburban
- Connected to survey photography
- Highly critical of land use
- Grey palette
- Best known for *The New West*
- Also writes accessible essays including: *Beauty in Photography*, *Why People Photograph*

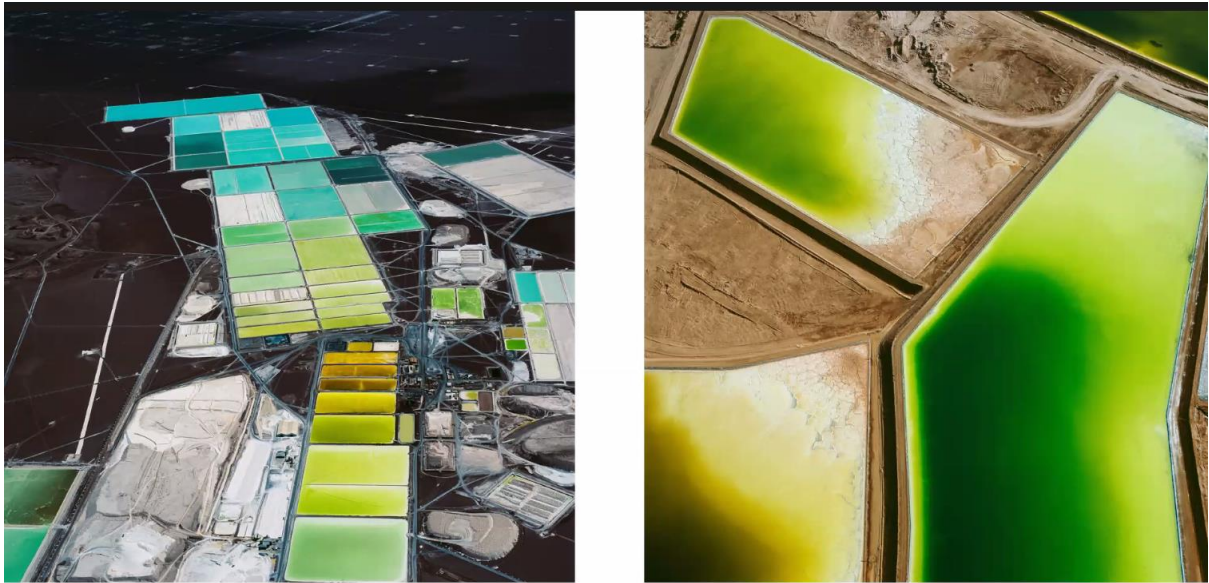




## David Maisel – The Lake Project







Desolation Desert, Lithium Extraction, Chile 2018

“My sense is that the places I photograph are an outer manifestation of our own psyches. These are not simply the work of some corporate enemy, but rather a reflection of who and what we are collectively, as a society.”

## Cat Hyland – Lithium Mining



# The Atacama Desert

It's also the world's largest source of lithium, home to minerals that provide the power that fuels our modern daily life.

Break down a smartphone battery and you'll find three grammes of lithium in there. A laptop has around seventy grammes.

Move up to an electric car and you'll find twenty kilogrammes. Lithium is the element of the moment and the Atacama is where most of it comes from.

One side of the story that Hyland tells with her images is the process of making this lithium. In the Salar de Atacama salt flat, lithium exists as a mineral salt suspended in underground reservoirs of brine. To get sufficient concentration of lithium, the brine is pumped into evaporation ponds and then goes through repeated cycles of solar evaporation. That's where the colours come from, the blues, the greens, the yellow, the deepening shades signifying the higher concentrations being reached for the final collection of lithium salts that are then processed further into the metal that will go into your smartphone battery.

<http://www.catherinehyland.co.uk/>







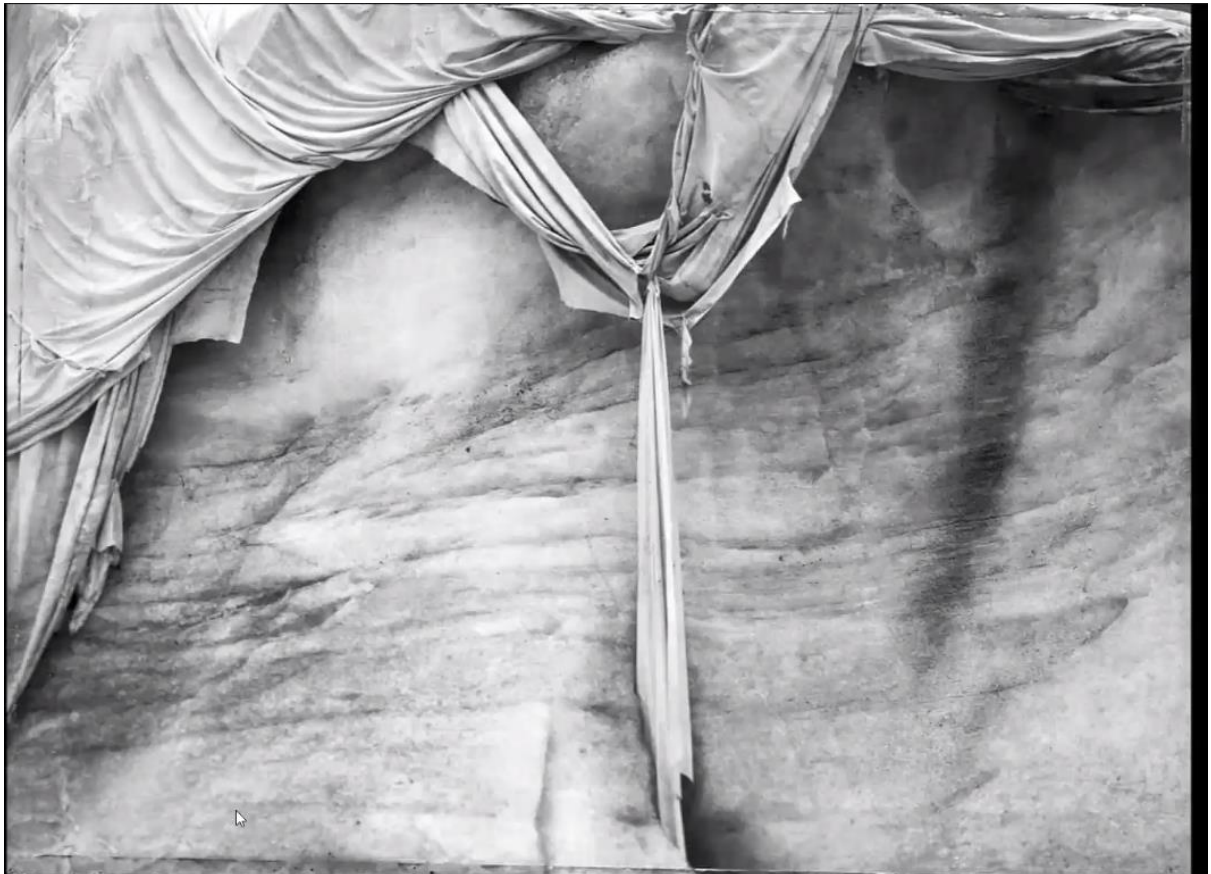
## Ester Vonplon - Gletscherfahrt



<https://vimeo.com/143865219>









# Fay Godwin



Fay Godwin 'Duke of Westminster's Estate' undated

'her work asked questions about conservation, and about access, thereby challenging exclusive rights asserted by landowners' (Wells, 2011)

↩

'she is one of few examples of women who include territorial vistas although [...] often shot from a slightly low angle, enhancing the sense of being within the landscape (rather than looking down on it)' (Wells, 2011).

Wells, L. (2011) Land Matters. New York: I. B. Tauris.

# Questions

How is the landscape changing where you live?

How can you photograph and record that?

Can photography ever result in any real change?

## 5. Psychological Landscapes

Autobiographical

Immersion in the landscape

Place Identity

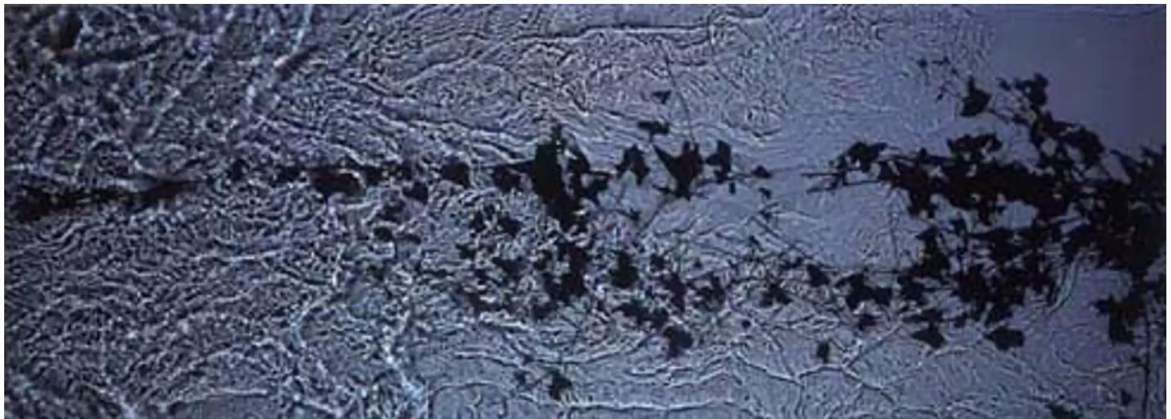
Forest Washing

# Place Identity

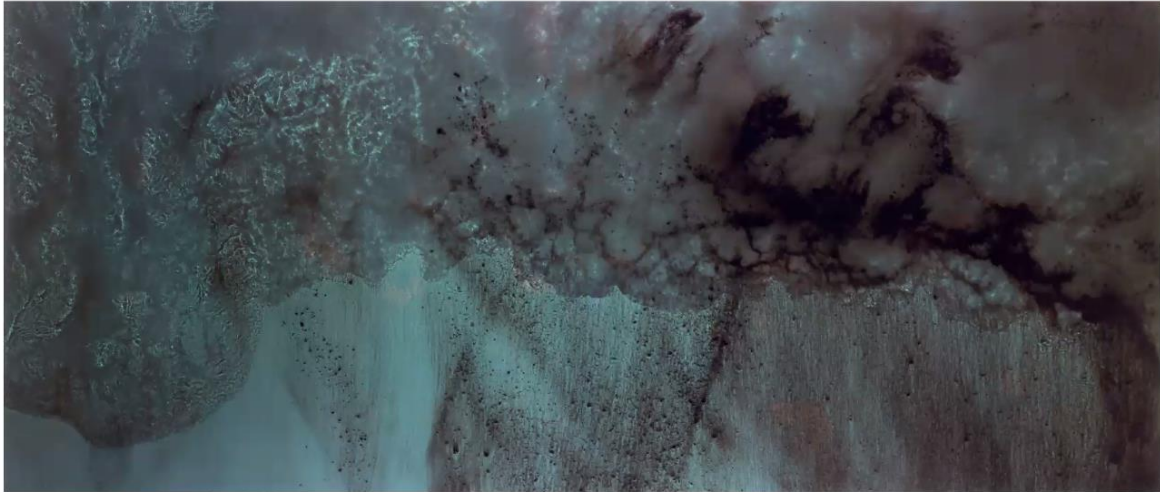
*Place identity* is a core concept in the field of environmental psychology which proposes that identities form in relation to environments. The term was introduced by environmental and social psychologists **Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe K. Fabian**, and **Robert Kaminoff**, who argue that place identity is a sub-structure of a person's self-identity, and consists of knowledge and feelings developed through everyday experiences of physical spaces.

<https://peopleplacespace.org/toc/section-3/>

## Susan Derges







Shoreline

## Awoiska van der Molen

‘spending long periods of time in solitude in remote landscapes, she slowly uncovers the identity of the place, allowing it to impress upon her its specific emotional and physical qualities’ (Dannemann, 2017)





## Question

What landscape do you feel most comfortable in? Is there a specific place?

What are the sights and sounds and smells and feelings of that place?

Is it possible to photography/film/record it?



# Some Reading

Alexander, J. – Perspectives on Place

Wells, L. - Land Matters.

Mitchell, W. J. T. - Landscape and Power.

The People, Place and Space Reader

