

ANDREAS RAUH

CAPTURING LANDSCAPE: PHENOMENOLOGICAL FORAYS THROUGH ART, ATMOSPHERES AND QUOTIDIAN LIFE

1. Introduction

'Does the landscape really exist?' is one of the inquiries hastily affirmed, prompting subsequent contemplation and a desire to qualify the initial response. Concepts and personal references swiftly intertwine. Further inquiries can be made: When was landscape last consciously noticed or perceived? How is landscape known, and what distinguishes various landscapes? This continued questioning elucidates my approach to our central query: in the following essay, I aim to explore 'landscape' phenomenologically. Specifically, I refer to a perspective that conceives of individuals as felt-bodily sentient beings capable of affectively perceiving their surroundings. Unwanted or involuntary experiences are also understood as significant influences on everyday (emotional) life.

In this context, feelings and atmospheres are interpersonal qualities that can emerge and be influenced in order to tune (emotional) life in a specific manner. Landscapes could now be defined as environments of the felt-body in which atmospheric sensations are experienced, establishing a certain physical and felt-bodily relatedness: a landscape is less than a whole country or a city, but more than a living room or house. The art world, in particular, is a realm that traditionally engages with individuals, their felt-bodily perceptual capacity, environment, and the affective tuning of atmospheres and feelings. And thus forays through the art world can inspire the unveiling and identification of facets of landscapes, their atmospheres, and the underlying everyday modes of perception.

The typologisation of landscape and its exploration primarily occur in geographical or geography-related sciences, referring to an area delimited, defined, and differentiated from others by certain, mostly natural scientific characteristics. This contrasts with our own felt-bodily perception of an area, the culturally

influenced, subjective perception of the aesthetic whole of the landscape. The semantic scope of the concept of landscape is broad and raises new questions depending on the disciplinary focus: territorial, geographical, philosophical, social, ethnological, political, economic, planning, life-world, and aesthetic. The view and concept of landscape are characterised by centuries of art and cultural history, presenting itself as both a perceptual reference and event, as well as the result of abstraction and construction.

In the following, I will embark on an exploration, opting for art as the context to unveil landscapes and present certain aspects of landscape through select artworks (chapter 2: Art). Given the distinctive role of affective, felt-bodily perception in this context, I will subsequently delve into the phenomenon of atmospheres (chapter 3: Atmospheres). This serves not only as a contextual justification for art but also as a justification for the phenomenological and artistic methods that render landscapes accessible in everyday life. Lastly, everyday life refers to the research context that underpins explorations through natural, cultural, and personal landscapes (chapter 4: Quotidian Life). In an atmospheric sense, this encompasses not only passive, pleasurable perceptions but also active, creative interventions in one's own and others' perceptual references.

2. Art = discovery context

In a commonplace understanding, landscape is viewed as a demarcated and cultivated natural space. This cultivation distinguishes landscape from a mere environment but also leads to the observation that in heavily built-up and utilised countries of Europe, there is only landscape and no longer nature. From a specific geographical standpoint, landscape is characterised as a section of the Earth's surface with a distinctive, uniform appearance and biological structure. This geographical perspective facilitates the characterisation and delineation of certain areas based on scientifically measurable attributes. Less quantifiable but qualitatively recognisable is an aesthetic-cultural-scientific perspective on the landscape as an aesthetic whole. In this perspective, one can notice and appreciate an area based on one's own culturally influenced, subjective, felt-bodily perception.

Within this cultural imprint, there is room for idyll, romanticisation, and nostalgia. The question, 'Does the landscape really exist?' might be answered, with a glance at the European

art-historical heritage, by asserting that landscape evidently only exists in Italy or the Netherlands. This deduction arises from the fact that many European artists' educational programs mandated a trip to Italy for studying, sketching, and painting the landscape. The painted landscapes reveal a specific relationship between environment and light that appears particularly pronounced and perceptible on these journeys and in these regions¹. This gives rise to typical landscape depictions and landscapes of longing, creating a kind of pictorial canon. It's crucial to not only engage with the depictions but also recognise them as bodily tangible realities on-site. This atmospheric renaissance is exemplified by works of Carracci, the French painters Poussin and Lorrain, who worked in Rome, and the Dutch artists van de Velde and van Ruisdael. Later, landscape painting was characterised by painters such as Millet, Corot, Courbet, and, notably in England, Constable and Turner.

The relationship between light, air, and surroundings indicates a specific atmospheric situation for all of them, even in a meteorological sense. This atmosphere prompts a comparison between the light observed and the light depicted. And so, it is not only due to further developments in painting technique that the aesthetic perceptions and physical sensations on-site have led to a brightening of the colour palette for many painters. It should not remain unmentioned that painting surfaces may darken over time and lose their brightness due to patination processes, adding an atmospheric dimension to the interplay between painting and exhibition.

The movement through a landscape and its artistic treatment are based on physical, atmospheric perception, and a unifying mood on the part of the artist (cf. Roquet 2012, 7). In the following section, personally selected images will be employed to illustrate selected aspects of the landscape.

¹ See, for example, with regard to the 'hazy clarity' of the Italian landscape: Böhme (2007, 238).



Fig. 1: H. Aé, 'Schellerhau'

The introductory example by the painter Hanna Aé 'Schellerhau' from 1935 presents an exemplary and almost clichéd landscape, reminiscent of the scenes that adorned nearly every living room in my grandparents' generation. The composition features various green areas such as grass and meadows, a wooded hill representing nearby and distant fields and forests (including the corresponding bluing/aerial perspective). Additionally, there are signs of civilization in the form of houses, a path, and a well-tended garden. Notably, there is an absence of human figures, avoiding potential distractions from identification.

In contrast, the subsequent example, 'Solitary Tree' or the 'Village Landscape by Morning Light' by Caspar David Friedrich, painted in 1822, depicts a natural pre-alpine landscape with meadows, hills, and a mountain range. Although a shepherd watches over his sheep at the foot of the prominently placed tree, it is the tree that is the main character in the picture.



Fig. 2: C.D. Friedrich, 'Solitary Tree'.

In the context of aesthetics as semiotics, meaning a context that requires interpretation, Gernot Böhme emphasises that «landscape painting [...] is generally not a depiction but the composition of a scene» (Böhme 2001, 154). Thus, Friedrich's painting goes beyond a mere study of nature; it integrates up to six individual studies into one picture, aligning with the genre's common convention. Landscape painting aims to convey the depiction of depth and the construction of exterior space. Friedrich organises the picture into a distinct foreground, middle ground, and background, using appropriate bluing to enhance the depth of colour. Since plein-air painting wasn't yet feasible or prevalent, the artist explored the landscape for observation and sketching, with the finalisation occurring in the studio (illustrated in Georg Friedrich Kersting's painting 'Caspar David Friedrich in his Studio' from 1811).

The painter's felt-bodily involvement in the landscape only becomes evident *post hoc* in the picture's composition. This enables the distinction between fictional and real landscapes, allowing the differentiation of the artist's intentions and topographical reference in landscape paintings. Particularly in this tree, romantic motifs play a crucial role in the composition. The

tree symbolises the stages of human life, from the robust branches of youth in the lower third to the lifeless stumps of old age at the top. Additionally, this tree serves as a symbol for the strength of a nation in decline.

But even when viewed without an (art) historical lens, gestures and suggestions of movement can be perceived in the picture, accentuating the waves of time. The picture is characterised by a clear rhythmisation through the sweep of the different picture layers, interrupted by the tree placed in the centre with its gestural references and finger-pointing by means of the branches with varying thickness and foliage into the different picture areas. Friedrich's beautiful portrayal of nature as a landscape is rooted in his harmonisation with the viewer, creating «nature as a resonance sphere of the mind» (Dickel 2007, 150). The artwork encourages the gaze to wander, acting as a form of perceptual training in nature. Even though the painted landscape is recognisable as such due to the painting technique and composition, the visibility of the artistic introduces a reflective period (cf. Dickel 2007, 154), an opportunity to contemplate one's own perception.

In addition to imitating nature, landscape painting is about framing the landscape, providing a school of distant landscape perception. This distance is evident in the picture, where the lone figure present, the shepherd leaning against the tree and gazing into the distance, differs from the hiker or viewer of the picture. This distinction is emphasised by the shepherd's small size and considerable distance from the viewer. For the shepherd, the landscape is a workplace, and his gaze is not detached or aesthetically motivated in the classical sense, unlike the hiker or viewer. Nevertheless, in terms of atmospheric perception, the shepherd has an advantage: his felt-bodily presence and proximity to the tree enable him to sense its mightiness (cf. Böhme 2001, 40 f.).

Does the landscape really exist? Yes, landscape is an area, a piece of nature through which I can move with a felt bodily presence, allowing my gaze to wander.



Fig. 3: C.D. Friedrich, 'Monk by the Sea'.

This wandering of the gaze is emphasised in the next painting: 'Monk by the Sea' by Caspar David Friedrich, painted between 1808 and 1809, takes us to the beach. The sky occupies more than two-thirds of the picture with a transition of clouds from shallow grey feathery clouds to dark storm clouds on the horizon. Once again, it is a small figure from behind that invites the viewer to identify with it and is placed in a scene that demonstrates the drama and the sublime nature to which the seemingly inconspicuous monk exposes himself. Here, the landscape as a piece of nature is nearly dissolved: the beach appears barren, monotonous, and less inviting for casual wandering and strolling around without interest. The dramatic sky signals unpleasant weather and therefore uncomfortable living conditions. The landscape has transformed into a landscape of colour, a vast expanse where I can lose myself by gazing through the fine nuances of colours that waft and dissolve. The emphasis on the pictorial elements leads to an abstraction of the landscape. The merging of landscape segments, the blurring of coloured areas resembles the haze that dissolves contours and unites the scenery with the situation of perception in a common atmosphere (cf. Böhme 2007, 236, 239).

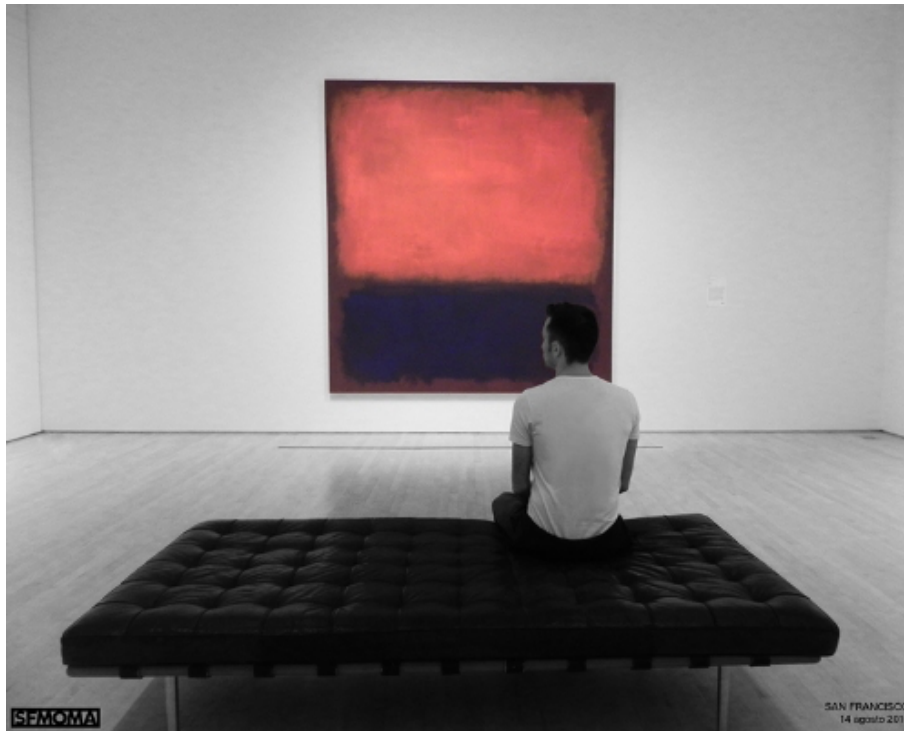


Fig. 4: MOMA San Francisco, in front of Mark Rothko's painting 'No. 14'.

Mark Rothko pushed the method of abstraction and blurring to the extreme, for instance, in his painting 'No. 14' from 1960 or 'Blue and Grey' from 1962. The canvas, almost two meters high, contains colour areas set in a specific ratio. This size and the resulting direct confrontation with the choice and application of colour create streaky and seemingly sloppy picture layers that manifest unforeseen nuances, gradations, and randomness on the canvas. This facilitates detachment from any focal point and allows concentration on the colour and its effect. It is fortunate that such artworks are displayed in museums – dedicated spaces where one can immerse oneself in colour without losing face. On the contrary, associations with the previous pictorial program and known landscape depictions are even possible, as seen in the sunsets without the sun in Rothko's painting 'Orange and Yellow' from 1956.

Does the landscape really exist? Yes, the landscape is a whole that can be assembled, constellated, and harmonised in different ways and enjoyed with a scenic view.

These transitional phenomena in colour pave the way for other transitions, for the crossing of contrasts, for coming-from and

going-to the countryside. This contrast makes it possible to understand the dictum of the artist and stroll-scientist Lucius Burckhardt, who states: «The landscape is an invention of the city dwellers» (Burckhardt 2006, 272). For him, the landscape is created in perception primarily based on comparisons – «temporally through diachrony, spatially through the stroll» (Burckhardt 2006, 96) – which arise when leaving the city, going out into nature, experiencing different areas, and then returning to the city.



Fig. 5: A. Bohlender, 'Mauerpark'.

In the photo by Andreas Bohlender, we observe a 'Cityscape' (from 2014) depicting various groups of people dispersed in a suburban environment. In addition to trees and bushes, nature, the scenery, is animated primarily with people in individual groups and in large numbers – more than just a solitary shepherd, as in Friedrich's work. The town discreetly reveals itself in the background behind the trees through houses, buildings, and signs of construction activity (the crane). The motif and staffage are reminiscent of Georges Seurat's 'Un dimanche à la Île de la Grande Jatte' (A Sunday Afternoon on the Île de la Grande Jatte, 1884-1886). There, too, culture/city closely intertwines with nature and the people, allowing us to disregard the concrete subject of the picture: in one case due to its size and in the other due to the

pointillist style of painting. We perceive the people as part of the landscape.



Fig. 6: A. Bohlender, 'Cuvrybrache'.

Another cityscape captures a lively scene in the city: a kind of flea market on a wasteland on the riverbanks, surrounded by tower blocks. A small stage for human activity emerges in the city, notorious as a 'concrete jungle', which also provides some space for nature in the form of lawns, bushes, and a few trees. The picture allows for the study of excerpts from the overall atmosphere. In this case, the wasteland creates an atmospheric island that stands out from the overall urban atmosphere. On-site, one is atmospherically embedded in a section of space demarcated from the surrounding urban atmosphere, defining its own mood – regardless of the kind of mood in question.

Does the landscape really exist? Yes, landscape is an area that doesn't necessarily have to be a piece of nature and is characterised, above all, by encounters with people as a built environment.

The significance of the design of the surroundings of a city, a person, or a painting can be easily demonstrated by the famous painting of the 'Mona Lisa'. On the one hand, considering her real surroundings in the Louvre, a touristy, organised, and hectic atmosphere makes it challenging to enjoy the aura of the artwork. On the other hand, the surrounding colours used as backgrounds

on tourist articles, for example, give the picture its very own and different connotations in terms of mood, influencing the impression of the painting.



Fig. 7: Th. Ruff, 'Portraits', exhibition view.

In contrast to this observation, the photographic artist Thomas Ruff endeavours to achieve an impression as neutral as possible. For his 'Portraits' series, he had been capturing bust portraits of individuals aiming to appear as neutral as possible since the 1980s. As a student in Bernd and Hilla Becher's renowned photography class at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf (which also included Candida Höfer, Andreas Gursky, and Thomas Struth), he sought to explore one- and multi-dimensionality. The portraits are not about the people depicted, but about the depictions of the people. This distinction is crucial because it aligns with the maxim he introduces in his exhibition 'Surfaces, Depths': «I assume that photography can only depict the surface of things»².

The intention is to keep one's gaze fixed on the surfaces, both on the surfaces of the photograph and on the surfaces of the

² Often quoted statement by the artist. Reproduced at: www.kunsthallezurich.ch/en/ausstellungen/1210-thomas-ruff. There you will also find a great exhibition view: www.kunsthallezurich.ch/images/thomas_ruff_02.jpg?w=2000 [Accessed on 27.11.2023].

individuals depicted. This conceptually neutral stance contrasts with our everyday interaction with people (and the hazy sfumato of well-known portrait paintings such as the aforementioned Mona Lisa). (cf. Böhme 2007, 243) The quest for signs of emotion supporting successful communication is disrupted by Ruff's portraits. We begin to let our gaze roam over the portrait subjects as if surveying a landscape. The forehead, eye sockets, bridge of the nose, curves of the cheeks, and roundness of the neck are then visually traversed. The face transforms into a landscape. Consequently, the individuals become pure bodies. This introduces a new contrast, emphasising the distinction between the positioned and photographed body and the perceptible, communicative felt-body. The body concludes at the skin's surface, while the felt-body extends beyond it. This recalls Hermann Schmitz, who defines

the felt body of a person as the epitome of everything that he himself can perceive as belonging to himself, in the vicinity – not always within the boundaries – of his material body [*Körper*], without making use of the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and of the perceptive material body schema (the habitual image of a person's own material body) that has been obtained from his or her experiences, particularly those of sight and touch. (Schmitz 2016, par. 4)

Does the landscape really exist? Yes, the landscape is a characteristic surface that – in the case of people – can manifest itself in physiognomy, facial expressions, and gestures.

In addition to the everyday understanding of landscape as a cultivated natural space, these erratic and modernist forays through art history have also brought to light other aspects that elucidate the unifying nature of landscape – both for the external environment and the internal perspectives of gaze and sensitivities. Beyond colour constellations, cities, or individuals, numerous other references for landscape are conceivable: from the 'roofscape' to the 'office landscape' or even more abstract concepts like the 'university landscape'. There is always a material or abstract point of reference that gains meaning through perception and sensation, subsequently acquiring a distinctive label. This is how a landscape is discovered. It is also how atmospheres are discovered.

3. Atmospheres = justification context

Depending on the research discipline, the foundation for describing or designing atmospheres may vary. The resulting diversity is to be embraced in the sense of a description that is commensurate with the phenomenon. While atmospheres as entities may always be connected to specific places, such as the somber atmosphere of an evening ruin in the landscape, however, as (astonishing) experiences, they only transition from a preconscious to a conscious perceptual context in special, dense situations and characterise the mood in the space, such as the festive atmosphere of a village festival. The *Atmospheric Spaces* project provides a succinct definition of atmosphere: «Atmosphere means, in this [phenomenological and aesthetical, A.R.] context, a sensorial and affective quality widespread in space. It is the particular shade or tone that determines the way one feels his/her surroundings»³.

As an anthropological constant, all research approaches share the idea of «a person who is integrated into their environment at all times via their senses, who is to a certain degree elastic and changeable and can change in their sensitivities as a result of the sensually perceptible qualities of their immediate surroundings» (Kazig 2019, 454). Humans are integrated into their environment through their felt-body, with which they are perceptibly present on-site. This emphasises the relationship of people to their surroundings, avoiding a single-sense-specific focus on the visual aspect of a landscape, for example – something which looking at pictures can tempt us to do.

The atmosphere in which the felt-bodily present person is embedded has a special ontological status: it is an intermediary that is characterised precisely by the relationship between felt-bodily perception and tuned space and can, therefore, exhibit a certain degree of vagueness or haziness (cf. Rauh 2018, 21 f.). At the same time, it can powerfully fill a room, affect those present, and influence their movements and gestures, for example – consider typical atmospheres in banks, churches, or hotels. The atmosphere creates a sensual unification in the perception of the space, unifying it in a similar way to how landscape combines the

³ <https://atmosphericspaces.wordpress.com/about-2> [Accessed on 05.04.2023].

natural and cultural facets of an area. Just as a forest is not just made up of trees, or a city is not just made up of individual buildings; the diverse components of a (perceptual) situation come together to create a perceptible and characteristic atmosphere. As a result, works of art and landscapes also become atmospherically perceptible.

Similar to how landscape can be clichéd to mean a romantic natural scenery with a feel-good character, the first associations when researching atmospheres were the feel-good atmospheres – precisely because one aims to create these conveniently in hotels or department stores or cover up the distinguished atmosphere of a bank with them. Far from this cliché of the feel-good atmosphere, however, current atmospheric research also deliberately addresses unpleasant atmospheres and thus any specific state of being in surroundings that is perceived felt-bodily.

It could be similar with the landscape. The landscape painting of the 'Schellerhau' shown at the beginning illustrates the common cliché of a depiction of a piece of idyllic nature orientated towards a certain ideal of beauty. The beautiful landscape is the idea of landscape experienced on holiday, prepared for tourism, distanced from everyday life, and used for relaxation. Burckhardt coined the term «lovely place» for this ideal, which

has been conveyed through painting and literature since Homer and Horace, via Claude le Lorrain, the Romantics and finally the brochures of our tourist resorts and cigarette advertisements. Recognising the landscape as lovely would therefore be an attempt to filter what we actually see in the place we visit in such a way that it can be integrated into our ideal conception of the lovely place. (Burckhardt 2006, 34)

The fact that the postcard idyll is staged, and the associated images are edited accordingly is a process that can already be traced back to Caspar David Friedrich with reference to the prevailing rules of composition when creating a landscape painting. The concept of landscape can predetermine a certain perspective on nature with an orientation towards beauty and thus towards a pleasure that is possibly dis-interested. This makes it possible to distinguish it from other (competing) concepts of landscape: whereas a hydropower plant operator, for example, sees the landscape as a usable area for disposal, the nature lover sees the landscape as an overall good to be protected, which does

not necessarily have to please everyone. Landscape to be protected is not necessarily beautiful landscape.

In this context, reference should also be made to the concept of mood, which plays a role in describing the impression of landscape – for example, if one wants to distinguish the mood of the landscape from one's own mood (which may only be a concern in German, as '*Stimmung*' is highly diverse). Thus, one could speak of a prevailing atmosphere in the landscape that influences one's personal mood. The design of landscapes, sceneries, and/or pictorial works is an attempt to tune and thus shape the atmosphere to create a certain mood in the viewer. This implies that not only positive atmospheres are particularly memorable, but atmospheres of all kinds, including uncomfortable or frightening ones. Research into atmospheres and atmospheric moods could broaden our understanding of the various characteristics of landscapes, so that they are not solely perceived as picturesque places and feel-good landscapes worth visiting.

This dual connotation of landscape for our everyday perception, on one hand with the classical concept of beauty and on the other with atmospheres, may lead to conflicts anyway.

Nature and landscape can be distinguished in that nature is in a certain relationship of cultivation to humans, and one may inquire about a yield in this utilisation, whereas the landscape only becomes a landscape with an aesthetic distance, a detached view of this nature. The distinction becomes apparent when comparing farmers and tourists. For instance, «the perception of the city dweller is 'without interest', without the expectation of yield: in the countryside, he moves as a tourist seeking confirmation that the landscape looks the way he imagines it or the way his training and tourist propaganda have molded it for him» (Burckhardt 2006, 69). The beautiful landscape grows or develops with the distance that one has or can build up to it as nature. This distance and 'distant view' indicate a classic mode of aesthetics, which also favours a specific mood. For Alois Riedl, it is «the cross-check of those elements – tranquility and distant vision – from which the mood emerges: movement and close-up vision have thrown me back into the struggle for existence» (Riedl 1899, 48). Mood through landscape, the sensing of an atmosphere of nature that makes it a landscape: this demonstrates, on the one hand, how compatible the concepts of landscape and atmosphere are with each other. Atmospheric and landscape impressions are both

characterised by a wholeness in which details only become apparent through analysis.

On the other hand, atmospheric sensations are characterised by the felt-bodily presence on-site, a special closeness, and an integration into the perceptual environment that hardly allows any distance. Spending time in a beautiful landscape and sensing a corresponding atmosphere is a prime aesthetic example of the difficulty or impossibility of technically capturing a beautiful impression, for example, by means of photographs. Due to this proximity, the concepts of landscape and atmosphere would prove to be incompatible in the sense of aesthetics as a theory of beauty. However, the detachment from a classical understanding of aesthetics has already taken place in atmospheric theory with the return of aesthetics to its origins as aisthetics, as a general theory of perception (Böhme 2001). This change is also accompanied by a focus on perception in everyday life and in everyday situations. However, this could cause us to lose sight of the landscape because we are more likely to find ourselves in nature or the environment or surroundings from which we allow ourselves to be tangibly influenced. The landscape would then only be a particular atmosphere of nature, and works of art and pictures of landscapes would be classic models for learning how to identify characteristic sections of nature as beautiful landscapes in the sense of an aesthetic judgment the next time you are physically present on-site. The landscape is thus only (re)constructed as perceived in retrospect, so to speak.

For further theoretical forays, it would be valuable to consider the following guiding questions: What does landscape have in common with atmosphere (- examining the compatibility and congruence of both concepts)? Additionally, when do we encounter a landscape, and when do we experience an atmosphere (- taking into account the incompatibility and specific distinctions between the two concepts)? Nevertheless, the preceding investigations should have already indicated that employing phenomenological and artistic approaches based on the concept of atmosphere might be intriguing for studying landscapes.

4. Quotidian life = research context

Everyday life provides the research context where individuals engage with landscapes, move through them, and focus on their

own perceptions and one's own sensing felt-body within the environment. Everyday life thus forms the foundation for forays through landscapes, encompassing natural, cultural, built, personal, and gestural dimensions. Navigating these landscapes results in situational changes experienced through one's own felt-body, becoming a condition for perceiving the landscape. One enters (totally) into the landscape and then at some point begins to regard perceptual sequences and sections of landscape as typical, clichéd, characteristic ways of perceiving landscape. The act of «experiencing landscapes» in the here and now of the sensitivities intertwines with a continuous «construction of landscapes» by the perceiver (Kazig 2019, 457).

The following discusses research methods suitable for integrating 'landscape' and 'atmosphere', emphasising strollology, aesthetic field research, and artistic research. While presented chronologically, these methods can be considered systematically related and complementary. In atmospheric research, empirical work plays a crucial role in testing, combining, and evolving unconventional research methods. The amalgamation of landscape and atmospheric research constitutes an «individual research field of landscape research» (Kazig 2019, 457) due to its focus on felt-bodily perception and experience in landscapes.

Firstly, 'promenadology' or 'strollology', developed by sociologist and artist Lucius Burckhardt, is an in-situ method merging sociological-urbanistic and cultural-scientific-aesthetic elements. It contemplates bodily perception through cultural analyses and aesthetic interventions, aiming to uncover the conditions of environmental perception and enhance its societal significance. The first stroll, occurring in 1976, was a hiking loop through a village, agricultural zones, forests, clearings, a concreted recreation area, and back to the village (cf. Burckhardt 2006, 260). Another paradigmatic stroll was the 'Voyage to Tahiti', a blend of a walk and artistic intervention. During this walk through a former military training area, passages from Georg Forster's book 'A Voyage Round the World' were recited at specific points, partially reshaping the perception of the surrounding flora (cf. Burckhardt 2006, 278f).



Fig. 8: L. Burckardt, 'Voyage to Tahiti'.

The fundamental premise expressed by Burckhardt is encapsulated in the statement:

'Landscape is a construct'. This term, albeit seemingly formidable, conveys the idea that the essence of landscape isn't to be sought in the tangible features of the environment but rather in the perceptions of the observers. The act of perceiving a landscape in the environment becomes a creative process originating in the human brain. It is marked by selective exclusions, filterings, and integrative activities of collective observation, which, in turn, are influenced by prior education. (Burckhardt 2006, 33)

This creative process involves a «certain kind of abstraction» (Burckhardt 2006, 82) capable of amalgamating various elements seen in the distance – ranging from natural entities like meadows and trees to artifacts like buildings and technical structures – into a unified image of a landscape.

Strollology, in this context, unfolds the «sequences in which the viewer perceives their environment.» (Burckhardt 2006, 251) For instance, one task involves taking a map on a walk, marking all the 'lovely places', and subsequently engaging in discussions and comparisons. This approach underscores that a «walk [...] is therefore a chain, a string of pearls with more expressive and then less expressive, but always effective passages that synthesise our perception» (Burckhardt 2006, 330). This principle applies to both rural and urban walks. The advent of modern transportation has significantly expanded the distance covered during walks. While the surroundings of a city can be explored on foot and

captured in an image, using a car transforms the landscape of an entire region into an image. This poses challenges in standardising impressions and comparing them with clichés and personal imaginations. Consequently, strollology becomes an «instrument for visualising previously hidden parts of the environment and criticising conventional perception itself» (Burckhardt 2006, 265).

What adds intrigue to these walks is the intricate relationship between atmosphere and landscape, particularly how «the perception of landscapes can change with the type of immersion in the landscape» (Kazig 2019, 456). Additionally, the role of language, its adaptability, and its influence in describing landscapes emerge as another captivating avenue of research. Pertinent questions include: To what extent does one's conception of a landscape derive from (artistic) representations or personal imagination? How precisely can vocabulary encapsulate a landscape? How effectively can a landscape be conveyed through representation?

The next method takes this language problem seriously. Aesthetic Fieldwork, contrary to the fundamental constructivist assumption of strollology, centers entirely on sensing the surrounding atmosphere and seeks changes in the atmosphere, occasionally indicated by linguistic shifts within one's own notes. Aesthetic Fieldwork is a phenomenological-hermeneutic method with three key points (cf. Rauh 2018, 96 f.): firstly, the notation of all perceptions; secondly, the possibility of recollective additions to the field report; and thirdly, the unity of the person collecting and analysing the data. In the first step, perceptions of atmospheric influences are recorded in the respective field of investigation. The holistic atmospheric impression is encapsulated and documented using single-sensory linguistic expressions without relying on potentially deceptive memory. The second step involves supplementing the notes of the field research report with remembered impressions before evaluation. This enables reflection on one's own sensitivities in its entirety, emphasising partial aspects successively recorded in the field research report as simultaneous perceptions – especially to provide descriptions of holistic sensitivities. The final step deliberately focuses the evaluation on one person, primarily to do justice to linguistic peculiarities such as a specific vocabulary or a specific notational style. The result is field research reports containing word types and sentence fragments, from which conclusions can and should

be drawn about the atmosphere. Impressions of an atmosphere are transformed into language, constituting a form of preservation and researchability.

Field research is generally an attempt, alongside conceptual explorations and conceptualisations, to compare and refine theoretically derived concepts through empirical data collection, sharpening terms – a practice inspiring theory after theory has inspired practice. Aesthetic Fieldwork, aiding in empirical comparisons and uncovering new theoretical aspects, has been applied to atmospheres, illustrated by the example of the ‘Museum Island Hombroich’ (cf. Rauh 2018, 49-51). Besides describing general characteristics of the atmosphere on-site, specific atmospheric moods of particular parts of the museum island’s landscape were revealed. Atmospheres become prominent at border points where two independent atmospheres meet, i.e., when they are noticed discrepantly. They are also notable at points where an atmospheric impression deepens, i.e., when they are noticed ingressively – describing two ways of perceiving atmospheres and connoting them differently than usual (cf. Böhme 2001, 46 f.).



Fig. 9: A. Rauh, Aesthetic Fieldwork.

To systematically enhance atmospheric competence, maintaining an Atmospheric Portfolio is recommended. This approach combines several methods to compare the specific sensitivities with experiences. As a cumulative portfolio, the Atmospheric

Portfolio (as a 'personal' or 'site-specific Atmospheric Portfolio') enables focused, continuous reflections on atmospheres and extends Aesthetic Fieldwork over time (Rauh 2018, 102 f.).

Marie Ulber examines in many facets and with different artistic approaches the way in which one enters into the atmospheres of landscapes, feels a discrepancy to or a correspondence with one's own mood. This exploration includes modes of movement through landscapes, such as driving on a country road, walking through a forest on an island, or strolling through a city. The felt-body's sensing of atmospheres facilitates a specific awareness of immersion in the landscape, transforming the on-site presence into a distinctive presence in the landscape.

Ulber introduces three levels of analysis to scrutinise the influence of the environment on atmospheres, each contributing to their interplay of consistency, dynamics, and stagability: «the massive level with spatial structure in specific materiality, the mobile level with all objects and living beings, and the ephemeral level with the atmospheric» (Ulber 2017, 57). From an aesthetic-atmospheric perspective, this analysis of the three levels also functions as a design and «planning model, revealing starting points for atmospheric changes» (Ulber 2017, 70).

In determining the influence of the landscape environment on the prevailing atmosphere, Ulber employs selected artistic methods that she has evaluated. The methodological question in this context is: which artistic methods provide information about the massive, mobile, and ephemeral constituents of landscape atmospheres? Conceptually, Ulber posits that atmospheres are permanently linked to landscapes, justifying revisiting them multiple times to pinpoint their character (cf. Ulber 2017, 74, 186, 206).

While the artistic methods employed aim to recreate the atmosphere, the goal is to evoke similar qualities of impression that allow the viewer to experience a comparable atmospheric character. The specific artistic-atmospheric study focuses on six landscape formations categorised by anthropogenic influence: natural (the island of Hiddensee with cliffs and forest), populated (Neuendorf on Hiddensee), used ('unterwegs'/motorway), cultivated (historical cemetery in Weimar), and urban landscapes (inner city of Weimar) (cf. Ulber 2017, 81 f.). These landscapes were visited multiple times over four years and explored atmospherically using four artistic approaches: visually through

photographs, manually through sketches, sculpturally with reliefs, and linguistically with phenomenological descriptions (cf. Ulber 2017, 83). In combination, these approaches reveal clear differences in the comparison of natural and urban (primarily man-made) landscapes. The series of photographs capturing forest paths and their atmospheric suggestions of movement, along with accompanying graphite drawings, stand out – changing light situations convey a sense of security but also evoke disorientation and uncertainty (cf. Ulber 2017, 104, 106 f., 164).



Fig. 10: M. Ulber, artistic research: photographs.

Despite the atmospheric-theoretical question about felt-bodily sensations in and out of the car, the phenomenological excursion ‘while driving’ is intriguing, presenting a collection of descriptions based on aesthetic field research and a three-column format analogous to the spatial situation. The perceptual protocol transforms into a map. The excursion ‘between houses’ in

Weimar's city center vividly illustrates the anthropogenic influence on the landscape and its reflection in the text. Perceptions emerge that echo general urban characteristics and allude to the specific Weimar atmosphere, aligning with the aforementioned transposability of atmospheric qualities. The artistic works are then organised with a focus on the sensed atmospheres, resulting in a compilation of the main structural characteristics of landscape atmospheres – enclosing, directional, homo-/heterogeneous, ambivalent, consistent or transient, communicative, natural or anthropogenic (cf. Ulber 2017, 178 f.).

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | blaues Geländer durch Brückentürme an Seilen verspannt hinauf auf zwei Spuren hoch gebaut | Kirchtürme Speicher dazwischen weiße Bögen |
| große Kräne blau grüne Werft | | |
| leere Felder | Straße erhaben über Landschaft schafft Überblick nun eingegraben | Hallendächer schwarze Zellen weites Land Baumgruppen |
| drehende Windräder | | |
| Waldstücke weite Grasfelder | | karge Stoppelfelder Baumreihen |
| einzelne Bäume | Haltebuchten unter Brücken ein Abzweig | |
| rechteckige Wälder | | flaches Land Baumreihen begrenzen nackte Böden |
| | Wind rauscht Autos ziehen vorbei blaue Lücken in Wolken rote Fahrbahn nun Grau | hügeliges Land |
| sanfte Bögen Wald | | Stromtrasse geschwungene Felder |
| | Einfahrt in den Wald bergauf | |
| weites Land | | angeschnittene Hügel Baumgruppen Acker |
| Wald | große weiße Wolken am tiefblauen Himmel | |
| lange Schneise im Wald | | hohe Bäume begrenzen Felder über Eck schwarze glänzende Reihen |
| Felder mit Quadratwäldern | | hügeliges Land hohe Kolben stehen |
| Stoppelfelder Nadelwälder zwischen Feldern | kurze Baustelle Güllegeruch | |

Fig. 11: M. Ulber, artistic research: phenomenological excursion 'while driving', excerpt.

All these methods for exploring landscape and atmosphere in quotidian life are fundamentally rooted in language. Is speaking of 'landscape' and 'atmosphere' simply an outcome of (artistic) (visual) language? Are we grappling with a language problem rather than a phenomenon problem? Does the landscape really exist in language?

Language, throughout our explorations, has served as the means of conveying experiences in art, atmosphere, and quotidian life. While it may not be visible, it renders things visible. It

encompasses not only a subjective language meant for description but can also take on a poetic nature. Through abstraction, weaning, and deconstruction of ordinary language, it entices attention to the landscape and how one feels within it. This process generates communicable images of the landscape that foster further landscape formation. Other disciplines, such as literary studies, are encouraged to delve into these questions of language and linguistic variation. Alongside interdisciplinary research, intercultural research could offer intriguing insights. For instance, exploring landscape descriptions from different countries and cultures could reveal the specific features of local landscapes in their respective linguistic versions. Thus, language functions as an intermediary between phenomenon and observer, encoding, storing, and conveying landscape and atmosphere. It opens up new (imaginative) spaces. However, this constructive role also gives rise to doubts and concerns about whether an atmosphere is adequately depicted in language to be felt, or whether language creates a separate construct that neglects felt-bodily sensations, at best serving as a reminder of an atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

Just as the path from the sensed to the written represents a change of form, other shifts in media occur in the artistic field – such as the transition from the sensed to the drawn. However, concerning the initial premises of this essay, these shifts in different impressions seem to be the catalyst for the formation of characteristic landscape images. In years of travel and journeys to Italy, the journey itself becomes the goal. The emphasis is on changing places, traversing landscapes, and the perceptible alteration of atmosphere. Without change, it's conceivable that someone who has always lived in the Black Forest as a forester may no longer perceive it as a characteristically romantic forest landscape. To use a German proverb, 'he can no longer see the wood for the trees'; he can no longer see the landscape for all its nature. If the landscape isn't appropriately focused on, it is perceived according to other criteria – biological considerations like biodiversity and nature preservation may override aesthetic criteria, leading to conflicts in certain landscapes, especially those revealed through art.

By immersing oneself in various characteristic landscapes and atmospheres, one can feel the change in one's own felt-body. The

felt-body can be understood as a dimensional basis for perceiving landscape: in common sense, it comprises a perceptible space oriented towards the felt-bodily dimension, neither as small as a living room nor as large as a country (except in artificial, metaphorical extrapolation). In the landscape, one not only has beautiful experiences in a distinctive environment but also has the opportunity to experience and feel oneself in new and different ways in changing surroundings. In this manner, the subject pole of perception in atmospheric events becomes aware that one is a felt-body and feels felt-bodily. Art can make us aware of this in various ways.

When sensation becomes an experience, it is not only associated with passive, pleasurable perceptions but also with active, creative interventions in one's own and others' perceptual references. One can influence one's state of being at different locations. Strollology has demonstrated this, and it has been shown in artistic research: reciting texts, subsequently listening to music (possible at any time using a smartphone), and adopting a different mode of movement, such as driving a car, can influence the sensing of environmental qualities. Shaping perception in this way is not restricted to the atmospheric effect of landscapes but also reshapes our own affectability of atmosphere. Even in a hectic city center, contemplative perceptions are possible when strolling with headphones. Travelling by car in the mode of everyday or artistic atmospheric research can transcend the confinement of a body in a car shell. One's own felt-body serves as the reference point for opening up a special integration into one's environment for the perception of landscape and atmosphere – allowing experiences like «lively encounters with landscapes, for example by joggers, cyclists, or mushroom pickers» (Kazig 2019, 454) to contribute perspectives to landscape research.

This research focus is likely to be an advantage of atmospheric landscape perception and thematisation that should not be neglected, especially for the diversity of landscapes that really exist.

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Figure 1: Hanna A  (1935): *Schellerhau*, Oil on cardboard, 26x38cm.

Figure 2: Caspar David Friedrich (1822): Der einsame Baum/Solitary Tree; alternative title: Village Landscape in Morning Light, Oil on canvas, 55x71 cm, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Einsamer-baum_cd-friedrich.jpg [Accessed on 25.06.2023]

Figure 3: Caspar David Friedrich (1809): Monk by the Sea, Oil on canvas, 110x172 cm, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monk by the Sea.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monk_by_the_Sea.jpg) [Accessed on 13.08.2023]

Figure 4: Stefenetti E. (2011): *MOMA San Francisco, davanti alla tela di Mark Rothko 'No. 14', olio su tela, 1960*, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sfmomadavantirothko.jpg [Accessed on 01.12.2023]

Figure 5: Andreas Bohlender: Mauerpark, Berlin from the series «Stadtlandschaften/Cityscapes», andreasbohlender.de [Accessed on 26.11.2023]

Figure 6: Andreas Bohlender: Cuvrybrache, Berlin from the series «Stadtlandschaften/Cityscapes», andreasbohlender.de [Accessed on 26.11.2023]

Figure 7: Laylamoget (2009): Thomas Ruff, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ExpositionThomas_Ruff_97.jpg [Accessed on 04.09.2023]

Figure 8: 'Voyage to Tahiti', photo from 1987. Lucius Burckhardt's action with students in the D nche is considered the 'original walk' of strollology. Photo: Klaus Hoppe /Martin Schmitz Verlag, <https://www.hna.de/kassel/in-der-doenche-tahiti-erkunden-92354844.html> [Accessed on 11.12.2023]

Figure 9: Aesthetic Fieldwork at the cafeteria on 'Museuminsel Hombroich', Photo: Andreas Rauh.

Figure 10: Marie Ulber, artistic research: photographs, 'Führung und Verführung' taken from her book 'Landschaft und Atmosphäre' 2017, p. 104.

Figure 11: Marie Ulber, artistic research: phenomenological excursion 'while driving', excerpt taken from her book 'Landschaft und Atmosphäre' 2017, p. 134.