

Hamish Fulton
*Walking In Relation
 To Everything*

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In the Shadow of the Atmosphere

By Günther Vogt

The French term “le temps” refers to both time and the weather. Hamish Fulton’s work thrives on this kind of multiple coding, the interstice of the “as well as”. Dialectic discourse disappears behind the this and that, the here and there. That which is measurable, time, versus the unmeasurable, atmosphere.

To determine the time and the weather means to describe a place. Time and space resist disconnection from place. The *genius loci* resides in the shadow of the atmosphere. Like a water mark on paper, Fulton’s work appears as text in space.

How to translate the scale of landscape to the confined spatial conditions of a gallery? What does the difference between the landscape outside and its translation to the gallery space mean in concrete terms? Let us take a closer look at some of the works in the exhibition.

“Glacial Boulder”

A huge wall piece, 8.5 x 2 meters, applied directly to the wall, blows up the sense of scale in the gallery space. Its landscape format is comparable to 19th century panoramas, for example those in Lucerne and Thun. Such formats created a 360° view, demanding that viewers move just like in a real landscape to experience the entire work, or – as in the case of “Glacial Boulder” – that they seek a greater spatial distance to it. Not a scale model of a landscape, nor an indoor miniature as a placeholder for the reality of the outside world. Foreground, middle ground and background dissolve within the sober, precise description of an experience of landscape: absence of the described, but presence of the experience.

Prose and Poetry

“Glacial Boulder”, a rock shaped by a glacier and carried far. We encounter it like cargo deposited in the landscape, a stone testimonial to a glaciation that ended over ten thousand years ago. A geological alien left behind in a mineral landscape no longer covered by the retreating ice.

The typography is bold and catchy. The name of the typeface is Century Gothic. Often used for posters in public space in the US and Britain, it is characterised by clarity and openness. It is geometrically constructed: a circular O, narrow and high U, open D. The colour of the words that describe what we cannot see is signal red, the subtext is red-black on white and stands like a membrane between the landscape outside and the architectural interior. The individual letters and words find their precise position along an invisible grid. They formulate a dense net of diverse relationships.

“A 15 Day Walk. Engadin, Switzerland 2000”

Painted text and skyline on wall.

Together, the text describing the walk and the geometric abstraction of the skyline create a condensation of the walk. The square format suggests a portrait rather than a landscape. The dramatically rising topography, graduated like the outline of a building, in a landscape without a horizon.

Other works are even more abstract: small wooden sticks contour the topographical line of the landscape like letters. An assemblage preceding or following an experiment? Is the walked landscape a laboratory, a depository or archive or an extension of the artist studio? Timeframe and duration are oriented towards the movements of celestial bodies. The solstices. Akin to a protocol, situations or conditions are often described in lapidary language, terse and succinct. A new compass for the experience of a landscape. Images composed of numbers and words overlap, filtering the perception of the artist.

Intention and Reflection

As echoes of existing landscapes the works of Hamish Fulton operate in the interstices, in between locations, experiences and representations. They enable the viewer to continuously create new constellations in space as well as time.

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