

# THE RECONFIGURED LANDSCAPE

23 JUNE, 2018  
13 JANUARY, 2019  
GALLERY 1

Curator:  
Benjamin Weil



Tacita Dean, *JG* (frame of the film), 2013

Depicting landscapes, whether realistic or fantasized, has been core to the practice of visual arts for centuries. Since the late nineteenth century, artists have taken new approaches to generating art forms that reflect the acceleration and the complication of the world that surrounds them. From Impressionism to subsequent movements and then to abstraction, the past 150 years has been informed by experimentation and formal breakthroughs that rendered the profound shifts brought about by new technologies and the rise of new social structures and new utopias. Art in the twenty-first century is rooted in the same concerns, reflecting a world that has become more chaotic and complex, as our realm becomes more multi-layered and globalized.

The idea of landscape is the common thread running through *The Reconfigured Landscape*, whether addressed in a literal or in a more abstract or esoteric fashion.

A landscape that is re-engineered and re-thought rather than just depicted: a site to watch or to experience within the space of the exhibition, in itself a landscape of sorts. Drawn from the collection of Fundación Botín, this selection of works includes painting, drawing, sculpture, video, as well as multimedia installations, a form that perhaps epitomizes the forefront of artistic research over the past few decades. It features works by Leonor Antunes, Miroslav Balka, Lothar Baumgarten, Jacobo Castellano, Tacita Dean, Fernanda Fragateiro, Nuria Fuster, Joan Jonas, Irene Kopelman, Sol LeWitt, Julie Mehretu, João Onofre, Sara Ramo, Ignacio Uriarte, and Oriol Vilanova.

The large-scale, intricate and multi-layered compositions of **Julie Mehretu** often feature architectural details; they depict a world in a state of chaos, wherein antagonisms and conflicts of all kinds seem to dominate.

**Leonor Antunes's** *Random Intersection #14* is part of an ongoing series of hanging works, whose design refers directly to horse bridles. She then connects her assemblage to the exhibition space by way of a network of hemp ropes, creating a kind of ghostly presence in the space, in contrast with the density of the surrounding architecture.

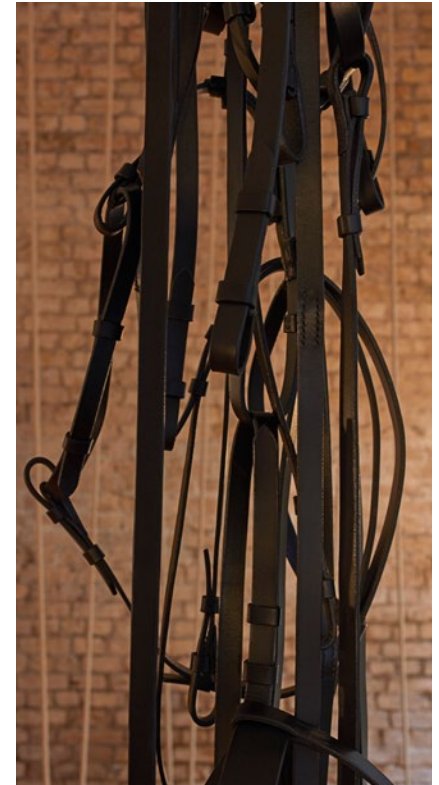
Core to **Tacita Dean's** film is her epistolary exchange with British author J.G. Ballard about the curious similarities between a short story he published in 1960 and *Spiral Jetty*, Robert Smithson's famed work of Land Art, in the Great Salt Lake (Utah). The film features saline landscapes of North America and a voiceover culled from various texts by Smithson and Ballard.

Working with an oceanographer, **Irene Kopelman** has researched the various systems used to measure the colour and degree of transparency of bodies of water since the nineteenth century.

**Joan Jonas** uses wall painting to create an immersive environment that evokes a forest inhabited by birds, and stages a two-channel video performance that blends references to her extensive travel around the world with her exploration of the rural landscapes of Cantabria.

From 1977 to 1986, **Lothar Baumgarten** explored remote areas of South America. His photographs reflect on how Western fantasies of paradise and the lifestyle of autochthonous tribes contrast heavily with the systematic destruction of their habitat by international conglomerates. The wall painting lists the names of some of those tribes and of the territories they still occupy.

**Oriol Vilanova** creates a meta-landscape out of a collection of 700 postcards of cities at night, pondering the manner in which the landscape is often reduced to a tourist cliché.



Leonor Antunes, *Random Intersection #14* (detail), 2017.

The floor sculpture *Intersection* of **Fernanda Fragateiro** is a replica of a duckboard pathway she encountered while scouting the grounds of Ciudad Abierta, a utopian architectural experiment carried out in central Chile.

**Nuria Fuster** stages an effigy of Don Quixote to imbue her gathering of found objects with a theatrical plot, while at once giving this installation a landscape-like dimension. A sheet of iron serves as a relief, as does a vacuum cleaner, which blows air into the blades of an otherwise idle industrial fan that evokes the windmills in Miguel de Cervantes's famous epic novel.

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