

# Landscape as a Metaphor

An exhibition of the Ursula Blickle Foundation  
September 11 – October 16, 2005

Today, nature has been charted as utterly and extensively as the urban spaces of major cities. Satellite-controlled technology allows the exact description of every imaginable patch of ground on the planet. Even regions assumed to be yet undiscovered have long since been recorded in detail in the atlases of civilization. Unspoiled nature is nothing more than an ideal notion, a dream, a vision.

The exhibition "Landscape as a Metaphor" is a collection of twenty photographic positions of international artists from Japan, USA, England, Italy, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands who have each dealt almost exclusively with the theme of landscape since the 1980s.

Landscape is, of course, not just a description of an idealized "pure" natural state, but can also serve as the vehicle for the critical expression of social and structural transition. In this way landscape bearing the marks of industrialization and settlement has also assumed its place in our collective image memory and has become inextricably linked to our current notions of representations of nature. The works shown in the exhibition hover, therefore, between the two poles of representation of nature: on the one hand, landscape as the embodiment of ideal, pure nature, far removed from civilization, and on the other hand, as a reflection of modern and post-modern cultivation.

The metaphor is used to pictorially paraphrase something for which one either lacks the words or is disinclined to use the common name. Thus in the works presented here, landscape assumes a representative function. In the photographic image it can become an ideal world, the expression of the need for directness, meditation, peace, harmony, escapism – as can be seen, for example, in the works of L. Davis, H. Sugimoto, and Th. J. Cooper. It can, however, also become the symbol of crisis or of radical change – a document of human destruction and self-destruction. Examples of this may be found in the works of N. Hatakeyama, M. Spiluttini, or W. Niedermayr.

Individual works in the exhibition create an impressive connection between the romantic and the critical depiction of landscape through their use of classic forms of representation to refer subtly to interventions in and alienations of ideal nature. Here the depiction of landscape orients itself on the art historical code and appeals to our cultural memory (e.g. E. Esser, L. Ghirri, P. de Pietri, P. Bialobrzewski). But cultivated landscape also includes the "non-places" of postindustrial society as opposed to the ideal landscape. Places as neglected zones in an urban context, dead corners, unutilized areas, nature destroyed by construction or manipulated by artificial interventions (H.-Chr. Schink, E. Raab, M. Tusch, D. Bouwhuis). Discernible especially in the works of young contemporary photographers is an impassive representation that documents and registers what is found in a cool and mechanical way. Despite the stark, unsparing selection of motifs, however, these photographs possess an underlying strongly metaphorical power. The non-place does not directly represent the (lost) place, but refers instead beyond itself to a much more complex social development. The depiction of tamed and classified nature in an abstract form, as for example in the work of T. Matsue, or in the cultivated garden landscapes by L. Ghirri are a clear contrast to the romantic landscapes of E. Esser.

The exhibition seeks to compare the greatly varying intentions of the artists, though without focusing on the veduta, i.e. the concrete landscapes or sections of the landscape as geographic or local depictions; rather, the landscape becomes an expression of yearning, fear, or criticism. Yearning for a romantically perceived harmony with nature; fear of one's own alienation through the disappearance of a "natural" environment or of the superior strength of nature; criticism through the confrontation between nature and civilization.

## Participating artists:

Robert Adams, Luca Andreoni / Antonio Fortugno, Peter Bialobrzewski, Dik Bouwhuis, Thomas Joshua Cooper, Lynn Davis, Elger Esser, Luigi Ghirri, Naoya Hatakeyama, Bill Jacobson, Taiji Matsue, Walter Niedermayr, Paolo de Pietri, Emanuel Raab, Stefano Scheda, Hans-Christian Schink, Annalisa Sonzogni, Margherita Spiluttini, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Martin Tusch

## Exhibition venue

**Ursula Blickle Foundation**, Mühlweg 18  
D - 76703 Kraichtal-Unteröwisheim  
Phone +49 7251 60919 Fax +49 7251 68687

## Curator

**Prof. Peter Weiermair**

## Press information

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## Preopening viewing

Please call for an appointment:  
Phone +49 7251 60919 Fax +49 7251 68687

## Press photos

Available on our website:  
[www.ursula-blickle-stiftung.de](http://www.ursula-blickle-stiftung.de)

## Duration of the exhibition

**September 11 – October 16, 2005**

## Opening

**Saturday, September 10, 2005, 7:00 p.m.**

## Catalogue

A catalogue will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

## Opening hours

Wed. 2:00 p.m. till 5:00 p.m.  
Sun. 2:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m.  
and by appointment

**We'd appreciate an announcement of our exhibition in your medium. If publicized, please send us a copy for our files. Thank you!**