



des voyageurs en fauteuil, qui étaient légion au 19^e siècle. Depuis ce temps, elles ont été reproduites à l'infini, d'abord par les explorateurs et les voyageurs en tous genres, ensuite par les touristes. Rutkauskas est retourné en ces parages, mais ce sont d'abord des randonnées *googléennes* qui l'ont mené vers certains sites et sommets particuliers. Parcourant Google Earth en faisant quelques captures d'image au passage, il en note les coordonnées qui lui permettront, grâce à un GPS, de se rendre sur le terrain refaire ces images à l'identique, cette fois à la chambre photographique grand format, dans la plus pure tradition du grandiose montagnoux.

Il y a, dans cette série, un curieux effet de contraction temporelle par lequel des technologies diversement datées s'amalgament, comme si la fuite en avant orchestrée par l'appareillage de Google nous ramenait en arrière. Le rôle primordial des représentations de l'espace et du temps (la photographie étant certes, par son effet de coupe, le premier médium apte à les figurer, ensemble) est rarement évoqué lorsqu'il s'agit de décrire l'impression de « compression radicale

des horizons spatiaux et temporels » propre à la modernité, dont on affirme toujours qu'elle a été provoquée par l'avènement des transports et des communications rapides⁷. Le processus de fabrication de la série *Virtually There* actualise et rend sensible cet effet de compression spatiotemporelle, qui n'a fait que s'accroître dans le passage de la modernité à la contemporanéité.

Deux séries récentes, *Borderline* (2012-2015) et *Stanstead Project, or How to Cross the Border* (2011), explorent les paysages de certaines zones frontalières canadiennes. Les photographies de *Stanstead Project* ont été prises dans les environs d'une petite municipalité des Cantons de l'Est coupée en deux par une frontière de plus en plus surveillée. Ces images en noir et blanc montrent, au-delà du village, une large tranchée dans la forêt, une ligne de coupe qui, semble-t-il, scinde le continent sur toute sa largeur. Ces perspectives fuyant vers l'infini évoquent à la fois les traversées, les migrations et les transgressions et elles invitent, paradoxalement, à suivre la trajectoire de ce *no man's land*, éclaircie qui serait comme en dehors de l'espace réel.

Les paysages ordinaires que multiplie et juxtapose la série *Suburb Beautiful* (2011) sont ceux du quotidien. On pourrait les supposer vernaculaires, mais ils sont trop policés pour ne pas être *politiques* : ils sont trop parfaitement ordonnés, trop constants, et il leur manque ces singularités habitantes qui façonnent le vernaculaire⁸. Ils s'inscrivent d'ailleurs dans l'imaginaire géographique comme l'absolu *antisublime*, tant par leurs configurations que par leur usage. Les

7 — Introduction de Jon May et Nigel Thrift (dir.), *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality*, Londres, Routledge, 2001, p. 7.

8 — John Brinkerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984. Voir aussi Jean-Marc Besse, « Le paysage, entre le politique et le vernaculaire. Réflexions à partir de John Brinkerhoff Jackson », *ARCHES*, tome 6 (2003), p. 9-27, HAL Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société, <<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00113275>>.





Andreas Rutkauskas

Kanata, Ontario,

série *Suburb Beautiful* series, 2008.

Photo : permission de l'artiste |
courtesy of the artist

photographies de cette série sont fascinantes, pourtant, en ce qu'elles dévoilent des agencements paysagers rigoureusement identiques d'un bout à l'autre du territoire. De Winnipeg à Sainte-Rose, en banlieue de Montréal, des maisons en rangées, semblables les unes aux autres, dessinent encore des lignes dont on croirait qu'elles aussi traversent tout le pays d'est en ouest, sans trop d'interruption. Ces habitations bien alignées composent des paysages de la mobilité, de cette mobilité urbaine, sociale ou socioéconomique qui fait migrer les citoyens des villes vers la périphérie pour diverses raisons, bien souvent monétaires.

Petrolia (2011) présente une autre face du paysage de la mobilité économique, dont on dirait qu'il est encore plus antissublime que celui de la banlieue, mais qui pourtant attire son lot de curieux, de photographes, tout aussi bien que de « touristes de la dérélition⁹ ». C'est le paysage de la délocalisation des industries, celui de la fuite des capitaux. Ils sont partout, ces paysages de l'abandon, de la désaffectation, de la spoliation et de la contamination, que l'on voit se multiplier dans le monde comme dans les photographies de maints artistes. *Petrolia* cible les installations pétrochimiques de cet endroit appelé Chemical Valley, près de Sarnia, en Ontario. Une dénomination rappelant ce *Chemical Corridor* qui sinue sur une centaine de kilomètres le long du Mississippi, entre Bâton-Rouge et La Nouvelle-Orléans, en Louisiane, que les habitants ont rebaptisé *Cancer Corridor*. Paysages toxiques ou toxicoéconomiques ? Ce type de photographie, évoquant à la fois l'horreur et les gloires industrielles passées, se constitue aujourd'hui en une forme de sublime singulièrement appréciée, le sublime postindustriel.

ADÉQUATIONS

Accompagnant la série *Petrolia*, la reproduction d'un billet de 10 dollars émis dans les années 1970 et montrant la Chemical Valley est visible sur le site web de Rutkauskas. Un billet de 20 dollars, de la même série « scènes canadiennes » produite à partir de 1969, représente le lac Moraine, un des sites les plus photographiés des Rocheuses depuis le 19^e siècle et encore aujourd'hui. À cette époque, la fierté nationale passait indifféremment, semble-t-il, par le sublime industriel tout aussi bien que par le sublime naturel ; et, curieusement, l'émission de cette série de billets correspond exactement au moment de la grande désillusion, la fin des

« trente glorieuses » marquée par la crise du pétrole et l'annonce du constat des dommages irréversibles de la pollution industrielle sur le monde et la nature.

Selon Mitchell, le paysage serait un vaste réseau de codes culturels et, comme l'argent, n'aurait en soi aucune utilité, mais il exprimerait une réserve de valeur potentiellement illimitée¹⁰. Jonathan Crary, quant à lui, a associé l'argent et la photographie, en disant qu'ils sont tous deux des systèmes totalisants, susceptibles de lier et d'unifier tous les sujets au sein d'un même réseau global de valeur et de désir¹¹. Cette double association signale le pouvoir complexe qu'a le paysage de susciter le désir, d'attirer et de faire se déplacer voyageurs, conquérants et spéculateurs, tout en étant lui-même mobile lorsqu'il est couplé à d'autres médiums. Il a ainsi, de tout temps, engendré des convoitises, des imaginaires géographiques impliquant des regards possessifs, impérialistes, cupides.

Le paysage, même si l'on conçoit maintenant qu'il puisse être vécu, habité et non plus seulement une formation symbolique ou culturelle, perceptive et perspective, reste une forme construite dont la valeur est basée sur l'échange et la circulation. Qu'il soit naturel (si pareille chose existe encore), (péri)urbain ou postindustriel, l'espace-temps propre au paysage, fait d'incessants déplacements, d'allers et de retours *du lointain au proche et de l'absent au présent*, est possiblement, aujourd'hui, entièrement déterminé par des phénomènes socioéconomiques : mobilité physique et électronique, migrations en tous sens, mouvements et fuite des capitaux. ●

9 — Bradley L. Garrett, « Undertaking Recreational Trespass: Urban Exploration and Infiltration », *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 39, n°1 (janvier 2014), p. 2.

10 — W.J.T. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 5. Aussi, à la page 15 : « Extrayez tout l'or d'une montagne et celle-ci perd sa valeur. Mais combien de photographies, de cartes postales, de toiles et de vues spectaculaires peut-on tirer du Grand Canyon avant que celui-ci perde sa valeur de paysage ? » [Trad. libre]

11 — Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1992, p. 13.



Andreas Rutkauskas

↑ Cemetery - *The Chippewas of Sarnia*,
série *Petrolia* series, 2013.

→ Cutline IV, série *Stanstead Project*
series, 2011.

Photos : permission de l'artiste |
courtesy of the artist

Perambulating, Wandering, *Fleeing*. A Few Notes on Mobile Landscapes

Suzanne Paquet

Geography, in this sense, is an art of representation, that is, an art of transportation and translation. How does one bring the distant into the near? How does one lend presence to absent realities?

— Jean-Marc Besse¹

Andreas Rutkauskas's photographic production is undeniably geographic; it covers a wide spectrum of landscape. And because it touches on or explores various aspects of the territory, it can also seem a little scattered. Yet I believe this artist's work is entirely focused on traversals, motion, movement—eminently contemporary phenomena—as each of his photographic series broaches these themes from a particular angle. Rutkauskas's work, finally, deals essentially with landscapes of mobility, of which it reveals various facets. Here I will attempt to explore some of the perspectives on landscape opened up by his practice.

At first glance, nothing could be more still, or *frozen*, than a photograph; and landscape, though it may undergo transformations, obviously cannot move. Yet photography and landscape may well be the most mobile of *mediums*. Landscape, as W.J.T. Mitchell said, may be considered not as a genre, but as a medium: it constitutes (itself as) a vehicle of power, acquires exchange value,² and can thus circulate just as a photograph would. One might even imagine landscape's true significance only became apparent with the advent of photography. Photography, in turn, could not have achieved its full potential without modern (and then contemporary) means of communication—related as much to transportation as to transmission. For it had to travel. And if, like the trains before it, today's Internet has allowed landscapes of the world to come to us in the form of images, the means of transportation and communication, on the other hand, have had a cruel impact on the landscape.

Photographs are mobile beings. They dawdle and amble around, rush, chase after the image, and sometimes travel through some curious places; one only has to think of those who take strolls “in” Google Street View or Google Earth, as Rutkauskas has done. Which goes to show that “if the landscape is not a place”³ (a debatable proposition), one sometimes has to immerse oneself in it in order to produce an image. As such, this applies as much to the Web as to physical sites. Landscape, then, beyond mere view, can be understood as an experience, a sensory one, “a kind of affective geography” that calls on more than one sense.⁴ As early as the 1950s, John Brinckerhoff Jackson

had already called for an active perception or grasp of landscapes, the “discovery of mobility”⁵ having prompted a new way of experiencing the world. And one cannot help thinking that navigating Google Earth, with all the strange manoeuvres this requires, is indeed not a passive form of discovery.

FROM ONE SUBLIME TO ANOTHER

Rutkauskas's series *Virtually There* (begun in 2009) joins Google Earth, a relatively recent technology that enables stay-at-home travel,⁶ with the old photographic tradition of the sublime landscape. Landscape sublime in Canada is closely associated with the Rocky Mountains and train travel. Returning to Montréal from the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1984, William McFarlane Notman brought back his groundbreaking pictures of the Western Rockies for the pleasure of armchair travellers, who were legion in the nineteenth century. The

1 — Jean-Marc Besse, *Face au monde : atlas, jardins, géoramas* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2003), 9 (our translation).

2 — Introduction and “Imperial Landscape,” in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002 [1994]), 2 and 5.

3 — Statement by Anne Cauquelin, who has been decried as a pure “culturalist” who excludes the possibility of a multi-sensorial reality and construes landscape exclusively as cultural construction, thus predetermined, rather than sensory (Anne Cauquelin, “Le paysage n'est pas un lieu,” *Paysages sur commande* (Rennes: Le Triangle, 1990), 92–96).

4 — Jean-Marc Besse, “Le paysage, espace sensible, espace public,” *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2010): 268.

5 — John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997 [1957]), 204–205.

6 — Original expression, “voyage casanier,” from Pierre Bayard, *Comment parler des lieux où l'on n'a pas été?* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2012).

images have been endlessly reproduced ever since, first by explorers and travellers of all types, and then by tourists. Rutkauskas returned to the neighbourhood, but it is his *Google-strolls* that led him to particular sites and peaks. Exploring Google Earth while making some screen captures, he noted the coordinates that later allowed him to use a GPS device to find the actual site and retake the same pictures, this time with a large-format camera, as in the traditional production of majestic scenery.

There is a strange temporal contraction in this series in which variously dated technologies come together, as if the rush forward orchestrated by Google's apparatus had taken us back in time. The primary role of representations of space and time (photography, by its cropping of the material, being the first medium suited to figuring them together) is seldom mentioned while discussing the "radical compression of spatial and temporal horizons" characteristic of modernity, a compression that is always said to be provoked by the advent of speedy transportation and communication.⁷ The process of making the *Virtually There* series actualizes and makes visible this spatiotemporal compression, which has only intensified in the transition from the modern to the contemporary.

Two recent series, *Borderline* (2012–2015) and the *Stanstead Project, or How to Cross the Border* (2011), explore some Canadian border zones. The photographs from the *Stanstead Project* were taken in and around a small town in the Eastern Townships that is cut in two by an increasingly watched border. Beyond the village, the black and white images show a wide trench running through the forest, a line that seems to cut through the whole breadth of the continent, perspectival lines vanishing toward infinity that simultaneously suggest crossings, migrations, and transgressions. Paradoxically, they invite us to follow the trajectory of this illuminated no man's land, which seems to lie just outside real space.

In the *Suburb Beautiful* series (2011), the ordinary landscapes that are multiplied and juxtaposed belong to the everyday. One could suppose them to be vernacular, but they are too civilized not to be *political*, they are too perfectly ordered, too consistent, and they lack the native singularities that mark the vernacular.⁸ In fact, they are inscribed in geographic imagination as the absolute *anti-sublime*, as much in their configuration as in their use. The photographs in this series are fascinating, however, as they reveal landscape arrangements that are unfalteringly identical from one end of the land to the other. From Winnipeg to Sainte-Rose, in suburban Montréal, rowed cookie-cutter houses seem to draw lines, once again, that traverse the continent from East to West, almost without interruption. These well-aligned dwellings compose landscapes of mobility, of that social or socio-economic urban mobility that prompts city-dwellers to migrate to the periphery for various reasons, often financial.

Petrolia (2011) presents another facet of the landscape of economic mobility, one that

could be said to be even more anti-sublime than that of the suburbs, but which attracts its own following of the curious, of photographers, and of sundry "dereliction tourists."⁹ This is the landscape of relocated industry, of capital flight. They are everywhere, these landscapes of the abandoned, of the disaffected and the decommissioned, of dispossession and contamination, proliferating throughout the world and in the photographs of many artists. *Petrolia* focuses on the petrochemical installations in an area known as Chemical Valley, near Sarnia, Ontario. The monicker recalls *Chemical Corridor*, which snakes along the Mississippi for about one hundred kilometres, from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, in Louisiana, and that locals have rechristened *Cancer Corridor*. Toxic or economically toxic landscapes? This type of photography, conjuring both the horrors and the glory of bygone industry, is now becoming a particularly appreciated form of the sublime, a post-industrial sublime.

CORRESPONDENCES

Accompanying the presentation of the *Petrolia* series on Rutkauskas's website is the reproduction of a ten dollar bill, issued in the 1970s and showing Chemical Valley. A twenty dollar bill in the same "Canadian Scenes" series, printed from 1969 onward, represents Moraine Lake, one of the most photographed sites in the Rockies from the nineteenth century to the present. At the time, national pride seemed to range indifferently from the natural sublime through to the industrial sublime; and oddly, the printing of this series of banknotes corresponds exactly with the great disillusionment, the end of the post-WWII economic boom, rung in by the oil crisis and by cognizance of the irreversible damage industrial pollution has caused the world and nature.

According to Mitchell, landscape is a vast network of cultural codes and, like money, has no use in and of itself, but expresses an unlimited reserve of potential value.¹⁰ Jonathan Crary, for his part, connected money with photography, saying that they are both totalizing systems, capable of binding or unifying all subjects within a single global network of value and desire.¹¹ This dual association signals landscape's complex capacity for awakening desire, for attracting travellers, conquerors, speculators, and for getting them to move, while itself being mobile when coupled with other mediums. It has therefore always engendered greed and geographic imaginings that involve a possessive, imperialist, or cupidinous gaze.

Landscape—even if we now conceive that it may be experienced or inhabited, no longer merely a symbolic or cultural fabrication, perceptual and perspectival—remains nonetheless a constructed form whose value is based on exchange and circulation. Today, whether it be post-industrial, (peri-)urban, or natural—if such a thing still exists—the space-time characteristic of landscape, composed of constant movement, comings and goings that bring the distant near,

the absent present, may be wholly determined by socio-economic phenomena: physical and electronic mobility, migrations in every direction, capital movement, and capital flight.

Translated from the French by **Ron Ross**

⁷ — Jon May and Nigel Thrift, *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality* (London: Routledge, 2001), 7.

⁸ — John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984). See also Jean-Marc Besse, "Le paysage, entre le politique et le vernaculaire. Réflexions à partir de John Brinckerhoff Jackson," *ARCHES*, Tome 6 (2003), 9–27, HAL Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société, <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00113275>.

⁹ — Bradley L. Garrett, "Undertaking Recreational Trespass: Urban Exploration and Infiltration," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 39, no. 1 (January 2014): 2.

¹⁰ — Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 5. Also: "Dig out all the gold in a mountainside, and its wealth is exhausted. But how many photographs, postcards, paintings, and awestruck 'sightings' of the Grand Canyon will it take to exhaust its value as landscape?", 15.

¹¹ — Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 13.

Andreas Rutkauskas

↗ *Park and Nitrogen Fertilizer Plant, Town of Courtright, série Petrolia series*, 2013.

→ *Parking lot, Imperial Oil Complex in the Background, série Petrolia series*, 2013.

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