

From the Earth to the Moon: Metaphors for Travel (Part II)

And if man had never set foot on the Moon? For nearly forty years, polemics regarding the truthfulness of the lunar landing by the Americans in 1969 have aroused public interest. Those who most fervently support yet another conspiracy theory utilize the analysis of photographs and footage that were disseminated at the time to back up their thesis, revealing incongruities related to light and shadow, apparently more like effects one might achieve in a film studio than those found on the Moon. Whatever the truth might be, the question, and above all its relationship to the history of voyages and the myths that surround them, and the possibilities for interpreting the images, is fascinating.

From the Earth to the Moon: Metaphors for Travel (part II) continues to plot a new course through works in Castello di Rivoli's collection, further investigating the ubiquity of the theme of the voyage in works by some of the leading figures in contemporary art. The selected works attest to artists' ability to articulate original interpretations of reality, thereby inventing new worlds to explore and new mythologies to pass down.

The articulation of new viewpoints can transfigure even the most quotidian reality. This is what happens in the landscape studies of Mario Giacomelli (room 34), who has returned frequently to this

subject throughout his career. Just as many of his images frame the large themes of existence, including time, memory, suffering, and love, for this photographer the earth is also an interior place whose signs recount the continuity of human activity, defined as wrinkles that compose a memory accumulated over generations. At the same time, the view from above and the solarization to which Giacomelli subjects his images abstract the landscapes from their terrestrial associations, making the Earth a place more like the Moon.

Grazia Toderi's works, which make visible the breadth of the mind's horizons, suggest a spatial dimension that tends toward the infinite. Investigating reality, but presenting a sublimated version of it, the artist combines an intimate vision of individual memory and a fantastic dimension that alludes to the collective imagination. Starting metaphorically with her own memories tied to the television viewing of the lunar landing, Toderi has created works whose context is the universe and its sidereal spaces. In more than one video, the artist has analyzed places linked to social encounter and entertainment, such as stadiums, arenas, and theaters, where she emphasizes oneiric values tied to the birth of collective myths. Television footage of the stadium in Paris that hosted the Soccer World Cup Final in 1998 is the basis for

her video *The Take-Off*, 1998 (room 35). The artist's elaboration of the subject frees the image from its defined and limited value as a historical document, as she transforms the closed ellipse of the stadium into a sort of space vehicle, a spinning spaceship, ready for a voyage far from earth and removed from the contingency of events.

Journey to the Moon, 2003 (room 36), by William Kentridge was created, along with other video works by this South African artist, in homage to Georges Méliès, the French filmmaker, actor, and producer who, as early as 1896, experimented with cinema's magical potential, and who was the first to transform Jules Verne's novels into moving images. *Day For Night*, 2003 (room 36), which was shot at the same time as Kentridge's other works dedicated to Méliès, captures the journey of some ants as they follow one another along a path traced by the artist using sugar. The inversion indicated in the title refers to the reversal between positive and negative image, achieved during the development of the film. Like a small fantastic story, the video represents the response to a narrative impulse that originated from a true invasion of ants the artist experienced in his studio.

The continuous shifting between reality and fiction is fundamental to Thomas Demand's works, life-size

photographs of paper models he has made in his studio.

Personal memories, collective history, and images taken from the media compose a rich network from which Demand often draws. However, precisely by virtue of the method he has adopted, every image by the artist declares the potential for fiction that is hidden behind each photograph. With the intention of developing new working methodologies, he began using digital technology to support a more precise construction of his paper models. This led to the idea to reproduce the image, found on a commercial postcard, of a cave in Majorca that is characterized by stalactites and stalagmites. A precise description of an architectural complex, the resulting work, *Grotto*, 2006 (room 37), succeeds in pushing vision beyond the specific method employed to create the image, thus describing a place that seems to be the result of fantasy more than of reality.

In his novels, Jules Verne indicated Iceland as the entryway to the center of the Earth. If, for the French writer, the island was the starting point for a fantastic voyage, for Roni Horn (room 37), Iceland, instead, is the realm through which she positions herself in the world. In fact, since 1975 the American artist has returned with migratory regularity to the island, a place that has become one of the cardinal

points around which her human and artistic experience revolves. For Horn, the geography of this extreme land has become, symbolically and literally, an inner geography, gradually brought to light over the course of each new voyage. Almost as if she were a cartographer, but working with a camera, over the years she has developed an encyclopedic project entitled *To Place*, made up of books and installations. The images in the exhibition belong to the chapter dedicated to Jules Verne. In these, views of waves of primordial power alternate with close-up shots of the water, at such close range they become abstract. As in all Horn's work, the observer is involved as a participant in the experience evoked through the images.

Pierre Huyghe is interested in the relationship between the real and the imaginary, in the stratification of interpretations, and in experience as a territory of new types of narrations. Following certain rumors about the existence of a creature and an island not yet charted on maps, in February of 2005 Huyghe organized an expedition to Antarctica. His film *A Journey That Wasn't*, 2006 (room 38), describes the voyage by sailboat, the encounter with the new island, and the appearance of the mysterious creature. While Huyghe and his fellow adventurers sail the sea, a group of musicians, in Central

Park in New York, play a piece whose structure evokes the island for which the artist is searching. Intentionally positioned at the boundary between documentary reality and narrative fiction, the work investigates conditions related to the birth of a story and possibly a new myth.

Returning to the concreteness of the present, the exhibition concludes with works that address the experience of tourism, a phenomenon that pertains to a precise category of travel.

The works *Florence, Audience 9 and 11 (Galleria dell'Accademia)*, 2004 (atrium Castello, floor 3), are from an analysis of museum interiors that Thomas Struth has been conducting for many years, focusing particularly on popular tourist sites.

In these images, he turns his attention to the museum-going public and the relationship between people and works of art on display. Set in Florence, the photographs are part of a series Struth took of the public at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence, shot at the moment of the spectators' encounter with Michelangelo's David.

Excluding the subject of the public's attention from his lens, Struth focuses on the individuality of each visitor, the body language, clothing, and details of posture, gestures, and expressions. Creating images of almost epic monumentality, Struth captures the disorganized

contingency of people within the presumed, almost sacred immobility, of the museum context.

Marcella Beccaria

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From the Earth to the Moon: Metaphors for Travel (part I and part II) is presented on floor 2 and 3 of the Castello. The exhibition includes works by:

Mario Airò
Giovanni Anselmo
Massimo Bartolini
Gabriele Basilico
Lothar Baumgarten
Alighiero Boetti
Jem Cohen
Enzo Cucchi
Roberto Cuoghi
Gino De Dominicis
Thomas Demand
Mario Giacomelli
Rebecca Horn
Roni Horn
Pierre Huyghe
William Kentridge
Anselm Kiefer
Kim Sooja
Mario Merz
Claes Oldenburg - Coosje van Bruggen
Charlemagne Palestine
Giulio Paolini
Thomas Ruff
Thomas Struth
Grazia Toderi
Bill Viola
Yang Fudong
Gilberto Zorio

HOURS

Tuesday to Thursday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Friday to Sunday: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Closed Monday.

Free guided tours to the exhibition take place on Saturday at 3:30 p.m. and 6 p.m.; Sunday and holidays at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tours covering the history and architecture of the Castello di Rivoli are held on Sunday at 4:30 p.m. A shuttle bus service directly links the Fermi Metro station to Castello di Rivoli.

For information: tel. +39 011.9565280
www.castellodirivoli.org

CASTELLO DI RIVOLI

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