The urge to escape from selfhood and the environment is in almost everyone almost all the time. ALDOUS HUXLEY

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escape to be

JOHN WATERS DRUSILLA FOER ADRIAN PIPER NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE GIAN PAOLO BARBIERI CHARLES FRÉGER CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

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BELÉN ANTOLÍN CLARA TOSI PAMPHILI FLORA PHILLIPS CHIARA GUIDI ARVED COLVIN-SMITH HOLLY SILIUS SAYURI BLOOM





16 | 17



A sequence of photographs depicting different people within various outdoor spaces. The artist has cut out and re-positioned a small side portion of each picture so to re-align the horizon while obliterating the human figure. The subject is de-centralized, denied its core role within the image. The author intervenes on the original structure of the picture to de-construct and re-configure existing hierarchies among the elements that define it, both visually and conceptually. Across a number of her works, Vlatka Horvat explores the landscape from different perspectives. Looking at it as an artistic subject as well as a physical setting, questioning the status of the human being in relation to such environment and therefore addressing the on-going negotiation between nature and humanity. Although her images might suggests the idea of a person as being swallowed by an overwhelming environment, I would say she is rather pointing towards relations of encounter, coexistence and exchange. The artist pushes the reciprocity and interpenetration between the human figure and its surrounding space to the point of posing a question on the identity of the artistic subject. Is it even relevant to be searching for an epicentre within these compositions? Perhaps we should look at this imagery simply as the collapse of two visual dimensions. Perhaps the key to these speculations lies in the element of the line.





Horvat's investigation into the landscape seems to culminate with a particular focus onto the line of the horizon, an element indicating both the finitude of the human being and its tension towards unlimited possibilities. At times, the horizon is even abstracted and dissociated from the reality of the landscape. The artist stretches it and distorts, alienates it from any actual spatial context to turn it into pure image... or action. The line embodies a movement of cutting, removing and shifting... the line defines the way in which the artist re-imagines a given figure. It is the space of tension and shift towards a new formulation, the tool to re-think the mode of conceiving and articulating the human subject. It is a vibrant space, a fertile ground incubating new potentialities for the image. Horvat's line is neither a scar nor a mutilation but instead a re-configuration. Most importantly it implies an element of visual deception and playfulness. Functioning as both a tangible and semiotic threshold, the line doesn't only allow forms of hybridization or apparent transfiguration: it marks the disappearance of the subject. The figure is hiding, or being hidden or, perhaps, insinuating a different way of being "present", excluding some of the factors that define its conventional representation so to bring forward other possibilities. Alittle bit like what happens when one of our senses is disabled: the remaining ones are suddenly amplified. And so it is for the human figure: its fragmentation might empower its own depiction and constitution as a subject. # An essay by **Bianca Baroni**