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Landscape, Images and Photography. From the Picturesque to the Performative Approach

Elena Romagnoli*

1. *Introduction*

While Plato famously dismissed art as twice removed from true being (a copy of a copy), the history of reflections on the relationship between nature and art went in the opposite direction. Indeed, with the emergence of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, the appreciation for nature has been merely understood as a mirror of art, the closer to a painting, the more beautiful: this is particularly striking in the concept of the picturesque, as "picture-like" (Carlson 2009, p. 4), i.e. the aesthetic appreciation of places that resemble paintings or photos. This conception has been radically criticized as conceiving of nature as secondary to art, calling instead for an aesthetic approach to nature as such. However, the relationship between nature and images is still debated from different perspectives.

My paper will challenge the idea that nature may be conceived by completely excluding the mediation of images, without this implying going back to the primacy of images over nature. Indeed, what is problematic of the picturesque is not so much that our experience of nature is *mediated* by pictures, but rather that this relationship is *one-sided*, favouring pictures over nature. Recalling one of Hans-Georg Gadamer's tenets, we need to go beyond the original-copy paradigm, in the direction of a *biunivocal* relation between the two. This helps to question any attempt at approaching nature in an unmediated and naïve way. Just as in general we cannot make blank slates of ourselves by removing all our pre-understandings, likewise we cannot get rid of all images and experience nature immediately. Along these lines, I will follow the strand of studies of Landscape Aesthetics, that conceives of landscape as a process, a practice between nature and humans.

To elucidate this biunivocal relationship between landscape and images, I will focus on photography, which plays a liminal role

* elena.romagnoli@unipi.it; Università degli Studi di Pisa.

in the consideration of nature. It can appear as the realm of the picturesque (let's think of the everyday uses of Instagram filters) while also having the potential to prompt critical engagement with nature. My proposal is that the latter option demands that, following a lead proposed by Richard Shusterman, we reassess the status of photography from the figurative (only focusing on photos, on the picture, as an "object") to the performative (taking the whole process of photography into account as an "activity"). The performative reassessment of pictures is particularly in line with the reading of landscape as "more-than-representational", while stressing however that performance is not opposed to images, but the latter can instead be conceived of in a performative way, thus overcoming a merely objectivistic approach.

My contribution will be organised as follows: 1) Analysis of the picturesque and connection between landscape and picture; 2) Illustration of Gadamer's argument on the copy-original relationship; 3) The role of photography in relation to images and rethinking photography in a performative way; 4) Application of the performative reading of photography to more-than-representational landscape.

2. *Picturesque, Pictures and Landscape*

The concept of the picturesque emerged shortly after the other two fundamental concepts in aesthetics, the beautiful and the sublime, and acts as a sort of "middle ground" between them. The picturesque was first systematized in the writings of William Gilpin, Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight in the late 18th century.[1] It arose in relation to the aesthetic experience of nature. As Allen Carlson states, this concept literally means "picture-like", in that "the picturesque advocates aesthetic appreciation in which the natural world is experienced as though divided into art-like scenes, which ideally resemble works of art, especially landscape painting, in both subject matter and composition" (Carlson 2009, p. 4). In the picturesque, therefore, the appreciation of nature, or a landscape, depends on its resemblance to an image, a work of art, particularly the landscape paintings that were emerging in those years.

Far from tracing the history of this fundamental concept, I am interested here in pointing out how the development of the picturesque, which unsurprisingly goes hand in hand with the centrality of landscape painting, shows how nature seems to be here a copy of

[1] I can't go over the history of this concept here; see, among others, Carlson 2009, pp. 3-4, 26-28 and 90-92; Conron 2000.

art (contrary to what Plato had claimed), the more similar the more appreciable. This aspect of the picturesque featured from the 18th to the 19th and 20th centuries, and finally to the present day. One thinks of the curious object named *Claude glass*, a convex colored mirror that allowed to see the landscape as rectangular and aged as a painting of Claude Lorrain.[2] This object was seemingly the forerunner of the filters we employ for pictures. In fact, the same dynamics operates exponentially today[3]: we appreciate a landscape because we have already seen it in brochures, on postcards, or in other people's photos, often reworked – it's a common experience to have a hard time finding photos of some popular tourist places on the internet that is free of filters or oversaturated colors.

Indeed, in recent aesthetic reflections, the concept of the picturesque has been strongly criticized for conveying conception of nature as subordinate to pictures. For example, while stressing that the picturesque contributed to approaching nature "in the raw" (Brady 2003, p. 41) and overcoming the idealization of the canons of classical beauty (Brady 2003, p. 41), Emily Brady asserts that there are nevertheless "both aesthetic and ethical reasons for criticizing the central project of the picturesque" (Brady 2003, p. 42). The picturesque reduces the aesthetic experience of nature to the visible and the two-dimensional, thereby placing a distance, not only physical, between the human being and nature.

Moreover, the concept of picturesque is often connected with that of landscape, as for Carlson the latter "is the direct descendent of the eighteenth-century concept of the picturesque" (Carlson 2009, p. 27). Landscape is criticized by Environmental Aesthetics, among which Carlson's cognitivism is one the most influential voices.[4] The accusation levelled against landscape is that it conveys an idea still linked to a primacy of the picture over nature: as in the picturesque, "the landscape model" means the appreciation of nature as a "prospect, seen from a specific standpoint and distance" (Carlson 2009, p. 26), something that leads to a "two-dimensional representation" (Carlson 2009, p. 28). The landscape would be appreciable only insofar as referred to landscape painting, so that it is not nature but its representation, the artistic copy, as it were, that is at the center.

[2] See Carlson 2009, pp. 27-28.

[3] D'Angelo criticized this role of images in the landscape in a paragraph titled "How images have killed nature" where he states that "in our relationship with nature, art has given up being our guide, and has left us at the mercy of images that do not let us *know* anything, because they only serve to confirm what we already think we know (D'Angelo 2014, p. 86, my transl.).

[4] For an overview of different approaches in aesthetics, see Carlson 2009, pp. 1-37 and Brady 2003, pp. 86-116.

Critics of the picturesque, and of the landscape model they associate with it, see the primacy of representation over nature as problematic, as in the case of Malcolm Budd that proposes instead "the aesthetic appreciation of nature *as nature*" (Budd 2002, p. 91). In Carlson's theorization, the concept of environment itself clearly separates nature from art, but we could say it separates it from any representation. As art is appreciated through the knowledge of the history of art, of forms of classifications, so for the natural environment, "the relevant knowledge is our common sense and the scientific discoveries that we have made about those environments" (Carlson 2009, p. 33). This separation between interpretation in the domain of art and in the domain of nature is common also in non-cognitivist approaches like Brady's: "We have to separate the relational, conceptual framework that we use to understand nature from the reality of natural processes. Nature is not subsumed by culture".[5]

But is a non-image-mediated approach to nature really possible? Can art and nature be separated into two isolated domains, each with their own peculiarities and means of access? This division appears increasingly problematic, if we consider, for example, that Ronald Hepburn's pioneering essay, which first denounced the neglect of nature's beauty in the aesthetic context, nevertheless pointed to the involvement of the viewer as a peculiarity of nature's beauty (Hepburn 1966, pp. 288-289) as opposed to the distance of the artwork as "framed" (Hepburn 1966, p. 290). However, nowadays we know how many works of art have challenged this kind of enjoyment, breaking the separation between the public and the work, appealing precisely to immersivity and multi-sensoriality.

Contrary to Environmental Aesthetics and in accordance with Landscape Aesthetics,[6] it seems to me that precisely landscape, conceived as a living and evolving relationship between humans and nature and not as something derived from painting,[7] can help explicating the relationship between nature and images.[8] Indeed,

[5] Brady stated that a difference between nature and art as an object of interpretation stems from such separation too. See Brady 2002. For a different reading that challenges such separation and builds a dialogue between Brady and Eco's theory, see Siani 2020.

[6] For a survey in this field, see D'Angelo 2014, pp. 11-55 and Siani 2014b, pp. 30-45.

[7] If the etymological origin of landscape in the Neo-Latin languages indicated first a landscape painting (see D'Angelo 2014, pp. 14-17), this *does not* imply that landscape itself must be conceived of as a reduction to images. On the contrary, this etymological root may be an indicator of the help landscape can offer in the relationship between images and nature. On the "pictorial origin" of the landscape and its potentials, see Siani 2024a, pp. 73 ff.

[8] "It is in the eighteenth-century concept of effect, I would argue, that we find the key to the enduring importance of the question 'Is landscape painting?'. To ask this question reminds us that landscape and representation can never be separated. From the

far from being reduced to a picture and considered the direct expression of the picturesque, landscape allows us to go beyond the picturesque itself, that is, beyond the relationship between the copy (nature) and the original (the picture). Landscape is in fact capable of explaining the specificity of our experience of nature, or better, as Alberto L. Siani states, "landscapes, just like artworks, should be seen in Deweyan terms as expressive forms of full, consummated experience" (Siani 2024a, p. 45). Landscape aesthetics – as recently developed by D'Angelo 2014 and 2021, Furia 2023, and Siani 2024a –, stresses how the concept of environment (as well as that of territory) is an abstraction and "the actual reality we encounter, experience, study, and can act upon is that of the landscape" (Siani 2024a, p. 19). As Siani claims, "landscape is not a 'given' but a process in which a certain space takes (and changes) shape, allowing only on this basis, the 'static' abstractions of matter and content/function" (Siani 2024a, p. 20). Landscape is a relational experience that takes into account nature and human beings in a mutual exchange involving action, knowledge and images.

3. *The Copy-Original Relationship*

Following a hermeneutical conception, it should be recalled that no approach to any kind of experience is totally immediate – as if we could abstract ourselves and relate to our surroundings as a *tabula rasa*.[9] This, however, does not entail a primacy of art over nature. Even for the aesthetic appreciation of landscape, which is therefore never mere nature, we are always influenced by prior knowledge and images we have acquired, for example, from pictures or videos. When we experience a new landscape, we always have some pre-understanding of it,[10] related for example to prior readings or precisely to images, which influences our aesthetic appreciation. One example is the aesthetic appreciation of "degraded" urban places, like the Quartieri Spagnoli in Naples or the streets of La Kalsa in Palermo, that have gained popularity – and consequently were gentrified –, so that we have become used to seeing and appreciating fine-art photos of those places.

very beginning, landscape locates the viewer at its center, as its point of origin. There is no possibility of looking at landscape free from a cultural framing or a subjective lens, for there is no landscape 'out there', landscape is always and already 'in here'" (Di Palma 2016, p. 67).

[9] Gadamer 2013, pp. 278 ff.

[10] Gadamer 2013, pp. 278 ff.

In this regard, I believe it is useful to refer to the analysis of the concept of image that Gadamer provided in his most famous work, *Truth and Method*, where the ontological relationship between image and original is reassessed. Gadamer argues that the image is not actually a diminished imitation of the original, but that, on the contrary, it may be more authentic than the original itself. Gadamer distinguishes the picture [*Bild*] from the mere copy [*Abbild*] as a mere reflection of the original, i.e. what is produced by a mirror, where the only criterion is to match the original, so that in the copy one recognizes the original (Gadamer 2013, p. 139). The copy indeed "exists by itself in order to efface itself" (Gadamer 2013, p. 139), only to suppress itself in the original.

The case of the picture, on the other hand, shows a different kind of relationship to the original. Indeed, "the picture has its own being" (Gadamer 2013, p. 141). It is not a mere copy but says something more about the original: "Even today's mechanical techniques can be used in an artistic way, when they bring out something that is not to be found simply by looking". And Gadamer continues: "This kind of picture is not a copy, for it presents something which, without it, would not present itself in this way. It says something about the original [e.g., a good photo portrait]" (Gadamer 2013, p. 141). Gadamer is clear on this point: an image can tell us more about the original itself, such as a photo in which we can notice something that we had missed with the naked eye.[11]

From this point of view, therefore, there is no "*one-sided relationship*" (Gadamer 2013, p. 141) between the original and the copy. For this reason, Gadamer could say that what is represented in the representation experiences "an *increase in being*" (Gadamer 2013, p. 141). From an ontological point of view, Gadamer tells us, the copy and the original are on the same plane. Therefore, not only is the image modified according to the original, but the latter is enhanced in the image: "The picture then has an autonomy that also affects the original" (Gadamer 2013, p.142). This also finds etymological justification: "It is only through the picture [*Bild*] that the original [*Urbild*] becomes the original [*Ur-Bild*]" (Gadamer 2013, p. 142).

Gadamer's reflection is influenced by Neoplatonism (Gadamer 2013, pp. 135 ff.) and developed in the context of his work on the role of the picture in contemporary aesthetics, dominated

[11] In the specific case of photography, which I will go back to in the next paragraph, Walter Benjamin coined the phrase "the optical unconscious", stressing the richness that photography is capable of conveying, even beyond the photographer's intention: see Benjamin 1979.

by musealization and "aesthetic differentiation", which he harshly criticized. What interests us here, however, is the fact that this reflection postulates a biunivocal relationship between the original and the picture.[12] The image is not a mere reflection of an original but has an existence of its own that can influence the original itself. This is apparent in the case of the landscape, which does not stand for a mere abstraction that isolates nature, but rather something that always involves human action. The copy-original dualism must therefore be overcome, by questioning both the primacy of the landscape over the image as a mere reflection and, conversely, the primacy of the image (the painting etc.) over the landscape, as in the picturesque.

Instead, we are dealing with a dynamic relationship between the original and the copy, where the two alter and influence each other: such is the relationship between the landscape and the pictures. For example, a landscape may be altered by the fact that some photos show particularly beautiful spots that need to be protected or how some landscapes need readjustment. Just think that Carleton Watkins' photographs of Yosemite landscapes persuaded President Abraham Lincoln to sign the *Yosemite Grant Act* in 1864, paving the way to the creation of the national parks of the United States, with all their pros and cons.[13]

As mentioned above, the picturesque emerged precisely in the historical period when landscape painting was emerging: such images had influenced the pre-understanding of the viewers, who then tried to find the same characteristics in the landscape. The problem, however, is not so much that the view of nature was in any way *influenced*, or *mediated,* by the images, but rather that this relationship was *one-sided*, uniquely biased towards the painting. One possibility to reassess the relationship between images and nature is by rethinking this relationship in a *performative* sense, focusing not on the objects (paintings or landscapes) but on the *activity*.[14] Landscape is a process, and the relationship between the image

[12] This conception has been strongly criticized and accused of supporting those traditional theses for which art is an enhancement of nature. Indeed, it should be pointed out, that Gadamer still appears to be bound to a reading of aesthetics as a philosophy of fine art that excludes nature, conceived as a derivative phenomenon (e.g. Gadamer 2013, p. 136). What interests us, however, is to show how his reflection can be fruitfully applied to landscape as well, in order to question the one-sided relationship between image and nature.

[13] "The National Parks and other preserved areas were represented as sanctuaries of transcendental restoration. […] Photography was thus in the service of a secular evangelism devoted to preserving natural places deemed sacred by virtue of their scenic resources" (Kelsey 2016, p. 84). For a critical reading about the relationship between photography, environmentalism, and politics, see also DeLuca and Demo 2000.

[14] For the development of an intrinsically relational approach to ecology, see Perullo 2022.

and the landscape itself is processual. With this in mind, the next section will focus on a modern art form such as photography, which has played a liminal role in questioning the relationship between copy and image.

4. *Taking Pictures and the Performative Approach*

Landscape photography is certainly one of the most popular genres in photography and plays an ambivalent role with respect to landscape (see Kelsey 2016).[15] On the one hand, it can be seen as an enhancement of the picturesque in which paintings are replaced by photographs, with the option to edit the images making the altered images of a landscape prevail over the landscape itself.[16] On the other hand, it is precisely photography that can highlight the overcoming of the picturesque model. As for the first point, it is true indeed that photography was originally more faithful than painting – it is not by chance that landscape painting *à la* Canaletto eventually found different forms of expression other than the meticulous reproduction of real elements, just think of Cezanne's famous *Mont Sainte Victoire*.[17] With the recent development of photo-editing techniques, however, the criterion of imitation has been abandoned in photography as well, with photographs acquiring more and more "freedom" from the original, almost as an enhancement of it through filters, color saturation and image cropping (e.g., pictures of landscapes for marketing purposes, or tourist promotion) – an aspect now amplified by the use of AI.

A paradigmatic example is the famous work titled *Pictorial Effect in Photography* (1881), written by Henry Peach Robinson and related to the Pictorialism movement, that was precisely a guide for photographers to frame the scene as if it were a painting, aiming not at verisimilitude but at mixing reality and artifice. As underlined by Ian Tompson and Peter Howard, "picturesque principles

[15] Numerous philosophical studies have been focussed on photography from a wide range of perspectives. The intent here is to limit myself only to emphasizing its role in overcoming the copy-original relationship in the case of landscape. In this sense, Davis 1989 called landscape studies to take back an interest in images, particularly in photographic images. For the strong historical interconnection between landscape and photography, see Kelsey 2016.

[16] "The temptation to equate landscapes with photographs of landscapes may lead to an unfortunate tendency to view the landscape as a formal composition to be judged aesthetically or as an abstract text to be deconstructed analytically" (Davis 1989, p. 2).

[17] For a contribution highlighting the advantages of photography in liberating painting from the demands of representational realism, see Weston 1930.

of composition were readily adopted and adapted by photographers […]. Much of the advice offered to photographers about composition, even today, is derived from Picturesque theory" (Thompson and Howard 2019, p. 241), like for example the famous "Rule of Thirds" to compose photos. From this point of view, photography has certainly been related to the picturesque, to the point that that we can state that photography and mass tourism are "symbiotically entwined" (Thompson and Howard 2019, p. 242).[18]

Unlike the picturesque model, however, photography has the potential to highlight a different relationship between the image and the landscape. Interestingly, some recent movements have tried to rethink the role of photography, from its assumed objectivity and the absence of human figures to its increasing involvement of human life. Moreover, God's eye views privileging elevated, mostly inaccessible viewpoints have increasingly been challenged and replaced with immersive perspectives where the point of view is from inside nature, e.g. pictures taken from inside a cornfield or close-ups on ordinary items, making images "deeply intimate, complex and intensely personal" (Thompson and Howard 2019, p. 251).

Questioning the romantic and picturesque view of photography is not all about changing the *subjects* from exceptional places, e.g., the great Yosemite and Yellowstone parks,[19] to urban or industrial settings, or, as it often happens nowadays, to everyday life in quotidian photography.[20] Rather, we need to rethink our approach to the relationship between photographs and landscape. For this purpose, I will refer to an essay that Shusterman focussed on photography, in the attempt to rethink it in a performative sense. Shusterman draws attention to the fact that reflections on photography have tended to reduce photography to the image,

[18] For the close link between landscape photography and mass tourism, see Thompson and Howard 2019, pp. 242-244. On this topic, D'Angelo affirmed: "The tourist who walks around with his eye glued to the camera, who does not look at what is in front of his eyes, but *filters* it to *see it again* at home […] is the proven proof of how the image serves, today, to prevent us from seeing nature" (D'Angelo 2014, p. 86; my transl.).

[19] On the aesthetic exceptionalism associated with particularly beautiful places at the expense of the "more banal", see Saito 2007, pp. 61-65. For the critical role of photography in denouncing mass tourism and the exploitation of nature, I was personally impressed by a picture taken by Roger Minick, "Woman with scarf at inspiration point, Yosemite, National Park", showing a woman sitting at one of Yosemite's most famous viewpoints with a scarf on her head, taken from the souvenir shop, showing views of Yosemite Park itself. See the exhibition "Sea Change: Photographs from the Collection", at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, September 2, 2023-March 17, 2024.

[20] The 1957 exhibition "New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape" in New York marked the start of an important transition from the model of the picturesque to critical photography; see Thompson and Howard 2019, pp. 246-247. On the historical evolution of photography in relation to landscape, see Davis 1989, pp. 1-4.

understood as an object. The photographic image, as had been the case with the pictorial image, "came to be identified entirely with its *two-dimensional* end product or photograph as *object* while its performative, temporal dimension was neglected" (Shusterman 2012, p. 73; my emphasis).

Contrary to this tendency, he aims to recall the processual aspect of photography, that is, the performative basis that breathes life into it.[21] Shusterman limits his discussion to fine-art photography, in particular the case where the "subject" photographed is a human individual. His goal is to show how the body and the performance are central to this type of aesthetic experience as well, in accordance with his conception of Somaesthetics (Shusterman 2012, pp. 67-68). According to him, "there is more to photography than the photograph" (Shusterman 2012, p. 68). Shusterman thus defends the existence of the image independently of its referent.

From this perspective, the problem of the copy-original relationship arises again, in this case in the field of photography. Shusterman explicitly decries the tendency to reduce the identity of the image to that of the referent, that is, reducing the "the essential meaning of the photograph (at least in philosophical discussions) […] to the object photographed". This entails "reducing the aesthetics of photography [..] to the aesthetics of an object (that is, the real-world referent) actually outside the photograph, hence allegedly beyond photography" (Shusterman 2012, p. 68).

Photography has often been reduced to the instant of the shot, the shutter that closes, an act that would not suggest duration and therefore a performative process. These readings, as Shusterman points out, neglect "the complex performative process that occurs before the shutter release and the camera's ensuing mechanism of producing the photographic image" (Shusterman 2012, p. 72). It is precisely such process that "is necessary for achieving the desired optical image in the camera lens that one then seeks to fix in the photographic image" (Shusterman 2012, p. 72). The performative process is thus at the basis of photography: this can help to reassess the relationship between nature and images in a biunivocal way, while stressing their mutual influence.

[21] Shusterman traces some possible reasons about the primacy of this object-based reading, even in authors fundamental to reflections on photography, such as Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin and Susan Sontag. See Shusterman 2012, pp. 121-128.

Shusterman focuses on the processes leading up to the shot (creation of the background, use of lighting, choice of framing, etc.), but he himself states that the same happens even after the shot, at the editing stage, especially with digital photography. He thus emphasizes the transformative potential of photography, both in the human subject and in the photographer. But how do these reflections apply instead to the case where what is photographed is not a human individual but a landscape?

In my opinion, the subject being the landscape is inconsequential when it comes to rethinking the photographic process in a performative sense. It is a matter of focusing not only on the process that precedes or follows the moment of the shot, but also on the landscape itself, which is not something separate but something which the photographer himself/herself is immersed and participates in. Moreover, the resulting image has, in turn, a performative power over the landscape, itself in perpetual becoming.

A performative reading of the relationship between landscape and photography enables us to overcome the copy-original dualism and to rethink this relationship in a transformative sense. Photography is more than just an image; it shows a processual relation between the photographer and the landscape that starts with the choice of the location, maybe the setting up of the tripod, the adjustment of light and time, the movement of the plants or human beings or animals, to the shot. In the process, the photographer is part of the landscape, even if he or she is not captured in the photo (for example, the photographer may have travelled a bumpy route to get to the spot where he or she is taking the photo, got dirty in a thicket, or stroked some animal).

This is then followed by the photo-processing stage. Even in the final form of photography, the image maintains this performative relationship with the landscape it portrays, since the landscape, as I mentioned, can itself be influenced by the image, for example inasmuch as the image is used for preservation or sustainability purposes (showing, for example, degraded landscapes). Just like thinking of nature as mere nature is an abstraction, so is thinking of an immediate approach to a landscape, namely an approach that does not take into account the role of images in shaping and adjusting the relationship we have with that landscape. However, we are not just dealing with nature from the photographer's point of view, but rather "from the point of view of the landscape itself" (Siani 2024a, p. 79).

Not only are photographs performative, but landscapes can be conceived themselves as performative expressions of our relationship with the world, as stressed by Schneemann 2023. Moreover, as specified by Siani, "they are *performative* in the double sense that our sense-searching and sense-making activity performs them by instituting specific 'units of sense' and that they sensibly express and put before our eyes our sense making activity by embodying and letting us experience and encounter it" (Siani 2024a, p. 25; my emphasis).[22] Interestingly, from this perspective, the theories of landscape as "more-than-representational" show precisely how the landscape, far from being reduced to the pictorial model, has a practical, performative and embodied reality: "Landscapes in this rendering are not static backdrops, but instead are imagined as fluid and animating processes in a constant state of becoming" (p. 95). It should be emphasized, however, that landscape is not performative *in opposition to* representations or images (in our specific case, photographs), but that *even images* entertain a performative relationship with the landscape.

More-than-representational theories certainly aim to separate the landscape from the picturesque and from its reduction to mere representation, conceived of as an objectifying and contemplative reality. It should be noted, however, that, in the light of a performative reassessment of photography, images too can be thought of as more-than-representational, as more than an 'object of contemplation'. Paying attention to the more-than-representational aspect of the landscape should not lead to regard any representation as 'detrimental' to the landscape or otherwise to be excluded. Photographs themselves have a relational and performative origin. As Tim Davis mentioned, "landscape scholars need to be aware of the ways in which the technical constraints of the medium can affect the manner in which landscapes are perceived and interpreted" (Davis 1989, p. 2).

Picking up the threads of the argumentation, the picturesque expressed a relationship between the image and the original, biased towards the image. Based on the Gadamerian conception, a biunivocal relationship between the landscape and the image can be

[22] In particular, Schneemann develops the theme of the performative landscape by comparing contemporary arts, such as photography, exhibitions, and performances, and analysing the role of landscape and the shift from representational to situational aesthetics. "The perspective on performative landscapes allows contemporary art to address developments in situational, relational, and appellative modes, and to differentiate between the aesthetics of movement, gesture, and action; it thereby contributes to the history of landscape as an aesthetic medium" (Schneemann 2023, 408). His contribution also has the merit of emphasizing the participatory and collective aspect in the performative rethinking of the landscape.

proposed. The specific case of photography helps us highlight the performative character of photographic images. A further rethinking of the relationship between the image and the landscape in a biunivocal sense will thus require holding together the conception of performative photography and the more-than-representational theories related to the performativity of the landscape.

If the image should not subsume the landscape (as in the model of the picturesque), the performative rethinking of the landscape should not banish images either. Performativity per se is not opposed to images, it is opposed to a static conception of images. Just like the landscape cannot be thought of without our relationship to it, so it would be unthinkable without a relationship to images. In this way, the role of images could be rethought, not inasmuch as they "killed nature", as D'Angelo (2014 p. 83) decried with respect to the model of the picturesque, but rather by focusing on how they can make us get to *know* and *experience* nature.

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