

Casey J. Opstad

STATEMENT

“Landscape in art also tells us, or asks us to think about, where we belong.”

– Malcolm Andrews

My examination of the natural world started through the lens of the landscape painting. From there I sought to understand what the landscape was communicating and how the painting worked as an object. My current work is the unpacking and examination of how our culture has shaped the landscape as well as the personal and cultural meanings associated with the natural world and the landscape.

Historically landscape painting has been an idealization of the natural world. By the simple act of choosing a “good view” the artist is selecting what they consider a preferred slice of the countryside. Exploring idealized versions of natural phenomena, one begins to understand that it highlights the truths as well as the lies contained in the representation. In the disrupting of the idealized image, it also ends up transforming the way the painting as an object communicates.

Breaking the landscape down into pixels, planes or a paint-by-numbers schema, the absurdity of representing the natural world inside the gallery becomes apparent. Furthermore, the deconstruction of landscape image represents for me man’s attempt to digitize the world around us. Whether we are turning music into MP3s or birthday party wishes into ones and zeros, we try to hold onto a moment by digital means. Yet this world is anything but ones and zeros. It is an organic, shifting and volatile environment. The disruption of the idealized image of the natural world allows us to see the intricacy of our relationship to it.

All art involves some kind of transformation, altering materials into a new form. I believe that art that is executed perfectly has the power to transform the viewer. In my most idealistic moments I hope to transform how we view ourselves in relation to the natural world and hopefully we all get a little closer to understanding where we belong.