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Eastman House showcases Dutch photography

Nature as Artifice: New Dutch Landscape in Photography and Video Art

on view June 13-Aug. 16

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — The description "Dutch landscape" may evoke an idyllic vision reminiscent of Dutch landscape paintings, but today the Netherlands is known for its planned, manipulated landscape. In the last two decades a number of Dutch photographers and filmmakers have taken contemporary Dutch landscape and nature as their point of departure. George Eastman House presents a major survey of this new work, titled Nature as Artifice: New Dutch Landscape in Photography and Video Art, on view June 13 through Aug. 16. It is a companion show to the Eastman House summer exhibition New Topographics, originally mounted in 1975, illustrating the profound influence of that exhibition on the generations that have followed.

Affected by a global reordering of production and industry, the agrarian function of the Dutch landscape is making way for suburbanization, recreation, industrial and business parks and infrastructure for transportation. “The country is in the throes of a continual process of spatial planning, and reorganization,” said Maartje van den Heuvel, curator of Nature as Artifice. “The radically artificial nature of things like greenhouses, waterworks, polders with gleaming new designer cities, and geometrically patterned nature areas that were designed just yesterday often imbue the Dutch landscape with a distinctive visual appeal.”

Nature as Artifice opened in June 2008 at Kröller-Müller in Otterlo, the Netherlands, and traveled to Neue Pinakothek in Munich, Germany. After the Eastman House display, Nature as Artifice will travel to Aperture Gallery in New York City, Sept. 10 through Oct. 29, 2009.

Meet the Artists and Curator

Meet four photographers featured in Nature as Artifice, as well as the curator the evening before the exhibition opens to the public. A panel discussion will take place in the Dryden Theatre at 6 p.m. Friday, June 12. Admission is $5 for the general public; free for members and students. Participants include van den Heuvel and featured artists Erwin Driessens, Maria Verstappen, Theo Baart, and Cary Markerink.

The exhibition also features work by Hans Aarsman, Wout Berger, Henze Boekhout, Marnix Goossens, Arnoud Holleman, Gert Jan Kocken, Jannes Linders, Hans van der Meer, Gabor, Bas Princen, Xavier Ribas, Gerco de Ruijter, Frank van der Salm, Hans Werlemann, and Edwin Zwakman.

A catalog accompanies the exhibition (NAi Publishers, 2008) and features a foreword by Dr. Anthony Bannon, director of Eastman House, and an essay by Dr. Alison Nordström, Eastman House curator of photographs. The Eastman House exhibition of Nature as Artifice is made possible in part by the Mondriaan Foundation and The Consulate General of the Netherlands.

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