

ARTIST STATEMENT

Referencing the utopian, hybrid landscapes of 19th century French scenic wallpapers my digital photographic landscape compositions bring together multiple points of perspective, different locations, times of the day and seasons. These elements are then arranged to create seamless and therefore impossible places; landscapes that are familiar yet somehow non specific, that appear so real that they should exist but couldn't possibly.

As wallpaper prints in an immersive installation context my works resonate with early forms of virtual reality such as dioramas, stereoscopic photography, and the contained exotic environments of European glasshouses. The 19th century wallpapers explored fantasies of travel, colonial expansion and a fascination with the exotic. They often collapsed geographical space and time through incorporating a variety of locations into a seamless continuous image. Gathering and sampling plants and images from around the world at a time of colonial expansion they were, amongst other things, self congratulatory expressions of the achievements of early globalization, and the desire to impose control and order upon the natural world.

Often flouting the rules of perspective and visual logic these wallpapers can be seen as an interesting counterpoint to contemporary photographic strategies to make visible the experience of globalization in the postmodern era. More specifically, the idea that digitally altered photographs that bring together multiple locations and moments more effectively represent contemporary social spaces that are no longer defined by fixed territorial places or time. That hyper-real photography can operate as a new form of documentary practice, one that allows us to create images that are not visually available to us in the physical spaces we live in but perhaps more accurately represent the interconnected spaces and complex relationships of contemporary global systems. Much of this photographic genre has focused on 'non spaces', the built environment and the excesses of consumerism and capitalism. I am interested in extending this to another discourse of globalization; the growing anxiety around environmental change and erratic weather patterns.

Through combining photographic wallpapers, wall drawing and architectural lighting in an installation context I look for the visual threshold between the site as a form of containment and dissolution as the interior is colonized by representations of places elsewhere. I look for the spaces between different forms of visual logic that play geologic and architectural systems against each other and create tension between the natural and built environment.

Valerie Sparks