

# VISION AND AESTHETIC PERCEPTION IN THE LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

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Fig. 1: View from the Window at Le Gras.(1826)

## INTRODUCTION

Aesthetics is a separate field of philosophy that discusses beauty's concept and definition. It explores if some rules and parameters define what constitutes 'beautiful.' The term 'Aesthetics' appears first in the 18th century by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762), who's work contributed to the recognition of Aesthetics as a separate industry in Philosophy, after Ethics, Gnosiology, and Metaphysics. Today we have several independent fields of philosophy, such as Logic, Philosophy, History, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Medicine, Language, Law, Mind, and Religion. Aesthetics deals with when a subject is of great perfectionism, either visual or auditory or of speech (spoken or written). It concerns the work itself and its creation, and it also concerns the artist and the observer. From the etymology of the word is obviously related to the senses, so it has to do with the function and physiology of the human senses such as vision, hearing, olfaction, taste, and even touch.

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## **The aesthetic in landscape architecture**

Architecture is a part of visual creation and therefore is governed by the rules of aesthetics. The architecture of the landscape, similarly subject to the aesthetic rules of the art, combines the existence of multiple sensory stimuli, undoubtedly such as the optical ones, but also acoustic, olfactory, and even touching. The components of the projects, cohesion, and respect for the environment determine the parameters. For example, a garden consists of the plants, their properties, the presence or absence of the flower morphology and the class of the plants, the existence or non of scents, color combination in their foliage or flowers, the shape of the torso and stems and the correlation of their geometric shape. In the above example, altering the image during the year should be considered due to the alternation of the time, the specific moment of the day, and the different colors of the seasons. Auditory stimuli could also be added with birds and constructions that, with the movement of the wind, could cause aesthetically acceptable specific sounds. The practical additions, such as signs with instructions, or purely artistic interventions, such as sculptures, respect and serve the overall idea of this project. Generally, Aesthetics in Landscape Architecture is a complex riddle to be solved by the creator architect so that the result will be excellent and aesthetically complete.

## **Art, Photography and landscape**

Landscape in photographic art is an important chapter and have emerged as great artists in this area. The imaging methods vary, and the aesthetic elements vary and differ in each technique. The primary primordial familiarity between people and the environment has accumulated knowledge, instinctual sensing, and learning of the sensory stimuli. The human mind composed rules, elements, and parameters that helped the one hand, creative imagination, on the other hand, the determination of beauty. Before the invention of photography, imaging was based on the creative ability and combination of the composition of talent, combining different images and substantial interference on the facts while depicting a landscape. For example, the artist could combine or omit theme elements, such as a tree, a top, or a building, change the lighting, and change the time by changing colors or elements of the specific seasonal moment. According to many artists, the depiction of the landscape is an expression and coordination of their inner world with the external. The final project is a combination of a philosophical vision of the creator about the world that surrounds him. The various currents reflect the period of prevalence and of course, the philosophy of the creators

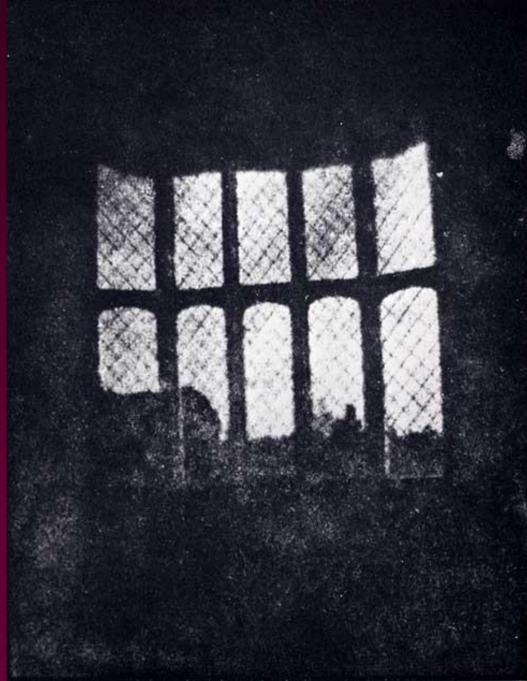


Fig.2: William Fox Talbot, A Latticed window in Lacock Abbey, England, 1835

### The aesthetics of photography to landscape

Photographic art was present in the pictorial representation of the landscape. The first permanent photograph with the Camera Obscura in 1826 by the French Nicephore Niepce depicted a landscape: View from the Window at Le Gras. (Fig. 1) At the same time, many were experimenting with various techniques and particularly preferred landscape depictions, such as William Fox Talbot with A Latticed window in Lacock Abbey, England, in 1835, with the first surviving negative of this effort. (Fig. 2). As one can observe, the artists apply some aesthetic rules that are valid in contemporary photography using the lines of an architectural building (Fig. 1) or the use of a natural frame (window) which gives perfect aesthetic results with the contrast and accenting of an outer element (garden) and a sense of perspective. Since then, the evolution of photography has passed many stages, at the beginning at a rate parallel to the other sciences and later at a breakneck pace, reaching today to dominate our lives either in moving pictures or in intangible form (digital).

For a long time, photography was monochromatic, and this fact created an artistic trend with fans expressed with black and white photography. This trend has presented many works of several artists over the years, and many of them were devoted to landscape representation. Indicatively we mention Franco-Swiss Frederick Boissonnas (1858-1946), who for thirty years toured Greece with his friend Daniel Baud-Bovy (1870-1958), Dean of the Geneva School of Fine Arts and recorded with the camera lenses exceptional moments of life and the Greek countryside. It should be mentioned that these two authors and travelers, during their tour in Greece, climbed along with the Greek Christos Kakalos in August of 1913 and conquered for the first time the highest peak of Mount Olympus, and of course, they photographed it (Fig. 3) We see immediately the high aesthetics that expresses this first display of the highest peaks of Olympus, in the presence of clouds, the choice of vertical recording which dramatically emphasizes the height and isolates the subject and the existence in the foreground of the nearby mountain structures that provide a sense of depth and perspective to the picture. Even the existence of the clouds and snow highlights the majesty of the peaks, using the contrast of white and gray.

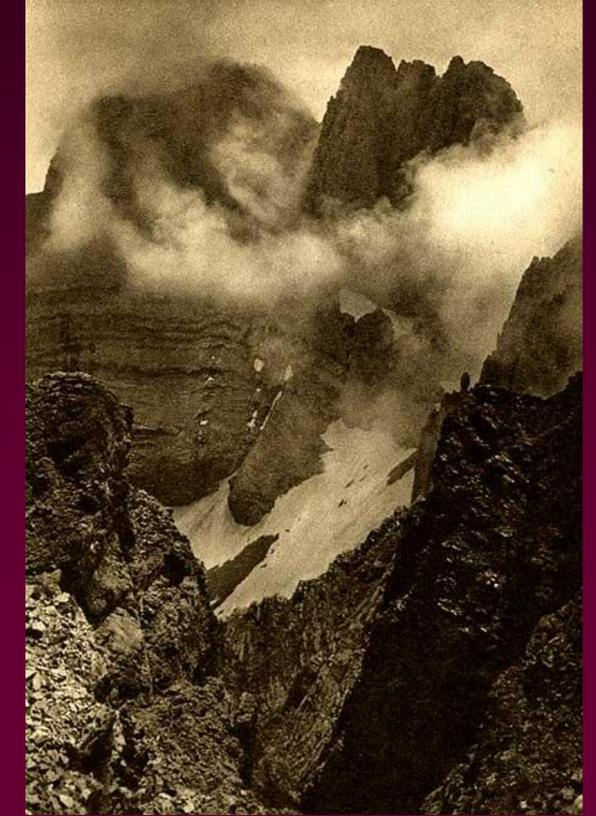


Fig 3: Frederick Boissonnas, Mt Olympus, Mytikas and Crown, 1913

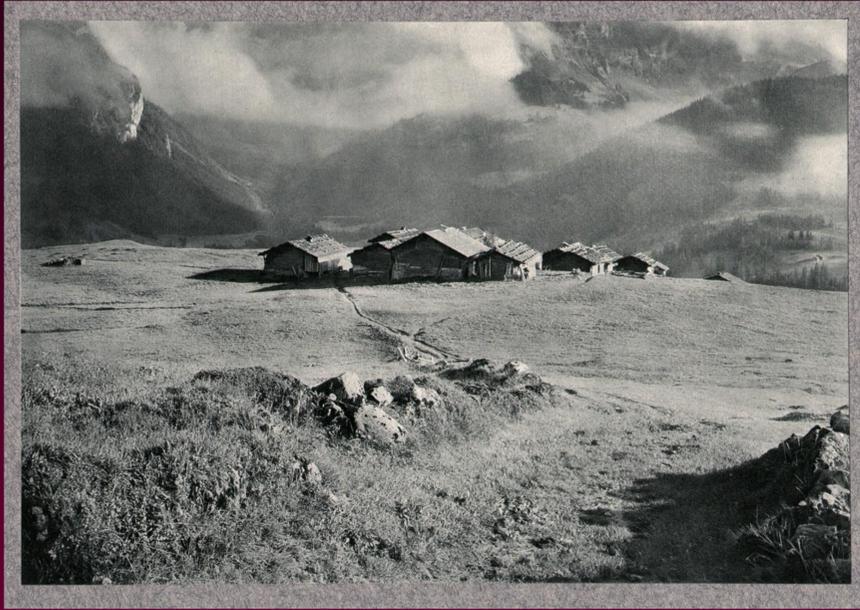


Fig.4: Frederick Boissonnas, Dans la Montagne

Boissonnas, in the fourth picture, focuses on a rural village, which marks the center of the image where the horizontal line of the plateau intersects with the ridges of the distant hills. We see how the artist captures a theme and places it at the center of the image and how he frames it with the backdrop of the distant hills and overcast peaks.

Boissonnas In the fifth picture, in the inner courtyard of the Athos monastery Chilandari, divided into four sections; the first includes human presence, connecting with the interior environment and landscape, which runs in the background, framed in the remaining three sections of photography. The hazy display of the courtyard with the Catholic and the cypresses give the required sense of the depth of field that helps in the perception of the third dimension. The fourth picture focuses on a rural village in which marks the center of the image where the horizontal line of the plateau intersecting with the ridges of the distant hills. We see how the artist captures a theme and places it at the center of the image and how he frames it with the backdrop of the distant hills and overcast peaks.



Fig.5: Frederick Boissonnas, Mount Athos, Chilandari

## Elements in the landscape

In a landscape, the human brain looks for specific signs indicating uniqueness. Such is the line of the horizon, the sea, the lake, or a river, the existence of mountains, turbulence or calm shown by the movement of air or waves, and even buildings or people. Even there may exist other natural objects (trees, shrubs, rocks) or human creations (cars, statues, roads). All of these elements create a landscape, the aesthetics of which depends on harmonious coexistence and uncluttered presence—nothing more and nothing less, only what is needed. The photographer can capture this landscape, and the result will be aesthetically par. He can isolate elements and avoid others, such as electrical power lines and cars or seek their visibility when capturing the urban environment. The unlimited ability of editing and interventionism in the digital image should be noted, but of course, we are not referring to that. The study of the role of photography in the aesthetic display of scenery refers only to authentic and unedited imprinting. The validity of the rule of thirds applies to the photographic representation of the landscape as the preferred decision at the end of an element that shows the position of the photographer (a tree branch, window frame, door, et others.) and the placement of the central theme in one of the vertical lines of thirds. The use of light versus shadow, the harmonious use of colors, and the crucial detail (movement of water, branches, et others) can give us information on the moment's circumstances.

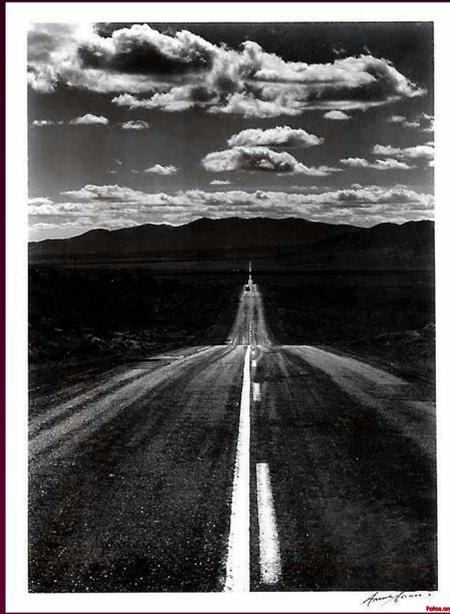


Fig.6: Ansel Adams, Road to Nevada Desert

The sixth photo by Ansel Adams (1902-1984) takes us on the road in the desert of Nevada, which uses the central marking of the asphalt road masterfully; the different levels of the road give an impression of distance and the peculiarity of the road (ups and downs) the parallel lines which, due to the visual perception coalesce and converge at the foot of the mountain, serving as an indicator of direction. The dramatic display of the clouds increases the dynamism of the image and gives a metaphysical style in which we foreshadow this landscape.



Fig.7: Ansel Adams, Farm workers and Mt. Williamson

In the seventh picture, Ansel Adams depicts a scene of the American agricultural countryside but plays with the geometry of the cultivated field. The field's heavy ruts and the farmers' presence refer us to a mathematical puzzle with lines and dots; the horizontal dividing line, respecting the two-thirds rule, marks the end of the puzzle and switches to the physical presence of the distant mountains. Essentially the photo consists of two distinct sub-images separated clearly by the horizon of the field and a neutral zone of distant meadows before the mountain volume. Note the use of the wide-angle lens and the genius reception angle.



Fig. 8: Ansel Adams, Bridalveil Fall

In the eighth picture, Ansel Adams gives a dramatic and magnificent scenery of Yosemite Valley to capture the foreground lobola trees, trunks afflicted by disasters, and a robust background with steep cliffs and an almost exotic waterfall. The photographer uses different shots to give the dramatic landscape with a strong presence of trees and the menacing but distant presence of cataracts. The presence of the rocks maximizes the majesty of the landscape.



Fig.9: Ansel Adams, Mount Williamson, Sierra Nevada

In the ninth picture, Ansel Adams transforms a landscape into a surrealistic one using the wide-angle lens and the perfect reception angle. We see the dominance of the rocks as a central idea, but the ultimate goal is the allegorical depiction of two hills and the distant peaks surrounded by clouds. The hills impersonate natural pyramids, the stones replace the desert, and the distant mountain range denatures the natural environment into an intangible. The game of light, with the splendor of the clouds and the optical bundles of rays incident at an angle, causes our vision to synthesize visual connotations almost supernatural in the brain.

### The aesthetics of landscape photography in the work of major photographers

Perhaps the most famous landscape photographer was Ansel Adams (1902-1984) (fig. 10), who photographed American nature. He is known for using monochromatic film and black-and-white photography. However, he has occasionally used colored film. He is also known for inventing the method of zones, and he also used large format cameras because he wanted maximum accuracy with the richest possible display of the detail. In choosing the theme and setting, he used lighting, contrast, shape, and form as tools, always respecting proportionate rules even when he said that art has no rules. Figures 11 and 12 show the fantastic technique in making the landscape with grandeur and solidity in their composition. In figure 12, additionally, the artist's surrealistic view uses lines and contrast in lighting. In figure 13, we can see the moment's drama with the stream's momentum and the tree's falling in the raging waters. Ansel Adams gave another dimension to photographic landscape aesthetics either with his innovative photographic work, his technique, or his writings, and he is a benchmark in photography.

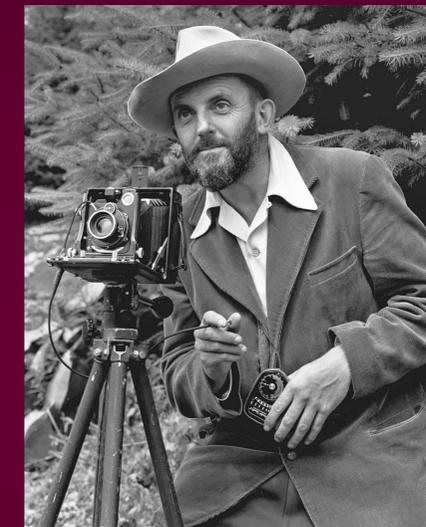


Fig.10: Ansel Adams with his camera and other accessories (tripod, light meter)



Fig.11: Ansel Adams, The Tetons and the Snake River (1942)



Fig. 12: Ansel Adams, Sand Dunes.



Fig.13: Ansel Adams, Rushing water, Merced River

The other photographer we have already discussed is Frederick Boissonnas (1858-1946) (Fig. 14). His action lasted more than 30 years, and his philosophy of the representation of the environment is multifaceted. He has turned to depict the countryside but in relation to humans. He records the life, habits, and structures of the people in absolute harmony with their surroundings. The landscape has an essential role in the scene but needs to be consistently dominant. He traveled to Greece in the early 20th century and convincingly recorded the life, the habits, and the site of the Greek countryside. He used with great mastery the light and selected his themes with his inspiring perception. He had the fortune to conquer first Mount Olympus's peak with his group and simultaneously recorded it with the camera lens (Fig. 3, 17). In the last image, Boissonnas proved a maestro in taking pictures even in difficult lighting conditions such as night. His work, evident with the apparent artistic value, is also a precious source of information for depicting his era and the lives of the people of this period.



Fig. 14: Frederick Boissonnas with his camera

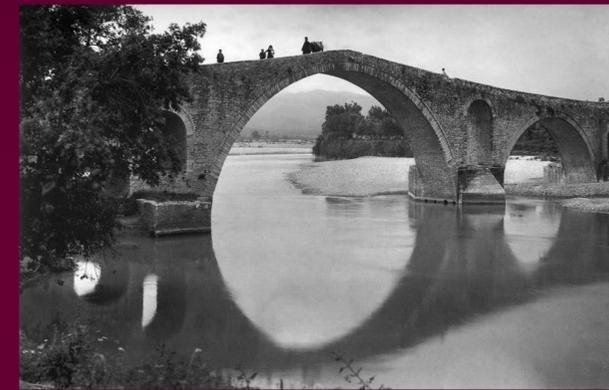


Fig. 15: Frederick Boissonnas, Arta's bridge, 1913



Fig.16: Frederick Boissonnas, Parga, 1913

### The concept of photographic imaging

The difference between photographic imaging with other visual arts focuses on the snapshot of the landscape. Does not contain inherently cumulative information in the creator's mind, nor conceal the almost free intrusiveness of the artist, if the picture has not been a relevant subject. The possibility of intervention is limited to the time of the shooting. It consists in choosing the topic, the angle, the selection of lighting, complying with the rules of aesthetics (thirds, perspective, background), isolation of details, and the selection of the photographic lens. The use of black and white photography usually highlights dramatically or not the issue, playing with the contrast of black and white, while in color reproduction, the colors define the characteristics of the subjects, as well as the timing, if we talk about the landscape. These colors reflect hours, days, and seasons.

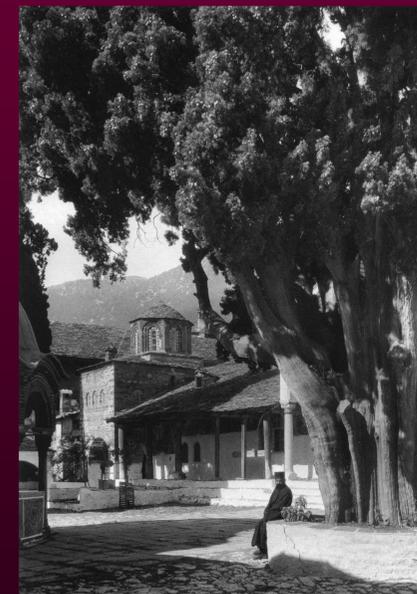


Fig.17:Frederick Boissonnas, Megisti Lara monastery.1929



Fig.18: Frederick Boissonnas, Mt Olympus, camp breeders, 1914

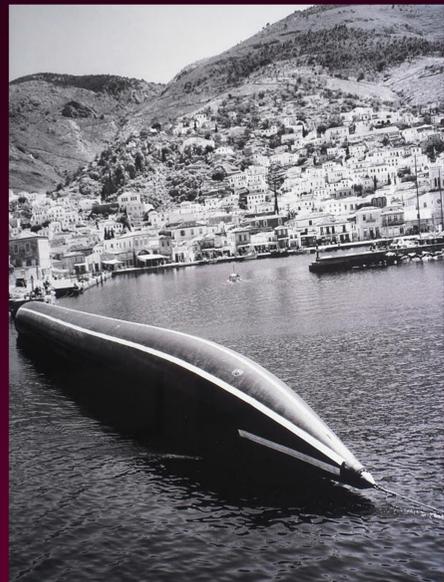


Fig.19: Demetrios Papademos, Greek theme



Fig. 20: D. Papademos, At work

Demetrios Papademos (1918-1994). Egyptian Greek dealt with photography initially amateurish and then systematically as a military photographer in Greek Forces of the Middle East and the press office of the exiled Greek government. His work focuses on landscapes and faces (fig. 19, 20). He has combined his travel passion with photography and worked with British writers. He has traveled to Egypt, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East and recorded places, people, and events (such as the dramatical events of December 1944 in Athens). In 1956 he settled in Athens and, by 1980, literally plowed Greece photographing every corner of the country. The aesthetics of his photography was synthetic of these parameters giving a different dimension to the meaning of the travel landscape.

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#### EPILOGUE

The Chapters Landscape aesthetics and the art of photography are vast and rich, providing the scholar with various items and elements about the landscape's composition and the photographic art's limitless possibilities. As is natural and urban landscape photography, the meeting of an endless source of inspiration contributes to a deeper understanding of the function of human visual perception and interpretation. Photography is another valuable tool in the hands of the landscape architect. The aesthetic philosophy of the landscape in photography follows the rules of the aesthetic perception by the human mind; in photography, the most crucial difference is the significance of the moment. In any visual depiction of a landscape, the inner feeling of the creator is a set of stimuli that are sometimes different than the unique property of the visual stimulus. In photography, only the moment contributes, and what it produces does not give the author another chance. The landscape photographers each time have a different project, with other shooting conditions; the coincidence of the inner impulse to the external picture is more complex, but when it happens is crucial. and the coincidence of the inner impulse to the external picture is more difficult, but when it happens is crucial.

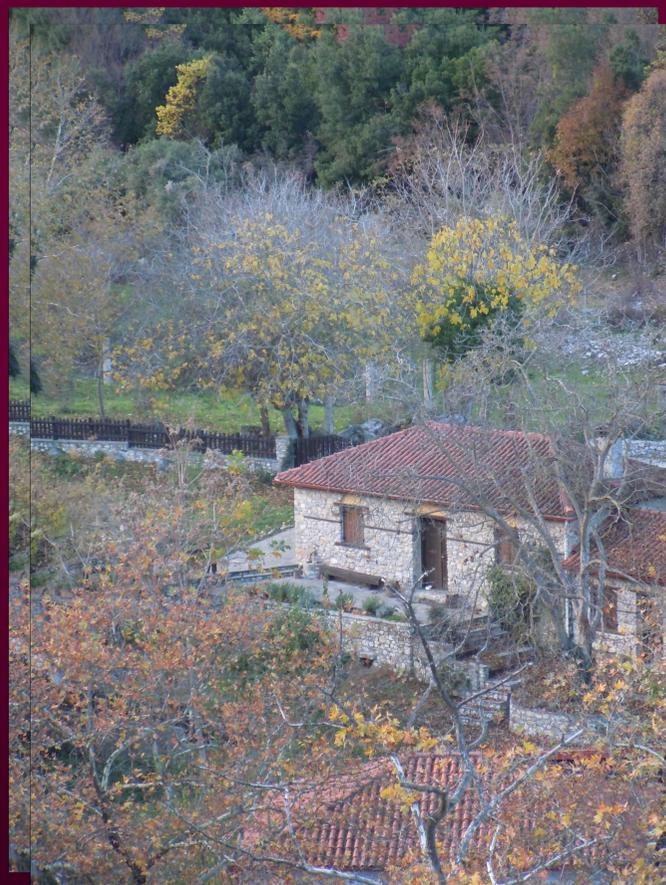


Fig. 21: Enippeus gorge, Litchoron



Fig.22: Nicholas Balanikas, Untitled

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