

Artist Statement

Jane Sartwell

In these images, I aim to present the landscape in abstraction. I intend to use the camera to distort and confuse space, to find the abstract in the concrete. I try to willfully disorient myself when photographing. It is my intention to explore the relationship between land and photograph — I believe their conflicting physics of depth and flatness can transform each other. The act of transposing the depth of the natural world into the flatness of the image plane is troubling and exciting to me. I aim to explore this dissonance of spatial logics in my images. I want to decenter the viewer by refusing and excluding traditional visual anchors of landscape photography. In particular, I avoid the horizon. The horizon tells us where we stand in relation to the scene in front of us. It is how we estimate distance. These estimable distances place us within the familiar proportions of our body and the comfortability of a central perspective. I am interested in how difficult it is to place oneself in an image without a horizon, how it becomes possible to fall in and out of the picture, all the while remaining on the flat surface of the image. The singularity of our vantage point begins to waver and join up with other possible perspectives. Thinking about dissonant spatial logics when photographing often led me to look for substitutes for the horizon line. My attention to these alternative, illogical horizons caused me to lose myself further in the scene: things began to take on a certain distancelessness. The horizon is the seam which distinguishes earth from sky. It forms proportions, angles, and ratios. To me, an artificial horizon line, an imagined horizon, causes this single seam to multiply and disperse into many seams, into threads that could weave together a blanket — flat yet flexible. This blanket wraps itself around the image plane. I want to practice re-seeing the landscape by defamiliarizing myself, in hopes of photographing an imaginary terrain.