

Landscape (of all landscapes)

A “conceptual lit object” of poetry, installation, and varied media
presented in sample images of the artwork and complete text of its booklet



Landscape (of all landscapes), 2019, installation closeup, Minnesota Museum of American Art collection



Landscape (of all landscapes), 2019, installation view, Minnesota Museum of American Art collection



Landscape (of all landscapes) booklet page 1 and case



Landscape (of all landscapes) booklet page 2 and case

This inventory package series gives select museum clients special access to works and artifacts that have fallen in our care as passionate players in collections management and storage, from our warehousing origins to our cutting edge database sampled in this booklet*.

This CD-ROM includes merge-ready records of *Landscape (of all landscapes)* as well as images, scanned files and media add-ons, providing a rare opportunity for our clients' clientele to take home an extraordinary piece of art, history, culture or nature, as is—compromised, but prized. Such are the times.

So enjoy an intimate encounter with an object that may never again see the light of day and display yet all the same lives on as much sheltered as removed through digitization, always in reach if we can but remember where we stood it.

But remember, the database is not the collection, and the collection is not art. As a landscape is not *the* landscape, and landscapes are not nature but distant vistas upon.

**Seen are all populated database pages of featured piece for easy reference and back-up in case of scratching, loss/theft or obsolescence. Text not guaranteed authoritative. Pictures not doing justice. Physical materialization of piece may not be possible, please make do.*

Object ID: 2016.500.01

Object Name: [Blank]

Other Name: landscape (of all landscapes)

Catalog Date: 02/29/2016

Artist: Peter Fillibus

Artist2: Miriam Jr. Fillibus

Artist3: Eskandra Fillibus

Dimensions

[Blank]

Dimension Details

Unknown—only 2/3 of the work has been seen as it's been folded an extraordinary amount of times onto itself with many seams brittle. The folded segments are also not uniform and their lumpiness suggests other smaller folded sections within. Further confounding accurate measurement is that the canvas is pervasively crumpled as if literally topographical, or just extremely rumpled due to age/movement/storage.

Condition

As-is from get-go

General Condition Notes

Stably deteriorating. Canvas determined to be a handmade moist dull sandpaper constituted of powdered quartz, feldspar, and mica from the Canadian shield [likely MN/WI]. Constantly exposed to moisture and sun, its texture and purity sustains a hearty algae between its granules keeping it soft enough to avoid crumbling while protecting it from sanding itself away as ultrafine gooey glaze.

Maintenance Notes

DO NOT spritz. Keep in open air environment exposed to indirect, natural light and currents carrying moisture.

Art

Description

This enormous painting starts past a grove of trees along the entire 80ft left side, at a low gravelly vista overlooking a dark blue mass that appears to move in place and into the distance [due to the rock “glitter” effect of canvas makeup—see Condition]. The mass returns in different hues [multiple lakes/rivers?] throughout the work’s visible unfolded portion when hills give way. As the eye prods it, a bright splotchy green surfaces at its rim [possible first rendering of algae bloom] and a yellowish-purple in its interior [fish or refuse?].

Next, chalky bluffs rise to wide lush plateaus that recede into the folded area, hosting huge flocks [passenger pigeons?] that cover dense reddish-green bushes in a tawny scrawl and farther off hover over an overgrown field of bicolor [tantalizing] corn. Beyond, mountains of ochre bales sit in half-cut acres of top-heavy grain. Splays of trees and sprays of flowers crop up whenever a neglected opening presents itself; where maintained, spots of bovines/canines and dabs of litter. Water/mud bodies

spread wherever there is indented space, accompanied by wild strokes of vegetation. Short waterfalls—or commanding rapids—spill wherever perspective breaks from one distance to another [possible stopgap for vastness]. Further interrupting planes of green are quaint gestures at industry and architecture in gray streaks and hatches and colorful signs of habitation and leisure in valleys and shade. A lone figure

such lone figures. In contrast, baby Cervidae frolic in meadows tucked in ranges and broods of Anatidae congregate in streams winding around cobbled islands in heavy silty olive paint [flood or drought, unknown—many features are similarly undeterminable in scale, taxonomy, condition, or causality: ponds or puddles, logjam or beaver dam, bears or groundhogs, shanties or crates]. Discovered in a recently successfully unfolded segment, orangish-blue structures with a glow like hearths or nuclear energy or radiation, unclear, and speckled with shadows possibly lifeless yet

seemingly not sedentary [heat or motion blur]. All this indeterminacy creates a timeless bucolic air of springing summer, and the visible portions suggest the painting has glosses [literal glaze] of five seasons— spring, summer, fall, winter, and allseason, present less as physical phenomena than tones and textures: muted fuzziness, primary thickness, saturated detritus, clear cutting mono-tonous, and sheer brown excess. This dominates the background; so immense, it eventually turns

vacant, hazy, impressionistic, then abstract, then almost minimalist. In farthest sections, shapes take on variable contour lines as on a relief map [may be roads or fencing]. The horizon, a rust-colored shadow breaking over itself, crosses the painting crookedly fifteen inches from the top of the canvas [possibly painting cutoff mark/actual rust mark] with a swarm of gray extending above it. At the folded end, the mass of blue breaches both, off the canvas, out of sight

conglomeration of natural spaces, capturing an entire region [unspecifiable, Midwest] that is most picturesque, yet also rampantly pastoral, accumulating to a quotidian sublimity, a teeming of nearly repulsive natural fecundity, or human inattention—untendedness—that leaves life unbridled: Orchards bloom in frost, birds sit too high in nests, waters overrun, and every color used is suffused with a honey brown [with a lucid undertone of fluorescent brown] that is not representational (seaweed/leaves/smog) but brown undying [a supreme burnish, as if].

Notes & Legal

Notes

In size, bird's-eye perspective, topographical details, other details, work could be categorized as map but its spatial properties frequently enough inhere to pictorial or abstract renderings of such engrossed attention to/desire for nature that it's narrowly judged landscape that it's not known if it is landscape or
or portrait

This work started as the way-finding “map” of Egyptian (Sinai) travelling salesman/frontiersman Peter Filibus (originally a US Camel Corps driver under Hi Jolly [Haj Ali]). It was drawn on the inside of his covered wagon fabric while working the Sante Fe trail between Missouri and New Mexico in the 1890s. Once settled in Nebraska, the canvas became more complex and aesthetically driven—a “landscape.” It was gessoed onto a massive homemade canvas hung inside a gutted barn for an expansion of huge magnitude spatially and conceptually, with his two daughters assisting while Native Mexican/American wife Mary ran their patent medicine business “Ottoman Follicle” made of Filibus hair which fell out at the root. By 1904 the painting was 60ft x 30ft by one account and turned roadside attraction, adding draw to the production facility of their snake-oil remedy where people could see it created “in full sheerity.” Over time the work “became more” [yet more ambiguous] Midwestern as the Filibus home shifted, south/western features gradually covered over. Early 1900s the family moved up the

Missouri to Sioux City, the canvas for the first time painstakingly folded, rolled, covered with hemp, and returned to the now uncovered wagon as cargo. A picture of

the Fillibuses shows them standing on the painting with beloved camel Jilly [bought from Corps] in the wagon, wheels removed and set on a raft ready to float upriver. After Mary and eldest Mariam (Jr.) died in the 1918 Ruff Disaster, Peter and Eskandra moved to Des Moines and painted murals for booming insurance companies. Peter's dream was to show his painting at the 1933 Chicago World Fair but could not bear to fold it and worked in futility to take it by rail spread over multiple cars. He died in 1932 with it unfinished. Destitute Eskandra traded Jilly to a circus owner for a Model T hoping to take the work to the fair more to sell than display it and go to Mexico to her mother's family. She succeeded somewhat—it was shown only half unfolded, off-site, and purchased cheaply in pesos sight unseen by an unknown Rhode Island insurance tycoon who was told it was a massive Ottoman carpet. After a brief tour it was stored in a warehouse till 1967 next to PastPerfect, to which it was willed during a sudden bankruptcy and related suicide.

(Biography/historical notes from Sotheby's, Sioux City Journal, various articles in file)

Legal Status

2/29/2016: Digitalization of work in progress for circulation to select relevant Midwestern museums under authority of PastPerfect

Provenance

1932 Eskandra Filibus inheritance
1933 bought by unknown RI insurance/oil co
1948 Sioux City Public Art Museum lease
1948-1952 unknown Midwestern museum leases
1953 Saint Paul Art Center lease & back to RI
1967 Willed to PastPerfect art subsidiary
2000 Select museum digital distribution rights

ABOUT LANDSCAPE (OF ALL LANDSCAPES)

This was the product of a collaboration with the Minnesota Museum of American Art, and in most fine meta form became a part of their collection. It came out of a residency in the museum's art storage warehouse using their digital collections database, PastPerfect, to look at landscape paintings as an index of human relationships to the living world. The physical art/lit object presented here shows an entry in that database detailing an unfathomably large and unwieldy landscape painting not fit for museum display and therefore made publicly accessible through CD-ROM media. The booklet is given to show all the fields of information in the entry, and the CD-ROM (missing from all 150 available cases and hence \$1.99 as-is) to contain an interactive version of the record and images of the artwork. The existence of the artwork, the CD-ROM, the database record, the database, the museum, the artist(s), and all else is verifiable and mistakes and inconsistencies are industry-standard.

Thematically, this project explores American wilderness and modernity, and questions of authenticity, identity, and authorship within those themes. It explores the bureaucracy and management of nature (here through the site of the museum and its technologies) and the distances and scrimms they create while also facilitating our desire to capture it, bring it close, commune with it. It also inserts difference into the canon of landscape painting and painters in the figure of the given insider-outsider immigrant peddler/artist and his family, laboring at the margins of the dubious artwork and dubious American project at large.

Landscape (of all landscapes) is part of [AS IS](#), a series of "conceptual lit objects" focusing on different natural-cultural spaces or instances, physically functioning as common chapbooks of language and imagery while also dysfunctioning as ubiquitous outmoded nostalgic media—CDs (and CD-ROMs), tattered liner notes, cracked cases, discs scratched or lost, loved and discarded, used and cheap. The invitation—the dictum—is to "make do;" fill in the gaps and imagine/understand/appreciate what is at hand with what humbly remains. There is an intended correlation to much of contemporary nature we inhabit and cherish in its own deeply compromised condition, demanding the same thorny embrace regardless of how used-up and unwhole—take it or leave it, as-is.