

das  
**SUPERPAPER**

Issue 7 • June 2009 • [www.dassuperpaper.com](http://www.dassuperpaper.com) • Free





**PRODUCER**

Nick Garner

**EDITOR**

Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris  
Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover

**ART DIRECTOR**

Will Loeng

**ONLINE EDITOR**

Paul Courtney

**PRINTING**

Spotpress

**Das SUPERPAPER Issue 7**

© 2009 Authors, artists, contributors  
and Rococo Productions.

All rights reserved. Reproduction  
without permission is prohibited.

**ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES**

contact@rococoproductions.com

**GENERAL ENQUIRIES**

contact@rococoproductions.com

www.rococoproductions.com

www.dassuperpaper.com

**THANKS**

Das Superpaper would  
like to thank all contributing  
writers, artists and galleries  
for their generous support.

**COVER IMAGE**

*Le Radeau de la Méduse (The Raft of the Medusa)*  
1818–1819 Théodore Géricault,  
Musée du Louvre, Paris

<b>Foreword</b>	04
<b>Leah Fraser</b> Interviewed by Lisa Lerkenfeldt	05
<b>Scott Morrison</b> Interviewed by Tom Melick	09
<b>Jordana Maisie</b> Interviewed by Timothy J Maybury	15
<b>Tania Safi</b> Interviewed by Jess Ison	21
<b>Dion Lee</b> Interviewed by Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover	25
<b>Costume Dramas</b> Interviewed by Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover	33
<b>What's On</b>	37

We stand in the hallway of a friend's apartment looking at a postcard, we remember an old book that's crisp pages frame views of Kosciusko, we stand on a hill, on the phone and tell people on other sides of the world what we see – the horizon stretches on, nestled in the panorama, our viewpoint. Between the view, the viewer and those that see or hear of what the viewer saw there's a synthesis formed – one of identity, time and place, changing to suit.

As a word, landscape came to us from the Dutch *landschap* in the 16th Century. At the time the young Dutch Republic, recently seperated from Spain, was enjoying the naturalistic depiction of their countryside – the windmills, rivers, forests, and cloudy skies over sweeping planes, dotted by the odd steeple or ruin or general farmy-life. These early landscapes served two purposes: to celebrate an idea of their world (and who they were to live in that land) and to take them away from the growing urban sprawl that many in the Netherlands found themselves living in.

This issue of Das Superpaper focuses on the Scape as a notion of both landscape and escape: cultural production that takes the viewer to a new vantage point. Perhaps the 'escape' element is like watching the burning town in the rear-view mirror, or, perhaps it's the constant construction, breaking down and reconfiguring of the ideas evident in what lies around us to make them relevant to where we're going.

– Nick Garner





## Scott Morrison – *The Good Hypnotist?*

INTERVIEW  
Tom Melick

Like a good hypnotist knows, a person must be calm, relaxed, and invested in the process in order to be persuaded by suggestions, directions and insinuations. Scott Morrison's video work attempts to use the moving image as a means of persuasion, where the agency of the viewer is not lost, but encouraged and re-directed via the experience of looking. Similarly – to follow our therapy metaphors – we might apply the lesson of psychoanalysis to the image here, in that 'human life is never just life', just like an 'image is never just an image'. Morrison's work is characterized by this approach, where images are reticent and revealing, sticky as well as slippery.

---

**We should alert you that Scott and I are on a literal blind date/interview, having never met up for a conversation despite living in the same city – which should give you an indication of either our reliance on email (turning face-to-face meetings into interface-to-interface screenings) or – and I think this is probably more likely – my questionable organisational skills in 'meeting the deadline'. Yet! In my defence there are various discussion points that emerge from this anonymous dialogue that are actually pertinent to Scott's work, that is if my interpretations of his work hold here. Following this then (and we are in the interview now), how would you describe your work to a possible lover on a blind date?**

I would describe my work as an ode to space(s), a desire to re-create moments that are inconsequential to our everyday lives. In doing such, I aim to present moments that are universally familiar, but new in their presentation. I'm interested in how the natural world can be captured, examined and re-imagined as a new experience. I ideally want to create works that allow for a viewer to find their own narrative and emotive response to the images and sounds they experience. When I work within a gallery space, I design them ideally as an individual experience, I want the viewer to spend their own time and make their own conclusions, as opposed to any immediate direction from my end. I liken my works to instrumental music, there may be no words or narrative within each video, but they have an order and compositional process that determines their structure and flow. So to my possible lover, I'd rather you tell me what you feel, as opposed to me telling you... I know my reasoning and responses towards the work; I'm more interested in yours.

- |• *Ballad for Velizy (Lost Ballad)*
- |• *Oceanechoes*
- //• *Push+shove*







Well I picked up on an interest (or can I say obsession?) with movement, which finds its historical roots at the very beginning of cinema (what theorists like Tom Gunning have labelled *cinema of attractions* in the early 1980s). This established a new way of approaching early cinema and its perceived marriage to the act of storytelling. Rather than diegetic saturation or plot-based film, Gunning argues that it was the *event* of the cinema, the magic of movement, and the heterogeneous 'attractions' that candidly presented themselves to the spectator, and dominated early film.<sup>1</sup>

What emerged from watching your work, such as *oceanechoes* (2007), which pulls the eye back and forth as we see a wheat field in detail and at rapid speed, was this occupation with countering what might be conceived as something rather banal (how exciting can a wheat field be?), with the ability of the camera (and the artist) to push banality into something quite startling. So I think my question is about this approach to the moving image, is there an intentional return to this history? A return or comment on the excitement engendered by the motionless spectator viewing motion?

I think that in approaching my practice, I have invested a great deal of time in the location in which I capture material. They are often places that resonate with me personally, be it as a place to re-gather my thoughts, get away from things, or particular locations that remind me of current trains of thought. I think obsession is an apt word towards my making of works, I'll record for extensive periods of time, in order to gather a collective of responses to my internal thoughts. Nothing is planned apart from a specific locale. Once this has ceased, I'll spend hours upon hours investigating and experimenting with these collected sources within my edit studio. The works begin to shape organically, the piece *oceanechoes* is derived from a 12 second shot - that shot came from about 9 hours of material that was from that location, I had to find the right moment that responded and resonated with me.

I'm never explicitly focusing on the banal per se, more so trying to find and expand moments that allow your internal rhythms to find a harmony with the work as you experience it. I do find, however, that by re-imagining somewhat known experiences (a field of grass for example) it offers an immediate platform or window in which the viewer can engage with the work. When something is perceived as acting outside of its natural order, its significance can start to become something else entirely. I'm interested in the energy of movement, and in a way how this movement, this energy, can be something that can transcend its function or form. I don't see a return to the history you mention so much, although when the topic of inspiration arises, I often find I'm looking back more so than I am looking at contemporary practice.

I find that aspect fascinating; that film not only offers us the ability to expand moments but also to alter those moments in such a way as to make, as you say, something else entirely. It's like David Byrne's idea that scratching your head in front of a few thousand people isn't the same as scratching it in front of your family. Also, I couldn't help think of something like the music of Phillip Glass, where the repetition of a few notes changes the way we hear those notes. It's not the music that necessarily evolves; it's our ear that alters the composition. But we need time for this to happen. I must admit that I needed this time for another of your works, *a field for your thoughts* (2008/09). Here the camera is fixed from above looking down, as we see a field of grass (or is it wheat?) being blown in different directions from an indecisive wind – there is a strange metaphor for collectivity here. As time goes on the image becomes a little like one of those magic eye puzzles where a picture emerges from an abstract pattern, only with this work you start to lose grasp of your eyes and the baggage they carry with them – what emerges is more abstraction. I think there are a few questions in one here...

**Are you interested in the hypnotic image? And what do you think about the time the viewer has to invest in the image (of course the popular criticism of video art in general is that it is an enervating and draining experience). Why ask the audience to be patient? Is the hypnotic image a way of seducing that cantankerous viewer who doesn't have time for what they might sarcastically label 'visual poetics'?**

I'm very interested in the hypnotic image. This is often achieved through the use of repetition within my works.

You mention Phillip Glass, this is perhaps an obvious reference towards my works but a key one. The minimalist school of thought towards composition has been a major influence on my work. Steve Reich in particular is a constant source for me. I like the balance of repetition and evolution of what we are seeing and hearing. *A field for your thoughts* (2008/09) is very indicative of this approach. The piece is a constant repeat of the same shot, but it is layer upon layer at different intervals - I really wanted to develop a piece that had its place, but over the course of time evolved into something very abstract. I wanted it to be something but nothing at the same time. I think that the synergistic properties of seeing and hearing are a big part of that abstraction. The visual development takes a long time in that work, so the audio spectrum is the main force of change in the work. I like your reference to magic eye puzzles, in a way that's how I'd like the work to be treated, the more time you give the work, the more you might find something or notice something new.

Regarding the audience, it's a hard game to play representing our ideas in something that has linear time. Sure the pieces start and they finish, but I'm really trying to make works that have no defined start or end point. I try to give my works presence within the gallery space, and in noticing and engaging with that presence, your own time and willingness to engage will give you something in return. I guess seduction might be a good word for it. I don't want you to be moved by me, I want us to move together.

**This idea of an image being 'something and nothing' might actually hit upon a fundamental aspect of film (and I'm thinking of Roland Barthes' proposition that the photograph is a 'message without a code'), in that in order to make an image we literally have to divide up reality into units and fragments that are both attached and unattached to the original location, place, object and so on. In line with this idea also is the theory that attributes to the image (whether moving or still) a level violence – an image literally *takes* from the world.**

**In most of your films, especially *Ballad for Velizy (lost ballad)* (2008), the environment becomes quite sinister. Here the camera drifts in a field (as though searching for something), moving in and out of focus while the light changes, and as we enter what seems like dusk, we hear what might be described as an orchestra infatuated with tuning their instruments. It seems that this work is close to the horror film genre. And yet, like most of your work, we are left with only the environment devoid of any human figure or presence – a post-human world. Is this a world you want to represent?**

Well, the morning that I captured the material for *Ballad for Velizy* was quite surreal. I had been out filming before the sun rose, and the *oceanechoes* piece had been completed. In a way I was trying to re-capture whatever it was that made *oceanechoes* have both energy and clarity. I was approaching a similar location with a mindset and approach that was trying to replicate a situation or sensibility that I had manufactured within the editing process. I was left with a series of shots that existed in their entirety, the short cutting process wouldn't work, and the images existed and were seductive in their original format. I still needed to own these images, I needed to define my place or at least my own relationship to these images that I didn't quite understand, but felt connected to.

Stan Brakhage describes the camera as the mind's eye, and often how this mind's eye can be the protagonist or guide for whom an audience can better understand the artist's concerns. I love this approach. I wanted to pursue the micro-space in which *oceanechoes* was formed; it acts like a segue between the *echoes* piece and another of my works, *we fell out of this world together* (2007). I was interested in texture for this piece, in both the seen and the heard.

I didn't want to be violent with the images, but I wanted them to fuse together and drift from shot to shot, a dream-like feel for the audience as the piece floats about the locale. The audio had to be dense, and the images hazy. I was trying to keep the reality of the place, but shift it slightly, as if the camera were waking from a dream.

Maybe I was trying to drive my obsession with grass from my mind, drive it out by filming it at 5 in the morning. I'm sorry you saw horror, I think I found a drama, or a romance being defined and formed right there in front of me. Not so much with the place, but with the act of movement and sensation of being the only person in a very vast surround. It was my space it seemed, my moment where the sun rose in that field and it sung to me. It was really quite sublime.

**And what about regret? Is it useful in art (and life)?**

Regret is a funny thing, I used to hold onto it pretty hard, and it informed my approach to making work significantly. But as we get a little older and wiser it becomes more and more irrelevant I think. We can't change the things we've done or could've done better, we can only use these moments to better inform and educate things to come.

*We fell out of this together* was a piece that really helped me realise this. I realised as the work was near completion that it really connected with a relationship breakdown I went through. It was the first and only real process like that I've ever encountered and processed. But I found I wasn't regretting the past, more coming to grips with what was, and what was to be. What could've been was no longer an issue. I think treating regret as perspective is far more useful. The work is still very close to my heart and I hope the girl understands the work, its ebbing and flowing until finally it's letting go of the images it tries so hard in the offset to contain. I think that by creating that work I processed my regret into something positive and useful. So in a way yes, regret is useful in art, although I treat it more as something that informs me personally and creatively as opposed to something to hold onto and focus upon. I guess in a way the art process has assisted with the personal process.

**So regret in life finds its worth in art, which in turn assists with life. It seems we have reached a tentative conclusion perhaps? I think the email-date ends here? Although I feel obliged – in line with regret and after having read Karl Marx's last words, in which he supposedly stated 'last words are for fools who haven't said enough' – to ask if there is a particular question you would like to ask that will remain unanswered here?**

I think in keeping with the words of Karl, and indeed my own approach to work, the resolutions and conclusions are your own. So we'll leave it there. It's been a treat; I've enjoyed myself immensely. Thanks.

---

<sup>1</sup> This fascination with 'theatrical display' finds its pertinence in early experiments with film by Auguste and Louis Lumière, Thomas Edison's The Edison Company, and Georges Méliès. See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde" in Thomas Elsaesser, *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, BFI, London, 1990.

