

R. L. Wilson's seven minute film *Vista* (2015) opens with a series of blank colour frames, followed by a minimal shot of reeds growing out of a grassy bank at the extreme bottom edge of the frame. This eventually turns out to be a view across a river estuary, but is revealed gradually and continues to evolve in front of our eyes. The work is thus very much a film in process, and this fact cuts across the pastoral, often bucolic, character of what we see.

A rustic voice describes strange, portentous weather conditions, and this portentousness rubs off onto the opening of the film. Wilson's voice takes over and at a certain point intones: "This place, where you were brought before you were born". This short, evocative statement typifies the project's preoccupation with the complexity of experience's multiple tenses and modes, with the way in which, even when we are staring at a landscape, as we are here, our minds are, more often than not, churning away with other thoughts, that may or may not be related to what's in front of us: we are rarely 'in the moment'. The diverse modes of thought are presented in a variety of sources; historic accounts, fragments from film soundtracks, personal reminiscences, poetic and descriptive passages that occasionally double what's on screen, directing the viewer to aspects of the image that they may or may not have noticed, all spoken in a variety of Received Pronunciation, regional and historical British accents.

Wilson fills the space with thoughts, but just as we settle into a contemplative mode of watching, we hear closely recorded sounds of movement 'behind the camera' as it were, and are pulled into a reflexive space where the film is being made in front of us. The maker appears in shot, but superimposed on the landscape he's recording, which is no longer a simply revealed view of the landscape, but an image under construction: placid scenes don't just politely appear, they have to be forged. Thus the simultaneous tenses present on the soundtrack are doubled in the image as superimposed, almost paradoxical moments: the film is being made and is already made.

In most movies, we are absorbed, so that the normal experience of having thoughts unrelated (or related) to what we're seeing is obliterated. Wilson re-

inscribes that process of thinking into his film, precisely by doubling what we're seeing with the voice over: 'you stare into the horizon. The sand dunes split the sea... and the sky' he suggests, so we do then look, and in the process become conscious of our own thought processes. Our thoughts coincide with what we are looking at and we are, albeit briefly, in the moment, but self-consciously so.

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