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Picturing landscape : contemporary photography, collective visual memory and the making of place in the Netherlands

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Chapter 2 THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE:

WERKLUST (2015) BY THEO BAART

The first photography project I will discuss is the photobook *Werklust* ('Zest for work') by photographer Theo Baart (b. 1957). The project deals with a vernacular landscape around the village of Hoofddorp in the polder Haarlemmermeer, near the capital city Amsterdam, where the main Dutch airport, Schiphol, is still developing. *Werklust* has a diachronic, documentary approach, as will be elucidated in this chapter.²²⁴

The project embodies work spanning forty years with photographs dating from 1975 until 2015. Baart was born elsewhere in the Netherlands, but grew up in Hoofddorp, having moved to the town in 1960 with his family, following his father's appointment as headmaster of the local primary school.²²⁵ In this project, Baart combines various photographic techniques and styles to highlight different aspects of his subject matter, which he also describes elaborately in accompanying text.

Although Baart has had several museum exhibitions and published various books showcasing aspects of his decades-long work, in this study, I take his recent photobook *Werklust: Biography of a landscape in transition* (2015, hereafter *Werklust*) as object for analysis. The reason for this is not only that, of all Baart's publications, it covers the longest time span, elucidating forty years of development and changes in the Haarlemmermeer. The photobook is also a key expression of Baart's work, with his photographs coherently perceived as a visual essay intertwined with the author's text.²²⁶ The composition of this photobook epitomises what Victor Burgin calls the position of photography in between painting and film.²²⁷ While it borrows the static imagery of painting and the camera from film, it differs from both because the photobook encompasses, again what Burgin calls, a 'parade of tableaux, a parade of decisive moments.' Although the photographs are presented sequentially, the narrative of the photobook is less constraining from that of a film: the viewer can jump to and fro freely. Another difference from both film and painting is that photographs are experienced less as an artistic product than film and paintings, and more as transparent windows on the world, which attract our attention to the subject and not to the image itself.²²⁸ Complementing what Burgin writes with regard to photography in general, I would say that this illusion of transparency is particularly at stake in the case of documentary photography. In the types of photography of the projects by De Ruijter and Kim Boske, which are studied in the next two chapters, the artistic intervention of the photographer is visible to such an extent that the work attracts attention to itself also as art object.

In terms of the photobook *Werklust* as a photographic object, the book is a 24 x 30 cm

²²⁴ Since the 1970's, 'documentary' has been under discussion, as reviewed in the chapter 'Photography's Social Function. The Documentary Legacy' in Gelder/Westgeest 2011, pp. 152-189.

²²⁵ Baart 2015, p. 13

²²⁶ Baart 2015.

²²⁷ Burgin 1982 [1980], pp. 142-143.

²²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 143 and 146.

paperback of 334 pages, containing 174 photographs. The photographs are divided over eight chapters, each with its own theme, and a title and introductory text of one, two or three pages, written by Baart: 'Land. Haarlemmermeer' (34 photos); 'Stad. Hoofddorp|Main city' (20 photos); 'Street. Leeghwaterstraat' (10 photos); 'Ventweg. De Hoek Industrial Estate' (20 photos); 'Canal. Rijsenhout|Aalsmeer' (12 photos); 'Runway. 18R-36-L|Polderbaan' (24 photos); 'Dyke. Office Park' (22 photos); and 'Main Road. Work in Progress' (28 photos). Together with one photograph in the introductory and three in the conclusion, these add up to the total number of 174 photographs. Each chapter starts with the oldest photographs, in black-and-white, followed by the more recent photographs, in colour. Most of the photographs are singularly printed on a spread, sometimes bleeding over the pages, sometimes with a small white border of circa one centimetre. Thirteen spreads in the book feature two to four photographs each, printed with the same height and presented in a horizontal line, next to each other. This creates a serial, filmic effect.

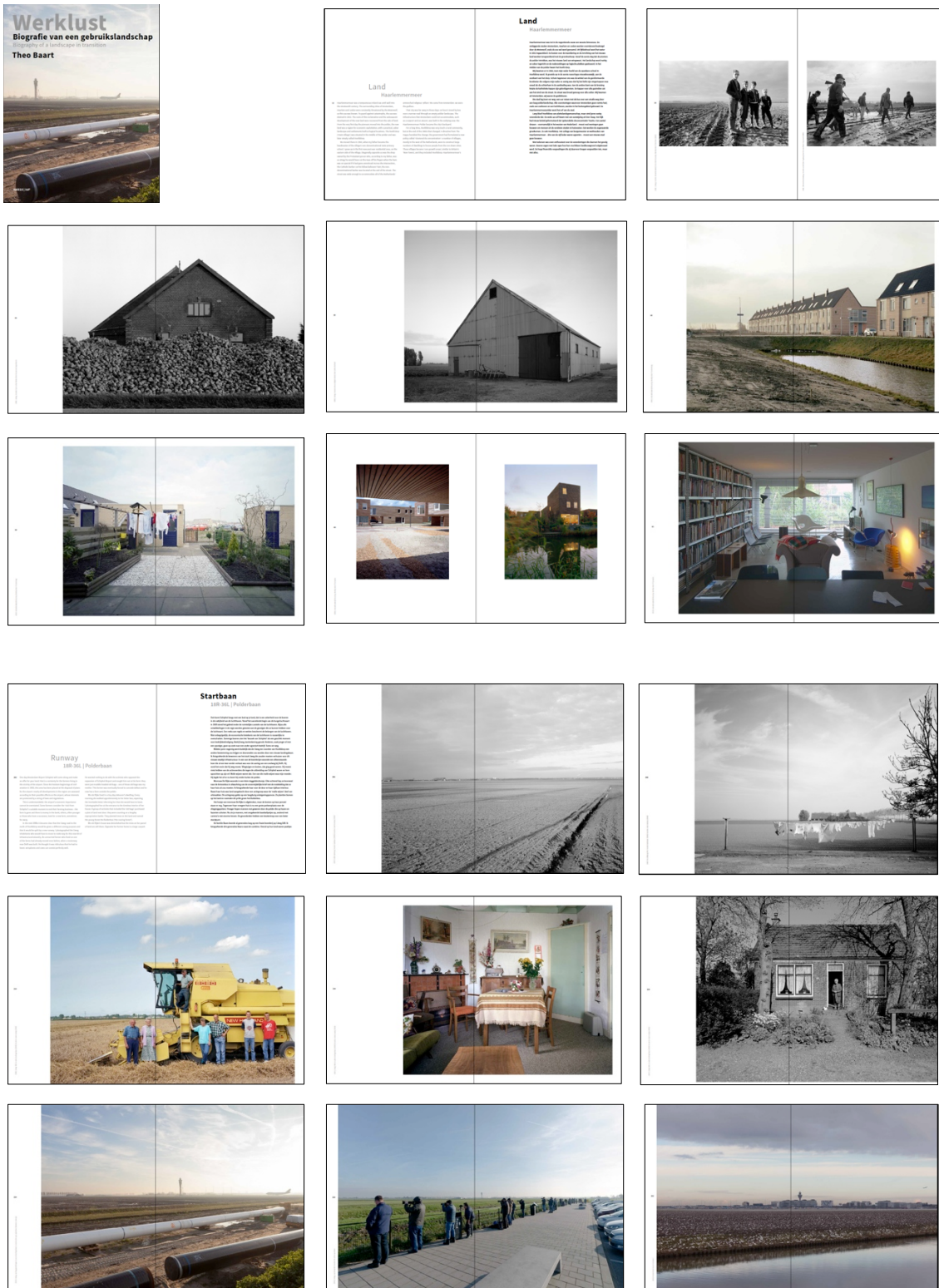


Fig. 2.1 Spreads from the photobook *Werklust* (2015) by Theo Baart.

Werklust is an example of the theory of centrifugal storytelling, which Bazin used to characterise

cinema.²²⁹ It is also apt to discuss this book in the framework of the non-representational or more-than-representational direction within cultural geography, exposed in the book *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (1979), edited by Donald William Meinig (b. 1924), and the later *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (1984) by French American landscape architect John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1909-1996). This direction within cultural geography understands landscape as the result of interaction between human activity and the physical landscape and focuses especially on landscape that has not been designed for formal or aesthetic reasons, but rather for purely instrumental, economic and infrastructural purposes.

Meinig favours a study of what he calls 'ordinary landscapes', which he clarifies as being subject to a 'continuous process of creation and alteration as much or more from the unconscious processes of daily living as from calculated landscape design.'²³⁰ He suggests understanding these as cultural landscapes full of cultural codes that can be 'deciphered'. Thus, by studying the scenic traits as 'diagnostic' features, one can learn about the meaning, cultural and social significance of the ordinary landscapes.²³¹ Jackson also pleads for attention for, in particular, vernacular buildings, which he describes as traditional rural or small-town dwellings, 'the dwelling of the farmer or craftsman or wage earner'.²³² This dwelling, he adds, does not pretend to stylistic sophistication, nor is it political. Indeed, settlements of such dwellings are of a non-political sort: the suburb, the company town, the trailer park, the resort area, and the condominium.²³³ While this architecture can be 'flimsy and undistinguished' and its environments 'without content', Jackson argues for a more 'conscientious' study of them.²³⁴

Although increased environmental regulations mean that no Dutch space or architecture comes into being with as much neglect of formal design as is often the case in American vernacular space, I think Baart's *Werklust* can still be understood as an example of such a study, the spaces he photographs being predominantly designed to serve economics and infrastructure. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the way Baart makes place of the Haarlemmermeer, with each section implementing one of the three steps of the Van den Heuvel method: 'georeferencing', 'geospecific comparison' and 'geogeneric comparison'.

2.1 the Haarlemmermeer near Amsterdam and Schiphol Airport

Taking the first step of this research method, Baart's project *Werklust* is georeferenced to its geographical location. As I pointed out earlier, the main aim of this research intervention of the georeferencing is to relate the photographs to their physical environment, the landscape that photographer has been dealing with. The study of these physical conditions also adds to our understanding of the photographer's professional process and the 'material' he worked with.

²²⁹ See his essay 'Theatre and Cinema II', Bazin 2005 [1971], p. 104

²³⁰ Meinig 1979, p. 6.

²³¹ Ibidem.

²³² Jackson 1984, p. 85.

²³³ Ibidem, p. 86.

²³⁴ Ibidem, p. 87.

The exact georeferencing of the individual photographs has already been executed by the photographer. At the end of the book, a map of the Haarlemmermeer is enclosed, using numbers to indicate the locations from which the photographer took his pictures.²³⁵ Baart took his photographs at different places in the polder and in the communities of Haarlemmermeer, with a concentration in and directly around the central village of Hoofddorp.²³⁶ (Fig. 2.2)



Fig. 2.2 Theo Baart, map by the photographer of Haarlemmermeer, based on PBL/BAG, Atlas Nieuwe Steden, trancity^xvaliz, with the locations where the photographer made his photographs indicated. Source: Baart 2015, pp. 242-243.

The map poses a problem in terms of georeferencing the *Werklust* photography project as a whole: what should be identified as the geographical location of *Werklust*, given that the photographs of the project were taken on several spots within a certain area? The answer to this question is guided by my research question: viz. in the context of this research, I am primarily interested in the depiction of the rural areas *outside* towns. Therefore, I have taken the whole of the Haarlemmermeer polder and not just the town of Hoofddorp as the geographical location. As pointed out earlier, referring to the definitions set out by Hackeloer, the geographical location is informal and referred to through a verbal description of the place.²³⁷ In line with the methodology developed in the EUWATHER project, the geographical name, chosen from the Getty Thesaurus of Geographical Names (TGN), is 'Haarlemmermeer'. This name and

²³⁵ 'Locations', Baart 2015, pp. 342-343.

²³⁶ Baart 2015.

²³⁷ Hackeloer 2014, p. 61.

geographical location has the TGN unique identification code '1112001'.²³⁸



Fig. 2.3 location within the Netherlands (left, with marker) and near Amsterdam (right and below, indicated in red) of the Haarlemmermeer area, where Baart took his photos for *Werklust*. The Haarlemmermeer used to be a large lake, but was drained into a polder in the nineteenth century. Today it is the basis of the village of Hoofddorp and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, amongst others.

Source: Screenshots from Google Maps (<https://maps.google.com>), accessed on 9 March 2017.

Then, as outlined in the first step of georeferencing and inspired by phenomenology, in order to understand the material of the landscape that the photograph consists of and which the photographer has been working with, I need to further inform myself about the physical landscape by studying its ground form, programmatic form and spatial form, as formulated by Steenbergen and Reh - leaving the discussion of the image form to the second step of our method: the geospecific comparison.²³⁹

With respect to ground form, to understand the flat, empty and rationally structured landscape of

²³⁸ This code is found when one, on the home page of the Getty Thesaurus of Geographical Names <http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/tgn/> in the field 'Find Name or ID' looks up 'Haarlemmermeer'.

²³⁹ See my reference to phenomenology and writers Gaston Bachelard and Christian Norberg-Schulz in 1.3.1; Norberg-Schulz 1980 [1979] and Bachelard 1994 [1958]. The four-layer system as formulated by Steenbergen and Reh, 1996, p. 383-385.

the Haarlemmermeer, it is relevant to note that, until the nineteenth century, the Haarlemmermeer was a large lake. The Dutch word 'meer' means 'lake', and 'Haarlem' is a city outside Amsterdam, and the capital of the province of Noord-Holland, so Haarlemmermeer means 'lake of Haarlem' or the 'lake near Haarlem'. The Netherlands is a delta landscape on the border between land and sea. Several important European rivers flow through the landscape and out into the North Sea and the country is rich in water, with numerous rivers, canals, ditches and inland lakes. Centuries ago, this delta country had many more inland waters than today. The dynamics of these inland waters, increased with the dangers of incidental floodings from the sea and rivers, and so draining and keeping water out of their country became an ongoing and important Dutch activity and specialism. As part of this process, land that is reclaimed from the sea is called 'polder'.

Over the years, the polders in the Netherlands have mainly been exploited as agricultural land or as basis for economically profitable ground for infrastructural building. These two purposes are visible in a key photograph from *Werklust*, the image, (printed on page 224) of a field view over the Haarlemmermeer, which is also the cover of the photobook. There is only a faint strip of farmland visible on the left of the horizon, a memory of the land's agricultural function, which have made place for the infrastructural functions, which dominate the foreground. (Fig. 2.4)



Fig. 2.4 Theo Baart, *IJweg*, construction of gas pipelines between runways, 2013, from the series *Werklust* (2015)

Plans for draining the lake were already drawn up in the seventeenth century. A map drawn by Jacob Bartelsz Veris, showing a plan for a massive Haarlemmermeer polder, was published in 1641 under the title 'Provisioneel plan and proposal toward the bediking of the great water lakes'.²⁴⁰ (fig. 2.5)

²⁴⁰ 'Provisioneel concept ontwerp ende voorslach dienende tot de bedykinge van de groote water meeren' (translation MvdH).



Fig. 2.5 Map of the Haarlemmermeer with its surrounding waters and places, published in 1641 after the plan by Jacob Bartelsz Veris, under the title 'Provisional Plan and Proposal for the Bediking of the Great Water Lakes, drawing on parchment, 65 x 97,5 cm, Leiden University Library,

Here, a plan for draining the Haarlemmermeer was laid out. Draining the large lake would be a massive enterprise, involving, amongst others, over 200 windmills to pump out the water. While many lakes in the Netherlands were already being drained in the seventeenth century, this was not the case with the Haarlemmermeer. Not only the complexity of the construction of such a large number of windmills delayed the undertaking, but also rivalry between the cities of Haarlem and Leiden obstructed the project. Leiden hindered progress in fear of losing the income won from fishing the Haarlemmermeer.

The decision to finally execute the plan to drain the Haarlemmermeer was finally taken two centuries later, after a storm in 1836 left both Amsterdam and Leiden threatened by flooding and because steam-driven pumps had been invented by then. Between 1848 and 1852, the Haarlemmermeer was drained and turned into land. A dyke, called the 'Ringdijk', with a length of 59.5 km was constructed around the Haarlemmermeer. Three steam-driven pumping stations pumped the water of the lake into the encircling ring canal ('the Ringvaart'). To keep on draining the polder, a geometric grid of canals was ditched, with a main canal, the 'Hoofdvaart', as a central axis, connecting the northeastern and the southwestern pumping stations.

The resulting landscape is a large, flat and empty space of almost 17,000 hectares. In geological terms, the soil is called 'old sea clay'.²⁴¹ By draining and pumping away the water of the Haarlemmermeer, the clay from the old sea bed came to the surface. This fertile, saline soil from the Haarlemmermeer, mixed with newer sand, is especially suited to floriculture.²⁴² This is a flourishing business in the Haarlemmermeer – the Aalsmeer flower auction is the largest in the world and an economically important business for the Haarlemmermeer. While the borders of the polder are

²⁴¹ 'Nederland. Geologie' ('Netherlands. Geology') in: De Grote Bosatlas, Groningen (Noordhoff) 2015, 54th edition, p. 31.

²⁴² 'Zeekleiafzettingen', in: Geologie van Nederland. Een tijdreis van 500 miljoen jaar ('Geology of the Netherlands. A journey through 500 million years', an academic website edited by Naturalis, museum and research institute for natural history), <http://www.geologievannederland.nl/ondergrond/afzettingen-en-delfstoffen/zeekleiafzettingen>, accessed on 10 March 2017.

organically shaped by the geological conditions of the former lake, the surface of the polder is divided rigidly into a geometrical grid of equidistant alternating roads and canals. It is this artificial character of the drained polder land, that determines the physical shape of the Haarlemmermeer and the ground form.

Moving from the ground form to the programmatic form that Baart encountered when taking his photographs, there are eleven villages inside the ring canal of the Haarlemmermeer, the largest of which is the village of Hoofddorp (the name means 'main village') with 73,446 inhabitants.²⁴³ Hoofddorp is one of the villages designed and built in the newly won land. Hoofddorp, situated right in the middle of the Haarlemmermeer, is the main village in the polder and is the site of the area's administrative authorities.

Keeping the photographic process of Snyder and Allen in mind, I can determine why the photographer chose Hoofddorp to determine his camera position for the photographs for *Werklust*.²⁴⁴ In fact, the choice is easily accounted for, since the project is a biographical one and the area around Hoofddorp is the landscape of Baart's youth.²⁴⁵ The photographer grew up in Hoofddorp and his aim was to document and reflect on the rapid developments that have taken place in this area.

Since its foundation in the nineteenth century, Hoofddorp has experienced enormous growth. This was not only the result of the village being built and becoming the administrative centre of the polder; the main cause of the growth and the building activity that can be seen in Baart's *Werklust*, is the building of Schiphol Airport, after the First World War, in the Haarlemmermeer polder adjacent to Hoofddorp, effectively expanding the existing military airport, which had been established in 1916. The programmatic form of the Haarlemmermeer is strongly determined by the economic activities resulting from the fast-growing Schiphol Amsterdam Airport, the closely connected seaports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam and the vast Aalsmeer Flower Auction on the eastern side of the polder, which trades millions of flowers a day internationally. In this sense, it is a typical example of understanding landscape as wealth, as described by Meinig, who recognised that a landscape's worth is predominantly determined by its market value.²⁴⁶

To illustrate the intensity of the growth of the airport, which, in turn, illuminates the scale of economic activity that we see in Baart's photographs: the annual number of travellers through the airport grew from a few hundreds in 1920 to almost sixty million in 2015, and it is Dutch governmental policy to develop Schiphol Airport into the main air hub for Western Europe.²⁴⁷ While, since the nineteenth century, the Haarlemmermeerpolder has primarily been exploited for agriculture, the area is slowly being taken over by buildings and infrastructure serving or related to the intense traffic to and from

²⁴³ 'Haarlemmermeer in cijfers', <https://haarlemmermeergemeente.nl/onderzoek/haarlemmermeer-cijfers>, accessed on 24 January 2017.

²⁴⁴ Snyder and Allen elaborated on this in Snyder and Allen 1975, p. 145.

²⁴⁵ Baart explicitly refers to this terminology of 'landscape of my youth' in his introduction, Baart 2015, p. 8.

²⁴⁶ 'Landscape as Wealth' is described by Meinig in the essay 'The Beholding Eye. Ten Versions of the Same Scene' in Meinig 1979, pp. 33-48, the section on 'Landscape as Wealth' on pp. 41-42.

²⁴⁷ Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, '2015' in: Corporate website Schiphol, Facts and Figures, <https://www.schiphol.nl/en/schiphol-group/page/facts-and-figures/>, accessed on 25 January 2017.

Schiphol. The area is connected to all parts of the world by queues of airplanes waiting to take off or land. The transformation this has brought about for land, architecture and people is photographed, described and reflected on in the texts Baart has produced for this long-term project.

In *Werklust*, Baart focuses on the way the increasing economic activity around Schiphol shapes the landscape, its buildings and even its people. Considering the landscape of *Werklust* on the level of the spatial form, I note that the area of the Haarlemmermeer where the photographer has been working is generally an empty, flat landscape, geometrically divided by streets and canals. The geometry of the spatial form is dictated by efficiency: the straight shapes of the infrastructure facilitate the optimal and fast transportation of water, goods and people. Or, as Meinig's said when describing the notion of landscape as wealth, it is the landscape of a 'society which is strongly commercial, dynamic, pragmatic, quantitative in its thinking and the very landscape itself [reflects] such characteristics'.²⁴⁸

As said, the photographic activities executed by Baart over the years, took place in and around the central village of Hoofddorp. In addition to the previously mentioned choice of camera position, there is another phase of decision-making in the photographic process, which has also determined the landscaping in *Werklust*, i.e. the editorial process of producing a photobook. With more than forty years of photographing in the Haarlemmermeer, Baart had a large photographic archive at his disposal when preparing *Werklust*. The way he selected and structured photographed locations and scenes for this photobook becomes clear when considering the various chapters. In the chapter 'Land. Haarlemmermeer', he employs the classical way of exploring an area first, capturing an overview of the whole area. Then, in 'Stad. Hoofddorp|Main city', he enters the land itself, heading to the main village, the place at the centre of his youth. From there, the photographic story evolves according to a set of lines that closely follow the programmatic form: 'Street. Leeghwaterstraat' (10 photos) concentrates on living; 'Ventweg. De Hoek Industrial Estate' (20 photos) on industrial zones; 'Canal. Rijsenhout|Aalsmeer' on water infrastructure; 'Runway. 18R-36-L|Polderbaan' on the impact of intensive air transportation; 'Dike. Office Park' on water management; and 'Main Road. Work in Progress' on the A5 motorway.

The ongoing process of georeferencing, the choice of the camera position, is described in the form of questions that Baart writes down for himself. While referring to the character of his photographic work and looking ahead to his future work, he makes clear that this does not emerge solely from his own mind: 'Which spots should you go and photograph now? (The Dutch version of this sentence literally reads 'On which spots should you stand with your camera now?) Where might you expect new developments in the future? How do you visualise proposals presented in policy statements, and by consultative bodies, workshops and symposiums?'²⁴⁹ The positioning of his camera follows the development of the landscape, which is being discussed by policymakers and other users of the land, who together steer this interplay between the ground-, programmatic- and spatial aspects.

²⁴⁸ Meinig 1979, p. 42.

²⁴⁹ Baart 2015, p. 298.

2.2 from water wolf to infrastructure landscape

Having studied the ground, programmatic and spatial form in the first step of georeferencing, I now move towards the image form level. In this step of geospecific comparison, I study what Wells calls the formal and aesthetic conventions of the place by comparing Baart's photographs with earlier visual representations of the same location, the Haarlemmermeer.²⁵⁰ As explained in 1.3.2, this study on the level of Steenbergen and Reh's 'image form' will reveal earlier situations of the physical landscape as well as historic imagery that depicts its importance. In cultural geographers' terms, together these inform us about the biography of the landscape.²⁵¹ Or, referring to Schwartz and Ryan, they inform us about what constituted the geographical imagination of the Haarlemmermeer.²⁵²

Baart himself writes about photographing the biography of the polder landscape, but actually his photobook represents the history of the past forty years, a history that coincides with the life of the photographer and that records the transformation of an agricultural landscape into an infrastructural landscape.²⁵³ The term 'biography' applies to the process of interaction between the photographers' life and the landscape of the Haarlemmermeer. The biography of the Haarlemmermeer goes back much further in history, of course. As pointed out, typical of a polder, prior to the nineteenth century the Haarlemmermeer was a large lake. Not surprisingly, in line with geographical imagination and formal/aesthetic conventions, we find painted waterscapes of the Haarlemmermeer.²⁵⁴ Studying some of these key paintings helps us understand the development and the 'place making' of the area. By comparing these paintings with Baart's photographs, we can clarify the role that *Werklust* plays in the construction of the meaning of the Haarlemmermeer.

Usually, Dutch waterscapes are depicted as quiet, peaceful and pleasant scenes. As explained in 1.2.1, citing research by Stechow and Bakker, in the seventeenth century, the Dutch landscape and its waters appeared in paintings as something peaceful, something to be enjoyed. Until the mid-nineteenth century, paintings or prints depicting the location of Hoofddorp portrayed a waterscape featuring peaceful, everyday activities like fishing, water transport, or, wintertime scenes with people happily ice skating. Seventeenth-century pictures by renowned Dutch landscape painter Jan van Goyen, such as this one, painted in 1656, show these typical activities on the Haarlemmermeer.²⁵⁵ (Fig. 2.6)

²⁵⁰ See my reference to Wells theory of formal and aesthetic conventions in 1.3.2. Wells 2011, p. 10.

²⁵¹ See Marwyn S. Samuels' essay 'The Biography of Landscape' in Meinig 1979, pp. 51-88.

²⁵² See my reference to theory by Schwartz and Ryan of the geographical imagination in 1.3.2. Schwartz and Ryan 2010.

²⁵³ Baart 2015.

²⁵⁴ With 'geographical imagination' I refer to Schwartz and Ryan 2003; for 'formal and aesthetic conventions', see Wells 2010, p. 10.

²⁵⁵ Interestingly, and typical of the high productivity of Van Goyen, he returned to the Haarlemmermeer several times and painted views of the lake and the fishing activities at least three times while experimenting with different compositions. Besides this version of 1656, two comparable paintings from nine and eight years earlier are known from 1647 and 1648 respectively. See <https://rkd.nl/explore/images/2584> and <https://rkd.nl/explore/images/34596>.



Fig. 2.6 Jan van Goyen, *Ships on the Haarlemmermeer*, 1656, oil on panel, 40,5 x 55,5 cm, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, inv./cat.nr SG 1071

Comparing these paintings with Baart's photographs, one also sees the economic aspects of the Haarlemmermeer, like the activities of the fishermen (as mentioned, it was the city of Leiden not wanting to lose its fishing rights and associated revenues that resulted in the drainage of the Haarlemmermeer taking so long). We also see the boats being used for transport. In fact, boats were the main means of transportation in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. The boats in the paintings by Van Goyen are supplanted by cars, buses and airplanes in the photographs by Baart: the slow traffic over the water has been replaced intense road and air transport. The situation of the Haarlemmermeer is determined by its central position in the economically strong western part of the Netherlands, between the coastal area where big rivers flow out into the sea, with big harbours near Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and important cities like Leiden, Delft and Haarlem on the one hand, and the 'hinterland' where much of the trade and traffic was destined on the other. The traffic confirms the central position of the Haarlemmermeer and explains why the Haarlemmermeer continues to be an infrastructural hub. However, the difference, to see from the photos, is that the traffic over the Haarlemmermeer has been intensified and internationalised, something confirmed by the information Baart provides in his texts.

The strategic situation can also be read from a painting by seventeenth-century Dutch naval painter Willem Vroom (1590-1661, fig. 2.7). The artwork reveals how the interests in the Haarlemmermeer, as an important transportation route, could also lead to fierce conflicts. The monumental painting depicts the scene of a frightening battle between the Dutch and the Spanish – we know that the Dutch have the advantage because they were masters of manoeuvring on the water at this time.²⁵⁶ Although the Spanish won the battle and reoccupied Haarlem, the scene on the Haarlemmermeer was visually memorised as an epic one. Vroom painted the events almost sixty years after they occurred, in a painting of almost three metres wide. It hung in the Haarlem town hall for

²⁵⁶ See Rooyendijk 2011 [2009].

several centuries.²⁵⁷ Although the sixteenth-century depiction shows the battle as a fearful scene, in the seventeenth century, danger to the Haarlemmermeer came from another aspect: the water itself.



Fig. 2.7 Hendrik Cornelisz. Vroom, *Naval battle between Dutch and Spanish ships on the Haarlemmermeer on 26 May 1573, city of Haarlem in the background*, 1629 or later [date painting], oil on canvas, 190 × 268 cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-602

The fact that in the seventeenth century the lake and the water it contained became a threat to its surrounding borders and lands, was expressed by key Dutch landscape painter Jacob Isaacksz. van Ruysdael, who painted ships on the Haarlemmermeer in stormy weather. (Fig. 2.8) Ships defying hard winds and turbulent waves are symbolic of hard times in life in general, as witnessed in the 2008 exhibition held in the National Maritime Museum in London and the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam *Turmoil and tranquillity: The sea through the eyes of Dutch and Flemish masters, 1550-1700*.²⁵⁸ Although the waves in the painting by Ruysdael are not of the kind that really devour ships, the stakes in the water in the foreground refer to the power of the water and to human efforts to cope with the turbulent waters.

²⁵⁷ Most famous are the battles of Den Briel (1572), Alkmaar (1573) and Leiden (1574), which were crucial for the final liberation of the Dutch from Spanish occupation.

²⁵⁸ See Gaschke 2008.



Fig. 2.8 Jacob van Ruisdael, *Marine (view of the Haarlemmermeer)*, s.d. [between 1643-1682], oil on canvas, 55 x 65 cm, coll Museum van Schone Kunsten, Brussels, inv. no. 1794.

Further geospecific comparison of depictions of the Haarlemmermeer brings us to another understanding of the Haarlemmermeer, caused by history and its representation and depicted by Baart. The dangers of the water and the struggle against its destructive forces are metaphorically depicted as an epic struggle against nature. In the seventeenth-century map by Jacob Bartelsz Veris, the cartographer drew a grey water wolf battling with the orange Dutch land lion. The struggling beasts express the fight of the Dutch, symbolised by the lion with the colour of the royal House of Orange, against the threats of the water, symbolised by the grey wolf. (Fig. 2.9)²⁵⁹



Fig. 2.9 Detail of map of the Haarlemmermeer with its surrounding waters and places, published in 1641 after the plan by Jacob Bartelsz Veris, under the title 'Provisional Plan and Proposal for the Bediking of the Great Water Lakes'
Drawing on parchment, 65 x 97,5 cm, Leiden University Library

It is a symbolic fight underlining the epic character of the struggle against the water, the Dutch experienced. Although the orange land lion is a popular Dutch symbol, the grey water wolf is a rare

²⁵⁹ For recent explanation and discussion of the cultural meaning and representation of the fight by the Dutch against the water, see the book *Waterwolven* ('Water wolves') by Cordula Rooyendijk, originally published in 2009.

'animalisation', symbolically depicting the danger of bodies of water as an animal or monster. The drawing was inspired by a poem by the Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679), printed next to the map of the Haarlemmermeer, in which he calls the Haarlemmermeer a 'Ravenous Water Wolf'. The drainage of the Haarlemmermeer is connoted with Dutch victoriously conquering the wild water, or, more generally, wild nature, by draining, making new land and raking it over into geometrical shapes. Through this allegorical representation, the economic profits of the activities on the Haarlemmermeer become enriching war booty. This, to speak in the terms used by Schwartz and Ryan in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, is part of the geographical imagination of the landscape that Baart has been working with.

If I follow the line of pictorial representations of the Haarlemmermeer throughout time, the number of examples becomes smaller as I reach the present day. A nineteenth-century example is a painting by Antonie Waldorp (1803-1966) with a contemporary view of the Haarlemmermeer, which was still a lake at that time. (Fig. 2.10)



Fig. 2.10, Antonie Waldorp, *View of the Haarlemmermeer*, s.d. [between 1818-1850], Oil on canvas, 83 x 110 cm, coll. Musée J.P. Pescatore, Luxembourg, inv. no. 371.

The painting has no date, but must have been made between 1818, when the painter started to be active as an artist, and 1850, when the painting was sold at an auction in The Hague, from the private art collection of the Dutch King Willem II.²⁶⁰ Given that the drainage of the Haarlemmermeer took place between 1848 and 1852, it is tempting to think that the painter painted the view of the lake during the drainage. In fact, this seems to be confirmed by a dyke that is already visible on the left and by the

²⁶⁰ The auction was held in 1850 at the auction house De Vries, Roos and Brondgeest in The Hague, the painting was lot. no. 151 and bought by a private person, J.P. Pescatore in Paris. Information of the RKD website <https://rkd.nl/explore/images/11616>, accessed on 9 January 2017.

apparently low water level. The painter may have been inspired to paint the lake in a painterly way, much like his seventeenth-century predecessors, including Jan van Goyen did, because it was about to disappear (a well-known motivation for picture-making). His nostalgia maybe led him to offer the painting to King Willem II. After 1850, the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD) offers no examples of paintings of the landscape of the new polder of the Haarlemmermeer. The area became a new area for economic production (first agricultural, later infrastructural), which apparently inspired no specific pictorial tradition or conventions.

The formal and aesthetic conventions of the Haarlemmermeer are strongly determined by painted waterscapes that depict the economic activity on the lake and the strategic position of the area between the sea, the larger cities of the western coastal part of the Netherlands and the hinterland where trade is directed to. Although Baart's photographs of the Haarlemmermeer polder no longer depict Dutch naval history, these historic marine vistas add to the history and meaning of the place.

The biography of the Haarlemmermeer *as land* starts in the nineteenth century, when the lake was drained and turned into a polder. Fig. 2.11 shows a map of 1860, in which the rigid grid is visible. Considering the painting by Van Ruisdael and the allegorical fight of the lion against the wolf, the draining of the Haarlemmermeer and turning it into a polder, also bears the symbolic meaning that the dangerous water was being defeated: one of the epic victories in the historical struggle of the Dutch against the water. This meaning is constructed by the historical painting tradition; this pictorial convention is the way the 'space' of the Haarlemmermeer is made into 'place'.

The strategic position that the Haarlemmermeer already had as a lake, and which is visually alluded to in the seventeenth-century paintings by Vroom, Van Goyen and Van Ruisdael, is sustained in the current functions of infrastructure made visible in the photographs by Baart. The sharp contrast brought about by the juxtaposition of the photographs of the land with the waterscape paintings is one aspect of the problematisation by Baart that I am interested in. It makes us aware of the total metamorphosis of a waterscape into a landscape and the extreme artificiality of the Dutch landscape. (Fig. 2.11)²⁶¹

²⁶¹ Especially the artificiality was central in Heuvel 2008: *Nature as Artifice*.

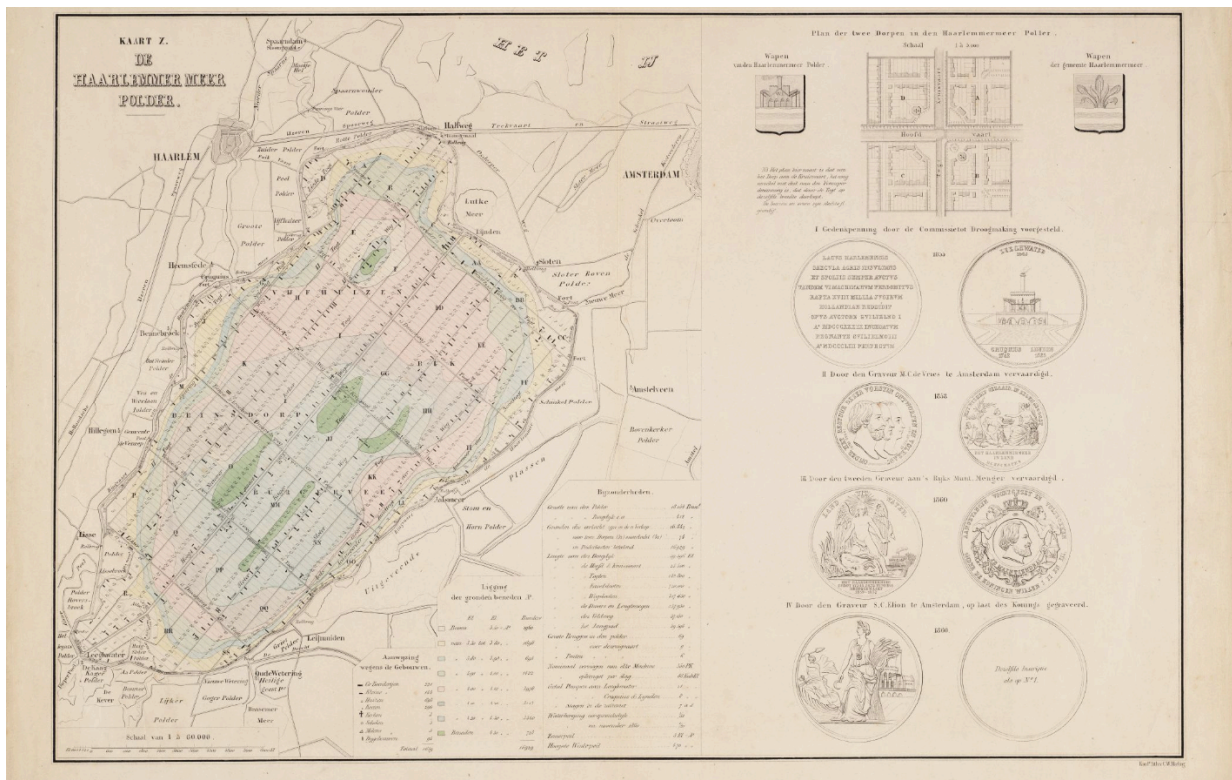


Fig. 2.11 Steendrukkerij C.W. Mieling (active 1839-1868), *Map of the Haarlemmermeer Polder, with the plan of two villages*, 1860, litho, . x . cm, coll. Noord-Hollands Archief, inv. no. NL-HlmNHA_474_C_M00669

Man imposed geometrical order to defeat the wild nature of the ferocious Water Wolf, so poetically described in 1641 by Joost van de Vondel (see fig. 14). The security the polder offers is a relative one, the average altitude of the polder being six metres below sea level, while the North Sea is, at some points, only 7.5 kilometres away.²⁶² Nevertheless, it never stopped the Dutch from situating one of their most intense economic traffic and trading hubs there. The agriculture, which the rectangular patches of land in the polder were first used for, soon made way for the growth of economic activity around Schiphol airport.

Because the polder is relatively new, it has little visual history as a piece of land. Baart was aware of the fact that there was no existing face of the landscape of the Haarlemmermeer.²⁶³ The polder was not meant to be beautiful, or – when harking back to the words of Jackson pointed out at the beginning of this chapter – it does not pretend to stylistic sophistication.²⁶⁴ It was meant to be a raw-material producing area (a 'wingebied' in Dutch), a utilitarian base for intense economic activity: initially

²⁶² The average altitude is mentioned in an information leaflet of the 'Nederlandse Gemalen Stichting' ('Dutch foundation for pumping-stations'), s.d., <http://www.gemalen.nl/download/verhalen/De%20Haarlemmermeerpolder.pdf>, accessed on 9 January 2017. At the northern side of the village of Lisse – where the famous Keukenhof is also situated - the distance between point 52.270153/4.568939 at the Ring Canal around the Haarlemmermeerpolder and the North Sea is 7.4 kilometres, according to the website www.afstandmeten.nl, accessed on 9 January 2017.

²⁶³ Interview with the photographer on 31 May 2006.

²⁶⁴ Jackson 1984, p. 86.

agriculture, later trade, and, in this sense, it is a typical example of what Meinig and Brinckerhoff Jackson call a 'vernacular' or 'ordinary' landscape. As Baart himself puts it in the introduction of *Werklust*, it is 'an infrastructure landscape that services the seaport, the airport and the Aalsmeer Flower Auction'.²⁶⁵

The area is a tightly knit network of lines and knots of intensely used rail-, run-, motor- and waterways, cables and pipelines. The large seaports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam are situated near the southwest and northwest of the Haarlemmermeer respectively. The huge Aalsmeer Flower Auction, lies on the eastern side, auctioning approximately 20 million flowers, the equivalent to 80% of the total global flower trade daily.²⁶⁶ Baart made his first picture for *Werklust* as a teenager, a well-known view from his home window to test a new camera and as a citizen of the Haarlemmermeer he photographed his personal environment with a more than average eagerness for photography. It was only later, that his photography became purposeful in the sense of investigating environment inside authorities' and urban planners' offices. He gave a 'face' to an area that had no visual history and had been designed on drawing tables for instrumental, mainly economical purposes.²⁶⁷

There are some exceptions to this lack of picturing the landscape of the Haarlemmermeer. In 1988, the historical department of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam commissioned two photographers, Dutch photographer Jannes Linders and French photographer André-Pierre Lamoth, to make a series of photographs of the modern Dutch landscape. The explicit aim was not to make a traditional painterly view of old and well-known Dutch landscapes, but to show the face of a changed, new landscape.²⁶⁸ Lamoth took photographs in the Haarlemmermeer, such as *De Haarlemmermeerpolder*, *Hoofddorp*, *Airport and environment* and *The North-Holland Landscape*, between 1988 and 1991.²⁶⁹ However, the fact that French photographer Lamoth was sent to photograph the relatively unknown face of the changed Netherlands, including this new polder, confirms the absence of a pictorial tradition.

Conversely, Linders had already done work in the Haarlemmermeer with respect to Schiphol airport. From 1993 through 1998, Linders, in close collaboration with the architects Benthem Crouwel, photographed extensively the expansion of Schiphol Amsterdam airport.²⁷⁰ The architects published this photographic work in a book entitled *Schiphol Stad* ('Schiphol City', 1998). Although Linders photographed the airport with distance views from the outside and the interior, the airport was perceived by the photographer as an urban space through which human beings move and find their way. Linders' photographs emphasise the modernity and internationalism of the intelligently designed airport. This project is more a kind of architecture or urban photography than it is a vision of the green landscape of the Haarlemmermeer. It visualises the experience of the airport from within, but not the experience of

²⁶⁵ Baart 2015, p. 6.

²⁶⁶ Annual report 2015 of Royal Flora Holland, the corporate name of the Aalsmeer Flower Auction, <https://www.royalfloraholland.com/en/about-floraholland/media-centre/annual-report-2015/> (accessed on 24 January 2017); Baart 2015, p. 178.

²⁶⁷ Baart 2015, pp. 116-117, showing the Leegwaterstraat in Hoofddorp in 1975.

²⁶⁸ Lamoth 1990.

²⁶⁹ Rijksmuseum inv. nos. NG-1991-3-6, NG-1991-3-24, NG-1991-3-27 and NG-1991-3-31.

²⁷⁰ Rooy 1998.

the surrounding landscape from the perspective of its inhabitants or visitors.²⁷¹

The georeferencing of Baart's *Werklust* project and the pictorial tradition of the Haarlemmermeer – when it was still a lake – teaches us that from the Golden Age until the nineteenth century it has been depicted as a waterscape and a scene of liberation, fishery or leisure, which ended after the work by Waldorp when the lake was drained. This information is important for understanding the nouveauté and the short life of the Haarlemmermeer as landscape. Few pictures exist of the new land of the Haarlemmermeerpolder later than the nineteenth century. Neither the RKD, nor the image base of the Rijksmuseum, for example, hold significant paintings or other artworks depicting the Haarlemmermeer. The Rijksmuseum Commission of 1988 rather confirms this. The pictures that do exist are commissioned by parties or institutions that operate in the area, like the pictures Linders made of Schiphol. The image base of The Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment can be mentioned in this context. It contains photographs from the 1940s documenting the works undertaken by this Ministry with respect to the drainage and later use of the polder. (Fig. 2.12)



Fig. 2.12 s.n. (Commissioned by Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment), *Wheat fields in the Haarlemmermeer near the Rijksweg*, 1946, imagebase Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, inv. no. 472637, <https://beeldbank.rws.nl/MediaObject/Details/472637>

It is difficult to group the pictures from the image base of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment into any artistic pictorial tradition of the place. These images lived a life as archival pictures documenting the Ministry's work, sometimes illustrating reports. However, the Ministry's image base is very accessible, primarily because the images are not, on the whole, seen as iconic artworks, and so are collectively shared by a larger public.²⁷² The work by Baart can be considered the first artistic effort to produce images of the area that make a serious contribution to the face of the geographical entity of

²⁷¹ Therefore, it is not within the scope of this PhD research.

²⁷² The url of the image base of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment is <http://beeldbank.rws.nl>.

the Haarlemmermeer, and more specifically the area in and around Hoofddorp. Baart's photographs have reached a wide audience via exhibitions in popular museums and the accompanying publications.

In 1999, Baart published his photographs of the Haarlemmermeer and the environs of Hoofddorp in the photobook *Bouwlust* ('Zest for building').²⁷³ After he moved to live in one of the vast newly built residential areas, he continued photographing from the position of a committed observer. Thus, his ongoing photographic project of the Haarlemmermeer is a visual study of 'ordinary' and 'vernacular' landscape, as advocated by Meinig in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (1979) and Jackson in *The Discovery of the Vernacular Landscape* (1984). Baart not only studies the landscape as an outsider, but as an inside observer, living in and experiencing the area as an inhabitant himself, a perspective he reiterated in his 2008 photobook *Eiland 7*.

Baart describes the *Werklust* project as a 'biography of a landscape in transition'.²⁷⁴ In fact, as we have learned, the biography of the Haarlemmermeer goes back much earlier, starting centuries ago when it was still water. It incorporates the naval history of this strategically situated lake, with a tradition of fishing, water transportation and battles to defend these interests. Moreover, the notion of the heroic victory by the Dutch over the dangers of the water of the Haarlemmermeer, symbolised by the water wolf, add to this place making. Nevertheless, the relevance of *Werklust* by Baart is that he was the first to give a face and a visual history to the Haarlemmermeer as land. His photography is also a visual expression of his personal interaction with the land and the area.

To give an area a visual history, is to render it with importance, with value, with identity. It is a manifestation of what Tuan describes as the making of place as the making of a pause in our movement through space and the activities that life consists of. Moreover, it is to grow attached to this place. Baart confirms that in the process of making and presenting (parts of) his photography project of the Haarlemmermeer, he experiences that he is making a difference in terms of encouraging interest in the visual history of the area around Hoofddorp - in encouraging interest in its history. Users and inhabitants of the Haarlemmermeer do not experience this value of the place. They are not interested in its identity as a landscape, in its history. While Baart's photography project is appreciated because of its photographic approach by an audience of aficionados in photography museums in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and abroad, there is no such interest in the area where the photographs were actually made. The exhibition *Werklust* in the local gallery in Hoofddorp attracted hardly any visitors and the local newspaper did not want to write about it.²⁷⁵ According to the photographer, this is because people in the Haarlemmermeer are there to earn their money, to make their living: they appreciate the landscape for its utilitarian possibilities, not for its identity, its value in terms of scenic beauty or landscape heritage.

The importance of Baart's photographic work in the Haarlemmermeer and especially around

²⁷³ Baart 1999. The photographer describes the development and relations of his different photographic projects in the introduction of Baart 2015, pp. 4-9.

²⁷⁴ This English subtitle of the book, 'Biography of a landscape in transition' differs from the Dutch subtitle, 'Biografie van een gebruikslandschap', which literally means 'Biography of a vernacular landscape'. Both subtitles actually emphasise different aspects of the *Werklust* project.

²⁷⁵ Conversation with the photographer on 27 March 2017.

Hoofddorp, is that it can be considered as the first and only serious attempt to make a visual history of the Haarlemmermeer since it has become land. Baart's earliest works, from the 1970s and 1980s, show the agricultural use of the polder in black and white – a period the photographer calls 'the phase of the potato fields'.²⁷⁶ From the 1990s, he started working in colour as well.²⁷⁷ His latest work is only colour photography, concentrating on the urbanisation and exploitation of the infrastructure of the Haarlemmermeer, a period that Baart calls 'the phase of the asphalt'.²⁷⁸ In the following section, I examine *how* the photographer does this. The notion of 'biography', as we will see, is an important clue to understanding the way Baart gives content and direction to his visual history of the area; in other words, to understanding how Baart makes place of the Haarlemmermeer through his photography.

2.3 diachronic, autobiographical, documentary research

As explained in 1.3.3, after georeferencing and the geospecific comparison, geogeneric comparison may provide insight into the artistic intervention by Baart and the way this photography makes place of the Haarlemmermeer. On the basis of the geospecific comparison, I compared his photographs with earlier pictures, mainly paintings, of exactly the same places in the Haarlemmermeer. In this next step of geogeneric comparison, I will reconstruct Baart's photographic process and intervention as a landscaping process. In order to do so, I compare Baart's photographs of the Haarlemmermeer polder to other pictures of the same landscape type but located elsewhere.

According to the map of the CLO (Dutch landscape types of the Environmental Data Compendium), which I referred to in 1.2.2 (see page 39), the Haarlemmermeer is of the landscape type 'Reclaimed land'. According to the scheme of concordance in 1.3.3, the physical landscape type of 'Reclaimed land' corresponds with Stechow's pictorial landscape type of both 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals' (see p. 35). Given this, do Baart's photographs look like the Country Roads and Rivers and Canals we know from art history?

The pictorial conventions of 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals' have their own rich image tradition in seventeenth- and nineteenth-century painting.²⁷⁹ How do Baart's photographs of the 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals' and the Haarlemmermeer relate to imagery from this tradition? The famous paintings by Pieter Brueghel are often pointed at as being the earliest real landscape paintings, i.e. paintings in which the landscape (and not what happens in it) is the main subject. (Fig. 2.13)

²⁷⁶ Baart 2015, p. 8.

²⁷⁷ His projects *Bouwlust*, *Snelweg* (together with Cary Markerink) and *Eiland 7* demonstrate the same multifaceted technique.

²⁷⁸ He applied this development from rural landscape and culture, photographed in black and white, to urban and infrastructure landscape photographed in colour within every chapter of his book. Baart 2015, p. 8.

²⁷⁹ See for a discussion of an example of an illumination by Jan van Eyck from as early as 1420-1425, with (for the time) very innovative scenic, optical and atmospheric effects in a representation of a place at the Dutch dunes and North Sea coast in the Turin-Milan Book of Hours: Bakker 2004, pp. 27-28.



Fig. 2.13 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The hunters in the snow*, 1565, oil on panel, 117 x 162 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

They are certainly close to this tradition and full of the connotations of showing God's works throughout the different seasons of the year. Whereas in much of the Western world, the times of the year were illuminated and referred to with images of biblical scenes, in Flemish art the habit developed of exemplifying the seasons through profane pictures of landscapes, in which humans were to be seen taking part in everyday earthly activities that were typical for that time of the year.²⁸⁰ (Fig. 2.14)



Fig. 2.14. Workshop of Simon Bening (Bruges), 'September: Ploughing, sowing and harrowing; and playing with marbles and stilts', page from the illuminated Book of Hours with the popular name 'The Golf Book' (because another page also depicts a game that resembles golf), published ca. 1520-1530 in Bruges, coll. British Library, inv. no. Add MS 24098.

²⁸⁰ Willemsen 2005.

Clearly, none of these references to the seasons are at stake in *Werklust*, since the division of his book in chapters is: 'Land', 'City', 'Street', 'Service Road', 'Canal', 'Runway', 'Dike', 'Main Road'. There is also almost no reference to religion in Baart's accompanying text. That said, some of the early photographs of the old, agricultural land of the Haarlemmermeer are reminiscent of Brueghels' famous winter painting and allude to the cold time of the year when hunting is popular. (Fig. 2.15)



Fig. 2.15 Theo Baart, Bennebroekerweg, location southern ring road, 1999

However, other pictures showing activities typical for a time of the year are hard to find - an understandable effect of globalisation, which disconnects these building, trading, industrial and transportational activities from temporality and locality. The profane character of Baart's pictures is more in tandem with the tradition of the vernacular landscape. So far, the term vernacular landscape has been clarified in this chapter with reference to the writings of Meinig and Jackson, and is noted as having a specific tradition in Dutch print making and painting. As pointed out in 1.2.1 on art historical theories and methods of landscape, Stechow argues that the history of the vernacular landscape starts with Dutch prints by Claes Jansz Visscher, for example his *Road to Leiden*. (Fig. 2.16) The two versions of the print almost demonstrate the transition from the medieval landscape in the upper picture, depicting seasonal activities, towards the second picture in which the focus has shifted completely onto the physical landscape itself.





Fig. 2.16 Claes Jansz. Visscher, *The Road to Leiden*, 1607, Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

As Stechow puts it: 'In a most suggestive manner, the foreground has here been left empty, giving the onlooker the impression of complete casualness, of yielding to nature without 'compositional interference'; and there is not a single human to be seen.'²⁸¹

Strikingly, this remark 'no single human to be seen' was exactly the surprised comment on and title of an article in the Dutch press when landscape photography was put on the public menu again through an exhibition on the Dutch landscape in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, featuring works by Linders and Lamoth.²⁸² I position Baart's documentary photographs in this tradition of casual, vernacular landscape pictures.

As previously mentioned, seventeenth-century landscapes were merely meant to please (1.2.1). Stechow further typifies the 'plaisantery' of the landscape imagery:

It is the epitome of landscape 'naer het leven'; the time when the rendering of landscape had to be justified by way of biblical, mythological or allegorical meanings seems a matter of irrevocable past. The optical truth is now 'plaisant' in and of itself.²⁸³

In the volume *Nederland naar 't leven: Landschapsprenten uit de Gouden Eeuw* ('The Netherlands from life: Landscape prints from the Golden Age', 1995), about Dutch graphic landscape art from the Golden Age, art historian Huigen Leeftang points out that the real morality-free landscapes stem from the topographical tradition and present landscape as something pleasant.²⁸⁴ This pleasant aspect of landscape is actually present on two different levels. First, the piece of land that was depicted was nice to *be in*. The viewer of the image was often manipulated into this feeling through the depiction of small human figures in the landscape, who were absorbed in recreational acts. Secondly, the

²⁸¹ Stechow 1968 [1966], p. 18.

²⁸² The title of the article by journalist Ursula den Tex was 'Geen mens te zien' ('No human to be seen'). It was published in the news weekly: *Vrij Nederland* which was a key platform for ambitious photographers. From the 1970s through the 1990s it was the hotspot for photographer to have their photographs published and discussed. Tex 1990, pp. 46-51. See also Lamoth 1990.

²⁸³ Stechow 1968 [1966], p. 18.

²⁸⁴ Leeftang in Bakker 1995, p. 29.

resulting image of the depicted land had to be pleasant to *look at*.²⁸⁵ It can be read on a title page from the early seventeenth century, also engraved by Claes Jansz Visscher on a series of landscape prints by Jan van de Velde II. The title on this page says: 'Playsant landscapes and amusing vistas, drawn after nature and engraved into copper'.²⁸⁶

Do the landscapes photographed by Baart fit into these formal conventions of country roads? Comparing two pictures provides an answer.



Fig. 2.17 a-b Claes Jansz. Visscher, *The Road to Leiden*, 1607, Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam



Theo Baart, *IJweg, construction gas pipelines between runways*, 2013, from the series *Werklust* (2015)

A comparison with the earlier mentioned key picture of the IJweg with the construction of gas pipelines between the airport runways (see fig. 2.17b) demonstrates similarities and differences – in addition to the fact that one is a black-and-white print and the other an image in colour, which I omit from this analysis. The compositions of the images are comparable, with the horizon more or less in the middle, the foreground determined by the lines of the traces of wheels from means of transportation, the upper part of the image determined by the shape of clouds and the light, emphasising the vanishing point on the horizon. In this respect, Baart's photograph does not differ much from the formal conventions of Dutch landscape imagery.

However, the difference between the images is revealed when I compare the visualised subject matter. The seventeenth-century print shows houses and elements that are meant for human use, trees and bushes providing protection against the wind and the organic forms of which, together with the curved lines of the road, render the view of the road and village with a impression of a place that is fit for human scale and needs. The landscape of the Haarlemmermeer polder does show traces of human activity, but, at the same time, is very empty, with no trees or objects to protect humans from the elements and no object or building that seems to be fit for human use or access. The human-unfriendly character is emphasised by the rigid geometricality of the landscape in Baart's photo and the airplane on a runway in the background, which suggests the area surrounding it might be forbidden and dangerous for people. We know there are people in the airplane in the background, although at the same time we know they are unreachable from the place where we are now. The air traffic control tower

²⁸⁵ For a diachronic selection of artworks on leisure in Dutch waterscapes from around 1600 until today, see Heuvel 2016.

²⁸⁶ 'Playsante Lantschappen ende vermakelycke Gesichten, na t' leven geteykent en in t' koper gemaect.' The series of prints is part of the collection of prints and drawings from Leiden University Library.

weirdly shows some human traits, but resembles more of a robot or alien-like creature. Also, the foreground shows no traces of people or footsteps of human beings, only tracks of tyres of tractors, excavators or other types of large vehicles for professional motorised activity. The space in Baart's photograph is not 'plaisant', but rather ominous to dwell in. This effect is underlined by the signs on the pipelines, which are incomprehensible because they belong to a system that is not revealed to the viewer. The environment appears altogether uncomfortable and alienating, if not downright hostile to humans. The contrast could not be bigger between the cosiness of the seventeenth-century country road to Leiden that is meant for humans and the huge present-day runways in the photograph by Baart, which are meant not for mortals, but for large professional motorised vehicles, airplanes and gas.

Baart's photographs also differ from the pictorial conventions of this landscape type of 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals' in terms of style and aesthetics. This becomes clear if I compare his photographs to landscape paintings of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the heyday of the landscape genre that grew out of the printing tradition of Claes Jansz. Visscher, Jan van de Velde and others. Within Stechow's categories of 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals', there is even a type of landscape painting specifically of the polder. Because the landscape of the Haarlemmermeer is a polder, there are paintings especially suitable for comparison.

Landscape painter Jan van Goyen provides us with a particularly interesting picture. In 1644, he made a painting of the landscape type 'reclaimed land', with the generic title "polder landscape". (Fig. 2.18)



Fig. 2.18 Jan van Goyen, *Polder landscape*, 1644
oil on panel, 22 x 33,2 cm, coll. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-3249

In this painting, land and water alternate harmoniously in a flat landscape with the windmills, used for draining, and boats that calmly float on the straight canals. The land is depicted as horizontal scenery in the open composition, the feature Wölfflin uses to typify Ruysdael's *View of Haarlem*. As Van Mander instructed, the ground plan is constructed of several plans. Van Mander's instructions are also met because most of the painting's surface is used for the cloudy sky and the chiaroscuro that is crucial to the composition. Van Goyen's rigid and horizontal open composition is remarkably distinct (and would have been considered so even by Van Goyen's own followers), much as Ruysdael's view of Haarlem differed from other paintings of the time (Fig. 2.19). The use of curved lines, grouping of subjects and

the chiaroscuro in the clouds produce more central compositions.

The polders of the paintings of the seventeenth century show an agreeable land with small-scale everyday human activity. People busy with farming or transportation, sometimes taking a rest while overlooking the land or immersed in angling. A few farms, barns, windmills (for draining the land or grinding wheat) and church towers are the vertical accents in the flat, peaceful landscape of the polder.



Fig. 2.19 Circle of Jan van Goyen, *Extensive polder landscape with houses and windmills*, between 1640 and 1660
oil on panel, 40,9 x 55,5 cm, private collection, RKD images <https://rkd.nl/explore/images/738>

In the nineteenth century, a specific pictorial tradition of polders emerged, elaborating on this polder vision of the seventeenth century. A need to profile a national identity and sense of belonging with a 'typical Dutch' landscape, is said to have inspired painters of the Hague School of painting to profile the polder.²⁸⁷ Especially the painters Willem Roelofs (fig. 2.20), Paul Gabriël and Jan-Hendrik Weissenbruch made waterscapes featuring meadows with cows, windmills and cloudy skies in compositions that took seventeenth-century landscape paintings, like those by Van Goyen, and developed them into more poetic versions, adding drama by brightening and intensifying colours, blurring contours and making more extreme contrasts between dark and light.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ For recent studies of the Hague School of painting in which this nineteenth-century longing for a 'typical Dutch' landscape is elaborated, see: Reynaerts 2008 and Bekke-Proost 2015.

²⁸⁸ See for a discussion on the continuities in and differences between seventeenth and nineteenth century Dutch landscape painting also the texts accompanying the exhibition *Blue Bliss: The Art of Enjoying Water*, Heuvel 2016, chapters 'Dutch common sense' (pp. 18-71) and 'Poetry' (pp. 80-129) respectively.



Fig. 2.20 Willem Roelofs, *Dutch Polder Landscape near Abcoude*, s.d. [mid nineteenth century] oil on canvas, 80 x 108 cm, coll. Gemeentemuseum Den Haag (legacy of mr and mrs Philips-van der Willigen), inv. no. 0332454

Compared to the style of these paintings from Stechow's categories 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals', it becomes clear that, even when Baart simultaneously includes land and water in his photographs, showing the character of the water-surrounded reclaimed land, as in *Beukenhorst-West* (1991) or *Lijnden-Hoofdweg* (1997), he remained distant from this painterly polder vision.²⁸⁹ Although there are similarities in composition and ordonnance that link a documentary photograph to a seventeenth-century landscape painting, what strikes the eye in Baart's pictures is the rigidity in the borders of the land, the architecture of offices and the geometrical rhythm in which trees are planted. (Figs. 2.21, 2.22) The small-scale activity of people in the landscape of the seventeenth-century paintings contrasts with the absence of people in the photographs by Baart. The sole figure in Baart's photos is a lonely cyclist in the *Lijnden-Hoofdweg* picture, who does not seem to feel at home, in contrast to the fishermen in the painting of Van Goyen's followers. The cyclist moves at speed, which is emphasised by the blurring. This 'moving through' is associated with alienation, calling to mind Yi-Fu Tuan, for whom space is somewhere we move through while a place we feel at home is somewhere we pause.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Baart 2015, pp. 260-261 and pp. 302-303 respectively.

²⁹⁰ Tuan 1977, p. 6; see also paragraph 1.2.2 of this dissertation.



Fig. 2.21 Theo Baart, *Beukenhorst-West*, 1991, from the series *Werklust* (2015)



Fig. 2.22 Theo Baart, *Lijnden-Hoofdweg*, 1997, from the series *Werklust* (2015)

The painterly vision of Dutch 'Country Roads' is not confined to painting, photographers also remediated it into photography. Boom researched how, after seeing landscape paintings from the Hague School of painting, foreign photographers used their cameras to remediate this painterly image into the new popular medium of photography.²⁹¹ In the nineteenth century, foreign photographers James Craig Annan, Alfred Stieglitz and Heinrich Kühn had already made pictorialist landscape photographs in the Netherlands, much in the spirit of the Hague School of painting and long before Dutch photographers like Henri Berssenbrugge, Berend Zweers and Bernard Eilers started to do so at the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁹²

That the pictorial image is persistent in the twentieth century, is illustrated in the photographically interesting and popular photobooks such as *De Schoonheid van ons Land* ('The

²⁹¹ Boom 2012.

²⁹² Heuvel 2015, for the study of the foreign pictorialists working in the Netherlands at the end of the nineteenth century most research has been done by Mattie Boom, see Boom 2012.

Beauty of our country'). Such photobooks were published from the Second World War until the beginning of the 1960s by the Amsterdam publisher Contact. Although modernism had done away with traditional landscape, ever since, internationally, New Photography had rejected the pictorialist landscape, when picturing reclaimed land, as in the chapter 'Polder' in the volume *Landscape*, the publisher of this book commissioned the Dutch pictorialist J.G. van Agtmaal to photograph this vision of the polder in the style of the Hague School of painting. (Fig. 2.23)

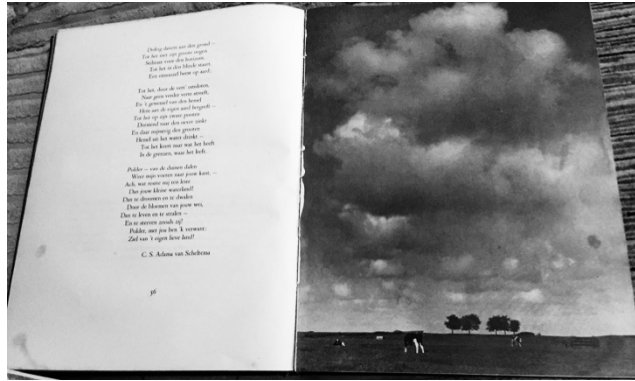


Fig. 2.23 J.G. van Agtmaal, spread from the chapter 'Polder' of *De schoonheid van ons land* ('The beauty of our country'), Amsterdam (Contact) 1941

Even in the twenty-first century, art photographers pursue the painterly image of the Dutch 'Country Roads' and 'Rivers and Canals' of the polder land. Photographer Han Singels is an example. He drives around on his moped in the areas around Amsterdam and in South Holland where the landscape painters of the seventeenth century and The Hague School must have dwelled. With great effort, thoroughness and patience (waiting for the right combination of weather and light conditions and 'ordonnance' of cows, for example) he uses analogue, straight photography (without any digital manipulation) to emulate the poetic paintings of canals, grass meadows and cows as accurately as possible.²⁹³

The fact that the formal and aesthetic convention, stemming from historical landscape painting of 'Country Roads', 'Rivers and Canals' and the polder in particular, is still appealing to a large public of amateur photographers, becomes clear after a Google image search for 'Dutch polder'. The result is numerous photographs by tourists, showing the formula of meadows, canals, cows, cloudy skies, sometimes with a windmill or tulip field as a finishing touch, turning the objects and compositions of landscape painting into clichés. (Fig. 2.24)

²⁹³ In 2012, the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag organised an exhibition in which Singels photographs' hung next to paintings of the Dutch polder land by the Hague School painter Willem Maris.



Fig. 2.24 Gijs de Kruijff, *Dutch polder with typical Dutch cows near De Meije in South-Holland, The Netherlands, 12-8-2008*, uploaded amateur photograph on tourists' website http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Netherlands/South/Zuid_Holland/de_Meije/photo893086.htm, accessed on January 24, 2017.

A comparison with the essential polder picture by Baart (Fig. 2.17b) shows that he has stayed away from the pictorial conventions of polder paintings. This is how Baart problematises the making of place of the Haarlemmermeer polder. Whereas the geospecific comparison pointed out that Baart's photographs do not resemble conventions from painting and photography of the Haarlemmermeer specifically; the geogeneric comparison points out that his photographs partly link up to pictorial conventions from painting or photography of the landscape types 'Country roads', 'Rivers and Canals' or even generic paintings specifically especially depicting 'polder landscapes', such as those by Van Goyen (Fig. 23). While they can be similar in composition, the difference lies in the extreme rigidity and geometry of Baart's images, and the large scale of the shapes in the landscape that do not match human size.



Fig. 2.25 Theo Baart, *Amsterdam Airport Schiphol*, 2015, from the series *Werklust* (2015)

Even the rather poetic picture by Baart (fig. 2.25) that borrows its poetry from his choice for hazy weather, which results in blurry contours and even the reflection of *some* clouds in the water, the picture is dominated by the rigid geometrical shapes and straight lines as well as the total absence of people

and the ironic title of the image: *Amsterdam Airport Schiphol*.²⁹⁴

In addition to the classical compositions and motives of landscape painting, Baart had other sources of inspiration for his photography. Indeed, his photographs resemble another photographic tradition: modernism and American documentary photography. By adapting concepts and styles from these sources of inspiration to depict the Dutch polder landscape, which has a very different formal history, Baart problematises the making of place of the Haarlemmermeer.

In the twentieth century, modernism rejected the traditional genre of landscape pictures. Starting with abstract experiments in photogram art by photographers such as Russian Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956) and Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), modernist photographers soon found a wholly different way to avoid traditional pictorial landscape. They literally turned away their camera lenses from the rural and natural landscape, the environment chosen by landscape painters, and directed them inwards into the totally different urban environment of the city. They focused on revealing geometrical patterns and grids in the cityscape that was made, shaped and controlled by man, with the metropolis as its 'delirious summum'.²⁹⁵ The photcollage *Metropolis*, which Dutch photographer Paul Citroen (1896-1983) made in 1923 during his stay at the German Bauhaus, and which is now part of the Leiden University photo collection, is a visual hymn to this appreciation of the delirious city with its labyrinthine web of geometrical shapes and patterns and materials of modern life like glass, concrete and steel.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Baart 2015, p. 236-237.

²⁹⁵ Dutch urban architect Rem Koolhaas (1944) in 1978 dedicated the book *Delirious New York* to this modernist appreciation of the urban bliss.

²⁹⁶ See for a monographical book on Citroen: Bool 1998. The *Metropolis* photcollage is the most wanted loan from the Leiden University photocollection, featuring lately in the monographical exhibition on Paul Citroen in the Bauhaus Archive in 2009/2010 and the thematical exhibitions Bauhaus Art as Life in the Barbican Art Gallery in London and Oltre Sant'Elia: Cento anni di visioni urbane in Villa Olmo in Como, Italy.



Fig. Paul Citroen, *Metropolis*, 1923, photomontage, 76,1 x 58,4 cm, coll. Leiden University Library, inv. no. PK-F-57.337.

The same interest is to be seen in the 1970s with expressions such as Rem Koolhaas' book *Delirious New York* (1978).

After the Second World War, modernist photography was sustained by a committed version of documentary photography. Although this mainly focused on people and the human condition, in the 1970s, landscape photography got new impetus, one expression of which is Baart's photography of the Haarlemmermeer. Interest, in this case, was to be found in the ordinary, vernacular landscape that was designed not to have natural or pictorial beauty or monumentality, but rather was to serve economic and infrastructural functions. In this sense, the 1975 exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape*, held at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, was an epic and pioneering project.²⁹⁷ This exhibition turned out to be so significant for a later awareness and vision of photography that it provoked several discussions at the beginning of the new millennium.²⁹⁸ Moreover, because of its enduring and even increasing fame, it was entirely reconstructed and travelled internationally again in 2009.²⁹⁹ The *New Topographics* exhibition expressed an interest in the common, the vernacular, the anti-monumental, and thus connects clearly to *The interpretation of Ordinary*

²⁹⁷ Exh. cat. *New Topographics* 1975.

²⁹⁸ Foster-Rice and Rohrbach 2010.

²⁹⁹ Salvesen and Nordström 2009.

Landscapes by Meinig and *The Discovery of the Vernacular Landscape* by Jackson.³⁰⁰ The curator of *New Topographics*, William Jenkins, called it 'vulgar' in the press release for the exhibition:

The most vulgar aspects of our society seem neutralised as a result of this topographic approach. The viewpoint is anthropological rather than critical, scientific rather than artistic.³⁰¹ In the choice of subject matter and the documentary, the descriptive way of photographing in both black and white and colour, the photographs by Baart are comparable to the photographs in the *New Topographics*. New, suburban areas were represented in the 1975 exhibition, photographed by Robert Adams, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicolas Nixon, Stephen Shore and Henry Wessel, while Lewis Baltz provided photographs of warehouses and other – often prefab – modernist buildings. Those by John Schott showed a series of relatively new buildings used as motels.³⁰² (Figs. 2.26 - 2.29)



Fig. 2.26 Robert Adams, *Mobile homes, Jefferson County, Colorado*, 1973, gelatine silver print, 15,1 x 19,1 cm, coll. George Eastman House, inv. no. 77:148:05.

³⁰⁰ Meinig 1979; Jackson 1984.

³⁰¹ Original press release of the *New Topographics* exhibition. Documentation photography collection George Eastman House.

³⁰² Bernd's and Hilla Becher's images in the *New Topographics* exhibition showed industrial architecture and sites.



Fig. 2.27 Stephen Shore, *Main Street, Gull Lake, Saskatchewan*, 1974, Kodacolor RC, 19,5 x 24,6 cm, coll. George Eastman House, inv. no. 77:021:1



Fig. 2.28 Lewis Baltz, *South Wall, Mazda Motors, 2121 East Main Street, Irvine*, 1974, gelatine silver print, 15,1 x 22,8 cm, coll. George Eastman House, inv. no. 78:515:19



Fig. 2.29 John Schott, from the series *Route 66 Motels*, 1973, gelatin silver print, 19,2 x 23,8 cm, coll. George Eastman House, inv. no. 77:082:16

New Topographers harked back to 'describing' a documenting style of photography employed by the topographers of the nineteenth century. That said, they can still be seen as part of the modernist tradition because they relate to the modern landscape and their preferred subject is man-made urban elements and environments. Baart acknowledges he is profoundly influenced by the formalism and style of the New Topographics.³⁰³ Like most Dutch photographers, he did not see the exhibition. A few, like Baart's photo studio-mate Cary Markerink, saw a smaller version of the exhibition at the Photofusion Gallery in London in 2010.³⁰⁴ However, the photography of urbanised and industrialised landscape that Baart developed over the years, owes much to the 'movement' of contemporary landscape photography that was spread from the United States with the epic and instigating New Topographics exhibition. This movement reached the Netherlands indirectly, primarily through magazines and publications.

The fact that Baart photographed the Haarlemmermeer over decades and adds analytical text about the developments, means *Werklust* resembles the lifelong work on globalised economics by Photographer and writer Allan Sekula (1951-2013). Sekula made photographic projects and wrote on documentary photography in the tradition of politically leftist writers such as Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) and Burgin. Especially Benjamin's essay 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' (1936) and Burgin's 'Photography, Phantasy, Function' (1980) elaborate on the function of photography outside the realm of art and gallery spaces, as does Sekula's own photo and text book *Photography against the Grain* (1984).³⁰⁵ The potency of photography to inform, evoke awareness of developments in society and criticise is, in their opinion, greater when photographs are accompanied by text. The photobook *Werklust* that circulates outside the museum space in regular circuits of international publishing, in which Baart writes elaborately about the socio-economic developments that determine the Haarlemmermeer, functions in this tradition.

Through their photography, Sekula and Baart critique environments that are determined by global economic mechanisms, but which conflict with human scale and needs. Sekula and Baart have spent decades grasping and exploring economic phenomena in their projects, exhibitions and books. Sekula tried to grasp global economic mechanisms for example in *Fish story*, in which he follows and photographs the route of fish that is bred and caught, traded and consumed internationally.³⁰⁶ (Fig. 2.30)

³⁰³ See his words on the symposium 'Landschaft, Umwelt, Kultur: Über den transnationalen Einfluss der New Topographics' (30 Octobre 2015) in the Museum für Photographie in Braunschweig, Germany, one of the numerous recent events, exhibitions and publications commemorating the *New Topographics* show and through that underlining the topicality of the New Topographics photography now, forty years later. See for example Salvesen and Nordström 2009, Foster-Rice and Rohrbach 2010, Parak 2015.

³⁰⁴ See <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/feb/08/new-topographics-photographs-american-landscapes>.

³⁰⁵ Benjamin 1936, Burgin 1980, Sekula 1984.

³⁰⁶ Sekula 1995.



Fig. 2.30 Allan Sekula, Panorama. Mid-Atlantic, November 1993, from *Fish Story* 1989–95
courtesy Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica

His documentary film *Forgotten Space* is about the space of the oceans and the way economics, industry and transport evolves within it. It resulted in him following economic lines all over the world. Sekula and Baart have in common that they bring back these global mechanisms to human proportion. They illustrate that world economics is too abstract for humans to grasp and results in environments that are too unsuitable for humans to feel at home in. Baart shows that the Haarlemmermeer is designed not to meet with formal and aesthetic conditions or to fit human proportions. Considering the way, the place is landscaped (Mitchell) or practiced (Certeau) or the interaction between human activity and land (Creswell) or its 'environmental interaction' (Sauer, Olwig) as discussed in 1.3, the geometrically shaped, systematised land is rather shaped to serve the global economy that incidentally touches the ground near Hoofddorp. The global network of economic lines cannot be grasped or understood from the viewpoint of its inhabitants or visitors. This is too large to behold or grasp from the ground of the Haarlemmermeer, which makes the shapes of the landscape abstract and alienating. What Baart does share with Sekula is the way their photographs make a place of the Haarlemmermeer and the oceans, respectively. Their photographs give a face to an unseen area, and by showing their uncommonness and unease with pictorial conventions, they question it.

Another important similarity between the photographic efforts of Sekula and Baart is the character of their documentary approach. They both devote long periods of their life to the depiction and documentation of socio-economic developments: fisheries, global shipping and the ocean space in the case of Sekula, the development of the Haarlemmermeer, influenced by the global economy, in the case of Baart. From this lifelong devotion to photographic work, both men, from time to time, extract selections of photographs and accompany these with their own explanatory texts which is then presented in exhibitions or photobooks. Sekula's photobook *Fish Story* is, in this regard, very comparable to Baart's *Werklust*.

However, Baart's work also differs from Sekula's, and discerning differences further clarifies the photographic interaction with which Baart makes place of the Haarlemmermeer. In contrast to Sekula, Baart does not follow the economic traffic all over the world, but rather stays at home, in and near Hoofddorp, to document environmental change over the years. Nor is he, like Sekula, inspired by Marxist theory asserting the position of the common man. More than Sekula, Baart takes the position of a committed observer, analysing the developments and their backgrounds, documenting the new kinds of landscapes, buildings and inhabitants that the changes bring about and, in doing so, he informs and

amazes the viewer.

The viewpoint from which Baart creates this biography of the Haarlemmermeer is one of a committed and observing inhabitant. Compared to his earlier publications on the same subject, such as *Bouwlust* (1999) and *Eiland 7* (2008), and also compared to the work of Sekula, *Werklust* has a more personalized, autobiographical character. This is representative for a broader development in documentary photography in general. During the last decades, the alleged objectivity of documentary photography has increasingly been debated.³⁰⁷ The common opinion nowadays is, that in documentary photography objectivity does not exist. Rather documentary has come to be understood as photography in which the subject is clearly identified, while the photographer informs and expresses an opinion about it.³⁰⁸

Subjectivity has become a basic assumption in documentary photography – just as it is in other genres like commercial or art photography. The classical documentary reportage from the magazine pages, with its presumption of objectivity, made way to the notion of documentary being a story told from someone's explicit subjective viewpoint. Fully in line with that development, also Baart changed his strategy. In an earlier publication on the same theme of the development of the Haarlemmermeer around Hoofddorp, *Bouwlust* (1999), Baart's story about Hoofddorp and the Haarlemmermeer was still a rather objectified one about socio-economical developments in the polder. Instead, in the recently published *Werklust* (2015) Baart merges photographs of the polder with his personal story and memories in an explicitly autobiographical approach.

With this autobiographical approach, in fact, Baart links up to a strong local tradition of Dutch photobook production. Photographer and curator/writer Martin Parr in *The Photobook* discerned what he called a 'diaristic mode' which he saw in several Dutch photobooks from after the Second World War. As an early example of this he mentioned the strongly personalized fictive photo-novel *Love on the Left Bank* (1956) by Dutch photographer Ed van der Elsken and photobooks by Johan van der Keuken such as *Paris Mortel* (1963).³⁰⁹ Diaristic - from the word 'diary' – refers to the strongly subjective, informal and fictive character of the photobooks selected in this context by Parr.³¹⁰ Defined as such, *Werklust* fits in this Dutch tradition of the diaristic photobook as well as in the contemporary idea of documentary being chiefly an expression of the author's subjective story.

Baart's photographs contribute to the making of place of the Haarlemmermeer polder in two ways. First, because he photographed the, in those days, unusual environment of the new land of the Haarlemmermeer, in line with the notion of 'ordinary' or 'vernacular' landscape, as suggested by Meinig

³⁰⁷ See for an example in the Netherlands the exhibition and event by Perspektief Gallery and accompanying theme issue of *Perspektief Magazine* entitled *Repositioning Documentary* (1991) and the more recent Gierstberg 2005.

³⁰⁸ See for diverse essays on the changing character, appearance and distribution of documentary: Gierstberg et al. (eds.) 2005.

³⁰⁹ Leiden University Libraries' photo collection holds almost fourty manufactured dummy-versions of key Dutch post-war photobooks, among which as well Van der Elsken's *Love on the Left Bank* and *Paris Mortel* by Johan van der Keuken.

³¹⁰ Parr and Badger 2004, p. 204.

and Jackson.³¹¹ He was the first to give the Haarlemmermeer its visual history since it was transformed from water into land in the nineteenth century. The depiction of the Haarlemmermeer, which had quite a rich pictorial tradition thanks to paintings by renowned seventeenth-century landscape painters, stopped after the lake had been drained in the nineteenth century. With the urbanisation and industrialisation of the landscape, apparently the Haarlemmermeer lost the visual interest of artists and public alike. Baart took up this interest again and photographed the Haarlemmermeer in a variety of pictures, ranging from landscapes in the sense of wide scenic views, via street views and architecture photography to nocturnals and typological portraits of people, furniture, interiors, buildings.

Baart's interest in the vernacular landscape, with the Haarlemmermeer as case study, is comparable to the interest in the 'vulgar' by the curator of the New Topographics exhibition, the 'ordinary' by Meinig (in the title of the book *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, 1979) and the 'vernacular' by Brinckerhoff Jackson (in the title of his book *Discovering the vernacular landscape*, 1984). Indeed, Baart alludes to this in his Dutch subtitle for *Werklust: Biography of a useful landscape*. His choice of subject is so unusual that Baart's photographic efforts over the years can be considered as the first thorough attempt to render a face to the landscape of the Haarlemmermeer since it has become land. This photographing of an area that, until then, had little been depicted is the first step of Baart's problematisation. It is the first creation of an image of an unseen land, thus rendering it with value and making it possible to compare it with formal and aesthetic conventions, to use the terms of Wells.

Secondly, Baart's photographs problematise the making of place of the Haarlemmermeer because they visually contradict pictorial conventions. As the geospecific comparison highlights, they show nothing of the history of the place and do not resemble earlier images of it either, because it had been a lake before. We see nothing of its fishing, boating or naval history. Instead, we see four decades of recent history. We see some agricultural history, although, from the start, the extreme and systematised character of this new land strikes the eye. In the photographs Baart took over the years, using his diachronic approach, the old agriculture visibly declines, making way for infrastructure for the commercial activity of the global economy.

However, it is not only in terms of content that Baart's *Werklust* visually contradicts the seventeenth- and nineteenth-century paintings. Although as we have seen in 2.2, there are compositional similarities between the historical paintings of the Haarlemmermeer and the singular photographs of *Werklust*, a big difference lies in the fact that *Werklust* is a photographic project and does not consist of paintings or drawings. Therefore, the pictures of *Werklust* have an indexical relation to the Haarlemmermeer, which increases the sense of reality for the beholder and directs the beholder's attention more directly to the physical landscape, instead of focusing on the mental exercise in which the artist depicted the place.

Moreover, a difference between the historical paintings and the photobook *Werklust* lies in the fact that *Werklust* comprises not one singular picture, but near to two hundred photographs, ordered in

³¹¹ Meinig 1979 and Jackson 1984, as discussed in paragraph 1.2.3 of this dissertation.

a linear, almost filmic structure together with explanatory text and additional illustrative information in the form of maps. This multiplicity of the imagery and the narrative structure determines the character of *Werklust* and its difference from the historical paintings. Photographs without text are ambiguous and open to more than one interpretation, photography theory has taught us. Baart, in contrast, gives us his own interpretation, by adding text and geographical information. *Werklust* tells a story through visual *and* verbal means.

Baart shows this to us by making photographs and thus creating a face, a visual history of the past forty years of the infrastructure land of the Haarlemmermeer. Furthermore, he orders and structures a selection of 174 photographs into a narrative and characterises this narrative as 'biography', according to the subtitle of the book. This notion of biography is important for the way *Werklust* problematises the making of place. It helps us to understand the way Baart juxtaposes a different, photographic picture with the pictorial conventions of the Haarlemmermeer that emerge from historical painting.

As to the narrative of the photobook, *Werklust* as a whole is considered to have the centrifugal character of visual storytelling, as referred to by Bazin in the framework of film theory.³¹² Bazin uses this term centrifugal as opposed to the inwardly directed and centripetal character of the stage of a theatre – creating a central and singular *locus dramaticus* – and the frame of a picture.³¹³ *Werklust* invites the viewer not to stay focused on an image or one spot as a singular *locus dramaticus*, but to expand his view and look around in the landscape that has been so rarely visualised. In the photobook, the emphasis lies more on the developments of the Haarlemmermeer and the autobiographical experiences of the photographer himself in that area, than on the artistic aspects of the photograph. In the discontinuous, non-chronological way, Berger and Mohr refer to in *Another Way of Telling*, Baart's photographs together form a meaning of the Haarlemmermeer.³¹⁴

The centrifugal character makes us understand *Werklust* in the way Victor Burgin understands a panorama in his essay 'The Time of the Panorama' (2005): an experience that meets with our wish to see a *whole* picture ('pan' in 'panorama' referring to the Greek word for 'all' and 'rama' to 'horama' which means 'seeing') without being able to see that whole at once. Through the centrifugal experience of looking around in the Haarlemmermeer through the diverse images of Baart, the viewer constructs a whole, mental image of the Haarlemmermeer in his own mind; much like a spectator cannot see the panorama at once but forms an image of it in his mind with the various impressions he gets by looking around.³¹⁵ As we will see in the next chapters, the cases of the photographs by De Ruijter and Kim Boske are examples of centripetally directed images.

To understand what he sees in the physical landscape and what he shows the viewer in the landscape photographs, Baart seeks to answer the questions he formulates himself in the introduction

³¹² Bazin 2005 [1971], p. 55.

³¹³ *Ibidem*.

³¹⁴ John Berger, 'Stories', in: Berger and Mohr 1982, p. 277-289.

³¹⁵ Burgin 2009 [2005], p. 303-304.

of *Werklust*: 'What happened here? Was this the intention? Who invented this?'³¹⁶ In answering these questions, Baart uses information collected from published research reports and policy documents. In addition, and this is at stake to a larger extent than in Baart's earlier photobooks, he writes about personal childhood memories and alludes to changes he witnessed. It makes *Werklust* into a personalised operationalisation of the theory of Mitchell, Certeau, Creswell and other theoreticians mentioned before, who wrote about landscape as the outcome of interaction between the physical landscape and the people that inhabit and use it. The appearance of the physical landscape is visualised through photography; the process is described and analysed by the photographer in text and geographical information of maps. The term 'biography' in the case of *Werklust* is, according to the photographer, not deliberately chosen in order to associate it with theory from cultural geography, as, for example, published in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* of Meinig in 1979.³¹⁷ However, Baart shares the concern of the writers of cultural geography from those days, by understanding the appearance of the physical landscape as the outcome of a process: the history of the interaction between the land and its users.

³¹⁶ 'Wat is hier gebeurd? Was dit de bedoeling? Wie heeft dit bedacht?', Baart 2015, p. 5.

³¹⁷ In this publication, Marwyn S. Samuels wrote the essay 'The Biography of Landscape. Cause and Culpability', Meinig 1979, pp. 51-88.