

**Phenomenological
booklet**

**Aesthetic
embodiment of
the southern coast
of Schouwen
Duiveland**

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Landscape Architecture & Planning

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*This visual essay is framed within the **phenomenological study** of the southern coast of Schouwen Duiveland. It presents a fragmented journey through the nature area developed along the last two decades in Schouwen Duiveland. In the winter of 2013 a short site exploration took place. It was followed by day lasting journeys that occurred in the early summer of 2013. The study trip is an **aesthetic investigation** of the nature development of Schouwen Duiveland filled with the intention of revealing 'my personal sensuous encounter' with such particular landscape.*

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1. Intentions and Method

1.1 Talking about the intentions and method

The aim of the *aesthetic investigation* in hands is to represent the sensuous encounter with the landscape.

The research method used for this purpose has been *phenomenology*, a method that seeks to describe as closely as possible the way things first arise in our direct, sensorial experience (Abram, 1997:35). This *sensorial or aesthetic experience*^[1] takes place by means of the body, therefore in this essay we use the term *aesthetic embodied experience*, according to Berleant, the act of being fully present through the distinctive presence of the body with the sensory focus and intensity (Berleant, 2014). The aesthetic investigation therefore derives into representing the aesthetic embodiment of the landscape.

1.2 Intentions

In the attempt of illustrating this *aesthetic embodiment*, understanding that all the phenomena that we perceive in the perceptible realm are related in a constant way, merging one into the other was essential. It was equally essential though to acknowledge that the body constitutes a practic-sensory realm in which space is perceived through smells, tastes, touch and hearing, as well as through sight (Simonsen, 2005) in what Bachelard calls *'the polyphony of the senses'*, involving several realms of sensory experience which interact and fuse into each other (Bachelard in Pallasmaa, 2005).

¹ Sensuous experience and aesthetic experience are synonymous in this essay since aesthetic is used in its original Greek meaning: I feel, I sense. Experience involves the action of paying attention and being aware of, according to Berleant. Therefore, sensuous or aesthetic experience refers to the act of being paying attention and being aware of what we feel and sense.

These two ideas have strongly influenced the way data has been accessed. These two statements accentuated the awareness for describing the sensuous experience focused on how the diverse phenomenon of the landscape interact with the *sensuous body*^[2], instead of focusing on an approach that prevails the differentiation of the senses for data collection, eventually deriving into a fragmented description of the landscape.

In this line, it was also intended to give privilege to, or favor the very first impressions of the site that reveal which are the most expressive phenomena of the landscape.

1.3 Method

The suggested method consisted of systematic descriptions of the aesthetic embodiment of the southern coast of Schouwen Duiveland each 500 meters approximately, with a notebook in hands, (in order to write about the impressions acquired in the site). The time spent in each of the spots was not determined, neither the specific locations for doing so (Etteger, 2013). It was assumed that the same act of walking would determine the most relevant spots in order also to make room for *'unexpected localities and specificities'*^[3], but still being aware of the need for making notes regularly (each 500m).

The first act was to stop in the site and to close the eyes, since the view was already available from the act of walking.

² Body is interpreted as skin. All the senses, including vision, are extensions of the tactile sense; the senses are specialisations of skin tissue, which is eventually the external limit of the body. (Pallasmaa, 2005; Barañano, 1991)

³ 'Localities and specificities' makes reference to the particular locations and features that can be found through the act of walking, and which are considered of interest.

With closed eyes, listening carefully, focusing on the scents, and aromas, and later on, with eyes opened once again, looking at and listening to the landscape and its movements, smelling it again, and finally, tracking and touching the material and natural specificities: the plants, animals and materials. Relating them all and interpreting, as mentioned before, with the intention to grasp the next:

‘how the elements of nature interact amongst themselves, and how those are aesthetically embodied’.

2. Research context for aesthetic embodiment

2.1 Data collection

Site related data has been accessed through day lasting journeys, in total, three. These journeys are the response to the need to get in contact with the site in order to continue with the research. This means that the journeys give answer to different states of the research that have in mind different purposes for the data collection: from site exploration for acknowledgement of the area to (phenomenological) data collection (by means of) aesthetic embodiment. Still, in all these phases, knowledge relevant from the aesthetic embodiment perspective was generated.

2.2 Journey specificities

First visit: Site exploration

The first visit (15th February 2013) was an introductory exploration which had none specific objective within the research framework, except for getting acquainted with the site, and it only consisted of site observation and site walks. This first visit of the southern coast of Schouwen Duiveland helped with having a first impression with the landscape: dunes, sea, wind, special dike configuration: main dike and inlaag dike, trees shaped by the wind, birds, large water elements flooding inner land, small random water elements, salt spray, vast sky, infinite horizon, isolated farms, small harbors, stratified colors by materials on dikes, sheep, cows, coquilles, plants, sand, stone, grass. But also openness, vastness, remoteness; exposure, and silence and murmur, rigid landscape composition, distance and un-tactility. This first impression or discovery of the landscape was highly influenced by its novelty but also by the weather conditions: very cold and moderate windy winter day, with grey sky and sea and brownish vegetation: an atmosphere close to the dramatic Dutch landscape drawings. The area was visited by car, with stops at very particular spots such as the beach in the dunes, Plompe Toren or the café *Het Hereenkeet* and walking shortly around those spots. The visit, still, was able to produce very essential and useful information by means of observation and the act of walking in the form of pictures, memories and impressions.

Second – Third visit: Data gathering, focused on PHENOMENOLOGY

These visits took place the 22nd and 23rd of June 2013. The aim was to generate site related information, and an entire weekend was devoted to this. Field notes were accomplished following the method explained above, covering the *Plan Tureluur* development together with Schelpoek, the area that arose as a consequence of the dike failure of 1953. Field notes were carried approximately each 500 metres, but when the

similarity of the landscape made us think of similar phenomena to be occurring from an aesthetic point of view, some spots then were skipped in favor of aesthetically embodying and describing as much places as possible with differentiated character.

Characteristics of the day and activities

(Winter) 15th February 2013

Windy, greyish and cloudy day, with the sky covered; the temperature is low, and the field exploration is made mainly by car. We stopped in few spots: 1. Dune area; 2; the parking area behind the dunes 3. Plompe Toren; 4. Café Herenkeet and its surroundings

(Spring) 22nd June 2013

Extremely windy, locals said that that was one of the windiest days of the year. The sky was clear, clouds moving fast so the colors were changing quickly as well. In the afternoon it got sunnier than in the morning, and it was in overall nicer atmosphere for exploration; cold but sunny. We saw mainly people cycling, along the dike at the very beginning, pedestrians only along Wevers inlaag next to cyclists, and in Schelpoek cyclers on the dike. We met nobody in the forest. There were people sitting in the entrance of Schelphoek and there were very few people on Plompe Toren.

(Spring) 23rd June 2013

Rainy and cold. Very disagreeable weather, not enjoyable. The sky was covered, grey, and it was windy. The entire nature area was almost empty except for the ones practicing certain activities, such as snorkeling. We saw no people on the dikes. But the visit was also mostly devoted to explore bit further inland. We only came to Prunje Hill.

3 . Aesthetic embodiment



3.1 Phenomenological Trip Map



Intermezzo of the method



Illustration 1. Dunes in Schouwen Duiveland



Illustration 6. Dike break and mudflats emergin and disappearing



Illustration 2. Detail of the dike and harbour in Burghsluis



Illustration 4. Wevers inlaag



Illustration 3. Detail of the dike in Burghsluis



Illustration 7. View of Plompe Toren in Koudekerksche inlaag



Illustration 5. Flauwers-Wevers inlaag



Illustration 8. Compendium of material to be found in the dike

3.2 Descriptions of the Aesthetic Embodiment



Illustration 9. Notebook and map of the coast line of Schouwen Duiveland

1. Zierikzee, Havenweg

Contact!



Illustration 1.1. View towards Zierikzee



Illustration 1.2. Map

Day 22th of June
Time 11 a.m. On dike dating from 1554
Place 51°38'17.42"N, 3°54'7.52"E
Altitude 5,2m (on top of the dike and eyeview)

Notes I enter the dike through a steep path. I come on top of a dike. It is the entrance to the harbor of Zierikzee. Opposite another dike, in the background, Zeelandbrug.

I listen to the waves. Smooth and rhythmic movement. Calm. The sound of the waves encountering the dike repeats each second approximately; this is the rhythm of the sea. Suddenly I notice bicycles. Slight smell to see, not too much. Now suddenly birds show up. When you pay more attention, you can listen to the wind moving the gramineas of the dike, constantly. The smell of the sea also comes depending on the direction of the wind. A boat comes suddenly. It distorts, breaks the cadence, and alters the landscape, making the waves to move more. I feel the air blowing my hair, now stronger than before. Still I have to fight against the wind.

I see flowers, white and purple in colours; they are tiny elements. This is part of the composition of the dike, with vegetation. In the larger picture the landscape is moving constantly, tall grass dances with the wind. And different reflections of the sun are available. This reveals different textures. I see Zierikzee in the background, industry skyline and the bridge. The clouds are moving quickly and when the sun shows, suddenly the sea is gold. And the fields change in colours. Freedom and sound of the grass. Making sound out of the wind and the grass. I feel I am in nature, but the presence of urban development is there, framing me. I feel wrapped and comfortable.

2. Cauwers inlaag

Wild wind



Illustration 2.1. Entry to Cauwers inlaag



Illustration 2.2. Map

Day 22th June.
Time 11.40 a.m. Dike dating from 1553-56
Place 51°38'36.92"N, 3°53'25.88"E
Altitude 5,2m (walking height over 9,5m high dike)

Notes We come to the dike from the public parking lot. The sea reveals immense, on the left side. On the right just the steep slope of the dike. The dike shows itself as an infinite line.

It is a very wild and intense feeling. The wind is immense. Surrounds me completely. There is no way I can scape from it, I am so exposed... The wind is combing violently my hair and guides me, takes me, obliques me, in its own direction, which is not the same as the one marked by the dike. Takes me towards the slope of the dike. The smell is very intense. The waves are constant but they sound violently.

The thermo feeling is very low, and I need to curl up around myself. The wind impedes me to do so. This makes me to look downwards, making me appreciate all the elements and the landscape thoroughly. The details.

The foam is drawing lines on the sea, which is rough. The composition is very simple: sea, dike, sky. The horizon is varied, from merging sky and sea on the left, to mudflats in the front, to the slope of the dike to my right, making it look like a pictorial composition. Always immense sea, and blowing wind. I look towards the right and I see the sky grey, immense, and I look at the movement of the grass that dances. But I don't see anything else. The wind makes them noticeable, able to listen and see one by one. Suddenly the sun comes out the clouds, and the sea is shining. I also see a cyclist almost not being able to cycle. The asphalt is dark, black, but nature grows in it. Even the hair is violent on my face.

3. Cauwers inlaag End

Wind in motion



Illustration 3.1. On the remnants of the broken dike in 1553

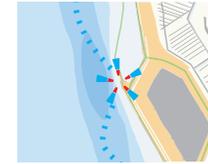


Illustration 3.2. Map

Day 22nd June remnant of 1553-56
Time 12.05 a.m. Dike dating from 1553-56
Place 51°38'52.79"N, 3°53'10.14"E
Altitude 3,5 m (on top of the dike and eyeview)

Notes Walking along the dike. Nothing changes, except the fact of the dike at one point diving into the sea.

My body feels safer. Still I listen vividly to the waves and now more in terms of waves than air noise. I mean that I hear them breaking on the dike.

I lay down. The air is moving the vegetation as if nothing. At the same time the air moves the water. It is like when the sun light gets reflected and moves on the sea, it is the same ephemeral but continuous phenomenon. I smell the sea. It pervades the space. It is all the time present. The sky doesn't move. I can touch the stones, the materials, marked by the strength and presence of the sea. It is beautiful to notice the rhythm of the landscape. It is a peculiar motion. Waves and wind, bringing the smell, wind and grass, making the landscape in constant movement. When the air moves the grass, I see the air. I see that it is a flow that goes on further on the landscape. I see the same horizon, sea-sky, sea-mudflats, dike-sky. I also see the colours: grey stones and vegetation, green and yellow, grey sky, yellow until green grass gradient, wooden sticks on stone.

Now that I have walked through this dike, my body gets slowly accustomed to its rhythm and I notice my heart is beating very slowly. My body is in very low motion as well. I guess it is due to the harshness and roughness of the landscape composition. I can only walk very slowly. It is 'slow motion'.

4. Prommelsluis

New neat dike. Body decontracting



Illustration 4.1. Walking on renewed dike



Illustration 4.2. Map

Day 22nd June 1588-1591
Time 12.35 p.m. Dike dating from 1588-91; recently reinforced
Place 51°40'36.17"N, 3°51'39.45"E
Altitude 5 m (walking height, over 8,0m height dike)

Notes The dike composition looks very different. The materials, and the slope have varied considerably.

I feel that I am in a landscape that is less wild, less expressive than the other sections I have walked through. The dike is not any more such a vast element, it is lower, the slope is not that steep. The sea is also closer, easier to touch, but it is also calmer. Altogether, the feeling is not as rough as in the other section of the dike.

I still feel the air in my face and the hair blowing but it is less perseverant than before; the noise of the wind is the most noticeable element. I can merge with it.

The dike contains shorter vegetation because it is managed, so the impression is not as lively as in the other sections; the dike is also less natural, more domesticated and also more regular in its materials (fixed stones in the dike section instead of loose ones). Vegetation doesn't grow as spontaneous as if silently conquering the dike. I don't see small elements of the landscape, like oysters, the small flowers in the dike, the life that is sensed and also intuited. I also can't look for shelves because there are none.

The horizon is wider; it is again sea-sky, but also sea-dike-architecture, and dike-sky. I can see it all from this position. I see a completely opened panorama. I see the shadows. And my body feels more relaxed than before, the muscles get relaxed. I am not fighting against the wind in order to be able to walk.

5. Prommelsluis backside
Camomile



Illustration 5.1. Behind the dike, sea and sky forming the horizon and daisies.

Illustration 5.2. Map



Day 22nd June 1588-1591
Time 12.45 p.m. Dike dating from 1588-91; recently reinforced
Place 51°40'31.25"N, 3°51'50.93"E
altitude -1,6m (ground level, over 7,0m height dike)

Notes This is the entrance towards Prommelsluis, just narrow stairs. They don't guide you anywhere, nor do represent a noticeable spot on the dike line. It is only matter of infrastructure.

I feel secluded (with positive meaning) after leaving the dike. The noise of the sea is hardly noticeable, I only hear now the murmur of the wind, and sitting here, I also listen to the plants dancing with the wind. It is relieving that I don't need to fight against the wind. I feel warm and safe from hostility and harsh conditions. I am enjoying this single place.

I also see the water elements, and the cows that belong to the nature development; in the background, trees. Human activity is present here through the surrounding farms. Camomile smell is striking and ladybugs are next to me. I can touch them, for the first time, I can easily touch manifestations of nature. And I come to notice single elements in the landscape.

The path is narrow, only up to 1 person; very intimate and enjoyable. It looks like domesticated nature because the plants are not like the ones in the other side of the dike. The inner slope of the dike is so steep that when I go up the stairs (getting back to the dike) I can only see the sea.

I need to conclude that I am happy that the landscape changes, and I get a bit of less exposure.

6. Prommelsluis right
Only the horizon



Illustration 6.1. Walking along the dike. The dike has been reinforced recently.

Illustration 6.2. Map



Day 22nd June 1588-1591
Time 12.55
Place 51°40'26.86"N, 3°51'55.45"E
Altitude 5,0 m (walking height, over 7,0m height dike)

Notes Few people were cycling around the area

Getting adapted to the new softness of the wind and to the smooth slope of the dike, I start to miss somehow the roughness of the immense dike. The materials have changed, the dike looks new, with moss growing in the little stones that reflect that the tidal influence is more perceptible here than in the former places. It draws a gradient of colours, ranging from the dark almost black of the stones to the lively green. But the dike is less spontaneous, barely expresses life.

I stop and almost nothing is moving. Not my hear, not my sweater, I can continue walking slowly, feeling the salt spray and appreciating the quietness of the waves. The grass of the dike slope is shorter, the horizon very very wide, but for some reason it is not very attractive to walk on this line, or better said, it gets too long and rigid line, and I am looking forward to get to its end.

7. Herenkeet
Sea behind



Illustration 7.1. Harbor and entry to Flaauwers-Wevers inlaag

Illustration 7.2. Map



Day 22nd June
Time 13.10 p.m. Dike dating from 1548. Recently reinforced
Place 51°40'40.17"N, 3°51'15.55"E
Altitude 7,0m (on top of the dike and eyevlew)

Notes We are next to the harbour. This is an area with a parking lot and the cafeteria, where most of the journeys apparently start. Info point, and the dike departing inland.

The wind is less powerful. We listen more silently to the sea. It is a rumour. The material has changed, so it is softer, the wind also comes from another direction. I feel nicer than in the former point. I can hear every single piece of grass moving; strong presence of humans in the environment for the first time. (Cafe Herenkeet is close by, starting point of bike trips and pedestrians' walks)

The huge water elements and the first dike line, (I am in the inlaag dike) because this is an inlaag, make it a VAST area. Water expands, and the horizon comes very far, but the scattered vegetation in the form of trees present for the first time also makes it a bit cosy. I still see it is more protected; therefore I walk in a more relaxed way, less tense, I also notice that I can look upfront more directly, and the brightness of the sea penetrates me. Trees shaped by the wind, vernacular architecture, and small water elements, this gives me cosiness and closeness and confidence and I can walk faster. For the first time I come to notice the ancient creeks, I start to see inland.

This morphology, more varying than the former one, makes it a scale more human and it is not as rough as the other! Inlagen are 400 meters wide according to the map, and the farms don't expand more than 25 meter in their unit.

8. Inlaagweg
Vastness



Illustration 8.1. Views of the wide panorama along inlaagweg

Illustration 8.2. Map



Day 22nd June
Time 14.00 p.m. Dike dating from 1650-51
Place 51°41'52.29"N, 3°48'49.61"E
Altitude 4,7m (on top of inlaag dike; eyevlew)

Notes We are next to the harbor. This is an area with a parking lot and the cafeteria, where most of the journeys apparently start. Info point, and the dike departing inland.

The sea has disappeared. Instead, water elements that flood the innerland of the double dike system arise. They are shallow, they reflect the sky, so they look blueyish today. In winter time, when exploring the site, this landscape looked dark, with brown vegetation and half frozen greyish water. It is not so much about what I hear any more, the landscape is not dancing either, the sea is barely noticeable. It is the panorama, the wide view, which is the most relevant issue. It is almost picturesque.

I can look towards the nature development for a prolonged time (this implies water and birds mainly, not reddish salty vegetation, not yet). I am in the nature development finally. It is a landscape where human habitation expresses; there are some farms surrounded by trees that make the landscape more varied, the landscape expands, feeling far, not close. But its elements don't interact so much with me. I can't touch the vegetation, I can't see it from a close point of view. Only if I get to the birdwatching tower, but it is closed. I also can't come towards the water. But, it opens the island for me. The horizon is far, where the vegetation of the dunes meets the sky. More crowded than the former part of the island, there is a car path, and cyclers and pedestrians share the same dike. And I understand that it must be about watching birds. The water doesn't move, it is not in motion, the wind is also softer, it is not that vibrant, the ground is again hard surface, the landscape path is a straight line, rigid, straight to an end.

9. Inlaagweg
Rounded line



Illustration 9.1. Inlaagweg end and Schelpoek starting point

Illustration 9.2. Map



Day 22nd June
Time 14.40 p.m. Dike dating from 1588-1591
Place 51°40'31.25"N, 3°51'50.93"E
altitude 4,5m (on top of inlaag dike; eyeview)
Notes The inlaagweg (also available by car) comes to its end, merging with the sea. At this point we come to see a bay that opens, that changes the entire rigid landscape composition. Also show up elevations on the landscape.

The roundness of the ring dike. The mudflats and the sun shining on the sea. I close my eyes and I breath deeply. No strong wind, only subtle wind moving my hair and the grass. The smell of the sea present, and I don't hear any more the waves in cadence breaking on the dike.

I open the eyes, and then this immense roundness invites to follow the path, suggesting a change in the linear movement I have followed surrounded by the large water elements. A round shape whose end I can't reach with my eyes. I see that behind the dike there is a higher area, with undulating forms, partly covered by trees, trees that for the first time appear dense, as a forest. It seems that the landscape starts to dress itself with elements other than the sea and the dike.

The mudflats bring a different tone to the lanscape, The colour ranging from grey to golden reflections, varying with the light of the sun. It is the first time that I encounter the sand, and I can get down following the short path that approaches me to touch the wet sand.

The long stripe on my left, covered in dark material must be a remnant of the broken dike, but it is different from the formers I have seen, it rather looks a built sea arm than a remnant.

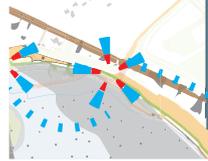
A completely new landscape that embraces the sea with its arms is in front of me.

10. Walking Schelpoek,
Feeling with feet



Illustration 10.1. Sea and sandy vegetation with caissons on the background

Illustration 10.2. Map



Day 22nd June
Time 15.30 p.m. Dike dating after 1953
Place 51°41'52.29"N, 3°48'49.61"E
Altitude 1m (walking height, over 7,0m height dike; eyeview)
Notes Sandy reliefs, dike blending with the sand, allowing to wander around. Open bay in front, with the remnants of the dike failure in 1953: caissons and concrete platforms.

I walk on *soft* material: sand. I feel light, somehow suggesting me to deambulate. It is not any more a flat rough surface underneath, instead, organic and soft; providing texture to each step, undulating. This is a relaxing feeling. I feel the sea far in distance. The sea expresses differently, not so rough, smooth sounds, but again without stop... not extreme wind blowing my hear and body, I am not struggling against the wind. Eventually, I feel able to breath openly and deep.

Vegetation starts to be very present. But it is richer in variety. Landforms are also richer, actually, there are landforms, this is new! not having a flat view, rather suggesting a landscape that shows and hides. I see sand around and I can touch it only by kneeling. Or just sit and look at the landscape. Finally I can touch something, and rest upon. Actually, I do this precisely. The wind, as always, is present but moves the landscape smoothly. Vegetation provides me with shelter. Small birds are also able to *sing*. And is this sand part of the dike?

A huge bunker. This is a remnant of the dike failure in 1953. Square structure in concrete in the middle of the bay. The dike also ends with a concrete sctructure. On the other side, I see the forest. And I can get in over there. I feel protected and I also feel something else is coming, I can read it on the path, and the sea is immense. The sun is in my back.

11. On the path, Schelpoek
Alice in Wonderland



Illustration 11.1. Entering the forest of Schelpoek and the path in it

Illustration 11.2. Map



Day 22nd June
Time 16.50
Place 3°48'49.61"E, 3°48'25.69"E
Altitude -0.6m (on top of the dike and eyeview)
Notes Walking behind the dike, I enter through a hole in the 'wind breaking trees' line. It seems like getting lost in 'Alice in Wonderland'. From open and vastness, to an enclosed space.

I listen to the leaves moving. Now it is not an overwhelming noise, but rather sounds like the breeze of the fresh evenings; a whistle, suspended in the air, back and forth, as the waves. The soundscape has completely changed, becoming a very intimate feeling. On the ground, grass. Oh... how good is this! I can touch the leaves when I move only two meters far, becoming 1:1 scale.

I notice the light in the leaves. Gold on the leaves. Ephemeral. The gold that comes and goes as the waves do in the sea. Not even a tiny hair is moving for the first time. The ground is soft grass, covered with leaves, and the path is meandering, makes me want to go farther. I see the sun also when I look up through the branches. The roughness of the landscape is over, this is like a fairy tale. So many smells! I feel finally cosy; in what is for me the image of nature. This is wonderful; a path that leads me to somewhere but I have no idea to where.

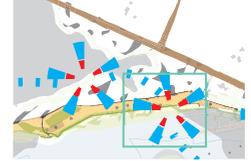
This is a new universe, light (faster motion), lively, less intense, but more varied. In the shade (or in the sun) without much exposure, intimate, warm. The body expands appreciating changes second after second, a landscape that changes its elements and makes your eyes and body move constantly.

12. Schelpoek, path next to lake
Wandering Exploring Discovering



Illustration 12.1. Walking inside Schelpoek with water element next to path

Illustration 12.2. Map



Day 22nd of June
Time 17.00 p.m.
Place 51°41'56.70"N, 3°48'23.01"E
Altitude -1.6m (on top of the dike and eyeview)
Notes The enclosed space widens to show a path that goes next to a lake. From grass to trees we continue in the fairy tale.

Leaves, leaves and leaves dancing and singing. Intense scents from flowers that come and go meanwhile I walk. It feels simply good. Sweet water of the lake to my right. I don't even hear it because the wind is smooth but it is present. Small flowers, bushes, tall trees, branches covering the path, and a path that takes me somewhere! Don't know where the path will take me yet, but the light on the path is a driving force. It is 1:1 scale. It makes me feel comfortable, absolutely. I see colours such as pink. But in overall all is green for me. I don't need to protect myself against anything. I am safe.

The path is green. I listen to the birds and look at water. The air embraces the atmosphere in the same way. But it is more open, so the sun is reflected in the path. My hair has stopped moving. My body doesn't need to shake. The sun heats my head and my feet feel comfortable against the grass. I feel extremely relaxed and lively. I want to continue exploring because that feeling comes to me: continue and continue.

13. Schelphoek, high
From wonderland to the sea



Illustration 13.1 View of the dike break from Schelphoek



Illustration 13.2 Map

Day 22nd June 1588-1591

Time 17.08 p.m.

Place 51°40'31.25"N, 3°51'50.93"E
Altitude 4,8 m (on top of the dike; eyeview)

Notes After following the green path upwards, not knowing where that could take us, and leaving other paths on the way, surrounded by wild vegetation, we come up to the high point. Then the sea is back.

It does not represent harshness or roughness, instead openness, but an openness that compared to the dike sections, it reveals as an undulating and changing landscape, in which the elements can be touched and sensed. Smell, smell, sand!

The vegetation keeps on moving, it is very rich in textures. The colour of the sand makes contrast with the yellowy-greenish-violet vegetation. It is rather a silent landscape compared to the loud wind of the dikes and the light whistle of Schelphoek forest. The movement of the vegetation overlaps the murmur of the waves. Cadence, rhythm in the landscape that expresses, and myself. It is only a short moment, in 50 steps this view will be gone, but I know it continues and that I will see that. This is the most enjoyable fact: to show and to hide again. The possibility to continue downwards or instead get back to the intimate green area. I see birds, I hardly listen to them.

This point reveals as a pick in the walking activity

14. Prairie, Schelphoek
Enclosed and wide prairie/Green square



Illustration 14.1 Prairie inside Schelphoek forest area



Illustration 14.2 Map

Day 22nd June 1588-1591

Time 17.16 p.m.

Place 51°40'31.25"N, 3°51'50.93"E
Altitude -1,6m (behind the ring dike in the forest; eyeview)

Notes An open prairie shows up. This is the first of the kind in the entire trip so far. Trees in the border, but wild flowers as a touch of colour. No path, just grass.

It is a mixture between nature and urban. I can listen far in the background the cars. At the same time it gets overlapped by the trees moving.

It is an open space. Like a square in nature. An empty space in the forest. Bushes delimiting the water. My hair moves, the wind is present in here very vivid. Short, high plants, yellow, violet, green; different ones, white. Single flowers. I see trees in the background. More mystery back! There is not even a direction to follow, no path, no signal. Soft ground, I can only enjoy it enormously. It represents a completely different type of space that I still had not experienced in the entire day, an enclosed space.

It is still very close, 1:1 scale, but wider, more open, from where the sky is available and the water can be sensed by the type of vegetation.

Walking in again very pleasant and relaxing, needing for this to make larger steps than in areas where the path is marked.

15. Prunje Hill Entry
Ondulating dancing wet ground



Illustration 15.1 Behind the dike of Schelphoek, with landforms



Illustration 15.2 Map

Day 23rd June

Time 11.35 a.m. Dike dating after 1953

Place 51°41'25.28"N, 3°49'33.35"E
Altitude -1.7m (behind the dike; eyeview)

Notes The landscape is a desert. No people around. I get there by car. First time that an undulating landscape is visible without being dunes or sand accretion. First time time that the dike merges with the landscape towards inland

Today it is so rainy, so dark, so empty. I can't stay longer than five seconds in one spot. But here it comes that I discover, amidst the rain, the wind, the thunderous noise that merges it all these suggestive landforms and trees that move with the wind.

I come up slowly, through a path that is being taken over by grass spontaneously to the highest point I have accessed so far, in a sort of wide tunnel that surrounds me. The slopes are gentle, no more than 75 cm. high. When I walk, it is so soft under my feet, that all being covered in very intense green looks like a carpet that covers the ground, recalling the Irish landscapes.

I smell wetness, I feel the wetness in my bones, that dramatic sky whose clouds move very fastly, in almost white sky (different from yesterday, so blue in the end of the day). There are no reflections on the ground. And I am very very tiny in the middle of these strong forces of nature that reveal so intense today in this landscape.

16. Prunje Hill Top
Glorious bay



Illustration 16.1 Schelphoek mudflats, on the dike. Back of the dike area is open



Illustration 16.2 Map

Day 23rd June

Time 11.55 a.m. Dike dating after 1953

Place 51°41'29.32"N, 3°49'30.89"E
Altitude 7,5m (on top of the dike; eyeview)

Notes First time time that the dike merges with the landscape towards inland. Low tide. The tide expresses as it would in an estuary. Mudflats.

On top of the dike, with the ring dike embracing it. I expand my arms as well, mimicking the gesture the dike does with the sea. The sea is reflected on the sea, both grey, a bit gloomy. The shallow sea and the sand merge one into the other, drawing patterns on the surface, the sea caressing the sand, the sand caressing the sea.

In this spot, not being still located in the center of the ring dike, for the first time I experience a 360 degrees panorama in front of my eyes, without needing to turn my face to the left and to the right in order to draw the picture; all is in front of me, in what is considered a panorama, a higher point by which we observe or perceive. The wind is perpendicular to my face, not sideways, and as such, I position myself openly, fully conscious of all the parts of my body, all of them sensing at the same time. Openness, magnificent and impressive this round shape.

Far, almost not able to notice them, two people walk on the sand. Two very little spots in the landscape.

4. Phenomenological conclusions

A final conclusion of the descriptions :

- This landscape is about

Sea, Wind, Sky, Dike, shallow water and low vegetation;
Openness, Vastness, Exposure and Intimacy

- However, there are some areas that are similar in composition that provide very particular and unique feelings or experiences. We can detect five main landscape compositions:

land over water: smaller water elements, shallow, with less water fluctuation, in open fields

water over land: very large water elements, shallow but with larger water fluctuation, with animals present

transition zone: only the sea

natural landscape: after the dike failure of 1953, where nature has been allowed to express with the tides, forest, and soft surfaces

again land over water: smaller water elements, shallow, but picturesque

- The **nature development** is mainly a **visual phenomenon**: textures of the brackish vegetation, its colours, water elements and the birds. This nature development is untactile; there is no access to it except for some birdwatching towers (2) located within the nature development. In auditory terms it is about the birds nesting, and the only scent is the sea.

- The **dike** is the main element in the landscape that **allows to experience** it (pedestrians and cyclists).

- The **dike** becomes of extreme relevance for **embodying the landscape**. What makes most difference in perception is the **height** and **section** of the dike.

With the dike as material manifestation allowing perception, we can say that:

- The landscape composition provides very particular experiences. In the water-land, land-water nature areas it is about experiencing what the dike affords us: the sea interacting, murmuring with the wind, moving the grass, the murmur of the waves providing rhythm to the walking activity, the salty smell and foam: the exposure to these strong elements of nature by means of a dike that in the meanwhile, hides all what is behind it.

Water land nature occurs in inlaag, therefore more protected and so, the murmur of the elements ceases being that relevant and the visual experience becomes the most expressive one, focusing on inner water and land interacting.

Schelpoek however becomes shelter, joy, closeness, intimate, slow in motion but fast in change, appealing, and tactile; but this would not be so vivid if we were not to compare with other landscape compositions. Because it is due to this that we notice:

- how exposed we were in the path of the dike
- how rough and magnificent it is
- how untactile it is
- how rigid as landscape composition it is
- how enjoyable it is to be able to touch nature with the extension of our hands and legs, to walk on soft nature

- These landscape compositions are lasting for **long sections**. What is perceived becomes a regular perceptive pattern. And therefore, the landscape compositions can become **monotonous**.

- The intensity of those **murmurs** is decreasing when the height of the dike is getting lower. The most expressive experiences are available in the dike sections which are highest, where the dike is a huge element, the murmur strongest.

- At few spots the nature development shows, with its wide panoramas and shallow water elements due to changes in the section of the dike.

- These points are very appreciated because they represent change in the walking motion and also in what is perceived.

- **Tactility** is missing. Or an activity that makes you merge with, dive into the landscape, touch it, except for Schelpoek. So activity that helps in the tactile activity would be interesting. Otherwise a change in the dike section that becomes place, allowing to rest.

- **The dike divides as much as unifies**. In Prunje and Schelpoek the dike is a transition element that provides different walking possibilities, a rich variety. In the rest, it divides nature development from the sea.

- Some **protection** is required as well. The rigidity of the landscape becomes unbearable for pedestrians, for instance, in extreme windy conditions.

Conclusion

- These leads me to focus on the dike since it becomes the frame for accessing the landscape, but also determining element for how we experience the landscape. By means of the different sections of the dike facing the forces of nature differently, by means of the materiality of the dike giving us different experiences, it is intuited that the dike needs to be farther studied. And as such, it becomes object of study.

5. Method conclusion

This cahier is the tangible result of the *aesthetic investigation* carried out in the Southern coast of *Schouwen Duiveland*.

Filled with firm *intentions* from the beginning, whether those being achieved or not is an issue of major relevance for the research, and this can only be done through *self-reflection* on the process, method, and information gathered. Therefore, the reflection diverts into this direction:

"Has the method properly accomplished the intentions stated for the description of the aesthetic embodiment?"

Reflection and Conclusions on the method

Intention 1: describing the sensuous experience focused on how the diverse phenomenon of nature interact with the sensuous/aesthetic body

Restraints to intention 1: Is it not needed first to reflect upon the sensuous expression of the phenomena? Do I have an appropriate language or frame for systematically translating it? Rather not. When I don't have a language, I can't even consciously process the information in that specific approach.

If phenomena of nature need to be described from an aesthetic point of view, they require also to be thought of from an aesthetic perspective by the researcher, as expressive phenomenon as they are. The language used for describing it needs to correspond to this. Thinking of phenomena with an aesthetic language would be helpful: language that needs to be borrowed very likely from 'aesthetic or art field'.

Intention 2 & 3 can be together evaluated: give also privilege to the very first impressions that reveal the most expressive phenomenon of the landscape and find out the 'unexpected

localities and specificities'

Restraints to Intention 2 & 3: to track the unexpected localities and specificities has been impossible. It was already difficult to check the space even each 500 meters. Time is always limited in research, and in areas of large surface, as it is usual in nature development projects, to investigate the entire area becomes very difficult. Therefore, the method used is not successful enough from this view.

Conclusion

- Having in mind the reflections mentioned above, then, arises the need for becoming more concise with the analytic frame for the aesthetic embodiment in nature development.
- The aesthetic embodiment, at the same time, needs to be helped out/specified by means of a language that describes and represents the aesthetic expression of the different phenomenon of nature.
- In the attempt of giving a solution to the inadequacies of the method/language, and after exploring the processes as potential design material through both theory and design practice (Selvadson in Hansen, 2011) I come to the conclusion that there is the urge to come up with concepts that cover all that has been experienced and described in this booklet systematically. Aesthetic concepts that frame and cover the descriptions and experiences. Concepts that arise from contextuality of the site.
- The need for further studying the dike already mentioned reveals as one of the possible aesthetic concepts. However, it needs to be framed theoretically. These concepts need to be by means of their definitions able to frame the experiences. That is why the attempt is made on borrowing specific definitions from aesthetic literature and writings, intending to cover and frame the definitions as analysis and design material (Hansen, 2011).

6. Definition of aesthetic concepts

These *concepts* with their definitions concretize and gather the outcomes of the phenomenological study. The focus is on 'working with, instigating, probing, shaping and changing possible modes of representing and generating design' (Hansen, 2011).

The concepts are the next:

Limit and **Rhythm** (further explained in chapter 4)

Limit borrowed from aesthetic literature:

'where all important things occur'

'where one thing touches the other with out stopping being' (Chillida, 1991)

'the limit is the true protagonist of space' (Chillida, 1991)

Supporting the outcome of the aesthetic investigation, that around the dike occur the strongest experiences.

Rhythm both from aesthetic and scientific literature;

Dynamism (Lefebvre, 1991)

Serial features that install a sense of spatial belonging (Edensor, 2010)

Discovering rhythms means to find out the similarities and differences (Chillida, 1991)

Phenomena of nature reveal in different rhythms (Edensor, 2010)

The dike gives as a specific rhythm, the body contracting and decontracting, directly related to

its materiality. And its materiality, in the same way, is dependent on the forces of nature, to their intensity, the dike, its materiality, becoming specific safety response to it. The dike then, with the forces and elements encountering on it, and directly related to that intensity, is facilitator of specific rhythms. The act of walking, encounters these specificities on the dike, representing a cadence that needs to be further explored.

At the same time different phenomena of nature are expressed in different temporalities.

These are two concepts that represent space and time in a more context related frame, bridging theory and design, becoming phenomenological lenses with which to look at the landscape, as well as design material.

In order to enhance the experience, then, I will consider the limits existent in the southern coast of Schouwen Duiveland intending to depict what **rhythms** it reveals: the rhythms of nature, and its material rhythm.

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