

LOST DISTANCE – EYEWALK IN A CHINESE PAINTING

*“It was a traditional Chinese landscape painting with mountains and streams, done in Indian ink on a light, shaded scale that made the painting almost invisible. After having looked at the picture and let my eyes sink down into the almost unlit universe, I found an opening in it that became a kind of key to another conception of time, space, and body – and that put me on the track of spatial formations that may be described as “lost distance” and “rubber geometry” – in an attempt to attain breadth of view. For at the bottom of the picture, where one could follow – as though from a birds-eye view – a little path winding in and out between projecting rocks and thus wind one’s way upwards in the picture, the recognizable landscape disintegrated in the middle of the picture into a kind of “cloud”; technically, this was achieved by a delicate change in the soft and light brush strokes to small “chops” with the tip of the brush. Thus the cloud could also be regarded as an enlarged area of bacteria. And this membrane, this field of oscillation or this enlarged vanishing point – which might also bring to mind a flickering television screen caught between two channels – functioned like a time machine in which the journey through the landscape was accomplished without one’s body. Like a thought, the body – transparent and weightless – had crossed a great distance in one slow moment. Above the cloud the little path reappeared, only seen from below, but of the same breadth, as though **nothing** had happened.”*

Dorte Dahlin, Hamburg 1985

Else Marie Bukdahl: “The World of Reenchantment”. *Overlaps. North-Southeast*. P43. Edition Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE, 2000