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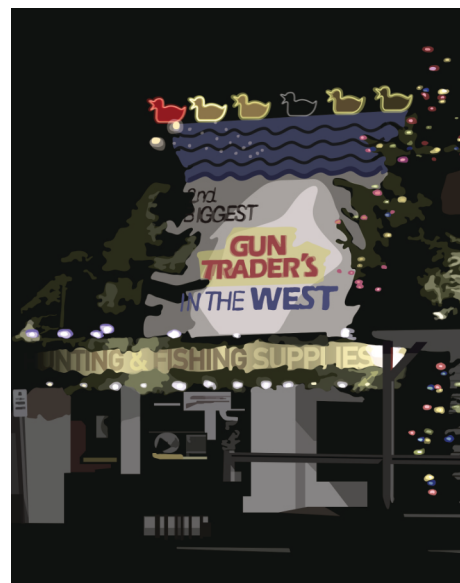
AN AMERICAN LANDSCAPE II (OR THE AMERICAN MUSICAL INDUSTRIAL ENAMELS)

What constitutes an American landscape? The phrase conjures wide-open spaces, iconic natural wonders and wholesome heartland towns across the USA. One might think of Thomas Cole's Hudson River School paintings, Ansel Adams's photographs, John Ford's Westerns, or even advertisements for Marlborough cigarettes and GMC trucks... A Sylvester Stallone action movie from the 1980s, maybe not. However, as Alain Bublex demonstrates with *An American Landscape II*, the backdrop for the original John Rambo movie (*First Blood*, 1982) is indeed a reflection, celebration and perpetuation of a particular vision of America's landscapes – one that is heavily informed by art history.

To create *An American Landscape II*, Bublex digitally redrew scenes from *First Blood*, faithfully recreating camera movements and cuts while eliminating all human presence. In removing the actors from this quintessential action movie, Bublex lets the scenery engulf the original Panavision widescreen format and emerge as the film's true American hero. The forty-minute animation moves between majestic snowcapped mountains, an archetypal Main Street, lakeside cabins festooned with hanging laundry, and dirt roads winding through birch tree forests. An original score, including ambient bird chirps and rustling leaves, accentuates the intrinsic drama of the landscape itself in all its alternately idyllic, nostalgic and menacing glory.

A selection of framed stills from *An American Landscape II* highlights compositional similarities between certain backdrops in *First Blood* and works by nineteenth and twentieth century American landscape painters. Spectacular mountain vistas recall the expansive majesty captured in the Hudson River School paintings of the White Mountains, while more focused vignettes depicting a small coppice and an empty gas station evoke the melancholic musings of American regionalists like Charles Burchfield and Edward Hopper. Nightscapes featuring glowing neon lights bring to mind Robert Cottingham's fascination with signage and other urban Americana. Even the most abstract of the stills, which is based on a scene in the movie where street lights begin to flicker out because of a blackout, harkens back to some of Georgia O'Keeffe's most sublime urban nocturnes. By reframing *First Blood* within an art historical context, Bublex points out that the true marvel of the American landscape is that it owes just as much to cultural construction as it does to natural phenomena.

Mara Hoberman



15.10

20.11

2021

OPENING

Thursday, October 14
6 PM to 9 PM



AN AMERICAN
LANDSCAPE

Produced by Alain Bublex
Directed by Alain Bublex
Music by Alain Bublex
COPRODUCTION
FUNDATION
CINEMA