Economies of the residual: A Theory of Landscape as a Fold
Itinerary for the Banco de España collection.
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Forest Remains

Among Karl Marx's earliest writings were several essays on the deliberations of the regional political assembly of the Rhineland. They were published in 1842 in the *Rheinische Zeitung* of which Marx had become the editor shortly after completing his studies. In essence, these were works of journalism, discussing the many and varied issues debated by the assembly. However, Marx presented them as topics that were symptomatic of the historical moment in time — freedom of the press, divorce, communal reforms, etc. One out of all these articles on local politics is especially important. It deals with a bill to criminalise the collection of fallen wood from the local forests for firewood and reclassify it as theft. There had long existed a kind of common-law right to the free use of waste matter, whereby the poorer peasantry, were allowed to move about unhindered on private land, gathering fallen branches. However, the bill on the division of rural property in the Rhineland proposed to have the custom classed as a crime.

Marx's article of 25 October 1842, *Debates on the Law on Theft of Wood,* is peppered with quotes from the debate in the *Diet* (the regional political assembly). With a mix of sorrow and irony, he remarks on the sophistic pettiness of the discussion on the use of the word 'theft' to refer to a harmless, socially accepted custom. This same ironic way of addressing fallacious arguments can also be found in some of his great later works, although it has often been overlooked by more earnest Marxist scholars. These early texts also reveal another side to Marx's work, suggesting that there is also a breath of poetic justice beneath the science of the political economy he sought to construct.
'The gathering of fallen wood and the theft of wood are therefore essentially different things,' he tells us. Turning to the issue of semantic misrepresentation, he goes on: 'You should have called it murder of wood and punished it as murder. The law is not exempt from the general obligation to tell the truth. It is doubly obliged to do so, for it is the universal and authentic exponent of the legal nature of things. Hence the legal nature of things cannot be regulated according to the law; on the contrary, the law must be regulated according to the legal nature of things'. Marx noted that the structures protecting the landowner's private property were gaining ground through forms of dispossession that entailed not only the abolition of ancestral customs linked to the sustenance of the most deprived classes in society, but also the prohibition of poverty itself and the privatisation of natural resources beyond any possibility of real exploitation.
As well as the theoretical and historical importance of these texts – which one might easily consider somewhat peripheral in such an impressive oeuvre – the subject matter and the way Marx addresses it are especially significant today, when the environmental crisis that grips us has become a topic of global debate. From those apparently insignificant and local issues we obtain a powerful image of a process that today affects matters of international law. There is something prophetic about this

work, such as when Marx writes: 'We demand for the poor a customary right, and indeed one which is not of a local character but is a customary right of the poor in all countries. We go still further and maintain that a customary right by its very nature can only be a right of this lowest, propertyless and elemental mass'.

The young Marx's article also raises an implicit relationship with the landscape, insofar as the act of gathering fallen wood, of clearing the forests, in which the surplus of natural organic matter is reutilised, offering direct benefits for individuals without resources and indirect benefits for the owners of the land – suggests a figure of enormous poetical and political significance. Almost inevitably, we imagine in our mind's eye a landscape peopled by figures hunched over the ground, hugging the bundles of firewood they have gathered. Marx's chronicle of the assembly debates contains an involuntary image that transcends legal arguments, embedding itself firmly in our imagination. That reverence shown to the gatherers deep within the forest, that form of human fold set against the rest of the natural, against the offering dropped by the trees as a seasonal gift or part of a biological cycle, suggests a correction of the scales we employ to reinterpret our relationship with the environment. The landscape is likewise something that is seen up close, like some miniature diorama, in the undergrowth that becomes a scale replica of the protective canopy overhead. It is also the enlarged texture of the weave of the branches, the shape of the conflict that appears in the tangle we unravel as we pass through this wild territory. This descent to the proximity of the earth is presented as a humble offering and an exercise of dignity, but also as an interstitial space in which the traces of the human drama are hidden. In a way, it reminds us that any coexistence with the environment involves an effort to yield to the territory, to bend before it, in order precisely to occupy it within its folds.

This relationship of different scales in our proximity to the territory, the corporal choreography of labour, the notion of the fold and other elements we can draw from the young Marx's writings are echoed in some of the poetic aspects of contemporary art. They are intended as an interpretation of the stratum that reproduces certain patterns in today's art. And we can use it to find the traces we need to build a story that plays out across some of the pieces in the Banco de España Collection. And it is on them that this itinerary focuses; on the figures that we intuit, conceptually and symbolically, in a selection of items ranging from minute attention to detail to the poetics of the fragile and the residual and to revisions of Western concepts of aesthetics under new conditions of production and enunciation. They are all new declinations, transforming the notion of landscape within a geopolitical consciousness, in a manner that Marx already perceived in relation to the rights of the poor. On a global scale, this transformation evokes – to a more or less literal extent – cultural and social phenomena without which we could not give full meaning to a notion such as landscape today, which is so overwhelmed by the Western tradition that has created it. It is itself a Eurocentric, in some cases clearly colonial, notionfrom which we can scarcely free ourselves, and yet in its variations it can mutate into an exercise of awareness on the territories and forms of life that we represent to ourselves.

In this selection, Magdalena Correa's photos of La Rinconada, the gold-mining settlement in Peru at 5600 metres above sea level, taken between 2012 and 2016,

clearly depict the transformation of the territory. The series could be seen as encapsulating the relationship with the landscape, incorporating the residue or marginality of the scenes she photographs. In ***Mountain and Rubbish*** (2012-2016), for instance, that relationship can be seen in the contrast between the epic vision of the snow-capped mountains and the landfill that seems poised to invade them. Today, we have created mountains of rubbish in the Peruvian Andes and the wasteland of any European city. Here, the waste hangs like a shadow over an entire population devoted solely to finding vestiges of the canonical metal of wealth. Waste and wealth are closely linked in the dynamics of extraction; the landscape is the scene separated out by human action, by the acting of searching, finding and discarding.

In another of Correa's pictures, ***Women*** (2012-2016), female workers are shown expurgating the arid terrain, with that same gathering movement, bent to the ground by their tough labour. Against the backdrop of an earthen embankment that appears to bury them, their bodies fold in their painstaking search amidst the stones. The search for gold (if that is what these women are looking for), might seem to contrast with the humble act of collecting fallen firewood; but here it is articulated in the same gesture one might have seen among the Rhenish wood-gatherers Marx alluded to. The human presence here plays out against a landscape entirely devoid of vegetation, under conditions of penitentiary isolation. Correa's photos serve to reveal these almost hallucinatory scenes from a corner of the planet practically cut off from all access to the media.

The collection includes two photographs by Willie Doherty, both depicting tangled branches that apparently conceal something hidden beneath, an idea that is reinforced by the titles, ***Beneath the Surface I*** and ***II*** (1999). The pictures hark back to the territory in which Doherty photographed the remnants of the Northern Irish political conflict. We see close-up shots of branches at ground level, evoking aesthetically complex sensations. Amidst the foliage, we can make out the living breath of the forest's dampness, the rough texture of the branches and their visual labyrinth, and the abstract patterns formed by the plants in their singularity. However, as the title reminds us, we are also looking at something beneath the surface, something hidden, an unwelcome surprise waiting to be revealed. That experience, that suspicion that every landscape hides a conflict, a story and, probably, a grave, is part of our archaeological impulse; it forms part of the visual programme that gives meaning to the concept. It is an intellectual mechanism that forms part of the way we look; it is an inevitable feature of the cognitive structure of the concept of landscape.

We know that the depiction of landscape evokes a narrative, and this undoubtedly implies different stratigraphically superimposed pasts. Between each one, in the folds of that sedimentary time, lies a drama or a loss. In semiotic terms, landscape is a primordial container of narrative, the condition of possibility of the stage on which a plot will be played out, whether it is the story of the far-off place in which children's stories are set, or of our own location as subjects in a deferred temporality. However, the undercurrents, that which is concealed beneath the apparently tranquil surface, are not always revealed; and then the semiotic effect of looking at a stage, the result of geological and human time, will trigger a remote suspicion as to its own opacity.

This mechanism can clearly be seen in a number of artworks created since the late twentieth century, such as Bleda & Rosa's groundbreaking series of photographs entitled *Battlefields* (1994-2016). The Banco de España Collection has two of their pieces from the *Handbook* series. Also of note is their ***Handbook. Notes on War and Revolution. I Trafalgar*** (2011-2013), containing pictures of different positions at the Cape Trafalgar near which the historic naval battle was fought, beneath a selection of nine sea views that would be unrecognisable without the accompanying text. There is also a reproduction of the official account submitted by Vice-Admiral Villeneuve following the French defeat. Once again, beneath the apparent peace of the horizon lies an undercurrent of violence buried beneath the land and water.

German photographer Jochen Lempert has been photographing fragments of nature, often eschewing any angles that might provide us with some wider context about the fauna or flora and concentrating instead on the tiniest of details. His technique is particularising, focusing as he does on the specific form of a given specimen, in an approach akin to the tradition of Karl Blossfeldt that challenges the ambition of more contemplative wide-angle views. In ***Photosynthesising*** (2009), however, he widens the focus slightly to give a minimal view of leaves falling from a tree against a background constructed by human action — a wall that serves as a screen onto which the capricious shadowplay is projected. This windfall of foliage is a reference to the production of residue, imbued by Lempert's camera with poetic significance, in an act of both visual and symbolic economy — a celebration of precariousness, one might say. The falling organic matter becomes residual rain that summons us and incorporates us as inhabitants of an interior landscape, folded to the singular detail.

Landscape as a fold

The notion of landscape implies the depiction of a fold. The premise that every landscape can be a fold makes us an integral part of our surroundings. It is not simply a geological whim whereby the valleys and mountains, the dunes and the spaces bounded by the mountain ranges are drawn — all, ultimately, as folds — but the elementary relationship between two overlapping planes joined by a (more or less) winding horizon line. The axis of the infinite geometries of the landscape will always be that conceptual fold with which we position ourselves in it, either as spectators or as gatherers of firewood. However, the mathematics of the landscape will not be binary, but multiplicative. Between the planes there will be no dissociation, but an infinite adherence that never fully becomes detached before us. Considering landscape from the perspective of the fold allows us to overcome the representational tradition which saw it as a complete and stable scene, arranged according to some visual hierarchy with its axes and fugues. It allows us to reinterpret it in a more unstable and topological fashion. Whereas for Gilles Deleuze the fold is not a limit between two planes, but the movement that brings them closer and makes them coexist without merging them, we can view landscape as a surface in a perpetual state of inflection: an intermediate zone where the territory, the gaze and the body are progressively coupled. Thus, the distant overhead view from a weather satellite and the proximity of a soil fragment are not remote extremes, but modulations of the same field of

perception. Ultimately, they are different degrees of curvature in the surface on which the landscape experience is etched.

The body, then, is not an external observer but the very support of the fold — whether it is looking down from above, raising its face to look up from below or leaning over the undergrowth. These are not opposite positions, but vectors of the same folding operation. The landscape experience plays out in this transition of scales, where the gaze oscillates between abstraction and tactile proximity. The insignificant ceases to be a subordinate residue of a total landscape to become a place of sensitive condensation. Thus, the landscape is not so much a representation or scene, as a topological process, a shared torsion between the territory, the gaze and the body. There is an unremitting temporality in this process that expresses the gradation, the focus, the approach and the distance with which we situate ourselves before the space.

Thus, from among the many possible positions we can take in the fold, new technological systems of observation frequently place us in the aerial plane that rotates, moves and emits fleeting and unrepeated fragments. ***From serie 17 position P6*** (2007), by Joana Pimentel, is one of those images that takes an aerial perspective to show another form of contemporary landscape. It is a specific avatar of our current relationship with the landscape. The spiral of clouds is a clear sign of the storm pattern suggested by the weather forecasts, based on the contingency of a kind of sublime, antagonistic to that which, at ground level, is proposed by the folds in the terrain, in the minimum things that offer us close links with nature. The piece is one of a series of images with the same pattern. Over the image is superimposed a rhythmically paced caption, '*stop-ping the ro-ta-tion of the ro-ta-ta-ble hou-sing (breath)*', and a rhythmic and minimalist musical notation. The combined result is an enigmatic set of instructions reminiscent of some act of performance art.

With its acquisition of Javier Núñez Gasco's series of four mobile pictures ***Open Sea: Phygital experience*** (2024), the Banco de España has become the repository of a temporal depiction of a virtually generated wave. Yet this is only the visual surface of a work that has two ontologies, one material – related to the usual logic of the art market – and the other virtual — associated with a new economy of digital objects. The fragments acquired by the bank are a recording of four of the twenty-four hours of an artificially recreated representation of the movement of the sea, specifically, from noon to four o'clock in the afternoon. The images are hypnotic fragments of a section of sea without a horizon, centring on the rise and fall of the surface. They are part of a larger mosaic covering all the hours of the day. Time is the only value that cannot be exchanged for other forms of wealth. In this it shares in the topology of the landscape fold precisely as a phenomenon that is not only spatial but also temporal, economic and virtual, but which also provides a larger plane as a background. The work is fragmented and distributed via computer media, but it is made up of particles encrypted as non fungible tokens (NFTs), so that each piece of this virtual sea is unique and has its own trading value depending on the market among potential investors willing to share in its tokenisation. The digital certificate is a sort of stamp collectively protected by a blockchain system in the new global economic scene. Indeed, the 'open

sea' referred to in the piece's title and visual appearance might also have something to do with this condition. It appeals to a collective scenario of validator nodes that guarantee its authenticity and any fluctuations in its value over the course of time. At the same time, it is also a version of a tradeable security operating outside the legitimising protection of central banks such as the Banco de España, because it does not need to be backed by a specific state currency or national reserve. Like the open sea, it is in another place and in another temporality in the ontological fold of value, it is a residue, with an arbitrary appearance, whose digital structure cannot be altered, but whose monetary translation may range from the negligible to the incalculable.

From the worm's eye view, with another way of dimensioning time, Pieter Vermeersch's ***Painting #24*** (2007), depicts a subtle gradation in light across seven monochromatic planes. The seven paintings form a sequence; in their minimal expression, they are a credible experience of changes in light from the atmosphere. Indeed, the work begins with a photographic elaboration of natural light that he then transfers to the pictorial plane with a precision that blurs the boundaries between the separate supports. In this way, he creates a sequenced experience, paced to the cadence of geological time, like that dialogue with the unstoppable rotation of the earth enigmatically proposed by Pimentel. Thus, one of the properties of this landscape condition is a temporality associated with the fold, because it only shows itself through a sometimes subtle and imperceptible gradation.

This attention to the central idea is in some ways matched by Mireya Masó's ***Washing Away Time*** (2001), juxtaposing two photographs taken from slightly different angles in a London park, so that in one a stump is positioned in front of a complete tree. Like some kind of reintegration or cure, the two photographs shift the narrative point of view almost indiscernibly in two acts, reinforcing a vision in which the aim is not to retrieve the tree's lost branches, but to see it in all its former completeness at an earlier stage of its biological cycle. The process of washing away time referred to in the title also involves erasing that temporality, sweeping us towards a certain restitution within a natural cycle in which we are active and reconstructive subjects.

In an object-related logic associated with collage, Alfredo Alcaín quite literally makes a forest floor in autumn out of tailings of wood — in other words processed biological waste imbued here with a new life. However, in ***Autumn Starts in the Forest*** (1989) that almost toy-like literalness returns metaphorically, presented here as a fragment of the leafy blanket spread across the floor of forests and parks in autumn. The painstaking way the fragments are assembled provides a recognisable visual result that speaks to us, in a material register, of this seasonal tapestry. The woodchip, that leftover of human action, is also reincorporated into an intuitive and recognisable imaginary form with a deliberate economy of resources. The simple phenomenon of the seasonal leaf fall can be seen as the offering up of a surplus, a spectacle we experience as a sign of passing time. The individual shaping of each fragment goes to make up this small picture depicting the leaf carpet of any forest in autumn. It is another season in that descent of the fold in which the almost artisanal constructive corporeality places the point of view in a symbolic continuum with the aerial perspective.

Since the development of genre painting, from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, the pictorial tradition itself developed this tactile and material function with a high degree of technical sophistication. The collection contains some magnificent examples from that period — Pierre Patel the Elder, George Elgar Hick, Ramón Casas, Santiago Rusiñol and José Beulas, to name just a few particularly important examples for the construction of a landscape-centred language. However, contemporary art has drawn on diverse techniques to show that there are infinite ways of depicting the symbolic and semantic aspects of landscape pictorially and materially, and these in turn fold the pictorial tradition itself over onto its elementary principles. Among the most outstanding works in this dislocation of the inheritance of the landscape are some that employ a register based on the precariousness of line and drawing, offering images in which one can identify both landscape and fold. Adrianne Gallinari's ***Landscape*** (2007) is a panoramic view that contains the sinuous legacy of topographical maps, the connection between contour lines and the almost textual appearance of a plan of an imaginary territory. In the resulting plastic conformation, based on this tangled structure, objects and figures stand on an undulating territory acting as the resonant words of a text. The link between word and drawing becomes even more direct, generating an immersive experience in which we decode the lines in an unmistakably spatial sensation combining this configuration between the imaginary territory of the surface of the canvas, the gaze that can get lost in the maze of lines and the evocation of the body that has meticulously traced them. The resulting effect of an imaginary archetypal place enables us to associate it with some narrative drive that will also be one of the semiotic properties of the landscape.

The Voice of the Landscape

In every fold there is a voice. It would be impossible to access the underlying space without noting a change in the pressure in our ears. And whatever its cause, what our ears perceive is a sort of specific voice from the intermediate space. This is what happens when we put a shell to our ear (two folds held together) and it also occurs when we enter a cave, because both speaking and hearing require a certain hollowness and a fold. The forest itself and the empty desert give a voice to the wind that depends on the specific matter being blown around – leaves, sand, fog, emptiness, and so on. This voice is not only a soundscape, but a sound of the landscape as a place of association in which we find ourselves or which we witness. If the fold is a topological figure involving heterogeneous planes, the voice can be interpreted as the resonance that emerges in that in-between: not an interior contribution, but a sensitive manifestation of the fold as such. The voice is not extracted from the landscape, it inhabits it from within, it makes it vibrate. There emerges a place of listening at that point where territory, gaze and body are all folded.

Íñigo Royo has explored this relationship between landscape and the sound that inhabits it. In ***The Human Voice*** (2000), he applies the same set of instructions to fifteen different spaces; after performing a particular action, he takes a photo of the landscape in which it has taken place. As the text accompanying the work explains: 'Accompanied by a number of people, I go to a wide, solitary area, as quiet as possible.

Once there, I position my companions at some point in the space and invite them to talk to each other. As they do, I walk away from them in a random direction until I can no longer hear any trace of their voices. Then I find a third place halfway between those two points from which I can photograph the distance that separates them as accurately as possible'.

The work in the Banco de España Collection is the result of one of these carefully scripted actions. The place here is an unidentified forest, which acts as an anonymous scenario with the potential to evoke other scenes the viewer has seen or experienced. However, the substantial element of this piece – like other scripted works performed in order to obtain a material result – is that the actual description of the procedure forms part of the artwork, acting as an account and turning it into a self-referencing narrative artifact. And it is this narrative component that gives meaning to the resulting image; what sustains our interpretative association with the work is that missing story in the space (forest, desert, plain, etc.) — unexplained, yet capable of giving a certain illusion of meaning.

Just as the phototextuality of 1960s and 1970s concept art gave the pictorial a narrative element, a legacy of stories occurring within the landscape becomes part of our relationship with it. In Smithson's walks, Graham's mock reports and Ruscha's counted gasoline stations, this was a specific narrative of the new landscape painting that is a perfectly identifiable part of the art history of the second half of the twentieth century. After all, the landscape is the place in which the great — and not so great — epic narratives play out. It is the first vision that locates the momentum of the plot. We there recognise the foundational premise that every landscape is a narrative detonation. In the decontextualised ambiance of *The Castle*, Kafka devotes a few pages to a description of the surroundings that greet the land surveyor, victim of a place seized by the imperative structure of the kingdom: 'It was late in the evening when K. arrived. The village was deep in snow. The Castle hill was hidden, veiled in mist and darkness, nor was there even a glimmer of light to show that a castle was there. On the wooden bridge leading from the main road to the village K. stood for a long time gazing into the illusory emptiness above him.' Indeed, any awareness of the landscape is born out of an intermittency between the journey, the subtle change in perspective, and the act of halting in front of things. It is in that moment of stopping that listening appears. As Jean Luc Nancy wrote: 'A landscape is always the suspension of a passage... It cuts out a place for the withdrawal of presence, for the thought of presence as withdrawal from itself'.

In a similar vein, Vasco Araújo's short film ***The Path*** (2009) shows a gypsy father and son roaming the mown fields after the harvest has been brought in. As they talk, they halt and then keep walking. The stills from the film show fragments of this narrative on the dispossession that pushes people into nomadism, forcing them into a life of goalless wandering. The caption on one of the pictures reads: 'We do not return to our land, which is no longer ours / The land does not belong to us nor we to it / There is no land, there is no night, there is no'. A poetic form is established in the interrupted narrative passage, playing out in a sequence of images and in turn standing as a vestige of the organic framework of an audiovisual work. As in so many literary passages, the

breath comes from the very severity of the territory, already more than just landscape. Like the stark locations depicted in Juan Rulfo's short story *They Have Given Us the Land*, the road is hostile and the destination uncertain: 'After walking for so many hours without coming upon even the shadow of a tree, not even the seed of a tree, not even a root of anything, you can hear dogs barking. / You might sometimes think, in the middle of this edgeless road, that there would be nothing after it; that you would find nothing on the other side, at the end of this plain split with cracks and dried arroyos. But yes, there's something. There's a village. You can hear the dogs barking and feel the smoke in the air and relish the smell of people as if it were a hope.'

Carnac, 1 August 2008. History Lesson, (2008), one of Jorge Ribalta's series in the collection, is a sequence of photos of a guided tour of the megalithic standing stones at Carnac in Brittany. The format is similar to Ribalta's other series in the collection: sequences of black-and-white images in regular formats, arranged so that the entire ensemble is visible at the same time. The photographs are arranged with the cadence of a narrative reportage. Over the fifteen pictures we see the group gathering, the guide giving explanations as some of the people listen, the group setting off and walking around the area. The camera then heads off in search of different spots on the site. We see the menhirs themselves, fragmentary shots of groups of stones, apparently adhering to their own order of undeciphered signs. We also see fragments of a landscape that seems indifferent to this celebration of the stones' historical value. The opacity of these megaliths is presented in documentary form, with the prehistoric stones juxtaposed with traffic signs, fences and areas in which the current settlers can live. The landscape, marked out with prehistoric signs, is an open-air archaeological site in which the monumental quality of the stones and their historical value determine the identity of the territory. History and prehistory become blurred in the intentional arrangement of the formations; photography exercises a sort of archaeology, which can do nothing more than reflect the way the landscape is sealed off from any convincing explanation of its remote past.

This focus on the archaeological drive, duplicated in the documentary function through reference to objects and traces of the past, can also be seen in another of Ribalta's series in the collection: ***Petit Grand Tour*** (2007-2008). The same programmed approach is visible in this earlier work, in the correlation between the archaeological site or object and the tourist industry. It can be seen in the element of heritage or identity acquired by these trophies, seized from the past where they were buried by time. The documentary function of photography replicates the act of archaeological recovery by offering paths for a critical deconstruction of the issues surrounding tourism, the consolidation of institutional symbols and the subordinate activity of work around cultural industries. And the whole industry of tourism was first forged in the prestige of those who journeyed to southern Europe, driven by an aesthetic awareness of the picturesque. Like artists operating on the memory of the landscape, in these images we relive the opacity of the document through the desire for meaning involved in the images. Ribalta has long championed documentary culture, seeking to get back to its historical origins, inspired by 'the need to represent the anonymous and disempowered citizenry, the demos, in the era of mass communication that began in the first third of the century'.

In a register that is closer to abstract pictorialism, Axel Hütte's photographs, ***Yuste I*** (2001) and ***Yuste II (Fog)*** (2002), return to the oak forest, beneath a historical memory spectrally housed between the trunks imprisoning the frame. Two images taken a year apart show only the marbled trunks and gold or red ground of autumn. In each one, the carpet of leaves and fog alternate as texture and atmosphere. They could have been taken in any September, like the September of 1558 when Emperor Charles V died at the Monastery of Yuste. These photos take us back to the La Vera region, to the monastery and to one of the most decisive moments in the history of the Spanish monarchy — Charles' withdrawal following his abdication in favour of his son, Philip II. The emperor ordered that Titian's *The Glory* (1551-1554) (commissioned some years before) be brought to him at the monastery and asked to see it shortly before his death. The greater part of the picture is an almost delirious mass of human figures, representing some of the king's relatives, ascending to meet God and Christ. However, almost crushed into the bottom of the painting is a narrow strip with a miniature landscape, where diminutive witnesses observe the encounter playing out above. In Hütte's photographs, far from this desire for glory, we return to the place where the memory of the kings left its mute stratum, now transfigured into fog and narrative.

The forests of La Vera might be very similar to the woodland through which those Rhineland wood gatherers wandered. They left few traces behind them, other than in the philosophical locale provided by Marx. The very fact that the Banco de España has its own art collection means that those artworks form part of a heritage linked to the economic and symbolic capital the bank represents as an institution. The symbolic function cannot be dissociated from the institutional function and its system of guarantees. And thus, along with the honorific adulation reflected in the portraits of the different governors and the sumptuary pieces received from different branches of the state, many of the pieces in the collection lead us to the narratives of the minor. This focus on the minimum is at once residual and surplus; it is a leftover, surplus to what might appear strictly necessary. Because in an updated, global division of labour, we need to focus on the residual, on that which – like the fallen branches – becomes a metaphor of a dispossession that takes refuge in the symbolic protection of memory.