

## *Periphery and Horizon Linkages*

### *To Erieta*

The desire to encompass within her gaze vast spaces—of heaven and earth—encourages Erieta Attali to strive towards an ideal of global observation, and embark on a quest that is unending. But is photography linked to the project of an endless description? In fact, the postulate of description is no more than an illusion. Description is not, or rather is no longer, what is expected of literature, any more than it is of photography. Rather than description, it would be more appropriate to speak of a duty of creation: a new way of seeing, or a perspective that opens up from an unexpected angle; and from this novel viewpoint, not the aesthetic effect of clichés or the artifacts of photographic technique, but what could be termed accommodation. The word should be interpreted here in an optical sense: choice of the correct distance; adjustment of the planes; balance of light and shade. But, the word has a double meaning: it refers to the process of accommodating, that is both consenting and coming to an arrangement.

What is at issue with the landscape we behold is no different from any other human undertaking whose meaning and consistency we might wish to comprehend. But now, from the edges of the world, do we comprehend the orb as a system, or do we embrace such immensities with the meaning of a totality? This is not what landscape or its images ask of us; nor is it what works of art expect of us. What they offer us is a horizon. Not just one that opposes the sky to the plain or the curves of the hills, but one that accompanies each movement, each intention, every choice of direction; it defines the limit, nearby or far away, that separates the visible world from all that is not part of it. From this perspective, the insistent presence of the horizon signifies more than just an opening up to the different geographical scales of a region. What is beyond the horizon will forever recede before the navigator, the observer or the wanderer. But this relative line teaches us something, and obliges us to think, that is, to doubt that what belongs to mankind is only given to us in the self-evident forms of the sensible world. The horizon in space and time inscribes the visible world within a circle that is greater than it.

The series of images by Erieta conjure up the idea of accommodation in the double visual and artistic sense of the word. The question is not so much: what is the world that photography beholds and embraces? Nor: what are the architectural landmarks she seeks to track down or capture? But: from how close and with what sharpness of focus? Only then does an operational poetics come into play, one that involves using either a distant viewpoint or a reflective close up, aiming far into the depth of natural context, raising or lowering the line of horizon, harvesting gorgeous crops of light. It can never be stressed enough just how aware of the photographer's gestures and movements the image makes us: it is they that are the source of emotion.