



**External
Space**

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Lynn Canyon
Adam Waldron-Blain
May 7 – June 18, 2013

In 1999 Peter Land created a work entitled *Survival Kit*, the kit was labeled “FOR COMFORT – Device for putting things into perspective,” and included a bottle of whiskey, a glass, and a star telescope. For every potential bad moment in your life, Land’s survival kit advised “Drink a bottle of whiskey, take a look at the stars, and get things back into perspective.” A romantic notion, Land’s kit encourages us to get drunk and let the vastness of the starry sky remind us just how insignificant we are in the face of all that beauty. Rather than throwing us into despair, this revelation is intended to be a comforting one, for as much as our problems may seem insurmountable those same problems are just a blip in the history of the universe.

Often misunderstood as some form of beauty, the sublime includes a combination of both awe and terror, and the beauty in the sublime is achieved through the presence of both of those qualities in equal measure, something that is overwhelming to look at. As in the above example, we find beauty (and therefore comfort) in staring at the stars because of the way that it makes us feel smaller, invisible, and insignificant.

Adam Waldron-Blain’s *Lynn Canyon*, 2012, is equal parts beautiful and sublime. Shown on a loop the video provides a contemplative and meditative reflection with the sounds of rushing water and occasional winds rushing past the static camera. Faint violin sounds, elusive in the rush of the water, reach the viewer as the artist plays in response to his surroundings. At times, it sounds like the violin even when the artist has left the screen, phantom music mixing and melding with the sound of the water. Waldron-Blain’s presence in the landscape draws attention to the sheer beauty of his surroundings, his playing of the violin is all but drowned out by nature’s own symphony. The work makes use of the tropes of romanticism in landscape art, presenting a single figure against the vast beauty of the natural world, and yet at the same time genuine emotion is wholly pulled out of the viewer, overwhelming and demanding an emotional response.

-- Amber Landgraff