

*Hiker, Painter,
Diasporic
Picture Maker:*

*Artistic Integrity
and Critical
Regionalism in the
Margins of Canada's
Parks Discourse*

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Dans cet essai, je mets en relation les œuvres de David Kaarsemaker et Zinnia Naqvi avec les concepts de régionalisme, dans l'histoire de l'art canadien, et d'« intégrité écologique », dans les stratégies de gestion des parcs nationaux canadiens. Je développe une interprétation phénoménologique de leurs travaux, en actualisant les termes employés par Heidegger dans ses écrits sur l'environnement, pour mieux expliquer les identités coloniales réflexives de Kaarsemaker et Naqvi. En m'appuyant brièvement sur l'exemple de Greg Curnoe et sa conception tout aussi critique de lui-même en tant que colon, je propose une approche du régionalisme qui laisse place à des réflexions sur le déplacement, l'intrusion et l'aliénation, les privilèges et la complicité des colons dans l'art contemporain canadien.

INTRODUCTION

In his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1950), Martin Heidegger gets impressive philosophical mileage out of Vincent van Gogh’s painting of well-worn boots. The goal of the journey is an account of the origin of the work—any work of art—in the details of van Gogh’s. His reading of *A Pair of Shoes* (1886) is keyed, accordingly, to general terms such as the “thingly character of the work,” its “formed matter,” and its content, that, in the course of the meditation are identified with equipment, or the “equipmentality” by which an entire world of the peasant who toiled in the boots is disclosed to the viewer.¹ Aside from the philosopher’s rapturous tone, what lingers in memory is his effort to weave together elements of the painting that fall on the side of nature (i.e., the physical world), on the one hand, and culture (i.e., the work’s artifice and symbolism), on the other hand, into an aesthetic whole, one that confers a kind of integrity on the artist Van Gogh, the imagined peasant subject of his painting, and Heidegger himself as the viewer.

In this paper, I argue that the wielded and pictured equipment, to use Heidegger’s terms, of the painter David Kaarsemaker and the photographer Zinnia Naqvi similarly weave together cultural and natural features of Canada’s national parks and tourist sites. Following Heidegger’s more ambitious philosophical aims, I analyze the artistic and ethical subject formation of these two artists that emerges from such mediated encounters. But quite unlike Heidegger’s romantic, agrarian subject, these artists picture a fraught settler colonial subject’s relationship with the land in Canada’s national parks and tourist sites. While the philosopher does not consider the political stakes of the relationship between land and those who inhabit and cultivate it, such stakes are addressed in Naqvi’s and Kaarsemaker’s evocations of conflict, trespass, and alienation. Updating the phenomenological approach of Heidegger, and with a full acknowledgment of its troubling ethical blindspots, I argue that Naqvi and Kaarsemaker picture a grappling with their presence on the land as “space invaders,” seeking harmony and belonging but very often in “the wrong place.”²

Heidegger’s projection of *Dasein* (literally “there-being,” the term he gives for the human subject in his earlier work) into those shoes was pointed out in what one writer called a philosophical “rumble” involving the art historian Meyer Shapiro and the philosopher Jacques Derrida.³ To be sure, Van Gogh’s picture is pressed into philosophical service by Heidegger at the expense of a reflection on his own act of framing (for Derrida), and with little regard for the art-historical and biographical context of the painting (for Shapiro).⁴ What is salient about the reading here is another sense of “projection” for Heidegger, namely the “thrown-projection” of *Dasein*, or its earth-bound “being-toward-death,” in a relation of “care” to the things and people in its midst.⁵ This wholistic, or existential-phenomenological picture of the subject in a knowing relation to its time-limited earthly existence, and to the things and people it encounters during its stay, informs the sense of artistic and moral integrity I examine in this paper.

The integrative and occasionally disintegrative views of the world in the art of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi are responsive to the history, terrain, and

cultural politics of Canada's national parks and tourist sites.⁶ The cultivated land of the peasant is to be contrasted with the protected land of the Bruce Trail, Beausoleil, and elsewhere for Kaarsemaker, and the spectacle of Niagara Falls and Miniature Village in Southwestern Ontario for Naqvi. Unlike the romanticized agrarian subject of van Gogh's painting, the views of these artists can be traced back to their shared self-understanding as settlers in Canada on stolen land. Their reflexivity updates and politicizes Heidegger's more narrowly existential sense of *Dasein's thrownness* into the world, or in his own terms "the facticity of its being delivered over" to that world.⁷ The "delivery" of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi, an American-born white artist, and a diasporic Pakistani-Canadian artist, respectively, into the places they reflect upon in their work is occasioned by their parents' decisions to settle in Canada. Their often-conflicted reflections on that circumstance are, however, entirely their own.

I adopt the phenomenological orientation of Heidegger in my analysis, directing it toward an account of the political power of these artists' works. To this end, two terms from the philosopher are important, namely *circumspection* and *dwelling*. For Heidegger, the things encountered in *Dasein's* world are approached with an attitude of care or "circumspection," that is, as things that are not understood at a distance, which is to say, theoretically, but moved in close or avoided, with a "readiness-to-hand."⁸ In the essay on Van Gogh, the peasant's boots provide an illustrative case of this kind of relation in their availability, their reliability, and their enfoldment in the world of an absent wearer. For Heidegger, the network of relations into which equipment is taken up is disclosed by means of an "attentive dwelling."⁹ My analysis of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi's work tracks their management of our visual attention, and the critical import of their own attentive looking as they move through places of national, ecological, and personal significance. Elsewhere in Heidegger's later work, the experience of dwelling is articulated in terms of the subject's awareness of its total *environment*—what he calls, again in a rapturous tone, a "fourfold relation" of the dwelling subject to "a primal oneness (of) earth and sky, divinities and mortals."¹⁰ For my purposes, these elements of a total physical, intersubjective, and cultural environment encompass the foci of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi's artistic attention.¹¹

While Heidegger's Van Gogh may belong to a different time, his picture of a philosophically resonant bond between a person, their things, and a place has echoes in Kaarsemaker's images of Canada's national parks, and Naqvi's images of Niagara Falls, Ontario. Kaarsemaker's *Gear Layout 1* and *Gear*

1 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi, new ed. (Oxford University Press, 2009), 294.

2 Evidence of Heidegger's Nazism and anti-Semitism is abundant in his posthumously published "Black Notebooks," private writings from the 1930s to the 1970s that show the extent of his commitment to Adolph Hitler's National Socialism. For commentary upon these writings, see *Heidegger's Black Notebooks: Responses to Heidegger's Anti-Semitism*, ed. Andrew J. Mitchell and Peter Trawny (Columbia University Press, 2017). The phenomenological approach I adopt in this paper makes use of several of Heidegger's concepts but is closer in intent to the work of Miwon Kwon and Sara Ahmed, on which I base my assessment of Kaarsemaker's "locational identity" in the "wrong place" and Naqvi's images of diasporic "space invaders." See Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (MIT Press, 2002); and Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Duke University Press, 2012).

3 Scott Horton, "Philosophers Rumble Over Van Gogh's Shoes," *Harper's Magazine*, October 5, 2009, <https://harpers.org/2009/10/philosophers-rumble-over-van-goghs-shoes/>.

4 See Meyer Schapiro, "The Still-Life as Personal Object – A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh," and Jacques Derrida, "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing (*Pointure*)," in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 296–315.

5 On *Dasein's* "thrownness," "being-toward death," and "care," see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 219–24; 279–311; 235–41.

6 I use the terms "integrative" and "disintegrative" loosely, in the way that a formalist analysis might refer to the "integrity" of the picture plane, but also as a way of characterizing the artists' subject positions, in which "integration" speaks to rootedness (or lack thereof) in a given locational identity. With thanks to Saelan Twerdy for his help in clarifying this usage.

7 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 174.

8 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 98.

9 Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 288.

10 Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Harper and Row, 1971), 149.

11 Heidegger's work has been enthusiastically taken up by scholars working on environmental philosophy. For a recent collection of such studies, see *Heidegger and the Earth: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Ladelle McWhorter and Gail Stenstad (University of Toronto Press, 2009). Conspicuously missing from such scholarship is an account of the limits of Heidegger's view of dwelling and the earth within settler-colonial contexts. From beyond the field of environmental philosophy, this study aims to revise some Heideggerian concepts to frame Naqvi and Kaarsemaker's critiques of settler-colonial dwelling.

Layout 2 (2023, figs. 1–2) lead us into the woods of the Bruce Trail and other national parks. The artist's lightweight hiking gear is laid out clinically on a grid against a white background, and then a negative space following the contours of each item breaks up a hastily painted forest view. The gear and the land, that, for Heidegger, form a seamless unity between natural and cultural elements of Van Gogh's total environment, are sharply divided in Kaarsemaker's more analytical pictures. Naqvi, as well, has a taste for the fragmentary, and for disrupting the surfaces of her images of natural spaces. Her photograph *The Wanderers, Niagara Falls, 1988* (2019, fig. 3) is organized around a large print of one of her family's early visits to the falls, ahead of their eventual move from Karachi, Pakistan to Canada. Near this print are several more: of tourists taking in the spectacle through its thick mists; of Caspar David Friedrich's emblem of sublimity *Wanderer Above the Sea Fog* (1818) on a coffee mug filled with pencils and pens; of pieces for the board game *Settlers of Catan*, a VHS copy of the Disney movie *Pocahontas*; and the book *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation Through the Lens of Cultural Diversity*.¹² This work's compositional pairing of a book on reconciliation alongside Disney's ur-text of cartoon primitivism, and of Friedrich's exalted, lone subject alongside a crowd of tourists, attest to Naqvi's gift for irony. This work gives us a sense not so much of a *rapprochement* of nature and culture around the Falls, but of a crowding out of the Falls by the viral force and accumulated products of popular visual culture.

Both artists betray an awareness of their mediated access to the places they depict, by way of high-tech hiking gear and the technology of the camera—by way of, to recall Heidegger's probing into van Gogh's world, the *equipment* of their interaction with their environment. We might push the comparison a little further. Both of them, like Van Gogh, forge a connection between particular places and particular kinds of subjects: a peripatetic, adventuring subject in Kaarsemaker's case and a diasporic and tourist subject in Naqvi's case. Their respective visions are premised on their perception of the country, in general, and of national parks and tourist sites, in particular, as zones of late-capitalist economic activity, if not "colonial crime scenes."¹³ As noted by the Kwantlen First Nation journalist Robert Jago, the representation of a Canadian wilderness "idealized...in paintings by the Group of Seven and the work of Farley Mowat" is "unrecognizable" to Indigenous peoples for whom, and from whom, those lands were stolen.¹⁴ With their self-understanding as uninvited guests on stolen land, I argue that Kaarsemaker and Naqvi, to varying degrees and with different aesthetic devices, both reflect an artistic and moral integrity in their work. Again, Heidegger's language for this point is suggestive, particularly his account of "dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on earth."¹⁵ The precarity and humility of the position of mortal guests on earth resonates with Kaarsemaker and Naqvi's self-understanding as guests on unceded Indigenous land—their moral integrity consists in this kind of humble, caring, and, again, circumspect relation to the places they picture.

One final point on my use of the concept of integrity. It is an integrity constituted in the margins of two discourses: a scientific discourse on national parks and an art-historical discourse on regionalism. Whereas Heidegger argued for a philosophical integrity through a reading of Van Gogh's work, one that joined the peasant woman to her world, and to ours, in what follows, I will set the artistic and moral integrity of these artists against another kind that has structured Canada's National Parks discourse since the

12 *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation Through the Lens of Cultural Diversity*, ed. Mike De Gagne, Jonathan Dewar, and Ashok Mathur (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2011).

13 Robert Jago, "Canada's National Parks are Colonial Crime Scenes," *The Walrus*, October 10, 2023, <https://thewalrus.ca/canadas-national-parks-are-colonial-crime-scenes/>.

14 Robert Jago, "Canada's National Parks are Colonial Crime Scenes."

15 Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 149.

middle of the twentieth century, namely “ecological integrity.”¹⁶ Ultimately, I argue for a view of the work of these artists as tentatively rooted and self-critical expressions of settler-colonial dwelling, a circumspect dwelling that I further characterize as a critical or reflexive *regionalism*. My aim is to provide an under-theorized concept of regionalism in Canadian art with a political application, and a philosophical grounding, in Heidegger’s phenomenology. This analysis of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi’s regionalism trades in the concept’s reductive association with specific regions (the Maritimes for Alex Colville, or London and Southwest Ontario for Greg Curnoe) for a more expansive and flexible account of the transient “locational identities” of contemporary artists who, as settlers of conscience, refuse to lay claim to the places in which they dwell.¹⁷ To return to the title of this paper, my treatment of these artists establishes them at the margins of both the discourse on “ecological integrity” and that of regionalism in Canadian art history. It is from these marginal positions that their critical commentary is pursued.¹⁸

INTEGRITY IN PARKS DISCOURSE AND BEYOND

Parks Canada prioritizes both “ecological and commemorative integrity” in its mandate.¹⁹ The statement has roots in the earliest articulation of parks policy. In a posthumously published 1957 pamphlet, Canada’s first parks commissioner, James B. Harkin, makes an analogical argument for the need to preserve the country’s natural wonders:

Parks belong to the people by right of citizenship, in the same way as our national galleries and national museums do...We talk of ‘priceless works of art’ and build great fire-proof galleries to protect them. But are these marvelous works of nature less priceless?²⁰

In this earlier phase of parks discourse, alongside the economic interests of Harkin and his colleagues in the touristic value of parks, we see intimations of their aesthetic and even spiritual value. As was the case for Heidegger, Harkin’s vision of the subject in nature is an integrated one that resonates with the above-mentioned fourfold relation of dwelling. At this early undifferentiated stage in the discourse on parks, then, nature and culture are equally worthy of preservation, co-constituting aesthetic experiences that are regarded as a “right of citizenship.” Of course, it is precisely this alleged “right of (Canadian) citizenship” with which Jago takes issue in his comparison of parks with crime scenes. As he notes, long after Harkin’s time, during Canada’s

16 Catriona Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity: Nature and Nation in Canada’s National Parks, 1885–2000,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 39–40 (2009): 179. As Sandilands notes, the concept was introduced by Aldo Leopold for whom “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community.” It appeared in parks discourse in 1979 to designate, ambiguously, practices of “commemoration” for Heritage Canada, and in a 1988 Amendment to the National Parks Act, a mandate: “Maintenance of ecological integrity through the protection of natural resources shall be the first priority when considering park zoning and visitor use in a management plan” (Government of Canada, 1988).

17 The phrase “locational identity,” which I return to below, is taken from the writing of Miwon Kwon. See Kwon, *One Place After Another*. Sara Ahmed’s comparable sense of place-based but shifting identity will be engaged in the discussion of Naqvi’s work. See also Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included*. Both these sources employ phenomenological concepts to account for politicized contemporary artistic engagements with place. There is a resonance, as well, between these artists’ transient engagements with parks and the “unlearning” of “settler colonial frameworks of citizenship” achieved through the practice of “diaspora walks,” according to Nazli Akhtari. See Nazli Akhtari, “Diaspora Walks: Small Lessons in Unlearning,” *Performance Matters* 7, nos. 1–2 (2021): 73–83.

18 The work of Jody Berland on Canada’s marginal status with respect to the US and Europe, as a staple economy, historically, is worth considering here. What resonates in her study for my purposes is the role she, following the work of Harold Innis, identifies for technologies of communication and transportation as enabling traffic in staples, and thus producing Canada as a network of marginal social and economic spaces. Here, too, in Kaarsemaker and Naqvi’s works, margins are to be understood as physical and social spaces, constituted through their use of technologies of representation. See Jody Berland, “Space at the Margins: Colonial Spatiality and Critical Theory After Innis,” in *North of Empire: Essays on the Cultural Technologies of Space* (Duke University Press, 2009), 65–97. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this resonance to my attention.

19 “The Parks Canada Mandate and Charter,” Government of Canada, <https://parks.canada.ca/agence-agency/mandat-mandate>.

20 James B. Harkin, *The Origin and Meaning of the National Parks of Canada* (Saskatoon: H.R. Larson Publishing Co., 1957), 12–13.



/fig. 3/ Zinnia Naqvi, *The Wanderers, Niagara Falls*, 1988, 2019. Inkjet Print, 30 × 48 in.
Courtesy of the artist.



/fig. 4/ Zinnia Naqvi, *A Whole New World, CN Tower*, 1988, 2019. Inkjet Print, 30 × 48 in.
Courtesy of the artist.

150th anniversary celebrations, the release of Parks Canada's free, year-long "Discovery Pass" reiterated the historical claim of access to Canada's parks as a "right of citizenship."²¹

While aesthetic, spiritual, or broadly cultural values are indicated in these official statements, according to Environmental Humanities scholar Catriona Sandilands, the guiding principle of "ecological integrity" in parks discourse has created a "historical erasure" in the government's management of Canada's protected natural spaces.²² For her, the emphasis on "ecological integrity" and its prioritizing of specialist and scientific engagements with parks over artistic, spiritual, and certainly decolonial ones, is still tethered to early nationalist purposes, even if those purposes are no longer explicitly stated, as they were in Harkin's time. The value of "ecological integrity" is cast as a "sanitary nationalism" or a nationalism whose thorny cultural politics are hidden behind a "singular ecological telos."²³ The specialist language of "ecological integrity" might be productively contrasted with the artistic and moral integrity exhibited by Kaarsemaker and Naqvi, to reveal just those features of national life that Sandilands describes as being under erasure, namely the politics of Indigenous-settler relations, of regional identity, and of official multiculturalism and diversity.

In the first of four phases of parks discourse analyzed by Sandilands, Rocky Mountain exploration around Banff National Park provided a focus for the national discussion of parks.²⁴ As Sandilands notes, a market for "outfitters" was at the center of the discussion, which involved stakeholders as diverse as the Alpine Club of Canada and the "Canadian Pacific Railway's corporate empire."²⁵ In a second phase, between 1914 and 1945, parks came to be understood in more strictly nationalist terms, as marks of the distinctiveness of Canada from its imperial roots in Britain and France, and from Europe generally. This is also the moment of Harkin's insistence on the aesthetic and spiritual value of natural spaces. The Group of Seven's vision of the Canadian wilderness, which was consolidated during these years, can be seen as a direct reflection of this nationalist zeal.

Already some connections with Kaarsemaker and Naqvi's works can be pointed out. The economy of outfitting for the discovery of Canada's natural spaces is updated in Kaarsemaker's images of high-tech hiking equipment. While Naqvi does not exhibit the same kind of affection for gear, the image of her young mother's contemplative view from the observation deck of the CN Tower, titled *A Whole New World, CN Tower, 1988* (2019, fig. 4) points us back to the wider corporate context of early Parks tourism. In Naqvi's picture the sublime view from the CN Tower is supplemented with a diminutive, wooden toy stand-in for the Canadian Pacific Railway's locomotives that runs across the foreground, leaving a winding trail of rice grains in its wake. In the grains there is a reference to the experience of Asian migrant workers on the CPR, whose labour silently enabled the Rocky Mountain discoveries that Sandilands describes in the first phase of Parks discourse in Canada.²⁶

The post-war discourse Sandilands tracks is different, and more closely tied to Kaarsemaker and Naqvi's work. It is in these phases that the idea of ecological integrity comes into sharper focus, to "reinsert a weakened federal nationalism into parks" and enlist ecological science in the promotion

21 Robert Jago, "Canada's National Parks are Colonial Crime Scenes." More recently, Mark Carney's federal government issued a "Canada Strong Pass" for the summer of 2025 which, in response to US tariffs and a reduction in Canadian travel to the US, encourages Canadians to vacation in National Parks. The initiative is framed in patriotic terms as a response to economic threats posed by the US, a framing that does not take note of the threat of National Parks to Indigenous ways of life and titles to the land described by Jago. See "Canada Strong Pass," Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/canada-pass.html>.

22 Sandilands, "The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity," 163.

23 Catriona Sandilands, "Ecological Integrity and National Narrative: Cleaning up Canada's National Parks," *Canadian Woman Studies* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 1, 4.

24 Sandilands distinguishes four overlapping periods in the evolution of Canada Parks discourse. In a first phase, between 1885 and 1930, parks are understood as sites for recreation in the context of empire, wherein the Canadian wilderness is marketed as an exotic colonial outpost even after Confederation. See Sandilands, "The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity," 163.

25 Sandilands, "The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity," 166.

26 Zinnia Naqvi, interview with author on Zoom, March 2024.

of national heritage.²⁷ In the third phase, between 1945 and 1985, Sandilands notes an increase in access to Parks on account of a post-war expansion of automobile ownership and road construction. Amid this scramble for “authentic” experiences of the Canadian wilderness, Parks are understood as engines for federal economic development in their capacity to attract tourists to remote regions.²⁸ This was especially obvious in the Pierre Elliott Trudeau era, during which these spaces were mobilized by the federal government towards nation-building or culturally unifying ends. Under Trudeau, Sandilands explains, Parks were conceived as a “form of federal awards to the regions, a privilege bestowed by Ottawa on remote areas...with federalist strings.”²⁹

Kaarsemaker and Naqvi’s work is, however, better understood against the background of the fourth, strictly ecological phase of Parks discourse identified by Sandilands.³⁰ As a result of this last development, the definition of the “nature of nation” shifted from an “iconic or political...to an ecological one,” with major consequences, I argue, for artists responding to Canada’s natural spaces.³¹ In this fourth phase, the network of Parks Canada included thirty-nine “terrestrial regions” in a systematic manner according to features of “biophysical diversity,” all of which are to be managed through a careful and expert study of risks to ecosystems and wildlife. Sandilands sees a privileged role for science in policy documents from this period that are exclusively attentive to “numbers, food, shelter, migrations, reproduction, diseases, parasites, predators, competitors” in Parks Canada management strategies.³² It is significant for her, though not acknowledged in these expert accounts, that such a focus on a scientifically understood “ecological integrity” across distinct biophysical regions takes hold in the wake of Trudeau’s articulation of a policy of multiculturalism. As she notes:

The development of a discourse of park nature as a collection of ecological regions was conceptually equivalent...to the development of discourses of official multiculturalism, and both...represented a way of containing conflicts over diversity in favor of a more neutral conception of co-existing plurality.³³

When Sandilands remarks on the historical erasure caused by such a specialist discourse, she has this sort of oversight in mind.

There is a limited recognition of the importance of Indigenous relations with the land in the language of Parks Canada. But this amounts to a mere accommodation of Indigenous cultural practices and knowledge in a scientifically described object domain. In the 2000 “Report on the Panel on Ecological Integrity in Canada’s National Parks,” it is granted that “ignorance of naturalized knowledge has contributed to the decline of ecological integrity... And a process of healing is needed to facilitate...trust between Parks Canada and Aboriginal peoples.”³⁴ For Sandilands:

As the Panel makes clear, science defines integrity, and Aboriginal “naturalized knowledge systems” are able to contribute to integrity provided that their “systems” are congruent with a meaning and valuation of nature already defined elsewhere.³⁵

Cultural understandings of nature loom in the margins of Parks Canada discourse, in acknowledgements like this one from the Panel’s Report, in the

27 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 163.

28 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 163.

29 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 171.

30 Between 1980 and 2000, amidst weakened federal support for parks and an expansion of global tourism, a strictly ecological view of distinctive “local” natures, open to study and in need of preservation, emerged to secure a role for the state in the scientific management of a now expansive network of parklands.

Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 163.

31 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 173.

32 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 173.

33 As cited in Sandilands “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 174.

34 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 180.

35 Sandilands, “The Cultural Politics of Ecological Integrity,” 181.

conceptual link between inscriptions of diversity in official multiculturalism, and in contemporaneous accounts of ecological integrity and its management of biotic complexity. These two appearances of culture in the margins of a specialist discourse on ecological integrity are manifested in the place-based visions of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi. I'll turn to them below to show how their way of working sheds light on these occluded cultural themes in the national discussion of Parks.

Although this national discussion is historically and geographically removed from the European concerns of Heidegger, aspects of his phenomenological approach to the analysis of place are relevant here. One of the most compelling features of the essay on Van Gogh's painting is its passage between the natural or physical aspects of the work and what it represents, and its more strictly cultural features. The painting for him, and artwork at its best, partake of both these dimensions, aligning them with the concerns or the caring, circumspect attitude of humans. In that admittedly cryptic "fourfold relation" of the dwelling, environmentally attuned subject, we have yet another expression of this affinity between nature (i.e., earth, sky) and culture (i.e., mortals and divinities). The privileging of a scientific understanding of nature in the discourse on ecological integrity might be described in Heideggerian terms as inauthentic or not fully human, not fully circumspect, and hazardously distanced. He contrasts the caring attitude of a subject to things that are "ready-to-hand" with a more removed and theoretical attitude of the subject toward things, people, and indeed "Nature" understood rather as a mere "presence-at-hand":

If its kind of Being as ready-to-hand is disregarded... "Nature" itself can be discovered and defined simply in its pure presence-at-hand. But when this happens, the Nature which "stirs and strives," which assails us and enthralls us as landscape, remains hidden. The botanist's plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow; the "source" which the geographer establishes for a river is not "the springhead in the dale."³⁶

I what follows I'll consider how Kaarsemaker and Naqvi work to locate themselves at a threshold of nature and culture, moving back and forth across this notional border to expose its contrivance, and to model a more attentive, poetical, and critical dwelling in parks and tourist sites, and in the settler-colonial context of Canada.

TOWARD A REFLEXIVE REGIONALISM

Ethical assessments have been made of the London regionalist Greg Curnoe's work, of his Dorval mural especially and its searing, morally superior criticism of America in the Vietnam era.³⁷ Art historian Mark Cheetham has written about the aesthetic strategies and the theme of visibility in the work of other well-known Canadian regionalists such as Alex Colville, specifically the "communality" of his Maritime vision and, closer to Curnoe, the "haunted" vision of fellow London regionalist Jack Chambers.³⁸ I wish to revise the terms of regionalism on which existing studies of Curnoe, Coleville, Chambers and others are based. Curnoe, especially, provides a model for a *reflexive regionalism* that anticipates the work of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi in their respective engagements with place. His enthusiasm, as well, about his bicycle, that

³⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 100.

³⁷ Eve Marie Kroller, "Fear of Flying?: The Myth of Daedalus and Icarus in Canadian Culture," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, no. 4 (Winter 1993-94): 102-16.

³⁸ On Colville's regionalist aesthetics and vision, see Mark A. Cheetham, "The World, the Work, and the Artist: Colville and the Communality of Vision," *RACAR* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 58-63. On Chambers's haunted relationship with London, see Cheetham, "Squaring Circles: The Regional and the 'Foreign' in the Art of Jack Chambers," *RACAR* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 55-64.

beloved piece of *equipment* through which his access to London was mediated, further suggests his kinship with Kaarsemaker and Naqvi.³⁹ But more to the point, in Curnoe's book emerging from a study of the Indigenous history of his London home at 38 Weston Street, we have an example of a Canadian regionalist whose sense of dwelling included a self-critical reflection on his settler identity.⁴⁰ Curnoe's recognition of his settler identity as a part of a regionalist sensibility is instructive for the account of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi to follow—an account of their reflexive occupation of already occupied places in Canada's national parks and tourist sites.

A feature of Métis scholar and artist David Garneau's decolonial aesthetics comes up in a paper on Curnoe's admiration for the Indigenous languages that were once spoken in the vicinity of his London home, namely the concept of *métissage*, defined as a way of facilitating cultural mixing.⁴¹ For Garneau, fostering awareness of such mixing is perhaps the most that can be done in a settler-colonial Canada where there is little hope for "a classical postcolonial state [from which] the colonizers sail home, dragging their institutions behind them."⁴² Short of this, there is a realistic (if "ironic") prospect, for Garneau, in "unsettling settlers, and helping them to adapt, to better settle themselves as non-colonial persons within Indigenous spaces."⁴³ Something like this irony is reflected in Curnoe's effort to better settle himself at 38 Weston Street, surely. But what Garneau has in mind would involve a more complete disintegration of national identity, or, to return to his formulation, a more acute irony in the settler's subject position.

The work of artists in this vein is vital, as they are uniquely capable of, as Garneau puts it, "extra-rational aesthetic action," or actions that sustain rather than resolve the ironies of settler dwelling, and linger over rather than accommodate the "shock" of cultural difference.⁴⁴ Garneau clears a "wide space for art," an apparently triangular space for artmaking, including that of settlers like Kaarsemaker and Naqvi, between such shocks, the more "polite" approach of pedagogical work, and compellingly beautiful work.⁴⁵ In my view, the practices of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi resonate with Garneau's categories of beautiful work and pedagogical work, respectively.⁴⁶ And while the shock of decolonial performance art is, in his view, the unique achievement of selected Indigenous artists such as Rebecca Belmore and Terrence Houle, Kaarsemaker and Naqvi make important contributions with their images to an unsettling of settler habits by exploring the conflicts inherent in their relationships with Canada's parks and tourist sites. For settlers, these sites, and the regions in which they are found ought to be understood as conflicted and shot through with difference: between commerce and communality, between nature and culture; between brown and white bodies for Naqvi; and between pavement and birch trees for Kaarsemaker. In drawing our attention to these and other tensions, these artists challenge the paired settler-colonial habits of proprietary and uncritical dwelling.

39 See Greg Curnoe's work *Mariposa 10 Speed No. 2* (1973).

40 The book works are *Deeds/Abstracts* (1995) and *Deeds/Nations* (1996). The first contains records from Curnoe's investigation into the previous ownership and long history of his plot of land at 38 Weston Street, London. The second includes a list of every Indigenous person who signed a treaty with Europeans in the London area between 1750 and 1850.

41 In an undated text based work by Curnoe, several languages—Munsee, Oneida, Ojibwa, Cornish, English, and French—are used to write "It is I," a *metissage*, according to the art historian Stacy Ernst, following Métis artist and scholar David Garneau, in which the artist's linguistic identity, at least, is crossed with those of a number of communities of speakers encountered in the course of researching the history of his home at 38 Weston Street. See Stacy A. Ernst, "Going Beyond the Archival Grid: Carl Beam and Greg Curnoe's Decolonization of a Colonizing Space," *World Art* 6, no. 1 (2016): 98.

42 David Garneau, "Extra-rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural Decolonization," *FUSE Magazine* (Fall 2013), 15.

43 Garneau, "Extra-rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural Decolonization," 15.

44 Garneau, "Extra-rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural Decolonization," 16.

45 Garneau, "Extra-rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural Decolonization," 16. While this typology in Garneau's essay is meant to characterize the approaches of Indigenous artists to cultural decolonization, here I am interested in how it might apply to settler artists.

46 Garneau does not elaborate on these categories as they apply to specific artworks or practices in his essay. I freely interpret them here to distinguish Naqvi and Kaarsemaker's respective approaches to the representations of nature, parks, and space.

DAVID KAARSEMAKER'S "WRONG PLACES"

David Kaarsemaker's biography is marked by extensive travel: to Burkina Faso in West Africa with his parents, and then across Canada alone, to Southwest Ontario, the Maritimes and elsewhere. One critic remarked on the continuity between this "peripatetic" life and the mobile appearance, akin to travelling digital images, of Kaarsemaker's paintings from his MFA show in 2015, out of the University of Ottawa.⁴⁷ Whereas his earlier works tracked a movement between the studio, other modelled architectural spaces, and the outdoors—or, more formally, between painting and photography by way of "diaphanous" layers of pigment, his recent work is based on long-distance hikes in the Caucasus Mountains, along the Bruce Trail, in Canada's smallest national park on Beausoleil Island, and elsewhere.⁴⁸ Heidegger's distinction, taken up in Kenneth Frampton's characterization of "critical regionalism," is apt here. Between his earlier and recent work, Kaarsemaker seems to shift his priorities from technical explorations of a more abstract and theoretical *spatium* to embodied encounters with place or *raum*.⁴⁹

I'll pause on works that describe Kaarsemaker's sense of place, his use of light, and his reckoning with a settler identity. In this last connection, I argue that Kaarsemaker's art accomplishes its unsettling work by means of a conflicted and immersive reflection on natural beauty. Whereas Garneau regards beautiful work as a potentially "poor vehicle for critical engagement," I argue that the various conflicts and tensions in Kaarsemaker's paintings save his vision of natural beauty from such a fate.⁵⁰

His sense of natural places in Canada's national parks and elsewhere, and his way of engaging them almost meditatively and with a light touch, in accordance with a "leave-no-trace" ethic, is conveyed in works from the series *One Thing at a Time* (2022–23).⁵¹ As the series title suggests, Kaarsemaker pauses for these images of lone fungi, fragile new growth under older forest canopies, and lichen-covered ancient boulders encountered along the Bruce Trail in Southwestern Ontario, photographing them quickly before returning to the swift pace of his lightweight, long-distance hikes. The objects captured, then rendered later in studio in "Naples yellow" in the case of a sun-kissed small tree, and "olive green" in the case of a lumpy boulder imposing its mass against a play of light on its mossy surface, are presented as totemic, almost anthropomorphic in their sharply isolated character against more indistinct forest backgrounds / figs. 4–5 /. In the artist's words, they are "alien" objects snatched from the hiker's moving memory reel and shown "without duration," or with a share of eternity and "sanctity," in the manner of Byzantine icons.⁵² Kaarsemaker communes with isolated instances of natural beauty rather than laying claim to the forest from which those instances emerge, and to which they are returned as the hike is resumed. There is an echo, in this way of moving through the land and pondering its exalting sights, with Heidegger's sense of dwelling as attentive and attuned to the spiritual charge of the natural world, or its divinity.

Kaarsemaker's experience of the trails of Southwestern Ontario is mediated by technologies, by equipment in both the general sense, as discussed earlier with reference to *Gear Layouts*, and in a more precisely

47 Michael Davidge, "David Kaarsemaker at Gallery St. Laurent + Hill in Ottawa," *Akimbo.ca*, February 24, 2015.

48 Davidge, "David Kaarsemaker at Gallery St. Laurent + Hill in Ottawa."

49 As Frampton notes: "If any central principle of critical regionalism can be isolated, then it is surely a commitment to place rather than space, or, in Heideggerian terminology, to the nearness of *raum*, rather than the distance of *spatium*." See Kenneth Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," *Perspecta* 20 (1983): 162.

50 Garneau, "Extra-rational Aesthetic Action," 16.

51 David Kaarsemaker, phone interview with the author, March 15, 2024. According to this ethic, encouraged by parks managers and popularly held amongst hikers and responsible eco-tourists, visitors to protected natural places are to "pack out" whatever they bring with them, and "leave no trace" of their having visited.

52 Kaarsemaker, interview with the author.



/fig. 5/ David Kaarsemaker, *Naples Yellow*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 36 × 24 in.
Courtesy of the artist.



/fig. 6/ David Kaarsemaker, *Olive Green*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 36 × 48 in.
Courtesy of the artist.

Heideggerian sense in these and other works. The natural light of the works in the *One Thing at a Time* series gives way in the *Nightwalking* series to artificially illuminated views of the trails of Beausoleil. Here, light is thematized, but for Kaarsemaker, its link to technologies is explicit, even determining. Whereas in four paintings titled *Headlamps* (2023) / fig. 6 /, his artificial light catches birch trees and leaves on the edge of a trail in the center of the composition, the quartet of *Flashlights* (2023) / fig. 7 / presents the birches of Beausoleil as obstacles to the hiker's progress. What's crucial is the determining imprint of these technologies on the artist's presentation of a natural scene. While the sightlines of the works differ, their foreboding tone is comparable. The images in the series carry a decidedly eerie feeling, like the frantic point-of-view cinematography of the *Blair Witch Project*, or, more to the point, like images of "national parks as crime scenes."

In his remarks on the nature of equipment, be it the peasant's boots or one of the philosopher's favorite examples, the hammer, Heidegger makes a point about the way in which equipment-in-use reveals its character through a kind of disappearance or absorption in its field of application. The peasant's shoes for him:

...are what they are...the less the woman thinks about the shoes while she is at work, or looks at them at all, or is even aware of them...It is in this process of the use of equipment that we must actually encounter the character of equipment.⁵³

What Heidegger elsewhere calls this "reliability" of equipment directs us to the world from which it derives its essential character or readiness-to-hand. In Kaarsemaker's *Gear Layouts* we are given a succinct expression of two opposed modes of being for the equipment of the hike: isolated in its *presence-at-hand* from the trail on a grid that reinforces its intelligibility, and then disappeared against a forest background in which its character as equipment or its *readiness-to-hand* is evoked through its absence. The *Headlamps* and *Flashlights*, rather, plunge us into the field of application or use for Kaarsemaker's equipment, namely the forest trail with its obstacles and openings.

What we are given in Kaarsemaker's painted recollections of his hikes are snapshots of immersion in which one almost hears the click of a shutter through the forest's ambient sounds. These moments of pause, of the terminated crunch of the hiker's footfall and the flash of the headlamp, announce the presence and use of equipment in Kaarsemaker's mediated engagement with the environment—an *environment* here understood in Heidegger's sense as a bridge between cultural and natural features of place. A look up at the sky toward the firmament, or down at the earth and its plant life, or through an opening in the trees, facilitated by electric light, which in some of the works carries the spiritual charge of Byzantine gold-leaf, recalls in Kaarsemaker's vision of the trail that wholistic fourfold relation of dwelling.⁵⁴

In several of the works from the *Walking* series, Kaarsemaker takes care to describe those moments in natural settings that are inescapably structured by signs of culture and industry, signs that oblige a more critical and cautious approach to dwelling. In a number of abstract black-and-white works showing overlaid, translucent outlines of tree-trunks bearing trail-blazes and boulders, encountered along Ontario's Bruce Trail and the Wilkin-Young Circuit in New Zealand, the artist captures the ambition of the hiker to cover ground and the hiker's utter dependence on others for the preparation and mapping of

53 Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 292. A similar claim is made in *Being and Time* to illustrate the hammer's "readiness-to-hand." See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 98.

54 Kaarsemaker, interview with the author.



/fig. 7/ David Kaarsemaker, *Headlamps*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 12 × 16 in. each.
Courtesy of the artist.



/fig. 8/ David Kaarsemaker, *Flashlights*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 12 × 16 in. each.
Courtesy of the artist.

the trails and circuits to be covered.⁵⁵ I'll finish here with a final expression, in Kaarsemaker's *Walking* series, of this ambivalence, and a split between a kind of integrated and disintegrative vision in his work—between the will to capture nature and the necessity (and indeed morality) of allowing it to escape.

In a suite of nine black, white, and grey paintings titled *Road Walking* (2023, fig. 8) Kaarsemaker offers views of the extensive roads which provide access to remote stretches of the Bruce Trail. As he notes, the Trail is constituted in large part by roads rather than proper trail.⁵⁶ The works recall the third phase of parks discourse treated by Sandilands, during which the expansion of roads to newly designated parks was conceived as an economic boost for remote regions. Here the roads are travelled along by foot, in stretches of Kaarsemaker's long distance hikes which he describes as "mundane" and "meditative." In these passages an interior focus is ideal. But upon entering the forests, the experience of the hike becomes much more exteriorized and intensely sensory.⁵⁷ It is this tension between access to a directly experienced nature and the industrial and economic means of that access that gives voice to Kaarsemaker's settler self-consciousness across the works discussed. As he notes, for all their beauty and spiritual power, Canada's national parks are "sanctuaries," viewed originally as *terra nullius* and protected only after their violent "discovery" in a settler-colonial history.⁵⁸

In *One Thing After Another*, a book on the history of "site-specific art and locational identity," Miwon Kwon offers a genealogy that is useful for characterizing this work.⁵⁹ To be sure, Kaarsemaker's series title *One Thing at a Time* suggests a relationship between his practice and Kwon's subjects. The difference, however, is telling: Kaarsemaker's meditative and spiritually inflected practice of painting involves an aesthetic focus on objects that might seem foreign to the artists Kwon deals with: artists whose post-conceptual works are "de-materialized" and "de-aestheticized." But the critical power of Kaarsemaker's work is not necessarily compromised by his *prima facie* traditional methods as a painter. In its emphasis on the embodied experience of the hike, its pace, its gear, and its impulses, his art aligns with the more nomadic approaches to site-specificity in Kwon's genealogy. The critical power of his work, its wariness of human impacts on pristine natural spaces, and his settler self-consciousness suggest a sympathy with Kwon's discursive paradigm, as well. The places he represents are understood as necessarily constructed—by the history of settler colonialism in Canada, by economic and political interests in national parks, and by the very discourse on parks with which we began. Kaarsemaker is largely uninterested in the scientific study and cataloguing of nature, in "learning the names of species and plants" encountered on his hikes.⁶⁰ He is closer, in Heidegger's terms, to "the flowers of the hedgerow" than the botanist's plants. His practice favours a more culturally oriented mode of understanding, framed by the politics of settler colonialism, by the allure of lightweight gear, and the integrative and disintegrative qualities of artificial, natural, and even spiritual light.

Kwon offers a theorization of "being-in-transience" that captures the spirit, critical import, and phenomenological resonance of Kaarsemaker's work. For her, the accounts of place given by Frampton in his critical regionalism, and by Heidegger in his notes on "dwelling," run the risk of lapsing into an

55 See *Every Marked Tree During Two Hours on the Wilkin-Young Circuit* (2024) and *Every Boulder I Photographed on the Bruce Trail in the Past Three Years* (2024).

56 Kaarsemaker, interview with the author. Approximately one quarter of the trail is gravel or asphalt, and suitable for motor vehicles rather than hikers.

57 Kaarsemaker, interview with the author.

58 Kaarsemaker, interview with the author.

59 Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 4–8. Across the study, she tracks three stages of development and attendant paradigms in the genre, from sedentary to nomadic work (phenomenological or experiential), public art to community-oriented art (social/institutional), and finally "new genre public art" or community-oriented projects that engage with places and spaces conceived in advance of a given intervention as discursively structured.

60 Kaarsemaker, interview with the author.

uncritical nostalgia for lost or threatened experiences of belonging.⁶¹ Such a criticism of the essay on Van Gogh is echoed in the responses to it from Derrida and Shapiro mentioned earlier. By contrast, the restlessness of site-specific art, its shifting and proliferating “locational identities,” for Kwon suggest a value in occupying, for a time, “the wrong place”—a position that “[disrupts] a subject’s habitual spatio-temporal experience” and reveals “the conditions of [that subject’s] estrangement” from a supposed “right place.”⁶² In Kaarsemaker’s work we follow such a dislocation, in the night scenes that read as foreboding or forensic, which is to say, as colonial crime scenes; in the artist’s view of the roads that both grant access to desired natural spaces and threaten them; and in the negative spaces carved out of a landscape by Kaarsemaker’s own gear. The unsettling power of the work consists in his challenge to the habitual claims of a settler-colonial and late-capitalist culture to the land.

ZINNIA NAQVI’S “SPACE INVADERS”

Naqvi began her life in 1991, the year her parents immigrated to Canada from Karachi, Pakistan. In her research-based photo practice she tracks her parents’ story through a study of family photo albums and reflects on the life of her grandparents in post-partition Pakistan. In works like *Heart Shaped Box* (2016), a video piece showing Naqvi and her sister rehearsing the eponymous Nirvana song in their suburban bedroom, the family’s historical timeline is followed past the moment of immigration. In her autobiographical artist book *Yours To Discover*, Naqvi describes these years as marked by possibly “too much assimilation.”⁶³ Across much of her work, Naqvi’s concerns as a photographer are trained on the potential of private, family images to challenge more public and official narratives of place, national identity, and belonging.⁶⁴ But, as she notes, her diasporic identity is not exclusively forged between Canada and Pakistan, or between the safety of suburban Ontario and the bustle of her parents’ and grandparents’ Karachi. Rather, Naqvi understands her work and her subject position as more complexly engaged in both struggles for social and racial justice within her diasporic community, and the politics of settler colonialism in which she and her family are implicated as “settler migrants of colour.”⁶⁵

In what follows, I’ll show Naqvi’s continuity with the tradition of regionalism in Canadian art, and her move, like Kaarsemaker’s, toward a more critical or reflexive regionalism—namely in her sense of place, thematization of vision, and in her reckoning with a complicit settler-migrant identity. Whereas Kaarsemaker’s work distinguished itself through a conflicted reflection on beauty in images of Canada’s national parks, I argue that Naqvi’s is more aligned with what Garneau calls a “pedagogical” strategy of cultural decolonization.⁶⁶ Garneau regards the “politeness” and “rationality” of this approach as “less transformative than immersion in difference,” but as will be seen, beyond the apparent playfulness and accessibility of Naqvi’s teaching materials, her art stages a destabilizing encounter with difference. If Kaarsemaker’s work performed its unsettling integrative/disintegrative maneuvers in “the wrong place,” Naqvi’s are rather pursued by diasporic “space invaders” in Southwestern Ontario’s tourist sites.⁶⁷

61 Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 159, 165.

62 Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 160, 164.

63 Zinnia Naqvi, *Yours to Discover: Writings by Zinnia Naqvi* (Montreal: Zinnia Naqvi, 2020), 79.

64 Noa Bronstein, “Family Photos: Notes on Zinnia Naqvi’s *Dear Nani* and *Yours to Discover*,” *BlackFlash*, April 24, 2020, <https://blackflash.ca/2020/04/24/family-photos-notes-on-zinnia-naqv-is-dear-nani-and-yours-to-discover/>.

65 Zinnia Naqvi, interview with the author.

66 Garneau, “Extra-rational Aesthetic Action,” 16. On the so-called “pedagogical turn” in contemporary art, see Janna Graham,

Valeria Graziano, and Susan Kelly, “The Educational Turn in Art: Rewriting the Hidden Curriculum,” *Performance Research* 21, no. 6 (2016): 29–35. For an early articulation of the turn, see Irit Rogoff, “Turning,” *e-Flux Journal*, no. 0 (November 2008), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68470/turning>.

67 The concept of “space invaders” is drawn from the work of Sara Ahmed discussed below. For now, it is worth noting that Naqvi’s work is, in this regard, in dialogue with the hybrid mock-sci-fi-documentary work of Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen. See Hoang Nguyen’s film *1967: A People Kind of Place* (2012). I thank Georgia Phillips-Amos for pointing out this comparison.

Naqvi's images of Niagara Falls interrogate the myths of Canadian wilderness sustained by early parks discourse and lamented by Jago and so many other Indigenous commentators and settlers of conscience.⁶⁸ It is no wonder a book by Jin-me Yoon and Judy Radul titled *Between Departure and Arrival* appears in Naqvi's *Wanderers*. In Naqvi's own book, Yoon's *Souvenirs of the Self (Lake Louise)* (1991) is described as "an active intervention" in the Canadian landscape.⁶⁹ Similarly, Naqvi's brand of regionalism intervenes in both lesser-known and iconic Canadian tourist sites. Taken in the late 1980s during a reconnaissance visit from Karachi, during which Naqvi's family stayed with relatives already settled in Canada, the images of her parents in *Wanderers* are sentimental and aspirational. Naqvi notes that her aunt was moved to tears by Niagara Falls the first time she saw them. But they're also deliberately presented by Naqvi as generic tourist images, of a piece with countless others produced at this eminently photogenic site. This reproduction of the image of the Falls is precisely what sustains the myths Naqvi interrogates, analyzes, and fragments in her work. Her research into the historic past of the Falls and their early marketing for European tourists as a "wonder of the New World" informs her own far less sentimental encounter with them. The artist recalls a very strong aural impression of the parking lot after her first visit, and wonders what it must have been like when the area was covered with forest and the Falls were "heard before they were seen."⁷⁰

In a group of nine photographs also taken at the Falls titled *Another Desi with a Camera* (2020), Naqvi herself is featured alongside her white partner / fig. 9 /. Here, her sense of place is divided both along geopolitical lines and more social or interpersonal ones. Naqvi's vision of the Falls is one of a fraught borderland. The appearance of her family and herself in the images holds a reference to the Pakistani experience of them, to her family's migration, and to the moment of partition in India/Pakistan during which her grandparents came of age. The personal and interpersonal imprint of these various encounters with borders is registered in *Another Desi* in some subtle but unmistakable social distances, between Naqvi and her partner, seated side-by-side but in their own worlds psychologically, removed from the spectacle of the Falls, and in Naqvi's turn toward the camera, against the direction of the nearby crowd's visual attention. The image documents a reenactment of an original taken by the artist's father of a tourist crowd at the Falls, which also includes a white man and a South Asian woman sitting side-by-side but conspicuously not interacting. Naqvi notes this moment of social awkwardness in her writing on the work and speculates on the contribution of race and gender to it, on the "woman's feeling of excitement and confusion as she tries to understand a new country," and "her discomfort with the way she is treated by men like the one sitting next to her."⁷¹ The image recalls those discourses analyzed by Sandilands at the edges of policy statements on ecological integrity, especially the contemporaneous one of multiculturalism in this "new country" and its promise of social integration. On the periphery of the Falls, Naqvi responds to such a promise with pressing and still relevant questions about what constitutes social integration and, more importantly, what inhibits it.

In *Yours to Discover*, Naqvi remarks on the Ontario tourism slogan used for the series title, its predecessor in the 1970s ("Keep it Beautiful"), and Premier Doug Ford's 2019 proposal for yet another pair intended to

68 For another more explicitly decolonial artistic engagement with the Falls, see Mohawk artist Shelly Niro's video *Niagara* (2015) and its exhibition at the Art Gallery of Guelph in *Shelly Niro: ONGNIAHRA/Niagara* (January–February, 2018), <https://artgalleryofguelph.ca/exhibition/shelley-niro-ongniahra-niagara/>.

69 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 41.

70 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 56–57; Naqvi, interview with the author.

71 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 44.



/fig. 9/ David Kaarsemaker, *Road Walking*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 12 × 16 in. each.
Courtesy of the artist.



I've gathered a 200-strong crowd. They come with their cameras and their smartphones. They are all here to take pictures.

But when I look back at the photos I've taken, I don't see the crowd. I see the people who are sitting on the sand, looking at their phones.

It's like they're not here. It's like they're not even looking at the camera. It's like they're not even looking at me.

I think the camera knows but it never sees the face of the photographer. It's just one more person in the crowd.

I see how the photographer sees and how what they see each other in their differently through a camera.

Like this moment in his life. I don't see the crowd. I see the people who are sitting on the sand, looking at their phones.

I know that he's not here, but I don't see the crowd. I see the people who are sitting on the sand, looking at their phones.

I don't see the crowd. I see the people who are sitting on the sand, looking at their phones.

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I don't see the crowd. I see the people who are sitting on the sand, looking at their phones.

/fig. 10/ Zinnia Naqvi, *Another Desi with a Camera*, 2020. Six inkjet prints, adhesive vinyl, 75.433 x 40.157 x 55.906 in. Courtesy of the artist.

encourage investment: “A Place to Grow” and “Open for Business.” She notes a shift from messaging about “wandering” and “exploration” to appeals for primarily economic “growth.”⁷² In Sandilands’s historical account of parks discourse, a similar course is tracked, as economic and nationalist imperatives steer shifts in emphasis from the touristic value of parks to their benefit for remote regions, and finally to their crypto-nationalist preservation of unity in diversity—an echo, for Sandilands, of the vision of official multiculturalism.⁷³ The thematic overlap between this national discourse and the provincial slogans is evident in the commands to “preserve” and “discover” Ontario’s beauty. Naqvi’s redirection of the latter in her title is loaded with irony, as the views of the province she focuses on are no longer discoverable, but industrial and repeated incessantly in vernacular and commercial photography.

A more pointed intervention in this provincial discourse is found in one of her works entitled *Keep off the Grass, Cullen Gardens and Miniature Village, 1988* (2019, fig. 10). The jarring, imperative tone of the title reads between the lines of the provincial tourist authority’s more polite invitation to “keep it beautiful.” But in the details of the image, as well—in piles of Monopoly money in front of the board game with its marked property boundaries; a VHS copy of *Mary Poppins; On Being Included* by Sara Ahmed and another book on “The Pakistani Middle Class”; and in a smaller photograph taken by Naqvi’s father of the park’s miniaturized scene of a policeman interrogating the driver of a red sports car in a suburban development—a disciplinary edge in the province’s address to “new Canadians” is sharp. In a second iteration of this work named after Ahmed’s above-mentioned book, Naqvi makes explicit all those boundaries that are alluded to in the original. In the large-scale, photo-based installation *On Being Included* (2024) / fig. 11 /, physical rifts between parts of the image of her family at Miniature Village materialize the borders they experience as settler-migrants: between classes and nationalities, between citizens and police, and between their viewing positions behind a fence and the cheery display of a suburban host culture. A suggestion of the ubiquity of such borders in public space is made through the wood substructure of the installation, a frame that recalls, for Naqvi, that of a billboard display. Her careful (and more private) analysis of the image is signaled by the checkered Photoshop field that bisects the work, dramatizing the family’s distance from the display of a miniature fairground. This disintegration or fracturing of the scene is stark, but the work’s scale invites viewers to move around it, searching for more integrated views in which the digital gap is closed and the family is drawn nearer to the coveted field of play. Alas, the fence remains, and integrated views are fleeting, or temporary, not unlike the task of social integration for the family pictured.

Naqvi’s camera captures tourist trinkets and ephemera, stationary, a coffee mug, books, board games, collections of analogue media like VHS tapes, and models composed of toys. All these materials are presented as “ready-to-hand” in her mock-up workspaces. This, then, is the diverse equipment of her work, but the role of the camera is privileged, framing these materials as components of scaled-down media environments or carefully curated physical (rather than digital) desktop arrangements—snapshots of the working spaces in which the artist dwells. This manner of dwelling in and through pictures recalls some further insights from Heidegger’s later work, on the affinity between dwelling and building on the one hand, and on the “age” in which both built and natural environments are appropriated and understood as “world pictures.”⁷⁴ With these terms in mind, we can track Naqvi’s critical

72 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 54.

73 Sandilands, “Ecological Integrity and National Narrative,” 4.

74 On the kinship between building and dwelling see Heidegger “Building Dwelling Thinking,” 147. On the notion of world

pictures and their technological conditions of production in the nineteenth century, see Martin Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York, 1977).



/fig. 11/ Zinnia Naqvi, *Keep off the Grass, Cullen Gardens and Miniature Village*, 1988, 2019. Inkjet print, 30 × 48 in. Courtesy of the artist.



/fig. 12/ Zinnia Naqvi, *On Being Included*, 2024. Inkjet print mounted on plywood, UV prints, plywood, 65.16 × 79.92 × 67.91 in. Courtesy of the artist.

distance from the world of Van Gogh's peasant to that of Canadian tourist sites like Niagara Falls and Miniature Village. Whereas the kind of dwelling captured in Van Gogh's picture concerns the cultivation of the peasant's land, or in Heidegger's more poetic register, the "tilling of the soil and cultivation of the vine," Naqvi's images hold this natural and romantic world at a distance to show how its photographic representation is instrumentalized in the tourist industry. To modify Heidegger's terms somewhat, Naqvi both pictures and satirizes that industry's profane "temple-building."⁷⁵

The nineteenth-century dawning of the "age of the world picture" for Heidegger overlaps with the long nineteenth century of European colonial adventures whose phantoms populate Naqvi's work at every turn—in the *Pocabontas* film and the board game Settlers of Catan, for example, and in her family's diasporic trajectory from post-partition India/Pakistan to their adopted settler-colonial home in Canada. The world pictures she composes point to social and economic values that define the adopted home both positively and with a healthy suspicion. They include signs of industriousness and innovation in the CN Tower and the toy train, signs of majesty and vastness in the Falls, and signs of the safety of well-ordered residential areas in the model homes of Miniature Village. But the board games and films that co-constitute these world pictures point to foreboding shadows of industry, majesty, and safety, too. Alongside these, Naqvi arranges signs of precarity in the Jenga set, racialist exoticism and colonial zeal in the Settlers of Catan game and in the films *Pocabontas* and *Aladdin*, and signs of the equally damaging zeal of capitalist accumulation and property ownership in the Monopoly set. In these games and films, Naqvi allegorizes her diasporic experience in Canada, alluding at times to her family's complicity with settler-colonial culture, too. As she notes in her artist book, the original name of Monopoly, "The Landlord's Game," describes Naqvi's conflicted awareness of her family's ownership and management of rental properties in a hostile climate of gentrification, "reno-victions," and soaring housing prices.⁷⁶

As mentioned, these world pictures are highly readable and, if not didactic, then certainly driven by a pedagogical impulse. The display of books leading viewers to an appreciation of a settler-colonial subtext in Naqvi's work provides an opportunity for critical reflection within a world picture that might otherwise reinforce the spectacular appeal of the Falls, the CN Tower, and Miniature Village. Some language for this interrogation of spectacular world pictures is available in an essay by Timothy Mitchell on the colonial culture and anti-colonial criticism of nineteenth-century World's Fairs. As he notes in his study of the responses of Arab visitors to a mock-up of a medieval Cairene street scene in the Paris World's Fair of 1889:

Non-Europeans encountered in Europe what one might call, echoing a phrase from Heidegger, the age of the world exhibition, or rather, the age of the world-as-exhibition...not an exhibition of the world, but the world organized and grasped as though it were an exhibition.⁷⁷

The very phrase employed by those Arab observers in their description of the nineteenth-century culture of arcades and window shopping, tourist sites and World's Fairs, namely *intizam al-manzar* ("the organization of the view"), might well be taken as a *leitmotif* in Naqvi's work. In her efforts to both hold up the organized views of tourist sites to scrutiny and place them on the shoulders of the authors whose books she celebrates in her pictures, she offers strategies of critique for the reorganization of those views.

75 Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 147.

76 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 71.

77 Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 414.

The pedagogical approach in Naqvi's work obliges a closer look at her references, or what she calls her "performative citation," in the title of another work.⁷⁸ In reviewing some of the key concepts in *On Being Included*, Ahmed's influence seems deep indeed. In what follows, I'll focus on Naqvi's apparent engagement with Ahmed's description of racialized subjects as "space invaders" with a peculiar "stranger making" power in the face of empty institutional promises of equity and inclusion. If Kaarsemaker's work may be thought of in terms of a reflexive settler inhabitation of "the wrong place," Naqvi's goes a step further in its effect of unsettling even such an unsettled subject position, noting her family's peculiar settler-migrant bind: "disenfranchised" and under the gaze of a white settler majority in their adopted home, and settled in that home as guests on stolen land.⁷⁹ The artist explores this dilemma at length in her writing, in reflections on the risks of assimilation, on her family's awareness and even celebration of Trudeau's 1971 policy of official multiculturalism, and on her own discomfort with the history of Indigenous "cultural genocide" that preceded such a policy.⁸⁰

We register this discomfort in the attitude or comportment, and the often-disjunctive settings of her photographed subjects, including herself. Ahmed's remarks in *On Being Included* about the "stranger making" power of bodies of colour engaged in diversity work within white institutional spaces are apt here: "To borrow [a] wonderfully evocative expression, we share experiences of being treated as 'space invaders,' as invading the spaces reserved for others."⁸¹ Like the petrified pose of Yoon amongst a group of mostly white tourists in front of Lake Louise in *Souvenirs of the Self*, so many of Naqvi's works convey this feeling of invasion. But unlike Yoon's almost startled presence, Naqvi's in *Another Desi with a Camera*, especially, is willfully, if quietly disruptive. Another of Ahmed's reflections from the book is resonant here, too. In her remarks on the frequent use of liquid metaphors in social theory, Ahmed calls for productive acts of blockage in diversity work, or "getting in the way of a flow." The course of the Falls, its muscular flow, is utterly resistant to change, a sign of inevitability in Naqvi's pictures of it. But her response to the spectacle is freely chosen and irreverent. Ahmed's next lines resonate with the specific action of Naqvi's gaze in *Another Desi*, cast over her shoulder toward the camera, isolated somewhat from her partner, and worlds away from the mob of tourists fixating on the Falls: "In noticing the crowds, we also notice the orientation devices that direct the flow of human traffic...We all know the experience of going the wrong way in the crowd."⁸²

Such knowledge is pursued in Naqvi's work and deployed to trouble a taken-for-granted belief in multicultural harmony. In this regard, her unsettling gesture is in step with Kaarsemaker's, made deliberately in the wrong place to call into question the rightness of Canadian national identity. Unlike Kaarsemaker's often-enchanted views of nature, Naqvi's are profane, at times diagnostic, but no less enveloping in their presentation of entire worlds, or environments of earth and sky, united by the powerful Falls, and mortals enthralled by that spectacle, or awkward and estranged in their lapses of touristic attention. Naqvi's pictures are perhaps more illustrative of a threefold relation, then, one which leaves out the realm of divinities. But her frank look at the commodification of nature points insistently to that realm in its absence.

78 Naqvi's *Performative Citation* (2019) includes a stack of books on which is placed a curling copy of the photo of Naqvi's family at Cullen Gardens, and around which she has arranged small wooden toys of soccer players. The book in the center of the stack is, once again, Sara Ahmed's *On Being Included* (2012).

79 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 84.

80 Naqvi, *Yours to Discover*, 80–81.

81 Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 3, 13.

82 Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 186. Again, the strategy of "diaspora walks" described by Akhtari makes room for this kind of irreverence or disidentification with a citizen-crowd. For Akhtari, the actions of "walking backwards" at conferences, or "walking out" of the building in which she was granted Canadian citizenship – as though walking out of an "unrepairable relationship" – secure an "opacity" for the diasporic subject that is not so easily mapped onto the settler colonial grid of citizenship. See Akhtari, "Diaspora Walks," 79–80.

Her impressions of the Falls' parking lots betray this "stirring and striving," in Heidegger's terms, as Naqvi wonders about the call of those Falls that preceded their image for the region's Indigenous peoples.

CONCLUSION

Kaarsemaker and Naqvi—and Curnoe, who makes a brief appearance above—are, at first glance, odd bedfellows. However, we have seen a continuity between their works that suggests two things. In the first place, Curnoe's regionalism, in its acknowledgment of the stamp of settler colonialism upon London, points ahead to the more recent practices of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi—artists who, owing to their historical location in the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and political movements for Indigenous rights, could not in good conscience engage the topic of place without offering a similar acknowledgment.

In the second place, all three of these artists exhibit a kind of moral integrity as self-identified settlers that is closely linked to the places in which they dwell. But this vision of place is a conflicted one that is both held together and broken apart, or integrative and disintegrative, as we've seen. Their treatment of place is deeply historical and responsive to the cultural politics of settler colonialism that are, for Sandilands, kept at a safe distance from the "sanitary nationalism" of parks discourse. In the works of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi, history, politics, and culture are allowed to complicate a vision of natural places sustained by the discourse on ecological integrity. Their willingness to undermine the visual integrity of their works suggests as much. But in doing so they also direct our attention to the spectre of environmental, social, and political *disintegration* beyond the doorstep of Canada's protected natural spaces.

As we have seen, phenomenological analysis of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi's work permits an account of these artists' embodied, highly mediated, and critical or circumspect engagements with Canada's parks and tourist sites. Their images attest to the critical value of artistic dwelling within such places, a manner of dwelling that, again, remains marginal to the overwhelmingly scientific and economic engagement with parks and tourist sites uncovered in Sandilands's study. Instead of such purposive and instrumental encounters—but with a critical eye cast upon them—Kaarsemaker and Naqvi offer us images of Canada's natural spaces that are, for all their complexity and aesthetic refinement, recognizable as the places in which we, too, dwell. Their world pictures are, in other words, pictures of *our* world, and invitations to inhabit it with care and historical awareness, for as long as we have the privilege of doing so, as guests on this land.

The critical regionalist frame for their art implies such a responsibility. But this frame is also of art-historical value in its accommodation of settler artists' perspectives on Indigenous land. To describe the art of Kaarsemaker and Naqvi in these terms is to modify the category of regionalism in Canadian art and prepare it for a more critical (if not a fully decolonial) application in places of national significance. Instead of simply identifying artists, nominally, as belonging to particular regions, the Maritimes and London, or as Pakistani-Canadians or American-born artists raised in Burkina Faso, for that matter, a critical regionalist framework invites us to instead track the modes of place-based encounter pursued by settler artists of conscience as they build and dwell tentatively in their moral and artistic homes. Belonging, here, dispenses with the regional and national senses that have structured accounts of Canadian art from the time of the Group of Seven to the time of the London and other celebrated regionalists of the 1960s and after. As we've seen, *not* belonging, in fact, for Kaarsemaker and Naqvi, is an essential aspect of their overlapping critical projects and a circumstance to be reckoned with for settlers both within and beyond the sphere of contemporary Canadian art.

I'll finish with a last turn to Heidegger. In his essay on "Building Dwelling Thinking," Heidegger remarks on a "plight of dwelling" that exceeds the social and economic problem of housing, and predates "the world wars with their destruction...the increase of the earth's population, and the condition of the industrial workers."⁸³ Some of these lesser plights are accounted for in Kaarsemaker's pictures of the encroaching built environment around protected spaces, and in Naqvi's vertiginous views of a power of consumerism even more formidable than the hydroelectric power of the Falls responsible for its neon advertisement. Indeed, in her autobiographical writing and her allegorical use of board games, Naqvi acknowledges the plight of the housing crisis, gentrification, and "reno-victions." And both artists, certainly, are attentive to what Heidegger, in his ethnocentrism missed, namely the plight of colonial evictions, and subsequent Indigenous struggles to dwell on land freed from the proprietary or extractive hold of settler culture. Our sensitivity to the consequences of settler colonialism in Canada is more developed. But the philosopher suggests, in his essay, a prospect for developing it further by confronting a deeper plight of dwelling, or an essential "homelessness" that we all share as guests on earth.⁸⁴ In this recognition there is a summons to inhabit the earth with more circumspection, with more care, and with an attentiveness to place, politics, and history, which is to say, to the always cultural production of nature, exemplified by Kaarsemaker and Naqvi in their visions of Canada.

83 Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 161.

84 Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 161.