



org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.

**Your path through the collection lead along** Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023, Swarms, Negative sheet 13, negative 24, negative 24,5, Beyond the Sky's Limits, (Un)Touching Ground, A flowering juneberry signals a beekeeper's spring, 12M m3 [1/8] Rapid Snowmelt, Oven encounter, Neptune in opposition [4/20] – Dispersion, Guzmania, Tipp-Ex, A Seismic Change, Roofing (6) – JEM, Neptune in opposition [16/20] – Unrest, Magic Mountain, 12M m3 [6/8] 56 years, Negative sheet 17, negative 36, negative 36,5, A flowering juneberry signals a beekeeper's spring

## What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, etc., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).

Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.

the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases ‘documentalist’ Suzanne Briet, stating that ‘an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance’. The gathered files are all documents – if they weren’t before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an ‘antelope’.

As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed. It documented your path through the website. As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.

This document was compiled by \_\_\_\_\_ on 24.12.2024 01:31, printed on \_\_\_\_\_ and contains 18 documents on 40 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/24-12-2024-6459/>)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

#### Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.  
[www.decleenedecline.be](http://www.decleenedecline.be) / [info@decleenedecline.be](mailto:info@decleenedecline.be)
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

#### Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents*. Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed on 13.05.2021.



Flanders  
State of the Art



A constant, dependable presence. With the camera focused on the North Star for an extended period, the rotation of the Earth becomes visible. Nearby, in the municipality of Wiederstedt, the geologist, poet and philosopher Friedrich von Hardenberg (better known by his pen name Novalis) spent his childhood years between 1772 and 1784. A quote of his is engraved on a stone bench in the park surrounding the chateau where he was raised: “The human being does not speak alone – the universe also speaks – everything speaks – infinite languages.”

#### Notes

- From *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.

# Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023



|                                |            |                 |       |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|
| type                           | date       | filename        | size  | author           |
| photograph                     | 14.06.2024 | Bild 003_mk.jpg | 73 MB | Stephanie Kiwitt |
| category                       |            |                 |       |                  |
| astronomy, literature, Trigger |            |                 |       |                  |

02:27:08

July. Our eight-month-old son has a fever. We have a hard time getting him to drink enough. The tally marks on the back of a tortellini-box keep track of the diapers he wets and the millilitres of milk and electrolytes he's able to hold down.

Stuck inside with worrying parents, a sticker-book about a farm is his brother's favourite pass-time.

Tired of having to go back and forth between the pastures and the sticker-filled sheets we decide to use my arm as a repository for animals that share a habitat.



type  
photograph

date  
23.01.2024

filename  
IMG\_6467.jpeg

size  
1,66 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
collecting, family, hand, sticker

02:28:31

In Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, Convolute Q is dedicated to the panorama. Benjamin writes: 'Setup of the panoramas: View from a raised platform, surrounded by a balustrade, of surfaces lying round about and beneath. The painting runs along a cylindrical wall approximately a hundred meters long and twenty meters high. The principal panoramas of the great panorama painter Prévost: Paris, Toulon, Rome, Naples, Amsterdam, Tilsit, Wagram, Calais, Antwerp, London, Florence, Jerusalem, Athens. Among his pupils: Daguerre' (Q1a, 1).

**Sources**

- Benjamin, W. *The Arcades Project* (H. Eiland & K. McLaughlin, trans.). Cambridge/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 528.



|          |                                                      |             |         |                     |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------------------|
| type     | date                                                 | filename    | size    | author              |
| scan     | 31.05.2023                                           | 013b_16.jpg | 1,18 MB | De Cleene De Cleene |
| category | architecture, archive, decoration, fissure, panorama |             |         |                     |

02:28:38

*‘In the human design and use of weapons, natural elements are harnessed and deployed as a destructive technology. In this engineering, there is a break, fissure, and crack whereby the human and non-human entity, having been elastic, on impact becomes plastic, and forever changed from its original self.’*

Screenshot from the film showing the calm shoreline situated close to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Netherlands.

*Frame of Accountability*, 01:00:00, Helene Kazan, 2024.

Film chapter *Beyond the Sky’s Limits* narrates law as a consciousness coming to terms with its own failings: the speculative voice of a feminist, queered, decolonial international law. Unravelling this complex non-human subjectivity, it narrates the drafting of the Rules of Air Warfare in 1923. A filmic study of the legal archival document reveals how these international laws of war become corrupted by the self-interests of the strong states and colonial powers involved in their making: their ambitions fail quickly and critically.

#### Notes

- Helene Kazan is an artist, writer and educator. Her work investigates ‘risk’ as a lived condition produced through the conjoined violent effects of capitalism and conflict. This is observed in the colonial roots of international law and its material formation of the lived-built environment. In response, she uses decolonial, feminist, poetic and critical-legal approaches in her work, which explores ways of dismantling the ongoing effects of neo-colonial violence towards wider frameworks of accountability and justice.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.



|            |            |                            |       |              |
|------------|------------|----------------------------|-------|--------------|
| type       | date       | filename                   | size  | author       |
| screenshot | 26.05.2024 | BSL_001.jpif, BSL_002.jpif | 59 KB | Helene Kazan |

category  
architecture, fissure, landscape, sea, technology, Trigger

02:28:46

*‘These attempts to dismantle occur amidst timeless acts of protest and resistance.’*

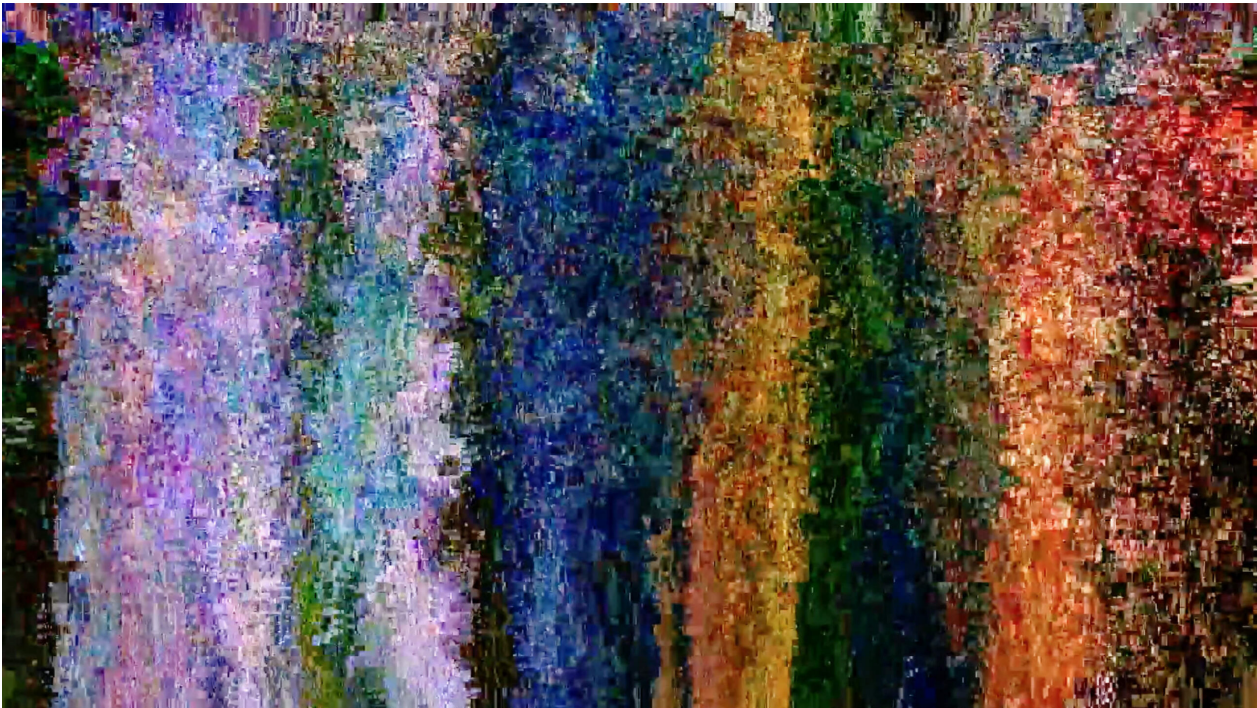
the-documents.c

Screenshot from film chapter *(Un)Touching Ground* where archival images that document a history of protest and resistance movements in Lebanon are put through a process of data-moshing. The disruption of the image in this pixelated moment in the film, forms to highlight the mass of people that make up these movements for intersectional revolution.

*Frame of Accountability*, 01:00:00, Helene Kazan, 2024.

#### Notes

- Helene Kazan is an artist, writer and educator. Her work investigates ‘risk’ as a lived condition produced through the conjoined violent effects of capitalism and conflict. This is observed in the colonial roots of international law and its material formation of the lived-built environment. In response, she uses decolonial, feminist, poetic and critical-legal approaches in her work, which explores ways of dismantling the ongoing effects of neo-colonial violence towards wider frameworks of accountability and justice.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and [Trigger](#) co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.



| type       | date       | filename                                  | size   | author       |
|------------|------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| screenshot | 25.05.2024 | FrameofAccountability_HKazan_2023_002.jpf | 517 KB | Helene Kazan |

category  
archive, government, technology, Trigger

When the juneberry (*Amelanchier Lamarckii*) flowers, the beekeeper knows it's time to add a first honey super to the hive. Winter's over and worker-foraging bees will fly out and come back with their stomachs full of nectar. To avoid larvae in the honey, the beekeeper will place a grid – the so-called queen excluder – between the main compartment of the hive and the honey super.



type  
photograph

date  
23.04.2021

filename  
\_44A0321.dng

size  
45,58MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, botany, food, tree, hand

02:28:55

December, 1947. Rapid snowmelt coincides with torrential precipitation. At the bottom of the Thur valley, in Wildenstein, the water gathers.



type  
photograph

date  
29.11.2021

filename  
IMG\_0504b.jpg

size  
8,68 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
landscape, precipitation

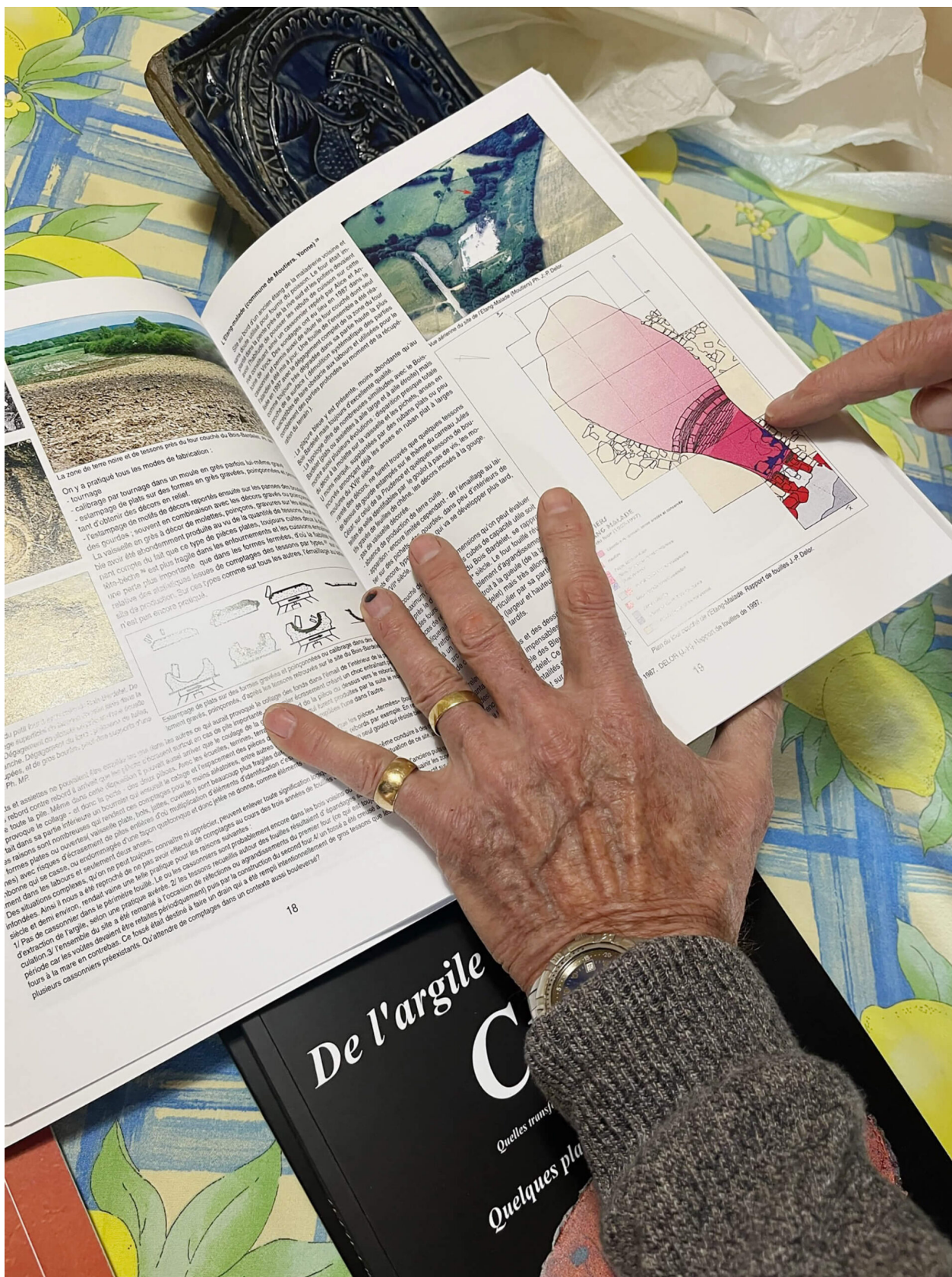
02:28:58

Here, on his kitchen table, Marcel Poulet, an expert on the stoneware tradition in the center of France, is explaining his archeological work on ‘whale ovens’.

I started collecting images and plans of ovens, for the beauty of those abstract technical lines and for what we can learn from them. In gathering the material that makes up this Atlas, and in sharing interests and knowledge, I learned that many people know about ovens, either in their homes, gardens, ateliers, factories, streets... Everyone transforms things through heat. Even bodies need warmth and produce some themselves.

#### Notes

- Clementine Vaultier’s interests, although trained as a ceramist, are in the warm surroundings of the fire rather than the production it engenders.



type  
photograph

date  
15.09.2022

filename  
clementine\_oven\_encounter.JPEG

size  
1,3 MB

author  
Clémentine Vaultier

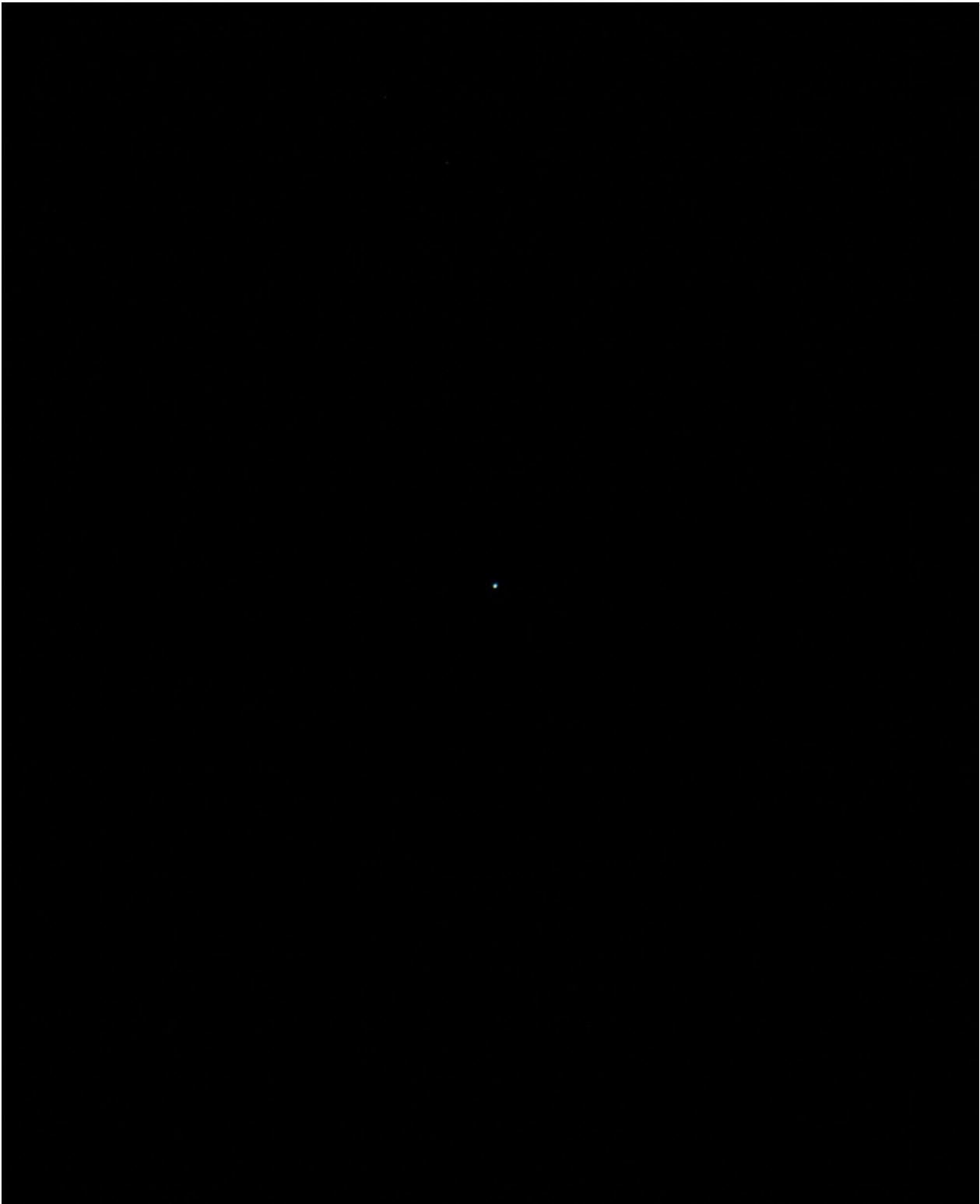
category  
archive, book, collecting, encounter, hand

02:29:47

As the light of celestial objects travels through the Earth's atmosphere, the various wavelengths that make up this light are refracted differently. This effect is called 'dispersion' and results in colour fringing on the edges of planetary discs: images with a sliver of blue at the top and a red one at the bottom appear.

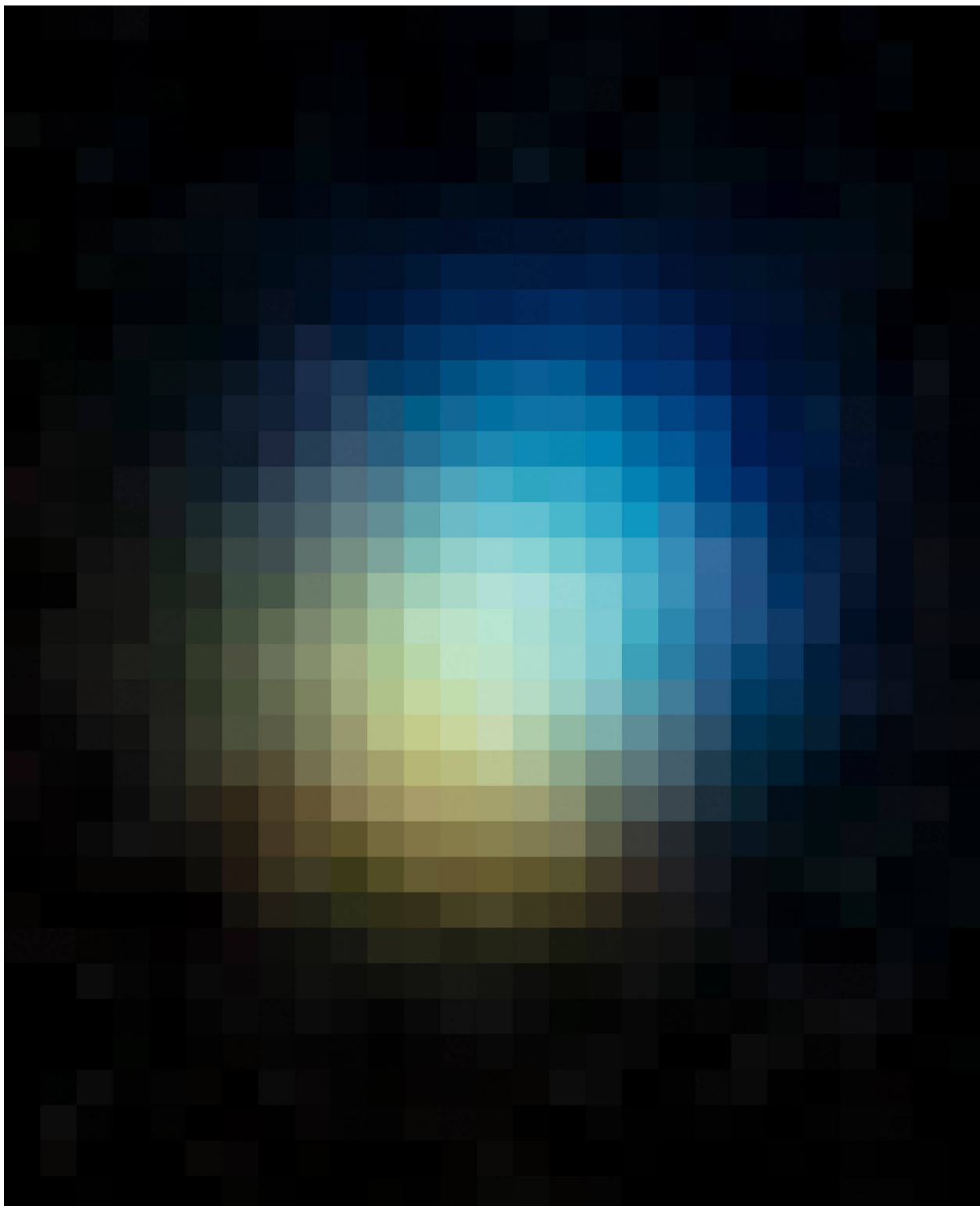
When celestial objects are positioned close to the horizon (like Neptune when observed from Luxembourg) the images are severely affected: the path of the light through the atmosphere is longer, leading to greater dispersion.

For the same reason sunsets are red, Neptune turns from a monochromatic blue disc into a misaligned, multicoloured oval.



|                                         |            |              |          |                     |
|-----------------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------|---------------------|
| type                                    | date       | filename     | size     | author              |
| photograph                              | 19.09.2022 | _44A5790.dng | 37,43 MB | De Cleene De Cleene |
| category                                |            |              |          |                     |
| astronomy, mistake, Neptune, technology |            |              |          |                     |





Anastasio Guzmán was a Spanish pharmacist and naturalist. He spent most of his career in South-America. He died in 1807 during an expedition in the Cordillera de Los Llanganates in Ecuador, in search of the lost treasure of the Incas. Some time after his death, his colleague Juan José Tafalla suggested naming a certain genus of plants after his friend.

Guzmanias are mainly stemless, evergreen, epiphytic perennials native to Florida, the West Indies, southern Mexico, Central America, and northern and western South America. They are found at altitudes of up to 3.500m in the Andean rainforests.

The symbols beneath the photographs indicate that these Guzmanias require full light, but it is advised to avoid bright sunlight in spring and summer (HALF WHITE, HALF BLACK SUN), the compost should be kept moderately moist during growth, allowing it to dry slightly between each watering period (HALF FILLED WATERING CAN). Unlike, for instance, the Grevillea Robusta, a Guzmania does not require being sprayed regularly (SPRAYER). The four digit code is the AUCTION CODE: 'Every product has a code. This code is indispensable for the trade.' The COLOURED BAR at the bottom shows the availability of a plant quarterly. RED means good, PINK means moderate and WHITE means not available.

The introduction to this booklet mentions that '[p]rinted colours are often not as accurate as the colours of the plants themselves, which is why it is possible that colours shown in pictures in this booklet may be a little different from the colours of the real pot plant.'

#### Sources

Bloemenbureau Holland. *Potplanten, pot plants, topfpflanzen, plantes en pot, piante da vaso, planta en particulier* 1995/96. Leiden: Bloemenbureau Holland, 1995.



type  
photograph

date  
12.04.2021

filename  
\_44A0323.dng

size  
45,38MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
book, botany, decoration, precipitation, replica/copy, tree, sign

02:29:57

A white Mercedes van inserts in front of me in a traffic jam near Antwerp. The back of the van has been altered in several ways: a latch was added to the door,<sup>1</sup> a footstep was bolted to the bumper, a couple of tie-wraps are holding up the lights on the left side.<sup>2</sup> Traffic is moving slow. There is no Mercedes logo.<sup>3</sup> Some parts have been retouched with white paint that differs slightly from the rest of the bodywork,<sup>4</sup> not unlike a tipp-ex'ed document.

#### Notes

- 1 Maybe the original locking mechanism no longer functions, or, perhaps, the owner wants to add a padlock to the doors at night.
- 2 Maybe a corroded screw caused the lights to come loose, or a slight collision.
- 3 Someone might have stolen it. Mercedes stars are often stolen, although mostly from the hood.
- 4 Maybe to counter corrosion, to conceal a mark someone made on the van or to cover up a fixed dent.
- Legislation concerning the publication of someone else's licence plate on the internet and the demand to blur it, is somewhat ambiguous.



type  
photograph

date  
05.07.2021

filename  
IMG\_7538.HEIC

size  
714 KB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
automobile, crash, impact, insurance, sticker

02:30:01

The road down from the top of Mount Vesuvius, at Atrio Del Cavallo. The sun sets. The last tourist bus has headed down. Then the headlights of the guardian's car swing their way down. It must be freezing. I am holding an orange-sized piece of petrified lava, probably stemming from the 1872 or 1944 eruption. A kilometer further down the road, the old Observatory is empty. Nowadays, monitoring seismic changes is done in a research centre in the city of Naples. Their seismographic registrations can be followed online, in real time. Two headlights swirling along the slopes, underneath me, are coming upwards.



|       |            |                      |       |                  |
|-------|------------|----------------------|-------|------------------|
| type  | date       | filename             | size  | author           |
| audio | 15.01.2021 | A seismic change.mp3 | 862KB | Arnout De Cleene |

category  
automobile, data storage, dusk, seismology, Vesuvius

02:30:04

In summer, the roofing gets hot and soft. In winter, it gets cold, hard and brittle. None of the gates to the garages are open. It's unsure whether the numerous texts and drawings – some dig deeper than others – have caused leakages.



type  
photograph

date  
14.04.2021

filename  
IMG\_6510.jpeg

size  
6,61MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
automobile, decoration, fissure, map/plan, parking, precipitation, roofing, sign

**02:30:55**

In *Six Stories from the End of Representation*, James Elkins writes: ‘Astrophysicists are well practised in “cleaning up” photographic plates by adjusting colour and contrast, removing images of dust, correcting aberrations, restoring lost pixels, and balancing uneven background illumination. When it comes to blur, the usual strategy is to specify what counts as “smooth” and what counts as “pointlike,” and then refine the image until it exhibits the required pointlike properties’<sup>1</sup>. Still, some astronomic images keep a certain amount of blur (although it would be technically possible to delineate them). Elkins continues: ‘blur does not need to be a matter of distance from some hypothetical optimal clarity: it can be a functional scale, independent of the viewer’s notions of clarity and even of the image itself’<sup>2</sup>.

On the night of 22 November 2021, I join John Sussenbach in his backyard while he captures Neptune.

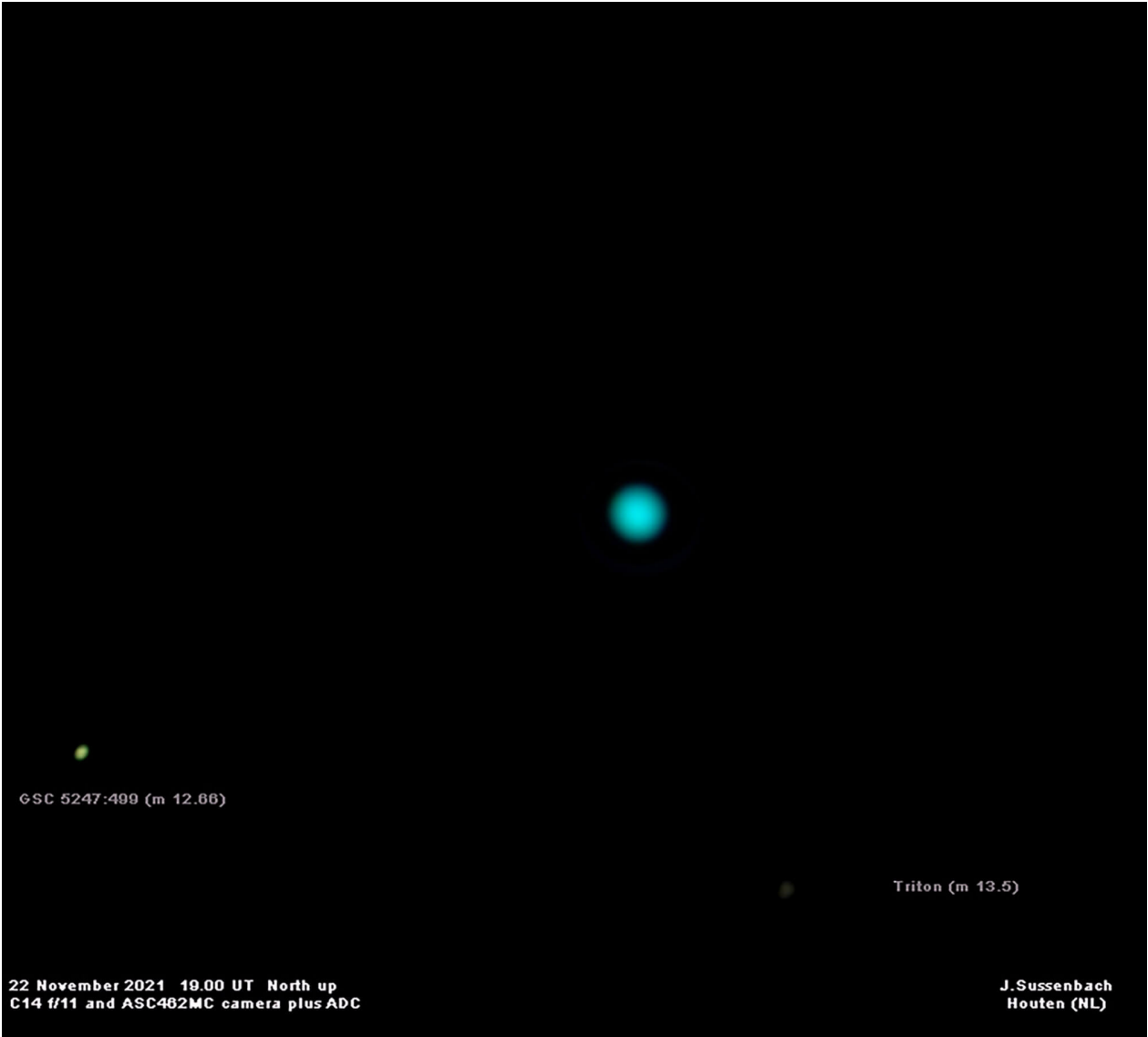
He invites me to join him and his wife for dinner. A prayer. Soup and bread. The images he makes, he explains, are complex from a temporal point of view. The light coming from Neptune has travelled for four hours before it reaches us. Moreover, these images are not photographs of a singular moment, but stacked frames of a video-recording. In doing so, he can, to some extent, eliminate the effects of a bad ‘seeing’: the negative effect atmospheric turbulence has on the light that reaches the telescope.

A bright dot is jumping around on his laptop’s screen. ‘That’s Neptune’, he says. With his index finger he follows the dot. ‘That’s the bad seeing. That’s the unrest.’

The next day I send him the photograph I took of him standing on his ladder, dangerously placed on the edge of the tarp covering his pool. ‘Nice to see the open star cluster Pleiades in your photograph’, he replies. He attaches the image he made that night: ‘If there would have been a clear storm on Neptune, it would have shown’.

#### Sources

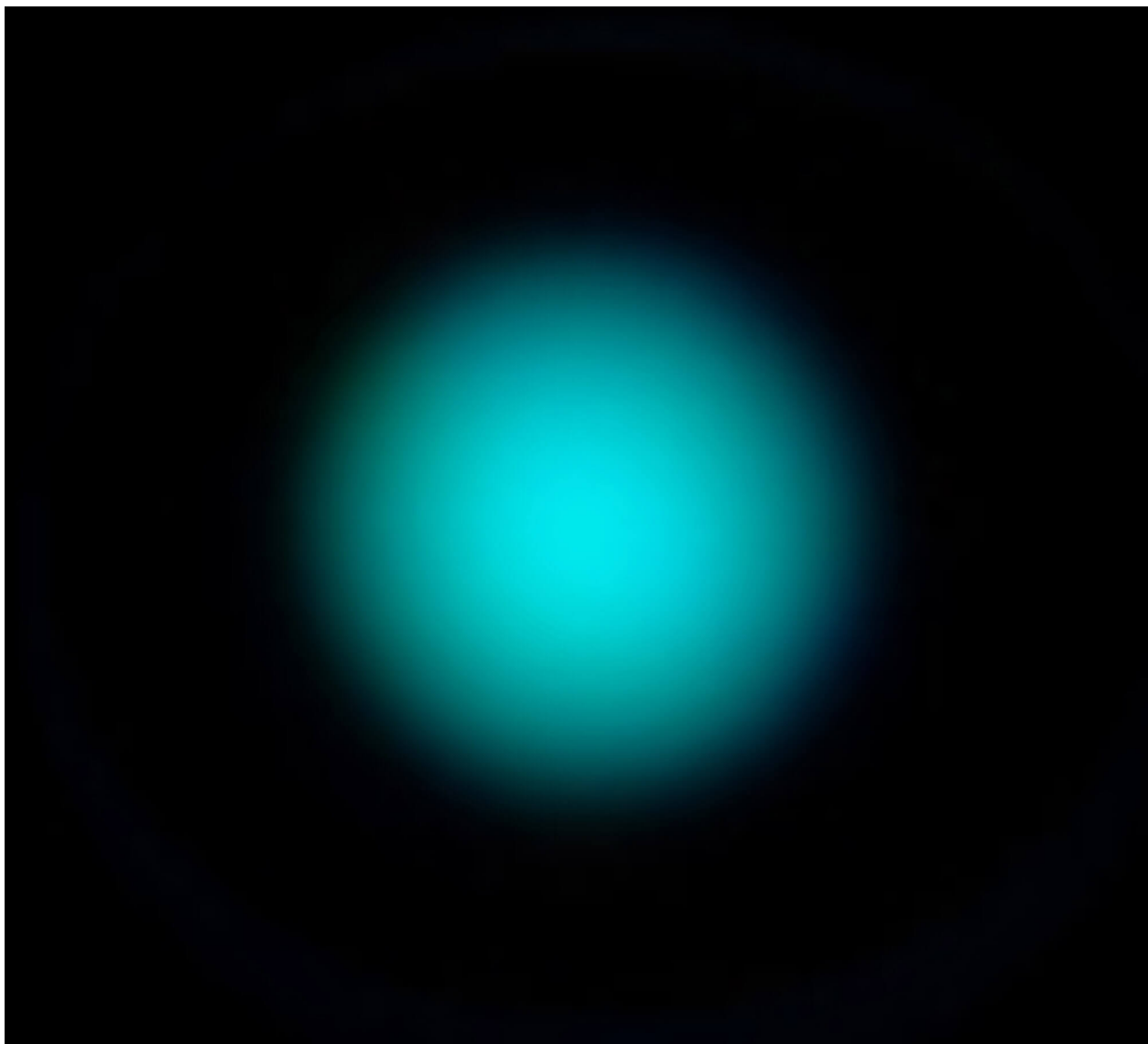
- Image by John Sussenbach. 22 November 2021 19.00 UT North up C14 f/11 and ASC462MC camera plus ADC, Houten (NL)
- 1 Elkins, J. *Six Stories from the End of Representation. Images in Painting, Photography, Astronomy, Microscopy, Particle Physics, and Quantum Mechanics, 1980-2000*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, 59.
- 2 Ibid., 62-63.



| type       | date       | filename                                      | size  | author              |
|------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| photograph | 30.09.2022 | nep221121-1900UT-RGB-ASI462MC-JSussenbach.jpg | 74 KB | De Cleene De Cleene |

category  
 astronomy, encounter, house, mistake, Neptune, physics, technology





A skiing holiday with my in-laws. The ski pass does not allow you to visit Schatzalp. We buy a separate ticket and take the train up the hill to the hotel, which served as the backdrop for Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*. The stately hotel and former sanatorium is gorgeous.

Meanwhile, a new virus is spreading. Some people are coughing. I am keeping distance while waiting in line to take the train back down to the snow-covered village.



type  
scan

date  
14.02.2021

filename  
Document\_2021-02-14\_140547.jpg

size  
770KB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
book, card, precipitation, epidemic, family

02:31:02

Where once there was twelve million cubic metres of water, excavators and trucks are moving dirt and rocks that have been hidden from sight for 56 years; piling them up into a temporary dam: a *batardeau*.



|                            |            |               |         |                   |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------|---------|-------------------|
| type                       | date       | filename      | size    | author            |
| photograph                 | 05.12.2021 | IMG_0512b.jpg | 6,68 MB | Michiel De Cleene |
| category                   |            |               |         |                   |
| drought, landscape, repair |            |               |         |                   |

02:31:07

Photographing the house and the clearing it stood in proved difficult. During summer, the nettles and brambles slowed down the pace. Some plants stung the elbows. The clearing only became visible when the sun fell through the opening in the canopy. On cloudy days the clearing disappeared.

#### Notes

- ‘As the order of institutions follows its course, or as huts give way to villages and then to cities and finally to cosmopolitan academies, the forests move further and further away from the center of the clearing. At the center one eventually forgets that one is dwelling in a clearing. [...] Yet however wide the circle may get through the inertia of civic expansion, it presumably retains an edge of opacity where history meets the earth, where the human abode reaches its limits.’

#### Sources

- Pogue Harrison, R. ‘The Ecology of Finitude’, in: id., *Forests*. Chicago, 1992, 245.



|          |                                                         |             |         |                     |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------------------|
| type     | date                                                    | filename    | size    | author              |
| scan     | 11.10.2023                                              | 017c_05.jpg | 1,48 MB | De Cleene De Cleene |
| category | architecture, archive, house, landscape, panorama, tree |             |         |                     |

02:31:11

When the juneberry (*Amelanchier Lamarckii*) flowers, the beekeeper knows it's time to add a first honey super to the hive. Winter's over and worker-foraging bees will fly out and come back with their stomachs full of nectar. To avoid larvae in the honey, the beekeeper will place a grid – the so-called queen excluder – between the main compartment of the hive and the honey super.



type  
photograph

date  
23.04.2021

filename  
\_44A0321.dng

size  
45,58MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, botany, food, tree, hand

02:31:17

