

# Flatland

Patricia Portela

**Op het dansfestival Amperdans bracht Patricia Portela**

**een performance die bestond uit een multimediale**

**stroom van gedachten, quotes en beelden.**

**In *Flatland* manoeuvreert zij het publiek in**

**een merkwaardige positie: de voorstelling ontstaat**

**in de waarneming van de toeschouwer.**

**Over de evolutie van een Flatland-bewoner naar een**

**3D-bestaan. Een neerslag van de hand van de artieste.**

## Flatpeople

Flatpeople cannot be in space, but boy, can we read books.

We can slide over the outline of the letters and follow the labyrinths of lines that make up each word and sentence, and in this way follow the stories written in any book made of flat pages. It sounds difficult, but in fact, for a flatlander it's natural and considered one of the most exciting sports.

## Euclides

(...) I started researching again, some habits you never forget. (...)

(...) I will spare you the details and I will go straight to the point and purpose of this evening.

Actually I have to give you some details... Euclides believed in intromissions.

Euclides thought that from the eyes of observers rays are launched into space, fine grains of looking

atoms melt and capture all information that is being observed ... the rays spread and mix with the particles of air, cover all surfaces and steal their images and transfer them back into the brains of people with fingerprints, just like a constant rain.

This is what I had seen when I was trapped outside the horizon line.

Those were observational rays, and that means behind those rays there were eyes, and around those eyes there were 3D bodies –of course! I was going to Spaceland every time I was going to work –unbelievable! How did I not think of this before?

Every time I was going to work I was going to the third dimension, pulled by the act of observation from the other side. You were making me go to the third dimension and once you stopped looking I would go back.

Of course I could not connect this foreign country with Spaceland because the lights were always off on your side, so I could not see you. And lights were always on on my side, so you could always watch me...

... lights words and movement on my side... darkness and silence on the other... how could I suspect that the light I was feeling was the light of your looking!

That was why I was so tired, you steal my image every time you look at me!

We are so close, and yet we cannot communicate!

An audience full of James Bonds leaving their fingerprints on their martinis while looking at me...

And the reason why I was feeling strangely alive in your world was because I was being seen! ... never mind to be or not to be... to be is to be seen!

And if I could force you all to watch me all the time, I would BE all the time, right?

If I could kidnap all of you, right here, right now...

And perform for you forever so you would stay right there, right now, watching me, all the time...

Interesting

If I could kidnap all of you, right here, right now...

Interesting... (...)

## nightmare

This was becoming a nightmare! You had already invented cubes like the one that took me so long to build!

You not only use me to reason about information, but you also want to make me look like you without allowing me to be you!

## letters

(...) All communication between the readers of an image and the makers of an image takes place on a 2dimensional surface. Communication is nearly always carried on a 2D level.

Spacelanders go to Flatland in order to transform and perfect information that can be used in their 3D world.

But what if Flatlanders wanted to have space in Flatland too, that would require a Dimensional Expansion never dreamed of before, wouldn't it?

I thought and thought and thought about these two worlds and realized that if the written world had been invented by Spacelanders, then everything that happens in 3D world must go through 2D world first.

This means that letters are codes to produce space.

Somewhere in all the reports, books, articles and other bidimensional documentation, the transformation processes are described in detail –I just had to do it backwards- it was just a matter of finding the right formula.

I decided to be very practical and dedicate my research to finding out more about the mysterious fingerprint beings and find what qualities they have that I don't have.

I started comparing everything I read to everything I have. This way, I would arrive, by an empirical process of comparison and elimination, to a list of empirical elements that would only exist in Spaceland and this way find the

empirical components I needed to create an empirical 3D model in Flatland.(...)

**chapter**

BUT One day, lazily sliding for a bit of relaxation, I accidentally discovered a strange letter like this:

I thought it was such an amazing letter with so many lines that no doubt it had to have a lot of meanings. I took what you would call a 'lot of time' in your world, to memorize this amazing letter and started investigating it.

At dinner, I discussed and shared my ideas with my family. My wife thought it was just another of my weird hobbies and my son kept telling me it was a landscape letter, not meant to be de-codified.

Still, I persisted with my investigation and still today I wish I had never paid that much attention to it. Maybe I'd be happier though more ignorant today.

But at the time I could not know what kind of tragedy I was getting into.

(You say curiosity killed the cat, but what I discovered almost killed me.)

On another day, it was a Sunday, I was a bit bored, sliding at random, and I ended up in a police report...I discovered this:

I could not believe what my body-line was sliding through!

This 'strange letter' was a fingerprint!

Well, I know what a fingerprint is, I just had not slid through one before.

But, the issue here is, that for me to be able to find a fingerprint in Flatland, there has to have been a contact between this suspect and my world.

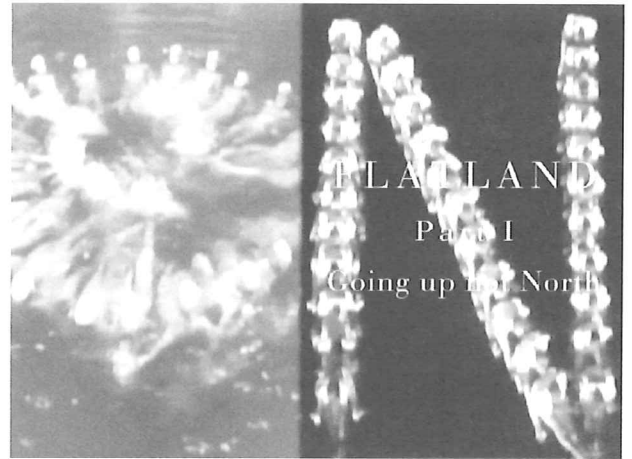
But a fingerprint requires a finger, and a finger requires a hand, a hand needs to be linked to arms, and arms don't just float around without bodies. And they should all have a head on top and legs below and they usually come with feet attached. A real person.

Just like James Bond so... this meant that somewhere, James Bond complete with martinis, beds, blonde girls, submarine cars with sophisticated gadgets, laser watches, creepy guys with bad teeth, midgets with razor hats and so forth... all really existed! ●

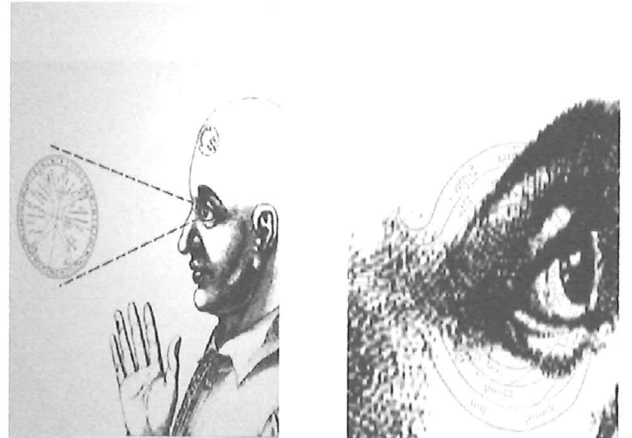
**'Hoewel we ons dagelijks door een driedimensionale wereld bewegen en in de wiskunde af en toe met relatief gemak nadenken over gebieden met nog meer dimensies, zit de wereld van onze informatiedragers gevangen in de twee dimensies van de eindeloze oppervlakten van papier en videoschermen.'**

*Edward R. Tufte*

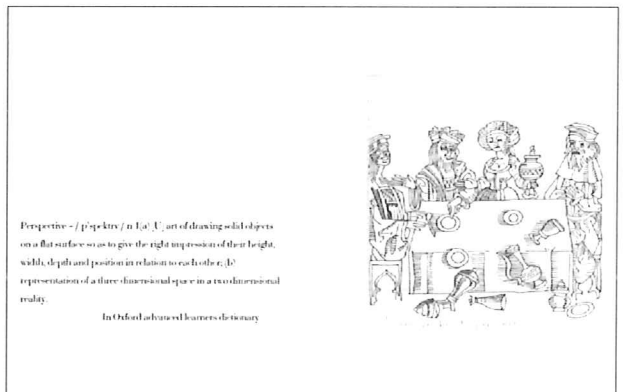
Flatpeople



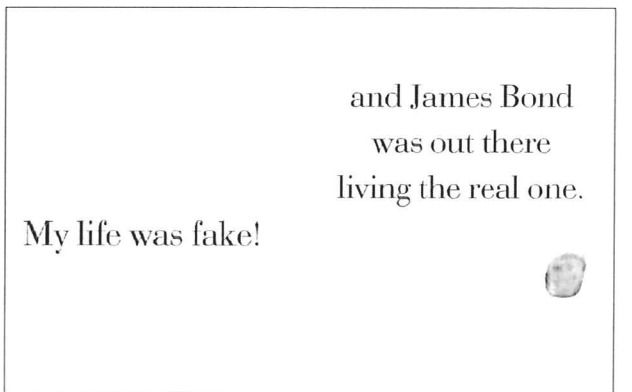
Euclides



Nightmare



Letters



Chapter

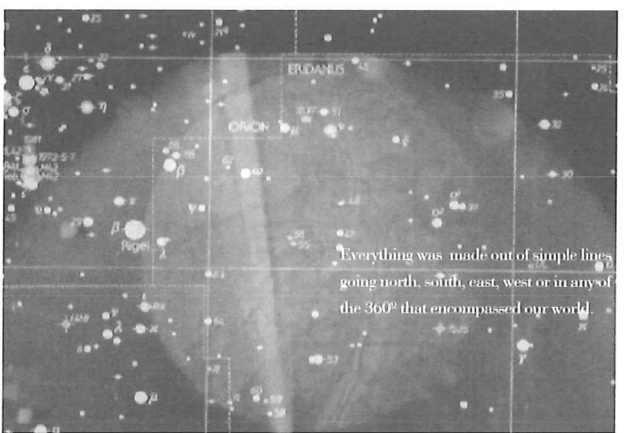
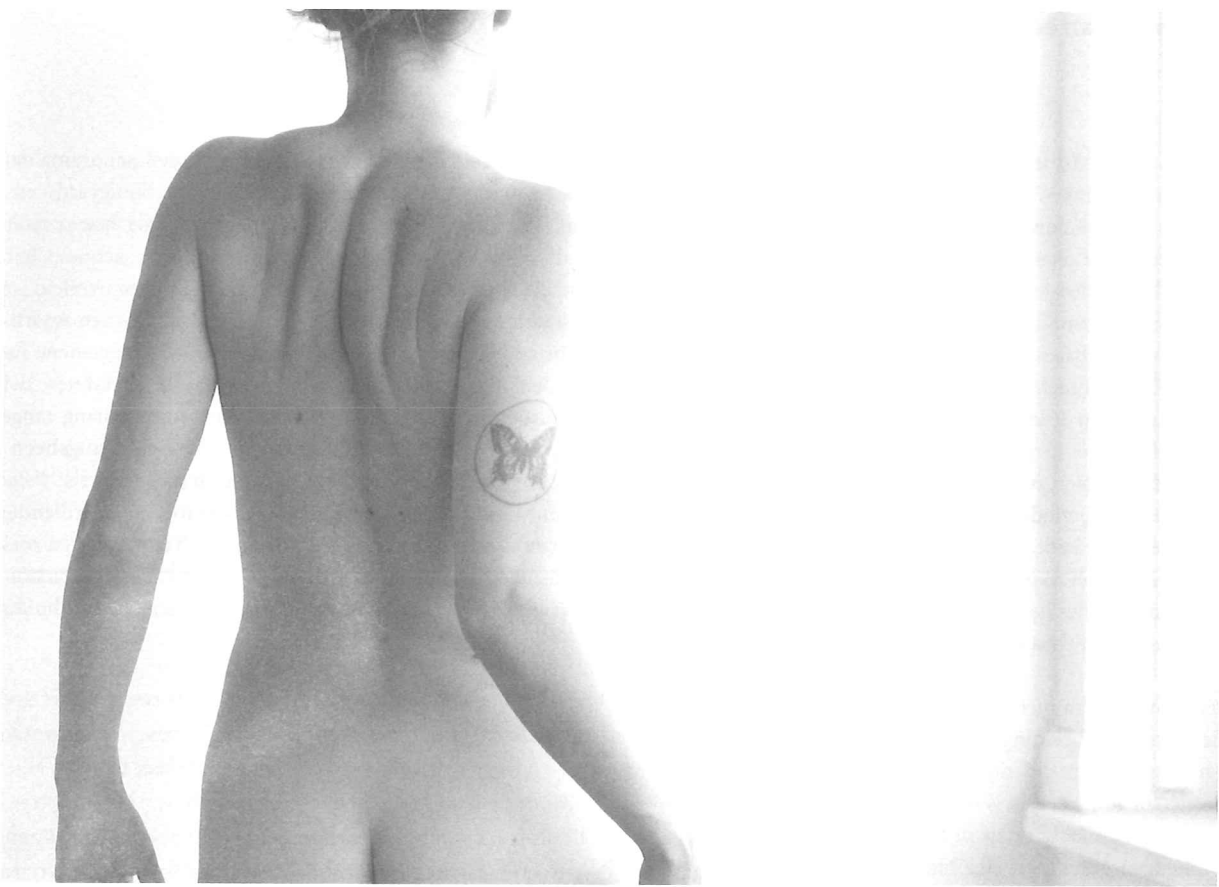




Foto Sarah Michielsen naar *What a body you have, honey* van Eszter Salomon, gezien in de Kaaitheaterstudio's op 5 oktober '04



David Bergé naar *What a body you have, honey* van Eszter Salomon