

EDEN'S EDGE

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With its thought-out conception, the visually minimalist, but therefore no less convincing short film series *Eden's Edge* explores the elusive relation between space, narrative and subject. Even though it is not an example of a classic documentary, the nine presented stories are a unique document of contemporary American culture – including its obsession with the desert. In the film, which questions its own foundations with the use of CG and voice-over, the desert acquires the status of a sort of a refuge, while its infinite emptiness enables a unique potentiality for generating audio-visual creativity. In this regard, the film does not repeat Antonioni's gesture of emptying the shot since we are witness to it being filled with digital aesthetics. *The counterpoint to the 1960s aesthetical modernism is even more intensively asserted in the narrative passages of individual life stories. These are represented through experimenting with the edges of classical cinema, testing the limits of the classical filmic and the so-called digital image in their representational capacities.*

The examination of the visible is complemented by the repetitive background soundscape created from the monologues of individuals that we never see *en face* since they are revealed to us only from afar, from the so-called bird's-eye view.

The shift from one story to the next is indicated by a telling intertitle and a change in spatial arrangement and the corre-

sponding props, which are intrinsic to the presented life story.

Because the editing takes place at the level of connecting particular stories, an individual scene functions as an independent unit, as a sort of a *tableaux vivant*, since the only movement that we can follow is the practically static pattering of the indiscernible main figure. This refers to walking as a productive practice of generating meaning which connects movement, image and viewer, creating a transference whose uniqueness is also manifested in the indiscernibility of the figure, which importantly contributes to the establishment of a specific atmosphere.

Thus, the almost ethereal atmosphere both plays on the "shamanistic" connotation of the desert and encourages the viewer to concentrate more on the spoken words than on the visual, whereby a unique intimacy is established between the viewer and the spoken word. The synergy between the visual, the soundscape and the play of meaning produces stories that function at the level of representation, performativity and at the level of eventness within which each story is established as an autonomous event. But despite their diversity, a special energy develops among them, weaving the visual image and the sound into a harmonious whole.

Eden's Edge – 9 shorts on the Californian Desert, O.N.L.S.D productions, AT/US, 2014

61 min. (*Turtle Island* 7:08 min., *Easy Rider* 5:24 min., *Garden of Longevity* 6:37 min., *Exile Park* 6:41 min., *Little Babylon* 6:51 min., *Time Square* 6:03 min., *Earth Tattoo* 8:06 min., *Water and Worms* 5:33 min., *Crosswinds* 7:50 min.)