

The entire scene is a wash of still, cold grey. A massive dark lake fills the bottom of the screen, above it bleak snow-capped mountains and above that heavy rain clouds. Shot on an overcast day, there are no reflections on the water. The immense scenery of the lake and surrounding mountains seems strangely flat. There are no figures, nothing in the foreground and no activity to focus on. Instead the work calls your attention to far finer details: tonal variations, the shifting scale of the scenery, the far-off shorelines inching imperceptibly closer, and the impending bad weather.

Lomond was filmed on location, at the largest inland lake in Great Britain. On several days last February, Mark Reid travelled from Glasgow to Balloch, a small town located on the southernmost point of the lake. From here he would catch one of the regular ferries that take tourists out on a circuit of Loch Lomond. Over and over again Reid sat in the cold on the boat's bow and filmed its slow journey, collecting hours of footage. He later re-watched this footage many times before finally choosing a brief, unedited seven minutes that expressed something of the total experience of its production.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs offer some of the most picturesque natural scenery in Scotland and for much of its duration the video has the classic, post-card proportions of landscape photography. Filmed from a stationary camera as a boat travels slowly through the massive lake, the frame changes gently as the boat tilts from side to side. New mountain peaks and shorelines appear and disappear, continually replacing one fugitive vista with another. What we see is created as much by hand as by happenstance.

Lomond teases us with the conventions of landscape photography – the colour palette, the subject, the sublime beauty of an untouched wilderness, the undercurrent of environmentalism and melancholy – without ever fully giving into them. This becomes even more apparent when you consider Reid's other videos, which give far less pretty spaces (car parks and suburbia) the exact same treatment as he does one of Britain's most beloved 'natural wonders'.

Lomond documents a journey on a passenger vehicle, a journey that was repeated many times by the artist. But the video never takes us to or from anywhere. In fact, for long stretches we barely seem to move at all. At times the video is almost as still as a photograph, but it never quite settles into a static image. So although it is filmed and screened in real time, time becomes elastic, elusive and highly personal. It doesn't pass, it is felt. Likewise Reid's landscapes aren't viewed so much as occupied. They are durational. This is why Reid describes his videos as 'quietly immersive'.

All of Mark Reid's videos are born in the same way. He sits in large open spaces for long periods of time, first choosing a point of view that 'needs to be investigated' and then filming it over a period of days. The final video is the outcome of a process of extreme patience and contemplation, a process that involves giving up any expectation that something will or should happen, and instead giving in to the sensorial qualities of place. It is this transformative experience, or some small part of it, that Reid is offering to viewers.

Maura Edmond

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Lomond

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