



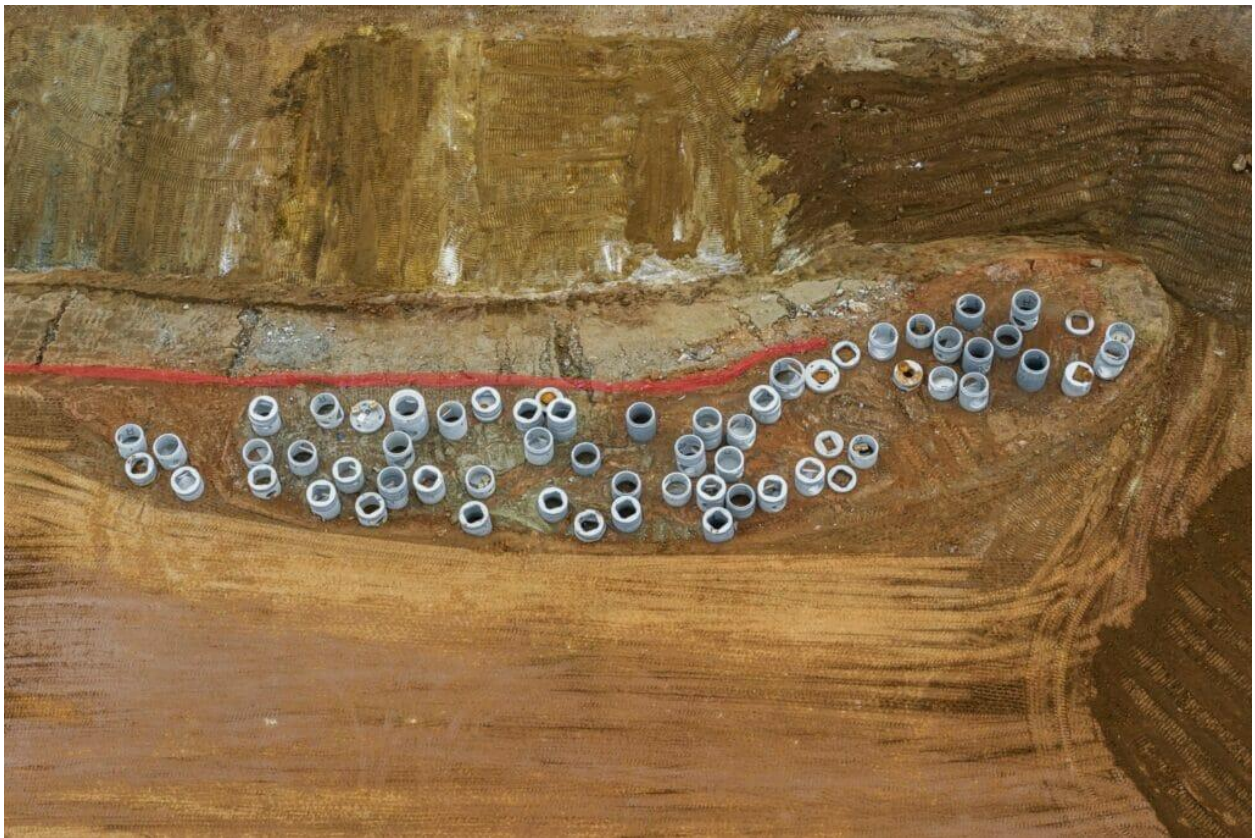
Marietta-Cobb Museum's "Contemporary Landscapes" is ambitious, innovative

Jerry Cullum

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At the Marietta-Cobb Museum of Art, curator Madeline Beck continues to produce some of the most innovative, ambitious and thought-provoking exhibitions in the metro area. [*Contemporary Landscapes*](#) might better be titled "Landscape and the Uncanny." One way or another, it confronts the unease imposed on us by a once-familiar world that has grown strange.

This is symbolized effectively by [Adam Gabriel Winnie](#)'s painting *Pessoa's Disquiet*, a title that alludes to Portuguese writer [Fernando Pessoa's *Book of Disquiet*](#). In it, a forest clearing is lit by sunlight from several angles at once, as a man hunched over in a chair manipulates a shutter trigger that is attached to a manual typewriter instead of a camera. The typewriter sits on a desk alongside a strange disk that appears to be a gigantic glass platter. The near-photographic precision of the rendering makes the scene seem realistic, until a closer look reveals the anomalous details.



Peter Essick's photograph "Construction Site, Snellville, Georgia #4," an urban landscape of torn-up land, evokes unease and a strange sense of beauty defiled.

[Peter Essick](#)'s color photographs of metro Atlanta construction sites do much the same thing with Snellville, Suwanee and Stone Mountain, where torn-up landscapes and construction equipment appear more alien than any casual observer would expect. It is, literally, the condition that [Ben Steele](#) evokes in science-fiction-like landscape paintings with such titles as *The Shape of Things to Come* (a [title](#) borrowed from sci-fi writer H. G. Wells).

[Ron Saunders and cuibonobo](#) take this motif into interactive digital dimensions with *Terra Incognita 2.0*, where the "unknown land" of the title is a set of superimposed images that can be manipulated by scanning a QR code. This literal presentation of multiple perspectives is rendered more symbolically in paint with [Namwon Choi](#)'s acrylic and gouache landscapes on canvas or panel, in which independent bits of scenery appear in adjacent but separate segments best described by the title of one work, *In-betweenness (Landscape – Fragmented)*.



Hannah Ehrlich's weaving "I am reminded and now it is all happening again"

The rest of the show uses diametrically opposed methods to convey a sense of something not quite right in the world as we behold it. [Hannah Ehrlich](#)'s consistently dark-colored textile weavings suggest aerial views of the land below. They are also visual metaphors for unsettled emotional states — as implied by such titles as *I am reminded and now it is all happening again*. [Chris Little](#)'s photographs, on the other hand, seem on one level like standard-issue Romanticism, with a touch of the awe and terror of [the sublime](#) in the mountain landscape of *Guardians of the Tetons*.

But the loneliness of an isolated farmhouse in British Columbia or an unaccountably windowless house in South Dakota introduces a sense of the uncanny, and the road repair that rhymes with the patchwork landscape on a [Patchwork Road](#) likewise reveals an unsuspected strangeness in the mid and far West.

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Dr. Jerry Cullum's reviews and essays have appeared in Art Papers magazine, Raw Vision, Art in America, ARTnews, International Journal of African-American Art and many other popular and scholarly journals. In 2020 he was awarded the Rabkin Prize for his outstanding contribution to arts journalism.