

The Last Silence; Pavane for a Dying World

Jennifer Dickson – Clip 6

The most important body of work I have done, commissioned by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, was *The Last Silence; Pavane for a Dying World*. I worked on that with Martha Langford as curator over a number of years. This was a complex piece and it dealt with my own feelings about the debasements of our cultural landscape. I attempt in it to document not only the beauty of the classical landscape, on which European culture is founded but on its degradation. I attempted to trace that degradation right back to classical times so that, in the exhibition, you had two perceptions of the four main sites. One showing us the site as we would like to see it, beautiful, something transcendental, something that made us want to dream and journey towards that vision of beauty; the classical image of beauty. On the other hand I showed how systematic defacement and debasement and degradation have gone hand in hand with beauty back to even prehistoric times. At the conclusion of this project, which I think owed a lot to Martha Langford's very brilliant curatorial involvement (it was definitely a project in which artist and curator worked in symbiosis) we came back with a body of work, which again I think is probably fifty years ahead of its time.