

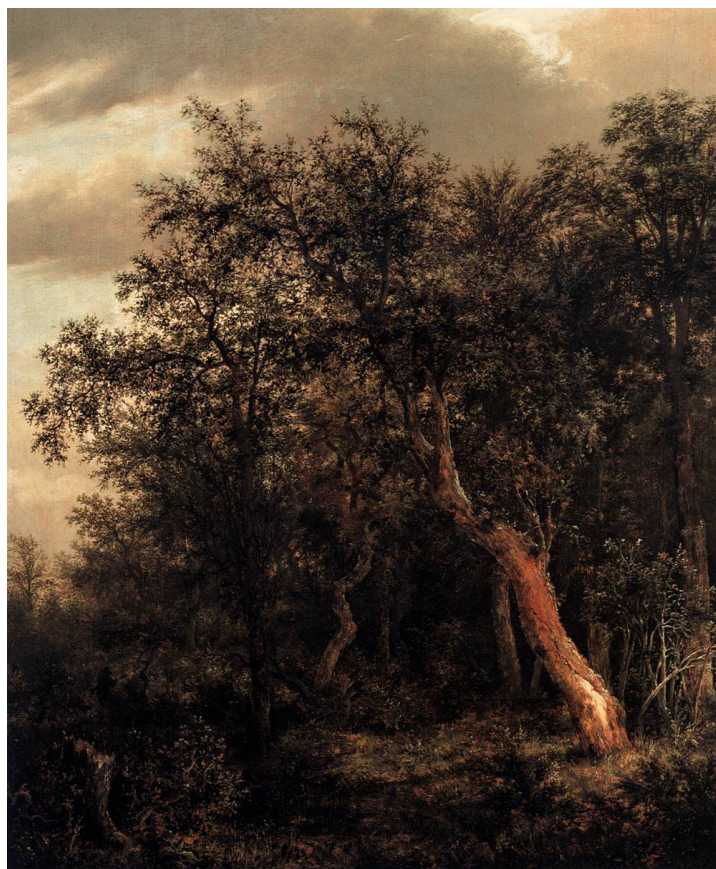
Notebook

A Note from Viennale

October 30, 2014

Marie-Pierre Duhamel, writer

On October 27th night, Nathaniel Dorsky presented four new short films in the lovely red velvet case of the Metro theater of Austrian Film Archive, in meditative silence and gorgeous projection conditions. Dorsky's films are experiences in the discovery of a world beyond (parallel to) ours that only his camera can capture; a world fleeting and luminous, where mystery prevails through unexpected associations in framing, light and color changes between the "ordinary" objects and spaces that surround us. A world painted in light and movement in which one can catch glimpses of fragile eternity. The impression remained long after the screening, and until the morning after: it had become obvious that the next "activity" would not be another screening but a visit to one of the museums of Vienna. And there was Dorsky: in a modest corner of the Fine Arts Academy Painting Collection is a small painting by Jacob van Ruisdael, called "Glade in a wood." Oil on wood, small dimensions (57 x 47 cm), dated 1646.



The reproduction cannot fully express its reality nor its experience—as words fail to express the subtleties of Dorsky's editing. But see the light on the tree trunk on the right of the painting. The glade. This light has no "logical" source: the sky evokes dusk, the season could be end of summer, the general tone is rather dark...the origin of this light is a fascinating and overwhelming mystery. Is it the last ray of a setting sun finding its way through the thick bushes? Or is it an annunciation of a more spiritual light, a sign of transcendence? Getting close to the painting, one can notice a subtle play of impasto in the upper branches on the left, small dots of black paint that catch the light of the room and produce a subtle flickering, as the white impasto on the tree trunk produce an intense glow. In this modest world of an ordinary wood, light creates movement, light and movement together create an image of eternity. It is because of Dorsky's screening the evening before that I stayed with this painting for a long time.



Avraham (Nathaniel Dorsky, 2014)

The association may seem far-fetched and a personal misinterpretation, but this is one of these things that Dorsky's cinema so generously offers: a renewed attention to the material world and an opportunity to connect experiences and feelings that would remain sadly separated. ■