# The Dioramic Approach

## A Manifesto for Experiential Philosophy

Ton Haarmans · Wide Open Windows

What if reality is not something we simply perceive, but something we continuously find ourselves already living inside?

This question lies at the heart of the dioramic approach.

Most of us grow up with the quiet assumption that there is a world “out there,” already formed, already waiting, and that consciousness somehow enters this world as an observer, looking at what is given. We learn to speak as if objects exist first, people exist first, meaning exists first, and only afterward comes experience, interpretation, or reflection.

But lived experience suggests something more subtle.

What we actually encounter is never a neutral world made up of isolated objects or raw sensory fragments. Experience always arrives as something already organized, already meaningful, already coherent enough to be lived as real. We do not open our eyes to disconnected data and then slowly construct a world

from it. We open our eyes and find ourselves already inside one.

This is what I call a diorama.

A diorama is not a fantasy, nor is it merely a subjective interpretation layered on top of an objective world. It is the living configuration within which reality takes shape as experience. It is the way a world becomes familiar, stable, and convincing enough to disappear as construction and appear instead as simply “how things are.”

Language participates in this. Memory participates in it. Emotion, culture, attention, identity, expectation, trauma, habit, belief, science, and even skepticism all participate in shaping the worlds we inhabit. None of these stand outside experience. They arise within it, reinforce it, and often become so transparent that their structuring role is no longer noticed.

The dioramic approach begins when this transparency starts to crack.

It begins in those moments when what once felt obvious no longer feels entirely self-evident. A belief begins to loosen. An identity no longer fits. A spiritual insight rearranges what feels real. A scientific model changes what can be seen. A loss, a shock, a love, or a deep

silence suddenly reveals that what we called “reality” may be more configured than we assumed.

From this perspective, the question is no longer What is reality, viewed from outside? There is no final outside from which the whole can be seen. Every observation, every philosophy, every religion, every scientific model, and every personal certainty appears from within a lived configuration.

The more interesting question becomes:

How does this world become convincing?

How does a sense of self become so natural that it feels unquestionable? How does language become transparent enough that we forget it shapes what can be thought? How does a worldview become reality-like? How does an awakening experience reorganize the structure of experience without taking us outside experience itself?

These questions form the foundation of the dioramic approach.

It is not a belief system. It is not a spiritual teaching. It is not a rejection of science, nor an attempt to replace one worldview with another. It is a way of examining how worlds form, how identities stabilize, how truths become persuasive, and how reality becomes inhabitable.

The aim is not to escape the diorama.

The aim is to see it.

And perhaps, in seeing it more clearly, to discover that what we call reality has always been more alive, more layered, and more participatory than we first imagined.