



***Not a Mirage, is it
Home and Estrangement Held in Suspense***

Arslohgo. Digital Composition. 4200 x 5940 Pixels. CMYK, 300 ppi

Artist Statement

“Perspectives can be very different. A photograph of Earth taken from the Orion capsule during the Artemis II mission may convey a completely different impression than the same photograph viewed in another context from a terrestrial vantage point. Both perspectives may stand for a sense of home and yet have nothing whatsoever in common. The question can be the answer, just as the answer can pose a question ...”

Technical Notes

“Not a Mirage, is it” is a digital composition from the Sky Series. The visible Earth is based on a freely available NASA photograph taken from the Orion capsule during the Artemis II mission. This cosmic reference image replaces the sun within a Sahara landscape generated with the aid of generative AI. The sand dust was laid over the entire scene as a final post-processing step.

Composition and Visual Structure

In “Not a Mirage, is it,” the viewer encounters an image configuration that reads at first glance as stark and dramatic – and on second look as a systematic deconstruction of familiar ways of seeing the world. The compositional tension is precisely calibrated: across the lower third of the frame, the Sahara spreads its sweeping dunes – photorealistic, physically tangible in their grain and weight. Footprints in the foreground lend the scene a human trace that is at once transient and charged with meaning. Above, occupying the place where the sun would ordinarily stand, Earth hangs in the haze of a churning sandstorm – immense, alien, and yet utterly familiar.

The Conceptual Displacement

The conceptual coup lies in the inversion of a cosmological given: Earth replaces the sun. Arslough draws on a freely available NASA photograph captured from the Orion capsule of the Artemis II mission – an image that originally belongs to the perspective of outer space, to the astronaut’s overhead view of something small, distant, and beautiful. Inserted into the work, a radical shift takes place: this cosmic document becomes a celestial

apparition hovering above an AI-generated Sahara scene, and immediately begins to oscillate between reality and illusion. Is it a heavenly body? Is it home? Is it a mirage?

Language as Conceptual Strategy

That very question is already embedded in the title – and not quite posed. “Not a mirage, is it” – the English tag question, that grammatical gesture of apparent confirmation which in truth sows doubt – immediately turns the answer back into a question. The image says: this is no illusion. But the syntax says: or is it? The artist is practicing here a form of lohgorhythmic displacement at the level of the title itself: language becomes visual strategy, certainty becomes an unstable category.

The Sand Dust as Planetary Metaphor

The sand dust, laid over the entire scene in a final compositional step, deepens this state of suspension. It connects both spheres – Earth and earth – because Saharan dust is literally a global traveler: carried by Atlantic winds all the way to the Americas, it fertilizes the Amazon rainforest, drifts over the Canary Islands, and regularly appears as an orange-yellow veil above European cities. Sand dust is not a local phenomenon – it is a planetary one. In this way, the compositional post-processing gesture becomes an ecological metaphor: Earth, as seen from the Sahara, is not simply home – it is a fragile, dusty system in the process of overwhelming itself.

Perspective as Statement

In Arslougho’s work, the choice of vantage point becomes the statement itself. In his artist’s statement, he observes that a photograph of Earth taken from the Orion capsule and the same image seen from a terrestrial perspective can trigger entirely different feelings – and that both may still represent a sense of home without sharing a single thing in common. This philosophical tension is anchored in the image not through form but through precision: the viewer stands in the desert, in the sand, in the heat of the immediate – and looks at the whole. Or does he stand in outer space and look back? The sand dust, which blurs every boundary, allows both readings.

Conclusion

“Not a Mirage, is it” is a work that derives an epistemological inquiry from apparently simple means – a NASA photograph, an AI-generated landscape, a single post-processing step. It is not about whether something is true or false, real or illusory, near or far. It is about the fact that the question itself is the answer – and vice versa. In this inversion, which gives the work its quiet gravitational pull, Arslohgo proves himself a master of the conceptual double floor: Earth hovers above the desert – and it is very close, and it is unreachably far away.

Medium: Digital Composition