

# Scouting as a service, a profile of Landscape VC and OpenScout

In the ever-growing investment landscape, funds are multiplying and diversifying, and for startups there is more to raising investment than the money and the media moment. With #QVCS Maddyness normally profiles funds to give founders and entrepreneurs the information they need to choose the right investor. Today however, we flip the script and hear from Emily LaRocque, Associate at Landscape VC.

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Hi! My name is Emily. I work for Landscape VC. Within Landscape I wear a number of hats. Covering everything from supporting founders with their fundraises, managing deal flow and making investor introductions, identifying and onboarding scouts to our venture scouting network and so on! A large portion of my role includes facilitating the relationships between our founder and investor community.

Landscape started last year, our founder, Joe Perkins, was frustrated with the fundraising process of his previous company. He decided to take the matter into his own hands and kickstarted Landscape with a review platform that was aimed at raising transparency in fundraising – essentially the Glassdoor for VC.

Since then, he's multiplied the team by six. The original review platform has had over 1,000 reviews and over 400 VCs are working with us. Our next product is all about helping people break into venture and monetise their dealflow. It's called OpenScout. We are extremely excited!

A bit about me. Prior to Landscape, I was born and raised in Chicago. For fun I enjoy yoga, live music, and the occasional pick up football game. My professional background thus far has mostly been finance-related. I've previously worked at Morgan Stanley – Private Wealth Management and M&A Advisory. I've realised the venture/startup space is where I am most passionate and motivated. I feel very strongly about people not only having the freedom, but also the encouragement to start their own businesses. Following through on new ideas is what keeps the world going 'round!

## Can you tell us a little bit about OpenScout? Is it a typical VC scouting network?

We're looking to productise scouting. Openscout is a "scout-as-a-service" platform that allows scouts to share their deals with a whole marketplace of VCs. Allowing VCs to gain access to deals they may not have seen, and providing individuals with quality deal flow an outlet to use it.

Unlike other VC scouting networks, OpenScout acts as a two sided marketplace. Scouts can pipe deals to multiple VCs – as opposed to other programmes who traditionally only allow you to scout for one. We will be launching with around 50 VCs to begin with, but we're eventually hoping to be able to say we've added another zero to that number!

## What is Landscape looking for in a scout on OpenScout?

We are hand selecting the first 100 scouts to ensure quality deal flow for our launch. But judging by the quality and quantity of the applications we've received, this number might well go up to 200! Essentially we are looking for people who understand how a fundraise process works and see valuable deal flow. We have specific core factors that we're keeping an eye out for in our vetting process. Once the marketplace is successfully running, our vision is to allow anyone from any background to become a scout – under one condition, they bring on high-caliber deals.

# Can you talk about your current portfolio?

I don't have a live startup investment portfolio that I'm willing to share. But I do have a fantasy portfolio that I like to mess around with. A few of my favourite companies within include [\*Furrow\*](#), [\*Vauban\*](#), and [\*Your Juno\*](#). Here's a peek into my analysis of them.

Furrow (previously called Tend). Furrow is an early-stage company. They are building the food system of the future where anyone can buy direct from any farm – redesigning the food supply chain for a digital world. Essentially, an online farmer's market allowing overall more direct sales. They came into our pipeline at Landscape when they were about halfway funded on their pre-seed. We helped connect them with a few investors and they successfully received funding. Not to mention, one of their new hires came through Landscape.

I love that they support both small businesses and the environment. Covid has further revealed how the £900B grocery industries destroy the livelihoods of farmers and keep their consumers in the dark. The man tackling this issue, James Lamming, is a first-time founder, and the close of his round was seemingly effortless. I'm eager to see what's to come for Furrow. I'll be watching them closely.

Vauban. Vauban is in the same market as Landscape and is building critical infrastructure to allow more efficient private markets. They are an online platform that allows users to raise capital from your network to invest in private companies. I've seen their product in action and it is impressive. It's remarkable how straightforward it can be to set up a fund and deploy SPVs through Vauban. They're a bit later stage now, and I wish I would've known about them sooner! Their team is super strong including the two co-founders, Remy Astie and Ulric Musset. They are both angel investors, come from impressive backgrounds, and have a clear drive to push this company to the next level. Overall, I believe in what they're building and know they'll go on to do great things.

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Your Juno. Juno is a financial education platform for women. They are working to close the gender gap in financial literacy and uplift women all over the globe through an accessible and engaging interface (think Duolingo for finance). Beyond a values-based interest in their mission, I believe their mainly Gen-Z target audience provides a lot of room for further growth and success. Juno is strategically intersecting femtech, TikTok, and edtech, three massively growing spaces. I was introduced to co-founders, Alexia and Margot de Broglie, through one of their investors and advisors, Sie Ventures. The two sisters are so clearly passionate and well versed in what they're building. Early user feedback has shown that the app has already empowered a number of users to negotiate their salaries, and one individual even left a financially abusive relationship. Now that's what I'm talking about! Your Juno could entirely change the lives of many women.

## Can you tell us about the type of scout you've had signing up?

So far, a great majority of the scouts that are being considered are a mix of founders, angel investors, community operators, and ecosystem leaders. They cover the UK, France, US, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, the Nordics, and more. Generally investing at pre-seed and seed. We've been thoroughly impressed with the people who have applied. I had a feeling they would be good, but with 90% of them being cold inbound, I never thought they'd be this good. My job got a lot easier.

## How has COVID-19 changed the way you operate?

Covid has accelerated the transition for Landscape to a remote team, this has honestly been great as we were founded as a remote first team. For me personally, everything being remote has allowed me to initially join this team while I was still living in Chicago.

From the wider standpoint, Covid has appeared to have significantly impacted the confidence of investors when making investment decisions without meeting in person. More and more they are deciding whether to join a round or not without ever meeting the founding team. It seems like this new way of operating is likely here to stay.

# What does the future look like?

Obvious things would be, web3, crypto, NFTs, decentralised spaces, remote work, lab grown meat. Another specific area I find interesting that is less commonly discussed is within industrial tech. The new and improved ways that concrete is being produced. For example, recycling waste concrete and combining it with captured carbon dioxide. Or the efficiency improvements within legaltech, more advanced and widely accepted male birth control, advancements in efficiency within crypto trading, femtech advancement, mental health focused companies and so on. The future is bright.

# What does the future look like if your OpenScout marketplace is successful?

Our plan is to help identify solo capitalists. We want to identify the top talent spotters in early stage venture and try to provide them with everything they need to forge a career in venture capital. OpenScout is going to change the future of scouting.

# How is Landscape making the startup ecosystem different?

As our review platform grows, our hope is that more founders will know exactly who they're going into business with before pitching them. As OpenScout scales, we believe it has a significant opportunity to change the face of funding in European tech. Making the process of venture scouting easier and more rewarding for investors and scouts alike.

# What one piece of advice would you give founders?

Advice for founders: Look for investors that are value add. Money isn't the only factor to consider when inviting someone into such a massive part of your life.

# What one piece of advice would you give

# to investors/VCs?

Advice for investors/VCs: Transparency with founders goes a long way, positive or negative alike. Oh, and throw a smiley face in your emails every once in a while, will ya?

*Emily LaRocque is Associate at Landscape VC*

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Article by EMILY LAROCQUE