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THE WORK OF RICHARD LONG:  
FROM THE SUBJECTIVE TOWARDS A MORE POLITICAL OBJECTIVE.

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BY

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## INTRODUCTION

In the mid sixties British art was regarded as being of secondary importance when considered in the context of mainstream modern art. To involve the landscape with an art intention and expect to make an international impression would have been thought unlikely. To be popular in the modern sense it was apparently necessary to sever the bonds with the past traditions and to be relieved of any oedipal strings with nature.

Both of these trends which were to be avoided were manifest in the landscape tradition, both of garden design and landscape painting which were essential components of the British tradition. To be modern and international you had to be urban. But perhaps in this sense also, just as had been stated through physics was that to every action there is an equal and opposite re-action. This could have created a fertile situation which allowed a new romanticism to mature, something which at first may have been thought of as a form of nostalgic idyllism, but later on a more exposed viewing would appear in its full artistic and political potential.

Both stages of this romantic element are highlighted by today's environmentalism, ie. environmental (land) art in the vein of that produced by British artists such as Richard Long and Hamish Fulton; by American artists such as Alan Sonfist, Michael Singer and the Harrisons, and through political movements such as 'Green peace' and 'Friends of the Earth'.

Richard Long, whom I have just mentioned, I view as being one of the chief exponents of the art form which responds to the natural environment. His use of the natural resources available to him I see as being intrinsically linked with a moral position on the present day use and abuse of nature and it's scapes. He expresses a profound experience of nature and of human kinds relationship to the natural world. Richard Long stresses that he is "in complete harmony with the 'Green' political philisophy with respect for our planet, and a need to husband its resources,

everything including preserving flora, landscapes and wildlife in a completely new way, different from the materialistic exploitation of the west". (Richard Long (1987) 1)

It is mainly for this reason that I have chosen to single out the artist Richard Long and to examine his art on its own terms and also in relation to his own moral viewpoints given that, as I have already pointed out, his choice of subject matter extends further to include not only artistic considerations but also ones of a moral and, therefore, perhaps of a political nature.

Richard Long works lightly on the earth with a great economy of means. His art is concerned with ideas about "...time, movement and places, with making marks on the earth by walking or by re-arranging things that are common to the place, such as stones brushwood and seaweed". (Richard Long 1984).<sup>2</sup> The forms Long's works take are many. Sculptures made on site during the course of 'the walk'<sup>3</sup>, or indoors in the gallery space from materials from and evocative of the journey. Also in the gallery space captioned photographs witness the place of the walk and its 'stopping places'<sup>4</sup> or site sculptures. Maps with text showing the journey taken, mud splash works on the wall using muddy water (most usually of mud taken from the river Avon), word constructions and publications which include many of these afore-mentioned forms all became modes of expression for Richard Long. It is important to point out that the use of these forms are most commonly the result of 'the walk' which has already taken place, or in the case of maps, instructions of the walks structure are indicated.

The physical traces of this de-materialised art (the walk) employ the use of basic shapes and patterns which have been common to all mankind for many thousands of years; circles, spirals, squares, lines, crosses and the labyrinth are all used in his work.

Richard Long is unlike many of his American counterparts such as Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer whose work involves the heroic conquering of nature on a grandiose scale. Long avoids violent and excessive means such as hammering, gouging and nailing; only

the non-destructive use of the resources of the single human body.

FOOTNOTES.

<sup>1</sup>Richard Long, from Letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1987.

<sup>2</sup>Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, 1985 Page 2.

<sup>3</sup>Nick Stewart, "Richard Long", Circa, August 1984, Page 8.

<sup>4</sup>John Beardsley, Earthworks, page 42.

"A walk is moving through life. A sculpture  
is still, a stopping place".

(Richard Long, 1975)

The Artist and the Art in Perspective.

- (23) Richard Long matriculated at St. Martin's School of Art, London during the period 1967 - '68. St. Martin's was then the testing ground for advanced art in Britan. Hamish Fulton, another artist practicing within the same artistic and moral vein as Long, by making 'the walk' the principal form of artistic activity, also studied at St. Martin's during this period and has accompanied him on many expeditions since. Also included in St. Martin's
- (24) list of successes of this period were 'Gilbert and George', the artistic twosome who, for a period, concentrated on the phenomenon of experience as a form of de-materialised sculpture. Their inclusion of themselves into their art produced continual movement and living sculpture.

- (6) While still a student in 1967 Richard Long had made ephemeral sculptures in the landscape; concentric circles on paper laid on grass and trodden in. On a rocky Somerset beach in 1968 he arranged a group of stones in a barely discernable outline, that of a square, and in 1969 walking itself became the principal 'art form. Sculptural domain now extended to include the process and the experience rather than the more traditional focus on volume and mass.

Long's use of walking and his sensibility towards the natural landscape if not derived from, was at least nourished by the long standing British tradition of landscape veneration, from painting to literature to garden design. The debt to this tradition owed by Long must be accepted and as he himself has said, "My sensibility and my culture.... it is completely out of my control, it is an English culture. I like and accept it". (Richard Long 1984) 1

The anti heroism of recent work is no doubt a reflection of the



(29) present day character of the English countryside which is a direct outgrowth of this tradition. A clear antecedent is found particularly in the poetry of the nineteenth century; from Wordsworth's museings on the lake district to Hopkins' perception of nature as a 'Heraditean Fire'. Other traces of strong traditions still evident today are those of the garden design made of landscape appreciation. Stowe in Buckinghamshire is perhaps the most widely known of the early eighteenth century landscape parks created by Charles Bridgeman and William Kent who were the most prominent practitioners of this aesthetic in that period. This tradition itself grew from the more intellectual and literary approach of those such as Edmund Burke who, in 1757, published his 'Philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful'<sup>3</sup>, which examines the implications of experience. 'Essays on the Picturesque' by another englishman Uvedale Price in 1794<sup>4</sup> was another contributor to this tradition as was Richard Knight's offering 'The Landscape: A Didactic Poem' (1794).<sup>5</sup>

Another strong influence for Long would have been the layout of the immediate landscape. An off shute of the previously mentioned tradition, the network of old roads, lanes and tracks which cover the countryside of Britain actively encourage the journey through the natural environment. This is something which physically effected Long during his formitive years. As a child he used to go youth hostelling with his parents, either cycling or walking through the Devon countryside, the moors and to the coast.<sup>6</sup> Another familiar source of Long's is the river Avon which played an important part in his childhood and still finds expression in art. Long recognises that "it is a potent thing from my childhood...in my unconcious are the places I played as a child." (Richard Long 1984).<sup>7</sup> The river Avon has been the source and subject for many of his indoor pieces including River Avon Mud Circles and River Avon Mud Splash. Long states, " I've always been fascinated by rivers because I grew up in Bristol. It's very beautiful to make a water work". (Richard Long 1984).<sup>8</sup>

(7&3)

The roots of this instinctive and inherited response to his

environment is further evident in Childhood Abiding Places (1984)<sup>9</sup> which is a nostalgic reminder of the physical involvement and responses had by Long as a boy with his surroundings in Bristol.

(8) One of the most referred to aspects of de-materialised art is that it is time bases. Time has always been implicit in the work of Richard Long; physically recorded through maps which indicate time through journey travelled, and more familiar is his alluding to time through his works like Walking the line in Peru which took place on the extraordinary ground markings made over two thousand years ago by native Nzaca indians on the costal deserts there.

(30) But perhaps one of the most important and universal sources for any individual, particularly for one whose work involves time aspects, both present and past, and responses to natural phenomenon, both physical and intangible, are the profound questions which present themselves when ones traversings stumble upon any of the many ancient sites which are richly distributed throughout Britain and Ireland. Time in a sense does become of an unaccountable dimension when we consider that the essentials of Long's walks in remote areas and the foundations of the megalithic peoples motives are both founded within a response to their respective environments. The results in both cases are not disimiliar which suggests that Long must recognise the forms and symbols such as the circle, labyrinth and spiral which appears in these sites as being of relevant construction and originating from a cultural centre founded deep within man's infrastructure. Long says of the circle that "it is a perfect human idea".<sup>10</sup>

Lucy Lippard, a noted art critic and author of 'Overlay', a book which chose as it's subject of discussion the overlay which existed between modern art and the art of pre-history, believes that one reason why the leading practitioners of this art form (the de-materialisation of art by reproducing 'the walk' as sculpture) live in the British Isles is not only an off shute from the aforementioned landscape tradition but also is a result of the 'sensous dialectic between nature and culture'<sup>11</sup> which is evident through the many henges, cairns, stone circles, and

symbols such as the carved spirals and labyrinths which dot the rural landscape.<sup>12</sup> Through these remains the ancient cultures collectively addressed themselves to the most profound questions about birth, death, earth and the universe.

(9) Richard Long must have been conscious of the connection he was making with the past by trekking paths, treading down river beds and touching stones in his works which concentrate on or around these ancient sites just as Lucy Lippard acknowledges her 'fascination' and awareness 'that a connection was being made' with the past through these placed stones which she did not 'fully understand'.<sup>13</sup> The time and historic implications which are deeply embedded in his work become more apparent when we consider that Long's walks on many occasions have made reference to these megalithic sites. An example of this time - expired aspect in combination with the almost ascetic ritual of the walk is evident in works like 'A Six Day Walk' over all the roads, lanes and double tracks inside a six mile wide circle centered on the giant at 'Corne Abbas' (1975). In connection with this piece Long says that 'a walk along a road is tracing a human record on the land whereas a walk along a riverbed follows a more natural path' (Richard Long 1986).<sup>14</sup>

For an artist whose work so far has involved trekking different continents and, therefore, has involved availing of the opportunities offered by flight technology, I find it interesting to relate that in his own words he 'could still be an artist working within fifteen miles of Bristol' (Richard Long 1984).<sup>15</sup>

#### Art Context.

Richard Long's work is very reminiscent of the role played by the ancient shaman because of the way his work involves the natural human actions and pursues this innate element of the man-in-nature condition. By another understanding this might have been termed the 'pursuit of truth' or might fulfill the role of some unusual religious practice but by today's western understanding I feel such practices to a large extent avoid the modern vernacular. Today

I see this element which concerns itself with life on a different level to that which just involves life as struggle and survival as fitting within the art category.

In one sense as Long himself maintains, this art form, 'is part of an almost unchanged human pattern of art making'<sup>16</sup> but in another sense it is completely modern and becomes like a cross-section taken through the recent history of modern art. The very tradition of art categorises the work of Richard Long as being conceptual by intent, 'it is about the power of ideas'.<sup>17</sup> His use of forms such as the spiral, line, circle, and labyrinth although he refers to them as being the 'vocabulary of common means'<sup>18</sup>; place part of his work within a specific 'Minimalist' structure based on rigid geometry. The manner and importance laid upon the execution of the work places him within the context of 'Process Art' and his choice of materials and work place relate him to the 'Earth Art' movement which is most evident in America but also had a strong impact on Britain. His choice of materials also draws certain connections to Jean Debuffet's concept of 'Art Brut' and also the Italian movement 'Art Povera' or 'Poverty Art'. Long says, 'I like that my art is not technical and uses common means and material'. (Richard Long 1985).<sup>19</sup> The manner with which he involves an almost ritual execution of 'the walk' lends his work method to something of the performance genre.

The most common symbols chosen by Long are the line and the circle. The straight line in particular which most often formulates the structure and direction of 'the walk' is very simple, easily comprehended and curiously minimal. In the art tradition this line structure has served both as the physical and meta-physical evocation of many directional concepts. Out of these I feel probably the most important influence to the work of Richard Long in terms of the surrounding art structures was the 'Minimalist' movement.

Minimalism indisputably transformed the practice of sculpture during the sixties and seventies. Process and procedure became

and remained important components of this movement. It's forms were straight forward and direct. Phyllis Tuchnan points out in her article Twenty Years of Purification how the advent of Minimalism dispensed with the sculptural pedestal and pieces now were truly placed in the gallery by resting directly on the floor. This aspect is most evident through Long's indoor works (25) which relate very much to the approach of Carl Andre and Donald Judd.

In an introduction to the exhibition catalogue for Primary Structures (1966)<sup>20</sup> Kayson Mc Shine noted how the minimalist's 'questioned the fashions which dictated the way sculpture, place and spectator interacted and the materials the selected to use'.<sup>21</sup> In 1967 Carl Andre adopted what he called 'Post Studio Art'<sup>22</sup> and his concept of sculpture as 'place' is one of the roots of earth art. 'Place' Andre defined as being, 'an area within an environment more conspicuous'. (Carl Andre 1967).<sup>23</sup> Andre took the interest from the object and placed it in the 'place'. Art as place means that the conditions of a specific location play a role in the art making by influencing the choice of placement of materials. This seems to be something of a description of the work of Richard Long who says that 'there would be no work without the walk in the environment'. (Richard Long 1985).<sup>24</sup>

Along with the universal evocations of the 'line' came the many minimalist additions. The line has meant many things to many different artists within this category. It can be a signifier of distance and within this dimension can be implicit of human capacity and time. The line can fluctuate between the concept of physical and meta-physical. It is an instrument of measure and has provided and enabled "...measure, movement, alignment, separation and joining, marking and de-marcation, correspondence, and as a means for locking information into a particular place'. (Phyllis Tuchnan: 'The Line').<sup>25</sup>

A line of rocks can become an active sculptural presence while the land remains essentially passive. A line can also cross

(26) boundaries like Christo's Running Fence or it can determine  
(28) boundaries according to Dennis Oppenheim in Continental Divide.  
For Richard Long a straight line walk is a transient experience  
which makes an ephemeral line in time and space and in this sense  
the line can function as an indication of process and physical force.

The concept of a walk as a dematerialised art form is a very  
definite departure from the dictates of the art object and gallery.  
However, Richard Long's walks do involve matter at the 'stopping  
places' of the walks but it is the experience I see as playing  
the major role in the art making and also the material aspects of  
uniqueness, permanence and decorative attractiveness are not  
involved. Although this would link Richard Long to the conceptual  
movement his work (ideas) are not purely conceptual in the sense  
that they are always physically realised.

The de-materialising ideas which connect concrete space to  
ephemeral experience were in part a rebellion against the precious art  
gallery object but also, and more importantly, they were a means by  
which the boundaries of art could be expanded to involve the process,  
material and experience which are intrinsically linked with the  
art process. "Until Post-Minimalism, 'Art' was indoors and  
Nature was outdoors. Post-Minimalisms elasticity meant that work  
could theoretically be placed anywhere". (Robert Pincus-Written:  
Post-Minimalism 1977).<sup>26</sup>

FOOTNOTES.

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, 1985 page 12.
- <sup>2</sup> Agustine Martin, Soundings, page 145.
- <sup>3</sup> John Beardsley, Earthworks, page 77.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid page 77.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid. page 77.
- <sup>6</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, page 16.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid. page 16.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid. page 12.

<sup>9</sup> David Reason, Bashos Pond.

page 32.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Cassette.

"A circle is a perfect human idea and  
because of that no matter where I  
use it always take the shape  
of the place."

(Richard Long 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Lucy Lippard, Overlay,

page

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

page 1&125.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

page 125.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Casette.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation,

"My art is very close to the hand marks made with mud on  
rocks in lascaux. I like the idea that my art is part  
of an almost unchanged pattern of making art".

(Richard Long 1985)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

"I use everything in life that is available to me, the  
power of ideas, the power of materials, time and movement".

(Richard Long 1985)

<sup>18</sup> Dorothy Walker, 'Richard Long', The Irish Times,

(10 sept. 1984)

page 10.

"I am content with the vocabulary of the universal and  
common means; walking, placing stones, sticks, water,  
circles, lines, spirals, days, nights, roads".

(Richard Long 1984)

<sup>19</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Casette.

<sup>20</sup> Linda Weintraub, The Line,

pag3 21.

- <sup>21</sup>Ibid. page 21.
- <sup>22</sup>Ellen H. Johnson, Modern Art and the Art Object. page 40.
- <sup>23</sup>Linda Weintraub, The Line, page 40.
- <sup>24</sup>Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Casette.
- <sup>25</sup>Linda Weintraub, The Line, page 66.
- <sup>26</sup>Robert Pincul-Written, Post - Minimalism, page 195.



The Art.

"My work is about being a human being, living on the planet and using nature as a source. Simplicity and directness are the highest things to aim for." (Richard Long 1985) <sup>1</sup>

For Richard Long "everything in life that is available, the power of ideas, the power of materials, time and movement" are at the essence of his work.<sup>2</sup> Other aspects such as history, human scale, survival I find happen naturally within his work considering his methods. For example, as he himself has stated, "...a walk along a road is tracing a human record on the land whereas a walk along a riverbed is following a more natural track".<sup>3</sup> Because a walk is always of a human scale and involves time, movement and bodily capacity, it becomes part of the natural articulations of the living body. It is part of the 'human pattern' on the surface of the world.<sup>4</sup>

The 'walk' through a particular terrain is at the centre of a number of different procedures which concentrate on aspects such as human time, human history, scale and experience. These may be recorded or communicated through map format, through publications and printed words or in terms of constructions using available materials within the particular environs through which the walk has been taken. Similiar constructions of natural materials from the outdoor site and mud works are also executed within the gallery space.

A walk, being a naturally ordained human activity is always of a human scale. It is through 'the walk' that Richard Long experiences 'the place' (place being particular areas included in the walk). The location, direction and manner of a walk is usually decided beforehand through careful consultation with an ordinance survey map. This is to insure that the particular structure of the walk, be it a straight line or a circle or a time based piece, is always possible by taking account of the relevant topographical features which exist and commonly influence any

journey which is of a human scale. These walks also aspire to qualities of precision, control and personal intent almost similiar in nature to what would be more usually associated with the taking of a vow, something which also assesses human capacity in human terms.

(15) This ascetic discipline becomes something of a paradox when we consider the usual associations of a walk. For example Four Hours and Four Circles (1972) involved walking each of four concentric circles in the space of one hour at speeds varying from very slow in the centre to normal at mid range to very fast, near running speed on the outer circle.

(33) Until the time of execution the walk will have existed only as a concept in conjunction with instructions marked on a map. Maps mark distance in space and area as clocks and calendars become indicators for accounting human distance of time. Maps indicate journey and by so doing implicate a notion of time within this space through which the directional line for the walk structure is drawn. I find it interesting to relate that in aboriginal culture maps are used to mark places and events which in turn tie the tribes past to the present by use of a formal vocabulary of symbols.

(18) Alongside it's more conceptual uses, Richard Long's consultation with the map also provides 'safety barriers' in a sense by reducing to a large extent the dangers of becoming lost, something which is usually synonymus with any experience in an unknown wilderness, particularly in remote regions like those to be found in western African and Bolivian, areas where Long has worked. Also Richard Long's use of the map as a prestructuring controller of the walk could be viewed as perhaps a less formal answer to the traditional use of the frame.

The use of photography by Richard Long in his work fulfill's the dual purpose of recording and communicating. A photograph brings the idea of a remote work into the public domain. It reinforces the idea that art can be made anywhere. The use of photography though is limited in the sense of communicating a more intangiabile

experience in that it records only one part of a second at any particular time, Long says of the photograph that,

"...it is not meant to stand for a walk but it does enough to feed the imagination. It allows art made in a remote area to become known to a more collective audience without popularising the site. The place should always remain anonymous." <sup>5</sup>

(5) In virtually all his photographs there is a melancholy absence of human activity. Even the work seems completely natural and because of this I find that urban situations are implicated by their absence. His constructions, made from natural materials on the site, which he refers to as the "stopping place" <sup>6</sup> are also very implicit of time absent or frozen and without human presence. This timeless sense which is echoed through his photographs of site sculptures is also reflected in the manner by which Long poetically refers to the Cerne Abbas Giant,

(10) "The giant walks on the hill, one step, forever." <sup>7</sup>

This continues very much the 'campfire' or 'stopping place' idea which again could belong to any time, similiar in a way to which many ancient settlements get buried in time and then become re-discovered again and thereby become in a sense an indication of the human being in a more timeless or metaphysical sense.

The outdoor sculptures or 'stopping places' are governed essentially by natural conditions and their continued existence as evidence of a recognisable human activity is fundamentally at the disposal of natures elements. "The work", Long says, "is impermanent, just like impermanence is a feature of life itself. It doesn't try to go against nature but exists with the elements". <sup>8</sup> Entrophy, the natural tendency of order to disorder, becomes therefore an essential element in such works. Decay is implicit in all growth and conversely growth is implicit in decay.

Inside the gallery space geometric forms re-surface through the formal assembling of natural materials such as stone, twigs, leaves, mud, etc. This aspect within the gallery space I would see as being similiar in nature to what the American artist Robert

(20) Smithson has termed the 'nonsite' <sup>9</sup> the indoor evocation of the

outdoor site. The use or purpose of the 'non-site' for Smithson was in establishing what he termed as, "...the dialectic between the site (the outdoor source of materials) and the non-site (the sculpture in its dis-associated settings)"<sup>10</sup>. For Long it is in the gallery that the audience encounter his more remote experiences through these physical reminders which  
(2) enter the gallery space.

The forms indoors often preserve the path or directional emphasis or the time and distance element from the outdoor walk. For example, at an exhibition in the Whitechapel Gallery, London in 1971 Long created a mud spiral which  
(12) measured the length of a walk up Silbury Hill, an ancient man made mound in Wiltshire. For this piece Long dipped his bare feet in mud and walked a number of steps in a spiral direction which equaled the number of his steps up the mound's slope.

When such a piece is made it is fixed and then a certificate is drawn up for it so as to facilitate the remaking of the piece by its future prospective owner. "Each certificate is very precise and particular", Long remarks.<sup>11</sup>

Although Richard Long avoids any primitivising categories which might be involved during an examination of his work there is no denying that his work method does relate to a different level of consciousness other than that which is most apparent in the West today. His indoor mud wall drawings also reflect a very definite instinctive, even primal work method. These pieces  
(7) such as River Avon Mud Circles (1982) or Mud Hand Circle (1984), I find relate with a very strong material sensitivity to that evident from the primitive  
(3&4) cave paintings at Laxaux and Altamira in France (30,000 - 20,000 B.C.).

Long's aesthetic of mud hand painting and his use of natural ochres are almost simulatory of the methods used by the primitive cave artists who similarly

used the hand as both a means of application and as a stencil by which they would reproduce its negative shape by blowing mud over it from the mouth.<sup>12</sup>

Long agrees that his works, particularly these peices, "are primitive in the sense that they are not technical".<sup>13</sup> He remarks how he found it "very exciting" when he saw the caves at Lascaux in France and has said, "...my art is very close to these hand marks of mud on rock".<sup>14</sup>

Such mud, hand prints combined with the use of universal symbols in his indoor arrangements and wall works become 'touchstones' <sup>15</sup> for the human condition as it is at the present time and as it was in time past when it existed in a different state. 'Cultural resonances such as these inform and enrich the work' Long remarks.<sup>16</sup>

Both the photographic works and the word compositions according to Joan Lyons author of Artists Books, could be categorised as 'book art' <sup>17</sup> since both forms commonly appear as published edition and also because of the nature of the particular media which lend themselves more towards expanded meaning.

One reason why Richard Long started using text was because, as he explained, "...it gave another kind of possibility, not using a camera and not necessarily making a piece of sculpture, words can produce different possibilities than what can be obtained by these".<sup>18</sup>

(13) Words fulfill a different role and make a better attempt at defying specific definitions and in contrast to a photograph words or text refer more generally to the whole idea of a walk. An example of this is A Three Day Bicycle Ride (1983). Each word of what at first appears to be a usual text is a specific marker on a specific journey but each remains undefined and leaves a more passing impression. As Long explains,

"316 miles is just the amount of miles (on the journey) and 'Family', well

I started back home from where I was born and ended up where I am living now. Time distance, memory, history and what the land is made of; places you meet and friends you stay with. These are all incorporated in this piece". <sup>19</sup>

Richard Long's word assemblings are outside the formal structured accustomedness of the sentence but succeeds in maintaining structure, continuity and formality.

They appear initially as an economic shorthand or as sentence alternatives or perhaps as a type of puzzle, but later reveal themselves to a much more open awareness which could be reflected and understood as something much more connected to, if not stemming from, the Zen Haiku poem (Ref. Chapter III) the formal structure of which requires a very brief and detached imparting of knowledge of a particular experience.

Richard Long has compared his simplicity, approach and understanding of materials to that of Samuel Beckett's Molloy <sup>20</sup> who kept a store of 'sucking stones' <sup>21</sup> in his pockets. A recognisable feature here which Long shares with Molloy is I feel, the ritual circulation of sucking stones from pocket to pocket <sup>21</sup> which could be seen as a signifier of time relative to necessity felt by Molloy to suck stones. In many of his pieces Long has used stones as a signifier of distance and time travelled. In Throwing a Stone around the (19b) Magillacuddy Reeks (1984) <sup>22</sup> Long threw a stone ahead of him, following it to its dropping point and then throwing another. This ritual he continued until he arrived back to where he had started. Long adopted a similar meticulous (14) approach in Windstones (1983) <sup>23</sup> a fifteen day walk in Lapland. Here his ritual required that he adjust any pointed stone he happened across to face with the direction of the wind at that particular time. Long says, "The feature of that particular walk was to bring together the direction of the wind from day to day and the places where I found these stones on my particular route". <sup>24</sup>

Although the experiences of nature had by Samuel Beckett's Molloy seem more through necessity and also seem to be somewhat unstable, it is easy to make the analogy between his actions and Long's work methods. The motivation and purpose may be different but the response is very much the same.

"In the sand I was in my element, letting it trickle between my fingers, scooping holes that I filled in a moment later or that filled themselves in, flinging it in the air by handfuls, rolling in it." (Molloy by Samuel Beckett)<sup>25</sup>

The 'spirals'<sup>26</sup> that Molloy makes in the sand also bear a poignant relationship to his life, and for that matter to anybody's life. The stones, sand holes, spirals employed by 'Molloy' are what Long refers to as "...the vocabulary of universal and common means; walking, placing stones, sticks, water, circles, spirals, lines, days and nights, roads, Walking", Long says, "is a metaphor for going through life".<sup>27</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES.

Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Casette 1985.

<sup>2</sup> I bid.

<sup>3</sup> I bid.

<sup>4</sup> I bid.

<sup>5</sup> I bid.

<sup>6</sup> John Beardsley, Earthworks, page 42.

"A walk is moving through life,

A sculpture is still, a stopping place."

(Richard Long 1984)

<sup>7</sup> Ref. ill. No.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Casette.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Smithson, The Writings of Robert Smithson, page

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. page

<sup>11</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, page 10.

<sup>12</sup> Anne Steveking, The Cave Artists, page

- 13 Richard Long, Richard Long, Audio Arts Casette.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Richard Long, Touchstones, front cover.
- 16 Richard Long, Richard Long, Ausio Arts Casette.
- 17 Joan Lyons, Book Art, page 115.
- 18 Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, page 7.
- 19 Ibid. page 20&21.
- 20 David Reason, Bashos Pond: A new Perspective, page 1.
- 21 Samuel Beckett, Molloy page 74.
- 22 Dorothy Walker, 'Richard Long', The Irish Times.  
(10 September 1984) page 10.  
Ref. Fig.
- 23 Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, page 10.
- 24 Samuel Beckett, Molloy, page 73.
- 25 Ibid. page 72.
- 26 Dorothy Walker, 'Richard Long', The Irish Times,  
(10 Sept. 1984) page 10.

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Nature: The Universal Catalyst.

Part 1

" I think it is interesting that people from different times and different cultures can come to similiar conclusions. It does say something about the universal human idea. I hope my work is something to do with this." (Richard Long: 1984)", 1

That man is part of nature and can only live in harmony with his surroundings and realise his potential through a reciprocal understanding with it are age old ideas which, in the press for porgress, periodically get forgotten and remembered again. Having discussed Richard Long's art in terms of social and cultural influences there are two other main influences which surface other than those the more direct formative environment.

The evidence which we gathered from reviewing the more recent landscape traditions in Britain suggest that nature was considered to be something of a second class citizen and this was evident in the constant effort which went towards the re-arrangement of the landscape, trimming and beautifying it into a garden, imposing structures onto its natural chaos. These more recent pioneerings into the landscape always reflected the mood of man and this one sided view was also included in the attitued reflected in poetry aside from the distinguishing 'signature' marks resulting from the more physical garden design. It is at this point where I find Long's art departs from the particular tradition and develops in another direction.

The new path , which I mentioned, at first seems alien but when viewed from

a particular perspective it becomes almost instinctive. The 'way of Zen' is something I find difficult if not impossible to ignore when confronting a sensibility like that which is inherent in the work of Long who expresses the profound and 'reciprocal' element. When exactly Long came in contact with Zen is unclear but perhaps as David Reason (author of 'Basho's Pond', an article which uncovers this relationship between Long and the Zen culture) suggests that it entered his 'bones' through many sources and "like strontium 90 the person is unaware of it".<sup>2</sup> This relationship is something which Long himself both respects and acknowledges.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly enough this 'Zen' influence had also penetrated earlier into the British sensibility as the American artist Robert Smithson relates when discussing Uvedale Price and Fredrick Law Olmsted (both landscape garden designers, British and American respectively).<sup>4</sup> 'Sharawaggi' which translates into English as, "... the quality of being impressive or surprising through careless or unorderly grace",<sup>5</sup> was the technique involved in this Chinese influence of English landscape development. This quality is very evident in the 'Zen' gardens which 'stimulate the self' through an apparent natural disorder which in essence is contrived and artificial in the sense that it is architected by man.

It is thought more probable that the role played by 'Zen culture' in Long's sensibility was more a confirmation of his ideas and his own perceptions, responses and reactions in the face of nature. The natural awareness inherent in 'Zen' promotes a deeper penetration into the 'reciprocal' relationship with nature and this instinct is sought in remote areas where the spirit of nature is free and undisturbed.

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In an essay on Long's work ethic entitled "Bashos Pond" (Bashoo being a

17th century Japanese poet), David Reason suggests interesting parallels between Richard Long's philosophy and that of the Zen Buddhist's strife towards the sublime and notes how Zen advocates, "simplicity, frugality, and straight forwardness and is against materialism and the exploitation of nature for selfish and egotistic purposes".<sup>6</sup> Long acknowledges this similar direction <sup>3</sup> and says, "my work is simple and practical..., I like the idea of using the land without possessing it".<sup>7</sup>

Traditionally, walking has had initiatory, ritualistic, survival, religious, poetic and even healing connections. Long's walks are ritualistic but not in the sense that they involve doing something relentlessly, without pleasure. The discipline and rhythms of walking promote the conditions of isolation which separate one from the egotistic, corruptive and exploitive views of nature and release one from the superficial and perverting discriminations of useful and useless, necessary and unnecessary, which are so characteristic of western industrialist ideals. Long says;

"...a journey in the wilderness becomes a fantastic focus of concentration. I can get totally involved in the place and totally involved in the work".<sup>8</sup>

The great Japanese 'Haiku' or 'Horru' poets of the past like Basho (1644- '94) were wandering artists. Haiku, being of the Zen way abhors egotism. These poets saw themselves as passive instruments for the expression of the other reality, the self (the first being nature).

As I stressed earlier, that these areas (of the walk) remain largely subjective experience and it is only through records being communicated that we can begin to realise the sensitivity felt to the place, unless of course we ourselves adopt a similar role which is perhaps the 'bottom line' of the suggestion. For the Japanese poets the tradition of Haiku decided the communication of these walks through the almost rigid restrictions of the Haiku poem which was confined to only thirteen syllables. I find an

incredible similarity between the manner in which the Japanese relate their emotions and responses through the Haiku and the structure and tone by which Richard Long relates his feelings. Consider the relationships in meter, tone and responded feelings between the following examples, one Haiku and one by Long from his publication 'Two Sheepdogs.' (1971). <sup>9</sup>

"An Ancient pond,  
A frog jumps in  
The sound of water."

(Basho) 10

"Two sheperds cross in and  
Out of the passing shadows.  
The clouds drift over the  
Hill with the storm."

(Richard Long) 11

The detached structure of the Haiku seems to record the incident in time by editing the experience to almost minimal suggestions. Detatched words relating to the experience (of the walk) also form an important part of Long's work. These pieces in particular I feel communicate the walk more successfully as an overall experience unlike the photographs which tend to favour a particular occasion. The text works are not an attempt at representation but intend I feel to encapsulate the overall time/space/nature dimension and his actions in a way that makes them available to us as simply as possible. Like the mapworks they relate the actions involved as an overall concept but do not privilage any particular moment. Long recognised that the textworks "have a more complete function and have a better chance of defying definition, unlike a photograph which proposes, and is contained within one visual effect" (Perspective).

Long's formally arranged textworks, like the Haiku's un-sentenced nature, I feel remain very open-ended in the sense that the words translate very easily into sound which creates a reverberation of images in the mind. The Haiku, according to Thomas Hoover (author of Zen Culture) is, "... the extension of awareness beyond the region of words".<sup>12</sup> This 'extension of awareness' <sup>13</sup> sought through the Haiku by the Buddhist's contemplation

on the sublime truths within nature I see as being of an essentially similar foundation to Long's experiences of nature's presence.

I have already mentioned when examining the socio-cultural influences in the art of Richard Long, that I felt there were two strong sources of influence which did not directly originate from his formative environment but were of a more alien way of thinking than what we would normally associate with man in the industrial age. The aspects of Zen which I discussed are part of a more complete culture which, more commonly today we find overlaying itself in a reactionary manner onto the capitalist ideology and confirms an achievable reality of a fulfilling and non-destructive existence.

## Part II

### Circles, Lines, Spirals and Labyrinths in Time.

Of the many ordinary and diverse sources which seem to collaborate with, and inform Long's work perhaps the most unusual in his associations with aspects of the primitive state which are present in many areas of his work. Perhaps, just as the way of Zen can be pursued as a natural impulse then so too could any associations with the primitive or unconscious be seen as being essentially of the human condition. The concentric circle, spiral, line and maze or labyrinth are remnants of a social and almost mystical existence so distant that their involvement makes time of an almost questionable reality. Therefore, although carved spirals and circles in stone are physically tangible structures the questionable dimension of time casts them into whirlpools of the mythical universe. To touch such stones is, as Lucy Lippard has pointed out,<sup>14</sup> more than just a physical experience. We are confronted by time, something which transcends our physical existence and social ideals. We are physically bound to it but it is independent of us.

Time is, as yet, inescapable.

The similarities between Long and his unknown ancestors are more subtle than are the differences. We can arrive at certain conclusions based on that of fascination and desire, and become engaged on a time travel of the mind into the unknown. A walk itself is an abstraction, a particular type of passage through time and space.

(4) When we consider that most of Long's works are cerebral in some way or another and rely on the viewers imaginations to make contact or fill in the pieces, it is not unusual then particularly for works like Connemara Sculpture (1971) which reproduces the labyrinthine forms carved on a rock at Tingarel, Cornwall <sup>15</sup> or others like The six mile wide circle (1975) walk centered (9) on the giant at Corne Abbas, for the viewer to build on obvious connections.

Questions of relationships arise between Long's assembled pieces and the stone carvings, constructions and arrangements from ancient and alien cultures, particularly in concern with his use of materials like stone which is very physical, permanent and relatively timeless. This means that 'after the act' remains a physical trace which is to a large extent undistinguishable from other remaining physical traces which are reminiscent of the existence of ancient cultures. The 'walk' which Long refers to as being 'just one more layer on top of a million other layers',<sup>16</sup> combined with his use of 'universal symbols'<sup>17</sup> such as the spiral, line, circle and labyrinth help to weave these connecting threads through the dimensions of time.

John Beardsley (author of Earthworks) claims that Long employs these symbols precisely because of these (primitive) associations. "Long appropriates them to render his privately ritualistic work more universal" Beardsley claims <sup>18</sup>. Anton Ehrenzweig has claimed in his book The Hidden Order of Art

that such symbols as these 'had their source in the unconscious and our own unconscious still reacts readily to them, preparing the way for ever new interpretations". <sup>19</sup> This assumption I would see as being 'in collaboration' with C.G. Jung's theory of a 'collective unconscious',<sup>20</sup> which, because we as a species are bound in what we understand as reality, warrants both merit and scepticism. The unconscious in this sense refers to a state of mind in which the person is not aware of certain aspects of his or her inner experiences but this does not mean that that person is devoid of any impulse, feeling, desire, fear, etc. which may be the resulting effect on the conscious.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps when Richard Long stated that, "...a circle is a shared common knowledge...belonging equally to the past, present and to the future" he is referring to our subconscious structures which renders the privately ritualistic elements in his work more universal.<sup>22</sup>

When we consider that such symbols were wrought from a much more reciprocal relationship with nature than is our present position, both the physical and metaphysical relationships with the past would appropriate any of these symbols to be viable as a social commentary in the present. According to Lucy Lippard these forms which survived the intervening millennia act as, "...vehicles for such a vital expression... and seem to have some basic connection to human identity, confirming bonds we have lost with the land, its products and its cycles, and with each other."<sup>23</sup>

The adaptation and use of such sources of symbolic content I feel makes it necessary for me to draw the similarities as I have in this way, with their foundation in pre-history, due to the scepticism of the present industrial age in which logical action prevails. These sources risk trivialisation if treated merely on their physical and conscious terms and by these terms their use today would be "doomed to superficial aestheticism" as Claude Levi-Strauss suggested. <sup>24</sup>

In her book on the subject concerning this overlay between the past and present Lucy Lippard adopts and discusses a more open view that these images, rooted and uprooted, can still carry the seeds of meaning as effectively as the most detailed realism, even in our individualistic society, estranged as it is, from nature. 25

FOOTNOTES.

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long Audio Arts Casette.
- <sup>2</sup> David Reason, Basho Pond: A New Perspective, page 6.
- <sup>3</sup> I bid page 5 & 6.
- <sup>4</sup> Robert Smithson, The Writings of Robert Smithson, page 117&127.
- <sup>5</sup> I bid. page 117 & 127.
- <sup>6</sup> David Reason, Boshos Pond, page 21.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long Arts Casette.
- <sup>8</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long in Conversation, page 14.
- <sup>9</sup> David Reason, Richard Longs Art of Words, page 4.
- <sup>10</sup> Thomas Hoover, Zen Culture, page 10.
- <sup>11</sup> Richard Long, Two Sheepdogs, page 1.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas Hoover, Zen Culture, page 205.
- <sup>13</sup> I bid. page 205.
- <sup>14</sup> Lucy Lippard, Overlay page 1.
- <sup>15</sup> I bid. page 147 & 155.
- <sup>16</sup> John Beardsley, Earthworks, page 42.
- <sup>17</sup> Dorothy Walker, 'Richard Long', The Irish Times, 10th September, 1984) page 10.
- <sup>18</sup> John Beardsley, Earthworks, page 42.
- <sup>19</sup> Lucy Lippard, Overlay, page 4.
- <sup>20</sup> Erich Fromm, Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis, page 96.
- <sup>21</sup> I bid. page 96.
- <sup>22</sup> John Beardsley, Earthworks, page 42.



- 23 Lucy Lippard, Overlay, page 10&11.
- 24 Charles Wentwick, Modern and Primitive Art, page 9&10.
- 25 Lucy Lippard, Overlay, page 11.

An Eighties Perspective:

From the subjective to a more political objective.

With the passing of every 'milestone' comes an opportunity to review the events of what has past in a more knowledgeable perspective. Such opportunities also herald the coming of viewpoints and ideals which have developed on, and often been held down by past traditions. Today, with the unfolding of the eighties I feel we are provided with a more sober position from which to view the issues events and structures which concerned the seventies. Nick Stewart (art critic for Circa) highlights the changing demands which stem from the roots of such an analysis and which are challenging many artists who have become familiarised with the "traditional modernist values"<sup>1</sup> which the seventies popularised. Stewart points out how these values are now being 'eroded' by the growing awareness in the eighties of the need to deal with society at large and this he says, "... will inevitably lead to a shift in the understanding and application of contemporary arts within society".<sup>2</sup>

Respecting this development I will attempt in this chapter to consider Richard Long's art in an eighties perspective and because of this I feel it is necessary for its direction to a large extent to take a more speculative position.

When we speak of success we are usually most familiar with its implications in the more immediate terms of being within the particular generation at hand. For example, the measure of the individual's success is usually calculated by his lifestyle or change over a certain short period of time without recourse

to the collective success of his or her race in the sense that scientists and ecologists might measure the success of an organism or animal species by its adaptation, existence and survival in much more collective terms. In relation to this, considering Richard Long's words, "...I want to do away with nuclear weapons not make art that will withstand them",<sup>3</sup> I feel perhaps we should neglect for a moment the singular subjective experience content and examine or seek to measure his success in more objective political terms, taking account of modern pressures that present and future considerations generate.

(23)  
(28)  
(35)

Both the art and the attitude of Richard Long and indeed many other artists such as Hamish Fulton, The Harrisons, Michael Singer and Alan Sonfist in many ways reflect the concerns of an increasing number of biologists, ecologists and botanists who recognise that since the nineteenth century man has controlled the landscape's formation on a scale approaching that of the geological process. Pollution can produce changes in the environment and atmosphere similar in magnitude to that of nature.

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Marxist aesthetics demand that art illuminate social relationships and, "... should help us to recognise and change social reality".<sup>4</sup> Therefore, by these terms at least, the legacy which remains after the act or statement in Richard Long's work should seek as wide an audience as is possible in order for it to become a social force. In a utopia where situations are seen by all to be perfect, art could morally exist outside the role of judgement. "In a corrupt society", according to Suzi Gablik, "...it is immoral to make art which does not comment or express concern".<sup>5</sup> Lucy Lippard also rebels against what she terms as the "...insidious notion of the artist as a political innocent whose domain is mystery not reality".<sup>6</sup> The art of Richard Long includes this 'domain of mystery' element but also I feel voices

very obvious concerns as to the present political situation which not only involves the natural environment but also the human being as a race and a collaboration with the many aspects of his/her environment. Social conscience, therefore, I would see as being implicit in his art. In fact any art which has its roots in or involves nature I would see as having a more political dialect.

Declan Mc Gonagle, director of the Orchard Gallery in Belfast, points out that there is, "...no such thing as non-political art or non-issue based art...because you either condemn or condone a set of circumstances by producing a work".<sup>7</sup>

Richard Long's art most often takes him out of the social and political environment. Therefore, because of the evidence towards his commitment and his concerns regarding man and nature, I feel the questions must be asked as to the degree of his success in a more objective, political sense. Perhaps this can be gauged by considering the work of some other artists who work with seemingly similar motives and convictions to those of Long. The American artist Alan Sonfist who, unlike Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer, claims that, "...it is the typical man against nature cliché that many artists are following that I am against". He states that, "...everyone has their own responsibility to their environment. Everyone has a certain role".<sup>8</sup>

(21)  
(22)

Compared with Sonfist I would argue that Long works two extremes. On one hand there is the apparently unharnessed freedom with which he works in the relatively uninhabited and remote regions of the planet and on the other there is the relatively limiting confines of the gallery space. According to the terms which require its communication to be a social force which I laid out earlier, how well does Long's work method compare with what Sonfist has achieved through his Time Landscape (1965-86). In Time Landscape Sonfist

(27)

dealt with the social issues which arise when the human being becomes completely divorced from nature and becomes engulfed by cement and factory fumes.

This piece becomes a political forum for the discussion of this man/nature conflict which I feel, prevails in Richard Long's work. Time landscape consisted of the re-creation of a pre-colonial forest in a site 200'x45' in La Guardia Place, Manhattan, New York by planting the site with native species of trees and fauna and microcosmic organisms that will grow as they did before the settlement of North America by Europeans. Sonfist who claims that art should have, "... a moral responsibility to our societies", says of the piece that,

"besides the aesthetic impact on the community, the project will add oxygen to the air and absorb noise. I see it literally as a growing counterforce within the city. The issue is to create a more heightened awareness of our circumstances, whether they be political or social. The forest... is a metaphor and hopefully it will alter people's perceptions of their environment."<sup>10</sup>

In this context I feel the best attempts made by Long to make his work more collective would be through his photographic works and published books which communicate his experience with the physical existence of the remote place visited. But I feel there is an essential difference between the manner in which Sonfist has chosen to make his work comment on more political issues and the avenue which Long has chosen to make his work something of a social force. I feel that in a similar way to which the Nazis glorified nature and the distant past, using them as reactionary propaganda to send people back to their proper places and gender roles <sup>11</sup> so too could the romantic element which is so prevalent in Richard Long's work be transformed into an almost 'patriotic' element in order to revive a sympathy for and, therefore, a more responsible attitude towards nature. This underlying almost unconscious political statement is present I feel in all his works, almost inviting the

(I6) audience to participate. However, in some works more than others does this implied comment become more obvious. Such a piece is Power Line Walk (1980), 'From a Waterwheel to a Nuclear Power Station' which uses a power line as a metaphor for the 'umbelical cord' of evolution, emphasizing the change in existence and culture, and the changing position of man in the environment. Further to the implied comment in this piece I see a very personalised and again an almost nostalgic view of time past, time present and time future with a heavy emphasis on the role of the 'double edged sword of technology'. Alongside this consideration surfaces Long's attitude towards the pollution of the earth of which he 'prays still has a future'.<sup>12</sup>

Although, in this analysis, I find these very obvious undertones in the work of Richard Long I would also find validity in David Reason's analysis when he refers to 'restraint' as being a more expressive form of deep feeling and authentic experience.<sup>14</sup> This is something more compatible with an outlook of the 'Zen' understanding. However, I feel I must speculate in this manner, that to which I have approached Richard Long's intent and purpose, as in today's industrial world such actions as 'picking daisies',<sup>12</sup> alone implies a visual and mental image of nevetee. Today such values are regarded as being largely irrelevant.

(I9)

Richard Long's modest gestures in his delicate unobtrusive manner may on the surface seem unimportant and even useless in the political context of him making a stand on his beliefs only if we believe that individual actions are quite helpless against the entrenched bureaucracy of our society. The knowledge or assumption that an action may not carry any political impact in terms of changing or correcting a situation does not relieve a person of his responsibility. Suzi Gablik in her book entitled 'Has Modernism Failed', which deals with art in the real terms of a more worldly view, classes Long

as being an "...agent of moral transformation".<sup>15</sup> She highlights the position of a person who, after finding himself or herself in a particular situation with which he or she does not agree, and who adopts an indifferent stance founded in the assumption of helplessness, would be more responsible for the continuation of these events than someone who had physically resisted against them and failed.<sup>16</sup> I would imagine that the majority of people are aware of Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence to achieve political and social progress. Gandhi claimed that although 'the act may seem very insignificant it is very important that one do it'.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, a very delicate action, even one as subjective, unobtrusive and pacific as those which concern Richard Long can be ultimately political.

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## Part II

### Dialectics Between Morality and Survival.

"A consumer society cannot possibly know how to take care of a world because it's central attitude to all objects including art is an attitude of consumption which spells ruin for everything it touches". (Hanna Ardent. The Human Condition)<sup>18</sup> For an art of the sensibility of that apparent in the work of Richard Long, who feel he has a "...personal physical commitment"<sup>19</sup> towards the earth, logically it should be in the best interests of his moral integrity to remain as far detached as possible from the politics of consumerism which is very much implicit in its agent, the commercial gallery system. We admire the integrity with which Long has evolved a sensibility that creates A Stone Line in the Himalyas, A Stone Maze in Connemara or A One Hundred Mile Walk Across Dartmoor, all of which are not subject to possession, all of which trespass the territories of ownership, and all transcend the discriminating political structures of government. However, on a more disenchanting level it occurs to me that a 'purest's' argument against Long's indoor works would observe how they fit in perfectly with the 'petty bourgeois' mentality which

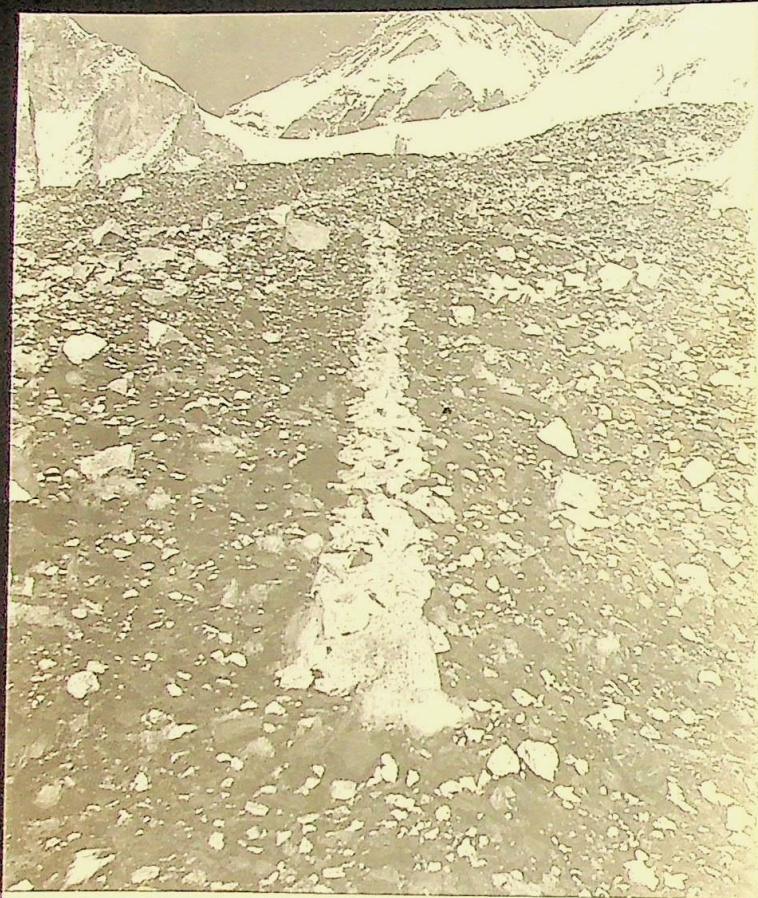
promotes the closed system of government ( in this case of the art pieces) by promoting ownership, and therefore promotes discrimination. (Although these pieces can satisfy this petty bourgeois mentality this of course does not mean that they are of this attitude or thinking.) These vices have, however, always been recognisable in the gallery system which we must realise in most cases are essentially a part of the trade and survival structures of civilisation. The corrupt form of this in which the excesses are applied I would only see as satisfying the real requirements of 'consumerism'. Interestingly no pre-industrial culture ever perceived their art in terms of commercial value.<sup>20</sup>

In effect in this chapter I have highlighted the dialectics which exist between morality and survival which results from the present structures of civilisation as we know it. In real terms I would consider these inevitable contradictions to be an acceptable compromise to what Long himself has termed, "...true Capitalist Art",<sup>21</sup> which he sees as being typified by the American 'Land Art' movement and characterised by artists like Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer. I feel that art outside the gallery is more accessible in the sense that it is closer to peoples lives than is art seen in elegant exclusive settings, and therefore is more sympathetic to a re-integration of the political, cultural, social and personal aspects of art. This coherent relationship is, I feel, a critical element in the progressive view of the future which parallels Richard Long's attitudes when he speaks of, "...a political philosophy of respect for our planet...different from the materialist exploitation of the West".<sup>22</sup>



FOOTNOTES.

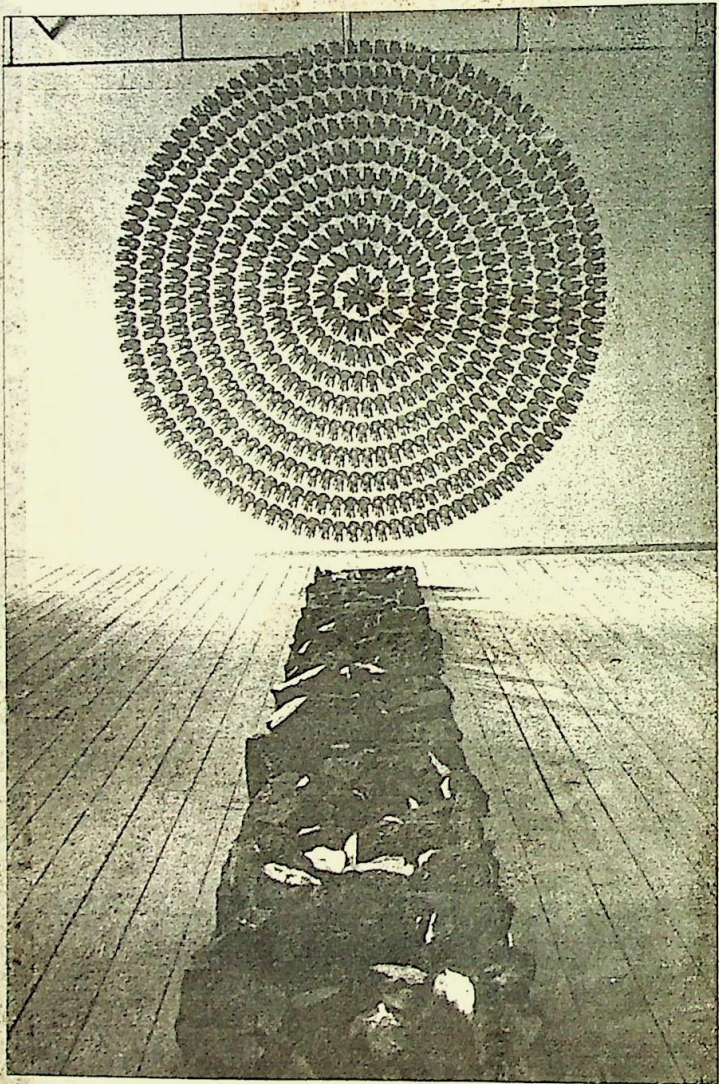
- <sup>1</sup> Nick Stewart, "Richard Long", Circa (August 1984) page 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid. page 8.
- <sup>3</sup> Suzi Gablik, Has Modernism Failed, page 44.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid. page 25.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid. page 27.
- <sup>6</sup> Lucy Lippard, Overlay, page 9.
- <sup>7</sup> Declan Mc Gonagle, "The Place of Place in Art", Circa  
(No.29. JULY/AUGUST 1986) page 11.
- <sup>8</sup> Alan Sonfist, Art in the Land , page 21.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid. page 196.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid. page 211 & 212.
- <sup>11</sup> Lucy Lippard, Overlay, page 9.
- <sup>12</sup> John Beardsley, Earthworks page 44.
- <sup>13</sup> Richard Long, Richard Long in conversation, page 7.
- <sup>14</sup> David Reason, Bashos Pond, page 14.
- <sup>15</sup> Suzi Gablik, Has Modernism Failed page 100.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid. page 99 & 100.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid. page 99.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid page 100.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid page 44.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid. page 44.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid page 44.
- <sup>22</sup> Richard Long, (In letter received by me from the artists  
dated 7th December, 1986).



A LINE IN THE HIMALAYAS

1947

I



RIVER AVON MUD HAND CIRCLES AND DUBLIN LINE

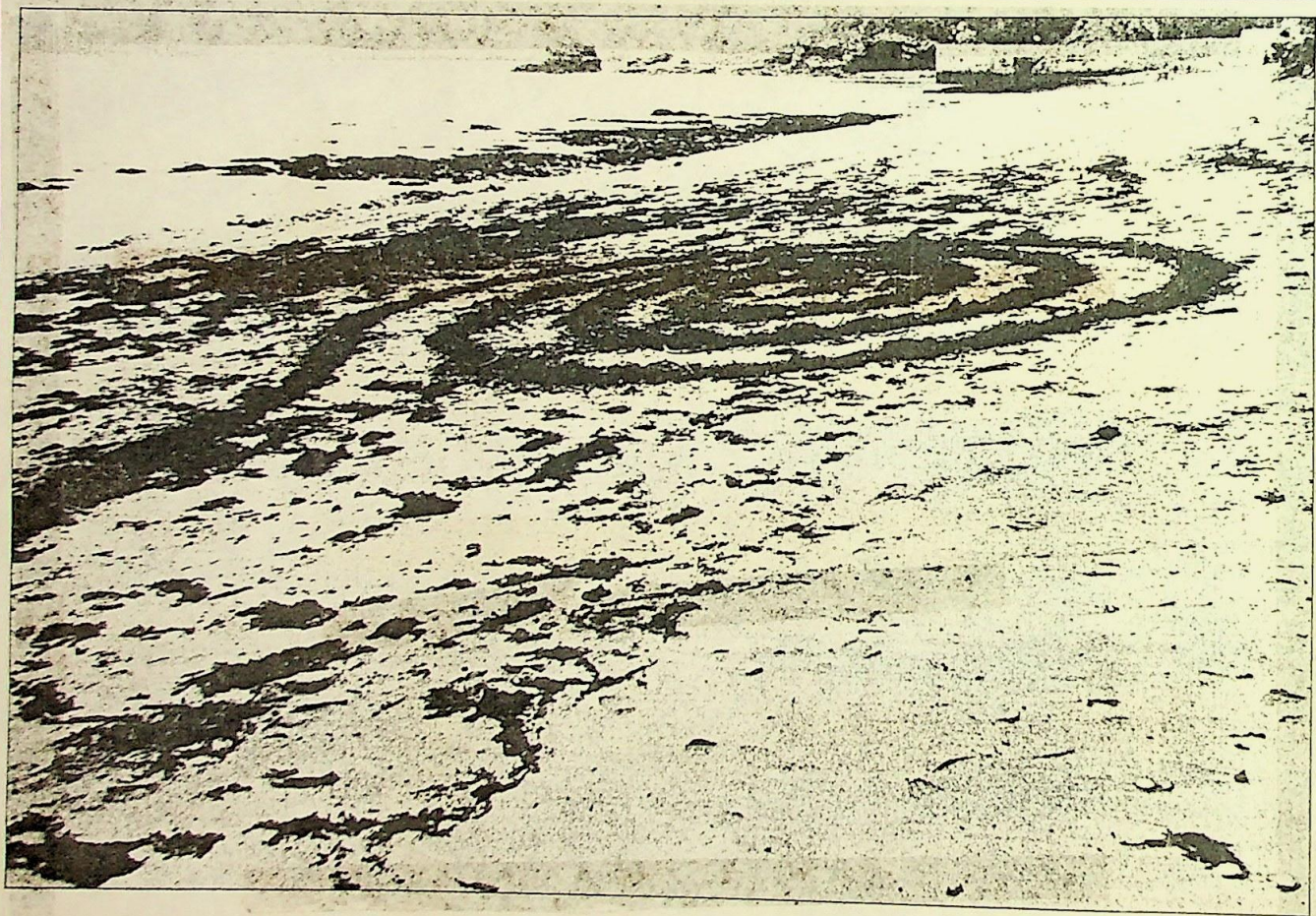
DUBLIN, 1984



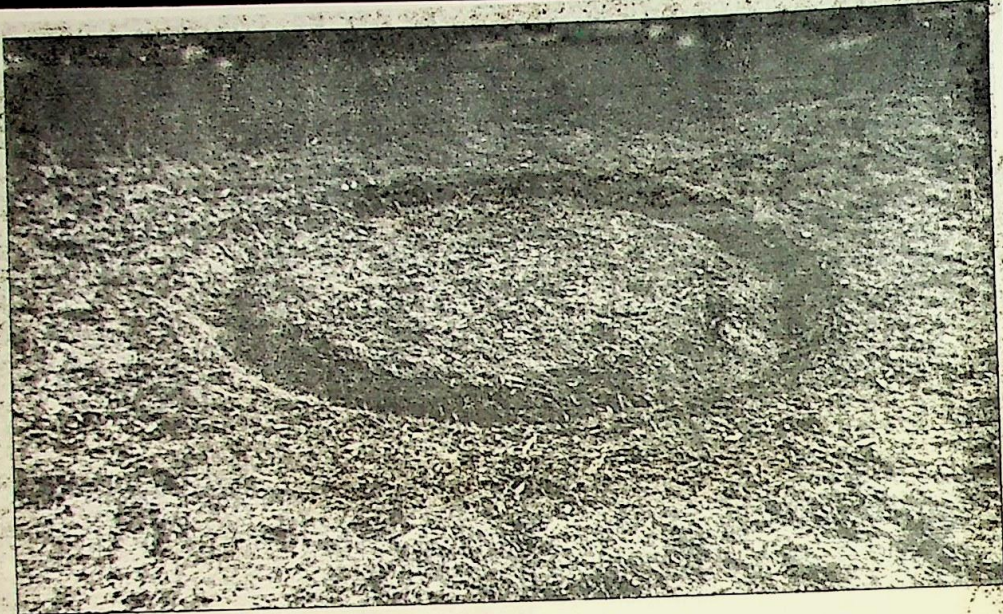
3



4

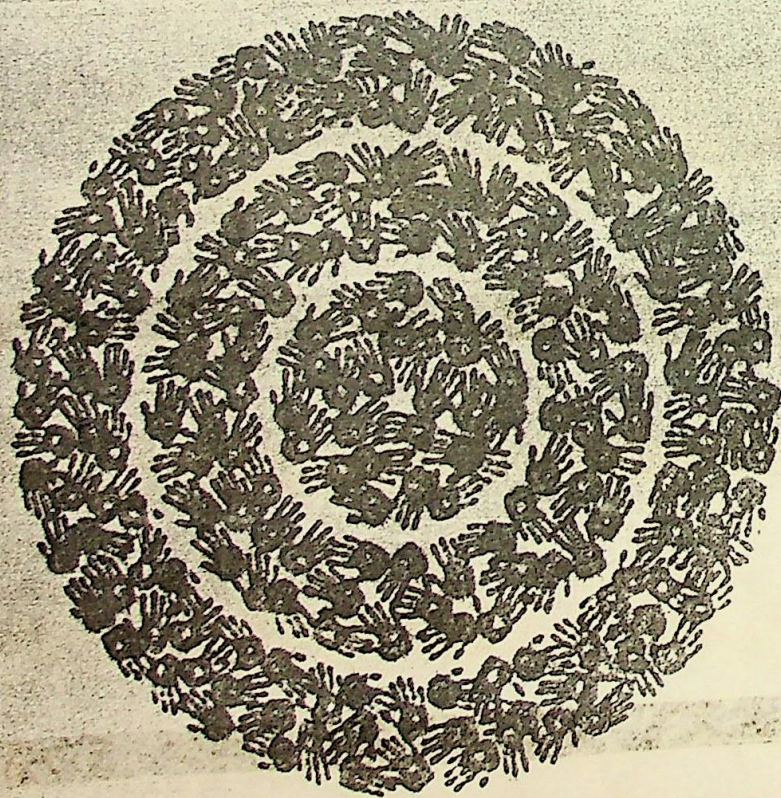


A SCULPTURE LEFT BY THE TIDE  
CORNWALL ENGLAND 1970



TURF CIRCLE  
IRELAND 1967

6

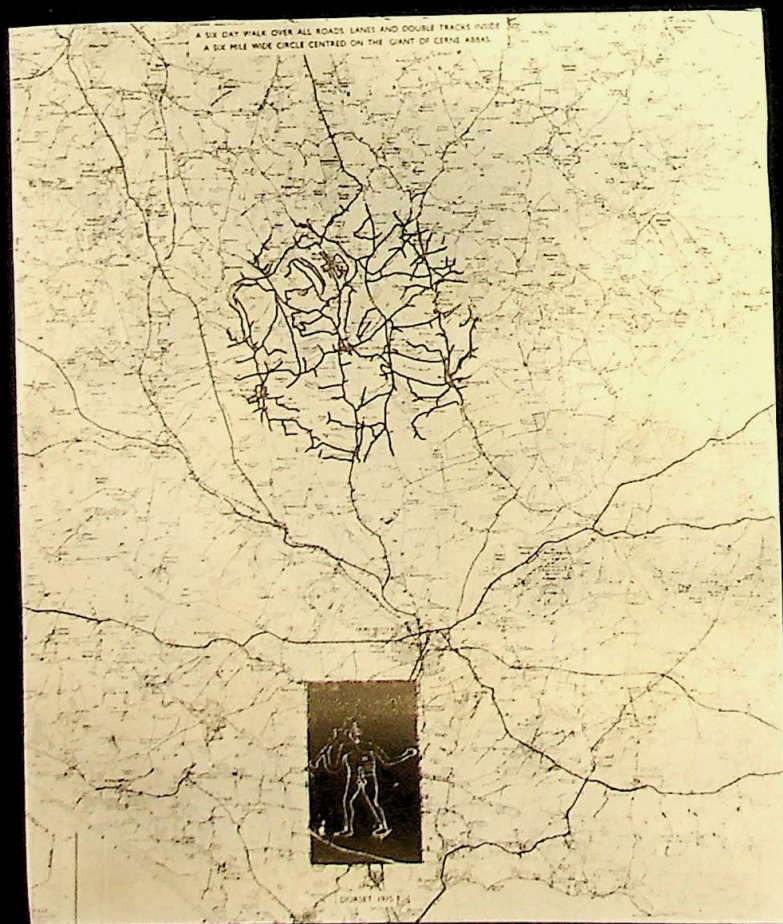


KILKENNY CIRCLES

1984



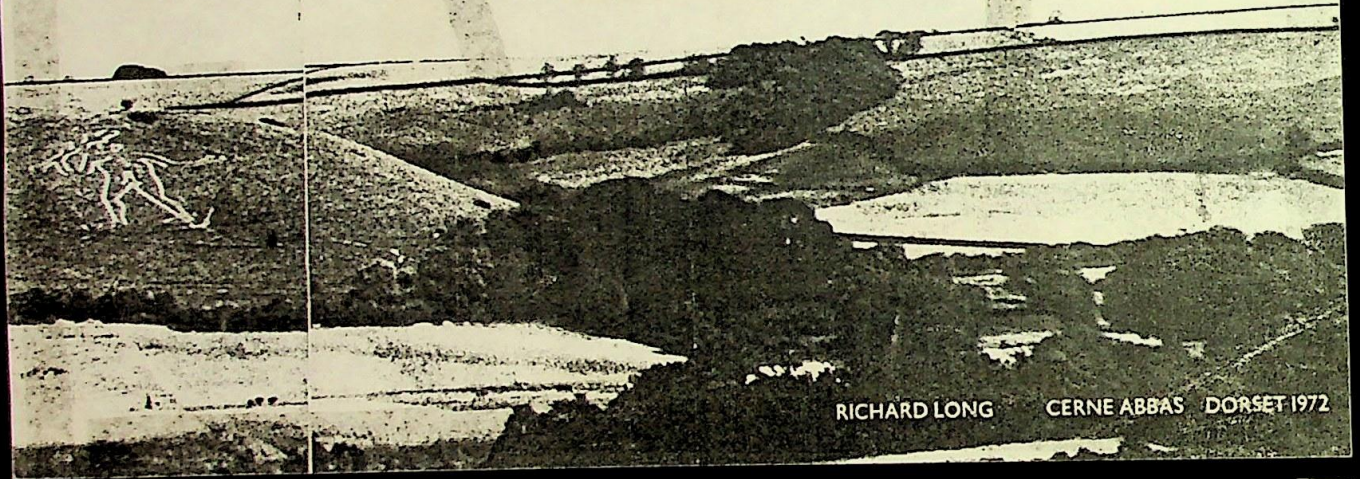
8



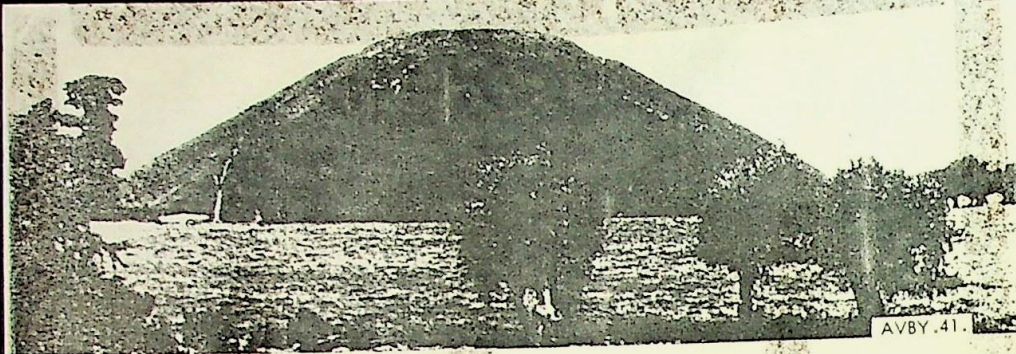
9



HIS EYES WATCH OVER A COUNTRY MILE.  
THE GIANT  
WALKS ON THE HILL  
ONE STEP  
FOR EVER.



RICHARD LONG CERNE ABBAS DORSET 1972



AVBY. 41.

THE LEGEND OF SILBURY HILL

THE TOWNSFOLK OF MARLBOROUGH AND DEVIZES WERE ALWAYS AT LOGGERHEADS. MARLBOROUGH, COMING OFF THE WORST AT ONE FIGHT, SOUGHT REVENGE BY USING THE SERVICES OF THE DEVIL, WHO OFFERED TO WIPE OUT DEVIZES BY DROPPING A HILL ON THE TOWN. THIS THREAT WAS HEARD BY ST. JOHN WHO IN DUE COURSE WARNED DEVIZES, THE TOWNSFOLK OF WHICH SENT THE BIGGEST LIAR, WHO WAS THE OLDEST INHABITANT, TO PUT THE DEVIL OFF. WITH A SACK FILLED WITH OLD CLOTHES AND SHOES HE MET THE DEVIL NEAR BECKHAMPTON, AND THERE ASKED HIM THE TIME. OLD NICK WAS TIRED OF CARRYING THE HILL, AND ASKED IN HIS TURN HOW FAR TO DEVIZES. THE OLD MAN SAID THAT HE WOULD NEVER GET THERE THAT NIGHT OR FOR SOMETIME TO COME, AS HE HAD LEFT DEVIZES AS A YOUNG MAN AND HAD INDEED WORN OUT THE CLOTHES AND BOOTS HE WAS CARRYING - DUMPING THESE ON THE FLOOR HE ENLARGED HIS TALE. OLD NICK WAS INCREDULOUS, BUT THE OLD MAN STUCK TO HIS STORY, AND FOOLED THE DEVIL INTO BELIEVING IT. FLINGING THE HILL DOWN FROM HIS SHOULDERS THE DEVIL DEPARTED IN A FLASH OF LIGHTNING. DEVIZES IS STILL THERE, THE HILL AT SILBURY IS FOR ALL TO SEE, SO THE TALE MUST BE TRUE.

II



A LINE THE LENGTH OF A STRAIGHT WALK FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP OF SILBURY HILL 1970  
WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY LONDON 1971

## A THREE DAY BICYCLE RIDE

BIRTHPLACE BRIDGE THE FAST YEARS

1977 CROSSING PLACE FOSS WAY CHALK VALLEY

FELLOW TRAVELLERS ON THE SAME ROAD FLINT SOURCE FRIEND

HEATHROW AIRPORT HERE THERE

DEAD STOAT ALDERMASTON BORROWED TIME

SILBURY HILL 316 MILES FAMILY

1982

I3

## WIND STONES

LONG POINTED STONES

SCATTERED ALONG A 15 DAY WALK IN LAPPLAND

207 STONES TURNED TO POINT INTO THE WIND

1985

I4



A WALK OF FOUR HOURS AND FOUR CIRCLES  
DARTMOOR ENGLAND 1972

I5

## POWER LINE WALK

FROM A WATER WHEEL TO A NUCLEAR POWER STATION  
32½ MILES IN A STRAIGHT LINE

A 48 MILE WALK FROM PRISTON MILL TO HINKLEY POINT  
BY ROADS AND PATHS

AVON AND SOMERSET ENGLAND 1980

I6

RAILWAY LINE  
A PAIR OF BUZZARDS  
THISTLES  
IRISHMAN'S WALL  
WHITEHORSE HILL  
STATTS HOUSE  
WINNEY'S DOWN  
EAST DART RIVER  
SANDY HOLE PASS  
A DEAD SHEEP  
BROAD DOWN  
SHEEP BONES  
COTTON GRASS  
CLAPPER BRIDGE  
MIDDAY  
GORSE  
GRANITE BOULDERS  
SECOND FOX  
SMALL WOOD  
WEST DART RIVER  
NAKER'S HILL  
FOX  
OLD CHINA CLAY WORKINGS  
RED LAKE  
PONIES  
FIRST SUN  
CAIRN  
BRACKEN  
STONE ROW

A STRAIGHT NORTHWARD WALK ACROSS DARTMOOR

ENGLAND 1979



BOLIVIA 1972

I8



ENGLAND 1968

I9



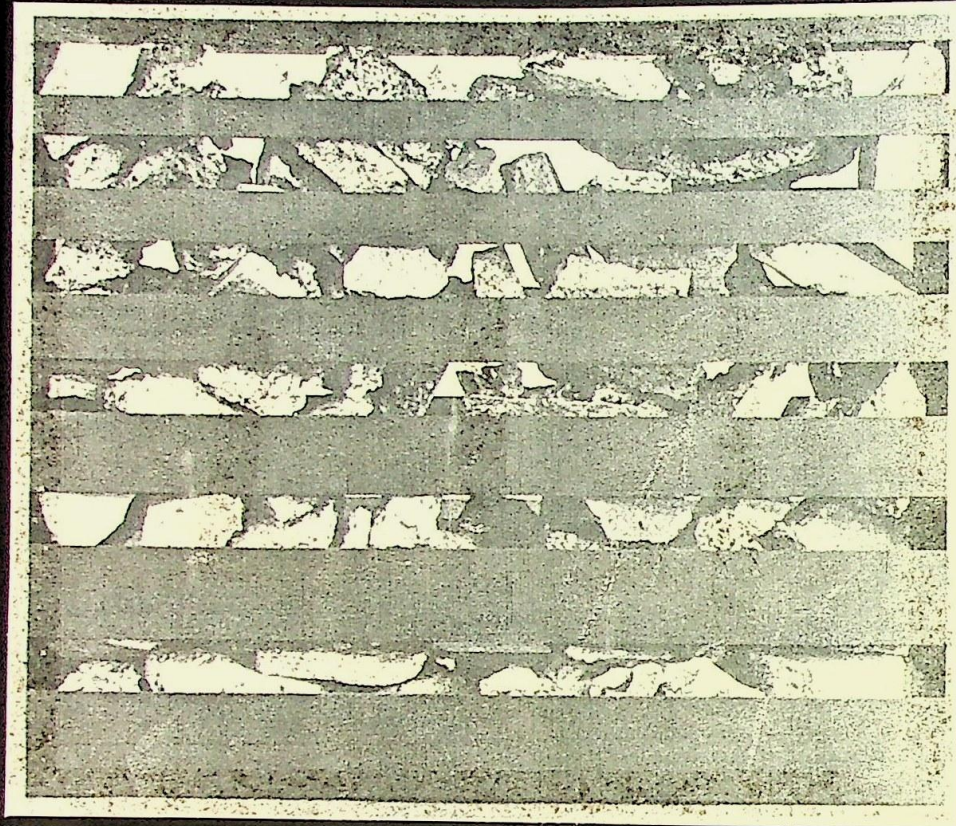
THROWING A STONE AROUND MACGILLYCUDDY'S REEKS

A 2½ DAY WALK 3628 THROWS

STARTING FROM WHERE I FOUND IT, I THREW A STONE, WALKED TO ITS LANDING PLACE AND FROM THERE THREW IT FORWARD AGAIN.  
I CONTINUED THROWING THE STONE AND WALKING IN THIS WAY ON A CIRCULAR ROUTE, ENDING AT THE PLACE WHERE I FIRST PICKED UP THE STONE.

COUNTY KERRY IRELAND 1977

I9b



20

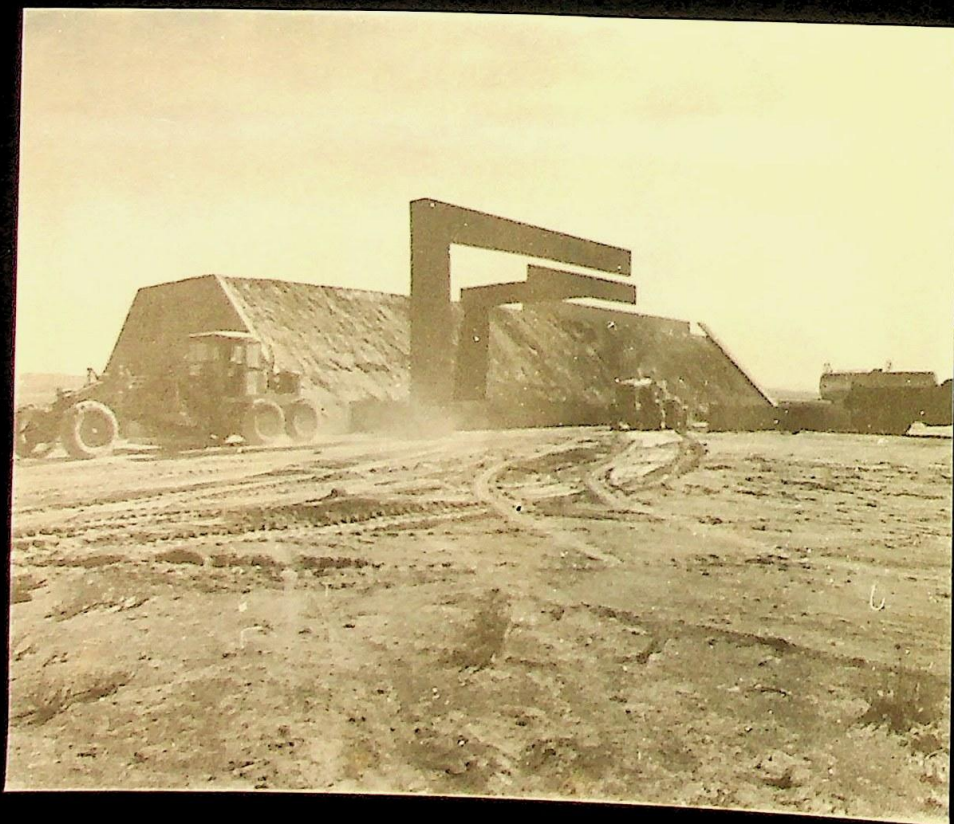
Robert Smithson: *Nonsite, Line of Wreckage, Bayonne, New Jersey* (detail), 1968.  
Purple-painted steel bin holding broken cement, 59" x 70" x 12½". The complete  
work includes maps and snapshots of the site: (Photograph: John Weber Gallery)



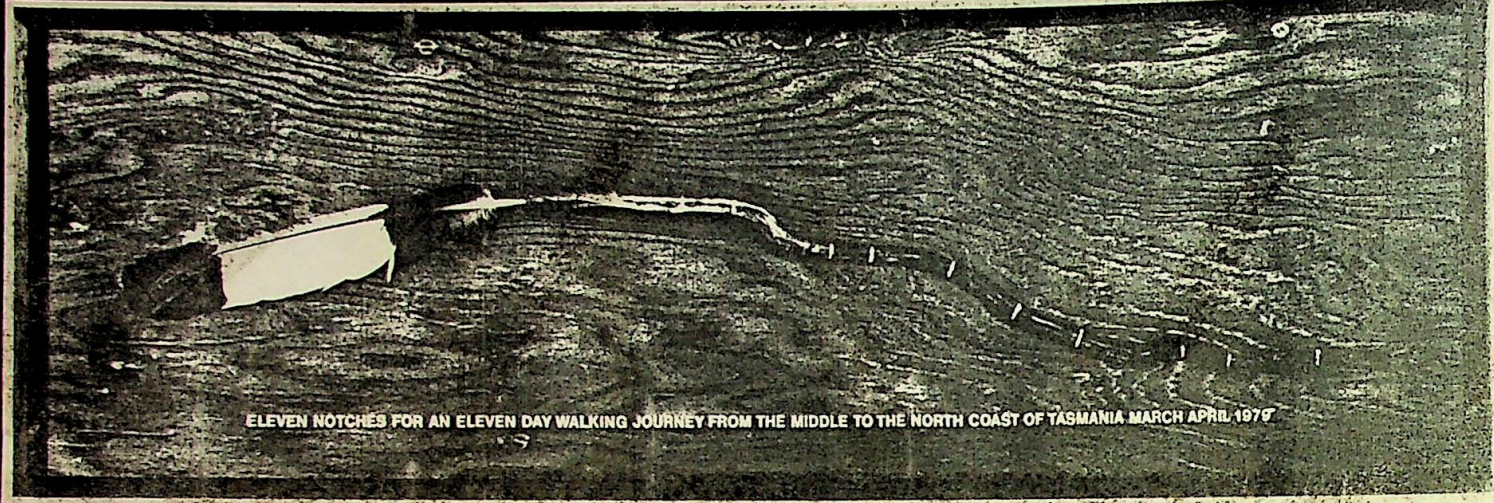


21

Robert Smithson (1938-73), *Spiral Jetty*, 1970. Diameter: 150 ft (49 m); Great Salt Lake, Utah. See p. 358.



22



ELEVEN NOTCHES FOR AN ELEVEN DAY WALKING JOURNEY FROM THE MIDDLE TO THE NORTH COAST OF TASMANIA MARCH APRIL 1979

23

*Eleven Notches for an Eleven Day Walking Journey from the Middle to the North Coast of Tasmania, 1979.* Photograph; 10¼ x 31¾". Lent courtesy private collection.

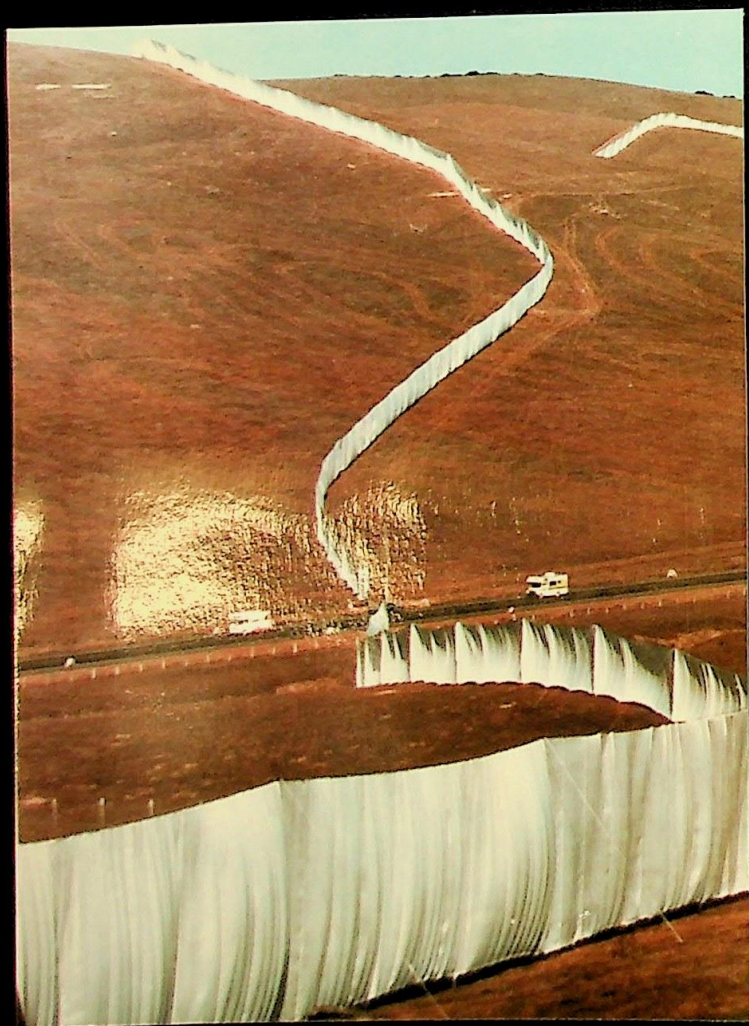


24

Gilbert and George (both 1942). *Morning Light on Art for All*, Spring 1972. Colour photograph. Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd. courtesy of Art for All. See p. 53.

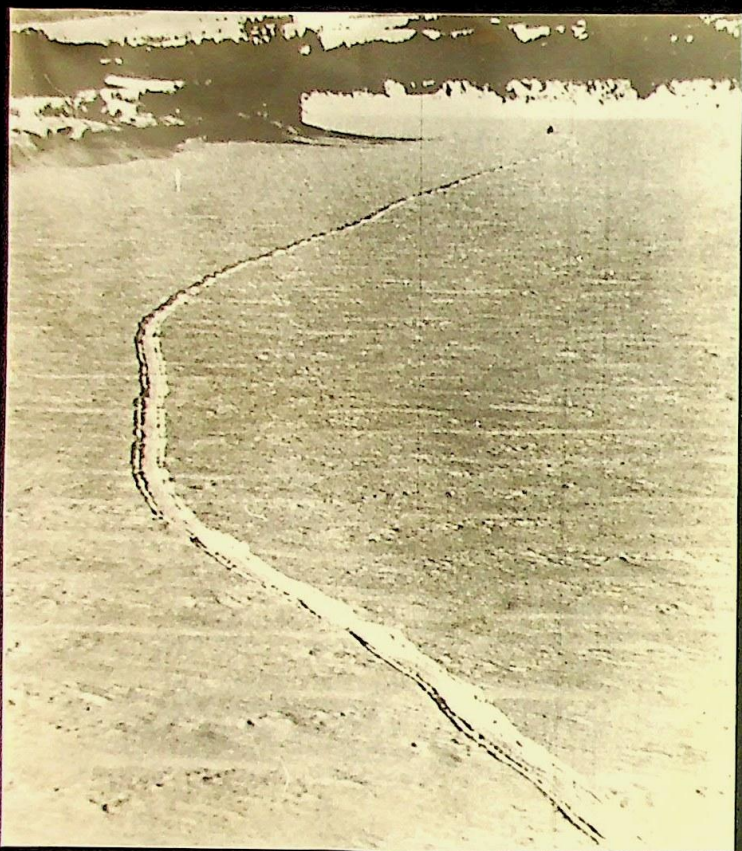


25



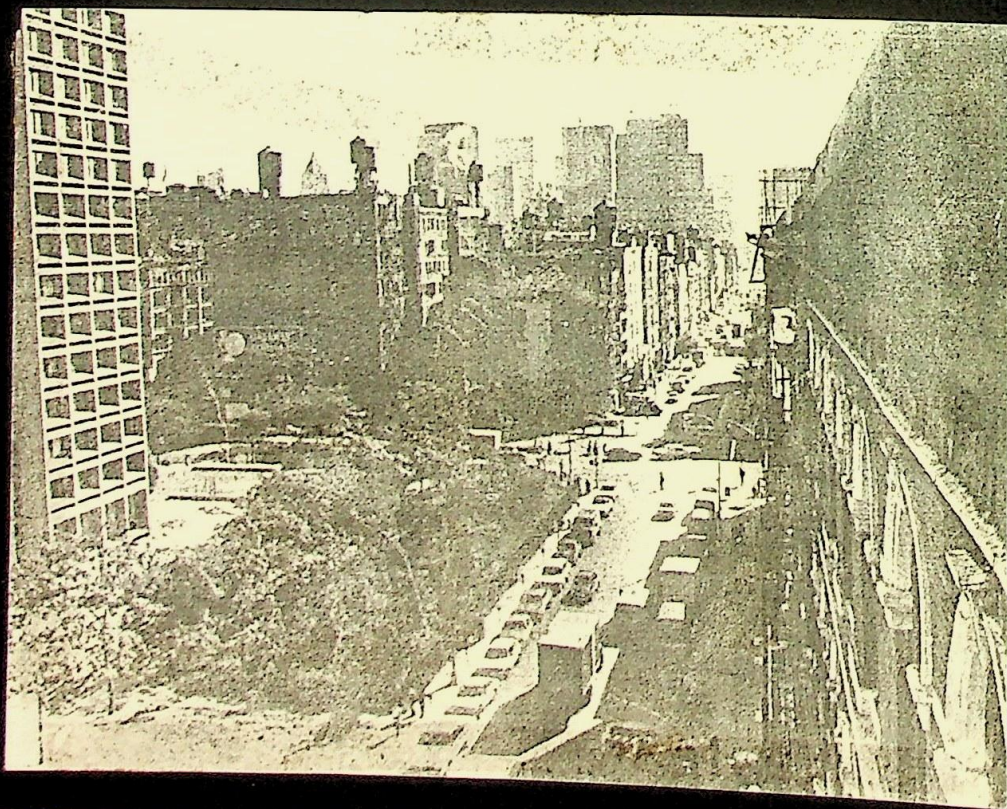
26

Chris: *Running Fence*. 1972-1976, 18' x 24 miles. A white nylon curtain running across Sonoma and Marin counties, California, for two weeks. (Photograph: Wolfgang Volz, courtesy the artist.)



27

*Time Line*, 1968. Boundary between U.S.A./Canada, St. John River; Fort Kent Maine. 1 x 3 x 3' cut between two countries. Lent courtesy the artist.

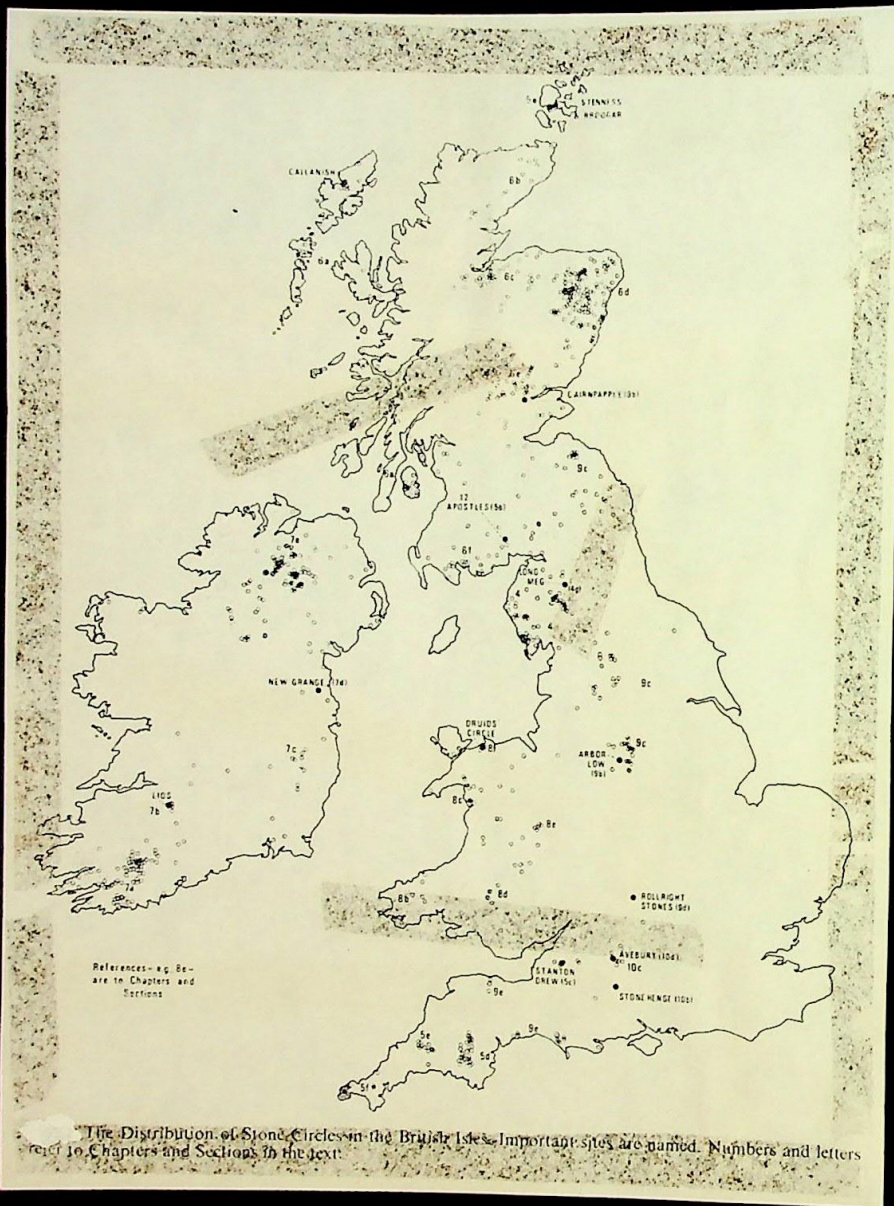


28

Alan Sonstig: *Time Landscape*. 1965-1978. 200' x 46'. The re-creation of a pre-Colonial forest by planting the site with native species of trees that will grow as they did before the settlement of North America by Europeans. La Guardia Place, Manhattan, New York. (Photograph courtesy the artist)



29



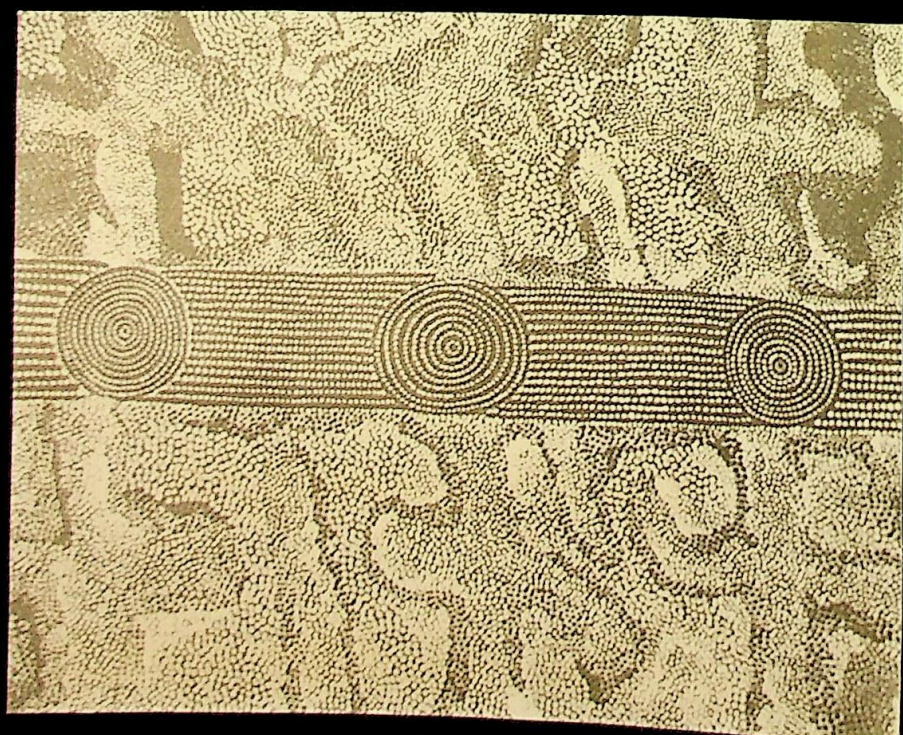
31



32



33





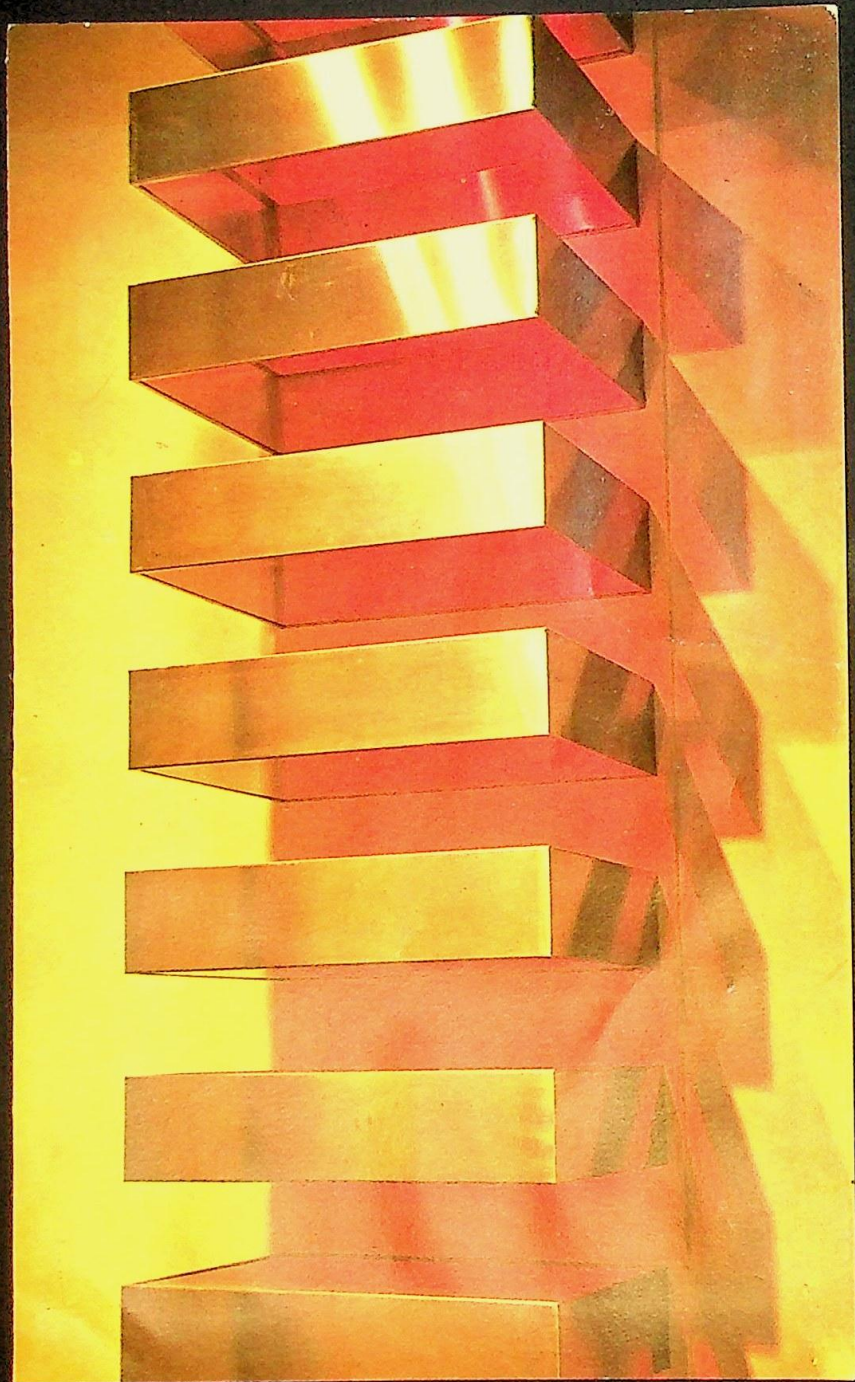
34





35

Helen and Newton Harrison *Crab Project* 1974. Installed at Ronald Feldman  
Fine Arts Inc., New York. (Photograph: Ronald Feldman Fine Arts Inc.)



36

Donald Judd (1928- ), *Untitled*, 1968. Galvanized iron and aluminum, 9 x 40 x 31 (23 x 102 x 79). Los Angeles County Museum of Art. See pp. 19, 26.

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