

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

"Richard Long at work in the studio," *Phaidon*, June 28, 2012,
<http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2012/june/28/richard-long-at-work-in-the-studio/>

PHAIDON

Richard Long at work in the studio

A chance to see the great British land artist at work, indoors for once, at the Hepworth Gallery, Wakefield



Richard Long (2012) at The Hepworth Wakefield (profile detail), Photo by Stephen Jackson

We're not really that used to seeing the great British land artist Richard Long at work in the studio, so we were happy when Hepworth Wakefield curator Sam Lackey sent us these pictures of him setting up an interesting new show at the gallery.

Long has spent most of his life in the open, on long walks often under epic circumstances: throughout his hometown of Bristol, where he still works; through Exmoor and Dartmoor; to the Andes, Alaska, the Arctic Circle and the snowy Atlas Mountains, where he's created countless sculptural works in lines and circles, carved into nature by his own two feet or else formed from indigenous materials taken from the natural landscape – stone, slate, driftwood, sometimes mud.

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

“Richard Long at work in the studio,” *Phaidon*, June 28, 2012,
<http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2012/june/28/richard-long-at-work-in-the-studio/>



Richard Long at The Hepworth Wakefield (2012) Installing Blaenau Ffestiniog Circle (2011) Photo by Stephen Jackson

The Hepworth show provides something of a Long re-introduction to the area's art audience – it's the first Yorkshire-based exhibition of his work for 14 years. In one room, a batch of almost-straight willow sticks cut to a consistent size are assembled free form into a long rectangular shape (*Willow Sticks*, 1980); in another, a selection of Long's photo-based works hang in unison, demonstrating the extent of the artist's travels. In the biggest space two large-scale sculptures (*Cornish Slate Elipse*, 2009, and *Blaenau Ffestiniog Circle*, 2011) sit side by side, at once vying for attention and complimenting each other.

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

“Richard Long at work in the studio,” *Phaidon*, June 28, 2012,
<http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2012/june/28/richard-long-at-work-in-the-studio/>



Richard Long, *Water Falls* (2012) Installation view of new work at The Hepworth Wakefield, Photo by Stephen Jackson

The highlight is an original site-specific piece Long created to mark the show – a china clay wall that responds, somewhat frantically, to the architecture of the building and the river that flows

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

"Richard Long at work in the studio," *Phaidon*, June 28, 2012,
<http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2012/june/28/richard-long-at-work-in-the-studio/>

right past it. Water Falls will exist for the duration of the exhibition, at which point the proposed plan is to paint over it, echoing the temporality of the sculptural works Long creates while walking – those circles and lines left to the whims and wishes of their surrounding landscapes. Rumours have it that Long's gallery-specific wall pieces are actually rarely destroyed, instead hidden behind fake walls by insistent curators who refuse to paint over original works. The same, perhaps unfortunately but maybe rightly, cannot be said of sculptures created beyond the gallery walls – who's around to look after art in the wilderness?



Richard Long, Somerset Willow Line (1980) Installation view at The Hepworth Wakefield, Photo by Stephen Jackson

JAMES COHAN GALLERY

"Richard Long at work in the studio," *Phaidon*, June 28, 2012,
<http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2012/june/28/richard-long-at-work-in-the-studio/>

Long's isn't the only work on show at the Hepworth right now. A new film commission by Luke Fowler, the young Glasgow-based artist nominated for this year's Turner Prize, plays in a dark room found half way through the Long exhibit. *The Poor Stockinger, the Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott*, runs for 60 glorious minutes, and focusses in great academic detail on the work of Marxist historian Edward Palmer-Thomson. The back story runs as follows: Thomson, aged 24 in 1946, was employed by the Workers' Education Association (a charity that continues today) to teach "literature and social history" to adults traditionally unable to access higher education, specifically in the industrial towns of the West Riding. The film, a seamlessly edited patchwork of archive material and present-day footage, documents a specific moment in post-war history filled with progressive optimism – a rare collision of minds (Thomson's and those in charge of the WEA) in the collective pursuit of a "socially purposeful" education.



Luke Fowler, *The Poor Stockinger, The Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott*, 2012. Image: WEA Archive, YUC Library, London Metropolitan University. Photo: A.S. Parkin.

It's hardly a light piece (Fowler's film, much like his previous works, is both thoroughly researched and long) but it's both important and, for those closely monitoring the actions of education Secretary Michael Gove, hugely relevant today – a 60-minute slice of great things to come from an artist on the rise.