

LISSON GALLERY

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Press Release

Richard Long

Circle to Circle

11 May – 23 June 2018

27 Bell Street, London

Opening: 10 May, 6 – 8pm

I can make a circle of words, I can make a circle of stones, I can make a circle of mud with my hands on a wall, I can walk in a circle for one hundred miles. It is a completely adaptable image and form and system.

– Richard Long, 1988

A large new floor-based stone circle, *Flint Wheel* (2018) is at the centre of Richard Long's latest exhibition in London, loosely themed around different uses of the circular motif across his practice. Constructed from knapped or split Norfolk flint, the stones radiate out from a central nexus like spokes on a wheel, alternating in tone between the chalky white exterior and each flint's darker core. This geometric, starburst pattern refers back to previous works by Long, such as *Paddy-Field Chaff Circle* (2003), a temporary circle of radial lines made on Warli tribal land in the Maharashtra district of India, while the sculpture's material relates to a recent flint and slate circle, *North South East West* (2017) made for his major exhibition at Houghton Hall last year.

Echoing this on the wall is Long's only tondo mud work, *360° Crescent* (2016), a round shape bisected by a sweep of marks tracking Long's gestural movements as he applies viscous mud to the surface with the resultant splashes and drips appearing below. The orientation of the work is not necessarily governed by the gravitational pull of these marks or the crescent shape, but can be rotated according to the artist's instruction. A text work, titled *From Circle to Circle From Space to Earth* (2002) made after a continuous walk of 39 miles from a full moonrise to the sunrise, is also a poetic description of one night in the planet's constant state of revolution.

Just as Long's work obliquely references ancient symbols, beliefs and superstitions surrounding sacred sites and stone circles, it also reflects the occurrence of shapes and forms in nature, at both the macro- and the microscopic level. In a recent photographic work, *Circle in the Amazon, Brazil* (2016) Long arranged palm leaves into a circular mound, leaving only a gentle imprint in the chaotic fabric of the jungle.

Indeed the first iteration of the circumference in Long's work harks back to his earliest days as an artist after leaving his first art school. In 1966 he made *Turf Circle*, in which Long convinced his neighbour in Bristol to allow him to cut and remove shallow triangular sections of soil before putting back the grass as a slightly lowered, circular bed. Another early sculptural circle, *Stone Dance*, appears in his first artist's book with Lisson Gallery in 1971.

For Art Basel's Unlimited section in June, Long will be installing a major work, *Ivory Granite Line* (2016), constructed from nine metres of granite stone, which follows up his presentation of a mud-panel triptych at the Armory fair in New York in March.

About Richard Long

Richard Long has been in the vanguard of conceptual art in Britain since he created *A Line Made by Walking* over half a century ago in 1967, while still a student. This photograph of the path left by his feet in the grass, a fixed line of movement, established a precedent that art could be a journey. Through this medium of walking, time, space and distance became new subjects for his art. From that time he expanded his walks to wilderness regions all over the world. He mediates his experience of these places, from mountains through to deserts, shorelines, grasslands, rivers and snowscapes, according to archetypal geometric marks and shapes, made by his footsteps alone or gathered from the materials of the place. These walks and temporary works of passage are recorded with photographs, maps and text works, where measurements of time and distance, place names and phenomena are vocabulary for both original ideas and powerful, condensed narratives.

Richard Long was born in Bristol, UK in 1945 and he lives and works between London and Bristol. He studied at the West of England College of Art, Bristol (1962–65), then St Martin's School of Art, London (1966–68). In 1969, Long was included in a seminal exhibition of Minimal and Conceptual works entitled *When Attitude Becomes Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern for which he made a walk in the Alps that was documented by his first text work. After 1969, Long began making journeys and sculptures in wilderness places all around the world, recording his walks with photographs, maps, and text works. In the 1980s, Long began making new types of mud works using handprints applied directly to the wall. He also continued to make large sculptures of lines and circles from slate, driftwood, footprints or stone, often sourced from quarries near the exhibition sites.

Major solo exhibitions include Houghton Hall, Norfolk, (2017), Arnolfini, Bristol (2015), Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2010), Tate Britain, London (2009), Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2007), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2006), National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (1996), Philadelphia Museum of Art (1994) and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1986). He represented Britain at the 37th Venice Biennale (1976) and won the Turner Prize in 1989. He received the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture (1990), has been elected to the Royal Academy of Arts, London (2001), awarded Japan's Praemium Imperiale in the field of sculpture (2009), made a CBE in 2013 and was knighted in the 2018 Honours List.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and develops 58 international artists across two exhibition spaces in London and two in New York. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Richard Long, before introducing a generation of significant British sculptors, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. In addition to a number of renowned artist estates, including Roy Colmer, the Leon Polk Smith Foundation and the John Latham Foundation, the gallery represents leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller and Tatsuo Miyajima. It is also responsible for raising the profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza and Wael Shawky.

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