

PROJECT 7

Richard Long

1977

A straight hundred mile walk in Australia

December 1977

Near Broken Hill, New South Wales

A line in Australia

December 1977

Near Broken Hill, New South Wales

Bushwood circle

8 December 1977 – 7 January 1978

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Stone line

15 December 1977 – 5 February 1978

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

BIOGRAPHY

Over the decades, Richard Long's work has developed a language of simple geometric forms, from natural materials such as stones, water, dust, mud or snow. Stemming from Long's love of nature, his relationship with place is vital to his practice. Long's works often take the form of long solitary walks in rural and remote areas of Britain, North and South America, Asia and Australia – 'walking as art, as sculpture'. Long responds to these environments by manipulating or altering the landscape in some subtle way: by making simple marks to leave a trace on the ground or by creating sculptures from natural features such as stone lines and circle sculptures or crosses of beheaded daisies.

FACTS

- Richard Long began undertaking 'walking as sculpture' in 1967. By the 1970s this simple action had formed the basis for numerous experiments with duration and distance.
- In 1969 he began to undertake walks outside of Britain, in countries such as Peru, Japan, and Tanzania, leaving arrangements in the landscape as traces of his passage.
- During Project 7, Long had no particular destination in mind: *I set out. I caught the train from Sydney to Perth and simply got off when I saw country that I thought was suitable.*
- Long spent eight days just outside of Broken Hill. Using a compass he walked out and back each day from his camp site in a straight line for a total of 160 kilometres (100 miles).
- He created a line in red stones somewhere within this environment, which resulted in the work *A line in Australia* which he then photographed. It may or may not still exist.
- Each work is constructed with natural materials from or near their location. Materials are sometimes positioned by hand, while at other times kicked or rolled into place.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Richard Long's 1977 Kaldor project in Australia was the first of several visits and projects connected to the Australian landscape. For Project 7, he created two major museum works and a series of photographs taken during walks outside Broken Hill. Long's work *A straight hundred mile walk* in Australia from this project was shown in his retrospective exhibition at the Tate Britain in London in 2009.

John Kaldor first asked Long to create a project in Australia in the early 1970s. In 1976, the year in which Long represented Britain in the 37th Venice Biennale, he finally agreed to make new works in Sydney and Melbourne the following year. He also proposed making a work outside the gallery spaces. *A straight hundred mile walk in Australia* was part of a body of works exploring the same principle in different regions. The destination for the walk was unplanned and uncharted, the location chosen intuitively by the artist. Long spent eight days and nights in the dusty bushland outside Broken Hill. Using a compass, he walked out and back each day in a straight line, returning each night to the same campsite, for a total of 160 kilometres (100 miles). Somewhere outside of Broken Hill, Long paused to create a rough line of red stones, a work he titled *A line in Australia*.

Long then visited Melbourne as part of the project and created *Bushwood circle* at the National Gallery of Victoria. The work, nine metres in diameter, was constructed over the course of a day on the pavement of the Gallery's Murdoch Court from gum and tea tree branches that had been collected by the artist. Long does not prefabricate or alter the natural fragments and detritus that he chooses for his museum works, just as he does not cut into the land when making works in the natural environment. The considered process of placement and arrangement transforms the raw materials into artworks. In Sydney, nine tonnes of blue metal stone was brought to the Art Gallery of New South Wales from a Parramatta quarry to create the 20-metre-long *Stone line*. With the help of art students, Long arranged the heavy blue-black stones to form a monumental vista along the gallery floor.

Kaldor Public Art Project 7: Richard Long, *A line in Australia*, near Broken Hill, New South Wales, December 1977

Photo: Richard Long



Kaldor Public Art Project 7: Richard Long, *Stone line*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 15 December 1977 - 5 February 1978

Image courtesy of Kaldor Public Art Projects

