Using the Landscape as a Studio and Gallery: How Practice Reacts to Space

The landscape can be a wild and unpredictable melting pot of natural forces, could this be the perfect setting for channelling creative energy?

In this essay, I will examine the effects of using the landscape as a studio and gallery space as opposed to the traditional gallery within a building and workshop styled studio and how my own work fits in with this. I will investigate the process of walking out into the natural landscape with only ideas and tools, using what you find out there to make work, for it to live out it's life in this natural setting, be seen by passers by or left undiscovered and eventually disappear as the effects of time and weather dissolve, disintegrate and melt it away.

This way of working comes under the title Land Art. By looking at Land Art's beginnings, how it manifests itself in the present, what meanings it holds and where it may go in the future, I hope to understand where these ideas sit within contemporary art practice.

Art has been made out in the landscape since near the beginnings of modern man. I will look at how this phenomenon has been used and developed over the past half a century, the unique media and locus, the effects of the elements as they are used to build and then destroy them, how the setting gives the work a rich context, freeing it from the prison like white walls of a gallery, the advantages and disadvantages of such conditions and what might happen to Land Art in the future. I will look at how the use of natural materials in a natural setting can make art relevant, immediate and profound.

The Birth and Development of Land Art

Humans have been making art in the land for millennia. The oldest examples to have been found are cave paintings. These ancient works were made from natural materials and give us a fascinating insight into the culture of our ancient ancestors. According to writer Noble Wilfred, the oldest cave paintings found are believed to be around 35,000 years old (Noble Wilford, 2014), although pigment dating back 164,000 years has been found by archaeologists, in caves in South Africa (Marchant, 2016). This indicates that humanity has, since early on in the emergence of modern man, always made art out in the landscape.

Coming a little closer to modern times there are the Nazca Lines which are dated around 1-700 AD (Golomb, 2015-2019) and other huge geoglyphs,
drawings on the landscape, made from the materials of the landscape, such as my local Westbury White Horse, a drawing made by scraping the top layer of soil away to reveal the chalk beneath, on a hill fort dating back 2000 years. The horse as it appears today is believed to have been cut around 1600. This is still, not only visible, but also maintained by locals and known as a prominent landmark (English Heritage, 2019). From there we arrive in England in 1967, when Land artist Richard Long (then a student) walked in a field to make his piece *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), in 1972 he made a work in which he walked along one of the Peruvian Nazca Desert Lines, some of his following works employed symbols which appear in the Nazca Lines such as the puma, falcon, condor and the sun and rain, he went on to win the Turner Prize in 1989.

Writer William Malpas comments that Long is 'someone who fuses Sixties Conceptualism with 1800s pantheism; he is something of a High Modernist and a Postmodernist Conceptualist.' (Malpas, 2003:6) This indicates that the practice of making art from the land and in the land had arrived as part of modern culture. If some early ideas about Land Art lie in Conceptualism, I will define this to put that theory to the test.

Writer Nikos Stangos writes that Conceptual art was a move away from the traditional art object that could be bought and sold, towards an emphasis on ideas. 'ideas in and around and about art...The result was a kind of art...[with]...it's fullest and most complex existence in the minds of the artists and their audience ' (Stangos, 1974:256) If these ideas are applied to Land Art, it would follow that these acts of creation within the landscape are designed to hold meaning for the artists and viewers.

In 1968, at Dwan Gallery, New York, artist Robert Smithson organised an exhibition which he entitled *Earthworks*, this is widely regarded as the beginning of Land Art. On display were piles of rocks and photographs of rock arrangements in deserts. Phaidon notes, 'Though the works in the show... were priced for sale, the artists did not truly expect to reap the benefits from the art market, but rather, to upset it.'(Phaidon, 2016). This indicates that Land Art rejected the conventions of the gallery space and sought to put art out into nature. At about this time in 1970, Smithson made his famous *Spiral Jetty*, a 15,000 foot long and 15 foot wide coil made from mud, precipitated salt crystals, rocks and water in the Great Salt Lake, Utah.

According to writer Michael Lialach, Land Art can be defined as work which has a preoccupation with sculpture related to minimalism, it is work out doors
which has been conceived for specific locations (Lialach, 2007). This can take many forms, some are small, fragile, ephemeral works made from materials found out in the wild, such as Andy Goldsworthy's 195 - 1980, made by bending hazel sticks in a pond and some became monumental in scale and ambition, such as Land artist Michael Heizer when he once said, "I guess I'd like to see art become more of a religion." (Lialach, 2007: 54) Heizer blasted out vast amounts of the earth's surface in California, in the wild land 130 km north of Las Vegas, to create his piece Double Negative, two huge trenches 9 metres wide, 15 metres deep and 230 and 100 metres long respectively. While Artist Nancy Holt sought to tame the wild with her Sun Tunnels in the desert in Utah, saying, "I want to bring the vast space of the desert back to human scale." (Lialach, 2007: 58) The ambition reached new heights when artist Peter Hutchinson commented, "Artists today are taking their cues from meteoritic craters and volcanic pits as well as dams, burial mounds, aqueducts, fortifications and moats, to build works that change the surface of the earth." (Lialach, 2007: 64)

With regard to the emergence of Land Art, writer Robert Shane comments,

While not overly political, members of this mostly American movement tended to be dissatisfied with the constraints of the market-driven art world and cultural commercialism, and many of them sought out remote sites unscathed by previous human intervention, where they could create monumental sculptures that enabled the viewer to directly experience the natural world. (Shane, 2014: 39)

Here we can see evidence that the practitioners of Land Art sought to move art away from capitalism by making work which could not easily be sold, they wanted art to exist in a context which was set by the artist, rather than as an object of desire to be corrupted, diluted, removed from it's original intention through the act of being bought and sold, transported or confined to the white wall of a gallery. Artist Michael Heizer once said, "One of the implications of Earth Art might be to remove completely the commodity-status of a work of art." (Lialach, 2007: 52)

Set free from the constraints of worrying about seeking approval for works, the Land artists were able to be ambitious with their concepts. Land artist Dennis Oppenheim once said, "It seems to me that one of the principle functions of
artistic involvement is to stretch the limits of what can be done." (Lialach, 2007: 82)

Working outdoors, in the wild could set artists free from the demands of society, artist Carle Andre once said "I'm interested in art which is not culture" (Lialach, 2007: 26)

However, in 1969, gallerist John Gibson set up an enterprise which brokered projects, ideas, photos, sketches and models with the aim of financing big Land Art projects. He arranged financing for the colossal works of Christo and Jeanne-Claude with their Wrappings of trees, buildings and land. Land Art grew in popularity, but Land artists found that they did in fact have to sell work to make a living and so the move away from capitalism was fragile. Land artist Andy Goldsworthy, who has now been working in the field for over thirty years, has written and sold nineteen books. These contain big colour photographs of his works, as well as a commentary about the making process, he also undertakes commissions to make installations. Richard Long undertakes commissions for works in gallery buildings such as his mud paintings and sells books, mud paintings and text works. In relation to the sales of Land Art, The Journal of Cultural Economics from the Université Libre de Bruxelles Brussels, Belgium documents that "Data collection on auctions over the period 1972-1992, show that this market is very thin. This was probably realised by Land artists who later seem to have turned to more marketable creations." (Ginsburgh and Penders, 1997) This indicates that many artists found it impossible to make a living from works which could not be sold and had to adjust their methods accordingly.

With it’s roots in the Land Art of the 60s and 70s, there is a movement known as Environmental Art, which concerns itself with man’s relationship with nature and the environment and how art can be used to highlight concerns about man’s affect on the planet. (Alfrey et al, 2012)

The following comment by Oppenheim about Land Art is the one which seems to encompass the genre as a whole, " The work is not put in place, it is that place." (Lialach, 2007: 80) Artistic actions can be fused with what already exists in the natural landscape, claiming the chosen features as part of the work. This allows the layers of physicality and context of a place to be absorbed into a piece and in turn, the piece to be absorbed into the pre existing physicalities and contexts of a place.

**The Effects of Choosing the Landscape Over the Gallery and Studio**
Art critic, writer and artist Brian O'Doherty says that if we reject the gallery space and the dealer we become:

Restless, self-doubting, inventive about diminishing options, conscious of void, and close to silence. It is a mind with no fixed abode, empirical, always testing experience, conscious of itself and thus of history - and ambiguous about both. (O'Doherty, 1986:81)

There are advantages to leaving the traditional gallery and studio space behind to work in the landscape. It is beneficial to the making process to be restless and self doubting, this attitude allows the artist to break new ground, surely diminishing options could inspire invention and a testing of experience is the best way to create. It is undeniable that being conscious of oneself in relation to history is an advantage to the making process, a dialogue can be struck up, answers sought and a rich wealth of knowledge accessed.

By working in the landscape there is an automatic link to history, instantly present in any work made. In the act of using found materials and the place, a reference to the history of that place is being created. For example in my piece *Tedbury Camp*, I made a self portrait from natural found materials on the site of an ancient hill fort. Natural found chalk was used to draw a depiction of my anatomy onto a large area of exposed, fossil littered, Jurassic, sedimentary rock. In this act, an association between myself and bygone ancestors who had inhabited the same rocks and cliffs was formed, as well as to the larger expanse of time represented by the fossils, remnants of living creatures from millions of years ago.
O'Doherty explains how the gallery space has been used as much as a context as it has a displaying space and how the artist interacts with the gallery space as a way of replying to how it has been used previously and also as a means to communicating with the audience. He writes, 'The white wall's apparent neutrality is an illusion. It stands for a community with common ideas and assumptions...collaging the gallery space. The walls content becomes richer and richer.' (O'Doherty, 1999:79) By removing artwork from this context and placing it out in the natural landscape, a new dialogue is being initiated. Yes the work does relate to modern culture, indeed it is a product of modern culture, but by placing it in the context of the landscape rather than the gallery space, it rejects the negative associations that can be attached to the institution of the gallery, where 'Esthetics are turned into a kind of social elitism ...Exclusive audience, rare objects difficult to comprehend - here we have social, financial and intellectual snobbery...' (O'Doherty, 1999:79). Land Art adopts a definition within nature which sets it free of these constraints. It is human creation as part of the landscape and all it's rich history, human creation as part of nature. Work can be made from mud, stone, natural chalk, water and plants, they are made of
the earth, thus directly linking human existence to the earth, collaging it onto the backdrop of natural history.
natural chalk, rock and landscape

'The artist studies his materials and methods in order to gain the greatest control possible over his manipulations, so that he may bring out the best characteristics.' (Mayer, 1987: V) By making these studies out in the landscape, a profound connection to the land is formed as a study of natural, found materials takes place in the act of making and also in the viewing of the work.

Writer David Pye, conveying his ideas in the 60s about the loss of handmade processes in manufacturing, champions the link that the hand made has to nature, explaining how we are naturally attuned to the materials and forms of nature as opposed to the man made, which can be too uniform and clean, putting us on edge. (Pye, 1995) By working with natural materials the maker has to adjusting their intentions and inclinations as they go, having to negotiate the uneven surface of a rock with unpredictable natural chalk out in the natural landscape, these links to nature are firmly re-established and a response of reassurance can be induced in the maker and the viewer. The advantage of working within these limitations is that anything created, automatically has an affinity with it's setting, it is already part of the land.

Time is inevitably going to play a part in working within the natural landscape and with natural materials. With regard to philosopher Jaques Derrida’s ideas about construction and deconstruction, writer K. Malcolm Richards comments:

A representation is created through the momentary stabilisation of a set of structures, allowing for an image to be recognised as a work and for it to have an effect on a viewer. (Malcolm Richards, 2008: 134)

When making art out in the landscape and from the landscape, there is a need to stabilise structures, natural materials in a certain order, to create work. There is a moment when the weather has been watched and the perfect moment has been picked for it's light, temperature, precipitation, the spot has been chosen for it's context and physical structure, the natural materials are all arranged into a piece which is a creation of the artist's mind, the structure hangs in a balance of compromise between ideas, physicality and time. This moment is ephemeral. Time will soon have it's way with this process, the natural materials will disintegrate, dissolve, be washed away, the light will change, the moment will pass.
It's Been a Long Life, 2019

Ice and landscape

This sense of impending change adds a tension to the making process and the finished piece, it is now or never, the moment has to be grasped, what is found in the landscape has to be capitalised on in that moment, a moment that may never occur again.

In 1687, Isaac Newton said that 'Absolute, true, and mathematical time, of itself, and from it's own nature, flows equally without relation to anything external.' (Kern, 1983:11) Kant defines time by saying that it is ' a subjective form or foundation of all experience. But even though it is subjective, it is also universal - the same for everybody.'(Kern:1983:11) Rather than the measured, mathematical ticking of a clock or the elusive perception of experience, time can better be measured by rapid disintegration. All objects, all materials all atomic arrangements are in parallel with the space time continuum in that they are on a constant, unstoppable path to expanding into the universe, emptiness, through their melting, dissolving and disintegration. By making pieces which deteriorate over a space of hours or days as they interact with the elements and
by documenting their disappearance, a study of time is made, this is a metaphor for human existence. Dr.Peter Fenwick, neuropsychiatrist and neurophysiologist says that when we die we '(give) up our body to join with universal consciousness, joyfully, happily and willingly ' (Thanatos, 2018), it is a process of letting go of our earthly state. I take this to mean that our physicality disintegrates back to it's atomic state, to become part of the universe that it came from. In the same way, these artworks are given up to the universe, they are allowed to disintegrate, to be evaporated by the sun, washed away by the rain, to become part of the cosmos once again.

The effects of time on artwork can be used to study where we sit in the vast expanse of time. We are all aware of our selves as existing beings, but none of us know how long this state will last or what will come once we are gone, we have some ideas about what came before us, but it is hard to grasp and define the present. German philosopher Martin Heidigger writes that we are all united by our existence, the basic fact of our common being and that it is good to have an appreciation of the time we have left before 'Das Nichts' claims us. (The School of Life, 2014)

By making pieces which stabilise structures at a given moment, a moment that will soon pass, a study of time is made. This is a statement of presence. Just as the prehistoric artists recorded their existence at a given time, by making stencil paintings of their hands, a study of existence can be made by making art out in the wild, using natural materials. The prehistoric artists left behind long lasting images, art which quickly disappears can mark time from another perspective. Richard Ingleby, co-owner of the Ingleby Gallery in Edinburgh said, 'ultimately in the battle between man and nature, nature wins' (The Guardian, 2012). This is a good reason to work out in the landscape, it is changing, dynamic, alive, this brings the work to life as it lives and dies out in the landscape. This process emulates human life.

The conventional way to make an artwork, it could be argued, may be to begin with a white canvas which has the artist's will put upon it, to transform it into something meaningful. Land Art is the practice of adding a layer to a vast timeline, which will long outlast the work, incorporating nature and the natural landscape into works. A study of our ancient planet, as well as traces of human existence and history can be made, by making work directly in this setting. Land artist Walter De Maria said, "The land is not the setting for the work but a part of the work." (Lialach, 2007: 38) The use of natural materials brings with it a wealth of historical contexts, if we take rock for example, there are the layers
which have been built up over vast expanses of time, by working on this material with say, chalk, another layer is being added, this automatically puts the work into a context of time, especially if it is a layer of sedimentary rock, unquarried, sitting within its context of the landscape where it originally grew. There are also the connotations to ancient rock art, our prehistoric ancestors who worked in similar ways right back through the history of humanity. Then to consider, we have masonry and how we use stone to make our buildings which again holds a plethora of meanings for us: the historic cities with their tales of heroics, massacre and the developments of culture, particular buildings which hold within their walls tales of human struggles and triumphs or even the statues which stand proud in our cities like the famous Trevi Fountain in Rome dating back to 19 BC. This is just one material, there are also of course, the elements: earth, air, fire and water, all of which have their own many associations. Writer Philip Ball mused,

Shakespear's Lear runs amok in the stormy rain, the rushing air and the oak cleaving thunderbolts of fire, nature's fretful elements...The Greek philosophers coupled a four elements theory to the idea of four primary colours: to Empedocles these were white, black, red and the vaguely defined ochron...The Renaissance artist Leon Battista Alberti awarded red to fire, blue to air, green to water, and 'ash' colour (cinereum) to earth; Leonardo Da Vinci made earth yellow instead....there is clearly something about the four Aristotelian elements that has deep routes in human experience...Canadian writer Northrop Fyfe writes:...'earth, air, water and fire are...the four elements of imaginative experience and always will be. (Ball, 2004:10)

There is a rich wealth of associations with all these materials throughout history and all societies, an opportunity to exploit these associations is presented when they are being used to make Land Art.

The Particularities of Working in the Landscape
Uncertainty plays a big role in the process of making Land Art. Just as Pye thinks about the negotiation between man and nature in the working of wood or stone with their unpredictable grain or malleability, by working outside the artist puts themselves at the mercy of the elements; at any moment the wind can change, the rain can wash away your marks, the sun can become warmer and melt your ice. Added to this uncertainty is the roulette that is played with natural materials, one patch of rock can have a completely different hardness, softness, roughness or smoothness to the next a few metres away. The natural chalk you are drawing with can vary from piece to piece: one soft and malleable leaving satisfying marks, the next hard, coarse and unworkable. If you are working in a river it can be clear one day, cloudy the next, deep one day, shallow the next, illuminated by sunshine one minute, dull and brown the next. To work with these materials it is necessary to embrace uncertainty, being happy to react to the conditions as you find them, rather than trying to work from a predetermined plan, as writer Malcolm Richards points out, when considering Derrida's thoughts on the creative process,

The ethical decision, constitutes moving from unknowing to making a decision, even if the consequences remain unknown...he shows the necessity and the profound difficulty of making decisions - a difficulty relating to creative decisions as well as ethical decisions. (Malcolm Richards, 2008:134)

Derrida teaches that life is uncertain, there is no cut and dry and that by embracing the unknown we gain a deeper understanding. In this way the act of making Land Art could be seen as a metaphor for life.

As the gallery space has been rejected in this method of working out in the natural landscape, there is opportunity for a different kind of interaction with the audience. Rather than people arriving with their expectations heightened, seeking an encounter with some thought provoking artwork, they could be travelling through the natural landscape, taking a moment to connect with nature, walking the dog and expecting to see other hikers. Through these informal interactions with a non art audience, the work preserves it's genuine status, it is not a commodity, it is part of the real world. Maria Lind, curator at Moderna Museet, Stockholm is quoted as saying, with regard to installation art, 'It generally wants to avoid the solemnity and the static quality that often
embody institutions' (De Oliveira et al, 2003:80). This can apply to installations made in the landscape too.

As the work is experienced by members of the public, it is enriched with a purpose, as De Oliveira et al point out,

Fluidity has become a buzzword in the new millennium and is indicative of a lack of boundaries...audience as a site...the centre and the meaning of the work, has resulted in a shift from aesthetic and art historical issues to a concern with the social integration of the installation.(De Oliveira et al, 2003:109).

Social integration brings these outdoor works to life and it gives them a purpose. My own work is unfunded and therefore unvetted by gallery staff, curators or patrons. It is made and left out in the wild, where it may be discovered or it may not, this allows for my own experience to be very immediate, a negotiation with nature and an interaction with the audience.

There are drawbacks to the freedom afforded to the artist when working in the landscape. The most obvious of these is the very fact that it is difficult for art lovers to visit the works as they are often in remote spots, with no signposts or introductions in the form of plaques. Some Land Art is difficult to access, for example *Spiral Jetty*, which is out in the desert in Utah. Additionally, they cannot always be gathered together as a collective and presented in a gallery setting. Photographs can be used to communicate what has been made out in the landscape, but in this format much of the rich context of the landscape setting is lost: the immediate interaction with nature, history and place.

According to writer William Malpas, for some critics there is a danger of Land Art becoming romanticised, escapist, indulgent and nostalgic for a bygone working class agricultural life which never did exist, avoiding real political issues. It could be seen as a retreat into fantasies about nature which has nothing to say about the problems of modern life. 'It's hippy, tree hugger art which panders to the middle class's nostalgia for nature, seen from the perspective of neurotic city dwellers who hanker for the peace and quiet of the countryside.' (Malpas, 2004: 15) I will admit that there is an element of escapism in quietly taking yourself away from other human activity to make art in the wild, but this negotiation is testing, tough and real, it is hard physical and mental work. The advantages gained from the investment in effort are that nature becomes part of the finished piece, making the trade off worthwhile.
With regard to Richard Long's Land Art, Malpas asks if this is just walking, claimed to be an act of middle class creativity and that sceptical critics describe his work as 'pretentious, shallow, repetitive, unoriginal.' (Malpas, 2003: 9)

Long '...says it is not enough for him to have an idea, he has to make it.' (Malpass, 2003:6) Malpass claims that Long's walks 'sacralise space and time. As the walk takes place, sacred time is reinstated. Walking therefore has a religious and philosophical dimension' (Malpas, 2003: 8). Long writes,

I do things that have a deep meaning for me. I have the most sublime or profound feelings when I am walking, or touching materials in natural places. That is what I have decided to do and that is what I am showing you in my art. (Malpas, 2003:8)

Long's approach to land art is radically simple, but he claims that his walks are physical sculptures because they are things that have actually taken place. As he walks he records the wind direction, incidents along the way, the weather and so on. These are then presented at exhibitions and in books as text works. There is a deep level of thought that makes up his work.

If you look at books such as Jeffrey Kastner's *Land and Environmental Art*, it could be argued that with it's big glossy photos and target audience of Land Art enthusiasts, there is a danger of the concepts being forgotten in favour of aesthetics and Land Art becoming a cliche. This is the same point made by Clair Bishop when she writes that many installations of the 1990's aimed at getting a 'wow' reaction from the audience rather than having any intellectual dimensions. (Bishop, 2005) However, Land Art can be deeper than that, according to Lialach Land Art's roots lie in Minimalism (Lialach, 2007:12-14) and according to Malpas some early examples were inspired by Conceptualism (Malpas, 2003:6). Minimalism uses physical space to make art as well as an eradication of traces of the human touch. Land Art uses space too, but in opposition to Minimalism, it embraces the effects of nature on the media. Conceptualism uses ideas over physical form to make art. Land Art uses physical form to communicate ideas and provide experiences.

Installation art critically engages with 'the experience of human perception' (De Oliveira *et al*, 2003:6), testing and expanding it's possibilities. It capitalises on the latest innovations to stimulate our senses and our minds. Land art does all of these things but more by using what is available within the landscape rather than innovative technology. Richard Long's practice involves using only what is found out in the landscape, and his hands. This could be argued to be the most
ecologically sound way to make art. As installation art becomes more ingrained into the contemporary art scene, it may well be that more artists venture out into the wild to make their work. As humanity becomes increasingly concerned with the fate of our planet, it could be that Land Art, made as short lived pieces, from only natural materials and by hand with no machinery involved, is embraced as an ecologically friendly way to make art, fusing what is made in the urban landscape, under the title *Installation Art*, with what can be achieved in the natural landscape under the title *Land Art*, in a bid to raise awareness of how we can preserve the natural order of our world. Land Art and Ecologic Art may be very relevant ways for humanity to communicate ideas about what is happening to our planet. Just as Conceptualism was the fore bearer of Land Art, Conceptualism now 'coexists in a terrain densely populated with painting and sculpture...nor is much of the conceptual art produced today purist in terms of it's media.' (Stangos, 1974, 268) It may well be that Land Art is seen more prominently included in works of Installation Art, becoming less pure, but continuing to address the real issues facing humanity and be relevant, contemporary and investigative.

So to make Land Art, is it necessary to be purist in approach? Is it necessary to use only what can be found out there on location? Is there a need to focus on the concepts of the pieces? In my own practice this is what naturally happens: it is much more effective to use what is out there, because it automatically holds an affinity with it's setting. It could be argued that a fusion of materials is possible. So long as it is done in a sympathetic way, no pollutants are left behind, this could actually be a way to bring land art in to the contemporary practice of fusion. If natural materials are used, which have their origins in other sources, this would still qualify as Land Art. Concepts are used in the creative process, working outdoors, to give the work relevance, life and a reason to exist, without this, art becomes decoration.

In my own experience, the practice of Land Art is an interaction with natural forces. One can set out for the two mile trek across the wild, with an idea or intention, but as you encounter natural features in the landscape or the weather conditions change, it is necessary to adapt and work with intuition, capitalising on what is provided by the landscape. This could be a slab of rock on a cliff face which is just the right height and shape for drawing on or it could be that the river is low today and running clear, perfect for making a semi submerged piece. Alternatively it could be that the wind picks up, the sun disappears and it begins to rain, in which case a large drawing in the open has to be abandoned.
This means it is essential to have intentions, but not fixed intentions. Intentions to negotiate, adapt, capitalise.

**Conclusion**

So how *does* practice react to space, when the landscape is used as a studio and gallery? Malpass asks whether it is just walking, claimed to be an act of middle class creativity or 'pretentious, shallow, repetitive, unoriginal.' (Malpas, 2003: 9). Shane describes it as a chance to '...create monumental sculptures that enabled the viewer to directly experience the natural world.' (Shane, 2014). I would argue that it is a practice which provides an elemental interaction with time and place, both for artist and viewer.

Land Art is a profound and conceptual interaction between man and the land. It benefits from existing outside the gallery space by having the opportunity to relate to the world at large: natural materials, the public, social and natural history and the landscape in all it's changeable forms.

By working with natural, found materials, out in the landscape, allowing the work to live and die in it's setting, a true interaction with reality can take place, an interaction with time and place. Time is not measured by the ticking of a man made machine called a clock, it is measured by the interaction of natural materials with the elements, it is measured by all these components coming together, stabilising at one moment, just before they change, disintegrate or dissolve, their passing marking the passing of time. This study of the passing of time gives opportunity for an insight into the ephemeral qualities of human existence: just as the artwork returns to become part of the natural cycle, so one day, along with the passing of the sun through the sky, the changing of the wind and the falling of the rain, will we return to dust. Uncertainty can be embraced as part of this process and ultimately a disorderly order can be found: an accepting of disorder and uncertainty, a dialogue with history and nature, a real life experience. Through the physical act of stabilising the natural materials into and artwork, a human connection to the landscape is formed and thus a human connection to place, this can serve to link the audience and the maker to their own perceptions of the place in question as well as the broader history of the place. Land Art is a study of human existence within the context of the landscape, our planet and the cosmos.

**Appendix**

**Manifesto for Making Land Art**
Working out in the natural landscape brings with it a set of limitations and diminishing options. Any thoughtful conscientious human would aim to interfere as little as possible with the natural balance and order of things out in the wild. There is a responsibility not to leave pollutants out there in the name of art. The best option is to use what is naturally occurring, thus allowing a clear conscience to be carried, as well as avoiding the need for permissions. These diminishing options create an atmosphere of creative thinking, these limits afford the use of: minerals, earth, water and plants, wax and latex.

4981 words

Bibliography


