

Collated

In response to an invitation to contribute to an issue of a Scottish literary journal celebrating the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay, a pair of short texts:

The cream cover of *Jibs*, published at Christmas 1972, shows a detail of a model lugger made by Ian Hamilton Finlay, its triangular sail central within the oblong image. The surface of the water is just visible against the bow of the boat at the bottom of the photograph, while the foremast can be seen through the translucent cloth of the main sail. Preceding the title-page is a closer detail of the same photograph, the jib-sail still central, the mast cropped by the folded edge of the page. The sequence of right-hand pages that follow the title-page are each occupied by a single poem and its title. Preceding the signed and numbered colophon page, the entire boat is shown, with its three sails fully reflected in the water; the extremities of masts, booms and reflections equally spaced from the edges of the paper.

The pale blue cover of *A Pretty Kettle of Fish*, published at Easter 1974, shows a detail of the five painted wooden Toy Fish made by Ian Hamilton Finlay in 1965; the three central fish suspended from their string line, the shadows of the construction visible against the background of the oblong photograph. Preceding the title-page the same image is repeated, enlarged and ranged to the folded edge of the page. The sequence of eight right-hand pages that follow the title-page are each occupied by a single poem and its title. Preceding the signed and numbered colophon page, all five fish are shown, but the image does not extend to include the two vertical props from which the string suspends.

They weren't included in the publication, but this kind of attentive bibliographical description was employed five years later in a commentary to accompany an exhibition of publications by Richard Long at the Centre for Artists Books, Dundee, where it was produced as a single-sided sheet to be given freely to visitors.

NUMERACY, UNIFORMITY AND STRUCTURE THREE PUBLICATIONS OF THE WORK OF RICHARD LONG

1976

The title of this publication is 'Some notes on the work of Richard Long' by Michael Compton and it was published to coincide with and accompany an exhibition in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale during the summer of this year. The format is A4 portrait and consists of twenty pages wire-stitched into a white cover. With the exception of the first two pages which are blank, the text and the photographic and line illustrations are printed black letterpress throughout, while the cover is printed on the front only. The cover text, essay, captions, biography and colophon are set in Times New Roman. Integrated within the essay are thirteen photographic illustrations of works and one line illustration of an appended map, along with two illustrations of exhibition announcement cards (both of which have single photographic images). Of the thirteen works, two are appended maps, eight are of physical interventions made in the landscape and three are sculptures made in galleries. The landscape and gallery photographs have a bordering rule around (with the exception of the first which bleeds on four sides), while the maps and exhibition cards do not. The works are ordered, with a few exceptions, chronologically; the majority dated as being from the previous year. In contrast to the other publications detailed here, the choice and sequence of the images is presumably determined by the essay, which they in effect illustrate.

1977

The title of this publication is 'The North Woods' and it was published on the occasion of an exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery from 25th January to 27th February. The format is A4 landscape and consists of sixteen pages wire-stitched into a white cover. The text and the photographic and line illustrations are printed black offset litho throughout, while the cover is printed on the front only. The cover text, captions and colophon are set in Gill Sans. There are six photographic works and one graphic work occupying right-hand pages, while the title of each work is printed opposite on the left-hand page. The photographic works have a bordering rule and outside of that a consistent white margin to the page edge. Apart from the graphic work and the final photographic work, the titles refer to the particular physical intervention made in each location: a line made of fallen saplings in Canada; a line of stones in the Himalayas; a circle of stones in Iceland and another in Ireland; and a composition of twelve radiating stone lines on The Prairie. The graphic work shows the irregular line of a six hour run from Dartmoor in the south to Exmoor in the north, from the bottom to the top of the page; while the final work shows a view of a wood from a journey in Japan. None of the works state the year in which they were made.

1978

The title of this publication is 'Rivers and Stones' and it was published by Newlyn Orion Galleries for the exhibition 'Peter Joseph, Richard Long, David Tremlett'. The format is A4 landscape and consists of sixteen pages wire-stitched into a white cover. The text and the photographic and line illustrations are printed black offset litho throughout, while the cover is printed on the front only. The cover text, captions and colophon are set in Gill Sans. There are six photographic works occupying right-hand pages, while the title and details of each work are printed opposite on the left-hand page. They each have a bordering rule and outside of that a consistent white margin to the page edge. In addition to the textual details, the first two works are appended by a graphic rendering of the route and the basis for the extent of each particular journey. Apart from the penultimate work which is from 1974, all of the works are from the previous year to the publication, and apart from one work from Ireland and one from Switzerland they are all made in England.

THROUGHOUT THE PUBLICATIONS, THE PHOTOGRAPHS ARE DEFINITIVE RECORDS OF MOMENTS WITHIN A LANDSCAPE,
WHETHER OF A SINGLE GEOMETRIC FORM MADE WITH MATERIAL FROM THE PARTICULAR TERRAIN, OR A COMPOSED VIEW OF A LANDSCAPE FROM WITHIN THE DURATION OF A JOURNEY.
WHERE A SCULPTURAL FORM HAS BEEN INTRODUCED INTO THE LANDSCAPE, THIS WILL OCCUPY A CENTRAL, FOREGROUNDED POSITION WITHIN THE IMAGE.
THE LANGUAGE IS DISTILLED, PRECISE AND ECONOMICAL, REFERRING NUMERICALLY TO PERIODS OF TIME (HOURS, DAYS) AND DISTANCES (MILES),
OR DESCRIPTIVELY TO REPEATED ACTIONS (WALKING, THROWING), FORMS (LINES, CIRCLES), MATERIALS (STONE, DRIFTWOOD), AND LOCATIONS:
THE UNIFORMITY OF PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS THE VARIATIONS AND PARTICULARITY OF EACH COMBINATION OF TEXT AND IMAGE:
THE SINGULARITY OF EACH WORK IS ESTABLISHED BY ITS RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER WORKS.

Commentary by Colin Sackett for the exhibition at the Centre for Artist Books, Dundee. 18th September – 17th November 1999

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