

1. Exploring art outside the Gallery space discuss how artists have developed art practice utilising space and or place. Focus on more than one example of practitioners and or thinkers.

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This essay will discuss the importance and development of artistic work outside of a traditional white cubed space, as seen in most galleries, and further demonstrate the importance of similar presentations of work, such as site specific, installation, land, environmental and public art. It is my belief that spaces dedicated to art such as galleries and museums are a place where ideas and interpretations can be freely expressed, where deep thought between artists and art lovers alike can discuss important matters and theoretical ideas i.e. emotional issues, environmental disasters and possible solutions, political matters and concerns etc.

However, the act of going to a gallery space and viewing, enjoying, and discussing art has become redundant among the public. "In 2018 to 2019, 50.2% of people aged 16 and over had visited a museum or gallery at least once in the past year" (Department for Digital, 2019). Recent events such as the coronavirus has prompted galleries to become more digital and has further alienated the physicality of gallery spaces with the notion that there is simply no point in taking the time to view and dissect art when you could simply view it from the comfort of your living room. As art becomes more and more distant from aesthetics, pictures and paintings that are pleasing to look at, and become more meaningful in terms of subtext and context, people are quick to dismiss art simply because they may lack the visual appeal. Art has now evolved beyond the need for a white wall and is now slowly being integrated

into our everyday lives, be that while walking to work and seeing a sculpture or looking at your phone and seeing a video with a message. Art that targets the less favourable events and decisions in life are not just valid but are important for us to evolve further, which is why the need for installation art that forces these important issues into the forefront of humankind is necessary, whether aesthetically pleasing or not.

This essay will be focusing on works by Olafur Eliasson and Richard Long as both have incredibly strong interactions, relationships and demonstrations of ideas when working with landscapes and environment.

Olafur Eliasson is an Icelandic-Danish artist, known for his works using sculpture and large-scale installation, often employing elemental materials i.e. Light, water and air temperature, in order to enhance the perception of the viewer. (Eliasson, 1995)



Figure 1

During 1998 and 2001, Eliasson and his assistants used a non-toxic water-soluble dye, called uranine, to turn the water of 6 different rivers green (*Figure 1*). Uranine is often used for tracer experiments due to its colour and vividness, as shown in *Figure 1*, which worked perfectly for Eliasson's plan to get people to start taking notice of the small things in their lives.

"He noted that many individuals are completely disconnected from their environments, particularly urban spaces, which users perceive almost as a blank, external image of no personal consequence" (Paul, 2017)

Eliasson's vision to bring back a vibrance to something that we may walk past everyday was demonstrated in his hometown of Stockholm, where a river runs incredibly picturesque to the point that Eliasson describes it as 'immutable and idyllic' (Paul, 2017). The river seems to have been viewed as an aesthetically pleasing decoration for the town and not viewed as a "flowing, dynamic natural force" (Paul, 2017). Eliasson's goal was to make the river 'present' again. Using the same method of Uranine in the water, the river turned green, and the town took notice. Upon encountering the newly green river Eliasson explained it as *"encountering something familiar but wholly changed"* (Paul, 2017). In each of the locations Eliasson's unannounced tampering of the water colour invoked a multitude of different responses across all cultures, but ultimately, he had one goal in mind, have people take notice.

When art is placed, intertwined with the public, it does not become about just the art itself. The response, the interaction, and the reaction of those who encounter it, they become themselves part of the exhibit and are forced to view it. People will

remember when the rivers turned green, they may not know how, who or why, but they will know that it did in fact happen.

"The point was not even the Green River; the point was how it looked before and after. Understanding of past and future has been transformed, and the vehicle for this re-thinking is green." (Paul, 2017)



Figure 2

Similarly, in his piece 'Ice watch' audience participation was not only expected but encouraged (Figure 2). Twenty-Four ice blocks, weighing between 1.5 and 6 tonnes, were placed in a clock like circle in Bankside outside Tate Modern in London.

Eliasson almost demands, asking us "Put your hand on the ice, listen to it, smell it, look at it" (Eliasson, 2018) to fully grasp the full impact that we're having on the planet due to climate change.

"Ice Watch raises awareness of climate change and explores how feelings of distance and disconnection, of proximity and relevance, hold us back or make us engage" (Eliasson, 2018)

Eliasson's effort towards climate change and raising awareness demonstrates a level of commitment that many people lack simply because of their disconnect to the subject matter. The effort Eliasson went to, using divers and dockworkers to collect the ice that had fallen from the Nuup Kangerlua fjord outside Nuuk, Greenland, keeping them cold and frozen from Nuuk to Aalborg, Denmark, then to Immingham, UK, where it was then transported in trucks to London, only to be left in the open to melt and disappear. This ephemeral piece of work demonstrates quite clearly the impact we have of the earth and promoting onlookers to interacting with them not only removes the disconnection from what is happening out of our own personal view but strengthens our understanding of the urgency and importance while instantaneously reminding us of the beauty in the world that we need to preserve.



Figure 3

Richard Long's sculptural and environmental photographic work captures the nature and the importance of art outside a gallery space. (Long, 1968)'s website

demonstrates many incredible visuals of his work inside and out of a white cubed exhibition (*Figure 3 and 4*).

(Tate, 1991) describes Richard Long as an English sculptor and best known for his work using the British landscapes. Long's work has emphasised and widened the idea of sculpture to encompass performance and conceptual art. Working with earth, rock, mud, stone and other natural materials. When displayed, the materials are physically in the spaces or often the use of documentation photography is used for more performance-based experiences.

When discussing Long's work in this essay it often feels like a juxtaposition. The experiences that Long is subjected to in his commute with nature, which is what I am to focus on, is dependant on environmental surroundings and his engagement with those surroundings. However, his photographs and sculptures that capture fragments of those moments are often displayed inside traditional gallery walls and therefore, technically are not defined as site specific art or public/outside art. The nature of Long's work and his dedication to using natural materials that he often finds in his landscapes demonstrates a mentality and message that is based outside of a gallery space, further emphasised by his continuation of bringing outside materials inside breaking what we know as a traditional white cubed space, and that the pictures capturing his art is of a nature setting and not in a gallery. Stating about his work to the Tate,

"The outdoor and indoor works are complementary, although I would have to say that nature, the landscape, the walking, is at the heart of my work and informs the indoor works." (Long, 1990)



Figure 4

Long's work is based in nature due to his upbringing in the countryside. Figure 4 depicts River Avon in the southwest of England, close to where Long was born and raised. The river has often been speculated as the beginning of Long's communion with nature. His work often maps his walks by photographing the terrain he has covered, often showing his tracks or pathways that have been made from continuous use.

Long's use of creating almost geometrically aesthetic images using the natural world in his photographs is incredible. The river flows from left to right and the bridge centred in the picture while the asymmetrical tracks, that Long has walked over for several days, that cross the bridge and curve and wind making a visually appealing scene. Long does not picture himself in the landscapes he photographs but his presence is still there from his previous markings made by walking.

One of Long's first uses of using himself as the instrument of mark making in nature is in the piece *A line made by walking, England 1967*, where a line has been created in a meadow simply from Long's continuous walking back and forth. Stated by Richard Long on the Tate website (Tate, 1967) "my intention was to make a new art which was also a new way of walking: walking as art".

Another artist I had decided to research was Joseph Beuys. (Tate, 1921-1986)'s website recognises Beuys as a German artist, teacher and performance artist that reflected on "concepts of humanism, social philosophy, and anthroposophy".

Similarly, to Eliasson, Beuys' focus of work has often been environmentally focused. Beuys believed that art, especially social sculpture, had the ability to change and reshape society and in some cases politics.

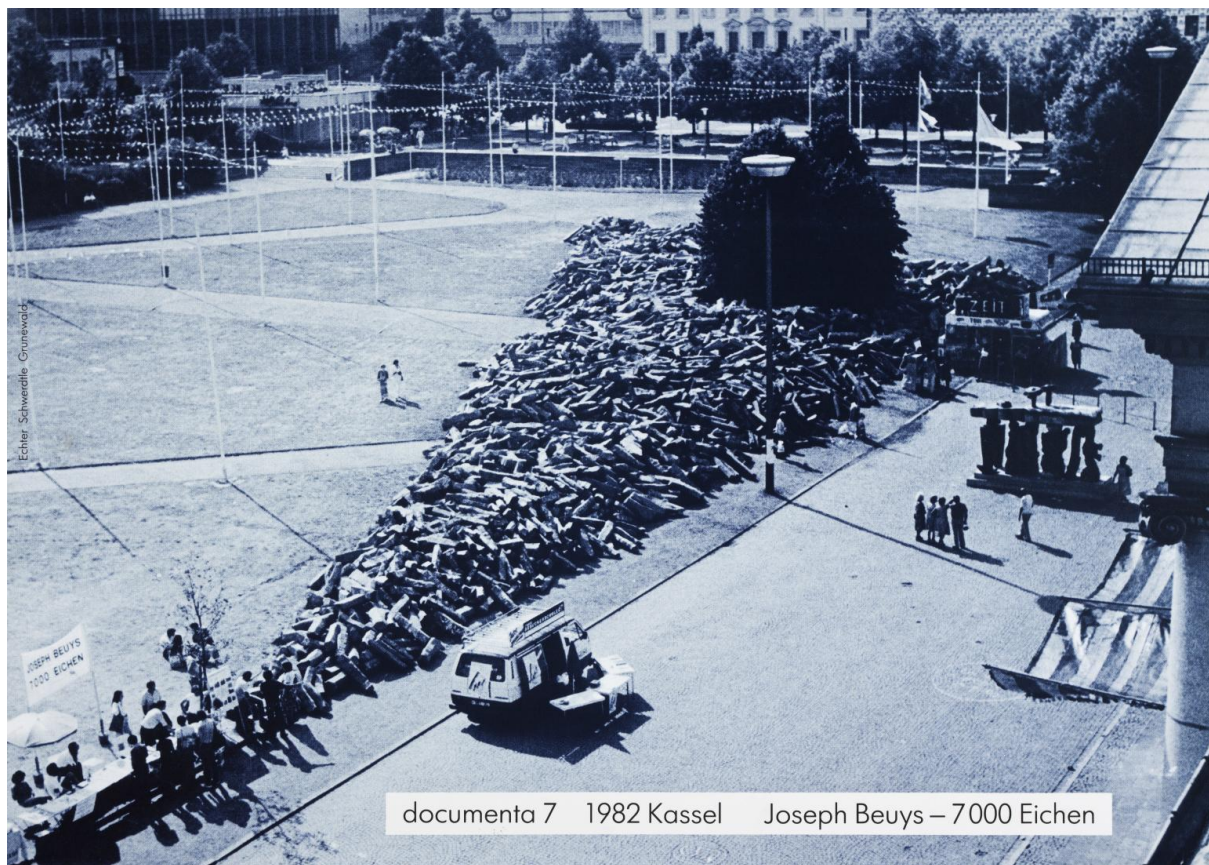


Figure 6

In 1982, Beuys set a goal to plant 7000 trees in the city of Kassel in Germany (*Pictured in Figure 6*). Each tree would be planted with a Basalt stone, planted next to said tree. The large-scale impact of this art piece would need a large amount of time and a large number of supporters, especially due to those in opposition for this integration of nature within the city were political parties, as their goal were to make the city more urbanised while Beuys' was to cultivate nature within it to recover land due to the recent war. It seems the idea was to plant these stones in order to encourage the public, negatively or positively. Over recent years, negative press has demonstrated to travel much faster than positive, especially demonstrated in (*Left- and Right-Leaning News Organizations' Negative Tweets are More Likely to be Shared*, 2020) where it shows that 'negative news' does travel much faster and have a larger effect. Beuys social and political understanding was very advanced, and I believe the controversial nature of the subject when first brought up was an important aspect in getting people to take notice. People over time become subject to routine, when that routine is disrupted, it causes panic and discomfort which paired with a large basalt stone which many described as 'ugly', it causes talk which in turn cases contemplation and deeper thought. In an Interview (Beuys, 1983) Beuys states "...I not only want to stimulate people, I want to provoke them."

(Montagnino, 2018)'s article demonstrates a further goal, similar again to Eliasson's Ice Watch, to involve the public but in this case, have them contribute. Financed by crowdfunding, sponsorships and donations, Beuys' attempts to not just engage the public but corporations as well in order to remove the passive attitude towards issues of great importance to trigger a global environmental change. Beuys' efforts have not gone unrecognised as other countries have decided to improve and adapted their own methods of integrating nature into their cityscapes, showing that this method of

putting the art in front of people and forcing them to look works in creating important change.

In conclusion, as demonstrated by Eliasson, Long and Beuys, art that often inhabits an outside area whether in an urban environment or the countryside has a rooted intention of connection with the natural world. Since the industrial age we have moved further and further away from what would be described as a 'natural world'.

Landscapes became areas for factories and housing. Work was prioritised over pleasure and leisure and the need for beautiful scenery became less wanted.

Present day, we admire the landscapes and seek out places near to untouched by civilisation that give a sense of peace. We find ourselves looking for nature and this is what all three artists, that I have spoken about in this essay, are trying to encourage. It is not only necessary for humanity to be out and enjoy nature, but it is necessary to dismiss the passive observation that people often have when walking down the street, to remind these people that we need nature to survive.

While the artists that have been discussed have a root in nature the biggest similarity between these three and other land, public, site-specific artists is that it is there to be seen and to impact. Art that is conducted outside the gallery space disrupts the routine of everyday life. Life that is often unappealing and tuned out, like walking from point A to point B. To challenge, to inspire, to irritate those who have become content in the mundane of routine and snap them back into reality so that we don't waste any second on this planet.

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