

Art Outside the Gallery

Name: Darren Palmer

Student ID: 1815975

Course: Fine Art Studio Site and Context

Word Limit: 2500 +/- 10%

Word Count: 2446 (excluding title page, table of contents, list of illustrations, reference list, bibliography)

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations.....	3
Introduction.....	5
Richard Long’s A Line Made by Walking.....	6
Richard Long’s Circles, Lines and Textworks.....	10
J.M.W. Turner: South Wales and the Sublime Landscape Tradition.....	14
Paul Kenton and the City as Studio.....	18
Paul Kenton’s En Plein Air Studies.....	20
Paul Kenton’s Aluminium Cityscapes and Urban Atmospheres.....	22
Conclusion.....	24
Reference List.....	25
Bibliography.....	27

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Tate (n.d.) Richard Long, A Line Made by Walking (1967).

Figure 2. National Galleries of Scotland (n.d.) Contextual image of A Line Made by Walking.

Figure 3. DACS (2024) Richard Long Stone Circle.

Figure 4. Turner, J.M.W. (c.1795–1830) Swansea Bay sketch.

Figure 5. Paul Kenton (n.d.) Manhattan En Plein Air Studies.

Figure 6. Paul Kenton (2021) Center of the Universe (Times Square).

Figure 7. Art in Context (2024) Paul Kenton's night after night.

Introduction

When artwork leaves the gallery space, it changes in important ways. The surroundings affect how the work is made, how long it lasts, and how people experience it. Weather, movement, and location become active influences. This is very different to the controlled environment inside a gallery, where lighting, cleanliness and space are arranged for you.

In this essay I explore how three artists—Richard Long, J.M.W. Turner, and Paul Kenton—have each engaged with space beyond the gallery. Their work shows different versions of place-based practice: the land becoming a tool for making, the landscape used to express atmosphere, and the modern city used as an active studio.

The works discussed demonstrate how art changes when location becomes part of the process rather than simply a subject being represented. Long's work focuses on walking as a way of marking space, Turner documents environmental and emotional conditions directly from life, and Kenton captures live urban environments with immediacy and light.

The aim of this essay is not to compare them by ranking one above another, but to show how each artist contributes a distinct way of using real environments in the formation of a work.

Richard Long's A Line Made by Walking



Richard Long's *A Line Made by Walking* (1967) is often regarded as a turning point in British land-based practice. Long repeatedly walked across a field in Wiltshire until a straight path formed through flattened grass. He photographed the result, and this photograph became the artwork itself (Tate, n.d.).

The piece is simple, yet operates powerfully. It is sculpture without material construction, drawing without tools, and performance without an audience standing there as it happens. What remains is a physical trace of time spent in the landscape. The walking action becomes the method of making.

The work relies on the fact that it will not last. Rain, new growth, animals or other walkers will eventually erase the line. But that makes the artwork deeply connected to its environment. It shows that art outside the gallery has no guarantee of permanence: it belongs to living conditions and weather.

The photograph matters too. It becomes the evidence of the event and a record of the artwork after it disappears. Rather than pretending to be the field itself, it acknowledges that the original site was temporary. This is an honest approach to working outdoors—accepting that what is made cannot be fully preserved.

Long is often quoted as saying his work “comes directly from the land,” and in this early piece, that idea is literal. Nothing has been added; the mark is caused purely through travel. For me, this reflects something familiar about moving across fields and coastal paths around South Wales—footprints, animal trails, and worn tracks are all drawings made through movement rather than materials.

Richard Long's Circles, Lines and Textworks



Many of Long's later works use repeated forms: lines, circles and written accounts of journeys. The simplicity of these formats means that location and time carry most of the meaning. A circular arrangement of stones set out on a hillside, for example, is never identical to one installed in a gallery space, even if visually similar.

Outdoors, the circle has weather, wind direction, horizon lines, shadows, and ground textures influencing it. Indoors, it becomes a sample or memory of its outdoor logic.

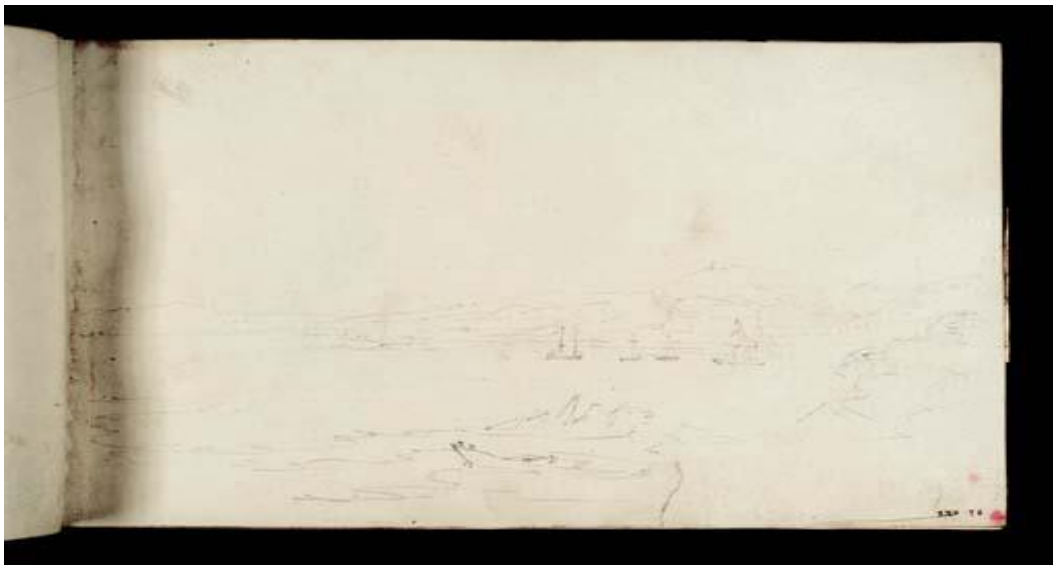
Miwon Kwon (2002) writes that artworks can remain connected to their original environment even when moved, because they carry the logic of place into other contexts.

Long's textworks are often overlooked, but they reveal how linked his process is to movement. A typical example lists distances, river crossings, or weather conditions.

These become short records of journeys that encourage the viewer to imagine the environment rather than simply look at an object.

These pieces show that art does not need physical mass or decoration to express something significant. A line made through stones or a short written account can speak about labour, time, endurance and presence. This approach relates directly to everyday experiences—especially here in Wales where weather conditions change quickly and where walking routes along beaches or hills often create natural lines simply through repeated use.

J.M.W. Turner: South Wales and the Sublime Landscape Tradition



Long may have introduced minimal, process-driven landscape practice, but Turner established a much earlier route into environmental engagement. Turner travelled repeatedly through South Wales between 1792 and 1799, sketching Swansea Bay, Mumbles, Neath, and surrounding valleys. Many of these locations are still widely recognised today (Tate Archive).

Turner was drawn to the coastline partly because of its wide atmospheric range. Swansea Bay can look glass-smooth at low wind, but within minutes carries heavy cloud and sudden colour shifts across the surface. Turner responded to those exact changes. His notebooks show quick watercolour washes and graphite marks that observe light patterns rather than static scenery.

Turner's approach is grounded in looking, waiting and responding. Although he later translated these sketches into studio paintings, the origin remained outdoors.

He saw landscapes as emotional spaces—not just surfaces. Swansea Bay becomes not just a location, but a mood. This aligns with the Romantic tradition, where nature is not



neutral; it is expressive.

Turner's inclusion here is important. He provides a classical foundation for how artists worked directly in the environment before conceptual land art or contemporary urban painting existed. He acknowledged that nature has an active voice—something Long later emphasised through minimal intervention rather than depiction.

For someone living and working in South Wales, it is significant to recognise that this coast has already shaped a major historical artist, and continues to influence contemporary practice.

Paul Kenton and the City as Studio

Paul Kenton works almost in the opposite direction to Turner. Instead of open land and skies, he operates in the density of modern cities. His plein-air studies, often made quickly on location, form the foundation for final works completed on aluminium panels (Kenton, n.d.; Art in Context, 2024).

Cities are never still. Light changes constantly due to moving vehicles, signage, and reflections. Kenton's response to that movement is visible in his brush marks—streaked lights, blurred edges and layered tonal shifts. These effects come from working live, not imagined afterwards.

Materials play a role too. Kenton commonly paints on aluminium rather than canvas. Aluminium reflects colours through surface sheen and picks up ambient tones. When varnished or sealed, his paintings visually resemble wet road surfaces, glass and metallic infrastructure.

This means the physical support relates directly to the subject matter. Turner did this through atmospheric oil and watercolour layering. Long did it through physical interaction with land. Kenton does it through reflective industrial material.

Paul Kenton's En Plein Air Studies



The Manhattan Studies show clearly how location affects decision-making. Kenton captures the glow of shop fronts or headlights in real time, rather than stylising them later.

These works are arguably closest to Long's in spirit. Where Long walks to mark space, Kenton paints to capture motion in front of him, producing an immediate record.

Studies often reveal the most honest responses—fast marks, changes in direction, and risk-taking. They also show that outdoor space does not provide controlled conditions; the environment dictates pace, palette and composition.

Paul Kenton's Aluminium Cityscapes and Urban Atmospheres





The finished works often exaggerate what began outside. On aluminium, reflections feel amplified. When paint catches light from the surface, it recreates the layered brightness of urban space—neon signs, passing traffic, street-level glow.

Kwon (2002) writes that artworks can move from place to place yet still contain sites within them. Kenton's paintings do this. A work made from field drawings on Oxford Street continues to carry that location into galleries or private spaces.

Kenton provides a compelling contemporary example of how place is not just represented—it becomes part of what the work physically is.

Conclusion

Working outside the gallery invites conditions that cannot be fully controlled: time, temperature, movement, and decay. This is visible across the three artists discussed.

Long's works interact physically with the land and often disappear. Turner captured changing weather and atmosphere directly from Welsh coastlines, shaping paintings known internationally. Kenton responds to shifting light from busy streets and uses reflective surfaces to hold that experience.

Across all three examples, place is not a setting—it is an influence.

Art made outdoors responds to what it encounters. It accepts unpredictability, and because of that, often holds a deeper connection to lived experience.

Reference List

Art in Context (2024) Paul Kenton—Where Light Meets Landscape. Available at: <https://artincontext.org/paul-kenton/> (Accessed: 27 October 2025).

DACS (2024) 'Richard Long describes A Line Made by Walking'. Available at: <https://www.dacs.org.uk> (Accessed: 27 October 2025).

de Certeau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kenton, P. (n.d.) *Manhattan En Plein Air Studies*. Available at: <https://www.paulkenton.com> (Accessed: 27 October 2025).

Kenton, P. (2021) *Center of the Universe*. Available at: <https://www.paulkenton.com> (Accessed: 27 October 2025).

Kwon, M. (2002) *One Place After Another*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London: SAGE.

Tate (n.d.) *A Line Made by Walking*. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk> (Accessed: 27 October 2025).

Tate Archive (1792–1851) Turner sketchbooks relating to South Wales. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/archive> (Accessed: 27 October 2025).

Bibliography

Augé, M. (1995) *Non-Places*. London: Verso.

Ingold, T. (2007) *Lines*. London: Routledge.

Lippard, L. (1997) *The Lure of the Local*. New York: The New Press.

Macfarlane, R. (2009) 'Walk the Line', *The Guardian*, 22 May.

Tuan, Y-F. (1977) *Space and Place*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.