WORDS FROM WALKS

HAMISH FULTON

WORDS FROM WALKS

‘Never write anything,
you’ll only regret it’.
(Don Whillans, English mountaineer 1933-1985.)

I understand that the artist may not be the best person
to provide an objective, art historical overview
of their own life’s work.
However, in the absence of any in-depth writing,
and in an attempt to prevent misconceptions
continuing without comment (the complicity of silence)
I present here, in leaflet form, for the record,
a few points
regarding my general outlook.

I exhibit words as a walking artist, not a conceptual artist.
I am not an author. I’m ‘uneducated’.
Learning without being taught.
Words are independent
of any one material, size or colour.

The sovereignty of languages. The histories of nations.
In the English language,
justice is a seven letter word.

THE NEWOLD WAY

Walking is ancient and contemporary.

I describe myself as 'a walking artist'.
Walking art is the bringing together
of two entirely separate activities.
Walking and art.
I transform ideas
into physical experiences.
My self-imposed rule is:
If I do not walk I cannot make any art.

THE ENJOYMENT OF WALKING
THE PLEASURES OF CREATIVITY

I recognise the fact that not everyone
is physically able to walk.

I am not a fast walker, but I can keep going all day.

I am an artist who walks, not a walker who makes art.
Not every artist enjoys walking
and not every walker is tolerant of contemporary art.

An 'artwork' may be purchased,
but my walks
cannot be sold or stolen.
A Walked Line Unlike A Drawn Line Can Never Be Erased.
Duration. Ten toes. Counting by hand.
Mark time… *not the land*.
Measure, is a se7en letter word.
Reading from left to right, but walking in every direction.
Up hill
down hill.
From and to THE TENT.
Tent doors opening to the east.

Brain Heart Lungs. Breathing. Walking Rhythms.
Different walks different rules.
My walks range from...
7 barefoot paces walking on grass towards the rising full moon,
to...
multi-week solo camping treks (on the Earth under my feet)
to...
coast to coast walks (sea to summit to sea) and...
road walks (walking with a light pack) to...
'high altitude trekking' (guided mountain ascents),
and,
1-2 hour unique shared urban walks
(building experiences, not objects)
involving up to several hundred participants.
(Participation corroboration).
Repetitions of the same walk ideas
in different locations with different people.
The Walking Participants Are The Art Observers.

Images of **the land.**
I walk on **the land, not** in **the 'landscape'.**
I do not take **walks, I** make **walks.**
'Walk texts' are about **past events.**
Walking 'in the moment',
is **walking now.**

AN OBJECT CANNOT COMPETE WITH AN EXPERIENCE.
A completed walk is like an invisible object.

Out of respect for the abilities and standards
of world-class mountaineers, The Marathon Monks,
and unrecorded foot travellers from the past and present,
I describe my few artwalks as short and easy.
I compete, only with myself.

Walking Is The Constant The Art Medium Is The Variable.
Every piece of art I materialise contains a 'walk text'.

I make art exclusively
from **walks that I have personally experienced.**
WORDS FROM WALKS.

When a walk has been completed, the text can be written.
('Earning the right' to record the event.)
The basic facts of the walk cannot be altered,
but as time passes and the quantity of walks increases,
the walks may be re-evaluated, re-contextualised,
and the 'walk texts'...
recycled.

In choosing a text 'title' with the same number of letters
as the days walked,
the graphic elements are 'locked' together.
Numbers. (Old Norse, meaning: a report, narration).

My walk texts are like a pack of playing cards
which I can rearrange into a variety of categories.

'When the time is right'.
I took a gamble, and placed my bet on just the one horse, walking.
1973, my year of the unknown **road ahead.**

In a 21st century internet world overflowing with words
I do not provide the relief of wordless abstract art.
Conversely, I am not an urban 'primitive'.
Internet research → ← surveillance capitalism,
all in contrast to our private intuitions.

Make a walk, write a text, read it to an audience.
By word of mouth. The spoken word. Oral history.
Memory is selective.
The retelling of stories. A good story well told.
Verbal interpretations for the meaning of visual symbols.
Picture writing. Sign language.

The Winter Count (from snow to snow.)
Quipu, knotted string records.
Notched moon counting sticks.
Calculi, pebbles used as counters.
The length of a journey, remembered by the number of sleeps.
Beyond the word. There are no words in nature.
Written-in-the-earth, fresh tracks of a grizzly bear.
A walk may exist purely as a walk,
but my 'artwork'
cannot be created without the walk**.**
IT'S WHAT IT'S ABOUT,
NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
The surrounding 'imagery', the graphic design of my artwork,
is what I call the 'container' for the 'walk text'.
I date my artwork, by the date of the walk.
EVERY WALK IS UNIQUE.
Walks are facts for the walker and 'fiction' for everyone else.
An Artwork Cannot Re-present The Experience Of A Walk.

Walking Art.
Neither of these two words
specify an art medium,
thereby suggesting openness and potential
for anyone.

The separation of experience and object.

The history of walking...
'**from** walking **to**... sitting and riding',
'**from** necessity **to**... choice'.
'**On** the path, to go **off** the path'.
A tree at its birthplace, a boulder at its resting place.
Distance and time.
Direction
of the rising sun.
Summer solstice.
Winter solstice. Darkness. Silence. The call of an owl.
Sound of the wind through pine needles.

Walking against the traffic.
Not-by-car. The width of a footprint.
Side stepping. Walking in the age of vehicle dependency.
'Park your car, ride a bike. Stash your bike, take a hike.'
The consistency of walking.
Childhood, old age. Ancient and contemporary.

Uncontacted Peoples. Walking without a smartphone. Uncontactable.
(There are no photographs of Crazy Horse).
Walking without talking.
Springtime listening. Arrival of the first cuckoo where you live.
The Southern Hemisphere. The South Face.
Walking backwards in mud. Walking In any direction.

Walking
is the interconnecting experience
for a wide spectrum of possibilities, disciplines and research...
slow travel, SLOWALK, **walkability,**
restorative walking disentangling the mind,
walking and talking, **mental health,** HEALING **is a 7 letter word,**
creative thinking, into the trees (shinrin-yoku),
the experience of purposeless walking,
freedom of movement, freedom of expression, free speech,
non-violent protest marches, refugees on foot...
the electronic identification of walking styles, (facial-ID) AI,
escapes across the Nangpa La, Journalists Without Borders,
the right of assembly, walk the talk, not rule-by-law,
walkabout, the right to roam, public pathways, footpaths,
pedestrian road crossings, indoor walking,
egoless pilgrimage, Kailash is a 7 letter name.
The Tibetan Kora (both outdoors and indoors),
seated mechanistic society's missing rituals,
meditation, 'performance', 'movement', visual art...
'the wandering haiku poets of old',
and contemporary mountaineering expeditions:
'the walk-in',
the climb... 'ROUTE AND STYLE'... **descend and,** 'WALKOUT'**.**

Walking Between Walks.

Weaving the walks,
layer on top of layer, 'woven time'.
Connecting the invisible footsteps of my previous walks,
crossing and re-joining.
The starting place: dawn of the day.
The ending place: euphoric exhaustion.
Energy from deep sleep.
(Physical energy provided by a strong idea.)
7 7
Walking Through.
Oxygenating the brain,
lost memories rising to the surface like tea leaves,
opening the mind, a change of mind,
transforming perceptions, relaxed but alert.
Walking is magic. Walking is 'good medicine'.
Walk-In-Nature.
Organic is a 7 letter word.
Walking In Relation To Everything.

TAKING A STEP BACK

MY ART IS A COMMENT ON THE WAY WE LIVE TODAY. INDOORS.
Outside.
Seeing The Bird That Sings.
Antidote: fresh air for children
as they stride out across the hill tops.

A DECISION TO CHOOSE ONLY WALKING.

Although I made my first 'artwalk' with other students
during 2 February 1967,
step
by
step
it took me a further six years of trial and error
via several short walks,
to arrive at a total commitment to walking.

In October 1973 at the age of 28,
after completing one coast to coast walk
of just over a thousand miles,
on Scotland, Wales and England,
I made the single most important decision
of my creative life:
To Make Art Resulting Only
From The Experience Of Individual Walks.
7 the universal readymade.
The 7 days of the week, the seventh wave,
The 7 principles of 'Leave No Trace'.
Rainbow. No-thing is a 7 letter word.
The seven colours of a rainbow
transformed into a heap of grey dust.
Mandala, is a seven letter word.
Bardo. Transition, rebirth after 49 days.
The Seven Stars. 'The moon lives for 28 days'.
Index finger of the right hand.
'Seven steps, rest. Seven steps, rest.
I knew that should I try 12 or 13 steps
I would lose consciousness'.
(Jerzy Kukuczka. My Vertical World. 1992.)
In the English language,
WALKING IS A SEVEN LETTER WORD. **(Bipedal)**
The seven names of women
who ascended to the 8848 metre summit of Everest
***Phantog* Schmatz Allison Pittman Boskoff**
Araceli Segarra.
Habeler • Messner • Mandela • Thoreau • Jokhang •
Leonard Peltier •
Arapaho • Arranda • Dongria • Quechua • Inupiat • Huichol •
***Dzambha* •**
(Google: Naglha Dzambha, a sacred mountain in Tibet).
HABITAT.
Oceti Sacowin, The Seven Campfires. 'For the Seventh Generation'.
The United Nations Declaration
On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples. (2007)

In 2016 I voted to remain in the EU.
In 2019,
it is the Indigenous Peoples of the world who may guide us
to a more reverential relationship with what they call,
Mother Earth.
Changes, is a 7 letter word.

'We need to remember that the work of our time
is bigger than climate change'.
(Rebecca Tarbotton.
Quoted by Naomi Klein. This Changes Everything. 2014.)

---

idlenomore.ca

---

www.honorearth.org

'...to transform human laws to match natural laws,
not vice versa'.
(Winona LaDuke. All Our Relations. 1999.)

'...the democracy of all life, the little beings and the big beings
with no hierarchy
because you have no idea
ecologically how things fit into the web of life'.
(Vandana Shiva. Restoring The Balance. 1997.)

'Man is part of nature and his war against nature
is inevitably a war against himself'.
(Rachel Carson. Silent Spring. 1962.)

'We have somehow contrived to discount land
as a significant subject for public debate'.
(Mark Cocker. Our Place.
Can We Save Britain's Wildlife Before It Is Too Late? 2018.)

1969 boot prints on the moon.
Our lack of respect
for the diversity of life forms
on
This Planet
is the root cause of the ecological crisis.
BIGDATA **or, eye** WITNESS**? Lithium is a 7 letter word.**
As we gaze down
into our smartphones (nomophobia)
we simultaneously turn our backs on all non-human existence.
N.D.D. Nature Deficit Disorder.
THE ECONOMY IS IN CONFLICT WITH THE ENVIRONMENT.
Either 'game' or 'vermin'...
SHARKS WOLVES **BEARS** SNAKES
(slugs, spiders, rats, leeches, mosquitoes, termites, flees...)
The life-force even in the smallest of insects.
See: Chatral Rinpoche (1913-2015). Fish release ceremonies.
Migration of the Arctic Tern. The pollination of plants...
Migration of the Monarch butterfly.

Mountains that look like **clouds,**
clouds that look like **mountains.**

Moving and seen to be moving,
moving and seen not to be moving.

The altitudes of high mountains... gravity.
Let the rivers run free and 'wild'.
Flowing energy.
Animate and inanimate 'beings', 'the other peoples'.
The Uncarved Block.
A glacial boulder transported by ice and shaped by erosion.
The-rocks-are-alive-in-their-homeland.
Scale and Quantity • Weight and Value • Marble and Diamonds •

A MOUNTAIN IS NOT MADE OF STONE IT IS STONE

THE RIGHTS OF NATURE

'We abuse land
because we see it as a commodity belonging to us'.
(Aldo Leopold. A Sand County Almanac. 1949.)

GENESIS - is a 7 letter word.
History is not neutral.
A case of mistaken identity.
There is more than one story to be told.
From the 70's to the present time,
some art historians have categorised me as a Land Artist.
From my side,
in 2019, as a symbolic gesture of respect for nature,
I wish no association with a dominant order of art
that intentionally re-models
the naturally evolved form of the land,
or introduces natural-objects into the international art market.
LAND ART CONTRADICTS WALKING ART.
My disagreement
is with the limited focus of art historians...
not the diversity, freedom and creativity of artists...

Cho Oyu **Denali** **Chomolungma**

My rule for high altitude mountain art is to mention only
those few mountains that I have ascended (with assistance.)

'My truths are not universal,
which is one reason they are so difficult to express.
My ice axe may be your paintbrush.
One man's Slovak Direct is another's West Buttress'.
(Steve House. Beyond The Mountain. 2009.)

An Object Cannot Compete With An Experience.
Movement in contrast to stillness.

Culture is created – nature exists.
All my art begins with the walking experience,
not nature as material for human use,
not ancient monuments and ruins,
not the history of agriculture and 'landscape' gardening...
not the history of 'landscape' painting...
Conversely, some Indigenous Peoples,
sense that particular natural locations are 'sacred'.

(I do not consider myself to be a world traveler
in search of diverse 'scenery'.
Scenery coming from the Greek word meaning, stage.)
'...the idea of history is itself a western invention whose central theme is a rejection of habitat. It formulates experience of nature and tends to reduce place to...
only a stage upon which the human drama is enacted'.
(Paul Shepard. Nature and Madness 1982.)

Sometime in the mid-seventies, I defensively coined the term
'walking artist'.
But the true beginning for my intuitions,
was when, as 13 year old, I read the life story of Wooden Leg,
(born c 1858)
a Northern Cheyenne from the Black Hills,
in what was later to become South Dakota.
Nakota, Lakota, Dakota.
In the summer of 1969,
with Nancy Wilson I visited those places that I had read about,
among others,
Pine Ridge Reservation
The Greasey Grass, The Black Hills and Wounded Knee.
In 2005, I had the privilege of meeting Dennis Banks,
an Ojibwa
and co-founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM)
who led the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973.
'The Black Hills Are Not For Sale'.
(Public Sculpture At Mount Rushmore and Thunderhead Mountain.)

The worlds oldest ongoing art is
re-painted
Indigenous Australian cave art.

Flyweight = the weight of a fly.
My decisive restraint in the use of art materials,
is merely a symbolic gesture.
Eco-nomics.
Art materials: every 'thing' has to be made of something,
and everything comes originally, as 'free goods' from nature.

Didactic-sanctimonious-hypocrisy.
As an international artist,
I identify the fact that I generate a carbon footprint.
Rising sea levels, flooding, drought and forest fires.
I have read, that we have lived as hunter-gatherers
for 90% of human existence.
The light of day and the darkness of night.
'Moon - the night sun'.

Contributing to the life
of a footpath.
Hooves, paws, claws, feet, shoes, boots, rain, melting snow.

Mountain skyline,
a gap in the distant horizon.
Over the pass, between the hills, down beside a river,
the flow of air.
FIRE and WATER.
A blackened shelter rock.
Out on the plateau, a few scattered nomad tents.
Regrowth green. The seasonal rounds.

Time is static and we pass through it.

"Space generates time".

(Vine Deloria Jr. God Is Red. 1973.)

Spring Summer Autumn Winter Spring.
East South West North East. The Four Winds.

The Numbers: Four And Seven. DUST 4 SHADOWS 7.
Lowlands and mountains. Odd and even. Yin and Yang.
7 **14** 21 **28. The number of days to be walked**
may be set in advance,
but not always.
Twenty one walks, walking from one to twenty one days.
(Various locations 1971-1989.)
49 seven day walks. (Various locations 1978-2019.)

Unpredictable timing of the first seven steps and the last seven steps.
All my walks are related, from the shortest to the longest,
from the first to the most recent.
Then and there, here and now.
My walks collectively constitute 'a journey'.
I am the storehouse of all my walks.
The satisfaction
from earlier walks
contributing on reflection,
to the appreciation
of present day walks.

Walks
are like clouds,
they come and go.
In the memory
nowhere to be seen.

Walking into the distance
beyond imagination.

When I say that 'the walk is the art',
I simply mean
that 'the walk',
is my contribution to contemporary art.

Above: Walk texts for mailing cards and wall paintings.

Words From Walks
2019 © Hamish Fulton (Born 1946)
Outsider Survivor Lefthander

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Revised Version VII.