



Shades of Green

Changes in the Paradigm of Environmental Art
Since the 1960s

Jade Wildy



Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the coursework requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Studies in Art History) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Adelaide

in

April 2011

Abstract

Over the last 100 years, since the dawning of the modernist era in the 19th century, there have been major developments in the fields of art practice and theory, altering the course of art history. Changes that occurred in the late 1960s saw the emergence of a conceptual era of art, in which the emphasis and value within art altered; an art object's value was no longer inherent within that object. Rather value was applied through cultural context and what the artworks means. This is particularly evident in the growing environmental art movement.

Environmental art is an expansive movement that involves an artistic process or artwork where the artist actively engages with the environment. It is a widely diverse discipline encompassing small personal works, including earth/body art and performance, to permanent, large-scale works.

Through specific themed chapters, this thesis aims to establish some of the ways the paradigm of environmental art has evolved since its beginnings in the 1960s. This will be achieved through investigations of three dominant themes and forms of interaction, within environmental art. This thesis focuses on the areas of environmental art that clearly illustrate key concepts in the movement. It explores concepts within feminist art, linking with Ecofeminism; presents investigations into large-scale environmental projects, the most prominent examples of the movement, and lastly, examines works that interact with the idea of ephemerality and the changing role of the gallery.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Jade Wildy and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Jade Wildy

Date

Acknowledgements

Firstly, to my supervisors and lecturers who have provided guidance throughout my Masters studies:
Ian North, Cathy Speck and Lisa Mansfield.

To my friends who give me encouragement, advice and company.

And lastly, but most importantly I dedicate my thesis to my family, both living and gone, who have encouraged me throughout all my studies.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Illustrations	vii
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:.....	1
Changes in Conceptual Art.....	3
The Birth of Environmental Art	5
Defining Environmental Art.....	6
Aims and Structure of Thesis	8
CHAPTER 1: Literature Review	14
Style.....	15
Concept	18
History	22
Conclusions.....	25
CHAPTER 2: Gaia, Ecofeminism and the Earth Goddess - Women in Environmental Art	27
Ecofeminism	29
The Practice of Ecofeminism.....	30
Cultural Ecofeminism.....	30
Social Ecofeminism	30

Women Artists and Environmental Art.....	31
The Development of Environment Art in Ecofeminism.....	40
CHAPTER 3: Earthworks, Restoration and the Celestial Temple: Large-Scale Works.....	47
Conceptual Engagements with the Land.....	48
Celestial Temples.....	53
Landscape Art.....	56
Changes in Large-Scale Works.....	59
CHAPTER 4: Ephemeral Art and the Gallery.....	68
Ephemeral Art.....	69
The Art of Natural Materials.....	70
The Art of Synthetic Materials.....	75
The Art Without Material.....	78
The Role of the Gallery.....	81
CONCLUSION.....	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	95
APPENDIX.....	103
Appendix A: Definitions.....	104
Appendix B: Ecological Aestheticism: The Role of Art in a Positive Environmental Future.....	110
Appendix C: Sculpting Sustainability: Art's Interaction with Ecology.....	120

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1 Walter De Maria <i>The New York Earth Room</i> , 1977, earth, New York City, Photo by John Cliett, Dia Art Foundation.	10
Illustration 2 Jackie Brookner <i>I'm You</i> , 2000, Moss, volcanic rock, plants, metal, polluted water, variable size, Photo by Brandi Stafford Photos, Enquirer	11
Illustration 3 Jackie Brookner <i>The Gift of Water</i> , 2001, moss, concrete, 0.91 x 1.52 x 2.59 metres, Grossenhain, Germany Photo by Jackie Brookner, Tikkun Daily.....	12
Illustration 4 Hans Haacke <i>Rhinewater Purification Plant</i> , 1972, perspex, water, pump, variable size, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld Germany Photo by VG Bild-Kunst,	13
Illustration 5 Nancy Holt <i>Sun Tunnels</i> , 1976, 4 concrete tunnels, 5.5 x 2.7 metres, Utah, USA Photo from Grouse Creek.....	41
Illustration 6 Ana Mendieta <i>Imagen de Yagul</i> , 1973, photograph, 50.8 cm x 33.97 cm, Mexico Photo from Ana Mendieta Collection, Galerie Lelong, New York	42
Illustration 7 Patricia Johanson <i>Fair Park Lagoon</i> , 1985, concrete, variable, Dallas Museum of Natural History, Texas, USA Photo by Brian Amann, Picasa	43
Illustration 8 Agnes Denes <i>Wheatfield: A Confrontation</i> , 1982, wheat, 2 acres, Lower Manhattan, New York, USA Photo from IUPUI.....	44
Illustration 9 Lynne Hull, <i>Raptor Roost L-2, with Ferruginous hawk</i> , 1988, wood, metals, latex paint, 4.26 meters Photo by Lynne Hull, Green Museum.....	45
Illustration 10 Jackie Brookner <i>Prima Lingua</i> , 1996, concrete, volcanic rock, moss, plants, agricultural runoff, variable, Photo by Jackie Brookner, Tikkun	46
Illustration 11 Michael Heizer <i>Double Negative</i> , 1969, excavated earth, approx. 500 metres, Nevada Desert, USA Photo by Sam Morris, Las Vegas Sun.....	62
Illustration 12 Robert Smithson <i>Spiral Jetty</i> , 1969, basalt, rock, salt, 500 x 4.5 metres, Great Salt Lake, Utah, USA, Photo from Art Fag City.....	63

Illustration 13 Walter De Maria <i>Lightning Field</i> , 1977, 400 metal rods, Western New Mexico, USA Photo from Phillip's Garden	64
Illustration 14 Charles Ross <i>Star Axis</i> , 1971, architectural building, variable size, New Mexico, USA, Photo from Land Light Foundation	65
Illustration 15 James Turrell <i>Roden Crater</i> , 1979, architectural building, variable size, Arizona, USA, Photo from Mondo Mondo	66
Illustration 16 Agnes Denes <i>Tree Mountain</i> , 1992-1996, 10,000 trees, Pinziö, Ylöjärvi, Finland Photo by Agnes Denes, Green Museum	67
Illustration 17 Andy Goldsworthy <i>Ice</i> , 2007, snow, twigs, Photo from The Creative Instinct	83
Illustration 18 Chris Drury <i>Sky Mountain Chamber</i> , 2010, rock, branches, Malga Costa, Val di Sella, Italy, Photo from Daring To Do	84
Illustration 19 Dianna Thompson <i>Gesture Series</i> , 2003, shells, stones, variable, Vancouver, Canada, Photo by Diana Thompson, Diana Thompson. Net	85
Illustration 20 Christo and Jean-Claude <i>Running Fence</i> , 1976, nylon fabric, steel cables, 5.5 meters high, 39.4 kilometres long, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California, Still from Running Fence Directed by: Albert Maysles, David Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin	86
Illustration 21 Christo and Jean Claude <i>Wrapped Coast</i> , 1969, erosion control fabric, polypropylene rope 2.4, variable size, Sydney, Australia, Photo by Jean Claude, icollector	87
Illustration 22 Hamish Fulton <i>Geronimo Homeland</i> , 2007, vinyl wall text, 2.6 x 3.4 metres, Christine Burgin Gallery, New York Photo by Hamish Fulton, Christine Burgin Gallery	88
Illustration 23 Richard Long <i>A Line Made by Walking</i> , 1968, crushed grass, National Galleries of Scotland Photo by Richard Long,	89
Illustration 24 Joseph Beuys <i>7,000 Oaks</i> , 1982, Kassel, Germany Photo from Graduate Art Seminar	133

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Watching leaves fall from trees, feeling damp stone under your hands, listening to fire crackling and smelling fresh rain. There are many ways in which people experience the natural environment and yet when it comes to art many will choose a print or painting to hang on their wall that offers a different order of experience of the natural environment. However, in the 1950s and 60s the art world began to change and art moved off its pedestals, broke free of its frames and moved from the traditional 'white cube' out into the world.¹ A new experience was born in which the actual art object would not be brought to the viewer; rather the viewer is required to trek out in search of the art object in order to have a firsthand experience, in a manner that a photograph or painting cannot capture.

While the traditional manner of art appreciation has not disappeared, the structure of art has changed dramatically, as well as the manner in which artists engage with their subjects. This is most notable in the emergence of the environmental art movement, both in the physicality of the artworks and the method of their creation, as well as the conceptual manner artists engage with their subject. While previously artists sought to depict and comment on a particular issue, environmental art encompasses a unique element, as artists can not only comment on an environmental concern through their art and bring awareness to it, but can also create artworks that function as a remedy, actively changing or in some cases reversing environmental damage.

Environmental art is highly responsive to the demands of the natural environment. Focus on the environment through various mediums including the arts, popular culture and architecture,² has recently increased with the growing political emphasis on environmental concerns, like climate change and global warming. However, artists have worked in and with the natural environment in a variety of ways with different working methodology and conceptual emphasis, since the beginning of the environmental art movement. This study focuses on the various ways that artists interact with the environment and the manner in which this has changed since environmental art began, as a distinctive art movement, in the 1960s as a part of the conceptual art revolution.

¹ In reference to the term coined by Brian O'Doherty to describe the gallery space in Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* (University of California Press, 1999), 87.

² Indicated by popular movies like "The Day After Tomorrow (2004) - IMDb," *The Internet Movie Database*, 2010, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319262/>; or initiatives with environmental aspects, for example the architecture featured in Philip Jodidio, *Green Architecture Now!*, 1st ed. (TASCHEN America Llc, 2009).

Changes in Conceptual Art

Environmental art's beginnings are linked with the rise of the conceptual art movement. Hal Foster, an art theorist, described the conceptual art movement as encompassing a shift from a vertical conception of art, where value is decided through repetition of style and technique, passed down from master to student; to a horizontal conception, where art is extended outwards to be actively involved in the culture of a theme or discourse.³ He noted how the conceptual nature of these new forms of expression has positioned art in a more political and sociological stance: 'many artists and critics treat conditions like desire or disease ... as sites for art',⁴ and from this point art was able to make a notable departure from the traditional art object.

This departure has come to be described as positioning art in an 'expanded field', a term coined by Rosalind Krauss in 1979.⁵ Focusing on sculpture, Krauss gives a non-historically driven perspective of the development of art. She postulates that sculpture became abstracted from its relationship with the idea of the monument in the nineteenth century, and was no longer restricted to a static position on a plinth.⁶ By the 1950s, sculpture also began to lose its identity, as Krauss notes: 'modernist sculpture appeared as a kind of black hole in the space of consciousness ... a kind of 'categorical no-mans-land', referring to the changing forms that sculpture was taking.⁷ Sculpture began to be defined in terms of a combination of exclusions that Krauss defines as a 'Logically Expanded Field.'⁸ Essentially an object that is considered both 'not landscape' and 'not architecture' can be considered as sculpture. However, this logic term could be inverted to encompass the object that is both 'landscape' and 'architecture' leaving artists with an 'expanded field' of sculpture to work with; one that can encompass multiple elements, and is no longer defined by medium.⁹ This combination of landscape and architecture is particularly relevant to environmental art.

³ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 184.

⁴ As Quoted in David Hopkins, *After Modern Art 1945-2000*, Oxford history of art (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229.

⁵ Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 31-44.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

This recontextualisation of the art object required a re-working of traditional art theory, whereby traditionally non-art objects were removed from their contexts in museums and placed in the gallery setting, and art objects began to imitate real objects, for example, Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* of 1964, blurring the idea of what constitutes art.¹⁰ While pop culture placed an emphasis on the art object,¹¹ other artists began to move the focus of their practice away from it, and in the late 1950s, artists began to experiment with different ways of expressing their concepts or ideas. Alan Kaprow applied the term 'happenings' to a new art form that incorporated performative elements or actions into the art practice.¹² As Kaprow explained:

...once foreign matter was introduced into the picture in the form of paper [in reference to collage], it was only a matter of time before everything else foreign to paint and canvas would be allowed to get into the creative act, including real space.¹³

An idea that was embraced by various artists, a 'happening' can be defined as 'a work of art involving the interaction of people and things in a given setting or situation'.¹⁴ Essentially, there is emphasis on interactivity, either physically, or by engaging the viewer to cerebrally connect with the artwork. Place played an important part in many 'happenings', sometimes with the role of a site of a performance and other times playing an integral conceptual part in the piece, for example in the work *Untitled (Rape Scene)* of 1973 by Ana Mendieta.¹⁵ The role and emphasis of place and its interrelation with an artwork is, by necessity, a key component in environmental art. Thus, these key changes within the broader context of art played an integral part in the development of the environmental art movement.

¹⁰ Arthur Danto, "The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (October 15, 1964): 571 - 584.

¹¹ Nikos Stangos, *Concepts of Modern Art : From Fauvism to Postmodernism.*, 3rd ed. (New York N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 233.

¹² Higgins, "The Origin of Happening." 268

¹³ As quoted in Popper, *Art- Action and participation*, 22

¹⁴ Stangos, *Concepts of Modern Art : From Fauvism to Postmodernism.*, 233.

¹⁵ This was a controversial work involving staged a re-enactment of a violent rape in reaction to rapes occurring on campus at the time. This took place in the intimate setting of her kitchen, forming a strong connections between the artwork, performance and the intimate site of the work, as described in Elizabeth Manchester, "Tate Collection | *Untitled (Rape Scene)* by Ana Mendieta," Art Gallery, *Tate Collection*, 2009, <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=95805&searchid=10581&roomid=5638&tabview=text>.

The Birth of Environmental Art

While there is argument over a distinct date for the beginning of environmental art, 1968 is widely accepted as the birth year, not because it marked the first environmental artwork, but because several key environmental art exhibitions were held from this year onwards.¹⁶

The first recorded exhibition of environmental art, *Earthworks*, was held at the Dwan Gallery in New York in 1968.¹⁷ *Earthworks* featured various works by ten environmental artists, many of whom have become some of the most well-known names of environmental art: Carl Andre, Herbert Bayer, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Stephen Kaltenbach, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim and Robert Smithson.¹⁸

Described as 'Revel[ing] in their geophilia', these artists responded to the exhibition in various ways, showing a combination of both documentary photographs of works in the environment, sculptures and installations.¹⁹ Several artists exhibited materials from the earth itself, from unsculpted earth brought in by Morris, to soil rich with earthworms by Oldenburg. De Maria's submission was a photograph of a gallery in Munich, Germany, in which he installed dirt from one side to the other (similar to Illustration 1).²⁰ Heizer exhibited a work called *Dissipate*, an enlarged colour transparency of one of his works in the Nevada Desert, USA²¹ and Bayer exhibited a photograph of a giant ring of grassy earth produced in 1955 in Colorado, USA.²²

This pioneering exhibition showed the diversity of early environmental art and the manner in which artists engaged with the environment. The following year, in 1969, an exhibition called *Earth Art* was held at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, in Ithaca, New York, USA, and Michael Heizer held a solo exhibition at the Dwan Gallery.

¹⁶ Ben Tufnell, *Land Art* (London ;New York: Tate; Distributed in the U.S. by Harry N. Abrams, 2006), 51.

¹⁷ 1968 is recognised as the date of the first prominent exhibition, however several environmental artists were practising far earlier, for example Richard Long, whose practice dates back to 1964 as stated in *Ibid.*, 12 . There are also many prehistoric structures in the environment including Stonehenge or the Greek Parthenon which predate the 1960s 'birthdate'. However, as these are cultural artifacts rather than intentional artworks, they have been excluded from this study.

¹⁸ Suzaan Boettger, "Behind the Earth Movers," *Art in America* 92, no. 4 (April 2004): 55-63.

¹⁹ Grace Glueck, "Moving Mother Earth," *The New York Times* (New York, 1968), October 6 edition, sec. Art Notes, 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 51.

²² Glueck, "Moving Mother Earth," 38.

The act of exhibiting site-specific environmental art, proposed a problem for artist as well as for the gallery, in terms of a commercially viable product. Artists and galleries sought ways to address this problem, as described:

...artists developed two strategies: the use of photographic (and textural) documentation - presented both as artworks in their own right and as archival documents - and projects developed specifically for the gallery context...which establishes a relationship with the landscape work.²³

The use of documentation and complementary works made for gallery exhibition have been used prolifically by environmental artists (and non-environmental artists) and shows the diversity of approaches that artists use for the production of environmental works. Thus, through a broadening of the concept of what constitutes an art object, and an increased interest in environmental artworks, both gallery-based and site-specific, environmental art was gaining prominence and developing into a movement of its own.

Defining Environmental Art

The genre of environmental art is extremely diverse and many of the various interactions between artists and the environment have attracted varying definitions and descriptions that are often used interchangeably. Therefore, in any discussion of environmental art it is necessary to establish the definitions for the various terms and sub-genres as they are applied and used.

The term 'environmental art' is generally used as an umbrella term to describe an artistic process or artwork in which the artist actively engages with the environment.²⁴ Essentially this can encompass the natural environment or urban environment. Hal Foster refers to such works as:

Site-specific sculptural projects that utilise the materials of the environment to create new forms or to adjust our impressions of the panorama: programs that import new, unnatural objects into the natural setting with similar goals: time – sensitive individual activities in the landscape; collaborative, socially aware interventions.²⁵

²³ Tufnell, *Land Art*.

²⁴ Sam Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms," Arts Organisation, *Green Museum*, 2010, http://www.greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=306.

²⁵ Hal Foster, *Postmodern Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1985), ix-xvi.

This quote shows the broad range of artistic output that environmental art can cover, which can be broken down into the following sub-types, (elaboration on these definitions can be found in Appendix A)

Environmental Bio-Art: Artworks incorporating living material, such as plants or moss, for a restorative function;²⁶

Earthworks: Large-scale, environmental sculptures that use the natural environment both as site and as the materials for creation;²⁷

Earth/Body Art: Performances in which the artist physically connects with a particular environment with their body in a manner that is documented through film or photograph,²⁸ also known as Site-Specific Performance Art;

Ecofeminism: A social and political movement combining feminism and environmentalism, underpinning the works of many women environmental artists;²⁹

Ecovention: Contraction of 'Ecology' and 'Invention', encompassing artworks that repair damage to a natural environment.³⁰ Also known as Reclamation Art or Eco- Art;³¹

Ephemeral Art: Art that is built to last only a short period of time. These artworks are often left to degrade in natural environmental conditions;³²

Land Art: Term used predominantly in the 60s and 70s, referring to large-scale artworks, made outdoors on the land,³³ but not necessarily ecologically focused;

Walking Works: Practices in which the artist uses the act of walking through an environment as an artistic expression;

²⁶ Gloria Feman Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," *Ethics & the Environment* 8, no. 1 (2003): 108.

²⁷ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

²⁸ Susan Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," *Art History* 30, no. 1 (February 2007): 58.

²⁹ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 108.

³⁰ Sue Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies* (Cincinnati OH: Greenmuseum.org and Contemporary Arts Center: Ecoartspace, 2002).

³¹ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 96.

³² Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 12.

³³ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

Environmental Installation or Sited-Sculpture: Installation of a sculpture into the landscape, which uses the environment as 'site' rather than material;³⁴

Assemblage and Recycled Art: Works that utilise found objects (both natural and manufactured) in their construction;

Non-sites and Complementary Gallery Based Works: Material from a particular site used in a gallery-based artwork, forging a connection between the site and the artwork.³⁵ This can also refer to artefacts exhibited in a gallery relating to a site-specific work, including photographs, maps and other materials.

The definitions provided here are intended as a guide to the use of these terms as they are used in this thesis. It is by no mean an exhaustive list and the definitions can be flexible and variable.

Aims and Structure of Thesis

The many ways in which artists engage with the environment outlined in the section on defining environmental art, illustrate the diversity of this movement, as well as the large number of artists working in this field. Environmental art is developing a higher profile with the increasing political focus on the environment. Previous literature has generally presented environmental art as a small part of a larger movement of art history, focusing on the large-scale earthworks or environmental installations, or as historical survey of key dates, events, artists and movements, or by focusing on the works of a particular artist. To date none of the texts identified in this research determines, through thematic investigation, how the paradigm of the environmental art genre has changed since its beginning in the 1960s.

The aim of this research is to establish how the paradigm of environmentally based artworks has changed since the 1960s. This research identifies significant interactions between artists and the environment that form parts of the paradigm in which environmental art exists, and presents a progression of particular fields within the paradigm, with the intention of enhancing understanding of the development of environmental art.

³⁴ John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, 3rd ed., Abbeville modern art movements (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998), 103.

³⁵ Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford;New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 207.

This thesis explores the various ways artists interact with nature through environmental art, by focusing on specific types of engagement. It divides the topic into several thematic chapters, in addition to a literature review of texts related to environmental art, to be presented in Chapter One.

The following chapters are thematically based, focusing on the different interactions artists have with the land, and identifying key works and the nature of these interactions since the 1960s. Each chapter discusses the development of the various genres within the focus theme, and concludes with a summary of the information presented and an assessment of how the interaction has changed within environmental art.

Chapter Two presents an investigation of the manner in which women artists have engaged with the land from the beginnings of environmental art, incorporating a feminist perspective. It explores the ideas within feminism relating to the environment that have resulted in the genre known as 'Ecofeminism' and includes a discussion of the relationship and role of women with the environment, including the concepts of the Earth Mother, Earth Goddess and Gaia and how these have informed Ecofeminist art from the 1960s to present.

Chapter Three discusses the progression of large-scale environmental artworks, establishing the concepts that underpin them and incorporating conceptual works, remedial projects and architectural works that allow the viewer to experience natural phenomena. These works are the most prominent and recognisable of the genre associated with environmental art.

Chapter Four focuses on ephemeral environmental art and the ideas surrounding impermanence, through investigation of artworks that are ephemeral. It examines artworks created from natural materials, works of synthetic materials that are temporarily installed and works that do not result in a final object. It also addresses the changing significance of creating a lasting 'art object' and the role and importance of gallery-based works.

These chapters are followed by a conclusion establishing and summarising the salient points of the preceding thematic chapters, and a short discussion of possible future research within this field.

Illustration 1 Walter De Maria
The New York Earth Room, 1977, earth,
New York City,
Photo by John Cliett, Dia Art Foundation.



Illustration 2 Jackie Brookner

I'm You, 2000, Moss, volcanic rock, plants, metal, polluted water,
variable size,

Photo by Brandi Stafford Photos, Enquirer



Illustration 3 Jackie Brookner

The Gift of Water, 2001, moss, concrete,
0.91 x 1.52 x 2.59 metres, Grossenhain, Germany

Photo by Jackie Brookner, Tikkun Daily



Illustration 4 Hans Haacke
Rhinewater Purification Plant, 1972, Perspex, water, pump,
variable size, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld Germany
Photo by VG Bild-Kunst,



CHAPTER 1: Literature Review

There are many texts written on environmental art that address the subject utilising a variety of methodologies. Typically, most employ approaches that are either thematically based, dividing the text into particular methodologies, concepts, approaches or styles; or historically based, providing a history of dates and significant events. These texts treat the subject as a broad survey of environmental art or focus on a particular artist or group of artists.

While the various texts tend to trace key factors in environmental art, often commenting on the practices current at the time of publication, none currently compares the changes that have occurred in the paradigm of environmental art from the 1960s to the present, by identifying key thematic interactions and the changes that have occurred within them.

This literature review seeks to outline the different ways in which particular authors on environmental art have addressed the genre, focusing on their methodology, as well as some of the key understandings they have used. These understandings are reflected in their aims in writing the text (either stated or implied), as well as the definitions they employ to describe environmental art.

This review focuses on texts that specifically discuss environmental art, grouped under loosely defined subject headings, as well as an investigating some of the ways environmental art is treated in texts that comment on the wider arts. Thus, the focus of this literature review is to establish the manner in which writers on environmental art present their ideas.

While there is considerable overlap of subject matter between texts focusing on environmental art and related fields, such as landscape gardening theory, feminist art, environmentalism or architecture, the scope of this review chapter will largely exclude these resources in favour of texts specifically related to the field of environmental art in an art history context. Artist specific texts have been excluded, as the aim of those texts is to focus on a particular artist rather than the environmental art movement more broadly.

Style

One of the simplest methodologies for organising a text on art is to arrange it based on analysis of the physical style or production method of the works in question. Various authors follow this approach in their writings devoted to environmental art, however the manner can differ substantially.

Newspaper articles were among the earliest texts to focus on environmental art. By their nature, these texts tend to focus on a particular type as with Roy Bongartz's early article of 1970. While focusing on specific forms of early environmental art (rather than the broad genre), Bongartz, in 'It's called Earth art

– and Boulderdash’, focuses on large-scale environmental works using the term ‘Earth Art’ to describe them.¹ He discusses various works by leading environmental artists, like Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer and Denis Oppenheim, focusing on the production of works in isolated sites, and what these works mean for the traditional gallery space. Bongartz’s article includes the opinions of several other critics and art theorists, suggesting a mixed opinion of the successful nature of these works, with some arguing that the inaccessibility of works such as Heizer’s *Double Negative*, produced in the isolated location of Nevada, USA. Bongartz, however, does not offer any conclusions himself and gives the impression of reportorial emphasis rather than critique, which could be indicative of the publication date at the beginnings of the movement, and the generality expected of a newspaper article.

Almost 30 years later, one work that could be considered a core text on the environmental art genre was John Beardsley’s 1998 book, *Earthworks and Beyond*,² in which Beardsley utilised the term ‘earthworks’ to describe environmental artworks, however acknowledging that the term ‘environmental art’ was more commonly used.³ Specific interactions within a particular style are identified and presented under distinct chapters, centring on the production methods employed by the various artists, and with specific attention on American and British artists. For example, artworks employing the method of walking in their production, (including the works of Richard Long, Hamish Fulton and Andy Goldsworthy) are discussed in a chapter entitled ‘The Ramble’. This chapter highlights both the physical movement of the artists through the environment (which could be considered under performance art) and the specific artworks these artists produce on their journey, utilising natural materials in their production.⁴

While *Earthworks and Beyond* focuses on particular styles, it does not draw conclusions about the work. Rather Beardsley states his intent as ‘reportorial and interpretive’ intended to ‘advance rather than conclude critical debate...’.⁵ Thus, this text is arranged by style highlighting artists by their working practices, but can be viewed as a transient mid-point in discussions on environmental art.

Published in the same year was a second major resource for the environmental art genre, by Jeffrey Kastner and Brian Wallis, in *Land and Environmental Art*,⁶ utilising the term ‘Land Art’ broadly to

¹ Roy Bongartz, “It’s Called Earth Art -And Boulderdash,” *The New York Times* (New York, February 1, 1970), sec. The New York Times Magazine.

² Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 41-58.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶ Jeffrey Kastner and Brian Wallis *Land and Environmental Art*, Themes and movements (London: Phaidon, 1998).

'encompass earth, eco and environmental art'.⁷ They acknowledge the newer approach of the 'environmental artist' but use the term in reference to those who seek to remedy environmental devastation through their art.⁸ In contrast to *Earthworks and Beyond*, Kastner and Wallis' in *Land and Environmental Art*, present the topic in three distinctly different ways, providing the reader with materials relating to environmental art (like production materials such as maps, invoices and quotes, images of works, texts written by the artists or artist statements), rather than interpreting environmental artworks or the environmental art genre.

Land and Environmental Art begins with a chapter outlining the development of the environmental art movement, followed by a section entitled 'Works', which groups the various styles and types of interactions under the sub-headings of Integration, Interruption, Involvement, Implementation and Imagining.⁹ The various sections focus on interactions between artist and the environment, describing 'responses that combine incisive critique with practical and redemptive strategies which can be affected by the individual',¹⁰ and feature works by artists such as Hans Haacke, Alan Sonfist and Buster Simpson. Following the section on 'Works' is a complementary section called 'Documents',¹¹ dissecting the material under the same sub-headings mentioned above, with the inclusion of 'Illumination'. These sections provide excerpts of writings that relate to the various types of environmental art and some of the theoretical concepts underpinning them, commenting on the genre of environmental art as a whole. This approach, as illustrated by the sections emphasised above, is stated as designed to 'sketch a tendency...which in its art historical, social or poetic meaning forms part of the larger picture of Land and Environmental art'. Essentially this text does not form conclusions for the reader, rather it provides a body of related materials and documents for the reader to form their own ideas about the genre,¹² and provides resources from the 1960s to the present, without establishing a progression or change.

In these texts, the production methods are the primary focus, although many writers underpin them with conceptual considerations. While these texts may refer to changes within environmental art, they do not focus on them and tend to treat the different works or styles in isolation, rather than as a progression. Essentially, there is a tendency towards presenting environmental art at what could be described as a mid-point or snapshot, presenting the information for the reader to form his or her own conclusions.

⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹ Ibid., 44-189.

¹⁰ Ibid., 136.

¹¹ Ibid., 190-287.

¹² Ibid., 17.

Concept

Complementary to writers who have chosen to focus on environmental art, structuring the text around the style or production method that artists employ in their works, are those texts that are arranged under the conceptual rationales that underpin each environmental artwork.

With a different focus to his book *Earthworks and Beyond* (mentioned under Style) is John Beardsley's journal article 'Traditional Aspects of New Land Art' of 1982.¹³ In his article, Beardsley looks at several key environmental artworks, from the perspective of the 18th Century concepts of the sublime and the picturesque.¹⁴ Beardsley looks at the 'newness' of new art forms and the reinterpretation process that occurs, focusing on environmental art. He employs the term 'land art' and looks at the application of landscape aesthetics in interpreting environmental works, as underpinned by the concepts of the sublime.¹⁵ Beardsley draws attention to the isolation of these kinds of art with particular focus on De Maria and Smithson, commenting on the elements of the sublime within their work, as well as the idea of the picturesque in environmental art, in the work of James Pearce.¹⁶ Essentially this article employs a framework that has previously been applied to landscape art, reinterpreting it and applying it to the concepts that underpin environmental art. As such, this article presents the broad paradigm of environmental art, rather than a shifting paradigm.

The concepts of landscape theory, as related to concepts like the sublime are also investigated thoroughly in other texts, like Simon Schama's 1995, *Landscape and Memory*, which provides an extensive historical and theoretical perspective to the engagement between artist and environment.¹⁷ While *Landscape and Memory* can be considered as providing a conceptual link between historical art history of humanity and nature, and contemporary environmental art, it does not focus on environmental art and is more concerned with traditional art forms and landscape theory mentioning artists like Goldsworthy only briefly.¹⁸

In comparison, Suzi Gablik's 1992 book *The Reenchantment of Art*, while also more theoretical is deeply conceptual and involves with many of the major concerns that underpin environmental artworks.¹⁹ Gablik was already known for her prominent book *Has Modernism Failed?*, where she investigated the cultural paradigm of modernism and the influence of this paradigm on beliefs, values

¹³ John Beardsley, "Traditional Aspects of New Land Art," *Art Journal* 42, no. 3 (1982): 226.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁷ Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, (Harper Collins, 1995)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹ Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 1st ed. (New York N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1992).

and behaviours, and the problems these proposed for artists.²⁰ *The Reenchantment of Art* was her own answer to many of the questions she had posed, and is a significant theoretical text to the environmental art movement as it charges art with the responsibility of remedying cultural, social and ecological problems, many of which interlink. *The Reenchantment of Art* is particularly significant to works that are ecological in nature, with a chapter, 'The Ecological Imperative', devoted to encouraging an ecological environmental conscious within art. This chapter focuses on artists such as Mierle Ukeles Ladermann and her work with the New York sanitation department,²¹ or the large architectural works by artists like Charles Ross and James Turrell, where she writes that they have ... 'a setting in which to gather up and assimilate the cosmos'.²²

While *The Reenchantment of Art* is not solely focused on environmental art, it has a considerable conceptual relationship to the environmental art movement with particular relevance to those artists whose works are significantly ecological in focus. This is a considerable focus point for many articles and studies relating to environmental art, either from the perspective of artworks that restore environmental devastation or on the culture/nature dichotomy, as with Peggy Cyphers 1992 journal article, 'The Consumption of Paradise'.²³

'The Consumption of Paradise' considers environmental art in the context of the definition of nature (rather than in an art historical framework), deconstructing and redefining the genre to move away from the idea of 'nature as other' and the subsequent incorporation of culture into nature. She applies evolutionary theory to environmental art, stating 'This attempt to redefine nature is, in fact, an attempt to redefine ourselves in light of a humanist Darwinism of cooperation'.²⁴ Focusing on restorative artworks of artists like Jackie Brookner, and the remedial elements of Smithson's works in mined sites in his reclamations of neglected land, 'The Consumption of Paradise' highlights the progressive conceptual ecological nature of environmental art. It focuses on the natural balance of the works and how art engages with the environment, rather than the development of these themes within the environmental art genre.

More broadly than texts focusing on specific types of environmental art, like ecological art, are larger texts such as, Giles Tiberghien's, 1995 book *Land Art*,²⁵ which is arguably a third substantial reference point for environmental art. Tiberghien states he has intentionally structured his book thematically, with

²⁰ Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed?* (New York, N.Y: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 3.

²¹ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 70-75.

²² *Ibid.*, 82.

²³ Peggy Cyphers, "The Consumption of Paradise," *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 52.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁵ Gilles A Tiberghien, *Land Art* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995).

the exception of the first chapter, which offers a historical contextualisation of environmental art.²⁶ In each of his chapters, he addresses both the theoretical framework in which he situates the specific type of works, as well as the conceptual history related to the subject of the chapter. For example, his chapter called 'Inorganic Sculptures' focuses on the movement of sculpture from the gallery into the landscape.²⁷ This chapter thematically focuses on the relationship between architecture and sculpture, as relevant to environmental art.

Tiberghien employs the term 'Land Art', rather than environmental art,²⁸ highlighting the works of Smithson, like *Spiral Jetty*, and emphasising the various works produced by Michael Heizer.²⁹ He focuses on the conceptual elements underpinning these works, as well as some of the physical properties, like the outside location of many environmental artworks and the effects this can have on these works of environmental art. Tiberghien's stated aim of his book is to 'define a moment of contemporary history that is exemplary...in that it is situated at the turning point between modernism and that which contested it...'.³⁰ Thus, the book focuses on themes of environmental art as an element in the development of the wider conceptual art movement, rather than the conceptual development of a distinctive genre.

In contrast, Ben Tufnell's 2006 book, also entitled *Land Art*,³¹ looks at environmental art as a distinctive movement in art history. Tufnell states that he sets out to 'represent a personal and partial discussion of the subject', and investigates themes and concepts, as well as significant artists and their works, in a manner that is all encompassing rather than exclusive to one form of environmental art or another.³² Tufnell refers to environmental art using the term 'Land Art', describing this term as 'appropriately open and non-specific, suggesting theme but not style',³³ which is reflective of the thematic structure of his book. Tufnell groups specific interactions under clearly defined, broad chapters that have specific sub-headings. A chapter like 'Working with Nature',³⁴ incorporates a mix of historical and biographical information about both the field and individual artists. It discusses the various conceptual engagements these artists have, like the use of ritual or the incorporation of growing material.³⁵ His closing chapter 'Another Place: The Expanded Field' comments on the influence Land Art has on the wider arts, how it

²⁶ Ibid., 16.

²⁷ Ibid., 61-84.

²⁸ Ibid., 64.

²⁹ Ibid., 242.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Tufnell, *Land Art*.

³² Ibid., 17.

³³ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 15.

³⁴ Ibid., 78-93.

³⁵ Ibid., 87 - 88.

has incorporated other fields like Ecofeminism.³⁶ This chapter establishes links between Environmental Art forms and relates to wider culture. This text illustrates the wide reaching expanse of environmental art and the cultural territory and genres it traverses, but does not comment on the manner in which the engagement with wider genres has changed, nor how the genre of environmental art itself has changed.

Employing a similar structural approach to Tufnell (yet perhaps not as successfully in terms of the scope of the information covered or the depth of the investigation of the subject matter) and covering a wide variety of works and concepts related to environmental art, is William Malpas' 2007, *Land Art in the UK*.³⁷ This book is divided into two distinct sections, beginning with a general survey of environmental art since the 1970s, that primarily investigates American and British artists, and concluding with case studies of several UK land artists. The general survey is broken into segments of varying length that comment on various interactions, for example 'Capitalism and the Cost of Land Art', 'The Use of the Body' or 'Mazes' or discuss specific artists such as 'Smithson', 'Heizer' or 'Holt'.³⁸ However, these subheadings provide general comment on themes and seldom go into detail, or formulate any particular conclusions. While focused on concept, it is in essence a presentation of interrelated facts and related themes underpinning environmental art.

Analysing environmental art from a conceptual point of view has also formed the basis of other studies including Elaine Matthews' dissertation, accepted in 2007, *Environmental Art and its Contribution to Establishing an Awareness of the Sacred in Nature*.³⁹ While it is a general treatment of environmental art, it serves as the theoretical framework for the artworks that form part of the author's Masters Degree and raises ideas surrounding various interactions within the theme of environmental art including feminism, site-specific artworks, public spaces, sacred and shaman, and on artists that form businesses to propel their artistic ideas.⁴⁰ Essentially, it touches on some of the dominant themes and concepts, but does not provide an in-depth investigation of the genre or draw any firm conclusions about Environmental Art or how it has changed. It is essentially reportorial.

Environmental art also formed a core part of Jason Simus' PhD research in his thesis *Disturbing Nature's Beauty: Environmental Aesthetics in a New Ecological Paradigm*, completed in 2009. In his abstract Simus states that he aims to 'review concepts in the history of nature aesthetics such as the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ William Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.* (Maidstone: Crescent Moon, 2007).

³⁸ Ibid. 59 - 115

³⁹ Elaine Matthews, "Environmental Art and its Contribution to Establishing an Awareness of the Sacred in Nature" (Masters, Rhodes University, 2000).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

picturesque, the sublime, disinterestedness, and formalism' with a view to combining aesthetic appreciation with scientific ecology to 'emphasise the heuristic, exegetical, and pedagogical roles aesthetic qualities play in ecological science.'⁴¹ While environmental art plays a large part in this thesis, the focus is on the merger of ecology and aesthetics rather than the progression of the environmental art movement.

Texts engaging with the theory of environmental art through a focus on concept employ a clear framework, whether it is by applying accepted art historical analysis or Darwinist theory, or by situating the works in the wider context of art or scientific culture. These types of texts incorporate a wider range of influences and cross a broad range of themes, but tend towards either close focus on a particular element or mention many influences without investigating them closely.

History

Contrasting the texts that focus on style or concept are those that present the genre from a historical perspective. This form of structure is used in survey texts on art that include environmental art in the context of wider art history.

An early survey text that included environmental art is Frank Popper's book *Art – Action and Participation* from 1975.⁴² It incorporates environmental art (using the term 'Land Art') under a chapter called 'Art at Present'.⁴³ It describes environmental art in the context of works that 'break away entirely from the traditional artistic circuit' and having an 'existence [that is] of necessity ephemeral'.⁴⁴ It provides a survey of 'current' environmental artists, including Richard Long, Walter De Maria and Robert Smithson and touches generally on the concepts underpinning their work, in the context of a sub-development of the conceptual art movement.

Texts such as *Art – Action and Participation* place environmental art in an historical context, and tend to avoid focusing on the elements of these works relating to style and concept. Environmental art is marked as either a sub-genre or offshoot of a larger movement like minimalism or conceptual art, or is discussed by recounting historical developments through dates and events, and changes occurring over time. Survey books are, however, increasingly incorporating environmental art in their recount of

⁴¹ Jason Simus, "Disturbing Nature's Beauty: Environmental Aesthetics In A New Ecological Paradigm" (Doctor of Philosophy, USAS: University of North Texas, 2009), 2 - 3, http://www.phil.unt.edu/people/faculty/bios/Simus/Simus_Dissertation.pdf.

⁴² Frank Popper, *Art-Action and Participation* (New York: New York University Press, 1975).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 232 - 277.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

art history, although it is often treated as a minor sub-genre of a wider stylistic trend, such as Minimalism.

An example of a later survey text is David Hopkins' *After Modern Art*, 2000,⁴⁵ featuring environmental art in a chapter sub-section entitled 'Primordial Returns: Smithson, Land art and Language'.⁴⁶ In this chapter, Hopkins refers to environmental artists in reference to changes in conceptual art, touching on the concepts underpinning such works. It refers to Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* as one of the 'first exponents of Earth or Land art'.⁴⁷ However it does not emphasise this work's relationship with the specific movement of environmental art, rather it refers to it by association with other movements, like conceptualism and minimalism. While the concepts underpinning environmental art works are touched upon, this text focuses on the historical development of the movement without any interpretation or conclusions drawn, placing Smithson's work within the broader framework of marked changes in art in general.

Another survey text touching on environmental art is Lea Vergine's 2001, *Art on the Cutting Edge*.⁴⁸ This is a general text is broadly about art and contains short, subject specific chapters, which involve a brief introduction followed by several excerpts that relate to the subject, including one on environmental art applying the term 'Land Art'. Essentially this chapter provides a basic background to the genre that contextualises the excerpts that follow, which are provided in a similar way to Kastner and Wallis in *Land and Environmental Art*, mentioned earlier. However, there is no attempt to contextualise the excerpts outside of historical development.

In stark contrast, Michael Lailach in his 2007 book, also named *Land Art*, focuses entirely on instances of environmental art and presents the topic through a collection of artist specific sections. Beginning with a general history, Lailach's introduction, 'Beyond the White Cube',⁴⁹ provides a general background to the movement, touching on concepts like Krauss' 'Logically Expanded Field'. Following this introduction are short chapters that focus on a particular work, involving a short essay and image of the work. Lailach's *Land Art* provides general information on the construction and concepts that underpin each work, but is presented as a general, brief summary with each work treated in isolation, rather than contextualised in the broader context of the movement.

⁴⁵ Hopkins, *After Modern Art 1945-2000*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 172 - 176.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁴⁸ Lea Vergine, *Art on the Cutting Edge: A Guide to Contemporary Movements* (Milan: Skira Editore, 2001).

⁴⁹ Michael Lailach, 'Beyond the White Cube', *Land Art* (Köln; London: Taschen, 2007), 6 - 25.

Indicative of the growing interest in environmental art are several journals that have included a feature issue on environmental art, for example the *Art Journal* issue, 'Earthworks: Past and Present', published in 1982, which provided several thematic articles centring on environmental art.⁵⁰ An editorial by Robert Hobbs provides the background to the various articles,⁵¹ commenting on the development of environmental art from its conceptual beginnings in Minimalism and tracing the historical development of the movement and the theory and criticism surrounding it.⁵² Hobbs focuses more closely on the early large-scale earthworks, which is suggestive of writings from that time that discounted other methods of engagement with the land.

More recently, in 2005, the Australian magazine *Artlink* published an issue that focused on the ecological works of environmental art called *Ecology: Everyone's Business*,⁵³ which was intended to highlight what climate change meant to an artist and how artists chose to address it.⁵⁴ This issue served as a form of artistic survey, as well as providing more broad ecological information that contextualised the issue. The forms of art featured in this edition range from architecture and green living, an interesting trend in today's society (as evidenced by books such as *Green Architecture Now!*)⁵⁵ to gallery based works that draw their inspiration from nature or environmental concerns. One example is 'Sweet Revenge' that presents an interview with the artist Ken Yonetani. The issue also features works in which the selection of materials plays a significant role. as featured in an article entitled 'John Dahlsen: Plastic Art', describing the work of John Dahlsen, an artist who uses found plastic to form sculptures and collages.⁵⁶ This issue presents a snapshot of ecologically based environmental art from an Australian perspective (although many of the artists do work globally) and can be viewed as more of a historical record of a particular time rather than a resource for establishing the progression of environmental art. The production of these special issues are indicative of the place of environmental art in art literature. To date, there are no serious journals dedicated to environmental art and generally, environmental art is discussed in standalone articles, like most of those featured in this review.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Robert Hobbs, ed., "Earthworks: Past and Present," *Art Journal* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 191-194.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 191 - 194.

⁵² This issue contained a variety of different articles that thematically addressed various aspects of environmental art.

⁵³ *Artlink*, 'Ecology: Everyone's Business'. (Semaphore, S. Aust: Artlink, 2005).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁵⁵ Jodidio, *Green Architecture Now!*.

⁵⁶ *Art, Architecture, Environment*, *Artlink* v. 11, no. 4 (Henley Beach, S.A: Artlink, 1992).

⁵⁷ There are several smaller magazines and related journals that feature aspects of environmental art, like landscape theory, or are in the early stages of being established, like *Lake Journal* from the University of British Columbia, but none currently have a substantial presence.

Standalone articles can also incorporate a more historical focus on environmental art, like that of John Beardsley. Beardsley, is one of the more prolific writers on environmental art from various perspectives. His 1997 journal article 'Sculpting the Land', employs an historical approach, focusing on a broader range of environmental artworks than other writings, possibly reflective of the more recent publication date. In this article, he utilises the term 'environmental art', indicative of the later trend in terminology at the time of publication. Beardsley identifies some of the recent works that are essentially cross disciplinary in nature, including the environmental artistic expression through landscape design, referencing artists like Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison. He notes the overlap with feminist theory in the increasing prevalence of women artists and the growing influence of environmentalism and ecology. While this article does broadly speculate on some of the comparative changes and other genres/cultural elements that environmental art has broadened to encompass, it does not discuss in-depth how these have come about nor the nature of the changes.

A more recent journal article that strongly emphasises the historical focus is Susan Boettger's 2004 article, 'Behind the Earth Movers,'⁵⁸ that follows the development of the Dwan Gallery in New York. Boettger's article pays particular attention to Virginia Dwan's patronage of early environmental art, (referred to as 'Earthworks') and some of the major players in the beginning of the environmental art movement, providing names, dates and essential facts, and establishing the historical development of the movement. The article centres around the Dwan Gallery and the role it played, but touches on some of the conceptual elements surrounding environmental art, like the role of women in the early movement. This article establishes the early historical development of environmental art, but not the paradigm shift, styles or conceptual engagement.

Conclusions

From the available literature, including texts specifically focused on environmental art and those that incorporate environmental art in a broader art survey, it can be determined that the main methodological approaches are to group works under a specific style or mode of production, or by conceptual ideas that underpin the work, or to discuss the topic from an historical perspective.

The texts mentioned in this review, that emphasise style and production methods, tend to present environmental art from a transient point in the movements history, without forming conclusions about development or progression. These generally do not look at changes that have occurred and tend to avoid methodological analysis, with the exception of those texts that mention concept in relation to style or production. This, to date, encompasses texts by notable authors including Roy Bongartz' early

⁵⁸ Boettger, "Behind the Earth Movers." *Art in America*, (2004)

newspaper article: 'It's called Earth art – and Boulderdash' and the main environmental art texts by John Beardsley with *Earthworks and Beyond*, and Jeffery Kastner and Brian Wallis' text *Land and Environmental Art*.

In contrast, texts arranged by concept tend to have a clearly defined methodological approach within a defined framework. These texts incorporate a wider range of influences within both art and culture. While these texts interrelate the concept with physical attributes and style, they do not comment on the manner in which these might have changed. This includes texts such as *Landscape and Memory*, by Simon Schama, *The Reenchantment of Art* and *Has Modernism Failed?* By Suzi Gablik as well as more environmentally focused art texts like *Land Art* by Giles Tiberghien, *Land Art* by Ben Tufnell and *Land Art in the UK* by William Malpas. Concept based investigations into environmental art also includes studies like Elaine Matthews' dissertation *Environmental Art and its Contribution to Establishing an Awareness of the Sacred in Nature* and Jason Simus' thesis *Disturbing Nature's Beauty: Environmental Aesthetics in a New Ecological Paradigm*.

Texts relating specifically to the history and development of environmental art generally view it as a sub-genre of a wider art movement and are more strictly factual, including style and concept only in general terms and again do not focus on how these have changed over time. This is largely reflective of general art survey texts like Frank Popper's *Art – Action and Participation*, David Hopkins' *After Modern Art* or Lea Vergine's *Art on the Cutting Edge* as well as more general environmental art texts like Michael Lailach's *Land Art*. Individual journal articles and feature editions were also found to be more historical in focus as demonstrated in the *Art Journal* issue, 'Earthworks: Past and Present' and *Artlink* issue, 'Ecology: Everyone's Business' or the standalone articles including John Beardsley's 'Sculpting the Land' or Susan Boettger's 'Behind the Earthmovers'.

While there are three distinct methodological approaches identified in this review of environmental art literature, there are naturally texts that combine these crossovers to varying extents. However, none of the texts examined in this review combines all three approaches to trace how style and concept have changed with the development of environmental art, which is the aim of this research.

CHAPTER 2: Gaia, Ecofeminism and the Earth Goddess - Women in Environmental Art

Overnight, very Whitely, discreetly, Very quietly
Our toes, our noses Take hold on the loam, Acquire the air.
Nobody sees us, Stops us, betrays us; The small grains make room.
Soft fists insist on Heaving the needles, The leafy bedding,
Even the paving. Our hammers, our rams, Earless and eyeless,
Perfectly voiceless, Widen the crannies, Shoulder through holes. We
Diet on water, On crumbs of shadow, Bland-mannered, asking
Little or nothing. So many of us! So many of us!
We are shelves, we are Tables, we are meek, We are edible,
Nudgers and shovers In spite of ourselves. Our kind multiplies:
We shall by morning Inherit the earth. Our foot's in the door. ¹

Sylvia Plath's poem *Mushrooms*, written in the 1960s,² could be interpreted as a metaphor for the early feminist movement appearing 'discreetly' but almost 'overnight'; gaining momentum around the same time as environmentalism began to extend into the art world. Early environmental art was typically dominated by men, which was reflective of the standard trend of the art world at the time, and indicative, perhaps, of the physical activity involved in creating a large-scale earthwork requiring 'the strength, muscularity and stamina traditionally associated with masculine power'.³ Patronage for women in environmental art was also a problem, considering the 'debut' environmental art exhibition, *Earth Works*, 1968, solely exhibited men,⁴ and the Dwan Gallery, responsible for hold the pioneering exhibition, occasionally exhibited women in group exhibitions, but never exhibited a solo show of a woman artist. ⁵

While women artists were not prominent, there were several recognised women artists who engaged with the environment, including Cuban born Ana Mendieta; the American, Nancy Holt and Jill Orr, an Australian performance artist. Women environmental artists also engaged in environmental activism through art as exemplified by the works of Betty Beaumont and her underwater environmental installation; Agnes Denes, who drew attention, through art, to economic concerns; Patricia Johanson, and her remedial landscaping; and Mierle Ukeles Ladermann, whose environmental works incorporated societal elements like garbage collection.⁶ Thus, while environmental art history typically emphasises 'big name' artists like Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer, and can be described as 'archetypically masculine',⁷ there is a distinctive relationship between women artists and the environment that is equally as strong and has an equally long history.

¹ Sylvia Plath, *The Collected Poems*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 139.

² *Mushrooms* was republished in *Ibid*.

³ Boettger, "Behind the Earth Movers," 55.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 96.

⁷ *Ibid*.

This chapter explores the ideas and philosophies within feminism relating to the environment, discussing the relationship between women and the environment, including the concepts of the Earth Mother, Earth Goddess and Gaia and how these have informed environmental art produced by women. Beginning with a discussion of Ecofeminism, the chapter describes how the various interactions between women artists and the environment have changed since the beginnings of environmental art in the 1960s, by highlighting several prominent women working in environmental art.

Ecofeminism

In the 1970s, the relationship between women and ecology was beginning to develop into a distinctive philosophy that has come to be known as 'Ecofeminism'.⁸ This term was first coined in 1974 by François d'Eaubonne, ("l'eco-féminisme") to 'point to the necessity for women to bring about ecological revolution',⁹ in which the arts are considered to be 'essential catalysts of change'.¹⁰

While there are varying beliefs and opinions within Ecofeminism, the close link between humanity and nature is a common thread. A key belief is that with the advent of scientific and technological developments, the human race has become separated from nature. This divorce from nature, as a core element of the human condition, has resulted in soullessness and emptiness, a lost connection rendering the extensions of the spirit, life, creativity and emotion meaningless and dead. While this is considered significant for all humanity, ecofeminists consider it more poignant for women, critiquing the patriarchal view of the environment, as described:

...all human beings are natural beings... yet we live in a culture that is founded on the repudiation and domination of nature. This has a special significance for women because in patriarchal thought, women are believed to be closer to nature than men. This gives women a particular stake in ending the domination of nature – in healing the alienation between human and non human nature.¹¹

The concept of humanity and nature as a whole rather than a duality, manifested in the 1970s with the 'Gaia Hypothesis' whereby the 'entire range of living matter on earth, from whales to viruses, and from oaks to algae, should be regarded as constituting a single living entity...';¹² a theory that has arguably been supported through studies into biodiversity.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Trish Glazebrook, "Karen Warren's Ecofeminism," *Ethics and the Environment* 7, no. 2 (2002): 12.

¹⁰ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 103. The emphasis on the patriarchal structure of both society and art, is commented on in various texts as a potential source of conflict, for example in Suzi Gablik, *The Post-Avant-Garde: End game Art, Hover Culture, Read Guard Action, The Reenchantment of Art*, (United States: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 13-28

¹¹ Judith Plant, *Healing the Wounds : The Promise of Ecofeminism* (London: Green Print, 1989), 18.

¹² Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 4.

The Practice of Ecofeminism

While 'Ecofeminism' can be used as a broad term, there are varying degrees of interpretation and interaction. Two dominant strands can be determined. Cultural Ecofeminism incorporates symbolism, drawing on religious and mythical iconography, while Social Ecofeminism incorporates environmental activism and action. The following section elaborates on these two strands and women practising in environmental art can be viewed as linked predominantly with one strand or the other.

Cultural Ecofeminism

The practice of Cultural Ecofeminism is described as embracing 'intuition, an ethic of caring and web-like human-nature relationships', through the interpretation and revival of ritual and symbolism centred on goddess worship.¹³ Cultural Ecofeminism includes iconography of female deities such as Isis, Ishtar, Demeter and Kali that embody aspects of the feminine.¹⁴ These ideas of goddess worship were incorporated into the practice of several women artists, including Ana Mendieta, whose practice engaged strongly with her cultural heritage and sense of identity in the late 1970s,¹⁵ and in more recent times, continues in the work of artists like Dominique Mazeaud (discussed later in this chapter) who views her work in a motherly nurturing sense.

Essentially Cultural Ecofeminism invokes symbology of The Great Mother, The Goddess, or Gaia in order to 'emphasize the interconnectedness of three levels of creation, all imagined as female outside patriarchal civilisation: cosmic creation, procreation and artistic creation'.¹⁶

This kind of Ecofeminist interaction emphasises natural energies of the planet and incorporates natural regenerative cycles,¹⁷ as exemplified by works such as *Sun Tunnels* by Nancy Holt, which incorporates astrology as well as the seasonal solstices. These works are fundamentally based on symbolic feminine empowerment imagery and/or natural earth cycles.

Social Ecofeminism

In contrast to Cultural Ecofeminism, Social Ecofeminism highlights the interactivity of humanity with nature, incorporating Social Ecology, which is described as challenging the separation of nature and culture.¹⁸ This is not solely a feminist trend, and can be seen in works by men and women alike, for example in works such as *7,000 Oaks* by Joseph Beuys, in which the practice of planting trees in urban

¹³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴ Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.*, 121.

¹⁵ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 72.

¹⁶ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 103.

¹⁷ Ibid., 104.

¹⁸ Plant, *Healing the Wounds : The Promise of Ecofeminism*, 19.

areas attempts to unite ecology and sociology to heal both environmental and social problems. However, some Ecofeminist's perceive misogyny as the source of the opposition,¹⁹ and that the role of the Ecofeminist is to remedy it.

Artists whose practice is more in line with Social Ecofeminism are described as having 'internalised the knowledge that humans are capable of living on the earth without destroying it... these artists tend to focus on healing the damage through direct, hands-on, aesthetic and scientific collaborations with the earth herself.'²⁰ Social Ecofeminism can be viewed in the practices of artists such as Lynne Hull, who recreates habitats for wildlife in places where there has been environmental devastation, or in the remedial landscape architecture of artists like Patricia Johanson, who uses landscaping to rebuild environmentally damaged sites. Essentially, it involves women artists taking control to promote positive environmental change.

Women Artists and Environmental Art

While there are exceptions, environmental art produced by women since the beginning of environmental art movement in the 1960s can generally be defined as falling under either Cultural Ecofeminism or Social Ecofeminism. Through analysis of various works produced by women who can be linked with environmental art, the progression of the women in environmental art can be established within the context of Ecofeminism. The following women artists have been selected based on their earliest or most prominent work, identified as environmental art. These works have been chosen from the inception of environmental art to the present.

Rice/Tree/Burial, produced in 1968 and then reproduced in 1977, is one of Agnes Denes earliest explorations into the environment,²¹ and is viewed as one of the first site-specific works with ecological concerns.²² While she is better known for *Wheatfield: A Confrontation*, 1982, which will be discussed later, this work illustrates some of the tendencies that have become a signature in her practice.

Denes' practice began in 1964 when she attended Columbia University and the New School of Art.²³ Her early practice began with a movement away from traditional art forms of painting and drawing and she began to make extensive investigations into the ideas surrounding triangulation, with her research crossing over into science. This research substantially influenced her artistic practice and, as a result, Denes could be considered as one of the leading figures in changing the structure of art by

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 104.

²¹ Thomas McEvilley, "Philosophy in the Land," *Art in America* 92, no. 10 (November 2004): 160.

²² Peter Selz as quoted in Ibid., 162.

²³ Ibid., 158.

incorporating scientific concepts, an approach that has become important for environmental art, particularly works that are ecological in focus.²⁴

In keeping with Denes' interest in triangulation, *Rice/Tree/Burial* involved three distinctive parts: first the planting of rice, then chaining together a group of trees in a nearby forest to force them to grow in the shape of their enchainment, and finally a buried capsule of her poems.²⁵ This work is deeply steeped in meaning. Rice, (like her later use of wheat) refers directly to sustenance, but also serves as a metaphor for the seed, denoting the nucleus alluding to fertilization and conception - the beginnings. Chains signified 'linkage, connections, bondage, defeat' and the interference of growth. The burial of her poetry, written in haiku, represented the 'essence of consciousness...which connects and defines life and death'.²⁶

Denes states that this work is 'a manifesto that announced [her] commitment to ecological and environmental issues, human concerns and philosophic thought'.²⁷ In addition to the meanings described above this multifaceted work can be read as referring to a mythological trinity of Greek goddesses involving Demeter, the earth mother, in the growing of the rice, Artemis, the huntress, in the 'trapped' constriction of the trees and Athena the all encompassing goddess in the capsule of poetry. This work suggests a 'stand for the opposition that reconciles the opposition of the growing rice and the groaning trees'.²⁸ Thus, in Denes early work the symbolism of Cultural Ecofeminism is illustrated by the meaning she attributes to the essential elements. Contrasting *Rice/Tree/Burial* and more reminiscent of the bold environmental works reflective of the 1960s, are *Sun Tunnels* (Illustration 5), from 1973 – 76 which were positioned in the largely desolate, Great Basin Desert in North Western Utah.²⁹ Constructed by Nancy Holt, *Sun Tunnels* allows the viewer to actively engage with the environment and environmental conditions. Holt views her practice as an 'exteriorisation of [her] own interior reality', but her works are actively made 'so people can be a part of them and become more conscious of space'.³⁰ This engagement with space is a common theme in Holt's artworks. For example, it features in her

²⁴ Ibid., 160.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Agnes Denes, "Notes on Eco-Logic: Environmental Artwork, Visual Philosophy and Global Perspective," *Leonardo* 26, no. 5 (1993): 388.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ McEvelley, "Philosophy in the Land," 160.

²⁹ Janet Saad-Cook et al., "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy," *Leonardo* 21, no. 2 (1988): 127.

³⁰ Ibid., 126.

1974 piece at the Lewiston Artpark in New York, *Hydra's Head*, in which round shallow vessels, set into the ground, collected water to reflect the sky above, effectively bringing them both together.³¹

Location plays an important part in her works, as she desires accessibility. Contrasting traditional sculpture, where the 'best thing that can happen to a sculpture is that it is bought by a museum',³² her works tend to have a degree of accessibility allowing them to be enjoyed by anyone who should wish to travel to see them, at any time. Her early practice of positioning her works external to the 'white cube' gallery,³³ marks her as one of the 'first wave' of environmental artists.

Sun Tunnels, located in an isolated desert, involves four concrete cylinders set in a cross pattern that is 26 metres long on the diagonal,³⁴ and are 'axially oriented on the sun's farthest position above the horizon during the summer and winter solstices' to allow sun to fill the tubes.³⁵ The four cement tunnels provide a conduit to position the viewer to see the rise and fall of the sun during the solstice. Holt describes the work as being not just about the sun, but also about space, with her ensuring that the sculpture was big enough to allow the passage of an adult.³⁶ Holes were drilled through the surface of the concrete in patterns corresponding to the astrological constellations of Draco, Perseus, Columba and Capricornus, to allow the projection of the pattern onto the floor of the tunnel. These constellations link with the influence of the solstice as Holt explains:

The sun, being a star, is casting spots of starlight through the star holes, so that when one walks through the tunnels, in effect, one is walking on stars. It's an inversion of the sky/ground relationship.³⁷

Thus, *Sun Tunnels* focuses the viewer's experience on the changing seasons and equinox, as well as the celestial bodies in the constellations above. In this work, the site is an integral part of the work, as there are no obstructions to the play of sun and moonlight through the tunnels. Denes explains the importance of the site:

The idea for *Sun Tunnels* became clear to me while I was in the desert watching the sun rising and setting, keeping the time on the earth. *Sun Tunnels* can exist only in that particular place – the work evolved out of its site.³⁸

³¹ Lailach, *Land Art*, 60.

³² Saad-Cook et al., "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy," 127.

³³ O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*.

³⁴ *Land and Environmental Art*, 88.

³⁵ Lailach, *Land Art*, 58.

³⁶ Saad-Cook et al., "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy," 127.

³⁷ Lynne Cooke, "Review: Michael Heizer. New York," *The Burlington Magazine* 136, no. 1098 (September 1994): 127.

³⁸ As quoted in Lailach, *Land Art*, 58.

In this work, the interaction of natural processes is integral to the function of the work. While there is no clear direct reference to the idea of the 'goddess', the nature of the work reflects a distinctive reverence of and linkage to the environment through the conduit of art, consistent with the Gaia Hypothesis, which stipulates that all things are interconnected.³⁹

The idea of interconnection plays a part in the practice of other women artists, and it is actively embraced through the *Siluetta Series* produced between 1973 and 1980 by Ana Mendieta.⁴⁰ Mendieta was born in Havana, Cuba in 1948 and was later moved to America with her sister in 1961, during Fidel Castro's Communist revolution. She grew up in foster care and this painful separation from her parents is said to have informed much of her practice, in particular those works that relate to the land. She began to practise performance art in the 1970s, at a time when it was growing in popularity. What distinguished Mendieta's work was the level of intimacy through both physical engagement as well as the concepts that she explored, which were deeply personal, relating to her exile, femininity, vulnerability and personal spirituality.⁴¹

Imagen de Yagul (Illustration 6), produced in Mexico in 1973, is debatably the first of Mendieta's *Siluetta Series*, and is one of the few which features her actual body obscured by flowers, rather than just the outline or silhouette.⁴² Mendieta describes her practice as 'earth/body art': a term that expressly establishes the hybrid, dual nature of her work.⁴³ The *Siluetta Series* shows a definitive intentional link between woman and nature, both through the construction of these works, which involved various interactions with the environment from dug out mud, or crushed grass to ash generated through burning, and through Mendieta's commentary on her own works referring to them thus:

My art is the way I re-establish the bonds that unite me to the universe. It is a return to the maternal source. Through my earth/body sculptures I become one with the earth. I become an extension of nature and nature becomes an extension of my body. This obsessive act of reasserting my ties with the earth is really the reactivation of primeval beliefs...[in] an omnipresent female force, the after-image of being encompassed within the womb, [and] is a manifestation of my thirst for being.⁴⁴

³⁹ Works that interact with the elements of the environment are not exclusive to feminism, and similar works include the large scale architectural works like Charles Ross' *Star Axis*, or James Turrell's *Roden Crater*.

⁴⁰ Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," 57.

⁴¹ Olga Viso, *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body, Sculpture And Performance 1972-1985 Catalogue* (New York N.Y.: Hirshhorn Museum, 2004).

⁴² Mendieta and Merewether cite *Siluetta de Yamaya* (Silhouette of Yemaya) as the first major piece in Ana Mendieta and Charles Merewether, "Portfolio," *Grand Street*, no. 67 (Winter 1999): 49.

⁴³ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 69.

⁴⁴ As quoted in Elinor Gadon, *The Once and Future Goddess: A Symbol for our Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 278.

Through this series, Mendieta clearly identified with the concepts of the goddess and the 'mystical energy' that she intended to infuse her work,⁴⁵ by way of personal rituals for healing, purification and transcendence that were performed.⁴⁶ While later works did not necessarily have a definitive female shape, the use of her own silhouette as a basis for the shape can be read as a visualisation of a feminised earth, through incorporation of the female body into various natural environments by utilising natural elements.⁴⁷ Thus, through the purposeful use of symbolic elements to tap into 'mother earth energy', coupled with a sense of reverence and ritualism, the influence of Cultural Ecofeminism is distinctly strong within this series.

In contrast to artists like Mendieta, who work on a small intimate scale to physically engage with the environment, there are artists who practise environmental remediation and landscaping, often referred to in conjunction with Ecovention. Remedial landscaping (as a genre of Ecovention – see Appendix A), is another form of interaction between artists and the environment and includes works by artists such as Patricia Johanson and her *Fair Park Lagoon* project of 1981 (Illustration 7).

Through her work, Johanson seeks to 'transform sites to make us aware that we are citizens, not masters of the biosphere...' through carefully designed symbiosis between butterflies, birds and other creatures. In the 1960s, while studying at Bennington College, she began writing about designing the world as a work of art, suggesting 'total environmental design – aesthetic, ecological, psychological and social – such that the person would be placed *inside* the work of art...'. Thus, the artist functions as creative intelligence rather than isolated idealist.⁴⁸

These conceptual considerations underpin the complex design principles in Johanson's work and could be considered as forming a bridge between other artists in the 1970s whose practice involved environmental restoration, like Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison, and the traditional decorative sculptor.

In her project *Fair Park Lagoon*, Johanson transformed the algae infested waters of the lagoon near the Dallas Museum of Natural History, from a dangerous eyesore into a popular, ecologically friendly park and tourist attraction.⁴⁹ Conceptually, this work draws from Johanson's studies of plant and animal

⁴⁵ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 70.

⁴⁶ *Land and Environmental Art*, 121.

⁴⁷ Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," 58.

⁴⁸ Andrea Blum et al., "From the Other Side: Public Artists on Public Art," *Art Journal* 48, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 337 This is an idea that features in many artists practices, most notably in the works of Joseph Beuys.

⁴⁹ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 101.

patterns and microstructures to develop sculptural designs that can be worked into the site, 'without replacing or destroying the existing topography and the ecological balance'.⁵⁰

Fair Park Lagoon, like many of Johanson's works, draws on her knowledge of complex design principles that have been a common thread in her practice, dating back to 1968 with the production of *Stephen Long*. *Stephen Long* involved the creation of a 500-metre long single line sculpture comprised of the three primary colours, which stretched into the horizon, disappearing into the vanishing point. The use of bold lines in her productions, as well as the vanishing perspective, are seen in *Fair Park Lagoon* through the meandering paths through the sculptures, which add a sense of depth and adventure and give rise to the description 'Line Gardens'.⁵¹

Johanson believes that through art, environmental devastation can be healed.⁵² Through the production of sculptural gardens that have aesthetic elements, which engage the viewer, while also reviving the surrounding ecosystem, Johanson's works bring ecology into the surrounding culture. She establishes interactivity between humanity and ecology, which is in line with Social Ecofeminist principles. Through an ecologically sound sculpture park she shows how art can engage with society, and to bring about a change in society's ecological thought.

Another work that allows the public to engage with both the environment and art is Agnes Denes' *Wheatfield: A Confrontation* from 1982 (Illustration 8), which is one of her best known works and most prominently linked with environmental art. This work draws on some of the elements seen in her earlier works such as *Rice/Tree/Burial* (discussed previously), yet is contrasting in its methodology. Denes was invited by the US Public Art Fund to produce an outdoor sculpture,⁵³ but rather than produce a monument or public sculpture she instead chose to seed a two-acre wheat field on a landfill site in Lower Manhattan, USA with the aim of calling 'attention to our misplaced priorities and deteriorating human values'.⁵⁴

Perhaps today the significance of this work is much more poignant than when it was first produced. Denes describes the work as 'placed at the foot of the World Trade Centre';⁵⁵ clearly visible in the backdrop of documentary photographs of the growing wheat. Almost thirty years after the production of

⁵⁰ Lailach, *Land Art*, 66.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Caffyn Kelley, *Art and Survival: Patricia Johanson's Environmental Projects* (Salt Spring Island, B.C: Islands Institute, 2006), 3.

⁵³ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 101.

⁵⁴ Agnes Denes, "The Dream," *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 928.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Wheatfield: A Confrontation, the World Trade Centre was destroyed by terrorists who possibly saw it as a symbol of the economic, consumerist degradation of the west.

Wheatfield: A Confrontation highlights environmental art as a conduit for change. However, in this work there are elements of Cultural Ecofeminism in the iconography, as it can be interpreted in the same way as the mythological goddesses referred to in *Rice/Tree/Burial*; the choice of wheat could refer to a farming goddess such as Ceres. However, this work is more closely aligned with Social Ecofeminism as its' central, urban location allowed the surrounding stock brokers, economists, office workers, tourists and other denizen of Manhattan to consider the romantic pastoral past of the area, before construction and urbanisation.

From its location in an urban environment, *Wheatfield: A Confrontation* brings the conceptual concerns of the artist about capitalism, food security and consumerism. However, other works contrast sharply by providing an artistic haven that is vastly removed from the concerns of society, like the trans-species works of Lynne Hull.

Hull began her artistic career as a potter, with the functionality of useable objects in mind. This functionality evolved when she began to use fabricated materials that were compatible with nature, in order to benefit wildlife. She refers to this process as a form of 'eco-atonement for human encroachment'.⁵⁶ This sense of remediation or 'eco-atonement' is an increasing trend amongst artists, (as demonstrated by Johanson's work, mentioned previously). However, one of the significant elements of Hull's work is not what she does, but for whom she does it. Sculptures are generally considered from an aesthetic viewpoint for the human viewer's benefit. However, Hull is set apart from her sculptural counterparts as her works are made directly for the animal kingdom, and as such, are referred to as trans-species art.⁵⁷

Lynne Hull produces environmental artworks that are designed not for people but for animals that have suffered due to human incursions into their habitats. *Raptor Roosts* (Illustration 9) are a series of 'sculptures' that provide safe roosting places for large birds of prey, away from dangerous power lines,⁵⁸ and were designed (like all of her works) in collaboration with wildlife biologists and zoologists, with the aim of nurturing endangered species.⁵⁹ In her artist's statement on her website, Hull writes, 'My sculpture and installations provide shelter, food, water or space for wildlife, as eco-atonement for their

⁵⁶ Peter Warshall, "Eco-Art," *Whole Earth*, no. 101 (2000): 93.

⁵⁷ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

⁵⁸ Emily Brady, "Aesthetic Regard for Nature in Environmental and Land Art," *Ethics, Place & Environment* 10, no. 3 (October 2007): 297.

⁵⁹ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 107.

loss of habitat to human encroachment'.⁶⁰ She represents a distinctive change in artistic thought, through collaboration with non-art fields, through the production of works that actively remedy a problem, and through the shift away from the emphasis on the enjoyment of the human viewer.

Utilising wood and other found materials, in the manner of Recycled Art,⁶¹ the *Raptor Roosts* have a sculptural element that can be enjoyed by the passer-by, who may also view the large predatory birds for which the roosts are made. However, these roosts are primarily for the birds themselves to enable them to survive. In this way, these works (as well as others by Hull) function in a remedial capacity that aligns them with Social Ecofeminism. The 'society' in this case is, however, not of the human kind.

Essentially Hull's works provide an artistic remedy for an environmental crisis. This kind of function is a common thread through many works, including gallery-based works by artists like Jacquie Brookner, who produces biosculptures, a sub-set of Environmental Bio-Art, which incorporates living material.

Brookner is an environmental artist, who could be described as part of a 'third wave', beginning her practice in the 1990s. In some respects her practice builds on that of earlier artists mentioned previously. Brookner collaborates with ecologists to design works that function ecologically as well as aesthetically, representing a conceptual merger between aesthetics, design and ecological function, essentially a merger between science and art.

Prima Linga (Illustration 10), 1996, is a large sculpture of a tongue built of moss, volcanic rock and water that effectively 'licks' polluted water clean.⁶² Gravity pulls the water over the tongue into the small pool below, in which fish, snails and plants thrive in a small, contained ecosystem in an almost entropic cycle. This 'licking' is aided by a biochemical filter and demonstrates how natural systems have the capacity to use pollutants and toxins as nourishment.⁶³ Brookner is described as seeing 'gravity as a force that defines the body's intrinsic physiological relationship to nature's grand design'.⁶⁴ Drawing on the ideas of entropic death, this piece 'visibly transforms what is degraded, revealing the creativity of detritus, showing that decay is part of creation'.⁶⁵

Integral to *Prima Linga* (and many of Brookner's other works) are the natural processes that enables it to function, and demonstrates the remedial power that art can possess. However, conceptually *Prima Linga* can metaphorically express renewal in the cleansing of the water and the continuation of life in

⁶⁰ Lynne Hull, "Artist Statement," Artist, *Eco-Art*, 2008, <http://www.image-world.net/eco-art/etc/statement.html>.

⁶¹ Suzi Gablik, "The Ecological Imperative," *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 49.

⁶² Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 108.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Cyphers, "The Consumption of Paradise," 55.

⁶⁵ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 108.

the organisms that survive in the pool. Both of these conceptual elements are intrinsically maternal concepts linked with the idea of the mother figure. Combined with this notion is the choice of the shape of the sculpture. While the sculpture could have been abstracted or a simple geometric shape, Brookner creates intimacy by forming her sculptures in the shape of body parts. In this way, Brookner's biosculptures could be considered as situated in the grey-zone between Cultural and Social Ecofeminism, as the iconography is not expressly feminine, but contains elements of maternal nurturing, as well as having a distinctive remedial function.

Contrasting Brookner's biosculptures, Dominique Mazeaud's performance art centres on the earth as Mother Nature. Through performance art, the role of the artist can be extended to demonstrate the act of nurturing. A practising artist since the 1970s, Mazeaud began concentrating on her environmental art practice in 1987, when she left the commercial art world to live in a modest log cabin in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Likened to artists like Beuys who had the same worldview, Mazeaud sees her environmental art practice as fully integrated with her life and personal philosophy. Her integrated approach is underpinned by the spiritual dimensions of her beliefs.⁶⁶ Thus, Mazeaud is representative of a growing number of artists who not only produce works, but also essentially live them.

Describing herself as a 'Heartist',⁶⁷ Mazeaud is a performance artist who utilises repetition as well as audience participation. The *Most Precious Jewel* is an ongoing performance piece performed since 1998, that involves the participant sticking three beads onto a small globe, 'one representing a tear of joy for [the earth's] beauty, another a tear of grief for her ills and a third as a small gesture that the beader may be inspired to make on the Earth's behalf'.⁶⁸

For Mazeaud, like many other environmental artists, life and art are intrinsically linked and her works are infused with reverential rituals. Her ecological performances seek to engage society to consider the environment through empathetic, compassionate, and caring metaphors,⁶⁹ relating to the earth as a life force in the manner of Cultural Ecofeminism, yet engaging the audience in a manner that is reflective of Social Ecofeminism.

⁶⁶ Patricia B. Sanders, "Eco-Art: Strength in Diversity," *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 79.

⁶⁷ Dominique Mazeaud, "Dominique Mazeaud Heartist," Artist, n.d., <http://www.earthheartist.com/>.

⁶⁸ Deborah Mathew, "What Is Ecofeminist Art?," *Women & Environments International Magazine*, no. 52 (Fall 2001 2001): 10.

⁶⁹ Charles R. Garoian, "Art Education and the Aesthetics of Land Use in the Age of Ecology," *Studies in Art Education* 39, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 258.

The Development of Environment Art in Ecofeminism

The selection of artworks outlined in this chapter (which is by no means an exhaustive list) shows both the diversity of environmental art produced by women and the progression of the field of women environmental artists within the context of environmental art history. These works have been selected to reflect each of the artists' earliest or most prominent works. While the conceptual strands of these works have been considered in terms of the two dominant forms of Ecofeminism, the artists themselves do not necessarily identify with feminist principles.

In the works and artists identified in this chapter, the progression of women environmental artists can be viewed as moving from practices that employed female symbolism and ritual in the works of artists in the late 1960s and 70s, like Mendieta and the early works of Denes, to works that moved entirely away from the earth goddess concept of Cultural Ecofeminism, as evidenced by *Fair Park Lagoon* by Patricia Johanson, in the 1980s. Finally, it progressed to practices that encompass elements of both femininity and promotion of environmental remediation in a societal context from the 1990s onwards. Essentially, from these observations, it can be inferred that the progression of women in environmental art, as underpinned by Ecofeminist principles, has moved from earth-mother symbolism to movement away from these principles, to finally evolve into an all encompassing practice.

Believing in the interrelated spirit of humanity and the earth, Ecofeminism suggests that women are the environmental stewards of the planet and that women environmental artists can provide the means to remedy the ailments of Mother Earth. As Plath wrote, 'We shall by morning inherit the earth. Our foot's in the door.'⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Plath, *The Collected Poems*, 139.

Illustration 5 Nancy Holt
Sun Tunnels, 1976, 4 concrete tunnels,
5.5 x 2.7 metres, Utah, USA
Photo from Grouse Creek



Illustration 6 Ana Mendieta

Imagen de Yagul, 1973, photograph,

50.8 cm x 33.97 cm, Mexico

Photo from Ana Mendieta Collection, Galerie Lelong, New York



Illustration 7 Patricia Johanson
Fair Park Lagoon, 1985, concrete,
variable, Dallas Museum of Natural History, Texas, USA
Photo by Brian Amann, Picasa



Illustration 8 Agnes Denes

Wheatfield: A Confrontation, 1982, wheat,
2 acres, Lower Manhattan, New York, USA

Photo from IUPUI



Illustration 9 Lynne Hull,
Raptor Roost L-2, with Ferruginous hawk, 1988, wood, metals, latex paint,
4.26 meters

Photo by Lynne Hull, Green Museum



Illustration 10 Jackie Brookner

Prima Lingua , 1996, concrete, volcanic rock, moss, plants, agricultural runoff,
variable,

Photo by Jackie Brookner, Tikkun



CHAPTER 3: Earthworks, Restoration and the Celestial Temple: Large-Scale Works

Entropy: 'The tendency for all matter and energy in the universe to evolve toward a state of inert uniformity'.¹ The concept of entropy suggests that everything will eventually degrade to become a uniformed whole, with time and decay playing a major part. It is with this in mind that the ephemerality of environmental artworks, left to the devices of natural weather conditions, corrosion and creeping intrusions from seeping water and plants, can be considered. Even works built to last are subject to decay. However there are those works that are large enough to make a stand against (or actively embrace) entropy and the natural changes that occur, defying decay and decline into obscurity through sheer size and impact.

This form of large-scale environmental art has been present since the beginning of the environmental art movement, with several of these works featured in the 1968 exhibition, *Earth Works*, including representations of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* – the most notable example of environmental art and a work that is conceptually underpinned by the concept of entropy.²

This chapter seeks to identify the changes that have occurred in large-scale environmental art works, since the 1960s. It incorporates landscape restoration projects, in which artistic practice is used to repair and restore the natural environment; 'celestial temples', describing architectural works in which large-scale building complexes are constructed to experience natural phenomena; and Earthworks, works which alter the natural environment on a massive scale.³

Conceptual Engagements with the Land

Environmental art works first appeared during the conceptual revolution, when art left the restrictions of the gallery system. These early works marked a distinctive conceptual engagement with ideas, which could be produced with the new freedom of space and located isolation.

Michael Heizer is one of the earliest artists associated with the environmental art movement. He was one of the first artists to take the conceptual ideas of minimalism and reductive aesthetics of modernism, out of the gallery and into the natural environment on a monumental scale.⁴ Heizer's

¹ "Entropy," in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).

² Tufnell, *Land Art*, 42.

³ Earthworks is a term coined by Robert Smithson in 1967 to describe sculptures that are not placed in the landscape, rather the landscape is the very means of their creation. The term Earthworks is often used interchangeably with Earth art, however the exhibition Earth Art of 1969, was gallery based and included small-scale sculptural works.

⁴ As commented on by Garoian, "Art Education and the Aesthetics of Land Use in the Age of Ecology"; and John Haldane, "Transforming Nature: Art and Landscape.," *Art Book* 10, no. 3 (June 2003): 10-12.

significance in this pioneering transition is demonstrated by his inclusion in Krauss' pivotal article 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field'.⁵

While Heizer has produced several noteworthy works, he is best known for his striking work *Double Negative* (Illustration 11), 1969, which epitomizes the conceptual nature of environmental art, and falls under the genre commonly referred to as Earthworks. Produced in an isolated location in the Nevada Desert and backed by the Dwan Gallery,⁶ *Double Negative* essentially usurps the idea of the art object. In it, Heizer placed two deep cuts into the surface of two cliffs facing each other, resulting in two incisions creating a final piece that was just over 15m, (50 feet) and covered a distance of almost 500 metres (1,500 feet).⁷ *Double Negative* required the use of several bulldozers to excavate the 240,000 tons of earth. In regard to the title of this work, Heizer stated that 'in order to create this sculpture, material was removed rather than accumulated...there is nothing there, yet it is still a sculpture'.⁸ Essentially *Double Negative* was about the lack of object, as it was the voided space that comprised the artwork rather than the presence of an object. This marks it as distinct from other artworks at the time.⁹

Through his artworks, Heizer also played with other concepts that were external to the art object, for example perspective, which he emphasised through the angles of the photographs of his works. For Heizer these photographs not only emphasised the importance of how the space had been marked by art,¹⁰ but also the artwork's location in the landscape, forming just a small part of it. This effect is noticeable in the images of his earlier works *Rift*, *Dissipate* and *Compression Line* from 1968, in which he increased the depth of field, reducing the portion of the sky to a fifth of the image.¹¹ This effectively illustrated the enormity of the landscape in light of such a large Earthwork. Heizer, however, denies that his works are about landscape, but the association is unavoidable.¹²

Another large work that is located in a remote area is *Spiral Jetty*, (Illustration 12) 1969, by notable artist Robert Smithson. Smithson is arguably the most well known figure in environmental art, both as a pioneer artist in moving art from the gallery to the landscape,¹³ and for his extensive theoretical and

⁵ Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field."

⁶ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 227.

⁷ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 16.

⁸ Michael Heizer, 'Interview with Julia Brown' as quoted in *Land and Environmental Art*, 54.

⁹ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 17.

¹⁰ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 242.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹² Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 19.

¹³ Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field."

conceptual writings that in many instances combine art, science and philosophy.¹⁴ His ideas are encapsulated in his writing, which includes a mix of prehistory, science fiction, industry, nature and art,¹⁵ and provides a deeply complex conceptual framework for both his artworks and art practice. It is the conceptual nature of these writings that established Smithson as one of the most significant of the 'first wave' of environmental artists and the history of the conceptual art era.¹⁶

While there is debate about the environmental impacts of his large-scale work, Smithson was noted for his ecological concerns:

Smithson was killed in a small-plane crash in 1973 while surveying a new earthwork. The tragedy of his early death lies partly in the fact that he was virtually the only well-known artist of his aesthetic generation to be vitally concerned with the fate of the earth and fully aware of the artist's political responsibility to it.¹⁷

While not always apparent, these concerns often influenced factors relating to his work. As Smithson's most well known and most striking Earthwork, *Spiral Jetty* is formed from a 457-metre (1,499 feet) coil and located near an abandoned mining site in the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Conceptually complex, *Spiral Jetty* draws inspiration from various sources. The location was chosen specifically for the red tinted water that, for Smithson, was likened to blood and forged connections with 'primordial seas'.¹⁸ The spiral shape reflected the magnified spiral crystalline formations of the salt contained within the waters,¹⁹ and was also formed with an old myth in mind; that the lake was connected to the ocean by a vast tunnel that would create a whirlpool in the waters. Thus, *Spiral Jetty* is described as 'a key not only to the macroscopic world, but the microscopic and mythological as well'.²⁰

Entropy and ideas surrounding decay were also integral inspirations for Smithson in producing *Spiral Jetty*. The spiral shape represents the distant past, recent past and entropic present moving into a single point at the centre of the spiral,²¹ which is mirrored by the cyclic rise and fall of the waters that occasionally submerge the jetty and the natural salt deposits accumulating on the stones marking

¹⁴ Lucy Lippard, *Overlay : Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (New York: New Press ;Distributed by Norton, 1995), 30.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Smithson's complex conceptual concepts make it difficult to briefly sum up the content of his writings as noted by Robert Linsley, "Minimalism and the City: Robert Smithson as a Social Critic," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 41 (Spring 2002): 38-55. Thus this chapter mentions his writings only briefly to highlight Smithson's significance to art history and environmental art. .

¹⁷ Lippard, *Overlay : Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*, 33.

¹⁸ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 41.

¹⁹ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 20.

²⁰ Ibid., 22.

²¹ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 42.

change. Ironically, the transitional entropic concept of this work could be regarded as being undermined by the efforts to preserve it for future generations.

The construction of such a conceptually complex artwork was much more industrial, requiring the use of two dump trucks, a tractor, and a large front loader to move the 6,650 tons of earth and basalt rock.²² The site is an abandoned mining site and, while the conceptual relationship between this artwork and the location are clear, the use of industrial sites was also typical of Smithson's practice. However, this contrasts with other environmental artworks, as Smithson did not seek to reclaim degraded land, rather, he 'preferred to demonstrate industry's role in moulding new land forms'.²³ Building an artwork on a disused industrial site also has the drawback of degradation of the artwork should mining on the site become profitable again.²⁴

Contrasting the Earthworks of Smithson and Heizer, which were formed from the land, is Walter De Maria's *Lightning Field* (Illustration 13), 1977, in which the environment acts to complete the work. Pushing the boundaries of conceptual art,²⁵ De Maria's practice in environmental art dates back to the late 1960s with works like *Mile Long Drawing* and *Cross* in 1968 (the year noted as the birth year of environmental art),²⁶ and *Las Vegas Piece*, 1969, in the Desert Valley near Las Vegas.²⁷ *Las Vegas Piece* consisted of four shallow cuts, three and a half kilometres by four kilometres long, made with the blade of a bulldozer.²⁸ The strong formal qualities of these early works were reminiscent of minimalism in the use of industrial materials,²⁹ construction techniques and even spaced repetition and geometric placement, which were also echoed in De Maria's later works.

The conceptual nature of De Maria's practice was highlighted by his infamous unwillingness to talk or explain his work, adding a sense of intrigue and mystique, forcing the viewer to make a judgement about the meaning of a work rather than having it readily available.³⁰ Thus, De Maria was a significant, conceptual artist in broad art history, in addition to being one of the first artists to turn to natural materials for their own sake, for example filling 45 square feet of the gallery space at the Heiner Museum in Munich in 1968 with fresh soil.

²² *Land and Environmental Art*, 58.

²³ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 53.

²⁴ Stephen Speckman, "Can art, oil mix? Spiral Jetty friends think not," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, February 14, 2008).

²⁵ Jane McFadden, "Toward Site," *Grey Room*, no. 27 (Spring 2007): 69.

²⁶ As noted, this was the birth year due to several pivotal exhibitions that included Earthworks in New York, in which De Maria was involved

²⁷ Tufnell, Ben. *Land art*. London ; New York: Tate, 2006 .57

²⁸ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 57.

²⁹ Pam Meecham, *Modern Art : A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 279.

³⁰ McFadden, "Toward Site," 69.

De Maria's most striking environmental work is undoubtedly his *Lightning Field*, located in a desert region of New Mexico,³¹ which defies representation in the gallery because of its expansive size and the relationship between the work and the environment in which it is situated. *Lightning Field* comprises 400 pointed stainless steel rods, spread 67 metres apart. As lightning strikes, the rods ignite, creating a vast net of visible electric charges,³² which are viewed from a small log cabin located on site a safe distance away.³³ This work combines a number of different elements that imposed strict criteria for the work's creation. It took De Maria five years for a suitable site to be found with the correct combination of isolated open space and atmospheric conditions.³⁴ While the choice of materials may have a practical basis, given certain metals are more conductive than others, the work invites the viewer to consider the universal theme of humanity in collaboration with nature.

Contrary to other environmental artworks, where the landscape plays an integral part in the placement of the work, De Maria's artwork is dependent on its site, as De Maria explained, 'The land is not the setting for the work but a part of the work'.³⁵ At the conceptual core of the sculpture are the forces of nature, which are literally required to perform, interact with and complete the work.³⁶ This relationship places the artwork at the mercy of nature, as there are only a few days each year when thunder and lightning activity can potentially ignite the *Lightning Field*, thus the viewer is not guaranteed to see the full extent of the artwork.³⁷

In *Lightning Field*, the long, thin poles jut out of the earth over a vast distance and are only clearly visible at dawn and dusk when the light hits the poles. Placed in a grid pattern at regular intervals, an industrial formality contrasts sharply with the low-lying scrub of the surrounding flat land and the strength of nature in the lightening hit. The emotive quality of the poles alone could be regarded as cold and impersonal, to become awe-inspiring and sublime when hit by the lightning they are intended to attract. The impression is one of constructed symbiosis functioning between art and nature, leaving the artist on the sidelines.

³¹ "Walter De Maria: The Lightning Field," *Dia Art Foundation*, 2009, <http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/56/1375>.

³² *Land and Environmental Art*, 232.

³³ Hopkins, *After Modern Art 1945-2000*, 175.

³⁴ *Land and Environmental Art*, 232.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Hopkins, *After Modern Art 1945-2000*, 176.

³⁷ *Land and Environmental Art*, 233.

Celestial Temples

Contrasting the elegant simplicity of conceptual works like *Lightning Field*, and the organic interactivity of Earthworks, are the large architectural works that allow the viewer to witness the environment and celestial events.

Charles Ross was one of the first environmental artists to embark on an architectural project. His practice has centred on the investigation and artistic interpretation of celestial events, with his foundation work, *Solar Burn*, 1971, that traced the sun's 366-day path, through the burning of its path into bands of wood. This work propelled him into international prominence and established his interest in multiple views of the world that meet at a juncture point between art and science.³⁸ Ross' work is representative of the grand themes that can be encapsulated by environmental art, and the aesthetics that can be produced through science.

Through art, Ross investigates complex scientific themes of astrology and the movement of the earth, making them visually accessible, as well as works that utilise the principles of light refraction.³⁹ These smaller investigations eventually led to the development of a much larger and immersive project, which will eventually allow planetary aesthetics and experience of astrological phenomenon to be widely assessable outside scientific observatories.

Ross' *Star Axis* (Illustration 14), is one of several major architectural projects that began in 1974 and continues to the present, after a search for land that lasted several years and included investigation of sites in Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico.⁴⁰ Positioned in the mesa country, known as the Painted Desert,⁴¹ near Albuquerque, New Mexico,⁴² *Star Axis* is described as offering 'an intimate experience of how the earth's environment extends into the space of the stars'.⁴³

The name *Star Axis* refers to its 'primary earth/star alignment', aligning the installation precisely with the axis of the earth, which presently points towards the North Star Polaris. Its purpose is to allow the viewer to 'walk through layers of celestial time, making directly visible the 26,000-year cycle of precession and the Earth's shifting alignment with the stars'.⁴⁴

³⁸ Janet Saad-Cook and M. E. Warlick, "Sun Drawing: Sculptures of Reflected Sunlight Connecting the Earth and Sky," *Leonardo* 22, no. 2 (1989): 124.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴⁰ Charles Ross, "Star Axis: Timeline," Artist, *Star Axis*, 2010, <http://www.staraxis.org/index0.html>.

⁴¹ Charles Ross, "Star Axis: About," Artist, *Star Axis*, 2010, <http://www.staraxis.org/index0.html>.

⁴² Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 38.

⁴³ Ross, "Star Axis: About."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

The interplay between viewer and the natural environment is further established by the architecture of the structures, which Ross describes as needing to 'feel' grown rather than architecturally designed,⁴⁵ creating a specific set of conditions that the viewer physically engages with. Thus, the interactivity of viewer and subject is integral to *Star Axis*, as Ross explains:

I am interested in how we personally interface with the larger order; and I think it is possible to have direct experience of how we are fitted to the stars. That is really what *Star Axis* is about Ourselves. By walking through this work, one will be able to directly experience the entire 26,000-year cycle of polar precession.⁴⁶

Star Axis is in the style of works that provide an architectural viewing platform for astrological phenomena, much in the same manner as temples of worship. Built on a grand scale, *Star Axis* resembles other works, which function as immersive environments to view celestial and atmospheric events. Artworks that are formed of building structures, merge art with architecture and the environment, and can be viewed as reflecting a conceptual unification between the built and natural environments.

Another large-scale architectural work, similar to *Star Axis*, is James Turrell's *Roden Crater* (Illustration 15) started in 1979, with construction continuing to the present. While the concepts and motivation of the works differ, like *Star Axis*, *Roden Crater* belongs to the group of works that function as celestial temples for the observation of celestial events.

Turrell could be considered as a minor figure in minimalism when it was popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but he became an important part of the post-minimalism traditions of the 1980s,⁴⁷ through his early works that used light and perception to create illusions of solid forms,⁴⁸ which later developed into total immersive environments.⁴⁹

His investigations into colour and light essentially bridged a gap between earlier minimal, expressionist 'colour field' traditions and the broadening movement that merged art and science.⁵⁰ Turrell began his investigations into light in 1969 when he was introduced to an experimental psychologist, Edward Wortz to collaborate on a 'light and sound' immersive visual environment. While this piece never eventuated, it

⁴⁵ Saad-Cook et al., "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy," 125.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 124.

⁴⁷ Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Autumn 1990): 12.

⁴⁸ Saad-Cook and Warlick, "Sun Drawing: Sculptures of Reflected Sunlight Connecting the Earth and Sky," 9.

⁴⁹ Patrick Beveridge, "Color Perception and the Art of James Turrell," *Leonardo* 33, no. 4 (2000): 305.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 306.

set Turrell on a path of artistic investigation that he has continued to present day, most significantly in *Roden Crater*.⁵¹

Roden Crater is an extinct volcano near Flagstaff, in the Arizona Desert, USA.⁵² Turrell purchased the dormant volcano in 1974 (in addition to the 400 square kilometres of pastureland around it), and began designing a system of rooms, connecting passages and lookout points. The primary purpose of these was intense perception of light.⁵³ Similar to Turrell's gallery-based installations and investigations, *Roden Crater* creates experience through the manipulation of light to create 'ethereal environments in which light is perceived as an almost a palpable, physical presence',⁵⁴ affecting the viewer on both a psychological and physiological level. The choice of a volcano reflects the 'state of mind engendered by looking into fire',⁵⁵ with *Roden Crater* creating shifts in perception and reality seeming to warp.⁵⁶

Similar to conceptual works such as Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* and Ross' *Star Axis*, *Roden Crater* draws on the cycles of the sun and moon, as well as bearing witness to astrological phenomena. *Roden Crater* has eloquently been described thus:

... an extinct cinder cone in a volcanic field that is being subtly altered by the artist's painstaking wizardry in order to put us in regulated synchrony with the cycles of sun and moon, with the unimaginable time of earth's history, and with the changing phenomena of the void of the sky above being suffused with celestial light, day after day.⁵⁷

This demonstrates the enormity of the interactions with natural phenomena that the viewer will be subjected to upon the eventual completion of *Roden Crater*. Turrell describes this work as 'not so much observing the events but observing something that happens inside the space',⁵⁸ referring to the manner in which the atmospheric or astrological events affect the room or tunnel in which viewer is situated, stating 'the structure is literally in response to the events in the heavens'.⁵⁹

⁵¹ Ibid., 305.

⁵² James Turrell, "Roden Crater," *Grand Street*, no. 54 (Autumn 1995): 240.

⁵³ Lailach, *Land Art*, 94.

⁵⁴ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 29.

⁵⁵ Saad-Cook et al., "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy," 129.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁵⁷ Robert Rosenblum, "A Postscript: Some Recent Neo-Romantic Mutations," *Art Journal* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 76.

⁵⁸ Saad-Cook et al., "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy," 128.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

As with other architectural based works, *Roden Crater* is ongoing, with a complex system of tunnels viewing rooms and auditorium that are being progressively built in stages.⁶⁰

Landscape Art

Contrasting architecturally built works are those that utilise landscaping with a remedial function. In these works, artists work in the environment planting trees, bushes and other flora to restore the natural environmental order of a particular site.

Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison represent a partnership resulting in one of the earliest practices of landscape restoration. The Harrisons' early practice involved the production of many gallery-based works, of which *Portable Orchid* of 1972-73 from the *Survival Piece Series* is a striking example. These works parallel their conceptual concerns through the production of an indoor installation involving 'twelve four foot in diameter hexagonal redwood boxes, three feet deep, planted with assorted citrus trees, topped by hexagonal redwood light boxes',⁶¹ that were produced in reaction to the industrial development in Orange County that was threatening the food orchards.⁶²

Works such as this represent their early concern with the environment, which later culminated in their large-scale restorative works. These works involve an extensive consultation process in which the Harrisons' confer with a variety of people including journalists, mayors, public officials, artists and farmers to 'discover an appropriate solution that optimises twin components: biodiversity, which depends upon the continuity and connectivity of living organisms; and cultural diversity, which requires framing and distinction between communities'.⁶³

Spoils Pile, from 1977, epitomises the Harrison's practice in landscape reclamation. In this project the Harrisons' regenerated part of a 'spoils' pile, which was originally a quarry filled with the debris generated by the construction of the Niagara Power Plant.⁶⁴ To achieve this, they diverted approximately 3,000 truckloads of earth and organic materials, including mulch of leaves and grass, to transform approximately 20 acres from clay and rock to a viable meadow with trees and berry

⁶⁰ Michael Heizer is also currently building a large scale complex, started in 1972 in the American Desert, as stated on Nick Tarasen, "Double Negative | A Website About Michael Heizer," Artist (Unofficial), 2010, <http://doublenegative.tarasen.net/>. However as the nature of the building has not been definitively stated as being purely architectural or with the intention of experience natural conditions it has been excluded from this chapter.

⁶¹ Converted measurements are 1.2 metres in diameter by 0.91 metres tall.

⁶² Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, "Survival Pieces," Artist Website, *The Harrison Studio*, 2010, http://www.theharrisonstudio.net/survival_pieces_ii.html.

⁶³ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 32.

⁶⁴ Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, "The Harrison Studio Artpark," Artist Website, *The Harrison Studio*, 2010, <http://theharrisonstudio.net/artpark2.html>.

patches.⁶⁵ This evolving, living work has continued to grow and further the process that the Harrisons' initiated.

A key element in the Harrisons' practice is that they are collaborating with and for nature, rather than to benefit an individual or company. As they state:

Our work begins when we perceive an anomaly in the environment that is the result of opposing beliefs or contradictory metaphors. Moments when reality no longer appears seamless and the cost of belief has become outrageous offer the opportunity to create new spaces - first in the mind and thereafter in everyday life.⁶⁶

The Harrisons continue to produce works in reaction to environmental concerns. However, while they continue to work on landscape restoration projects, many of their recent works are more conceptually based rather than actively remedial, and feature in the art gallery rather than the environment.

Similar to the landscaping projects of the Harrisons are works like *Fair Park Lagoon* (Illustration 7), 1981, Patricia Johanson's earliest large-scale project.⁶⁷ As previously mentioned, the *Fair Park Lagoon* project transformed the algae infested waters of the Leonhardt Lagoon, part of the Dallas Museum of Natural History's Park Complex, from a dangerous eyesore into a popular, ecologically friendly park and tourist attraction⁶⁸ after Johanson's *Plant Drawings for Project* exhibition was seen at the Rosa Esman Gallery, New York,⁶⁹ in 1978.⁷⁰ The lagoon had undergone a process of eutrophication, brought about by algal bloom caused by a year's worth of fertiliser being washed into the waters from the surrounding lawns.⁷¹

Fair Park Lagoon, like many of Johanson's works, drew on complex design principles, which have been a common thread in her practice, dating back to 1968 and the production of *Stephen Long* in which a 500-metre long, single line sculpture comprised of the three primary colours, stretched into the horizon to disappear into the vanishing point. The use of lines in her productions, as well as the vanishing perspective, adds a sense of depth and adventure and gives rise to the description 'Line Gardens'.⁷²

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, "The Harrison Studio," Artist Website, *The Harrison Studio*, 2010, <http://theharrisonstudio.net/>.

⁶⁷ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 67.

⁶⁸ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 101.

⁶⁹ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 66.

⁷⁰ Patricia Johanson, "Patricia Johanson - Resume," *Varo Registry of Women Artists*, 2010, <http://varoregistry.org/johanson/resum.html>.

⁷¹ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 2.

⁷² Lailach, *Land Art*, 66.

Johanson draws complex sketches that incorporate both visual aesthetic elements as well as ecological concerns, merging science, ecology and art.⁷³ In preparation for the construction of the sculpture park at the eutrophicated lagoon, Johanson researched ways of restoring the balance of the area and requested several particular species of plants and animals to be used to restore the natural balance of the ecosystem, which included:⁷⁴

- fifteen bank and emergent plant species,
- four kinds of floating plants,
- three different submerged plants,
- eleven fish species
- five types of turtles, and
- several kinds of ducks.

In addition, she recommended anglers be permitted to fish the waters for sunfish with the stipulation that they were not permitted to throw them back.⁷⁵ This reflected the immediate efforts of Johanson's remediation, which had the subsequent effect of several species later returning to the lagoon. The other effect was that producing a sculpture park that the community could enjoy also encouraged the community to appreciate and consider the natural environment. Johanson believes that art can heal environmental devastation through the production of sculptural gardens that have engaging aesthetics, while reviving the surrounding ecosystem.⁷⁶

Another form of environmental art that engages with the land through a form of landscaping, is Agnes Denes' *Tree Mountain* (Illustration 16), which also uses organic growing materials, in the form of trees, to forge an environmental message in society's mind. While Denes' most well-known work was *Wheatfield: A Confrontation* of 1982, which involved the planting of two acres of wheat in Lower Manhattan (mentioned in Chapter Two), *Tree Mountain*, was a much larger scaled work, realised in 1995, involving much more extensive and permanent remediation to the landscape.

Based on a concept Denes had designed much earlier in 1982,⁷⁷ *Tree Mountain* is a constructed mountain measuring 420 metres long, 270 metres wide and 28 metres high in an elliptical shape, in

⁷³ Sanders, "Eco-Art: Strength in Diversity," 79.

⁷⁴ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 67.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Kelley, *Art and Survival*, 3.

⁷⁷ *Land and Environmental Art*, 161.

gravel pits at Pinziö, Ylöjärvi, Finland, as part of a generational reclamation project.⁷⁸ Conceptually *Tree Mountain* crosses several boundaries. 100,000 trees were planted in an intricate pattern 'derived from a combination of the golden section and sunflower/pineapple pattern designed by Denes'.⁷⁹ Each tree has an average lifespan of 400 years so that trees can be passed down through the generations to the descendants of the original person invited to plant a tree.⁸⁰ These people were invited from all over the world.

The trees themselves are significant as Denes explains:

Trees see so much history, they sway and whisper, hibernate and turn to blossoms. My forests are not landscaping where a tree is put there for contrast among paths and bushes to decorate a park or garden. A serious forest means business, not cutting business or profit, but demanding attention, respect, awe if beautiful and mysterious.⁸¹

Again the triangulation that Denes has extensively researched, underpins this work, merging science, art and ecology. *Tree Mountain* was deliberately produced on a site that had been degraded by mining, in an effort to not only raise awareness but also to restore the degraded site.⁸² This work effectively connects present generations with future generations.

Tree Mountain illustrates the conceptual nature of these works. It asks the viewer, from whichever generation, to consider the environment in its natural form rather than in an almost sanitised state, as found in carefully tended, aesthetically pleasing parks and gardens. *Tree Mountain* will eventually become a forest, as the trees grow and drop seeds to eventually undo the careful mathematical lines, allowing the natural disorder of nature to again take hold. It represents a long-term environmental message that could be interpreted as reflective of concepts like reforestation.

Changes in Large-Scale Works

The artworks discussed in this chapter, which are selected from the 1960s to more recent projects, and represent some of the largest examples of their kind, illustrate a shift in the conceptual nature of the artwork, from those that consider the environment and reflect upon it from dedicated sites, to those that are more ecologically conscious.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Agnes Denes, "Agnes Denes: Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule," *Arts and Science Collaborations, Inc*, 1995, <http://www.asci.org/news/featured/denes/denes.html>.

⁸⁰ Agnes Denes, "What it Means to Plant a Forest," *Green Museum*, 2010, http://greenmuseum.org/content/artist_content/ct_id-198__artist_id-63.html.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Brady, "Aesthetic Regard for Nature in Environmental and Land Art," 296.

The early large-scale works produced during the tail end of the 1960s were highly conceptual, reflecting the newly allowed freedom of an art culture that was not reliant on the art object. *Double Negative* exemplifies this concept, as the art is in the distinct lack of object, with the negative space being emphasised. The art 'object' is abstracted and conceptually created through meaning: *Nothing* becomes *Something*.

In contrast, *Spiral Jetty* is a parafait of layered meaning.⁸³ This work aesthetically represents the concepts of primordial beginnings, time and entropic decay that interrelate with the physical properties of the site, as well as linking with the location's myth and legend. Thus, in this work we can see the beginnings of environmental art closing the links between work and site. While it is not a major conceptual basis, environmental concerns do play a significant part in this work. Smithson chose the site of a disused mine, which has had the effect of protecting the site from further mining.⁸⁴

The linkage between the concept of site and work is epitomised by De Maria's *Lightning Field* as the work is, while still aesthetically appealing, essentially incomplete without the occurrence of a lightning storm, thus forming a union between artwork and environment.⁸⁵ These three works represent a cluster where concept played a major role. However, it is interesting to note that all of these artists later moved away from large-scale environmental works such as these.

The works of the 1970s saw the beginnings of several long-term projects, for example the architectural complexes *Star Axis* and *Roden Crater*, which are built for the expressed purpose of observing natural phenomenon, and described as celestial temples. While predicted to be opening to the general public soon, these works have both been under construction since the 1970s and represent an almost obsessive dedication to the exploration and expression of natural and celestial events.

The late 1970s also saw the beginnings of the Harrisons' landscape reclamation projects that followed their other environmentally conscious practices. Landscape reclamation also became a part of other artists' practices, as evidenced by Johanson's *Fair Park Lagoon*. These restorative works have an element of community engagement both in their construction, through the consultation process and physical assembly, and through the access that people have to these works, which enables the artists to raise awareness of the natural environment in the wider community. Both the Harrisons' and Johanson have continued this practice to present day.

⁸³ James Housefield, "Sites of time: organic and geologic time in the art of Robert Smithson and Roxy Paine," *Cultural Geographies* 14, no. 4 (October 2007): 537-561.

⁸⁴ "Robert Smithson: Spiral Jetty Preservation," Arts Organisation, *Dia Art Foundation*, 2009, <http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/59/1245>.

⁸⁵ Walter De Maria, "The Lightning Field," *Artforum* (1970): 57.

These works also represent a forward-looking attitude, as they allow a connection with restored nature that will be enjoyed for generations. This attitude is epitomised by Denes' *Tree Mountain*,⁸⁶ which is specifically intended to exist for several generations. It is both restorative and carries a relevant ecological message across the generations.

Perhaps in defiance of entropy, these works have a marked presence in both the landscape and art history, due to their size and prominence. They all leave a legacy whether it is by the concepts that the artists realise or the positive environmental impact that the works have brought about. It will be only through the test of time that the impact of these works will be known. The most significant legacy of the large-scale environmental art is the instigation of grand designs and big ideas by the early environmental artists, which influenced the development of the later, more ecologically remedial works that continue to progress and have an impact.

⁸⁶ Denes, "Agnes Denes: Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule."

Illustration 11 Michael Heizer
Double Negative, 1969, excavated earth,
approx. 500 metres, Nevada Desert, USA
Photo by Sam Morris, Las Vegas Sun



Illustration 12 Robert Smithson
Spiral Jetty, 1969, basalt, rock, salt,
500 x 4.5 metres, Great Salt Lake, Utah, USA,
Photo from Art Fag City



Illustration 13 Walter De Maria
Lightning Field, 1977, 400 metal rods,
Western New Mexico, USA
Photo from Phillip's Garden



Illustration 14 Charles Ross
Star Axis, 1971, architectural building,
variable size, New Mexico, USA,
Photo from Land Light Foundation



Illustration 15 James Turrell
Roden Crater, 1979, architectural building,
variable size, Arizona, USA,
Photo from Mondo Mondo



Illustration 16 Agnes Denes
Tree Mountain, 1992-1996, 10,000 trees,
Pinziö, Ylöjärvi, Finland
Photo by Agnes Denes, Green Museum



CHAPTER 4: Ephemeral Art and the Gallery

If something lasts only briefly, can it still be full of meaning?
How do we dissolve the idea of other? Is living in peace possible?
How can kindness become the base of our lives?
Can we grasp the brevity of life, and still rejoice? ¹

The artist Diana Thompson poses these questions in her artist statement on her website, considering the meaning and value of objects that are not built to last: objects that are ephemeral. The emergence of ephemerality as an expressive art form has intrinsic value for environmental art forms.

The pre-1960s art world hinged on the long lasting object, which could be sold, valued and commodified. Conceptual art subverted this idea of the 'commodified art object' by recontextualising the value of an object, to emphasise what it meant rather than what it was. The object itself became almost irrelevant. For environmental art, this opened up a completely new avenue of expression, through works that were produced, but did not necessarily need to continue to exist.

Beginning with a short discussion of the conceptual nature of ephemeral art, this chapter focuses on impermanent forms of environmental art, which may only continue to exist in documentary photographs. It presents the manner in which environmental artists have engaged with this idea since the beginning of the environmental art movement, how this relates to the former emphasis on the gallery, and how the relationship between environmental artists and galleries has changed.

Ephemeral Art

The word 'ephemeral' refers to the idea of impermanence, and stems from the 16th century use of the Greek word 'ephemeris' meaning 'daily'.² It refers to 'ephemera': objects that exist, or are used or enjoyed for only a short time. In an environmental art context, it refers to artworks that are created, but are not intended to last, and so only continue to exist in the documentation specifically produced to keep something of the artwork, like photographs, film, writings, formal documents such as maps, contracts and designs or in conceptually complementary gallery works.³

¹ Diana Thompson, "Artist Statement," Artist, *Diana Lynn Thompson*, 2010, <http://www.dianathompson.net/statement.html>.

² "Ephemeris", *The Free Dictionary*, 2010 <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/ephemeris>

³ While ephemeral art is intrinsically linked to the natural environment, it is not exclusive and can also refer to the urban environment, and is frequently linked with street art, whereby artists create quick, often illegal, works in public spaces. Examples of recent ephemeral street art are in the collections of the Wooster Collective. The emphasis in these works is statement and individuality and often works are not repeated, as stated in Cedar Lewisohn, *Street Art : The Graffiti Revolution* (London: Tate, 2009); so when they degrade or are removed they exist only in whatever documentation was taken at the time. For street artists or groups like the Wooster Collective, the internet has become the documentary collective of these 'here today, gone tomorrow' artworks, which also enhances the wide-ranging public profile of such works which is another core-value of street art, as reflected in "Wooster Collective," Artist Collective, *The Wooster Collective*, 2010, <http://www.woostercollective.com/>; "Wooster Collective: Environmental," Artist Collective, *The Wooster*

The forms of ephemeral art linked to environmental art vary, the most well known being sculptures from natural, organic, degradable materials like leaves, ice, or mud. Another form utilises synthetic non-degradable materials, but are intended as temporary site-specific installations and removed after a given time-period. The third major engagement with the concept of ephemerality is through pure process, referring to works that employ a set of actions within an environment but leave no lasting trace.

The development of ephemeral art has stemmed from the conceptual art movement, relating particularly performance art, which established a firm footing in the 1960s, at the same time as the emergence of environmental art.⁴ Essentially this form of environmental art was described as having ‘...claims of “phenomenological” inspiration and minimalism’s historical ties with happenings and other performances by Fluxus and the anti-art movement’ at the beginning of the 1960s.⁵

Conceptual art’s strongest influence on ephemeral art, is in the decentralisation of the importance of a final art object and the emphasis on the thought behind the work. In ephemeral art, this is combined with significance of process (stemming from performance art where the action is of importance), as well as the short-term duration of the work and required documentation. In an environmental art context, this emphasis on processes can be expressed as follows:

The work of the [Environmental] Artist cannot easily be identified with this or that particular object which the hands of the artist have made, but more with the relationship between that object (sometimes a mere rearrangement of on-site stones, for instance, or a line drawn on the desert floor) and the otherwise untouched site. The ‘landscape art’ in this case is that relationship.⁶

The ‘art’, therefore, is not in the production of an object by an artist, but in the connection between the artist and the environment. This movement away from a ‘final’ work has implications for the relationship between the genre of environmental art and the gallery system.

The Art of Natural Materials

Many artists work with natural materials, incorporating organic as well as manufactured materials in their work.⁷ While some artists utilise found materials to build sculptural constructions, others choose recontextualisation to present the object in its own right, by moving it to form a line or pattern. These

Collective, 2010, <http://www.woostercollective.com/environmental/> and contrasts with the often highly personal and intimate nature of environmental art. .

⁴ As mentioned previously

⁵ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 130 - 131.

⁶ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 204. Andrew uses the term Earth Artist rather than Environmental Artist.

⁷ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 78.

kinds of work have elements of the Duchampian Ready-Made, utilising elements of the environment rather than a synthetic object. In this context the description 'found sculptures' can be used.⁸ The natural material is allowed to exist in its 'home' environment, in an 'art object' context. In this way the objects are free to continue their natural degradation, (sometimes into oblivion), contrasting sharply with the displayed artwork, which is often drawn from a carefully preserved museum collection, to which it will eventually return. Thus, it is the works that utilise natural materials that most closely align with the environmental concept of ephemerality.

Andy Goldsworthy's installations using natural materials (Illustration 17) demonstrate his working practices of placement and ephemerality. His earliest engagement with the land, from the age of 13, was as a farm labourer establishing a connection at a very young age.⁹ He began to produce environmental artworks while he was studying the Fine Arts course at Preston Polytechnic,¹⁰ working outside of the studio and doing exploratory works using natural materials.¹¹ Beginning his career in the 1970s, Goldsworthy is considered as part of the 'younger generation' of environmental artists who practiced in the environment, but were not part of the early exhibitions in the 1960s.¹²

In creating his sculptures, Goldsworthy considers himself as a collaborator with nature and is interested in the elements of the natural environment, from the way rain pools in a hole, to sun and shadows. He is described as having an interest in the 'nature of things, in their colour, form and composition, in their taste and smell, and in their place within nature',¹³ and is primarily concerned with richly symbolic, abstracted forms, like holes, voids, circular patterns, spirals and wandering lines.¹⁴ As his works emphasise aesthetic, formal qualities, Goldsworthy has been criticised as having a 'populist decorativeness and a dewy-eyed sentimentalisation of nature'.¹⁵ However this interpretation ignores the sculptural elements of his work, as well as the concepts that underpin them.

Goldsworthy's ephemeral installations utilise natural materials and processes that quickly degrade, in some cases only lasting long enough to be documented before blowing or melting away. While these works are man-made, the materials give them an organic quality, as if they could have happened by chance.¹⁶ They incorporate elegant sculptural forms that emphasise process, colour, the use of line and

⁸ Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 12.

⁹ Sue Hubbard, "Into the darkness.," *New Statesman* 136, no. 4838 (April 2, 2007): 39.

¹⁰ Eleanor Robbins, "Hand To Earth: Andy Goldsworthy Sculpture 1976–1990," *Art Book* 12, no. 2 (May 2005): 29.

¹¹ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 81.

¹² Lailach, *Land Art*, 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁴ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 82.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁶ Andy Goldsworthy and Terry Friedman, eds., *Hand to Earth* (Leeds: W, S Maney and Son Ltd, 1990).

shape, tone and mass, in keeping with an almost formalist emphasis on the importance of the visual qualities of a work.¹⁷

At the centre of his works is an interest in decay and disintegration,¹⁸ which may take days or just moments to occur. Thus, it is the pattern of activity that Goldsworthy engages with that is of more importance than the final object,¹⁹ significantly placing the role of documentation as secondary to his practice. However, photography does play a key role in Goldsworthy's practice, as in many cases it is the only means of assessing his shortly lived pieces.²⁰

Ephemerality forms the core of Goldsworthy's practice. However, contrasting other environmental artists, Goldsworthy's gallery based works tend to reflect his more permanent works rather than his ephemeral working practices.²¹ Goldsworthy is thus known for his actions, rather than his gallery-based objects.

Engaging with the landscape in a similar way to Goldsworthy, is the ritualistic environmental artist Chris Drury. In 1982, Drury decided to focus on works from natural and found materials,²² contrasting his earlier figurative studies.²³ However, the main turning point in his career was in 1975,²⁴ when he took a 'walk' in the Canadian Rockies with well-known walking artist, Hamish Fulton.²⁵ Fulton's works were considered revolutionary, provoking a 'reassessment of our relationship with land and landscape',²⁶ which had a considerable effect on Drury. Drury's practice developed from these early experiences with walking works, where he began to make small interventions into the environment and collected materials to use later, as he describes:

Works made from these experiences are essentially photographic. These early interventions have taught me how to use simple, local materials which can give rise to large structures, made cheaply and simply with a minimum CO₂ footprint. Shelters later became *Cloud Chambers* and baskets, woven architectural structures.²⁷

¹⁷ Meecham, *Modern Art : A Critical Introduction*, 26 - 27.

¹⁸ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 81.

¹⁹ Edward Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945*, World of Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 156 - 157.

²⁰ Aleksandra Malczak, "The Ecological Imperative: Elements of Nature in Late Twentieth-Century Art," *Leonardo* 35, no. 2 (2002): 132.

²¹ While best known for his ephemeral works, Goldsworthy also produced a number of 'permanent' commissions later in his career, from about 1986, as referred to in Andy Goldsworthy, *Hand to Earth: Andy Goldsworthy Sculpture 1976-1990* (Leeds: W.S. Maney in association with the Henry Moore Centre for the Study of Sculpture, 1991), 143 which extend the underlying themes and working methodologies of his ephemeral works. .

²² Chris Drury and Kay Syrad, *Silent Spaces* (Thames & Hudson, 2004), 7.

²³ Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.*, 193.

²⁴ Drury and Syrad, *Silent Spaces*, 6.

²⁵ Chris Drury, "Biography," Artist, *Chris Drury*, 2010, <http://www.chrisdrury.co.uk/home.htm>.

²⁶ Drury and Syrad, *Silent Spaces*, 7.

²⁷ Chris Drury, "Chris Drury, Land Artist - Working with Nature," 2010, <http://www.chrisdrury.co.uk/>.

One of the most significant works for Drury was *Medicine Wheel*, produced from 16th August 1982 to 15th of August 1983.²⁸ The precise dates of this work are significant, as it essentially functions as a calendar, organising natural objects that reflect each day of the year that Drury spent collecting them. Each of the 365 collected items were strung between 24 spokes of an eight-foot wheel,²⁹ into a mandala like structure,³⁰ which references the influences of Zen Buddhism in Drury's practice.³¹

Drury has a distinctly diversified practice, producing works that range from movement of natural materials, like his 1996, *Stone Whirlpool*, in Japan to his woven works and structural chambers. Drury frequently employs concepts and principles from non-western cultures in the conceptual distinctions between culture and nature,³² consciously evoking the spiritual dimension of his practices.³³ Many of his works are immersive, and allow the viewer to enter and experience a particular phenomenon, essentially placing Drury in a role that could be described as a 'shaman',³⁴ forming a 'creative interface between the world and the viewer', through meditative spaces.³⁵

Works that exemplify the connection between the viewer, artwork and environment, are his *Cloud Chambers* (Illustration 18) from the 1990s, for example *Wave Chamber* of 1996,³⁶ in which the viewer must enter and be sealed inside the artwork. These works represent ephemerality in two different ways: they rely on changing environmental conditions to function and are not built to be permanent. These chambers contain a hole in the roof to act as a frame to the world beyond, or as a mirror to work as a lens connecting the intimate chamber (and the viewer) to the outside world. Some of Drury's *Cloud Chambers* also function in the manner of a camera obscura, with the sky above reflected onto the floor below.³⁷

In these immersive works, the viewer can personally engage with the work and the short lasting environmental conditions, an element that is lost when works such as these are translated into the gallery setting. Drury regards the photograph 'to be a poor substitute for the work itself...'³⁸ which has implications for the experience of his work in a gallery setting.

²⁸ Drury and Syrad, *Silent Spaces*, 18 - 19.

²⁹ Ibid., 7.

³⁰ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 85.

³¹ Drury and Syrad, *Silent Spaces*, 6.

³² Tufnell, *Land Art*, 84.

³³ Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.*, 195.

³⁴ Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive chaos : the creation of flowing forms in water and air* (London: Rudolf Steiner, 1996). As referenced in Drury and Syrad, *Silent Spaces*, 12.

³⁵ Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.*, 203.

³⁶ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 88.

³⁷ Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.*, 200.

³⁸ Ibid., 202.

Much of Drury's practice relies on experience and physical engagement with the natural environment, which is quite distinct from the experience that can be gained in a gallery setting. However, many of Drury's other practices, weaving for example, are transferable to the gallery and essentially function as a companion practice that echoes the concepts underpinning Drury's non-gallery environmental art. Drury effectively realises environmental art concepts through the production of companion works for the gallery.

The production of companion works is also present in the practice of Diana Thompson, an artist working between Australia and Canada, who could be considered as part of the 'third wave' of environmental artists, following the work of artists like Goldsworthy. Her practice involves the use of a wide range of materials, utilising both manufactured objects and natural resources. She engages with the environment in a variety of ways, utilising sequential designs and presenting, in some cases, an almost obsessive nature in her work through counting, sequence and patterning.³⁹

To highlight environmental concepts Thompson uses fabricated objects, including those that are salvaged and recycled, as well as natural degradable materials.⁴⁰ Her practice is process driven, exemplified by her work *The Word and The Leaf*, from 1999, in which she counted and numbered every leaf on a tree outside her studio. She describes the inspiration for this act as simply because she was curious, and repeated the process again between 2000 and 2001, in *Hundreds and Thousands*.⁴¹ For Thompson the dominant influence is the conceptual process and the mental engagement with the subject, rather than an end product.

Thompson acknowledges the ephemerality of her practice stating: 'The pleasure for me is the process of creating the work, and the sensibility that comes from being there.'⁴² In her work she combines the impermanence of nature with a strong emphasis on the formal elements at play in her works, for example the 2003 installations in her *Gesture* series (Illustration 19), temporarily installed on beaches where the community could see and engage with the work. These works essentially open a dialogue between the community and the planet, which is furthered by her practice of cleaning the site. As she

³⁹ Diana Thompson, "Diana Lynne Thompson," Artist, *Diana Lynn Thompton: Environmental and Participatory Art*, 2010, <http://www.dianathompson.net/statement.html>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Diana Thompson, "Hundreds & Thousands: Interactive Ephemeral Participatory Art on Leaves," Artist, *Diana Thompson*, 2010, <http://www.dianathompson.net/hundreds/htmain.html>.

⁴² Diana Thompson, "Gesture 1," Artist, *Diana Thompson*, 2010, <http://www.dianathompson.net/Gesture/g1.html>.

states: 'Sometimes I picked up globs of tar, syringes and items that could be dangerous or unhealthy for children or animals to encounter. It felt like a healing gesture to do this.'⁴³

In these works, photography is used largely to document the existence of the work rather than for gallery exhibition. Thompson's practice incorporates gallery-based installations like *Spill*, 2006, featured in the eARTH exhibition. This installation incorporated leaves from various trees, including the Sweet Gum, Hickory, Sycamore and Sugar Maple, suspended on wire in the gallery,⁴⁴ and is reflective of other works like *Rain Catcher*, 2005, which involved synthetic materials suspended in the environment.

Thompson describes *Rain Catcher* thus:

By draping the tree with pale green cotton yarn (the kind used for knitting sweaters) in shapes that echoed the curve of the branches, I was speaking about the physical connection between our bodies and the body of the tree.⁴⁵

Her permanent gallery-based sculptural works reflect her environmental works. An example are those exhibited in *Being Here*, 2008, an exhibition of collected shells strung together to form mobiles. These shells exemplify the artist's desire for calm and natural meditation,⁴⁶ reflective of the natural environment. Thus, like Drury, Thompson practises two forms of environmental art in tandem, one ephemeral in the natural landscape, the other produced for the gallery.

The Art of Synthetic Materials

While the most distinct example of ephemerality in this context is through natural materials, another engagement is through temporary, site-specific installations. Works in this genre interact with the natural environment as site, essentially recontextualising the environment from 'quintessential landscape' to 'art interactive'.

There are many instances where the environment functions as 'setting' and may not be considered as environmental art, particularly when defining environmental art as 'an artistic process or artwork in which the artist actively engages with the environment'.⁴⁷ Works that are considered environmental art are those that interact with the environment in a way that the work and environment are fundamentally linked in the one work. In contrast to organic works, these works are not typically formed with decay in

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "eARTH: Islands Institute Gallery Show," Arts Organisation, *Islands Institute*, 2010, <http://www.islandsinstitute.com/gallery/eARTH/Thompson/index.html>.

⁴⁵ Diana Thompson, "Rain Catcher," Artist, *Diana Thompson*, n.d., <http://www.dianathompson.net/gallery/raincatcher.html>.

⁴⁶ Diana Thompson, "Being Here: Installation at the Point Gallery Saltspring," Artist, *Diana Thompson*, 2010, http://www.dianathompson.net/Being_Here/point.html.

⁴⁷ As stated in to introduction and elaborated on in Appendix A from Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

mind, rather the work is intended to exist for a set timeframe and then is taken down and removed from the site.

Christo and Jean-Claude are known for their large-scale environmental installations (also known as sited-sculpture) in both natural and urban environments,⁴⁸ and have been using the artistic process of wrapping since the late 1950s, beginning with gallery-based works and later moving out into the landscape.⁴⁹ Their process involves adding fabricated materials to temporarily alter the site. These large-scale installations are entirely self-funded through the sale of drawings, collages and models.⁵⁰

Christo spent most of his life in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, where he studied both engineering and 19th Century art.⁵¹ Partnered with his wife Jean-Claude, his work was both conceptually ground breaking, in his instances of wrapping and thus negating the decorative elements of an object like a painting or a building such as the Reichstag, 1995, as well as feats of planning and engineering to achieve such ambitious projects. Thus, Christo can be viewed as a significant artist who combines the fields of conceptualism and engineering in an artistic sense, on a grand scale. Perhaps even more significant is that all Christo and Jean-Claude's projects are uncommissioned and self-funded. They select the site and design the work themselves, as well as engage the local community in the production, personally negotiating permissions, support and labour for their project.⁵²

One of the more prominent examples of their work is *Running Fence* (Illustration 20) completed in 1976,⁵³ which was reportedly visible from the moon. Situated in California, *Running Fence* involved the suspension of a long strip of nylon material, which spanned more than twenty-four miles and was eighteen feet high. It was left in place for fourteen days.⁵⁴

Conceptually *Running Fence* subverts the borders that are imposed on the landscape to define ownership. This is achieved by directly relating the border to the land, conforming to the contour of the earth and obeying natural corrugations, outcrops and other formations. Described as 'an artistic

⁴⁸ Gill Perry and Paul Wood, eds., *Themes in Contemporary Art* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 212.

⁴⁹ Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "Biography," Artist, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude*, 2010, <http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/bio.shtml>.

⁵⁰ Lailach, *Land Art*, 32.

⁵¹ Charles Garoian, Roy Quan, and Dan Collins, "Christo: On Art, Education, and the Running Fence," *Art Education* 30, no. 2 (February 1977): 17.

⁵² Robert Russell, "A Beginner's Guide to Public Art," *Art Education* 57, no. 4 (July 2004): 22.

⁵³ Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "Running Fence," Artist, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude*, 2010, http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/running_fence.shtml.

⁵⁴ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 204 - 208.

reflection on the arbitrary nature of borders',⁵⁵ *Running Fence* is considered to be a parody of "the iron curtain",⁵⁶ on the other side of which Christo lived until he emigrated to the West in 1957.⁵⁷

In contrast to *Running Fence*'s position along the landscape, is Christo and Jean-Claude's practice of literally wrapping objects, which began in the late 1950s.⁵⁸ While one of the best-known urban 'wraps' was the Reichstag in Berlin, Germany (completed in 1995 after development began in 1971),⁵⁹ they also made 'wrapped' interventions into the landscape including the *Wrapped Coast* project (Illustration 21), of 1969,⁶⁰ which was 14.5 km from Sydney, Australia in Little Bay.⁶¹

Funded through a grant from the industrialist and collector John Kaldor, *Wrapped Coast* used 92,900 square metres of fabric and 56 kilometres of polypropylene rope to hold the fabric in place and effectively wrap the enormous cliffs and coastline.⁶² Using the rope to draw the draped fabric into place, the wrappings in *Wrapped Coast* contoured the curves and convexities of the rocky coastline,⁶³ making it resemble a topographic map. This work recontextualised the landscape into something described as 'neither tracing nor map, but rather an intermediate reality; both new geography and system of coordinates', that referenced the landscape through rope drawn gridlines.⁶⁴ Thus, *Wrapped Coast* functioned as both a temporary redefinition of the landscape into an artwork and a redesign of the landscape itself.

These works are considered ephemeral in the manner in which they are designed, put in place, then removed after a given time period. They are documented and the photographs presented in the gallery. However, the emphasis of the work remains on the installation rather than the documentation, as is the case with other ephemeral works. The documentation accompanying Christo and Jean-Claude's projects also serves an important function, as it is through the sale of such documentation that these

⁵⁵ Ibid., 204.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ A similar work to *Running Fence* is described in Lailach, *Land Art*, 34. *Valley Curtain* was completed in 1971 in the Colorado Desert. this work could be considered exemplifying the ephemerality of man-made materials as it was destroyed shortly after installation, when it unfurled prematurely in the strong winds, and had to be taken down to be restitched. It was then reinstalled in 1972

⁵⁸ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁹ Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "Wrapped Reichstag," Artist, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude*, 2010, <http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/wr.shtml>.

⁶⁰ Christo and Jeanne-Claude, "Biography."

⁶¹ Lailach, *Land Art*, 32.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 171.

projects are largely funded.⁶⁵ Thus, in these works the role of the gallery is both representational and commercial.

The Art Without Material

While artists working from materials, either natural or synthetic, require the production of some form of object, another form of environmental art relies solely on the process without the object. The most poignant examples are walking works.⁶⁶

Steeped with distinctly performative elements, walking artists have a direct yet often passive engagement with the landscape, and rely entirely on documentation for these works to be realised in a gallery setting.

In these works, the role of documentation or production of a complementary gallery-based work is of a higher importance and greater emphasis, as there is no 'object' at any stage in the actual art process. These are ephemeral in the fleeting nature of the engagement, as it only takes a moment for the artist to pass through a particular place. Process works such as these have a meditative aspect, drawn from the conceptual nature of the art form. Some suggest that the act of journeying is not just physical but also mental, linking walking works to the Australian dreamtime.⁶⁷

Hamish Fulton is a walking artist who studied with another well-known walking artist, Richard Long, at St Martin's School of Art in London, and while some of their methodology is similar, Long is described as having a 'divergent, if sometimes overlapping, set of concerns' to Fulton.⁶⁸

Fulton's work is deeply personal, charting a personal journey he has taken through a landscape, using both text and image to document his works, alluding to the 'subjectivity and unreliability' of the memory of the experience.⁶⁹

Fulton's works focus on the physical and mental experience of the work.⁷⁰ For Fulton, walking is not just a process to promote meditation and achieve self-awareness, 'walking itself is his art', and is a consistent element through all his artistic engagements.⁷¹ In contrast to many other environmental artists, Fulton does not alter the environment. He states: 'I do not directly rearrange, remove, sell and

⁶⁵ Lailach, *Land Art*, 32.

⁶⁶ While some of Thompsons practice is process driven it has not been included here as it is a minor component of her output.

⁶⁷ Malpas, *Land Art in the U.K.*, 47.

⁶⁸ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 73.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁷¹ Lailach, *Land Art*, 44.

not return, dig into, wrap, or cut up with loud machinery any elements of the natural environment'.⁷² Instead, he uses fabricated materials like carved wood and photography, however stating that the difference is symbolic, rather than ecological.⁷³

Fulton's gallery-based representations of his works take various forms, incorporating photographs, texts and photographic collages.⁷⁴ Many of his works are painted directly onto gallery walls (Illustration 22), a practice he has used since the 1980s. He plans and designs the work, then leaves the directions for the crafts people to construct, who then remain anonymous.⁷⁵

For Fulton, the gallery-based work is secondary and is not necessary for the existence of the work. He states 'A walk has a life of its own, it does not need to be made into art. I am an artist and choose to make my artworks from real life experiences'.⁷⁶ Through his work, he addresses the interpretative nature of a gallery-based documentary work for both the artist and the viewer, stating: 'The texts are facts for the walker and fiction for everyone else. Walking into the distance beyond imagination'.⁷⁷ Essentially the words on the gallery wall are only a 'trace of a walk', functioning as a signifier for the 'real' works in the landscape and could be considered in the manner of an echo or ghost of the walk.

Like Fulton, Richard Long is a British artist who produced his first walking work, *A Line Made by Walking* (Illustration 23) in 1968, which is one of the earliest works associated with the environmental art movement. This work was described as an 'audacious work that was radically simple, breaking completely with traditions of landscape art',⁷⁸ as it was one of the first works employing walking as an artistic process, and did not result in a distinctive artwork.

A Line Made by Walking involved the process of repeatedly walking back and forth along a set path in a meadow, resulting in a path of flattened blades of grass, which was then photographed.⁷⁹ Long's walks serve to 'make apparent an idea, for example the amount of time taken to walk all the paths within an imaginary circle or the relativity of human and geological time'.⁸⁰

This simple working methodology is typical of Long's artworks, where he draws his journey on a map, or photographs or otherwise documents the path he has taken or describes the journey in words. His

⁷² Fulton As quoted in Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 75.

⁷⁵ Lailach, *Land Art*, 46.

⁷⁶ Fulton as quoted in Ibid.

⁷⁷ Fulton as quoted in Ibid., 44.

⁷⁸ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 11.

⁷⁹ Lailach, *Land Art*, 70.

⁸⁰ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 76.

process also includes sculptural elements, whereby he creates works with 'easily manipulable material' that he finds on site, along the path of his journey. This is reflected in works such as *A Line in Australia*, 1977.⁸¹ The work shows 'a line of scattered red stones, their loose fit structure harmonising with the desert landscape'.⁸²

Long describes his integration with the environment, which is inclusive of both landscape and urban environments, as important,⁸³ stating that the 'the work itself along with the exhibition of the work and the publication of books are all necessary for [him]'.⁸⁴ This suggests that, like many other environmental practitioners, Long's artworks form an essential part of his being.

The importance of the role of documentation is suggestive of the complementary role the gallery plays in Long's practice. While he produces sited works, like stone circles in a particular location,⁸⁵ he also produces works with found materials for the gallery, for example *Stone Circle*, 1979, housed in the Art Gallery of South Australia's contemporary art collection. Long describes the nature of his engagements thus:

My art is a portrait of my being in the world. A footprint as a portrait and as the trace of this passing through; every work of mine (the visible) exhibited in a gallery or museum echoes another work (invisible) left in nature. ⁸⁶

This illustrates Long's own feelings about his art, demonstrating the interactivity between the work and the gallery. For Long, a medium like photography provides a window for the viewer to share his experiences of his walks.⁸⁷ His photographs are always accompanied by captions,⁸⁸ providing shape and context to the walk, situating it as something more than just a snapshot of a landscape. Long also exhibits maps, pictographs, diagrams and texts to document his movements through a particular tract of country,⁸⁹ detailing the path of the journey.⁹⁰

⁸¹ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 235.

⁸² Lailach, *Land Art*, 72.

⁸³ Vergine, *Art on the Cutting Edge*, 145.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945*, 156.

⁸⁶ Vergine, *Art on the Cutting Edge*, 145.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 235.

⁸⁹ Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945*, 156.

⁹⁰ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 11.

In contrast to these documents, Long's sculptural gallery works literally bring the elements of his walks into the gallery for the viewer, presenting mud hand-print circles and assemblages of stone and wood on the floor to 'call attention to what the gallery cannot contain – a landscape'.⁹¹

The Role of the Gallery

Charting the progression of ephemeral works from the 1960s to the present requires consideration of various ways these works interact with the concept of ephemerality. Of particular importance is the role of the gallery in exhibiting the works of ephemeral environmental artists and the manner in which they do this.

Christo and Jean-Claude's environmental explorations began with *Wrapped Reichstag*, however their practice of wrapping and using fabric began in the 1950s with their early gallery works. This makes them a unique example of ephemerality as their work began in the gallery and was then extended into the environment, utilising the commercial nature of the gallery to fund their environmental works.

In these works, the gallery serves as a connection to the work in the environment, but cannot fully represent it. This is similar to the function of the gallery for Fulton's practice. He utilises documentary elements such as photographic collages and text based recounts of his practice, but maintains they remain abstracted from the actual work and therefore cannot fully represent it. This is indicative of the mental engagement he has with his work, which has an essence of intentional vagueness when viewed in the gallery.

The role of the gallery as a pointer to the 'real' work in Christo's and Jean-Claude's practice and Fulton's works is in some ways contrasting to the documentary nature that the gallery has for artists such as Long and Goldsworthy, whose practice in the environment followed in the 1970s.

For these latter artists the gallery provides access to environmental art, through documentation and complementary gallery works. The role of the gallery is almost essential to artists like Goldsworthy, as many of his works are ephemeral to the point of only lasting minutes, as exemplified in his 1990s works in ice, and is vital for walking artists like Long, who acknowledges the gallery-based work as having as much importance as the physical walk.

While the above artists' practice is based in the environment, a more recent artist, Chris Drury (who has been practising in an ephemeral form since the 1980s), has an almost polarised practice, which extends between the gallery and the land. While there is the element of photographic documentation of

⁹¹ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 204.

his works in an environment, these works are reliant on the viewers' physical engagement with the work and experience of natural effects like the camera obscura. However, he also produces gallery-based works that are conceptually, and in some cases methodologically, linked to the environmental works but are not ephemeral.

Diana Thompson's works are similar in many respects to Drury's. With her environmental practice beginning in the 1990s, she also has a tandem practice between natural installations and gallery-based works that have linked conceptual elements, which are referential to the environment.

The artists mentioned in this chapter have been selected to reflect prominent works that most closely engage with the various concepts of ephemerality, spanning the lifetime of the environmental art movement to the present. Ephemeral art's relation to the gallery can be charted as moving away from the gallery to later return.

Christos and Jean Claude's work, which began with a gallery-based process, was then extended to engage with the environment, both natural and urban. The gallery, however, continued to play a part through sale of documentation to fund other works. In contrast, Fulton and Goldsworthy's practice essentially abandons the gallery in favour of the physical engagement with the environment. More contemporary artists like Thompson and Drury have a form of tandem artistic practice between the environment and the gallery, producing separate bodies of work for each.

The progression of ephemeral art is perhaps indicative of the progression of art history at large. In the beginning of the conceptual movement in the 1960s, artists moved out of the gallery and ephemeral works of the 1970s (like Fulton, Long and Goldsworthy) reflect this emphasis on non-gallery based practice. However, later works indicate a return to the gallery (partially at least), perhaps due to the requirement of producing saleable works, as well as the importance of representation. It is the unfortunate nature of ephemeral art that, once it has gone, there is little to prove it existed, which makes its commercial value problematic at best.

Illustration 17 Andy Goldsworthy

Ice, 2007, snow, twigs,

Photo from *The Creative Instinct*

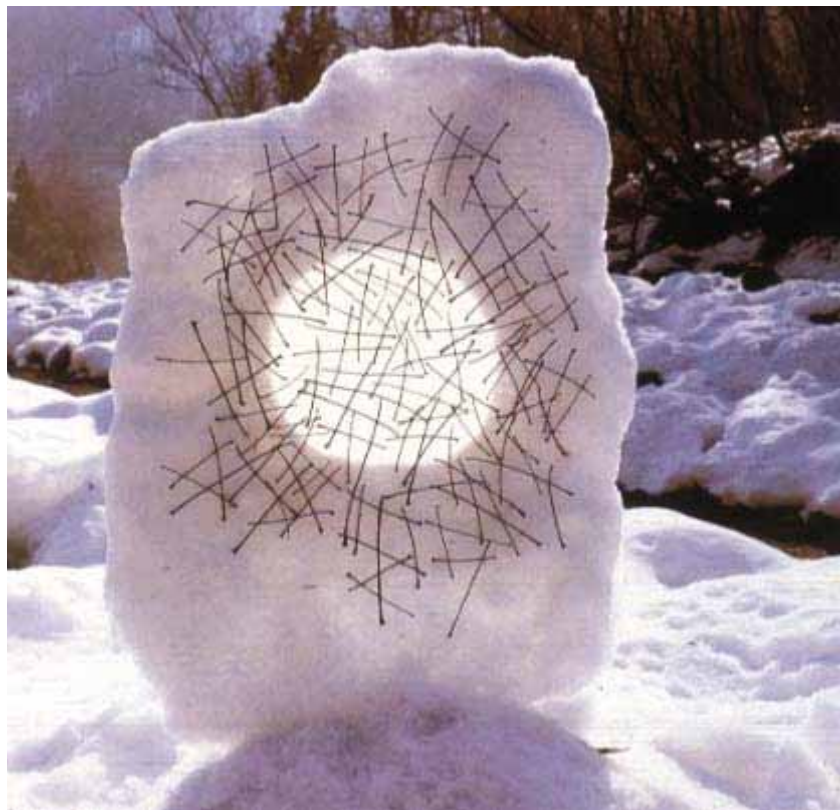


Illustration 18 Chris Drury
Sky Mountain Chamber, 2010, rock, branches,
Malga Costa, Val di Sella, Italy,
Photo from Daring To Do



Illustration 19 Dianna Thompson
Gesture Series, 2003, shells, stones,
variable, Vancouver, Canada,
Photo by Diana Thompson, Diana Thompson. Net



Illustration 20 Christo and Jean-Claude

Running Fence, 1976, nylon fabric, steel cables,

5.5 meters high, 39.4 kilometres long, Sonoma and Marin Counties, California,

Still from *Running Fence* Directed by: Albert Maysles, David Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin



Illustration 21 Christo and Jean Claude

Wrapped Coast, 1969, erosion control fabric, polypropylene rope 2.4,
variable size, Sydney, Australia,
Photo by Jean Claude, icollector



Illustration 22 Hamish Fulton
Geronimo Homeland, 2007, vinyl wall text,
2.6 x 3.4 metres, Christine Burgin Gallery, New York
Photo by Hamish Fulton, Christine Burgin Gallery

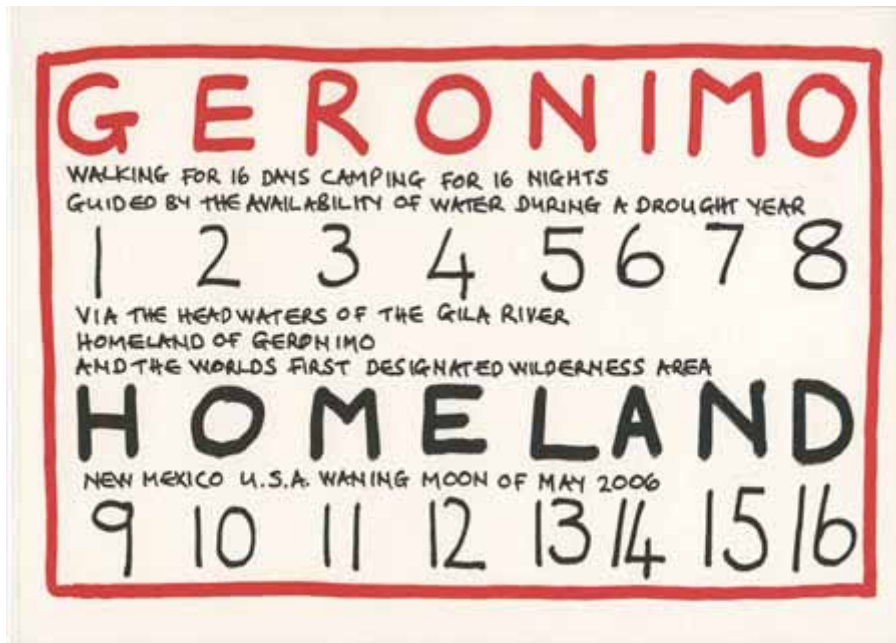


Illustration 23 Richard Long
A Line Made by Walking, 1968, crushed grass,
National Galleries of Scotland
Photo by Richard Long,



CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to identify particular changes within the paradigm of environmental art since its beginnings in the late 1960s to the present. To achieve this, thematic chapters focus on specific engagements in environmental art, including investigating women and the environment and the interactions from an Ecofeminist perspective; ephemeral art and the relationship between these works and the gallery; and the large-scale environmental art works that are the most notable of the genre, and in which some of the major changes were defined.

These chapters illustrate the changes that have occurred in the most prevalent forms of environmental art, as a representation of the far wider environmental art movement. They aim to contribute to an understanding of the changing paradigm of environmental art identified as a gap in the research in the review of the relevant literature.

Literature Review

The literature review in Chapter One, demonstrates that the currently available texts on environmental art can be identified as belonging to one of three main approaches:

- texts that focus on works associated with a specific style or mode of production, that tend to present environmental art at a given point in time without forming conclusions about the progression,
- texts that link environmental art under specific conceptual ideas, incorporating a wider range of influences within both art and culture or,
- texts that discuss environmental art from a historical perspective, establishing environmental art as sub-genre of a wider art movement, or with strictly factual direction that includes style and concept only in general terms.

These texts look broadly at environmental art but do not combine the above approaches to look at the interactions between artist and natural landscape and chart how these interactions have changed over time. Thus, the explorations in the literature review determined that there was a need for investigations into environmental art to establish how the genre has changed since the 1960s, combining style, concept and mode of production.

The Progression of Environmental Art

Environmental art began in the 1960s when there were several revolutionary changes in art history. Through these changes, that saw conceptualism, performance art and cross-disciplinary art forms

cross over into cultural fields like feminism, the different forms of environmental art began to take shape.

The chapters in this thesis each aimed to look at a specific set of interactions within environmental art, investigating works that are underpinned by a concept or framework, works that are large-scale and prominent and works that are not intended to last and what this means for the gallery and the artist.

Chapter Two focuses on the progression of environmental art from a conceptual standpoint and tracks the changes within a specific environmental art framework. This chapter presents an investigation of environmental art from the perspective of women environmental artists, as underpinned by the conceptual relationship with feminism, particularly Ecofeminism.

Looking at prominent and early environmental art produced by women demonstrates that the genre could be associated with the two main forms of Ecofeminism: Cultural Ecofeminism, that draws on 'mother earth' symbolism and cultural iconology and Social Ecofeminism, which links with the belief that women have a proactive role in the environmental health of the planet. Environmental art produced by women, within the framework of Ecofeminism, has evolved from practices that employed female symbolism and ritual linking them with Cultural Ecofeminism. It then progressed to works that moved entirely away from the earth goddess concepts of Cultural Ecofeminism and placed women at the centre of environmental remediation, aligning with Social Ecofeminism. Finally, Ecofeminism moved into works that are hybridised, linking with elements of both Cultural and Social Ecofeminism. Thus, the progression of women's environmental art, as underpinned by Ecofeminist concepts, has moved from earth-mother symbolism to a rejection of such principles to an all-encompassing practice.

Contrasting the conceptual direction of Chapter Two, Chapter Three focuses on the large-scale examples of environmental art, those that are the most prominent and recognisable of the genre. The works featured in this chapter were selected for their sheer size, spanning many kilometres in some instances, and impact on the landscape.

These works show a progression from the early 1960s, whereby the role and importance of the natural environment in the function and concept of the works steadily increases. The progression of large-scale artworks can be charted from works that strongly focused on the conceptual nature of the artwork, and were interactive with the environment. The genre of large-scale environmental works then moved into artworks that were more transitional in nature and reflected upon the environment from dedicated sites, considering aspects of the natural environment like light and celestial events. Many of these started in the 1970s and are still under construction today. Finally, with the exception of the on-going

works by Turrell and Ross, the large-scale environmental art genre has evolved into those works that are more ecologically conscious and intentionally setting out to repair and reclaim the natural landscape. Thus, the most significant element of the latter large-scale works is the positive remedial effect that they can have on the environment.

Chapter Four presents a contrasting environmental art practice to that explored in Chapter Three, in the drastically smaller, yet still prominent ephemeral environmental art. Where large-scale artworks are permanent, ephemeral works, by their very nature, are not. Thus, Chapter Four looks at short-lived environmental art and interaction with the gallery.

Selecting works that most closely engage with the concept of ephemerality, Chapter Four is divided into three main interactions: works utilising organic material, works using synthetic material and works that have no final product.

This chapter establishes that there was an initial movement away from the gallery (which was reflective of trends in broader art history), to works that were in favour of the physical engagement with the outside environment and used the gallery as a signpost to what was occurring. This then resulted in artists engaging in a tandem practice, producing both works for the gallery and in the environment. It can be speculated that this is due to the requirement of producing saleable works, as well as the importance of representation within contemporary art practice.

The forms of environmental art described in this thesis are major components of the environmental art movement, however, many more interactions between artist and the natural environment could be charted.

Future Research Possibilities

Any of the themes and interactions investigated in this thesis could be expanded and investigated further, as the scope of this thesis was intended to include a sampling of environmental art that was reflective of the major forms and concepts. Furthermore, within these themes and concepts, different approaches could be adopted.

Environmental art is an expansive genre, which is not limited to style, approach or concept, but is defined by the engagement between artists and the environment. As such, there are an extensive number of interactions that could be investigated. However, only a few were selected for this thesis, to represent aspects of the major interactions.

The field of Ecovention within environmental art is a growing sub-genre that has only been touched upon briefly within the context of these chapters. Ecovention and other environmentally remedial art forms, however, have been present since the beginnings of environmental art. It is in this area that the extension of the environmental art movement will be most visible and, therefore, these interactions are worthy of further investigation. Some of the different Ecoventionist interactions between artist and the environment are investigated in the articles in Appendices B and C.

Many artists whose practices could be associated with Ecovention tend to have strong spiritual responses to the environment. This spiritual and ritual relationship between artist and the environment is another major dimension to environmental art that could be investigated, as it forms a core value of many artists' practices, as well as permeating their daily lives.

Linking with the restorative elements of environmental art and the interactions between humans and the environment on an individual level, is the effect social and political trends have on environmental art practice. The environment is politically potent and the influence of politics on the further development of environmental art would be a relevant and significant future extension to this thesis.

Within this field there is also the opportunity of identifying and investigating environmental art with a more distinctive focus on a particular country or region. For example, investigation into the practises of Australian artists such as Hossein and Angela Valamanesh or Fiona Hall in a broader environmental art context, or the progression of environmental art in a country like Australia.

Significance of Environmental Art Research

Environmental art is a wide art movement that encompasses a variety of different interactions, concepts and methodologies. As the possibilities of future work suggests, there is still much to be researched in the area of environmental art, both in producing these magnificent works that draw from the natural environment of our planet and in investigating, charting and writing about what is produced. The lasting influence of environmental art is yet to be determined. However, it is an undeniably powerful art practice that may eventually permeate throughout society for the benefit of the natural world. As Tiberghien writes:

The importance of ...[environmental art] stems from the desire to revive, through art, another type of knowledge, one which would be based on our perceptible experience, but at the same time would permit it to be raised to an impure aesthetic experience..., which claims a "regard hybrid" at the intersection of the cognitive, the religious and the perceptible. ¹

¹ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 226.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Adam, Carol J. *Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals*, 1991.
- Andrews, Malcolm. *Landscape and Western Art*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Beardsley, John. *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*. 3rd ed. Abbeville Modern Art Movements. New York: Abbeville Press, 1998.
- Bonham-Carter, Charlotte. *The Contemporary Art Book*. London: Goodman, 2009.
- Drury, Chris, and Kay Syrad. *Silent Spaces*. Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- Foster, Hal. *Postmodern Culture*. London: Pluto Press, 1985.
- _____. *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996.
- Gablik, Suzi. *Has Modernism Failed?* New York, N.Y: Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- _____. *The Reenchantment of Art*. 1st ed. New York N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1992.
- Gadon, Elinor. *The Once and Future Goddess : A Symbol for our Time*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.
- Goldsworthy, Andy. *Hand to Earth: Andy Goldsworthy Sculpture 1976-1990*. Leeds: W.S. Maney in association with the Henry Moore Centre for the Study of Sculpture, 1991.
- Hopkins, David. *After Modern Art 1945-2000*. Oxford history of art. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Jodidio, Philip. *Green Architecture Now!* 1st ed. TASCHEN America Llc, 2009.
- Kelley, Caffyn. *Art and Survival: Patricia Johanson's Environmental Projects*. Salt Spring Island, B.C: Islands Institute, 2006.
- Lailach, Michael. *Land Art*. Köln, London: Taschen, 2007.
- Land and Environmental Art*. Themes and movements. London: Phaidon, 1998.
- Lewisohn, Cedar. *Street Art : The Graffiti Revolution*. London: Tate, 2009.
- Lippard, Lucy. *Overlay : Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*. New York: New Press; Distributed by Norton, 1995.
- Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Movements in Art Since 1945*. World of Art. London: Thames and Hudson, 2000.
- Malpas, William. *Land Art in the U.K*. Maidstone: Crescent Moon, 2007.
- Meecham, Pam. *Modern Art : A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. London ;New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Perry, Gill, and Paul Wood, eds. *Themes in Contemporary Art*. London: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Plant, Judith. *Healing the Wounds : The Promise of Ecofeminism*. London: Green Print, 1989.
- Plath, Sylvia. *The Collected Poems*. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1981.
- Popper, Frank. *Art-Action and Participation*. New York: New York University Press, 1975.
- Robbins, Eleanor. "Hand To Earth: Andy Goldsworthy Sculpture 1976–1990." *Art Book* 12, no. 2 (May 2005): 29-30.
- Rorimer, Anne. "Content as Context: Surveying the Site." In *New Art in the 60s and 70s: Redefining Reality*, 228 - 273. London: Thames & Hudson, 2001.
- Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. London: Harper Collins, 1995.
- Schwenk, Theodor. *Sensitive Chaos: The Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air*. London: Rudolf Steiner, 1996.
- Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*. Cincinnati OH: Greenmuseum.org and Contemporary Arts Center: Ecoartspace, 2002.
- Stangos, Nikos. *Concepts of Modern Art : From Fauvism to Postmodernism*. 3rd ed. New York N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1994.
- Vergine, Lea. *Art on the Cutting Edge: A Guide to Contemporary Movements*. Milan: Skira

Editore, 2001.

Journal Articles

- Art, Architecture, Environment*. Artlink v. 11, no. 4. Henley Beach, S.A: Artlink, 1992.
- Artlink*. 'Ecology: Everyone's Business'. Semaphore, S. Aust: Artlink, 1981.
- Beardsley, John. "Traditional Aspects of New Land Art." *Art Journal* 42, no. 3 (1982): 226.
- Best, Susan. "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta." *Art History* 30, no. 1 (February 2007): 57-82.
- Beveridge, Patrick. "Color Perception and the Art of James Turrell." *Leonardo* 33, no. 4 (2000): 305-313.
- Blum, Andrea, Houston Conwill, Patricia Johanson, Joyce Kozloff, Alan Sonfist, George Sugarman, Athena Tacha, John Pitman Weber, and Elyn Zimmerman. "From the Other Side: Public Artists on Public Art." *Art Journal* 48, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 336-346.
- Boettger, Suzaan. "Behind the Earth Movers." *Art in America* 92, no. 4 (April 2004): 55-63.
- Brady, Emily. "Aesthetic Regard for Nature in Environmental and Land Art." *Ethics, Place & Environment* 10, no. 3 (October 2007): 287-300.
- Cooke, Lynne. "Review: Michael Heizer. New York." *The Burlington Magazine* 136, no. 1098 (September 1994): 648.
- Cyphers, Peggy. "The Consumption of Paradise." *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 52-56.
- Danto, Arthur. "The Artworld." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (October 15, 1964): 571-584.
- De Maria, Walter. "The Lightning Field." *Artforum* (1970): 57.
- Denes, Agnes.. "Notes on Eco-Logic: Environmental Artwork, Visual Philosophy and Global Perspective." *Leonardo* 26, no. 5 (1993): 387-395.
- Denes, Agnes.. "The Dream." *Critical Inquiry* 16, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 919-939.
- Gablik, Suzi. "The Ecological Imperative." *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 49-51.
- Garoian, Charles, Roy Quan, and Dan Collins. "Christo: On Art, Education, and the Running Fence." *Art Education* 30, no. 2 (February 1977): 17-19.
- Garoian, Charles R. "Art Education and the Aesthetics of Land Use in the Age of Ecology." *Studies in Art Education* 39, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 244-261.
- Glazebrook, Trish. "Karen Warren's Ecofeminism." *Ethics and the Environment* 7, no. 2 (2002): 12-26.
- Haldane, John. "Transforming Nature: Art and Landscape.." *Art Book* 10, no. 3 (June 2003): 10-12.
- Higgins, Dick. "The Origin of Happening." *American Speech* 51, no. 3 (Autumn - Winter 1976): 268-271.
- Hobbs, Robert, ed. "Earthworks: Past and Present." *Art Journal* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 191-194.
- Housefield, James. "Sites of time: organic and geologic time in the art of Robert Smithson and Roxy Paine." *Cultural Geographies* 14, no. 4 (October 2007): 537-561.
- Hubbard, Sue. "Into the darkness.." *New Statesman* 136, no. 4838 (April 2, 2007): 38-40.
- Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 31-44.
- _____. "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum." *October* 54 (Autumn 1990): 3-17.
- Linsley, Robert. "Minimalism and the City: Robert Smithson as a Social Critic." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 41 (Spring 2002): 38-55.
- Mańczak, Aleksandra. "The Ecological Imperative: Elements of Nature in Late Twentieth-Century Art." *Leonardo* 35, no. 2 (2002): 131-136.

- Mathew, Deborah. "What Is Ecofeminist Art?." *Women & Environments International Magazine*, no. 52 (2001): 10.
- McEvelley, Thomas. "Philosophy in the Land." *Art in America* 92, no. 10 (November 2004): 158-193.
- McFadden, Jane. "Toward Site." *Grey Room*, no. 27 (Spring 2007): 36-57.
- Mendieta, Ana, and Charles Merewether. "Portfolio." *Grand Street*, no. 67 (Winter 1999): 40-50.
- O'Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube*. University of California Press, 1999.
- Orenstein, Gloria Feman. "The Greening Of Gaia." *Ethics & the Environment* 8, no. 1 (2003): 103.
- Rorimer, Anne. "Europe in the Seventies: Aspects of Recent Art." *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1973-1982)* 71, no. 5 (October 1977): 6-7.
- Rosenblum, Robert. "A Postscript: Some Recent Neo-Romantic Mutations." *Art Journal* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 74-84.
- Russell, Robert. "A Beginner's Guide to Public Art." *Art Education* 57, no. 4 (July 2004): 19-24.
- Saad-Cook, Janet, Charles Ross, Nancy Holt, and James Turrell. "Touching the Sky: Artworks Using Natural Phenomena, Earth, Sky and Connections to Astronomy." *Leonardo* 21, no. 2 (1988): 123-134.
- Saad-Cook, Janet, and M. E. Warlick. "Sun Drawing: Sculptures of Reflected Sunlight Connecting the Earth and Sky." *Leonardo* 22, no. 2 (1989): 151-158.
- Sanders, Patricia B. "Eco-Art: Strength in Diversity." *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 77-81.
- Song, Young Imm Kang. "Community Participatory Ecological Art and Education." 28 (February 2009): 4-13.
- Thompson, Diana. "Diana Lynn Thompson." Artist. *Diana Lynn Thompson: Environmental and Participatory Art*, 2010.
- Tiberghien, Gilles A. *Land Art*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995.
- Tufnell, Ben. *Land Art*. London; New York: Tate; Distributed in the U.S. by Harry N. Abrams, 2006.
- Turrell, James. "Roden Crater." *Grand Street*, no. 54 (Autumn 1995): 239-248.
- Warshall, Peter. "Eco-Art." *Whole Earth*, no. 101 (2000): 92.

Catalogue essays

- Viso, Olga. *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body, Sculpture And Performance 1972–1985 Catalogue*. New York N.Y.: Hirshhorn Museum, 2004.

Encyclopaedia / Dictionary entries

- "Entropy." In *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Fourth. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.
- "Ephemeros." *The Free Dictionary*, 2010.
<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Ephemeros>.

Newspaper Articles

- Barcio, Phillip. "Art for Earth's Sake: Jackie Brookner's Biosculptures." *Tikkun Daily*, 2009.
<http://www.tikkun.org/tikkundaily/2009/12/03/art-for-earth%e2%80%99s-sake-jackie-brookner%e2%80%99s-biosculptures/>.
 Accessed: 01 November 2010
- Bauer, Marilyn. "Art of a New Nature." *Enquirer*, 2002.
http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2002/06/27/tem_art_of_new_nature.html.

Accessed: 01 November 2010

Bongartz, Roy. "It's Called Earth Art -And Boulderdash." *The New York Times*. New York, February 1, 1970, sec. The New York Times Magazine.

Glueck, Grace. "Moving Mother Earth." *The New York Times*. New York, 1968, October 6 edition, sec. Art Notes.

Speckman, Stephen. "Can art, oil mix? Spiral Jetty friends think not." *Deseret News*. Salt Lake City, February 14, 2008.

Morris, Sam. "Sculpture Entrenched in Earth - 'Double Negative' Turns Empty Space into Art Experience." *Las Vegas Sun*, 2008.

Thesis/Dissertations

Matthews, Elaine. "Environmental Art and its Contribution to Establishing an Awareness of the Sacred in Nature." Rhodes University, 2000.

Simus, Jason. "Disturbing Nature's Beauty: Environmental Aesthetics In A New Ecological Paradigm." Doctor of Philosophy, USAS: University of North Texas, 2009.

Websites

Amann, Brian. "The Lagoon at Fair Park." *Picasa*, 2009.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/lh/photo/ePNdeyJWasSgkDr4wHnXWg>.

Accessed: 01 November 2010

Art Fag City. "Spiral Jetty Update and Conversation Points." *Art Fag City*, 2008.

<http://www.artfagcity.com/2008/02/01/spiral-jetty-update-and-conversation-points/>.

Accessed: 01 November 2010

"'Arte Sella', il contemporaneo che sposa la natura." *Daring To Do*, 2010.

<http://www.daringtodo.com/lang/it/2010/06/21/arte-sella-il-contemporaneo-che-sposa-la-natura/>.

Accessed: 01 November 2010

Bowers, Sam. "A Profusion of Terms." Arts Organisation. *Green Museum*, 2010.

http://www.greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=306.

Accessed: 15 May 2010

Brookner, Jackie. "Biosculptures." Artist. *JackieBrookner.net*, 2002.

<http://www.jackiebrookner.net/biosculpture.htm>.

Accessed: 5 May 2010

Christo, and Jean-Claude. "Biography." Artist. *Christo and Jean-Claude*, 2010.

<http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/bio.shtml>.

Accessed: 21 August 2010

_____. "Running Fence." Artist. *Christo and Jean-Claude*, 2010.

http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/running_fence.shtml.

Accessed: 21 August 2010

_____. "Wrapped Reichstag." Artist. *Christo and Jean-Claude*, 2010.

http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/wrapped_reichstag.shtml.

Accessed: 21 August 2010

Denes, Agnes. "Agnes Denes: Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule." *Arts and Science Collaborations, Inc*, 1995. <http://www.asci.org/news/featured/denes/denes.html>.

Accessed: 10 June 2010

_____. "What it Means to Plant a Forest." *Green Museum*, 2010.

http://greenmuseum.org/content/artist_content/ct_id-198__artist_id-63.html.

Accessed: 15 October 2010

Drury, Chris. "Biography." Artist. *Christ Drury*, 2010.

<http://www.chrisdrury.co.uk/home.htm>.

- Accessed: 21 August 2010
_____. "Chris Drury, Land Artist - Working with Nature," 2010.
<http://www.chrisdrury.co.uk/>.
Accessed: 25 April 2010
- "eARTh: Islands Institute Gallery Show." Arts Organisation. *Islands Institute*, 2010.
<http://www.islandsinstitute.com/gallery/eARTh/Thompson/index.html>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- "Geronimo Homeland." *Christine Burgin Gallery*, 2007.
http://www.christineburgin.com/exhibitions/eh_fulton_2007.html.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- "Hans Haacke: Rhinewater Purification Plant." *Green Museum*, 2010.
<http://www.greenmuseum.org/c/ecovention/rhine.html>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- Harrison, Helen Mayer, and Newton Harrison. "Survival Pieces." Artist Website. *The Harrison Studio*, 2010. http://www.theharrisonstudio.net/survival_pieces_ii.html.
Accessed: 25 April 2010
- _____. "The Harrison Studio." Artist Website. *The Harrison Studio*, 2010.
<http://theharrisonstudio.net/>.
Accessed: 6 October 2010
- _____. "The Harrison Studio Artpark." Artist Website. *The Harrison Studio*, 2010.
<http://theharrisonstudio.net/artpark2.html>.
Accessed: 6 October 2010
- Hull, Lynne. "Artist Statement." Artist. *Eco-Art*, 2008. <http://www.image-world.net/eco-art/etc/statement.html>.
Accessed: 25 April 2010
- "Inside IUPUI." *IUPUI*, 2003. <http://www.iupui.edu/news/insider082903.htm>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- Johanson, Patricia. "Patricia Johanson - Resume." *Varo Registry of Women Artists*, 2010.
<http://varoregistry.org/johanson/resum.html>.
accessed: 15 October 2010
- Krug. "Lynne Hull," n.d. <http://www.greenmuseum.org/c/aen/Bios/hull2.php>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- Leigh, Andrew. "Double Your Creative Output by Being in Two Places at Once (Seriously!)." *The Creative Instinct*, 2007.
<http://www.thecreativeinstinct.com/2007/09/26/two-places-at-once/>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- Manchester, Elizabeth. "Tate Collection | Untitled (Rape Scene) by Ana Mendieta." Art Gallery. *Tate Collection*, 2009.
<http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=95805&searchid=10581&roomid=5638&tabview=text>.
Accessed: 15 May 2010
- Mazeaud, Dominique. "Dominique Mazeaud Heartist." Artist, n.d.
<http://www.earthheartist.com/>.
Accessed: 22 July 2010
- _____. "The Great Cleansing of the Rio Grande." Artist. *Heartist*, 2010.
<http://www.earthheartist.com/cleansing.html>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- Mendieta, Ana. *Imagen de Yagul, from the series Silueta Works in Mexico 1973-1977*. Colour Photograph, 50.8 x 33.7 cm, 1973. Collection SFMOMA.
<http://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/9152>.

- Accessed: 5 May 2010
mondomondo. "Roden Crater Skyscape." *Mondo Mondo*, 2008.
<http://mondomondo.wordpress.com/2008/10/16/roden-crater-skyscape/>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- PhillipsGarden. "Lightning Field." *Phillips Garden*, 2010.
<http://phillipsgarden.com/news/?tag=lightning-field>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- Puthoff, Emily. "Graduate Art Seminar." *Graduate art Seminar*, 2010.
<http://graduateartseminar.blogspot.com/2010/04/joseph-beuys-7000-oaks-kassel-germany.html>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- "Robert Smithson: Spiral Jetty Preservation." Arts Organisation. *Dia Art Foundation*, 2009.
<http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/59/1245>.
Accessed: 2 January 2011
- Ross, Charles. "Star Axis: About." Artist. *Star Axis*, 2010.
<http://www.staraxis.org/index0.html>.
Accessed: 17 September 2010
- Simpson, Buster. "Buster Simpson," 2009. <http://www.bustersimpson.net/>.
Accessed: 25 April 2010
- Smith, Alan, and Delma Smith. "Sun Tunnels: Summer Solstice 2005." *Grouse Creek Golf and Country Club*, n.d. <http://www.grousecreek.com/photo-4.html>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- "SSRU Home." *Social Sculpture Research Unit*, n.d. <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.
Accessed: 16 May 2010
- "Star Axis." *Land Light Foundation*, 2010. <http://landlightfoundation.org/>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- Tarasen, Nick. "Double Negative | A Website About Michael Heizer." Artist (Unofficial), 2010. <http://doublenegative.tarasen.net/>.
Accessed: 25 April 2010
- "The Day After Tomorrow (2004) - IMDb." *The Internet Movie Database*, 2010.
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319262/>.
Accessed: 5 October 2010
- "The New York Earth Room." Arts Organisation. *Dia Art Foundation*, 2010.
<http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/52/1365>.
Accessed: 21 September 2010
- Thompson, Diana. "Artist Statement." Artist. *Diana Lynn Thompson*, 2010.
<http://www.dianathompson.net/statement.html>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- _____. "Being Here: Installation at the Point Gallery Saltspring." Artist. *Diana Thompson*, 2010. http://www.dianathompson.net/Being_Here/point.html.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- _____. "Gesture 1." Artist. *Diana Thompson*, 2010.
<http://www.dianathompson.net/Gesture/g1.html>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- _____. "Hundreds & Thousands: Interactive Ephemeral Participatory Art on Leaves." Artist. *Diana Thompson*, 2010. <http://www.dianathompson.net/hundreds/htmain.html>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- _____. "Rain Catcher." Artist. *Diana Thompson*, n.d.
<http://www.dianathompson.net/gallery/raincatcher.html>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010

- “Walter De Maria: The Lightning Field.” *Dia Art Foundation*, 2009.
<http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/56/1375>.
Accessed: 12 November 2010
- “What's On – Richard Long.” *National Galleries of Scotland*, 2007.
<http://www.nationalgalleries.org/whatson/exhibition/5:368/3655/3783>.
Accessed: 1 November 2010
- “Wooster Collective.” Artist Collective. *The Wooster Collective*, 2010.
<http://www.woostercollective.com/>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010
- “Wooster Collective: Environmental.” Artist Collective. *The Wooster Collective*, 2010.
<http://www.woostercollective.com/environmental/>.
Accessed: 21 August 2010

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Definitions

This section provides an extended explanation of the terms used in this thesis.

Assemblage:

While not necessarily an Environmental Art form, Assemblage has positive elements that are applicable to the environment and are manifest in many environmental artists' work in the various sub-genres of Environmental Art. Also described as Recycled Art,¹ Assemblage culminated in the Art Povera movement in the 1960s, of which the 'essential nature of the materials used is of fundamental importance'.² Many environmental artists incorporate the use of found materials in their artworks. Natural materials feature prominently in forms such as Ephemeral Art and synthetic materials are often re-used for a positive environmental effect in a variety of forms.

Cultural Ecofeminism:

Essentially this form of Ecofeminism invokes symbolism of The Great Mother, The Goddess or Gaia in order to 'emphasize the interconnectivity of three levels of creation, all imagined as female outside patriarchal civilisation: cosmic creation, procreation and artistic creation'.³ These works are fundamentally based on symbolic imagery of feminine empowerment and/or natural earth cycles.

Earth/Body Art

In an environmental art context, body art involves '...an engagement with the landscape and nature in which the body of the artist was explicitly placed within, subjected to, identified with and even merged with the earth'.⁴ Essentially body art, in an environmental art context, entails a physical engagement with the environment through a variety of different means in order to express a diverse range of concepts. The term 'Earth/Body Art' was coined by Ana Mendieta to describe her practice,⁵ and can be related to Site-Specific Performance.

Earthworks:

"Earthworks" are often considered a subset of "Land Art" however some use the terms interchangeably.⁶ Rosalind Krauss prefers the term 'marked sites' to describe the same form of interaction.⁷ The term 'earth works' in an art context was coined by Robert Smithson in 1967 as he

¹ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

² Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945*, 9.

³ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 103.

⁴ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 110. (p.62)

⁵ Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," 58.

⁶ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

⁷ Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field."

described: "A 'boring,' like other 'earth works' is becoming more and more important to artists. Pavements, holes, trenches, mounds, heaps, paths, ditches, roads, terraces etc., all have aesthetic potential..."⁸

Essentially, Earthworks describes sculptures that are not placed in the landscape, rather the landscape is the very means of their creation in remote, uninhabited locations and are left to change through erosion under natural conditions.⁹

Eco-Art:

Eco-Art, the contraction of Ecological Art,¹⁰ is a term for the ecologically responsive practices of Environmental Art and contrasts Land Art in both time and general philosophy. It is a more contemporary art movement, which addresses environmental issues and often involves collaboration, restoration and frequently has a more "eco-friendly" approach and methodology.¹¹ It can be used as an umbrella term that encompasses Ecovention, Restoration Art and Bio- Art (in an environmental art sense).

Ecofeminism:

Ecofeminism is a social and political movement that combines environmentalism and feminism, with some links to the philosophies of Deep Ecology. Ecofeminists argue that a relationship exists between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature, incorporating other issues like animal rights.¹² While not necessarily an art form, many women artists identify themselves as Ecofeminists, drawing on feminist principles in their work.¹³

Ecovention:

"Ecovention" (ecology + invention) is a term coined by Sue Spaid in her 2002 book of the same name, and describes an artist-initiated project that employs an inventive strategy to physically transform a local ecology.¹⁴ Also referred to as Restoration Art, the conceptual basis for the artistic process is specifically to repair damage done to the environment. Ecovention has also been historically described as 'Landscape Reclamation',¹⁵ typically referring to industrial sites and embraced in the 1970s with

⁸ As Quoted in Boettger, "Behind the Earth Movers," 59.

⁹ The term Earthworks is often used interchangeably with Earth art, however the exhibition Earth Art of 1969, was gallery based and included small scale sculptural works.

¹⁰ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Carol J. Adam, *Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals*, 1991.

¹³ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 108.

¹⁴ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*.

¹⁵ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 96.

several initiatives and exhibitions being held.¹⁶ The concept of Ecovention presents itself as large landscaping projects, which drastically transform a local ecology, as well as smaller projects that remedy a particular situation, like habitat loss in a specific area.

Environmental Bio-Art:

Bio-Art, in an Environmental Art context, refers to artworks that incorporate biological processes or living material to improve the environment. It incorporates Jackie Brookner's term Biosculpture,¹⁷ which refers to living sculptures that use the capacity of carefully chosen plants to clean and filter water.¹⁸ Essentially Environmental Bio-Art involves artworks that incorporate natural materials like plants or mosses for restorative function, and interlinks with Ecovention, though on a much smaller, isolated scale and incorporating gallery-based artworks.

Environmental Installation or Sited-Sculpture

Environmental Installation refers to works that, like gallery-based installations, introduce a sculpture into the landscape. While some sculptures like those in Ephemeral Art are more identifiable with environmental art, this term also refers to other installations that utilise the landscape as a setting. Also described as Sited-Sculpture, these works address the 'traditional concerns of sculpture', which include mass, form, volume, and surface with, as Beardsley describes, 'an explicit boundary between the work and the environment. Rather than being forms that have emerged from the landscape, they often have the look of objects that have been set down within it'.¹⁹

Ephemeral art:

Ephemeral Art describes art lasting for a markedly brief time,²⁰ and interlinks with the concept of Art in Nature. Art in Nature was predominantly an Italian, German and Scandinavian movement that 'explored the dialectic of nature and culture'.²¹ The works were usually outdoors in the countryside and were constructed using natural materials from the surrounding area,²² in a manner that did not cause irreversible damage to the environment. Also described as found sculptures, Ephemeral Art is expected to 'decompose and metamorphose with the natural processes of the seasons'.²³ There is a spiritual

¹⁶ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 103.

¹⁷ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 108.

¹⁸ Jackie Brookner, "Biosculptures," Artist, *JackieBrookner.net*, 2002, <http://www.jackiebrookner.net/biosculpture.htm>.

¹⁹ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 103.

²⁰ "Ephemeros," *The Free Dictionary*, 2010, <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Ephemeros>.

²¹ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 96.

²² Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

²³ Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 12.

element to these forms of art and the ritual of collecting, placing and recording plays an important part.²⁴

First Wave Environmental Artist:

This term refers to artists that began practising environmental art in the 1960s and were involved in the early exhibitions. These artists essentially 'set the scene' for environmental art practice and include artists like Richard Long, Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer.

Land Art:

Land Art is an older term in vogue in the 60s and 70s that has survived in common usage and suggests art made outdoors on the land.²⁵ Often the term is used as an umbrella term, like Environmental Art, or interchangeable with Earthworks referring to works in and about the landscape, as Beardsley describes:

Land Art...is in large measure about the landscape itself - its scale, its vistas, its essentially horizontal character, its topography, and its human and natural history. ...It reveals the changing characteristics that a work assumes in different conditions: diurnal or nocturnal light, winter glare or summer haze, full sun or clouded shadow.²⁶

The term Land Art is generally applied to early large-scale environmental works.

Non-Sites and Complimentary Gallery Based Works:

Non-Sites is a term first applied by Robert Smithson to his works that used materials from a particular site to form a gallery-based artwork that is connected to a particular site. As Malcolm Andrews describes "[these works are] specifically relational, and direct the spectator to the 'site' itself, thus setting up the back and forth rhythm that goes between indoors and outdoors".²⁷ While Smithson's gallery-based works were actually titled Non-Sites, this term can be applied to other artefacts complementary to site-specific Environmental Art that are presented in the gallery setting, for example the documentary photographs, maps and other materials related to a specific project.

Second Wave Environmental Artist:

This refers to the artists that began their practice in the 1970s and 80s, who were early and notable players in the movement, but were not a part of the early exhibitions. This includes artists like Andy Goldsworthy, Lynne Hull and Dominique Mazeaud.

²⁴ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 62.

²⁵ Bowers, "A Profusion of Terms."

²⁶ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*.

²⁷ Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 207.

Site – Specific Performance Art:

Stemming from Kaprow's Happenings, which were held both indoors and outdoors, Site-Specific Performance in an environmental sense allows the performers' ideas and bodies to interact with the natural environment. The nature of engagement between the artist and the environment varies from physical connections or insertion of the body into the land,²⁸ to performing an action that has an environmental restorative function.²⁹ Typically, these kinds of works are documented through either film or photograph.

Social-Sculpture:

Social Sculpture is a term used by Joseph Beuys and describes artwork in which there is an interrelationship between the environment and society,³⁰ with the aim of rejuvenating both.³¹ Essentially this form of Environmental Art implies a sense of social interactivity that ranges from environmental projects, involving the local community,³² to works that require interactivity between the human viewer and the artwork, promoting an awareness of natural environmental conditions.³³

"Every human being is an artist, a free being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and inform our lives".³⁴

Social Ecofeminism:

Social Ecofeminism highlights the interactivity of humanity with nature. Social ecology is described as challenging the separation of nature and culture.³⁵ Artists whose practice is more in line with social Ecofeminism are described as having 'internalised the knowledge that humans are capable of living on the earth without destroying it... these artists tend to focus on healing the damage through direct, hands-on, aesthetic and scientific collaborations with the earth herself'.³⁶ Essentially, it involves women artists taking control to promote positive environmental change.

²⁸ Best, "The Serial Spaces of Ana Mendieta," 58.

²⁹ Buster Simpson, "Buster Simpson," 2009, <http://www.bustersimpson.net/>.

³⁰ Charlotte Bonham-Carter, *The Contemporary Art Book* (London: Goodman, 2009), 29.

³¹ *Land and Environmental Art*, 267.

³² Young Imm Kang Song, "Community Participatory Ecological Art and Education." 28 (February 2009): 4-13.

³³ Anne Rorimer, "Europe in the Seventies: Aspects of Recent Art," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago (1973-1982)* 71, no. 5 (October 1977): 268.

³⁴ Joseph Beuys, as quoted on "SSRU Home," *Social Sculpture Research Unit*, n.d., <http://www.social-sculpture.org/>.

³⁵ Plant, *Healing the Wounds : The Promise of Ecofeminism*, 19.

³⁶ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 104.

Third Wave Environmental Artist:

This term is used to refer to artists who began practising in the 1990s onwards and who are building on the traditions set by Second Wave Environmental Artists. This includes artists like Diana Thompson and Jackie Brookner.

Appendix B: Ecological Aestheticism: The Role of Art in a Positive Environmental Future

This section contains a journal article on material, which is complementary to the subject of this thesis, submitted to ANTI Thesis, a peer reviewed journal from the University of Melbourne.

Abstract

Since the industrial revolution, the earth's environmental health has steadily grown worse, arguably approaching a critical state. With the convenience of technology came pollution, environmental degradation and human apathy towards the planet. Thus, in looking towards a more healthy environmental future, substantial changes need to occur. In this future, art can have a highly proactive role to play. This paper seeks to present many of the artworks that have contributed to a more positive environmental future since the beginning of the environmental art movement in the 1960s.

The description 'environmental art' is used as an umbrella term to describe works in which artists actively engage with the environment. While not all environmental artworks are ecological in nature, many function to substantially alter and contribute to the natural environment to undo damage caused by humanity. These works introduce an aesthetic dimension to environmental degradation incorporating sculptural and design elements, as well as landscape architecture.

Presenting various different interactions between artist and environment, this paper comments on the positive role art can play in building a better environmental future, combining aesthetics with ecology. It includes works that contribute to the environment through actively purifying water, works that address loss of habitat, large-scale works that draw attention to deforestation and works that aim to incorporate environmental conscience with social reform.

Planet earth's environmental history has been steadily growing more problematic. Since the Industrial Revolution, in the late 1800s, the face of the planet has undergone substantial environmental destruction and pollution, with the advent of technologies that make daily living easier like the development of cars and coal fired power, with no indication that present day lifestyles will allow this environmental pollution to abate.

Predictions of negative environmental trends for the future are the topic of various discussions, creeping into popular culture through multitude of documentaries, including Al Gore's award winning *An Inconvenient Truth*, produced in 2006,³⁷ not to mention speculation in fiction with the production of disaster movies like *The Day After Tomorrow*, in 2004.³⁸

Every day forests are logged, oil and precious minerals are mined, habitats are destroyed and human apathy seems to continue. While advocates for the environment are gaining growing support in the wider community, humanity is still slow to respond to the effects that our actions are having on the planet that we are all dependent on to survive.

While society waits for political policy to catch up to the planets demands, it comes down to individuals to make small changes to contribute to a brighter, more environmentally friendly future. In this new future, art has a substantial role to play.

The words 'environmental art' are generally used as an umbrella term to describe an artistic process or artwork where the artist actively engages with the environment,³⁹ and covers a widely diverse range of interactions, styles, approaches, methodologies and philosophies. The term 'environmental art' does not necessarily refer to ecologically conscious artworks exclusively and is used to describe artworks made in an urban environment in addition to the natural landscape, however it is more frequently used to refer to natural environments.



The environmental art movement began in the late 1960s around the same time as other conceptual art forms began to take shape.⁴⁰ 1968 is marked as the birth year of environmental art,⁴¹ as this was the

³⁷ "The Day After Tomorrow (2004) - IMDb." *The Internet Movie Database*, 2010. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319262/>.

³⁸ "An Inconvenient Truth (2006) - IMDb." *The Internet Movie Database*, 2010. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0497116/>.

³⁹ Wildy, Jade. "Definition of Environmental Art." *Suite 101*, 2010. <http://www.suite101.com/content/definition-of-environmental-art-with-some-of-the-different-types-a273040>.

⁴⁰ As referred to in texts such as Hopkins, David. *After Modern Art 1945-2000*. Oxford history of art. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, and Stangos, Nikos. *Concepts of Modern Art : From Fauvism to Postmodernism*. 3rd ed. New York N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1994.

year of the landmark exhibition *Earthworks*, held by the Virginia Dwan Gallery, featuring ten prominent environmental artists: Carl Andre, Herbert Bayer, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Stephen Kaltenbach, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim and Robert Smithson.⁴² Described as 'Revel[ing] in their geophilia',⁴³ these artists responded to the concept of the exhibition in various ways, showing a combination of both documentary photographs of works in the environment, sculptures and installations in the gallery.⁴⁴

The following year, in 1969, an exhibition called *Earth Art* was held at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, in Ithaca, New York, and Michael Heizer held a solo exhibition at Virginia Dwan Gallery. These ground breaking exhibitions paved the way for a new art movement to develop and evolve.

While there have been changes in the way artists interact with the environment, as well as the relationships between artists, environments and the gallery space, there has been a marked movement towards artists that not only make use of the environment, either as site or construction materials, but also repair or restore environmental damage. Thus, environmental art involves several smaller sub-genres like Ecological Art (or Eco-art) and Ecovention, which specifically focus on works that have a restorative function in the natural environment. While these works are not as prominent as their more impressive large-scale counterparts, the ideas surrounding art with a restorative function is as old as the history of the environmental art movement.

Susan Spaid first coined the term 'Ecovention', a contraction of 'ecology' and 'invention', for this form of artistic ecological expression in 1999.⁴⁵ Ecovention highlights the inventive nature of art for environmental remediation. In these artworks, ecology forms a core element and they are remedially responsive to the various forms of environmental destruction, as well as aim to change the mindset of the wider community.

The manner in which artists have engaged with environmental concerns, covers a variety of different interactions, drawing attention to and countering various aspects of environmental devastation, including water and soil pollution, deforestation and loss of habitat, as well as attempting to change how

⁴¹ 1968 is recognised as the date of the first prominent exhibition, however several environmental artists were practicing far earlier.

⁴² Boettger, Suzaan. "Behind the Earth Movers." *Art in America* 92, no. 4 (April 2004): 55-63. 55-63

⁴³ Glueck, Grace. "Moving Mother Earth." *The New York Times*. New York, 1968, October 6 edition, sec. Art Notes. 38.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*. Cincinnati OH: Greenmuseum.org and Contemporary Arts Center: Ecoartspace, 2002. http://www.greenmuseum.org/c/ecvention/intro_frame.html.

people think about the environment. Thus, the artistic interaction between the artist and the environment incorporates various elements. Tiberghien comments on this interrelated field thus:

The importance of ...[environmental art] stems from the desire to revive, through art, another type of knowledge, one which would be based on our perceptible experience, but at the same time would permit it to be raised to an impure aesthetic experience..., which claims a “regard hybrid” at the intersection of the cognitive, the religious and the perceptible.⁴⁶

This suggests that the various interactions and overlaps, between art and the natural landscape, can make lasting changes both in the physical alterations artists make in the environment and in the mind that can be changed, through various types of practice, concepts and aims.

Water is one of the most precious resources on this planet, yet it is subjected to vast pollution and waste. Jackie Brookner’s biosculptures are a notable example of small-scale installation and gallery based works. These works actively cleanse polluted water, using moss and porous cement, like her 1995 work, *Prima Linga*, which involved the sculpting of a large cement tongue, on which moss was encouraged to grow. ⁴⁷

Mist sprays polluted water over the moss to cover the sculpture allowing it to be partially absorbed and run down to be collected in a small pool at the bottom, containing fish and aquatic plants. ⁴⁸ In effect, the tongue licks the water clean enabling the fish to live in the purified water forming a tiny functioning ecosystem. This ecological aestheticism is mirrored in several of her works, including *I’m You*, 2000 and *The Gift of Water*, 2001, producing a work that is both conceptual aestheticism and ecologically functional. ⁴⁹

This merger between the aesthetic art object and ecological restoration is also reflected in the landscape reclamation work of various artists including Patricia Johanson, whose earliest work of this kind, *Fair Park Lagoon*, was built in 1981.⁵⁰ Leonhardt Lagoon is part of the park complex of the Dallas Museum of Natural History, that had become an algal bloom infested, eutrophicated eyesore due to the years worth of fertilizer that had washed into the water from the surrounding lawns, killing off the native

⁴⁶ Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 226.

⁴⁷ Orenstein, Gloria Feman. “The Greening Of Gaia.” *Ethics & the Environment* 8, no. 1 (2003) 108.

⁴⁸ Brookner, Jackie. “Biosculptures.” Artist Website. *JackieBrookner.net*, 2002.
<http://www.jackiebrookner.net/biosculpture.htm>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention : current art to transform ecologies*.

marine life.⁵¹ The lagoon had also gained a negative reputation due to the drowning death of a child some years prior.⁵²

Johanson was commissioned to design the parks and sculptures surrounding the lagoon, to ecologically transform the area and to restore the waters of the lagoon itself.⁵³ As the surrounding area became healthier and the fertiliser was no longer washing into the water, the lagoon itself became healthier and various bird and animal species began to return to the site. Thus, through utilising strong design elements that incorporated various varieties of native flora and fauna, combined with meandering paths and sculptures, the dangerous polluted waters were restored to an enjoyable biologically diverse park featuring a vibrant lagoon.⁵⁴

As with Brookner's biosculptures, projects like Johanson's *Fair Park Lagoon*, marry enjoyable aesthetics with environmental restoration that have resulted in improved water, and biodiversity.

With a similar instigation to the environmental devastation that had occurred at the Dallas Museum of Natural History (which resulted in native species leaving the area), are works that are produced to satisfy a need for replacement for loss of habitat. Lynne Hull's artworks provide safe havens and habitats for wildlife that have lost their natural habitat, through a sculptural form she refers to as 'trans-species art'.⁵⁵

Comprised of scrap, driftwood and other materials, Hull builds man-made trees and rafts that animals can safely live and nest in.⁵⁶ These are produced in consultation biologists and zoologists, with the aim of nurturing endangered species,⁵⁷ and encourage the wider community to consider the void left by human environmental degradation.⁵⁸ For example, the *Raptor Roosts* she began producing in the 1980s were made in response to the number of large predatory birds that were dying, as urbanisation had removed the large trees they nested in, resulting in these birds trying to use the elevated power poles. Hull's answer was large tree-like sculptures, that tower above the ground providing a high, safe vantage point with nest friendly plateaus.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Kelley, Caffyn. *Art and Survival: Patricia Johanson's Environmental Projects*. Salt Spring Island, B.C: Islands Institute, 2006.

⁵³ Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention : current art to transform ecologies*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Fullerton, Anne. "Eco-art." *Reportage Enviro*, Web Magazine, 2009. <http://www.reportage-enviro.com/2009/08/eco-art/>.

⁵⁶ Hull, Lynne. "Artist Statement." Artist. *Eco-Art*, 2008. <http://www.image-world.net/eco-art/etc/statement.html>.

⁵⁷ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 107.

⁵⁸ Song, Young Imm Kang. "Community Participatory Ecological Art and Education." 28 (February 2009): 4-13.

While still sculptural, Hull's works are not aesthetic in the same sense as Brookner or Johanson's, as they are primarily for the animals to fulfil their living needs, rather than human's visual aesthetic needs. Perhaps they could be argued as prescribing to a different set of aesthetics: one of animal preference for a good-looking tree in which to live.

The environmental problem of deforestation has also been addressed by several other artists including Agnes Denes and Alan Sonfist, though from a different conceptual angle. While Denes' most prominent work was *Wheatfield: A Confrontation* (created in Lower Manhattan in 1982), which addressed ideas like consumerism and food security, a much later work, *Tree Mountain*, addressed the idea of deforestation and the environment on a grand scale.

Tree Mountain began in 1996 and is comprised of 10,000 trees, planted in a mathematically precise pattern (as seen in pineapples and sunflowers), to form a huge, non-naturally occurring, forested mountain.⁵⁹ Each tree, will live for at least four-hundred years and will be passed down through subsequent generations, making this work not only a long term visual installation but conceptually potent, as it will continue to bring an environmentally conscious message to the descendants of the original owners, who come from all over the world.⁶⁰

An impressive visual image, the mountain will also be representative of nature's chaos and vitality, as the geometric patterning will eventually dissolve with the dropping of seeds and the growth of new saplings that will take the legacy and message of *Tree Mountain* far beyond the lifespan of the original trees. Thus, while this work may not 'reforest' the earth it does provide a long-term conceptual sign pointing to the environment and reforestation.

Where *Tree Mountain* is forward looking to multiple future generations, Alan Sonfist's *Time Landscape* is comparatively retrospective, yet still points to the environment and forest clearing. This work, started in 1965, reflects the pre-colonial history of Manhattan, before the city was built. Through the planting of trees and shrubs from Manhattans pre-colonised state, Sonfist created an environmental artwork that is a combination of a botanical museum, a recreational park for people to enjoy and an ecological reminder of human intervention and domination over the landscape.⁶¹

A significant element of *Time Landscape* was in the preparation, as Sonfist researched the natural history of the area for the native plants that had originally grown there, to produce a park-like area

⁵⁹ Kastner, Jeffrey, *Land and Environmental Art. Themes and movements*. London: Phaidon, 1998. 161

⁶⁰ Denes, Agnes. "Agnes Denes: Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule." *Arts and Science Collaborations, Inc*, 1995. <http://www.asci.org/news/featured/denes/denes.html>.

⁶¹ Sonfist, Alan. *Nature, the End of Art: Environmental Landscapes*. Florence, Italy: Gli Ori, 2004. 68

rather than a standard monument or statue.⁶² [This work also has personal resonance for Sonfist as it reminds him of the forests he played in as a child. Thus, Time Landscape has a dual meaning: one referencing an earlier time in Manhattans history, the other an earlier time in Sonfist's (and perhaps others) personal history.⁶³

These two works, *Tree Mountain* and Time Landscape, which focus on forests, demonstrate a duality of environmental education. *Tree Mountain* looks forward to future generations and their responsibility for the environment of the future, while Time Landscape points back to a pre-history and the environment that existed before.

A potential third category of artistic landscaping is in some of the works produced by artists like Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison, which is reflective of a transitional environment. Similar to the works by Patricia Johanson's (but with a different conceptual focus), the Harrison's produce works that reclaim the landscape through a process of remediation. For the Harrisons, the effect of their practice on the natural environment is of the utmost importance, rather than aesthetic considerations, which is in many ways similar to Hull's 'trans-species art' for the animals. Their practice is for the environment rather than people.

An example of the Harrison's long-term reclamation works is their early 1977 work, *Spoils Pile*, which involved diverting approximately 3,000 truckloads of earth and organic material, including mulch of leaves and grass, to transform approximately 20 acres from clay and rock to a viable meadow with trees and berry patches.⁶⁴

The site was part of a 'Spoils Pile' from a quarry filled with debris generated by the construction of the Niagara Power Plant.⁶⁵ The introduction of organic material revitalised the soil and produced fertile growing foundations, similar in concept to the popular 'no-dig' gardens,⁶⁶ which started a process that continued to evolve and grow, eventually giving life to a vibrant flowering meadow.

A key element in the Harrison's practice is that they are collaborating with and for nature, rather than benefitting an individual or company. As they state:

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Harrison, Helen Mayer, and Newton Harrison. "The Harrison Studio Artpark." Artist Website. *The Harrison Studio*, 2010. <http://theharrisonstudio.net/artpark2.html>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ A no-dig garden essentially involves laying heaped organic material like straw over poor soil (or even no soil) and top dressing it with viable soil, like compost, that plants can grow in. It adds fertile soil over infertile material to allow organic growth and doesn't require digging in to the garden.

Our work begins when we perceive an anomaly in the environment that is the result of opposing beliefs or contradictory metaphors. Moments when reality no longer appears seamless and the cost of belief has become outrageous offer the opportunity to create new spaces - first in the mind and thereafter in everyday life.⁶⁷

Their works function for the environment rather than human's desire for using the environment to suit their own needs, which also has the beneficial element of communicating environmental consciousness to the general community.

The Harrisons' ecologically conscious works date back to the earliest examples of the environmental art movement in the 1960s, and they continue to produce ecologically conscious works that either have a remedial function, like *Spoils Pile*, or raise awareness, evident in their recent works focusing on raising awareness of environmental concerns like global warming.⁶⁸

Raising awareness and changing minds is one of the key elements needed for positive environmental improvement. Some artists see arts role as functioning improve the condition of society for the benefit of both the planet and humanity as a joint, mutually beneficial goal. This is significantly present in the works of Joseph Beuys, who, aside from being a progressive performance artist, was instrumental in establishing the German Green Party (Die Grünen) in Germany in 1980.⁶⁹

Beuys referred to his works as 'social sculpture', in which he saw that every person was an artist and every artist working towards a goal of positive change. His work, *7,000 Oaks (7,000 Eichen)* exemplifies his belief in the role of art, societal remediation and environmentalism as a combined concept. Completed in 1987 for Documenta 8 in Kassel, it involved the installation of 7,000 oak trees with 7,000 companion pillars of basalt along an urban street. The trees represented the environment, life, growth and renewal, while the pillars represented industrialism, strength and the built environment. Combined they represented a unity of urban and natural environments.

These works were culturally inclusive and combined environmentalism with cultural reclamation and inclusion. The conceptual project based on Beuys' *7,000 Oaks*, has been continued at other sites including New York City in 1988 (extended in 1996).⁷⁰ Beuys originally intended *7,000 Oaks* to become a worldwide phenomenon '... as part of a global mission to effect environmental and social change' as

⁶⁷ Harrison, Helen Mayer, and Newton Harrison. "The Harrison Studio Home."

⁶⁸ Kastner, Jeffrey, *Land and Environmental Art*. 1998.

⁶⁹ Adams, David. "Joseph Beuys: Pioneer of a Radical Ecology." *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 26

⁷⁰ "Joseph Beuys: 7000 Oaks." Arts Organisation. *Dia Art Foundation*, 2009. <http://www.diacenter.org/sites/page/51/1364>.

well as a local event that was 'a gesture towards urban renewal'.⁷¹ Through works such as these, Beuys intended an integrated process of environmental, urban and social renewal.

Works like *7,000 Oaks* bear similarity with other works that crossed boundaries between art and other fields like the works by Hans Haacke that brought an environmental message to society and bridged the gap between the art gallery and the environment.

While Haacke is better known for his politically motivated art from 1970 onwards, Haacke's early installations also included works that are aligned with the concepts of environmental art. Conceptually, Haacke's works used nonverbal language to convey or gather information to broach complex non-visual issues that were related to time and change.⁷² Rather than dictating a message, Haacke's works alluded to a concept or idea that required the viewer to think about the message, and essentially strived to produce art that existed and developed in 'real-time'.⁷³ Haacke also developed a concept that he referred to as 'systems art', which relates to the interconnected nature of various elements.⁷⁴

Haacke's systems art, that could be more prominently linked with environmental art, included what he referred to as 'physical systems', where the work actively interacts with environmental conditions in works such as *Condensation Cube* (1963-1965), where the atmospheric conditions and ambient temperature caused condensation to form in a plexiglass cube. These physical systems later linked into 'biological systems' which involved various works like *Grass Cube* (1967) and *Grass Grows* (1969),⁷⁵ which centred on natural growth and change and involved allowing grass seeds to germinate and grow from a small mound of soil in the exhibition venue.⁷⁶ Of these works, Haacke stated:

[it is to]...make something which experiences, reacts to its environment, changes, is non-stable ... make something sensitive to light and temperature changes, that is subject to air currents and depends, in its functioning, on the forces of gravity...articulate something natural.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Stangos, Nikos. *Concepts of modern art : from fauvism to postmodernism*. 265

⁷³ Skrebowski, Luke. "All Systems Go: Recovering Hans Haacke's Systems Art.." *Grey Room*, no. 30 (Winter 2008 2008): 54-83.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Stangos, Nikos. *Concepts of modern art : from fauvism to postmodernism*. 42

⁷⁷ Kastner, Jeffrey. *Land and environmental art..* 32

These were extended into biological works that were ecological in focus including Chickens Hatching (1969), Transplanted Moss Supported in an Artificial Climate (1970), Directed Growth (1970-1972), Rhine Water Purification Plant (1972).⁷⁸

Setting historical precedent for contemporary works, early works like these established the ecological and conceptual role that art can play in positive environmental change. Rhine River Purification Plant involved the purification of water, gathered from the Rhine River, using a system of pools and filtration units in the gallery to reveal and then cleanse the pollutants from the water, to a condition that would allow fish to live in the water.

This installation created a physical link between the gallery space and the natural environment and had a positive impact for environmental change, both through the physical cleansing of the water and through the raising of awareness that there was a problem with the water.

Rhine Water Purification Plant illustrates the early ecological thought that was occurring within art and the environmental art movement that (as contemporary artists like Jackie Brookner demonstrate) are continuing to be produced.



There is a growing interest in the environment and maintaining the planet. Through a merger between art and the environment, positive change can be instigated to improve the planet for future generations. Artists interact with the natural environment in a wide variety of different ways and with a multiple of different conceptual angles and practices. However, it is through those works that actively engage with the environment and promote positive change that the role art can play in shaping a more positive, cleaner, ecologically conscious future is most evident.

Artworks can contribute to positive environmental change either actively through works like Lynne Hull's 'trans-species art' or the Harrison's landscape reclamation projects, passively through looking at the changed environment, either for the future like Time Mountain or the past like Time Landscape or as a figment of a wider community as with Beuys projects like 7000 Oaks.

Ecological aestheticism, which combines visually striking artistic practice with environmental remediation, provides art with a functional springboard to promote a brighter, more environmentally friendly future.

⁷⁸ Skrebowski, Luke. "All Systems Go: Recovering Hans Haacke's Systems Art. 54-83.

Appendix C: Sculpting Sustainability: Art's Interaction with Ecology

This section contains a journal article on material which is complementary to the subject of this thesis, submitted to The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability, a peer reviewed, online journal and published in 2011

Abstract:

Since the industrial revolution, the earth's environmental health has steadily grown worse, arguably approaching a critical state. While science and technology offer innovations to help move towards a sustainable planet, another less obvious field is also working towards a more positive environmental future.

Environmental art is defined as an artistic process in which an artist engages with the natural environment. An artistic movement that began in the 1960s, environmental art has gradually evolved into a form that encompasses a large number of ecologically driven works, which allow artists to improve environmental conditions through a more proactive, yet aesthetic role.

Environmental art draws on a wide variety of approaches, including ecological feminist principles (Ecofeminism); large, remedial landscape architecture; biosculpture, that incorporates a living component, like water purifying moss; as well as social sculpture that aims to combine environmental conscience with social reform. These works introduce an aesthetic dimension to environmental remediation, incorporating sculptural and design elements. While forming a core element of environmental art since its inception, ecological aestheticism is slowly becoming a more wide spread art form.

Presenting various different interactions between artist and environment, this paper will begin with a brief overview of the early environmental art movement that establishes the history of environmental art and contextualises more recent environmentally remedial artworks. It will also discuss some of the different forms of environmental art, to finally focus on the forms that are ecological in focus that repair damaged ecosystems, offer environmental solutions and generally serve a remedial function in a positive environmental future.

Changes in Art

In western society the industrial revolution in the late 1800s, could be viewed as the beginning of the downward slope in the health of the natural environment. While many argue over the root cause: be it the result of capitalism, democracy, culture, or needs of a rapidly growing world population, there is extensive devastation done to the environment each day. Recognition of this fact can be viewed in the growing emphasis in society on 'green' alternatives for energy and in the interest from popular culture through multiple documentaries, including Al Gore's award winning *An Inconvenient Truth*, produced in 2006,¹ and in disaster movies like *The Day After Tomorrow*, in 2004.²

Through entertainment and other expressive forms, attention can be drawn to the environment to encourage the individual to make alterations in their own lifestyle, and become proactive in broader societal change. However, there is a growing field of creative expressive art forms that both highlight environmental concerns and seek to remedy some of the environmental destruction that has occurred over the years.

The Environmental Art Movement began in the 1960s around the same time as other progressive changes within art history were occurring, which diverted the course of art history to a new expressive path. Most people are familiar with the beautiful paintings by artists such as the Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh with his brightly coloured expressive paintings, or Claude Monet, with his softly coloured water lilies or the oddly angled figures of Pablo Picasso's Cubist paintings. However, what most don't know is that these artist who began playing with form and colour in art, began a change in what was considered 'art' as previously the value of a work of art was determined by how closely apprentice artists emulated the technique and style of the master. These changes meant art was evolving.

In the 1950s, art underwent a further drastic change during a conceptual revolution. Artists began to experiment with what an artwork meant or represented, i.e. the concept behind the work, in many cases began to be more important than the work itself. This lack of emphasis on the final art object, combined with other expressive theatrical art forms, developed into new art form that incorporated performative elements or actions into the art practice.³ Alan Kaprow termed this new art form 'Happenings' explaining that:

...once foreign matter was introduced into the picture in the form of paper [in reference to collage], it was only a matter of time before everything else foreign to paint and canvas would be allowed to get into the creative act, including real space.⁴

¹ "The Day After Tomorrow (2004) - IMDb." *The Internet Movie Database*, 2010. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319262/>.

² "An Inconvenient Truth (2006) - IMDb." *The Internet Movie Database*, 2010. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0497116/>.

³ Higgins, "The Origin of Happening." 268

⁴ As quoted in Popper, *Art- Action and participation*, 22

An idea that was embraced by various artists, a 'Happening' can be defined as 'a work of art involving the interaction of people and things in a given setting or situation'.⁵ Essentially, there is emphasis on interactivity either physically or by engaging the viewer to cerebrally connect with the artwork. It is essentially an intimate performance that may not necessarily result in a final produce because the *art* is in the *action* not the final object.

These changes in the history of art: the progressive change in the forms of the object, the inclusion of concept and the lack of emphasis on a final art object that could be bought, essentially set the scene for environmental art.

Environmental Art

The words 'environmental art' are generally used as an umbrella term to describe an artistic process or artwork where the artist actively engages with the environment, and covers a widely diverse range of interactions, styles, approaches, methodologies and philosophies.⁶ The term 'environmental art' does not refer to ecologically conscious artworks exclusively and is also used to describe artworks made in an urban environment in addition to the natural landscape, however it is more frequently used to refer to natural environments.

As stated, the Environmental Art movement began in the 1960s. 1968 is marked as the birth year,⁷ as this was the year of the landmark exhibition *Earthworks*, held by the Virginia Dwan Gallery, featuring ten prominent environmental artists: Carl Andre, Herbert Bayer, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Stephen Kaltenbach, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim and Robert Smithson.⁸ Described as 'Revel[ing] in their geophilia',⁹ these artists responded to the concept of the exhibition, linking the gallery with the land in various ways, showing a combination of both documentary photographs of works in the environment, sculptures and installations in the gallery.¹⁰

The following year, in 1969, an exhibition called *Earth Art* was held at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, in Ithaca, New York, and Michael Heizer held a solo exhibition at Virginia Dwan Gallery. These ground breaking exhibitions paved the way for a new art movement to develop and evolve.

⁵ Stangos, *Concepts of Modern Art : From Fauvism to Postmodernism.*, 233.

⁶ Wildy, Jade. "Definition of Environmental Art." *Suite 101*, 2010. <http://www.suite101.com/content/definition-of-environmental-art-with-some-of-the-different-types-a273040>.

⁷ 1968 is recognised as the date of the first prominent exhibition, however several environmental artists were practicing far earlier.

⁸ Boettger, Suzaan. "Behind the Earth Movers." *Art in America* 92, no. 4 (April 2004): 55-63. 55-63

⁹ Glueck, Grace. "Moving Mother Earth." *The New York Times*. New York, 1968, October 6 edition, sec. Art Notes. 38.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Types of Environmental Art

Environmental artworks can be both small and intimate and on a grand scale spanning several kilometres. There is no specific stylistic approach and it is not limited to a specific group of artists or region, rather it is a broad genre. There are however several distinctive sub-genres of Environmental Art that artists can be identified with.

A growing trend in environmental art is the form known as Ecovention; a contraction of 'Ecology' and 'Invention', encompassing artworks that repair damage to a natural environment.¹¹ It can also be known as Reclamation Art or Eco- Art,¹²

The term "Ecovention" was coined by Sue Spaid in her 2002 book of the same name, and describes an artist-initiated project that employs an inventive strategy to physically transform a local ecology.¹³ Also referred to as Restoration Art, the conceptual basis for the artistic process is specifically to repair damage done to the environment. Ecovention has also been historically described as 'Landscape Reclamation',¹⁴ typically referring to industrial sites and embraced in the 1970s with several initiatives and exhibitions being held.¹⁵ The concept of Ecovention presents itself both as large landscaping projects, which drastically transform a local ecology, as well as smaller projects that remedy a particular situation, like habitat loss in a specific area.

Ecoventionist artists

Most relevant to today's environmental concerns are the Ecoventionist sculptures that combine aesthetics and ecological remediation. While there are many artists whose practice falls under this genre, there are several artists that are prominent in the field and can highlight the restorative interactions, between artist and environment.

Jackie Brookner

Brookner is an environmental artist that could be described as part of a 'third wave', beginning her practice in the 1990s following in the footsteps of the early big name artists like Robert Smithson and Andy Goldsworthy. In the tradition of the expanding art genre, Brookner collaborates with ecologists to design works that function ecologically as well as aesthetically, representing a conceptual merger between aesthetics, design and ecological function; essentially a merger between science and art to form aesthetic sculptures with a remedial function.

¹¹ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*.

¹² Tufnell, *Land Art*, 96.

¹³ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*.

¹⁴ Tufnell, *Land Art*, 96.

¹⁵ Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 103.

Water is one of the most precious resources on this planet, yet it is subjected to vast pollution and waste. Brookner's biosculptures are a notable example of small-scale installation and gallery-based works. These works actively cleanse polluted water, using moss and porous cement, like her 1995 work, *Prima Linga*, which involved the sculpting of a large cement tongue, on which moss was encouraged to grow.¹⁶

In *Prima Linga*, mist sprays polluted water over the moss to cover the sculpture allowing it to be partially absorbed to run down and be collected in a small pool at the bottom, containing fish and aquatic plants.¹⁷ In effect, the tongue licks the water clean enabling the fish to live in the purified water forming a tiny functioning ecosystem. This ecological aestheticism is mirrored in several of Brookner's works, including *I'm You*, 2000 and *The Gift of Water*, 2001, producing a body of work that are both conceptual aestheticism and ecologically functional.¹⁸

Integral to these works are the natural processes that enable them to function, and demonstrate the remedial power that art can possess. However, conceptually these works can metaphorically express renewal in the cleansing of the water and the continuation of life in the organisms that survive in the pool.

Patricia Johanson

Patricia Johanson's works also have a remedial yet aesthetic function, however her practice differs substantially from Brookner's through the sheer size of her works. Conceptually, through her work, Johanson seeks to 'transform sites to make us aware that we are citizens, not masters of the biosphere...' through carefully designed symbiosis between butterflies, birds and other creatures.

In the 1960s, while studying at Bennington College, she began writing about designing the world as a work of art, suggesting 'total environmental design – aesthetic, ecological, psychological and social – such that the person would be placed *inside* the work of art...'. Thus, the artist functions as creative intelligence rather than isolated idealist.¹⁹ Essentially, she sought to produce works that people could engage with and walk through that had ecological functionality. This culminated in her practice of producing large landscaped gardens and sculpture parks that could be enjoyed while remedying the environment of the location.

¹⁶ Orenstein, Gloria Feman. "The Greening Of Gaia." *Ethics & the Environment* 8, no. 1 (2003) 108.

¹⁷ Brookner, Jackie. "Biosculptures." Artist Website. *JackieBrookner.net*, 2002. <http://www.jackiebrookner.net/biosculpture.htm>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Blum et al., "From the Other Side: Public Artists on Public Art," 337 This is an idea that features in many artists practices, most notably in the works of Joseph Beuys.

This merger between the aesthetic art object and ecological restoration is reflected in Johanson's works like *Fair Park Lagoon*, built in 1981.²⁰ This work was built around Leonhardt Lagoon, (part of the park complex of the Dallas Museum of Natural History), which had become an algal bloom infested, eutrophicated eyesore due to the years worth of fertilizer that had washed into the water from the surrounding lawns, killing off the native marine life.²¹ The lagoon had also gained a negative reputation due to the drowning death of a child some year's prior.²² Johanson was commissioned to design the parks and sculptures surrounding the lagoon, to ecologically transform the area and to restore the waters of the lagoon itself.²³

As the surrounding area became more healthy and the fertiliser was no longer washing into the water, the lagoon itself became healthier and various bird and animal species began to return to the site. Thus, through utilising strong design elements that incorporated various varieties of native flora and fauna, combined with meandering paths and sculptures, the dangerous polluted waters were restored to an enjoyable biologically diverse park featuring a vibrant lagoon.²⁴

Works and projects such as *Fair Park Lagoon*, demonstrate Johanson's belief that through art, environmental devastation can be healed.²⁵ Through the production of sculptural gardens that have aesthetic elements that are engaging to the viewer, while reviving the surrounding ecosystem, Johanson's works bring ecology into the surrounding culture. She establishes interactivity between humanity and ecology, whereby art can engage with society, through an ecologically sound sculpture park, to bring about a change in societies ecological thought. As with Brookner's biosculptures, projects like Johanson's *Fair Park Lagoon*, marry enjoyable aesthetics with environmental restoration that have resulted in improved water, and biodiversity.

Lynne Hull

Another form of environmental remediation focuses not on the landscape, but on the wildlife that have suffered due to human interventions. Lynne Hull began her artistic career as a potter, with the functionality of useable objects in mind. This functionality evolved when she began to use fabricated materials that were compatible with nature, in order to benefit wildlife. She refers to this process as a form of 'eco-atonement for human encroachment'.²⁶ This sense of remediation or 'eco-atonement' is an

²⁰ Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention : current art to transform ecologies*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Kelley, Caffyn. *Art and Survival: Patricia Johanson's Environmental Projects*. Salt Spring Island, B.C: Islands Institute, 2006.

²³ Spaid, Sue. *Ecovention : current art to transform ecologies*.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kelley, *Art and Survival*, 3.

²⁶ Warshall, "Eco-Art," 93.

increasing trend amongst artists (as demonstrated by Johanson's work). In wider art sculptures are generally considered from an aesthetic viewpoint for the human viewer's benefit; however, Hull is set apart from her sculptural counterparts as her works are made directly for the animal kingdom.

With a similar instigation to the environmental devastation that had occurred at the Dallas Museum of Natural History, which resulted in loss of habitat and native species leaving the area, Hull's artworks provide safe havens and habitats for wildlife that have lost their natural habitat, through a sculptural form she refers to as 'trans-species art'.²⁷

Comprised of scrap, driftwood and other materials, Hull builds trees and rafts from scrap and recycled materials that animals can safely live and nest in.²⁸ These are produced in consultation with biologists and zoologists, with the aim of nurturing endangered species,²⁹ and to encourage the wider community to consider the void left by human environmental degradation.³⁰ For example, the *Raptor Roosts* she began producing in the 1980s were made in response to the number of large predatory birds that were dying, as urbanisation had removed the large trees they nested in, resulting in these birds trying to use the elevated power poles for nesting. Hull's answer was large tree-like sculptures, which tower above the ground providing a high, safe vantage point with nest friendly plateaus.

While still sculptural, Hull's works are not aesthetic in the same sense as Brookner or Johanson's, as they are primarily for the animals to fulfil their living needs, rather than human's visual aesthetic needs. Perhaps they could be argued as prescribing to a different set of aesthetics: one of animal preference for a good-looking tree in which to live.

Agnes Denes

The environmental problem of deforestation has also been addressed by several other artists including Agnes Denes though from a different conceptual angle. While Denes' most prominent work was *Wheatfield: A Confrontation*, created in Lower Manhattan in 1982, which addressed ideas like consumerism and food security, a much later work, *Tree Mountain*, addressed the idea of deforestation and the environment on a grand scale.

Denes' practice began in 1964 when she attended Columbia University and the New School of Art.³¹ Her early practice began with a movement away from traditional art forms of painting and drawing and she began to make extensive investigations into the ideas surrounding triangulation, with her research

²⁷ Fullerton, Anne. "Eco-art." *Reportage Enviro*, Web Magazine, 2009. <http://www.reportage-enviro.com/2009/08/eco-art/>.

²⁸ Hull, Lynne. "Artist Statement." Artist. *Eco-Art*, 2008. <http://www.image-world.net/eco-art/etc/statement.html>.

²⁹ Orenstein, "The Greening Of Gaia," 107.

³⁰ Song, Young Imm Kang. "Community Participatory Ecological Art and Education." 28 (February 2009): 4-13.

³¹ McEville, "Philosophy in the Land," 158.

crossing over into science. This research substantially influenced her artistic practice and as a result, Denes could be considered as one of the leading figures into the changes of the structure of art to incorporating scientific concepts, which has become substantially important for environmental art, particularly works that are ecological.³²

Tree Mountain is a constructed mountain measuring 420 metres long, 270 metres wide and 28 metres high in an elliptical shape, in gravel pits at Pinziö, Ylöjärvi, Finland,³³ as part of a generational reclamation project. Conceptually *Tree Mountain* crosses several boundaries. The numbers of trees, (100,000) were planted in an intricate pattern 'derived from a combination of the golden section and sunflower/pineapple pattern designed by Denes'.³⁴ Each tree has an average lifespan of 400 years allowing the trees to be passed down through the generations to the descendants of the original person invited to plant a tree.³⁵ These people were invited from all over the world.

An impressive visual image, the mountain is also representative of nature's chaos and vitality, as the geometric patterning will eventually dissolve with the dropping of seeds and the growth of new saplings that will take the legacy and message of *Tree Mountain* far beyond the lifespan of the original trees. Thus, while this work may not 'reforest' the earth it does provide a long-term conceptual sign pointing to the environment and reforestation.

The triangulation that Denes' has extensively researched, underpins this work, merging science, art and ecology. *Tree Mountain* was produced on a site that had been degraded by mining, in an effort to not only raise awareness but also to restore a degraded site,³⁶ this effectively connects present generations with future generations.

The trees themselves are significant as Denes explains:

Trees see so much history, they sway and whisper, hibernate and turn to blossoms. My forests are not landscaping where a tree is put there for contrast among paths and bushes to decorate a park or garden. A serious forest means business, not cutting business or profit, but demanding attention, respect, awe if beautiful and mysterious.³⁷

This work is reflective of aesthetic sculpture on a massive scale that combines the constructed elements of a carefully planned artwork with the natural beauty of the landscape in the eventual organics growth. Essentially, with the choice of this location: to reclaim the gravel pits, *Tree*

³² Ibid., 160.

³³ *Land and Environmental Art*, 161.

³⁴ Denes, "Agnes Denes: Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule."

³⁵ Denes, "What it Means to Plant a Forest."

³⁶ Brady, "Aesthetic Regard for Nature in Environmental and Land Art," 296.

³⁷ Denes, "What it Means to Plant a Forest."

Mountain transcends several of the Ecoventionist forms in landscape reclamation, biosculpture and has an element of generational social comment.

Alan Sonfist

Where *Tree Mountain* is forward looking to multiple future generations, Alan Sonfist's *Time Landscape* is comparatively retrospective, yet still points to the environment and forest clearing. This work, started in 1965, reflects the pre-colonial history of Manhattan, before the city was built. Through the planting of trees and shrubs from Manhattans pre-colonised state, Sonfist created an environmental artwork that is a combination of a botanical museum, a recreational park for people to enjoy and an ecological reminder of human intervention and domination over the landscape.³⁸

A significant element of *Time Landscape* was in the preparation, as Sonfist researched the natural history of the area for the native plants that had originally grown there, to produce a park-like area rather than a standard monument or statue.³⁹ This work also has personal resonance for Sonfist as it reminds him of the forests he played in as a child. Thus, *Time Landscape* has a dual meaning: one referencing an earlier time in Manhattans history, the other an earlier time in Sonfist's (and perhaps others) personal history.⁴⁰

These two works, *Tree Mountain* and *Time Landscape*, which focus on forests, demonstrate a duality of environmental education. *Tree Mountain* looks forward to future generations and their responsibility for the environment of the future, while *Time Landscape* points back to a pre-history and the environment that existed before.

Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison

Similar to the works by Patricia Johanson's (but with a different conceptual focus), Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison produce works that reclaim the landscape through a process of remediation. For the Harrisons, the effect of their practice on the natural environment is of the utmost importance, rather than aesthetic considerations, which is in many ways similar to Hull's 'trans-species art' for the animals. Their practice is for the *environment* rather than *people*.

The Harrisons' represent one of the earliest practices of landscape restoration as an artistic practice. Their early practice involved the production of many gallery-based works, of which *Portable Orchid* of 1972-73 from the *Survival Piece Series* is a striking example. These works parallel their conceptual concerns through the production of an indoor installation involving 'twelve four foot in diameter

³⁸ Sonfist, Alan. *Nature, the End of Art: Environmental Landscapes*. Florence, Italy: Gli Ori, 2004. 68

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

hexagonal redwood boxes, three feet deep, planted with assorted citrus trees, topped by hexagonal redwood light boxes',⁴¹ that were produced in reaction to the industrial development in Orange Country that was threatening the food orchards.⁴²

Works such as this represent their early concern with the environment, which later culminated in their large-scale restorative works. These works involve an extensive consultation process in which the Harrisons' confer with a variety of people including journalists, mayors, public officials, artists and farmers to 'discover an appropriate solution that optimises twin components: biodiversity, which depends upon the continuity and connectivity of living organisms; and cultural diversity, which requires framing and distinction between communities'.⁴³

An example of the Harrisons long-term reclamation works is their early 1977 project, *Spoils Pile*, which involved diverting approximately 3,000 truckloads of earth and organic material, including mulch of leaves and grass, to transform approximately 20 acres from clay and rock to a viable meadow with trees and berry patches.⁴⁴

The site was part of a 'spoils pile' from a quarry filled with debris generated by the construction of the Niagara Power Plant.⁴⁵ The introduction of organic material revitalised the soil and produced fertile growing foundations (similar in concept to today's popular 'no-dig' gardens),⁴⁶ which started a process that continued to evolve and grow, eventually giving life to a vibrant flowering meadow.

A key element in the Harrison's practice is that they are collaborating with and for nature, rather than benefitting an individual or company. As they state:

Our work begins when we perceive an anomaly in the environment that is the result of opposing beliefs or contradictory metaphors. Moments when reality no longer appears seamless and the cost of belief has become outrageous offer the opportunity to create new spaces - first in the mind and thereafter in everyday life.⁴⁷

Their works function for the environment rather than human's desire for using the environment to suit their own needs, which also has the beneficial element of communicating environmental consciousness to the general community. While works such as *Spoils Pile* may not have the same level of design and

⁴¹ Converted measurements are 1.2 metres in diameter by 0.91 metres tall.

⁴² Harrison and Harrison, "Survival Pieces."

⁴³ Spaid, *Ecovention : Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 32.

⁴⁴ Harrison, Helen Mayer, and Newton Harrison. "The Harrison Studio Artpark." Artist Website. *The Harrison Studio*, 2010. <http://theharrisonstudio.net/artpark2.html>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ A no-dig garden essentially involves laying heaped organic material like straw over poor soil (or even no soil) and top dressing it with viable soil, like compost, that plants can grow in. It adds fertile soil over infertile material to allow organic growth and doesn't require digging in to the garden.

⁴⁷ Harrison, Helen Mayer, and Newton Harrison. "The Harrison Studio Home."

aesthetics as found in the landscape reclamation projects of Johanson or Denes that natural beauty, that has continued to grow since the project was started, is the main strength of these works.

Joseph Beuys

Contrasting those works that change and remedy the environment on a massive scale are those that seek to transform the way people think on the individual level. Raising awareness and changing minds is one of the key elements needed for positive environmental improvement, and some artists see their role as functioning to improve the condition of society for the benefit of both the planet and humanity as a joint, mutually beneficial goal. This is significantly present in the works of Joseph Beuys, who, aside from being a progressive performance artist, was instrumental in establishing the German Green Party (Die Grünen) in Germany in 1980.⁴⁸

Beuys referred to his practice as 'social sculpture', in which he saw that every person was an artist and every artist working towards a goal of positive change. His work, *7,000 Oaks (7,000 Eichen)* exemplifies his belief in the role of art, societal remediation and environmentalism as a combined concept.

Completed in 1987 for Documenta 8 in Kassel, it involved the installation of 7,000 oak trees with 7,000 companion pillars of basalt along an urban street. The trees represented the environment, life, growth and renewal, while the pillars represented industrialism, strength and the built environment. Combined they represented a unity of urban and natural environments.

These works were culturally inclusive and combined environmentalism with cultural reclamation and inclusion. The conceptual project based on Beuys' *7,000 Oaks*, has been continued at other sites including New York City in 1988 (extended in 1996).⁴⁹ Beuys originally intended *7,000 Oaks* to become a worldwide phenomenon '... as part of a global mission to effect environmental and social change' as well as a local event that was 'a gesture towards urban renewal'.⁵⁰ Through works such as these, Beuys intended an integrated process of environmental, urban and social renewal.

Hans Haacke

Works like *7,000 Oaks* bear similarity with other works that crossed boundaries between art and other fields, like the works by Hans Haacke that brought an environmental message to society and bridged the gap between the art gallery and the environment.

While Haacke is better known for his politically motivated art from 1970 onwards, Haacke's early installations also included works that are aligned with the concepts of environmental art. Conceptually,

⁴⁸ Adams, David. "Joseph Beuys: Pioneer of a Radical Ecology." *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 26

⁴⁹ "Joseph Beuys: 7000 Oaks." Arts Organisation. *Dia Art Foundation*, 2009. <http://www.diacenter.org/sites/page/51/1364>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Haacke's works used nonverbal language to convey or gather information to broach complex non-visual issues that were related to time and change.⁵¹ Rather than dictating a message, Haacke's works alluded to a concept or idea that required the viewer to think about the message, and essentially strived to produce art that existed and developed in 'real-time'.⁵² Haacke also developed a concept that he referred to as 'systems art', which relates to the interconnected nature of various elements.⁵³

Haacke's systems art that could be more prominently linked with environmental art, included what he referred to as 'physical systems', where the work actively interacts with environmental conditions in works such as *Condensation Cube* (1963-1965), where the atmospheric conditions and ambient temperature caused condensation to form in a plexiglass cube. These physical systems later linked into 'biological systems' which involved various works like *Grass Cube* (1967) and *Grass Grows* (1969),⁵⁴ which centred on natural growth and change and involved allowing grass seeds to germinate and grow from a small mound of soil in the exhibition venue.⁵⁵ Of these works, Haacke stated:

[it is to]...make something which experiences, reacts to its environment, changes, is non-stable ... make something sensitive to light and temperature changes, that is subject to air currents and depends, in its functioning, on the forces of gravity...articulate something natural.⁵⁶

These were extended into biological works that were ecological in focus including *Chickens Hatching* (1969), *Transplanted Moss Supported in an Artificial Climate* (1970), *Directed Growth* (1970-1972), and *Rhine Water Purification Plant* (1972).⁵⁷

Setting historical precedent for contemporary works, early works like these established the ecological and conceptual role that art can play in positive environmental change. Viewable as a conceptual precursor to practices like Brookner's, *Rhine River Purification Plant* involved the purification of water, gathered from the Rhine River, using a system of pools and filtration units in the gallery to reveal and then cleanse the pollutants from the water, to a condition that would allow fish to live in the water. This installation created a physical link between the gallery space and the natural environment and had a positive impact for environmental change, both through the physical cleansing of the water and through the raising of awareness that there was a problem with the water.

⁵¹ Stangos, Nikos. *Concepts of modern art : from fauvism to postmodernism*. 265

⁵² Skrebowski, Luke. "All Systems Go: Recovering Hans Haacke's Systems Art.." *Grey Room*, no. 30 (Winter 2008): 54-83.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Stangos, Nikos. *Concepts of modern art : from fauvism to postmodernism*. 42

⁵⁶ Kastner, Jeffrey. *Land and environmental art..* 32

⁵⁷ Skrebowski, Luke. "All Systems Go: Recovering Hans Haacke's Systems Art." 54-83.

Rhine Water Purification Plant illustrates the early ecological thought that was occurring within art and the environmental art movement that are continuing to be produced, with the aid of technology that is growing in sophistication and ability.

Conclusion

There is a growing interest in the environment and maintaining the planet. Through a merger between art and the environment, positive change can be instigated to improve the planet for future generations. Artists interact with the natural environment in a wide variety of different ways and with a multiple of different conceptual angles and practices. However, it is through those works that actively engage with the environment and promote positive change that the role art can play in sculpting a more positive, cleaner, ecologically conscious future is most evident.

Art has evolved from the traditional art forms, that most are familiar with in the art gallery, to encompass different forms of expression, concepts and practices and this evolution has allowed new forms of art to exist like environmental art, which can have considerable impact. Nowadays it is increasingly common for art to cross the boundary into non-art territory with artists like Jackie Brookner, Agnes Denes and Lynne Hull researching the science behind the concepts in their work. Artists now actively employ the use of biologists, ecologists and other science-based fields in order to allow their works to have both an aesthetic and remedial function.

Through these changes in art, artworks can contribute to positive environmental change either actively through works like Lynne Hull's 'trans-species art' or the Harrisons' landscape reclamation projects, passively through presenting at the changed environment, either for the future like *Time Mountain* or the past like *Time Landscape* or as a figment of wider community and social change as with Beuys projects like *7000 Oaks*.

Ecological aestheticism, which combines visually striking artistic practice with environmental remediation, provides art with a functional springboard to promote a brighter, more environmentally friendly future. The production of such works have the benefit of not only immediately improving environmental concerns but of encouraging new generations to improve and promote environmental conscientious. It is through the practices of these artists that sustainability can be sculptured.

Illustration 24 Joseph Beuys
7,000 Oaks, 1982, Kassel, Germany
Photo from Graduate Art Seminar

