



SEE YOU IN EIGHT DAYS AT 2 P.M. AT SELLA PASS: RICHARD LONG IN THE DOLOMITES

In 1996 the artist, Richard Long, one of the best-known representatives of the European Land Art movement, accepted Karin Welponer's invitation to stage a solo show at the ar/ge Kunst Galerie Museum in Bolzano. For this exhibition, entitled "Dolomite Stone", the artist walked for eight days in the Dolomites, amongst the peaks of Fanes, Puez, Sella and Sassolungo. He also created a number of artworks, now conserved in the Museion collection. Karin Welponer recalls this extraordinary encounter as follows.

A red stamp showing two feet on a lined half-page, and a few words written in pencil – that was Richard's succinct reply, accepting an invitation to exhibit at the Galerie Museum. I had lured him there with aerial photographs of the Dolomites taken by Jogg Tappeiner, along with detailed hiking maps and Dolomite legends.

One year later, the director of the Galleria Museo at the time, Marion Piffer, and I picked Richard up at Villa di Verzegnis and took him from Cortina to Fanes. Having stayed the night at the Lavarella refuge hut, the next morning, we walked with him for a while, but then he set off on his own, saying "See you in eight days at 2 p.m. at Sella Pass," and disappeared with his huge backpack into the "Pale Mountains."

Richard trekked from Fanes to Puez to Sella and up to the summit of Piz Boè (3,150 meters), spending two nights in his tiny tent, one in a thunderstorm. He wants his works in the field to remain anonymous, and anyone who chances upon one of his circles will probably have no idea what a rare stroke of luck it is. At the Sella Pass he strolled out from behind a boulder right on time and beamed. The only difficulty he mentioned was finding water to drink.

Richard obtained the rocks for the DOLOMITE STONES exhibition from a porphyry quarry in the Eggen Valley, and the clay from the River Adige. He also left his mark on my house using this clay. One day, when I came home from picking apples, I found a number of clay imprints on a beam in the studio. With a sly smile, he sent me off in search, and I found two more rows of his clay handprints. He liked to do his work on the ironing board. He sketched the layout for the catalogue there, as well as writing some brief instructions. The draft sketch was similarly frugal, measuring just 7.5 x 11 cm.

The installation, "Eggental Circle" was purchased for the Museion collection and kept temporarily in an aviary in the garden behind the gallery. One day, for an exhibition in Klagenfurt, a transport company was sent to pick it up. But the driver soon got tired of loading stones onto the truck and took off. The next day he was back to grudgingly fetch the remaining pieces, full of incomprehension.



Richard Long, "EGGENTAL CIRCLE", 1996. Installation (Porphyry), 400 cm Ø. Museion Collection. Foto: Ludwig Thalheimer / Lupe

Richard never wants anyone with him when he is out walking. But, his photo book "A Walk Across England" allows us to trace the route he took from the West to the East Coast and share his poetic-epic and humorous observations, "Carrying a stone each day close to my heart." In this image, you can see his two feet again, which he is cooling in a stream. And on the opposite page there is a branch with apples. Apples, which he associates with me. He always wants to know how mine are doing.

Karin Welponer is an artist and co-founder of the Galleria Museo ar/ge Kunst in Bolzano, of which she is currently president.