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Long, Richard. "Shivering in Ithaca." *Art in America*, September 2015, p. 61.

BACKSTORY



Thomas W. Leavitt (standing), director of Cornell University's Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, with (left to right) Neil Jenney, Dennis Oppenheim, Günther Uecker, Jan Dibbets, Richard Long and Robert Smithson, at the exhibition "Earth Art," Feb. 11–Mar. 16, 1969. Courtesy Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Cornell University Library. Photographer Unknown.

Shivering in Ithaca

by Richard Long

PRESUMABLY SOMEONE wrote to me to invite me to be in the "Earth Art" show. That's what you did in those days, you wrote letters. I was a very young artist at the time, the youngest in the group, I'm guessing. I knew only one other artist in the show, Jan Dibbets. We'd been students together at St. Martin's in London. He was there for two months as a guest student, and we became a bit friendly. During the week I spent in Ithaca, N.Y., to prepare the show, I met Louise Lawler, who was then in her last year of art school. I've remained friends with her ever since.

For this project, I chose a certain number of stones and laid them out in a very big, spaced-out rectangle on the sloping lawn in front of Cornell's museum. It was a somewhat invisible piece, especially when it snowed. One of my strongest memories from this time is how cold it was—it was probably the coldest temperature I'd ever been exposed

to in my life. It was also the first time I'd seen a huge river completely frozen solid.

This project didn't really influence my future work; I just made some nice friends. And it gave me a bit more experience in the American art world. I stopped in New York City when I arrived in the States, and had with me a little box of photos of the work I'd been doing in England. One evening I was sitting in a bar, talking to some people, and I showed this guy the photos. He turned out to be John Gibson, who had a gallery. He said, "That's amazing work, I'll give you a show." I came back to town three weeks later. He made these large blow-ups of my photos from England, and that was my first show in New York City. It was a classic case of one thing leading to another. ○

—As told to Leigh Anne Miller

CURRENTLY ON VIEW
Richard Long's solo shows at Sperone Westwater, New York, Sept. 11–Oct. 24, and the Arnolfini, Bristol, U.K., through Nov. 15.

RICHARD LONG is an artist based in Bristol.