

A line made by walking.



I think the slowness is one of the most noticeable aspects of Richard Long's work. He walks for days at a time to create lines, maps and sculptures. Of course the time is a big factor. Not a lot of people still walk for this amount of time. There seems to be no patience for it any more. But time is not the only factor. The setting where he makes the walks are landscapes that look like they have been there for ever. Big mountains, grass fields, stones rocks, rivers. These places are timeless and bring a lot of slowness in the images. The work that sums it all up in my opinion, is 'a line made by walking' made in 1967. Here Long just walks in a grass field back and forth, again and again, until a visible line shows. He takes nothing away and puts nothing in the environment that is not suppose to be there. By walking he reduces his consumption down to its lowest level. There by being highly efficient in his act. In the city however lines made by walking are a result of the opposite nature. Cut corners and man made paths on the grass and in the bushes often show a result of haste. Trampled muddy lines are made from one point to another to save some time, or simply for ease.

Ivan Illich also writes about walks in his work *Energy and Equity*. He is convinced that walking is the highest form of transport a person can have and states that 'Equal speeds have equally distorting effects on the perception of space, time, and personal potency, however different the surface appearance might be.' I agree some how with what Illich says and of course I can see that walking is the most natural way of human transportation. It leaves few traces and has a minimal consumption. Even riding a bicycle is highly consuming if you take the production and transport of the bicycles in account. But I do see that the world we live in now is on a course witch can't be reversed. Walking from point A to point B is almost no option anymore. Only the time it would take for me to walk back and forth to school would almost leave no time in the day for other activities. So we take the bike, car, metro, tram and bus to catch up on the fast world around us.

The danger of this fast life, Illich claims, is becoming a habitual passenger. Passive and slow. Cut off from the outside world. Getting on at one point and getting out on the next. Not noticing the journey in between. I think this is a very popular idea in today's society. People are living fast, working hard and have the feeling that they are forgetting themselves. So they try to tone it down and escape it by suddenly taking it slow. I see the whole concept behind the slowness. No consumption, efficient. And think it is really nice to take a walk, have some time for it, but sometimes it is also just great to be from one point to another, fast.

