

PRESS RELEASE

Athens, July 20, 2020

NEON presents

Richard Long, *Athens Slate Line*

A contemporary Land Art installation at the Shrine of Dionysos Eleuthereus, Athens

21 July – 30 September 2020

Curated by Elina Kountouri, Director, NEON

Honouring its collaboration with the Ministry of Culture & Sports, NEON continues to activate archaeological sites through contemporary art with the proud presentation of Richard Long's *Athens Slate Line*, positioned leading up to the shrine of Dionysos Eleuthereus on the South Slope of the Acropolis of Athens. The project is realised as part of the initiative "All of Greece, One Culture". Curated by NEON's Director Elina Kountouri, the installation will be shown to the public for the first time since its inception in 1984. It will also be Long's first work to be shown in public out of lockdown.

Richard Long has for many decades been associated with the emergence of Land Art in Britain during the 1960s. Central to his practice is the action of walking. He has created sculpture and Land Art using lines all over the world, including the Sahara desert, Australia and Ireland. This particular work, *Athens Slate Line* (1984), consists of individual pieces of slate assembled to form a line. Its linear shape acts as a path, reminiscent of the meditative nature of walking. The act of walking combines physical endurance with the principles of order, action and idea, proposing a new way of viewing the wider area of the site. A line has been at the core of Long's practice and in *Athens Slate Line*. It first appeared in his seminal work *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), as a student at Saint Martin's School of Art in London. He created this artwork by continually treading the same path in a grass field in Wiltshire.

"Since 1967 I have been making walking lines and sculpture lines in different places and landscapes around the world. Life-lines. In the landscape they are marks of passage along a walk. In the urban world they are echoes of all my other lines. They are all made of different, natural materials. The slate of Athens Slate Line is one of my favourite materials; it's practical, and I can use it in different ways. Every time this work is made, each slate can/will be in a different place in the line, but it is the same work each time. Stones are what the world is made of, and a stone line is a microcosm."

Richard Long, artist, Bristol, 2020

"Drama and theater – a Greek invention and a gift to the universal community, with its distinctive characteristics of improvised Dionysian ritual, dance and religious chanting in honor of the god of fertility, the rebirth of nature and ecstasy – were born on the sun-drenched south slope of the Acropolis of Athens, in the sanctuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus, in the 6th century BC."

The work Athens Slate Line by the famous British artist Richard Long will be shown here for the first time. A linear work marks, in the form of a path, the meditative nature of the walker, the experience of nature, the interactive relationship between physical toil and idea. In the modern, fast-paced world of the 21st century, Long calls upon the visitor, through this "solitary path" of mental and spiritual contemplation, to turn as a "Dionysian mystic" back to mythology and the generative power of man's relationship with nature, out of which the leading creation of the theater grew.

Long's simple but powerful idea is harmoniously inscribed in the space of this unique Athenian ancient sanctuary."

Eleni S. Mpanou, Director, Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens

“Long’s walks are an expression of the relationship between humans and nature and they begin from the early human function of walking. The work presented in the Promenade functions as an imaginary continuation of the route which goes up the hill of the Acropolis to the Sanctuary of Athena. Individual pieces of slate blend together and all of them together create a path, a line of civilization from the Sanctuary of Dionysos on the South Slope of the Acropolis. This meeting is a joining together of art and life that records the ephemeral relationship between nature, materials, time, distance, and topogeography. It connects the landscape to the present, to the past, and to the timeless walkers, incorporating a personal, experiential and liberating experience.”

Elina Kountouri, Director, NEON

All the contemporary art exhibitions organized and presented by NEON in archaeological and historical sites in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture & Sports following approval from the Central Archaeological Council, are included in the independent microsite **contemporaryheritage.neon.org.gr**, created to highlight the interaction between the past and contemporary culture.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Richard Long

Painter and sculptor Richard Long (UK, b.1945) is regarded as one of Britain’s most prominent Land Art artists, known for his permanent and transient works in several mediums, which address the complex relationship between humans and nature. Long was born in Bristol and studied at the West of England School of Art and St. Martin’s School of Art in London. Employing natural materials – ranging from water, rocks and mud in a variety of mediums, such as sculpture, installation, text and paintings – Long creates works that trace his movement, largely walking on foot, through different landscapes in England, Scotland and the western United States.

Throughout his works, walking becomes a documented art form, through which he can explore the transience of time, distance, and place, seen in both the physical landscape as well as art forms. Long has exhibited his work at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among many other institutions. He has created several public works on commission, including pieces for the Hearst Building in New York and at Houghton Hall in Norfolk. Long is the only artist to have been shortlisted four times for the Turner Prize, which he won in 1989. He was made a Commander of the British Empire in 2013 and knighted in 2018.

About NEON

NEON is a nonprofit organization that works to bring contemporary culture closer to everyone. It is committed to broadening the appreciation, understanding and creation of contemporary art in Greece and to the belief that this is a key tool for growth and development. NEON, founded in 2013 by collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, breaks with the convention that limits the contemporary art foundation of a collector to a single place.

NEON’s space is the city. It acts on a multitude of initiatives, spaces and civic and social contexts. It seeks to expose the ability contemporary art has to stimulate, inspire and affect the individual and society at large. NEON constructively collaborates with cultural institutions and supports the programs of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art. www.neon.org.gr

VISITOR INFORMATION

Richard Long *Athens Slate Line*

Shrine of Dionysos Eleuthereus, South Slope of the Acropolis of Athens

Duration: 21 July – 30 September 2020

Hours: Daily 8:00-20:00

Free Entrance on Monday, Wednesday & Friday 19:00-19:45.

Prebooking required via digitalculture.gov.gr

The events are offered free of charge by the Ministry of Culture & Sports. The only price of admission is the ticket for entrance to each site, where applicable.

We would like to thank the Panhellenic Union of Employees for Guarding Antiquities, whose members generously participate in the events of the initiative "All of Greece. One Culture" of the Ministry of Culture & Sports.

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