

ART

Many of the original Land Art works are known today through (or exist only in) documentary photographs made by their creators at the moment of creation, as natural changes in the environment have subsequently and definitively altered the works. A new movement, what might be called "post-Land Art" has now arrived. In it, photography assumes a more essential role, with the photographers foregoing the earthmoving: they identify evidence of environmental change instead of creating it, turning man-made alterations of the landscape into poignant statements about man's power over nature. The artists' ecological outrage helps their work fit into a new framework of Land Art.

Andy Goldsworthy and **Nils-Udo**, leaders of the Art in Nature movement, have been artist-environmentalist pioneers for decades. They minimize the footprint of their sculptures and installations in every way. Goldsworthy uses only what he finds on site. He uses his teeth as a tool and his saliva as an adhesive. His projects include covering a rock in a clear river with bright yellow leaves to make it appear golden in the sunlight (*Yellow Elm Leaves Laid over a Rock*, 1991), or putting crumbling red rocks in a waterfall to turn it briefly red (*Red River Rocks*, 1997).

Nils-Udo tends to work on a larger scale to draw the viewer physically into the modified feature of the landscape. He has made a nest not in a tree but with a tree (*Willow Nest*, 1994), for instance, and he has installed grass-covered ramps, made from wood and earth, leading into a treetop (*Towards Nature*, 2008). The work of these artists celebrates, rather than obliterates, a landscape.

Michael McGillis explores the cycle of environmental destruction and industrial creation. In pieces like *Wake* (2006), he returns cordwood (painted purple) to disrupted nature (a trench) in an artificial arrangement (as pathway walls). The "denatured" installation leads the visitor a metre or so into the earth, while forming a barrier protecting the visitor from it. Unlike Richard Serra, the Land Artist who shocked viewers with an installation of logs cut from endangered California redwood trees in the Pasadena Art Museum in 1970, McGillis turns viewers into accomplices, forcing them into the "disruptive gesture...of opening the earth."

Tokihiro Sato's interventions can spread over vast distances across a landscape but exist only in photographs. Using a flashlight, he moves (or swims) across an area and shines his light at the camera. The shutter speed of two to three hours means that the dots of light, not his body, are captured on film. He modifies the landscape visually, but leaves it unaltered physically.

TOKIHIRO SATO
#389 Kamaiso, 1999,
black-and-white
transparency over
lightbox.
Image: 98 x 120 cm/
lightbox: 100 x 125 cm.
Courtesy of the artist
and Haines Gallery



