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## The Long View

### The Must-See Show Across the Atlantic



Richard Long, *A Line in Norfolk* (2016) © Pete Higgins

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Published 14 September 2017 in [Must See](#)

The art of the eminent British sculptor Richard Long is always born out of a profound engagement with its surroundings, whether Antarctica, the Andes or, in this case, [Houghton Hall in Norfolk](#).

Depending which way you are facing, *A Line in Norfolk* (2016) extends from—or stretches towards—the neoclassical façade of this 18<sup>th</sup>-century Palladian masterpiece, designed by architects Colen Campbell and James Gibbs, with interiors by William Kent, for Britain's first Prime Minister, Robert Walpole.

Extending for 84m and made from densely packed chunks of burnt-orange Norfolk carrstone, it is less a line than a knobby procession, a rugged but ceremonial carpet—or even, from some angles, an unfurled tongue—that glows against Houghton's smooth expanse of emerald lawn.

Meticulously aligned with the house and conceived in response to Houghton's formal landscape, Long's stone line pulsates with the friction of raw nature coming up against oh-so-English culture. Yet there's also a calming stability in his carefully placed, rusty rocks.

The push-pull of primeval geometry against Georgian gentility plays out throughout each of the eight works Long has created for the exhibition in Houghton House and its grounds. Entitled "[Earth Sky: Richard Long at Houghton](#)", it is the largest group of his outdoor works ever shown together (until 26 October).



Richard Long, *Full Moon Circle* (2003) © Pete Higgins

Accompanying the new works is the more tranquil *Full Moon Circle* (2003), the first work commissioned from Long for Houghton. It is positioned to echo the curve of the "ha-ha", a concealed ditch which disguises the boundary between manicured lawn and rough meadow when viewed from the house. Here, a dense mass of irregular slate slabs overlap like the scales of a fish, reflecting the ever-changing Norfolk sky as it shifts from silver to pewter.

The mood turns darker and more dramatic in the walled garden with *Houghton Cross* (2016). On top of an immaculate green lawn boxed in by neat yew hedges (one side of which contains a series of classically sculptured heads within clipped-out niches), there is a jagged slate cross whose craggy slices are propped against each other to form intersecting mini-mountain ranges.

There's another cross inside the house, this one titled *North South East West* (2017). It is encased within a circle of local flint and lies among the grandeur of the classical statuary and portrait busts of Houghton's Stone Hall.

The artist has said that "every sculpture I make is an emotional response to being there at that moment", and at Houghton Hall we see just how rich, complex and compelling these conversations can be.



Richard Long, *North South East West* (2017) © Pete Huggins