

**WORDS  
FROM  
WALKS**



**HAMISH FULTON**

# WORDS FROM WALKS

**'Never write anything,  
you'll only regret it'.**

**(Don Whillans, legendary English mountaineer 1933-1985.)**

I understand that the artist may not be the best person  
to provide an objective, art historical overview  
of their own life's work.

However, in the absence of any in-depth writing,  
and in an attempt to prevent misconceptions  
continuing without comment,

I present here, in leaflet form, for the record,  
just one or two points  
regarding my general outlook.

I exhibit words as a walking artist, not a conceptual artist.

I am not an author. I'm 'uneducated'.

Learning without being taught.

Words are independent  
of any one material, size or colour.

The sovereignty of languages. The histories of nations.

In the English language,  
justice is a seven letter word.

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## THE NEWOLD WAY

Walking is ancient and contemporary.

I describe myself as 'a walking artist'.

Walking art is the bringing together  
of two entirely separate activities.

Walking and art.

Yin and Yang.

I transform ideas  
into physical experiences.

My self-imposed rule is:

If I do not walk I cannot make any art.

THE ENJOYMENT OF WALKING  
THE PLEASURES OF CREATIVITY

I recognise the fact that not everyone  
is physically able to walk.

I am an artist who walks, not a walker who makes art.

Not every artist enjoys walking  
and not every walker is tolerant of contemporary art.

An 'artwork' may be purchased,  
but my walks  
cannot be sold or stolen.

**A Walked Line Unlike A Drawn Line Can Never Be Erased.**

Duration. Ten toes. Counting by hand.

Walk, mark time.

Measure, is a se7en letter word.

Reading from left to right, but walking in every direction.

Up hill

down hill.

From and to **THE TENT.**

Breathing. Walking Rhythms.  
Different walks different rules.

My walks range from...

7 barefoot paces walking on grass towards the rising full moon,  
to...

multi-week solo camping treks (on the Earth under my feet)  
to...

coast to coast walks (sea to summit to sea) and...  
road walks (walking with a light pack in warmer weather) to...

'high altitude trekking' (guided mountain ascents),

and, 1-2 hour unique shared urban walks

(building experiences, not objects)

involving up to several hundred participants.

(Participation corroboration).

Repetitions of the same walk ideas

in different locations with different people.

**'The Walking Participant Is The Art Observer.'**

Images of the land.

I walk on the land, not in the 'landscape'.

I do not take walks, I make walks.

'Walk texts' are about past events.

Walking 'in the moment',

is

Walking Now.

An Object Cannot Compete With An Experience.

Out of respect for the abilities and standards  
of world-class mountaineers, The Marathon Monks,  
and unrecorded foot travellers from the past and present,

I describe my few artwalks as short and easy.

I compete, only with myself.

Beyond the word.

Walking Is The Constant The Art Medium Is The Variable.

**Every piece of art I materialise contains a 'walk text'.**

I make art exclusively  
from walks that I have personally experienced.

When a walk has been completed, the text can be written.  
(‘Earning the right’ to record the event.)

The basic facts of the walk cannot be altered,  
but as time passes  
the walks may be re-evaluated, re-contextualised,  
and the ‘walk texts’...  
recycled.

In choosing a text ‘title’ with the same number of letters  
as the days walked,  
the graphic elements are ‘locked’ together.  
Numbers. (Old Norse meaning - a report, narration).

My walk texts are like a pack of playing cards  
which I can rearrange into a variety of categories.

**‘When the time is right’.**

**I took a gamble, and placed my bet on just the one horse,  
walking.**

The unknown road ahead.

In an internet world overflowing with words  
I do not provide the relief of wordless abstract art.  
Conversely, I am not an urban ‘primitive’.

Internet research → ← surveillance capitalism,  
all in contrast to our private intuitions.

Make a walk, write a text, read it to an audience.  
By word of mouth. The spoken word. Oral history.  
Memory. The retelling of stories.

A good story well told.

Verbal interpretations for the meaning of visual symbols.  
Sign language.

The Winter Count (from snow to snow).

Quipu, knotted string records.

Moon counting sticks.

The length of a journey, remembered by the number of sleeps.

There are no words in nature.

Written-in-the-earth, fresh tracks of a grizzly bear.

A walk may exist purely as a walk,  
but my 'artwork'  
cannot be created without the walk.

It's what it's about,  
not what it looks like.

The surrounding 'imagery', the graphic design of my artwork,  
is what I call the 'container' for the 'walk text'.

I date my artwork, by the date of the walk.

Every walk is unique.

Walks are facts for the walker and 'fiction' for everyone else.

**An Artwork Cannot Re-present The Experience Of A Walk.**

Walking Art.

Neither of these two words  
specify an art medium,  
thereby suggesting openness and potential  
for anyone.

The separation of experience and object.

The history of walking...  
'from walking to... sitting and riding',  
'from necessity to... choice'.

A tree at its birthplace, a boulder at its resting place.

Distance and time.

Direction  
of the rising sun.

Summer solstice.

Winter solstice. Darkness. Silence. The call of an owl.

Not-by-car. The width of a footprint.  
Walking in the age of vehicle dependency.  
The consistency of walking.  
Childhood, old age. Ancient and contemporary.

Walking without a smartphone.  
(There are no photographs of Crazy Horse).  
Walking without talking.  
Springtime listening. Arrival of the first cuckoo where you live.  
Walking backwards in mud.

Walking In any direction.

Walking  
is the interconnecting experience  
for a wide spectrum of possibilities, concerns and disciplines...  
slow travel, SLOWALK,  
walking and talking, mental health,  
creative thinking, the experience of purposeless walking,  
freedom of expression, protest marches,  
refugees on foot... identified by their gait,  
escapes across the Nangpa La, Journalists Without Borders,  
walk the talk, not rule-by-law,  
the right to roam,  
indoor walking, pedestrian road crossings,  
egoless pilgrimage, The Tibetan Kora,  
mechanistic society's missing rituals,  
'performance', 'movement', visual art...  
'the wandering haiku poets',  
and mountaineering expeditions:  
'the walk-in',  
the climb...  
'ROUTE AND STYLE'  
descend  
and, 'walk-out'.

### Walking Between Walks.

Weaving the walks,  
layer on top of layer, woven time.  
Connecting the **invisible footsteps** of my previous walks,  
crossing and re-joining.  
The starting place. Dawn of the day.  
The ending place. Euphoric exhaustion.  
Energy from deep sleep.

### Walking Through.

Oxygenating the brain,  
lost memories rising to the surface like tea leaves,  
opening the mind, a change of mind,  
transforming perceptions, relaxed but alert.  
Walking is magic. Walking is 'good medicine'.

### Walking In Relation To Everything.

MY ART IS A COMMENT ON THE WAY WE LIVE TODAY. INDOORS.

### Outside.

### Seeing The Bird That Sings.

Antidote: fresh air for children  
as they stride out across the hill tops.

### A Decision To Choose Only Walking.

Although I made my first 'artwalk' with other students  
during 2 February 1967,  
step  
by  
step  
it took me a further six years of trial and error  
via several short walks,  
to arrive at a total commitment to walking.



In October 1973 at the age of 28,  
after completing one coast to coast walk  
of just over a thousand miles,  
on Scotland, Wales and England,  
I made the single most important decision  
of my creative life:

**To Make Art Resulting  
Only**

**From The Experience Of Individual Walks.**

**7 the readymade. The replacement of cells.**

**The 7 days of the week.**

**The 7 principles of 'Leave No Trace'.**

**Rainbow. No-thing is a 7 letter word.**

**The seven colours of a rainbow  
transformed into a heap of grey dust.**

**Mandala, is a seven letter word.**

**Bardo. Transition, rebirth after 49 days.**

**The Seven Stars. 'The moon lives for 28 days'.**

**Index finger of the right hand.**

**In the English language,**

**WALKING IS A SEVEN LETTER WORD.**

**The names of seven women**

**who ascended to the 8848 metre summit of Chomolungma.**

**Phantog Schmatz Allison Baeyens**

**Kutiya Pittman Boskoff.**

**Habeler. Messner. Mandela. Thoreau. Jokhang.**

**Leonard Peltier.**

**Arapaho ● Arranda ● Dongria ● Quechua ● Inupiat ● Huichol ●**

**Dzambha ●**

**(Google: Naglha Dzambha, a sacred mountain in Tibet).**

**HABITAT.**

**Oceti Sacowin... 'For the Seventh Generation'.**

**The United Nations Declaration**

**On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples. (2007)**

In 2016 I voted to remain in the EU.  
In 2019,  
it is the Indigenous Peoples of the world who may guide us  
to a more respectful relationship with what they call,  
Mother Earth.  
Changes, is a 7 letter word.

'We need to remember that the work of our time  
is bigger than climate change'.

(Rebecca Tarbotton.

Quoted by Naomi Klein. This Changes Everything. 2014.)

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[idlenomore.ca](http://idlenomore.ca)

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[www.honorearth.org](http://www.honorearth.org)

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'...to transform human laws to match natural laws,  
not vice versa'.

(Winona LaDuke. All Our Relatives. 1999.)

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'...the democracy of all life, the little beings and the big beings  
with no hierarchy  
because you have no idea  
ecologically how things fit into the web of life'.  
(Vandana Shiva. Restoring The Balance. 1997.)

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'Man is part of nature and his war against nature  
is inevitably a war against himself'.

(Rachel Carson. Silent Spring. 1962.)

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'We have somehow contrived to discount land  
as a significant subject for public debate'.

(Mark Cocker. Our Place.

Can We Save Britain's Wildlife Before It Is Too Late? 2018.)

**Boot prints on the moon.  
Our lack of respect  
for the diversity of life forms  
on  
this  
planet**

**is the root cause of the ecological crisis.**

**As we gaze down  
into our smartphones (nomophobia)  
we simultaneously turn our backs on all non-human existence.**

**Either 'game' or 'vermin'...**

**SNAKES SHARKS WOLVES...**

**(slugs, spiders, bats, rats, leeches, mosquitoes, termites, flees...)**

**The life-force even in the smallest of insects.**

**See: Chatral Rinpoche (1913-2015). Fish release ceremonies.**

**Migration of the Arctic Tern. The pollination of plants...**

**Mountains that look like clouds,  
clouds that look like mountains.**

**The altitudes of high mountains,  
gravity...**

**Let the rivers run free and 'wild'.**

**Movement energy.**

**Animate**

**and inanimate 'beings', 'the other peoples'.**

**The Uncarved Block.**

**A glacial boulder transported by ice and shaped by erosion.**

**The-rocks-are-alive-in-their-homeland.**

**Scale Quantity**

**Weight and Value (Marble/Diamonds.)**

**A MOUNTAIN IS NOT MADE OF STONE IT IS STONE**

## THE RIGHTS OF NATURE

'We abuse land

because we see it as a commodity belonging to us'.

(Aldo Leopold. A Sand County Almanac. 1949.)

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There is more than one story to be told:

From the 70's to the present time,  
some art historians have categorised me as a Land Artist.

From my side,  
in 2019, as a symbolic gesture of respect for nature,  
I wish no association  
with any form of art that intentionally re-models  
the naturally evolved form of the land,  
or introduces natural-objects into the international art market.

My disagreement  
is with the limited focus of art historians...  
not the diversity, freedom and creativity of artists...



My philosophy for 'contemporary mountain art'  
is to mention only those few mountains and volcanoes  
that I have personally ascended.

**An Object Cannot Compete With An Experience.**

'My truths are not universal,  
which is one reason they are so difficult to express.  
My ice axe may be your paintbrush.  
One man's Slovak Direct is another's West Buttress'.  
(Steve House. Beyond The Mountain. 2009.)

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My art begins with walking,  
not ancient monuments,  
not the history of agriculture and 'landscape' gardening...  
not the history of 'landscape' painting...  
Conversely,  
some Indigenous Peoples,  
sense that certain natural locations are sacred.

(I do not consider myself to be a world traveler  
in search of diverse 'scenery'.  
Scenery coming from the Greek word meaning, stage.)

'...the idea of history is itself a western invention whose central  
theme is a rejection of habitat. It formulates experience  
of nature and tends to reduce place to...  
only a stage upon which the human drama is enacted'.  
(Paul Shepard. Nature and Madness 1982.)

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Sometime in the mid-seventies, I defensively coined the term  
'walking artist'.

But the true beginning for my intuitions,  
was when, as 13 year old, I read the life story of Wooden Leg,  
(born c 1858)  
a Northern Cheyenne from the Black Hills,  
in what was later to become South Dakota.  
Nakota, Lakota, Dakota.  
In the summer of 1969,  
with Nancy Wilson I visited those places that I had read about,  
among others,  
The Black Hills and Wounded Knee.  
In 2005, I had the privilege of meeting Dennis Banks,  
an Ojibwa  
and co-founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM)  
who lead the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973.

'The Black Hills Are Not For Sale'.  
(Public Sculpture at Mount Rushmore).

The worlds oldest ongoing art is  
re-painted  
Indigenous Australian cave art.

Flyweight = the weight of a fly.  
My decisive restraint in the use of art materials,  
is merely a symbolic gesture.  
Art materials: every 'thing' has to be made of something,  
and everything comes originally, as 'free goods' from nature.

Didactic sanctimonious hypocrisy.  
As an international artist,  
I identify the fact that I generate a carbon footprint.

Footprints at high tide.

I have read, that we have lived as hunter-gatherers  
for 90% of human existence.

Contributing to the life  
of a footpath.  
Hooves, paws, claws, feet, hooves, shoes, boots, rain, erosion.

Mountain skyline,  
a gap in the distant horizon.  
Over the pass, between the hills, beside a river,  
the flow of air.  
**FIRE** and **WATER**.  
A blackened shelter rock.  
Out on the plateau, a few scattered nomad tents.  
Regrowth green. The seasonal rounds.

**"Space generates time".**  
**(Vine Deloria Jr. God Is Red. 1973.)**

Spring Summer Autumn Winter Spring.  
East South West North East. The Four Winds.

The Numbers: Four And Seven.  
Flatland and mountains. Odd and even.  
7 14 21 28. The number of days to be walked  
may be set in advance,  
but not always.  
Twenty one walks, walking from one to twenty one days.  
(Various locations 1971-1989).

Timing of the first seven steps and the last seven steps.  
All my walks are related, from the shortest to the longest,  
from the first to the most recent.  
Then and there, here and now.  
My walks collectively constitute a 'journey'.  
I am the storehouse of all my walks.

The satisfaction  
from earlier walks  
contributing on reflection,  
to the appreciation  
of present day walks.

Walks  
are like clouds,  
they come and go.  
In my memory  
nowhere to be seen.

Walking into the distance  
beyond imagination.

When I say that 'the walk is the art',  
I simply mean  
that 'the walk',  
is my contribution to contemporary art.

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**A W A L K I N G A R T I S T**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7**

A FOURTEEN DAY WALKING JOURNEY  
FROM SALTWOOD BY THE STRAIGHTS OF DOVER  
TO THE STIPERSTONES IN SHROPSHIRE BY THE WELSH BORDER  
ENGLAND SPRING 1972

**H O N O U R T H E E A R T H**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6 7**

FOURTEEN DAYS WALKING FOURTEEN NIGHTS CAMPING  
WIND RIVER RANGE WYOMING U.S.A. SUMMER 1989

**W A L K I N G**

**SEVEN DAYS WALKING SEVEN NIGHTS CAMPING**

**T H E W A L K**

**CENTRAL HOKKAIDO JAPAN JUNE FULL MOON 1989**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7**

Above: Walk texts for mailing cards and wall paintings.

**Words From Walks**

**Summer 2019 © Hamish Fulton (Born 1946)**

**Outsider Survivor Lefthander**

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Revised Version I.