

not vital & richard long mothers

nara roesler rio de janeiro

opening september 10, 6–9 pm

exhibition september 10 – october 26, 2024



exhibition view, mothers, 2024
Photo © Rafael Salim

Nara Roesler Rio de Janeiro is pleased to present *Mothers*, an exhibition that brings together works by Not Vital (Sent, Switzerland, 1948) and Richard Long (Bristol, UK, 1945). The show, which opens to the public on September 10, celebrates the tenth anniversary of the gallery in Rio and will feature new works by both artists, including site-specific works by Richard Long created especially for the occasion.

Despite their different artistic and personal backgrounds, the artists share a friendship and a bond that transcends the field of art: Richard Long's mother, Frances, originally from Bristol, England, was born in Rio de Janeiro because, at the time, her father worked as a representative for the Hispano-Suiza automobile company in Brazil. Long, for his part, established a relationship of admiration and affection with Maria, Not Vital's mother, with whom he lived when he would visit his friend in Sent, in the Engadine valley of Switzerland. On Maria's 100th

birthday in 2016, Richard Long dedicated a new edition of his famous walking series, begun in 1971, to her, entitled *A Hundred Mile Walk*—a walk of one hundred miles, almost 161 kilometers—in which he covered the distance between Stonehenge and the source of the Thames.

Born in Sent, Switzerland, Not Vital grew up in a landscape marked by snow and shades of gray, a color palette that strongly influences his production, since, in his words, “when it wasn't snowing, everything was gray”. Although he also produces installations and paintings, the most expressive part of his poetics is made up of sculptures, a language to which he has dedicated himself since the beginning of his career and in which he uses materials such as bronze, plaster, and marble, among others. In many of these works, the artist explores the link between the organic and inorganic, human and animal, real and fantastic, in totemic, hybrid, and mysterious structures.

Not Vital is also known for having expanded sculpture into architecture with his Scarchs, a term created by the artist himself, combining the words “sculpture” and “architecture” to define works built using local materials in a site-specific environment worldwide. The artist travels the globe making works and interventions, having already visited places like China, Niger, the Philippines, and, more recently, Brazil, where he has a studio in the Santa Teresa district of Rio de Janeiro.

Richard Long, on the other hand, is one of the most celebrated contemporary sculptors, having been the only artist to be a Turner Prize finalist four times (and winner of the 1989 edition). With a career that began in the 1960s, the artist characterizes his work as a “response to the environments” he walks through. In general, Long makes some kind of alteration to these landscapes, almost always with the materials that make them up, such as stones, mud, and snow. In some cases, the main element becomes the artist’s walk through the area, with photographs, maps, and texts serving as a record of this action.

As his works often take place in isolated and remote areas, such as the Sahara desert or lands in Iceland, and since most of these sculptural actions are ephemeral, the process of executing his gestures on the ground, as well as the photographic record of them, bring his production closer to performance, of conceptual art and establish a dialog with Land Art.

As two artists who think about sculpture from a contemporary perspective, it is possible to draw interesting parallels between their poetics. In addition to the nomadic spirit they have in common which somehow marks the work of both artists, we can also highlight the ephemerality present in both Long’s work and some of Vital’s Scarchs. There is also the establishment of a relationship between the works and the environment and landscape in which they are located and, in the case of Not Vital, there are also the relationships established with the local population.

about not vital

Not Vital (b. 1948, Sent, Switzerland) is best known for having developed a practice that is based on intense contact with nature and a nomadic lifestyle. His work seeks to provoke unusual experiences or viewpoints, either by displacing purely natural forms, or by extracting elements from remote regions, and re-contextualizing them into an artistic framework, often

altering their scale or materials. Since the beginning of the 1980s, Not Vital has repeatedly collaborated with artisans in an endeavour to intertwine sculpture and the construction of space, frequently diluting the limits between art and architecture, and establishing an intimate relationship with the local cultural context. Indeed, his pieces work to alter our perception of the environment that they inhabit, either through their reflexive physicality or their unusual architectural structure.

Vital has also produced paintings and works on paper, which converse with the matters he addresses in his sculptures and architectural propositions. For these pieces, the artist employs a varied palette of materials that go from the simple and perishable –coffee, salt, eggs– to the most valuable and resistant –marble, silver and gold. Since the end of the 1990s, Not Vital has erected permanent installations in numerous locations, including Agadez (Niger), Chilean Patagonia (Chile) and Paraná do Mamori (Brazil). In addition, he has also built so-called habitats, such as the House to Watch the Sunset, amongst other schools, bridges or tunnels.

Not Vital lives and works in Sent, Switzerland, Beijing, China and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Not Vital: Scarch*, at Hauser & Wirth (2020), in Somerset, United Kingdom; *Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom*, at Galerie Andrea Caratsch (2019), in St. Mortiz, Switzerland, and at Ateneum (2018), in Helsinki, Finland; *Not Vital. Saudade*, at Galeria Nara Roesler (2018), in São Paulo, Brazil, and at Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2016), in Wakefield, United Kingdom. Recent group exhibitions include: *Passion: Bilder von der Jagd*, at Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur (2019), in Chur, Switzerland; *Surrealism Switzerland*, at Aargauer Kunsthau (2018), in Aarau, Switzerland; *Illumination*, at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (2016), in Humlebæk, Denmark; *Simple Forms: Contemplating Beauty*, at Mori Art Museum, in Tokyo, Japan. His works are part of important institutional collections, such as: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland; The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA; Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, Aichi, Japan, amongst others.

about richard long

Since the late 1960s, Long has made nature the subject of his work. Early on in his career, he began working outdoors using natural materials he found, such as grass and water: one of his

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first works, from 1964, consisted of a snowball and the trail it made as it rolled. This eventually evolved into the idea of making sculptures by walking. His first work in this sense was *A Line Made By Walking*, from 1967: a straight line in a field of grass recorded as a photograph with text. His creations expressed through walking have come to include the passage of time and place into the sculptural field, as his walks are recorded or described in photographs, maps or texts. Long also collects various materials found along the way to produce his works, both in the landscape itself and in galleries. In his words: “I’m interested in the emotional power of simple images”, and the materials he finds are organized into configurations such as circles and lines, which are “timeless, universal, understandable and easy to make”.

In his poetics, the changes he makes to the landscape are minimal. His outdoor sculptures, whether made by walking or by placing stones or sticks, leave minimal evidence of his presence. The artist has worked in some of the world’s most remote landscapes and, using the most economical means, has created a body of work that has transcended international boundaries and speaks a truly universal language.

Richard Long’s major solo exhibitions include: *Richard Long*, at the Rijksmuseum (2023), in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; *Richard Long*, at the Judd Foundation (2016) in New York, USA; *Richard Long: Time and Space*, at Arnolfini (2015), in Bristol, UK; *Richard Long: Heaven and Earth*, at Tate Britain (2009), in London, UK; *Richard Long: The Path is the Place is the Line*, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2006), in San Francisco, USA. His works are part of important institutional collections, such as: Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan.

about nara roesler

Nara Roesler is a leading Brazilian contemporary art gallery, representing seminal Brazilian and international artists who emerged in the 1950s as well as preeminent mid-career and emerging artists who dialogue with the currents put forth by these historical figures. Founded by Nara Roesler in 1989, the gallery has consistently fomented curatorial practice while upholding the utmost quality in art production. This has actively been put into practice through a select and

rigorous exhibitions program created in close collaboration with its artists; the implementation and fostering of the Roesler Curatorial Project, a platform for curatorial projects; and continued support to artists beyond the gallery space, working with institutions and curators in offsite shows. In 2012, the gallery doubled its São Paulo exhibition space, in 2014 it expanded to Rio, and in 2015 it opened in New York City, continuing its mission to provide the best platform for its artists to show their work.

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