

## How did it start?

### A simple historical overview

It is often said that the Land art began in the 60s in the U.S. Some of the foreground figures are: Robert Smithson, Nancy Holt, Michael Heizer, Valter De Maria and a few others. These were all sculptors and they were all influenced by performance art. Together they wanted to develop an art that, like performance art explored and focused on the experience of art rather than the final product. They also wanted to use art as a means to distance themselves from the rapidly growing commercialization that influenced the American art scene at the time. The result was Land art. An art made in inaccessible places, impossible to buy or visit, like one of the first works were made in the Nevada desert. The works were often monumental and minimalistic in its visual design and because of their huge sizes; many of them are still working and located as art even today. Even though art itself was not reachable to visit, artist still where dependent on reaching out to an audience and presenting their works. And almost all works of this kind depends on photographs, sketches and documentary materials for being exhibited in galleries. Or as today, is spread through internet media.

In the late 70's and early 80's Environmental Art began to. Like the Land Art exploited the site and nature but environmental commitment grew stronger than before. Many projects moved closer to the cities and some of them developed into social projects. From the established contemporary art began site-specific art show in the 90s . It is an art form that looks disconnected from Land Art. An art approach that focuses on places without any real environmental political position. During the 2000s, both photography and performance art started interacting with Land art scene worldwide.

### The concept of Nature and Land Art

Nature means different things to us and it might be important to stop for a moment at the concept of Nature and delve a bit into what exactly it stands for and how it is used in this book.

Pure general Nature defines to a place or an area where a number of natural elements predominate and are consistent with our own conception of what nature is all about. So Nature is a kind of umbrella term then we experience a complexity of living conditions, mineral structures, natural elements etc.

Natural concept is a highly charged word, some of us also see ourselves as a piece of Nature . Again, the limits are fluent in how we perceive nature and nature's place in our lives. Within Land art / Art in Nature Nature has always been a central concept and still is today, despite everyone's awareness that nature for many is a marginal phenomenon.

In the early 60 's Land art (in US) saw Nature as a neutral area. As I described before people started to use deserts to those in a work of art could describe something about the earth's resources. No, this man was interested in the desert because it had a neutrality in relation city and especially the commercial forces that actively sought out away from. This was the very reason why artists at first started making art in inaccessible places. During the 70's and 80 's saw Nature as an eco- political space rather than place; Nature was seen as a kind of meeting place for negotiation and cooperation - a sort of meeting place (and they kept almost always indoors).

And during the 90s and well into the 2000s, the concept of Nature has come to focus more and more on a mental and emotional place for the individual 's inner world or needs.

It is common for the orientation used the term Nature through soon five decades , can summarize by saying that Nature in Land Art is a symbol of human beings and their interaction with the environment that we call nature .

### **Land art in Sweden**

The art scene for Land art in Sweden is quite different as it is worldwide. One difference is perhaps that in small countries (such as Sweden ), it is possibly even more difficult to get around . The established art scene is more rectified in smaller countries and engaged one time with an art that is odd , well then the possibilities become fewer in exhibitions , scholarships and other awards.

Meanwhile , Sweden is a country with very unspoiled nature. Most people have a relative who lives outside the city and it makes the next all in this country has roots branching out in rural areas where nature is a part of everyday life . Therefore, almost all still a close relationship to what nature is and what it could mean for us. It also maintains the nation is still a law (since ? ) Called for the right of public access and that enable anyone can walk undisturbed by land you do not own . In order for this to work is taught to all citizens in how to stay smooth in nature, a public education that is still unique in the world and spread through compulsory education . With this background , have virtually all their own experiences of being creative in nature. My own experience is that this popular education foundation contributes strongly that it is not at all difficult to capture people's interest in the Land Art or to start teaching projects where creative activities in the outdoor environment is used to achieve different goals. It is easy to arouse people's imagination on how this could be, for whether you know anything about Land Art or not , most positive memories from when they were playing in the woods. Nature is seen as an available plastic and step between own game and be able to make art in it is not as long as one might imagine.

### **Examples of artists in the borderland between Land art and contemporary art**

Perhaps the most famous and publicized artist in the country is the art historian and artist Lars Wiilks . In one of his early art projects ( Arxs and Nimis ) questioned the ownership of works of art in nature. Learn more about this on [www.ladonia.net](http://www.ladonia.net)

Henrik Håkansson and Gunilla Olin are also artists who explore how nature affects us / we have it, and how contemporary art can be a mouthpiece and an " observation point " for such reflections and thoughts. see [www.haakansson.net](http://www.haakansson.net)

[www.bandolin.se](http://www.bandolin.se) Monica Gora is a landscape architect who works on the boundary between landscape architecture and konst.[www.gora.se](http://www.gora.se)

### **Projects, organizations and museums in Sweden**

Every year the project where nature and the local environment in one way or another is the very premise of the project. Then it is natural to explore konstinrikningens opportunities. The invited artists are usually locally based artists who have other media as a base for their operations. Very rarely put it into Internationally recognized artists to individual cultural projects which explores konstinrikningens opportunities.

A comprehensive large art project that was done in the 2000s was " Konstväg seven rivers " in Västerbotten. The project consisted of ten site-specific works along the road ...? The works linking the country and extends from the Norwegian border in the west to the coastal plain in the east against the Finnish border. The project concept is controlled by an association that has existed for 40 years. For more info see

Artist's center west www.kc - vast.se with its headquarters in Gothenburg since 2008 along with Bottna Culture Festival and KKV Bohuslän arranged Land art exhibitions and seminars : [www.bottnalandart.se](http://www.bottnalandart.se)

In southern Sweden (Blekinge) are Wanås castle, which, through its fiscal invested heavily to invite internationally recognized artists such as Yoko Ono, Jenny Holzer , Maya Linn,

Mariana Abramowitz , Allan Mc Collum , etc . . The artists have been able to carry out their work out in the park . More information is available on [www.wanas.se](http://www.wanas.se)

It pops up mayflies which organizes projects or utställningsr where Country species populate the scene : one such example is Sofieros First International Land Art Festival 2011. If there is no follow-up for the future to show.

## Why ?

Since many Land Art artists work so closely with nature and the environment , most of them has a green profile, and wants through their work contribute actively to sustainable development. It's great goals and in itself nothing unique, but I can imagine that an individual experiencing the reason they are working with Land art as something vital. And that through art may rule on the things you want to influence and change . The fact that it helps with making a difference on the big lot of other people.

*I thought I could share with you how it all began for me:* The first time I encountered Land art was when I went on the HDK in the late 80s. I read about Smithson , Joseph Beuys and other pioneering artists. It did not take long before I tried it myself , along with a fellow student . It was on my grandparents' farm in Småland as I did the first work . Agency was live on through a video , which was shown at various festivals and exhibitions. But it would take a decade before I could bet on Land art altogether. In 1994, I was commissioned for exhibition in a castle park . It was my first commissioned in Land Art. Education was vandalized beyond recognition and there was great excitement in the neighborhood. This of course was a tumultuous event but it was also the starting point for an exploration I could not refrain from pursuing . After such an experience, I had a number of questions that I wanted to explore with the help of art. Why did my art such strong emotions that it was destroyed ? Was it because it was built on a natural place ? Why is the concept of nature as charged to us? Why is it so? It took me 4 years to regain the courage to make a new work out there, but the time in between, I used for a thorough theoretical research for the questions I want to explore. Somehow it deepend my curiosity even more. And I decided to work with Art in Nature as an Art profile.

## The Dilemma of Land Art

So far I have presented and described things that hopefully will give a better picture of what Land Art is, who practices it and where in society one can come across it.

I now want to put out some critical thoughts, but also conclusions I have drawn from personal experience.

I also hope that this style of writing, where another perhaps more complex figuration emerges, at the same time will be able to contribute to a realistic description, a multifaceted image which also includes what challenges one is confronted with and how they affect the decisions one needs to make to be able to work with what one wants. Some problems may not be possible to solve on one's own, but must relate to them all the same.

When you back to the history of Land Art, we find cause for a dilemma about how to expose and show one's works. To distance oneself from a growing commercialization of art meant to turn away from galleries and museums. Especially those who were established and invested in

art. On one hand Land Art wanted to turn its back on the art establishment, but the art was at the same time dependent on the establishments' acknowledgement. And somehow this ambivalence between rejection and dependence continued to dominate the art scene for five centuries.

If the "springande punkten" was the art form's monetary value in the early stages of Land Art's development it may be understandable that this was the reason for Land Art's difficulty to find opportunities for exposure in-doors and in situations of establishment. But the conditions of Art have changed quite a bit since the 60's and today what is shown is almost exclusively experience-based art at well-established art halls and large galleries. Land Art as well as other contemporary experience based art could have a much better placement on the established art scene. But this is not the case. Nowhere in the world! What are the consequences, when art is mostly shown outside of established art museums?

For single artists it is a very difficult situation, especially when many subsidies and scholarships are tied to established exhibition-al forums in several steps. Partly because some of the decision makers within culture funds often hold positions in Art Halls as well, but also because the criteria for being eligible for art scholarships often is viewed in relation to where your art has been exposed. To work as a Land Artist in one's own country alone is all but impossible.

The art form now has its own forums for exposure around the globe. There are many exhibitions in parks, festivals and other public locations.

One might ask why Land Art does not knock on the door to the established contemporary art? I believe it could be very beneficial. There are areas where we do not do very well, where we could learn from an established contemporary art. And there are areas in which we are better than other contemporary art forms.

The ideal would, of course, be that people could travel to the places where Land Art projects are being made. People travel far and wide to see various sights and wonders, so why not to see Land Art? It sounds simple enough, but much will be needed for this (seemingly) simple statement to become a reality. People don't just do things. You would need massive marketing and co-operational partners within the culture sector for it to succeed. But a necessary step in that direction is that Land Art be seen as an established contemporary art form and be seriously taken up in the general art debate. The fact that it hasn't happened in a way that it has affected the art form in a positive direction is, of course, the fault of both parties. Perhaps one day, it will. Let us hope so.

## A Strategic Choice

Since I knew the door to larger galleries and art halls would slam shut in my face when I chose Land Art it was not an easy decision to make. But I thought there would be other ways to branch out. Where in society would be able to use Land Art and through that activity also present the art form for the public?

I found that place within education. The artistry needed both of its two legs to stand on in order to exist, given the circumstances I have described. One leg was the art projects that would not generate any considerable income, but would legitimize the art form. The other leg would give the art form an economical base while the activities contributed to Land Art being exposed to a larger number of people. The first educational project was done 13 years ago. I would summarize the 13-year-old activity as very successful. Creating in an out-door environment with a base in Land Art has received much praise from many people in significantly varying ages. Perhaps the reason for this success lies in the fact that no one has done it before. Everyone is on the same level and the performance demands diminish.

