

## Roger Ackling

Isleworth 1947 – Voewood, North Norfolk, 2014.

“Just before it hits the ground I focus sunlight through a lens and redirect that energy. On occasions, I suppose in a rather theatrical way, I have said I work with something 93 million miles away. What matters is my lack of physical contact with the materials” R. Ackling.

Roger Ackling (Isleworth 1947 - Voewood, Norkolf 2014) left school at the early age of fifteen and enrolled at Ealing College of Art, London, where he took a radical foundation course taught by artist Roy Ascott. In London in the early sixties the general fashion was for American-inspired Pop Art, but Ascott was interested in technology and cybernetics. This course was a transformative experience for Ackling, who said he then acquired a “strong interest in ideas” and developed confidence in his work as an artist. Ackling decided to study painting at Saint Martin's School of Art, where he quickly abandoned his work on canvas, influenced by the discovery of the possibilities of Povera and conceptual art.



Roger Ackling en su studio en Hackney, c. 1991.  
Photograph: John Riddy

During his time as a student he also became interested in video, looking at the way that light passing through the lens projects an image across space, touching something without physical force. Ackling often referred to the essay *Lightness* by Italo Calvino and the way the writer described language as a “weightless element that hovers like a cloud, or better perhaps the finest dust” The idea of drawing without literal contact then occurred to him. He started using magnifying glass to gather the sun rays onto the surfaces of leaves and sticks, and then began to use driftwood.

# GALERÍA ELVIRA GONZÁLEZ

Hermanos Álvarez Quintero, 1  
28004 Madrid

T +34 91 319 59 00

[galeriaelvira.com](http://galeriaelvira.com)

Setting aside traditional materials and progressively incorporating the power of ideas, Roger Ackling, together with his colleagues Hamish Fulton, Gilbert and George or Richard Long, belongs to a new generation of artists who aspired to bring art outside the artist's studio. For them, sculpture could be anything they wanted: a walk in the country, a bicycle trip across France or, as in the case of Ackling, a small piece of wood marked by the sun.

Roger Ackling used the same method for over forty years. Using a small hand-held magnifying glass, he concentrated sunlight on pieces of wood which he came across as he strolled through the countryside, -often discarded after having a previous use-. By the ray of light, this technique left a pattern of lines and shaped burnt into the surface of the wood. Solar energy created the relief design on it. Thus, his creative process necessarily took place in direct contact with nature, and not in a studio. Alone, sitting on the ground, with the sun at his back and holding the wood in his left hand and the magnifying glass in his right, he focused solely on his work.

During the 1980s and 1990s Ackling held exhibitions in galleries, museums and art centres all over the world, mainly in Europe and Japan. Recently his work was included in exhibitions in galleries all over Europe such as Galerie Rosa Turetsky (Geneva, Switzerland), Annely Juda Fine Art (London, England), Gallery I - Ingleby Gallery (Edinburgh, Scotland) and Galerie Josine Bokhoven (Amsterdam, Holland).

His work is included in important international collections such as Tate (London), the Arts Council of Great Britain (London), the British Museum (London), the Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (Paris), the Hiroshima Museum of Contemporary Art, the Stedelijk Museum, (Amsterdam) or the Setegaya Art Museum (Tokyo), among others.