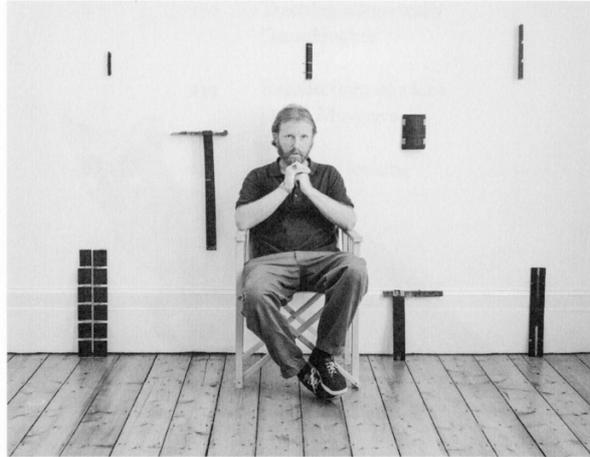


ROGER ACKLING

(Isleworth, United Kingdom, 1947 – Voewood, North Norfolk, United Kingdom, 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.

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 American-inspired Pop Art, but Ascott was interested in technology and cybernetics. This course was a transformative experience



Roger Ackling at his studio, Hackney, c. 1991.

Photo by John Riddy

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.

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 like a finer dust" The idea of drawing without literal contact then occurred to him and he started to integrate the search for lightness in his works. He started using magnifying glass to gather the sun rays onto the surfaces of leaves and sticks, and then began to use driftwood.

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 countryside, a bicycle trip across France or, as in the case of Ackling, a small piece of wood marked by the sun.

During the 1980s and 1990s Ackling held exhibitions in galleries, museums and art centres all over the world, mainly in Europe and Japan. 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.