Jeffrey Kastner (ed) : Land and environmental art. Phaidon, 1998

Page 11f: Among the many relationships that define the human condition, the individual’s connection to the environment is primary. Nature is the biggest of big pictures. We aspire to leave our mark.

We have consistently sought to connect on some level with the landscape. Among most complex and fascinating of these works is land art. What began in the mid sixties with a small number of committed conceptualists, has grown over the last thirty years to include a widely diverging collection of forms, approaches and theoretical positions.

In many ways this is a quintessentially American art form. Eco and environmental art began in the American cultural crucible of new York and the open spaces of its western deserts. It involved artists from around the world who brought very different approaches to bear. This was never a movement in the traditional sense, since all work has as its pivot in the land and the individual’s responses to and activity within.

Land art is concerned with the way both time and natural forces impact on objects and gestures: It is at once critical of and nostalgic for the notion of ‘the garden’; alternately aggressive and nurturing towards the landscape.

Land art emerged from a mid-60s art world that was seeking to break with the cult of the personalised, transcendental expression embodied in American post-war abstraction. Artists found alternatives to the gallery or museum by co-opting other urban building types or working in the open air.