

ABSTRACT

SIGNS OF *MONO NO AWARE*, *WABI SABI* AND *YŪGEN* IN THE EUROPEAN LAND ART OF THE SEVENTIES. RICHARD LONG AND HAMISH FULTON WALKS AS PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES.

In this study we analyse the aesthetic and philosophical analogies between the three main eastern terms of medieval japan: *mono no aware*, *wabi sabi* and *yūgen* and Land Art emerged in Europe in the seventies. Notably, we have chosen to include in this study only the European side of Land Art, rather than by the need to limit an investigation of this nature, for the discrepancies that arise between American earthworks and eastern medieval art.

The concomitants found between Land Art and Japanese medieval art are the result of a search, undertaken by the West, which goes beyond the purely artistic, as it responds to philosophical, social and cultural rights on new ways of experience existence. We can find the first signs of such far eastern influences in the break with the classical conception of art, that is in romanticism. Romantic art, with its new vision of nature, represented the appreciation of landscape as a genuine actor in a play. Land Art artists, capturing the category of the sublime in art, propose a new relationship between man and nature, based on respect and understanding of it, very close to eastern axioms. Not surprisingly, it was in the early works of European Land Art where contemporary critics found greater similarities with medieval Japanese aesthetics. There have been two walking artists around which have proliferated comparisons with *zen* art: Richard Long and Hamish Fulton. In the this one last case, authors such as Robert C. Morgan made explicit references to the relationship between *zen* and the worldview of the artist, are found in the article 'Hamish Fulton: El residuo de la vision / La apertura de la mente', in the book "Del arte a la idea : Ensayos sobre arte conceptual" edited by Akal in 2003. Also the artist has made statements about the influence of *zen* art in his work, we can see it in: "Higurashi: Spiritual Consequences of walking on the land", Kitakyushu: Center for Contemporary Art, 1999. As for Richard Long, the proximity of his work to Japanese medieval art, is a recurring theme in the writings of Anne Seymour, among which we highlight the foreword to the catalogue " Piedras" by Richard Long: 'El estanque de Bashō - una nueva perspectiva', published by the General Direction of Fine Arts and Archives of the Ministry of culture in 1986, as well as those of Gloria Moure, especially in his foreword to the '*Spanish Stones*' catalogue, published by the Council of Huesca in 1998.

Our thesis is divided as follows: In the first part we define the terms to be compared, *mono no aware*, *wabi sabi* and *yūgen*, analyzing their main artistic manifestations (literary, *nō* theatre, *haiku* and *haiga*, Tea Ceremony, *karesansui* gardens and ink painting); As the European Land Art of seventies, focusing on the work of Richard Long and Hamish Fulton. In the second part we compare the European Land Art and medieval Japanese art with emphasis on the four sections which, to our

knowledge, there are the largest number of concomitants, these are: 'nature as a subject of art', 'picturesque beauty of simplicity', 'towards an art of experience' and 'at the margins of the art'. This general comparative helps us to enter into the analysis of the features of medieval Japanese aesthetics in the work of Long and Fulton. Such traits are varied and diverse but can be summarized in the following aspects: exist *zen* traits in attitude and artistic work of our artists walkers; Their walk approach responds to a poetic conception of time very similar to the Japanese wandering poets of yesteryear; Nature is both for one as for others, a religion, their inspiration and ideal setting for his works; The writings and artworks that our artists produce on the way are marked by a austere, minimalist aesthetic very similar to the medieval Japanese artistic expressions, as *suibokuga* or *haikus*; And finally, the criticism contained in the work of all of them, both western and eastern, has been wrongly branded as escapist. More than a escape is a meeting. An encounter with the spirit of the landscape, with the poetic essence of it. Given the current crisis and the huge amount of negative news from the media we are exposed to, the work of Richard Long and Hamish Fulton is a balm that reminds us that we are part of nature and our existence would more fully if it based on a deep respect for her.