

## **Richard Long installs work of art at the Vineyard Hotel & Spa**

*(Cape Town, 11 November 2011)* Internationally acclaimed contemporary landscape artist, Richard Long has recently completed and installed the latest of his unique works in the entrance foyer of the Vineyard Hotel & Spa.

This marks Long's first domestic installation in South Africa. The British artist has been making art in nature since the 1960s and is seen as the modern pioneer of landscape art.

Lex Petousis, Owner and Group Operations Director of the Vineyard Hotel & Spa first met Richard Long upon a visit to South Africa by the artist in 2004, when he explored Lex Petousis' family farm in the Karoo. The Petousis family then invited Long to install his work at the hotel in early 2011.

Long's works were first noticed by the late Mr Francois Petousis, who enjoyed hiking and hill-walking. The art was appealing in the sense that it portrayed man's journeys through wide open spaces and remote wilderness, something that the late Mr Petousis had a great affinity for.

Some years later, Lex Petousis, son of Francois Petousis, discovered books about Richard Long that his father had collected and became intrigued by Long's epic journeys. He decided to invite the artist to stay at the family farm in the Guarrie Berg in the Karoo. Lex sent photographs of his farm to the Galerei Tschudi in Switzerland, where Long was exhibiting, to hand to the artist in the hope that the images would inspire a visit. This was promptly followed up with a formal invitation. Long replied two days later to say that he would be arriving in 14 days and that Lex should take him to the farm.

This visit was the first that Long had made to South Africa, and the remote wilderness of the Guarrie Berg left an impression on the artist. After spending two weeks camping at the Borehole Camp, he created a number of works depicting the remote landscapes of the Karoo. He returned to South Africa for a second visit in early 2011 where he travelled to the Cradle of Humankind. Lex then invited Richard to Cape Town to discuss the possibility of installing his work at the Vineyard Hotel & Spa.

Following his visit to the hotel, Long indicated that despite not having agreed to being commissioned to many 'domestic' works, that he would like to use one of the walls in the entrance foyer of the Vineyard Hotel & Spa to install his work. To the Petousis family's surprise, Long also indicated that he wanted to do something he had never done before – to use two clays – one from the Avon River in England and one from Africa in creating an artwork on the wall. Upon Long's return for the launch of his exhibition hosted by Iziko last week, the installation of his work was completed over 2 days and is proudly displayed in the entrance foyer of the property. "It is a great honour for us to be able to display work from such a talented and acclaimed artist," explained Lex Petousis, "my father would have been thrilled to see this unique piece of artwork displayed at the hotel."

Richard also agreed to supply the hotel group with his famous handprint to fit to their 'Living Green' communications. "Although I do not get involved with politics of any

kind, I am sympathetic to the efforts that the Vineyard Hotel are making towards reducing their carbon footprint." The hotel group intend on incorporating the artwork into their future sustainability, social responsibility and environmental awareness campaigns.

Long has been associated with the genres of Land Art and minimalism, however he sees his work as rooted in the act of walking, and in the reduction and relocation of forms rather than the production of new objects. Long has "made walks" all around the world, in each instance leaving a trace of his presence or arranging found natural elements directly in the landscape. Though these acts constitute the main part of his practice, he also shows artifacts and representations of his explorations and interventions in the contexts of galleries and museums.

Karoo Highveld is the first showing of the work by Richard Long in South Africa, and, indeed, the first on the African continent. Though for the most part these comprise photographic pieces, text and sculptural installations, this exhibition will show, for the first time internationally, a series of fingerprint drawings made by Long during his residency at the Nirox Foundation, in the Cradle of Humankind, which took place in 2009. Richard Long's Karoo Highveld exhibition is being hosted at the Iziko South African National Gallery (ISANG).

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