

Arts

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The Crack-up Artist

Andy Goldsworthy's sculpture at the new de Young will always remind us of something we'd rather forget. BY JONATHON KEATS

New de Young opens, OCT. 15, GOLDEN GATE PARK, S.F. **Rivers and Tides**, OCT. 11, HERBST THEATRE, 401 VAN NESS AVE., S.F., (415) 392-4400. **Stone Light Drawing**, OCT. 13–NOV. 26, HAINES GALLERY, 49 GEARY ST., S.F., (415) 397-8114.

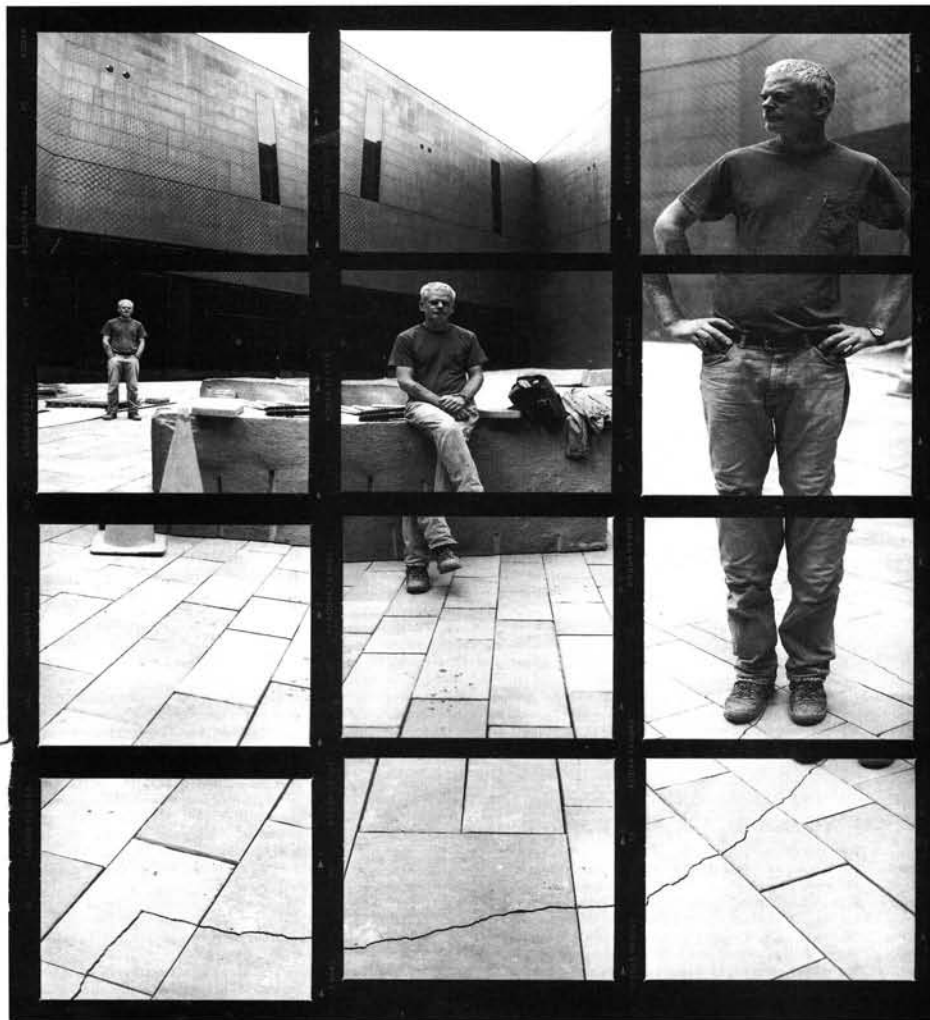
Andy Goldsworthy stands in front of the new de Young museum breaking paving stones with a hammer. In knee pads and work boots, he looks like a well-worn laborer—pushing 50 years old, with a faded tattoo and a white grizzle of beard—except that no normal construction worker does what he does. Here in what will be the museum's courtyard entrance, Goldsworthy is creating a sculpture of quarried limestone: stone by stone, he's making a crack, no wider than a finger, that meanders across the approximately 5,500-square-foot courtyard from roadside to entryway, a jagged line tacking left and right. The crack, which he calls *Drawn Stone*, occasionally cleaves a boulder of rough limestone on which a visitor can rest (there are eight boulders in all, the smallest one weighing almost three tons). But mostly it keeps to the ground, where visitors can follow its path or walk across it.

As a young man in the seventies, Goldsworthy went to art school, though he didn't become an artist until he began cutting class to spend his days at the beach. He wasn't there to bask—beaches in his native England seldom invite sunbathing—but to work.

While his classmates were learning to manipulate oils and pastels, he was teaching himself to grapple with natural materials such as driftwood and sandstone, making outdoor sculpture in response to the seaside environment, and in collaboration with it.

Three decades later, Goldsworthy, who lives in Scotland, is deservedly famed for his ephemeral art. The popular 2001 film *Rivers and Tides* documents his stunning structures, handcrafted in their natural settings of materials no more substantial than icicles and twigs,

STONE READER: **The unshakable Goldsworthy made earthquake-evocative curves and angles in the entry's limestone pavers.**



The de Young's landscape architect, Walter Hood, was in Scotland, and he mentioned to me that the stone for the pavers outside the museum came from a quarry in Yorkshire, near where I grew up. In my work, I'm interested in place, and in the parallels between the journeys made by stones and people—the journey from Europe to America, for example. I thought this might be a starting point for my sculpture. It's difficult for me to begin when a building isn't yet made, unless I find a link through the materials.

You decided right away to crack the stone.

I want to reach beneath the surface of the materials I use. Cracks are revealing, and obviously they have a resonance here in California. The demands of earthquakes dictated a lot of the architecture of the de Young, structural elements that have been covered over. People want to forget. Cracks can be a reminder.

How did you make the cracks?

It's hard work. I've learned that each stone is different, and that temperature changes the stone: if it's a sunny day, the stone has to be wet. And I want a line that meanders. I've learned to crack

curves and right angles in the pavers. I know this stone now in a way I wouldn't have dreamt.

How does the piece relate to your more ephemeral works?

I think it has a lot in common with my ephemeral works, in terms of unpredictability. Light has a big impact on this piece, and that will vary with the weather. For me, it works best under the gray light of a foggy day, when the black seems to rise out of the cracks. There will be times when the sculpture sleeps and times when it's awake. That's the nature of sculpture. It's a living thing. We shouldn't expect it to be performing all the time.

How do you expect people to respond to this piece?

This is the total opposite of what you'd expect at the front of a museum. People won't know that it's a sculpture when they first come in; usually a sculpture announces the place. But I've always used cracks as entrances. I crack a stone open to look inside of it. I'd hope that the crack I've made will draw people into the building.

What do you do with the pieces that break as you're working on them, the

castaways?

The stones I don't use at the de Young, I see as sketches. At Haines Gallery, I'll be putting some of the stones on the wall, exploring the notion of them as drawings.

How did your relationship with that gallery begin?

I don't like leaving home. Cheryl Haines is very persistent, though, and once she'd invited me to show in her gallery, she wouldn't give up. I told her that I'd come only if I could bring my whole family, and that I wanted to stay here for a month. She found local collectors who were willing to put us up, which wasn't so simple back then since my art wasn't widely known.

Once I've been to a place, I find it easier to come back. The more I work somewhere, the more I can do there.

You built a sculpture at Stanford in 2001 that deals with earthquakes quite differently from your piece for the de Young.

Stone River was about the movements of stone, the movements of nature, of which earthquakes are an expression. Stone is alive, not just in geological terms, but also in terms of the journey

the stone makes from quarry to building and beyond. In a river made of stone taken from fallen university buildings, the movement is not only in the materials but also in the form, because a river is a moving body.

Is it to visit *Stone River* that you come back to the Bay Area?

The gallery is the reason I keep coming back. People don't understand that there's a social nature to what I do—not partying but building relationships with people like Cheryl Haines. With the de Young, it's a onetime collaboration, but with the gallery, it's long-term, which allows me to do what I want to do.

And while you're here in San Francisco, are you able to get away from your work at all?

I'm here at the museum from 7 to 4 every day. I go walking in the park a lot. But I mostly go to bed early. I'm pretty boring. The art is interesting, but I'm boring. ●

Jonathan Keats is San Francisco's visual arts critic.