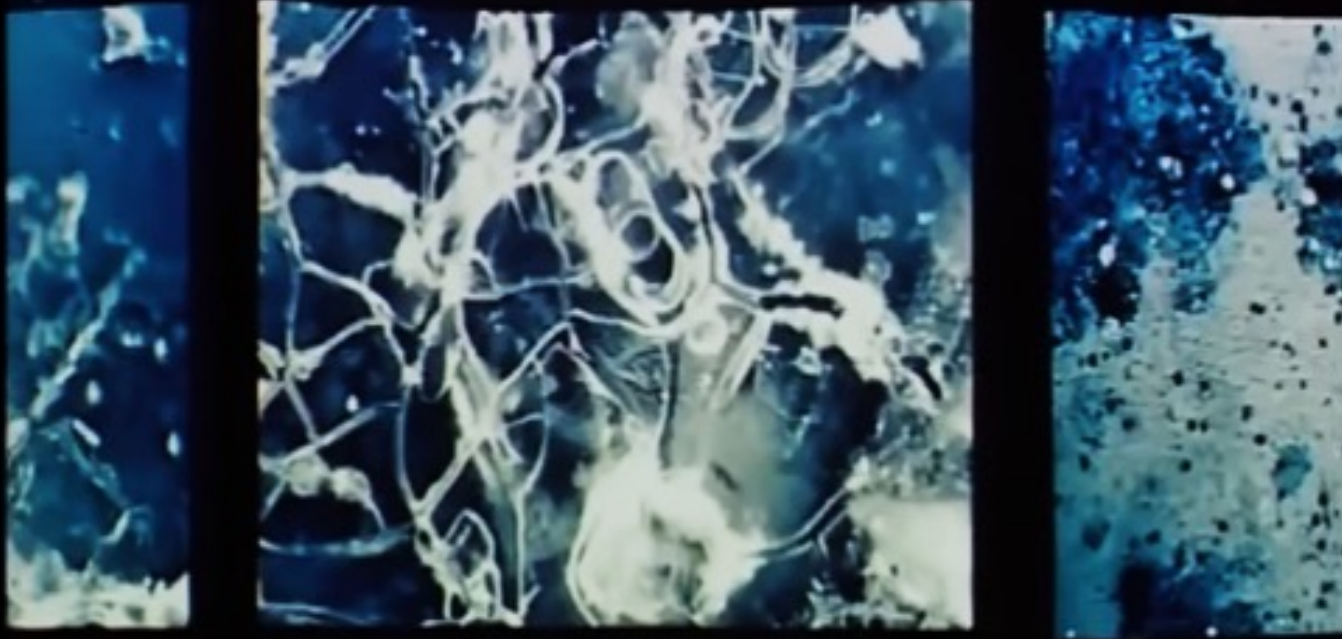


Boyle Family and Radical Enactivism

Chris de Selincourt • London College of Communication • University of the Arts London



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Bed Piece (1963)
Mark Boyle and Joan Hills

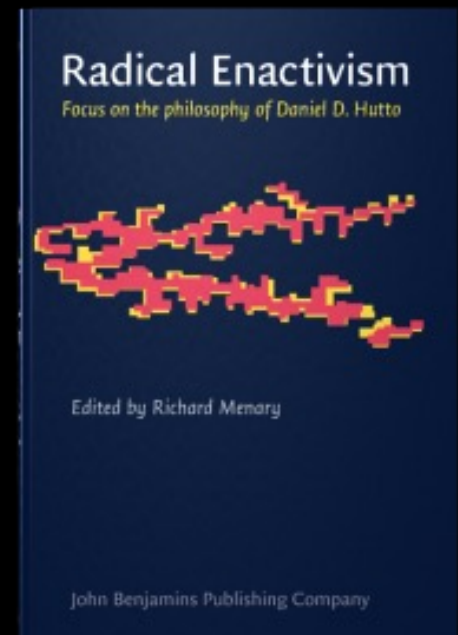
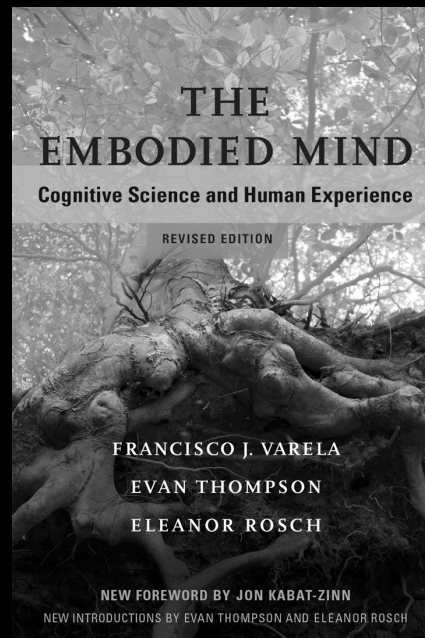
“NOTHING IS MORE RADICAL THAN THE FACTS”

(Mark Boyle, 1972)



RADICAL ENACTIVISM:

way to understand *what lies at the root of experience ...*
less through notions of pre-given world by a pre-given mind,
rather through the enactment of a world and a mind based
on the actions that a being in the world performs

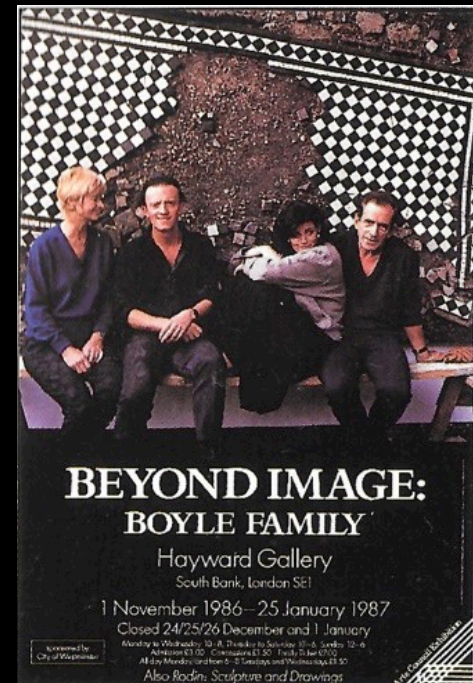


RADICAL ENACTIVISM

- ① rejects internal/external divide linked to representationalism, that separates experience from reality
- ② rejects the claim that we cannot act without first representing the world
- ③ nothing (and everything) at the root of cognition

① internal/external divide linked to representationalism
separates experience from reality

Reality is everything that is outside my head (but including what's inside my head because what's inside my head is outside someone else's) but we can only know this reality through the faulty information supplied by our senses via the filter of our prejudiced and conditioned minds. (Boyle, 1987)





Street (1964)
Pottery Lane, London W11
Mark Boyle and Joan Hills

② we cannot act without first representing the world

Enactivism argues that it is in doing that our knowledge of the world comes into being.

Question 1: What is cognition?

Cognitivist Answer: Information processing as symbolic computation – rule-based manipulation of symbols.

Enactivist Answer: Enaction. A history of structural coupling that brings forth a world



'O What a Lovely Whore' @ Institute of Contemporary Arts, London
(Mark Boyle and Joan Hills, 1965)



'O What a Lovely Whore' @ Institute of Contemporary Arts, London
(Kim Coleman and Jenny Hogarth, 2008)

1. Prepare a wide range of activities with maximum participation incentive.
2. Light them with two or three (i.e. not [1] enough) spotlights on stands with wheels, so that the audience can control them.
3. When the audience start to arrive hold them in a screened off area until they have all gathered.
4. Announce that you're not going to do any event that night and if they want an event, they'll have to do it for themselves.
5. Open screens or curtains.



MCDONALD INSTITUTE MONOGRAPHS

The cognitive life of things

Recasting the boundaries of the mind

Edited by Lambros Malafouris & Colin Renfrew



We have seen that the spreading of mind transforms material culture to an important cognitive extension, not in some symbolic or other representational sense, but in a more immediate and organic way.

... to understand the cognitive life of things means that archaeology no longer condemns material culture to a life outside of cognition proper.

(Malafouris & Renfrew, 2005)

The Institute of Contemporary Archaeology

announce their annual

DIG

on a site to be selected

The party will meet outside the I C A
17-18 Dover Street W1

12 noon Sunday 6th February 1966

The most complete change an individual can effect on his environment,
short of destroying it is to change his attitude to it. This is my objective
(Boyle, 1966)

The most complete change an individual can effect on his environment, short of destroying it is to change his attitude to it. This is my objective

...From the beginning we are taught to select, to separate good from bad, best from better: our entire upbringing and education are directed towards planting the proper snobberies, the right preferences. I believe it is important to accept everything and beyond that to 'dig' everything with the same concentrated attention that we devote to what we consider to be a good painting or a bad film...I am certain that, as a result, we will go about so alert that we will discover the excitement of continuously 'digging' our environment as an object/experience/drama from which we can extract an aesthetic impulse so brilliant and strong that the environment itself is transformed.

(Boyle, 1966)

John Ruskin's call to artists 'to see and feel nature as is found'.



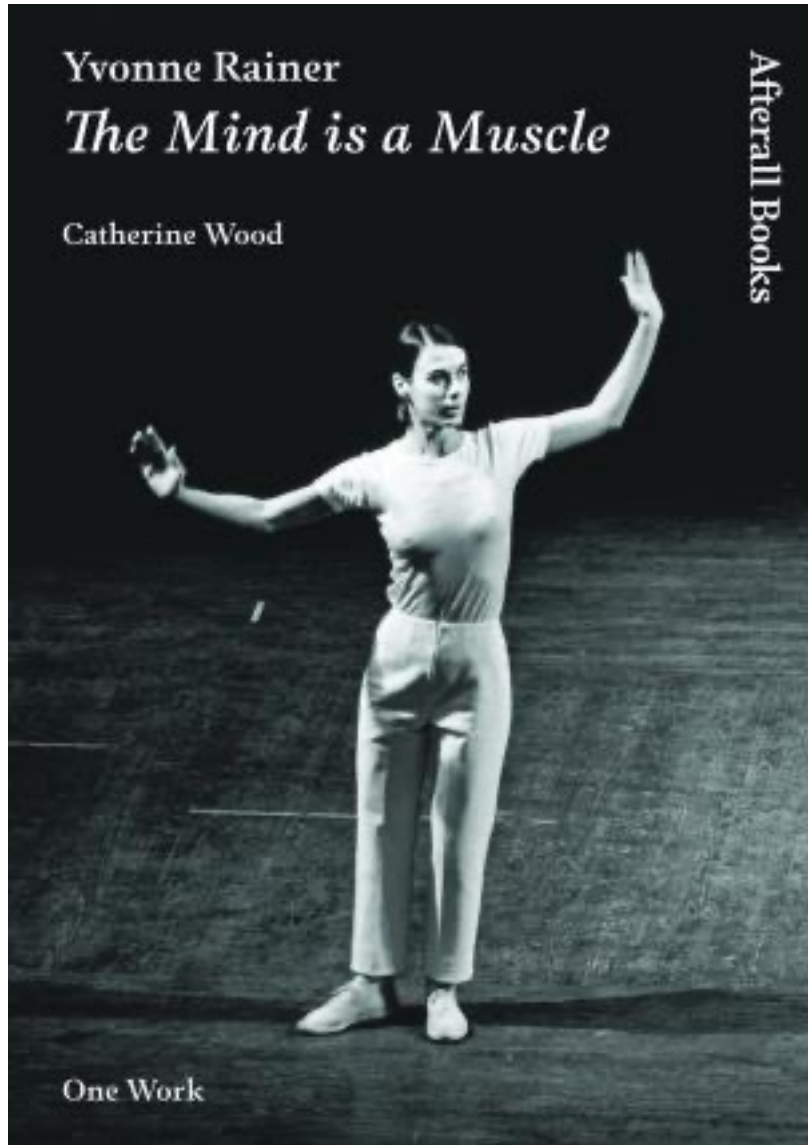
"Mountain Rock and Alpine Rose," 1844 or 1849, John Ruskin (1819–1900)
Pencil, ink, chalk, watercolor and gouache, 11 3/4 x 16 1/4 inches.



John Ruskin and Dante Gabriel Rossetti

'a view, or an experience, of totality...a stance which does not recognize boundaries,
which embraces rather than divides, which accepts but does not abstract'

(David Thompson, 1966)



Minimalism [understood to be]....

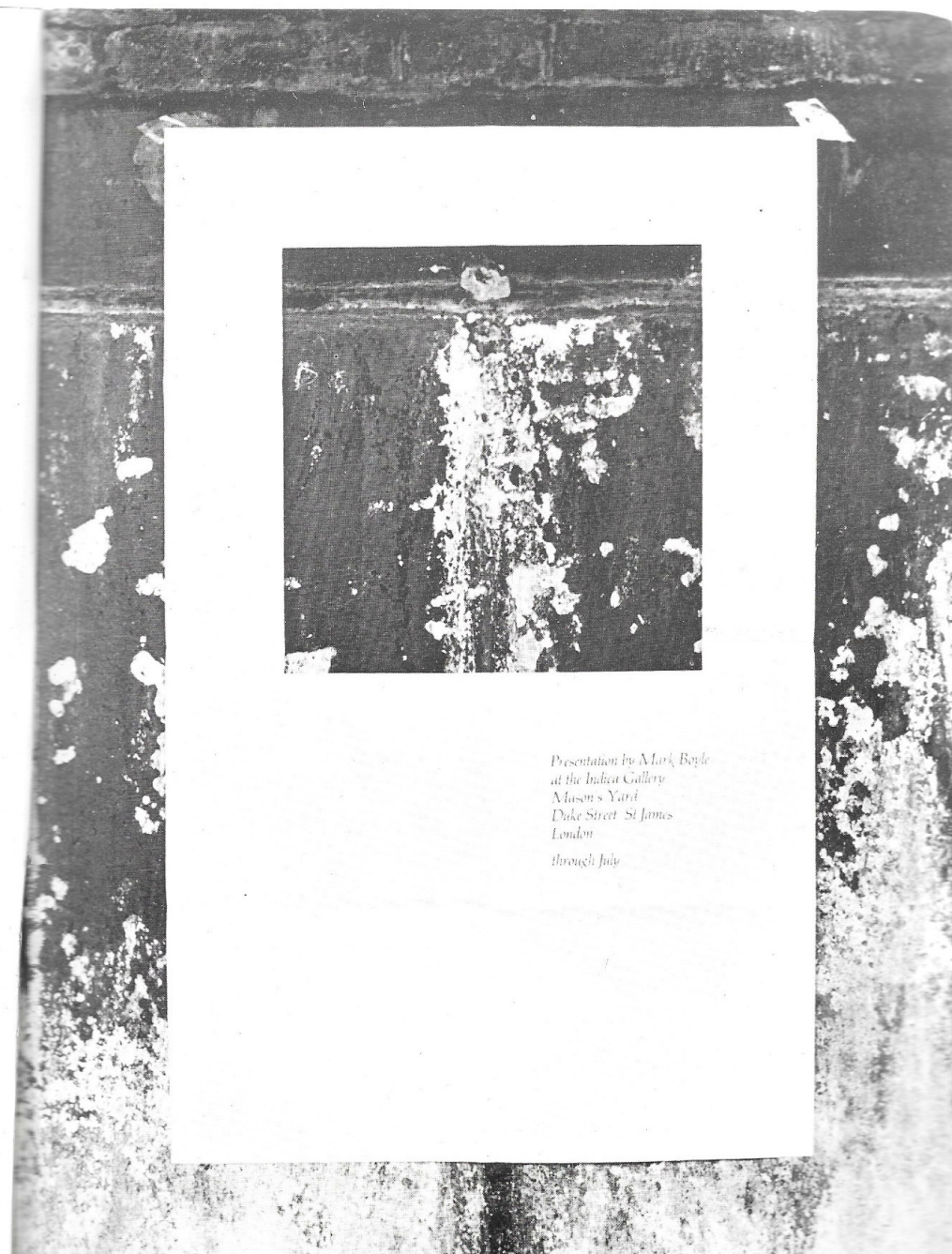
... “no one thing seen as more or less important anything else”

Patti Catterson – Yvonne Rainer

① nothing (and everything) at the root of cognition



Poster and window installation for
Presentation by Mark Boyle
at the Indica Gallery, London, 1966.

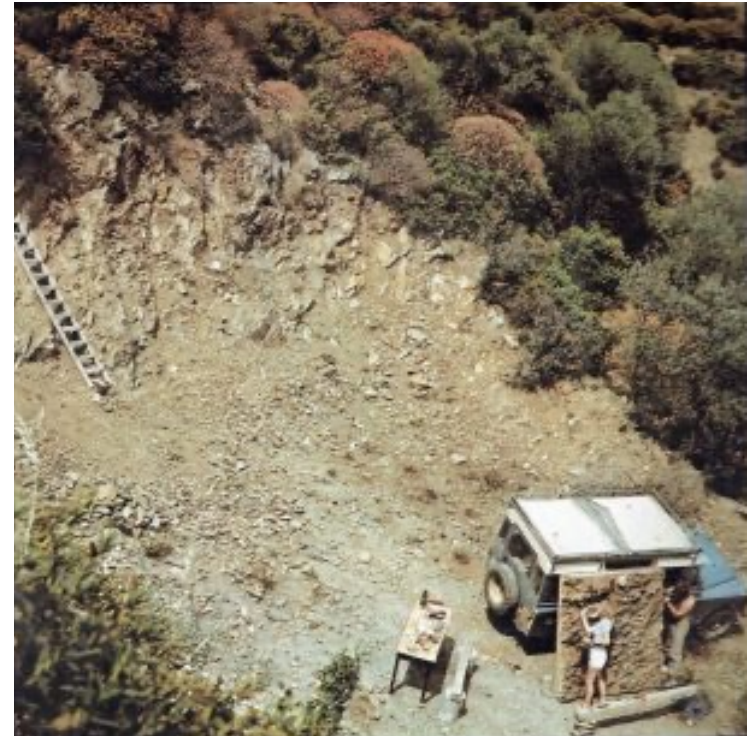




Map displayed at the ICA for the Boyle's Journey to the Surface of the Earth (1969)



Detail of the map used for the selection of sites for the World Series



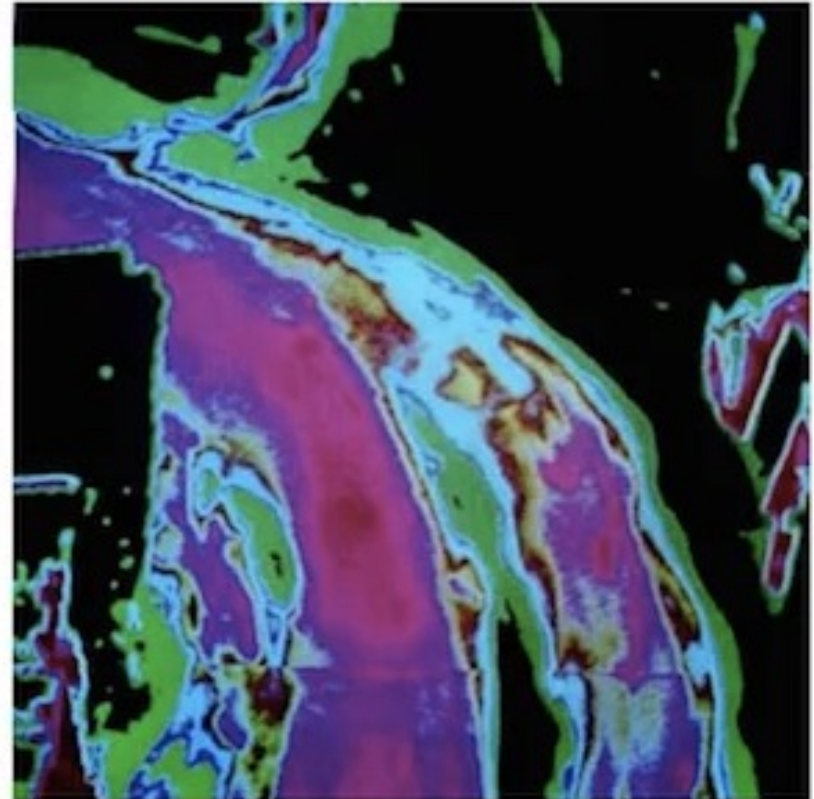
Boyle Family at work on Camber Sands, UK (1966) and Sardinia (1978)



Instillation in the British Pavillion at Venice Biennale,
showing Sardinia *World Series* project (1978)

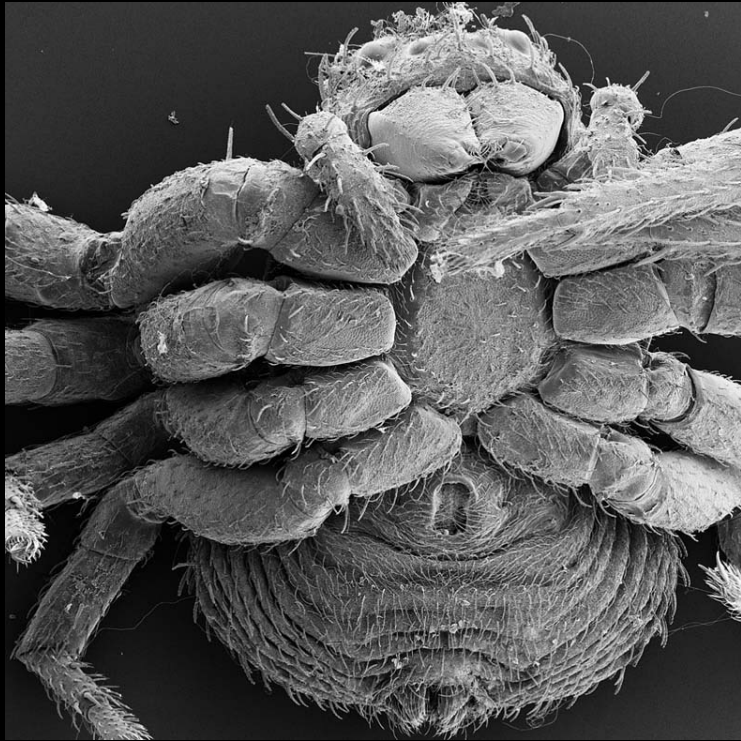


Location of Density photograph opposite



Density photograph of people in movement outside a tube station. The main concentration is in the plum red and magenta part of the plume. Some people were pushed wide, others went up the street, some hovered around the bookstall. Duration uncertain, probably about 10 minutes 71-78.

Multi-Human Being Studies (1970-1978)



World Series, Gotland Site (1970-1978)

Summary

Understanding Boyles Family as radical in relation to notions of:

- 1) Minimalism beyond abstraction toward an engagement with the environment that challenges any pre-conditioned view of the world.
- 2) John Ruskin's call to artists 'to see and feel nature as it is found'.
(Romanticism)

Return art to nature, return to the idea of art as a fact.

The Boyles Family commitment to these notions (and away from cognitivism or the representational model of mind) makes their art a clear and radical expression of enactivism