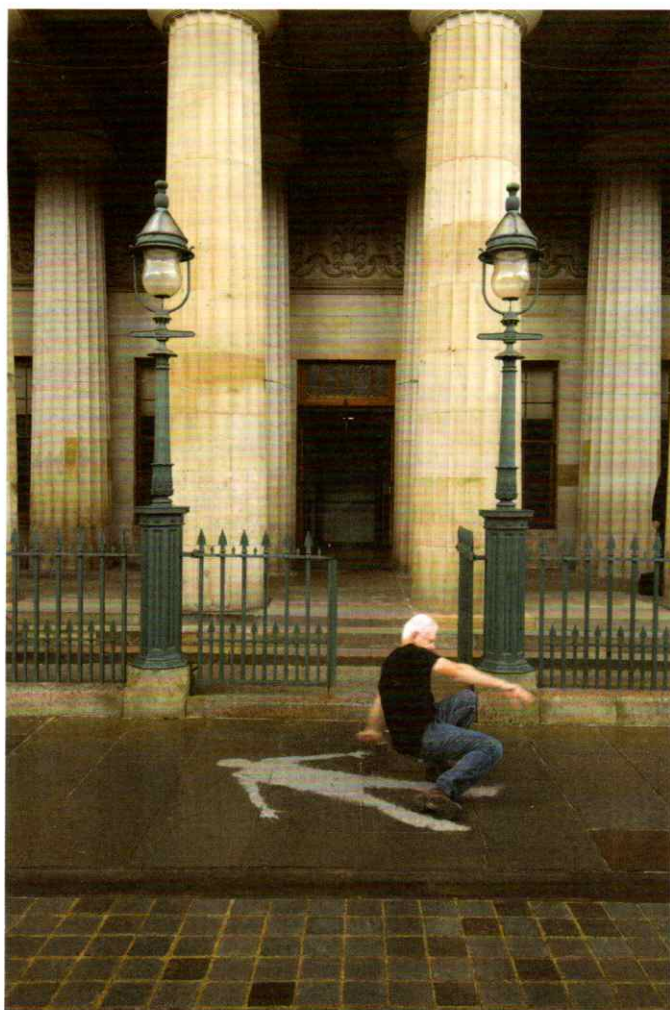


Andy Goldsworthy Fifty Years



Rain Shadow RSA, Edinburgh, 10 June 2024, 2024

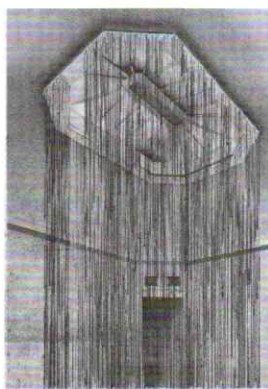
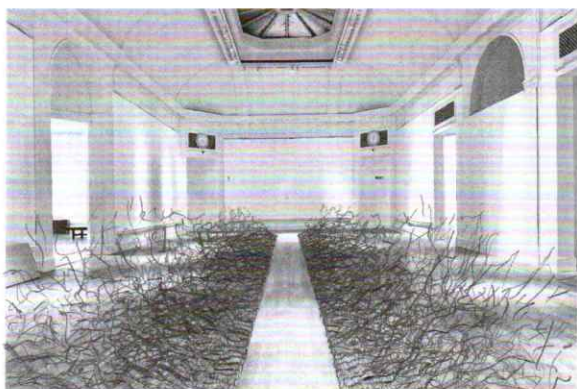
**National Galleries of Scotland
26 July – 2 November 2025**

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INTRODUCTION

Born in England in 1956, and based in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, for the past forty years, Andy Goldsworthy is internationally recognised for his work with natural materials such as clay, stones, reeds, branches, leaves, snow and ice. Over fifty years, he has created a unique and highly influential body of work that speaks of our relationship with the land. In *Andy Goldsworthy: Fifty Years* the artist brings the land indoors, into Scotland's capital city.

Working as a teenager on farms near Leeds in Yorkshire, where he grew up, Goldsworthy developed a passion for working with the land: harrowing the fields, bailing hay, picking out and piling stones, feeding cows and sheep. This is where he acquired many of the skills he uses in his practice today: cutting, digging, gathering, stacking, building. Goldsworthy then studied art at Bradford and Preston, while based in Morecombe Bay. It was there that he began making ephemeral works in the sand, recording what he made in photographs and on film.



Proposal drawings for *Oak Passage* and *Skylight*, 2024

Andy Goldsworthy: Fifty Years has been conceived by the artist as a single artwork in response to the space, materials and character of the Royal Scottish Academy building. The exhibition occupies all of the upper rooms and much of the lower floor. The interrelationship of humans and the working land is a recurrent theme in Goldsworthy's art and in the exhibition.

Andy Goldsworthy: Fifty Years could not have been realised without the generous support of our lead supporters: Ross Foundation, Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman, courtesy The FLAG Art Foundation, and the Friends of the National Galleries of Scotland, as well as Scott Mueller, Galerie Lelong & Co., Haines Gallery, San Francisco and the American Patrons of the National Library and Galleries of Scotland.



Ross Foundation

The FLAG Art Foundation

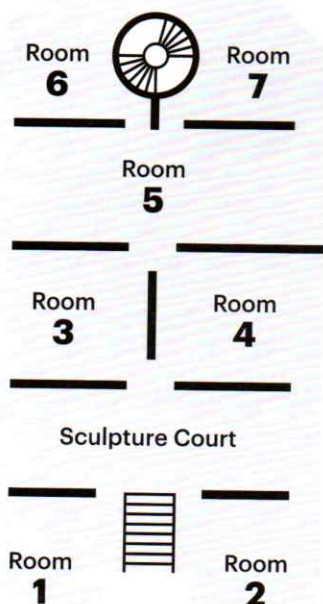


Friends

GALLERY PLANS

UPPER LEVEL

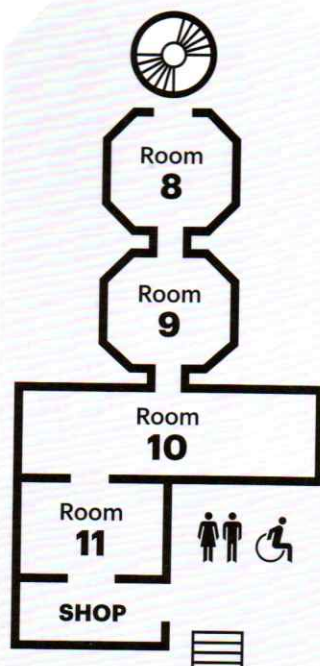
ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE



MAIN ENTRANCE

LOWER LEVEL

ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE

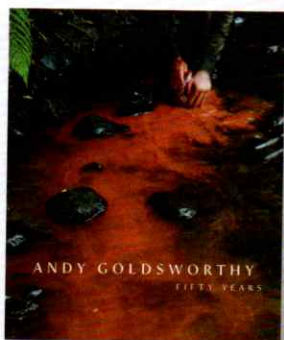


EXIT

VISITOR GUIDELINES

Even clean hands damage surfaces so please do not touch the displays.

Food and drink should not be consumed in the galleries; instead, we invite you to visit one of our cafes in the National.



Andy Goldsworthy: Fifty Years exhibition publication

Purchase your copy of the *Andy Goldsworthy | Fifty Years* exhibition book from the gallery shop. It features an extensive illustrated interview with the artist, in which he discusses his life and work and how he prepared for this major retrospective.

128 pages | 100+ illustrations | £24.99

Entrance Stair

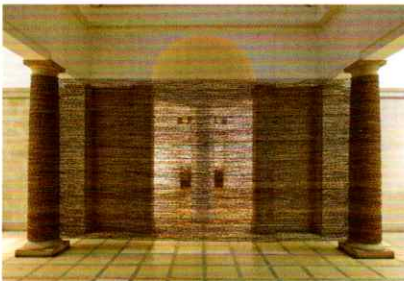
Wool Runner, 2025



A wool carpet once ran up the middle of the stairs from the entrance to the sculpture court. You can still see where the carpet was fixed. In spring, the fields around where I live in Dumfriesshire are littered with wool cast off from sheep, before they get shorn. More recently I have worked with the coloured markings that farmers use to colour-code their flocks. These marks show which ewes have twins or triplets, which ewes have been served by the ram and who the sheep belong to. The fleece is attached to sheep netting with thorns.

Sculpture Court

Fence, 2025



I rely on the goodwill and tolerance of others to be in many of the places where I work. It could be a wood, street, field, hill, mountain, river, building or institution. I often have to explain what I am doing — especially if someone comes across me whilst making a work. There are times when I have been asked (and occasionally forced) to leave. Obstacles that I encounter,

both indoor and outdoor, whether they be boundaries, borders, fences, misunderstandings or people, are met in the hope that a way through can be found.

Sheep Paintings, 2025



Canvas nailed down in a field. A mineral block placed at the centre. The sheep feed off the block, bringing mud onto the canvas. The number of sheep in the field, how hungry they are, and weather conditions all have a dramatic effect on the outcome of the painting. Several canvases were made before achieving the two that are hung in the exhibition. After a few days the mineral block is lifted — revealing a circle of white, untouched canvas.

Room 1

Gravestones, 2025

I have collected stones displaced by burials from 108 graveyards in Dumfries and Galloway, many with the help of my youngest son, Joel. The gathering of stones has been a deeply moving and humbling reaffirmation of life, which has given me a different perspective on the land and our connection to it. Initially the installation at the Royal Scottish Academy building was intended to test the idea and to figure out the feasibility of realising it on a much larger scale. In the event, it has become far more than just a test — it is a work in its own right. The proposal for a larger *Gravestones* project is presented in Room 7.



Room 2

Skylight, 2025



Reed mace (also known as bullrushes) were gathered from Loch of Kinnordy in Angus and various lochs in Dumfries and Galloway in 2024. The cigar-like seed heads have been removed so that the thin end of one stalk can be inserted into the wider end of another to make lines from ceiling to floor. It is intended as a partner to *Gravestones* (Room 1). One being earthbound and the other aspiring to the light. Made in the hope that the skylight would be cleared and cleaned to allow light into the building and illuminate the work.

Room 3

Flags, 2020

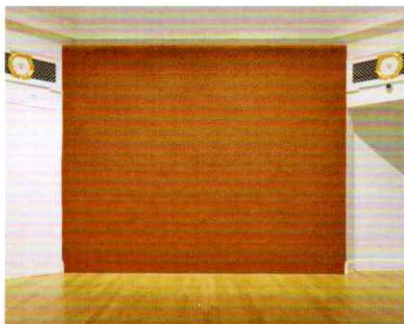
In 2019 I was invited to produce a work for the Rockefeller Center in New York. There are about 200 flagpoles there, often flying the flags of different countries. When I visited, they were flying the flags of the 50 US states. I proposed to replace each state flag with a blank flag that would be dyed with the reddest earth I could get from that state. Earth has great significance in the context of a flag; the connection between a flag and the land it represents is very powerful. So often, flags denote land fought over. Collectively I hoped these flags would transcend borders, that they would be raised to mark a different kind of defence of the land. A work that talks of connection and not division. Kindly lent by the Scott Mueller Collection, USA.



Alongside *Flags* are two works made in 2016 and 2022 whilst working on *Hanging Stones* (see Room 7). As with works next door in Room 4, they draw connections between earth, iron and body.

Room 4

Red Wall, 2025



Red earth, dug from the Lowther Hills in Dumfriesshire — a location where farmers have taken earth to colour their sheep to enhance their appearance at market. For this exhibition, clay-rich earth was dried, crushed, mixed with water, and passed through a sieve to remove stones. Dried once more and reconstituted into a workable material, it was applied to the wall, cracking as it dried. This earth is a vivid red because of its high iron content. Our blood is also red because of the iron in it. It's a reminder that we are bound to the earth.

Tables, 2025

Canvas provides a good practical surface for the preparation of clay; it becomes engrained through the rolling, wedging and slicing of clay. These canvases were stretched over plywood tables that were used in the making of *Red Wall*. A team of about a dozen art technicians from the National Galleries

of Scotland, alongside my assistants and a master plasterer from my village worked together to install the work. It is important that people working on the table aren't aware that the canvas may become a work in its own right. Its integrity as an artwork lies in it being a by-product of the process, not its purpose.

Red River Rock, 2016

Red ironstone can be found in a stretch of a river where I live in Dumfriesshire. It is often revealed after the river has been in spate. Collected and rubbed onto river rocks, mixed with water, releasing the red.

Hare Blood Snow, 2004

I was driving back from a long trip. I was almost home when I hit a hare. I couldn't ignore that I had just killed the animal. I turned back, picked up the hare, took it home and removed its guts. It seemed to have an extraordinary amount of blood. I mixed the blood with snow, which I put inside the hare's stomach before hanging it up. The snow then melted and dripped through its mouth and nose onto a piece of paper that I laid on the floor below. After a while the paper buckled and displaced the pool of blood. It was as if the spirit of the animal was departing. I filled the hare with snow and blood three times and made three drawings.



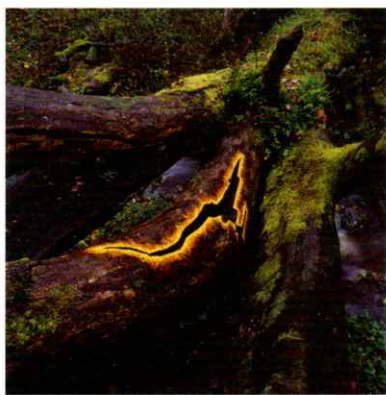
Room 5

Oak Passage, 2025

On first sight, the *Oak Passage* appears as an impenetrable mass of branches. Only when seen from either end of the room is a way through revealed — a path to be walked. The passage of people, whether it be through a building or the land, lies at the heart of my practice. There is often a disconnect between materials and their source. *Oak Passage* is made with branches from windfallen trees and boughs (many after Storm Éowyn). Many are the leftovers from trees that were cut up for firewood. The branches are a reminder that the oak floor of the gallery was once a tree — that a building is nature. The floor is as much a part of *Oak Passage* as the branches. I want to see the forest in a house and the house in a forest.

Room 6

Fallen Elm, 2009 – ongoing



The elm tree is a short walk from my house. It died of Dutch elm disease and stood for some time before eventually falling in 2009. One day I found it collapsed across the stream, spread out against the steep-sided banking. It took me a while to figure out how to work with it; it wasn't immediate. I started by exploring the cracks, fissures and splinters — evidence of the violence with which the tree fell. Since then, I have worked on the tree many times. It's difficult to describe the changes that have occurred to this elm as simply decay — it has generated so much life.

Room 7

This room contains work related to *Hanging Stones* and *Gravestones*. These projects are of personal importance to me — one is made in Yorkshire where I grew up and the other will be made in Dumfriesshire, where I have lived since 1985.

Hanging Stones, 2015 – ongoing

Hanging Stones was commissioned by the Ross Foundation. The name *Hanging Stones* derives from Hanging Stone Lane and Hanging Stone Farm in Northdale, near Rosedale Abbey in North Yorkshire — the location of the project. Northdale is wild but it is not wilderness. It bears the evidence of an industrial past — it is a complex, tough, resilient and powerful landscape with a strong human presence. Nine existing, unused derelict buildings (plus one new building) have been rebuilt and connected by a path to create a single work of art. I chose existing buildings because they bear the imprint of the people who have been before.

I made several related ephemeral works alongside the making of *Hanging Stones*. They are my way of getting to know the place and what materials are to be found there (see Room 3).

Gravestones, 2024 – ongoing

Judith, my ex-wife, died in 2008 and is buried in a cemetery in Dumfriesshire. Visiting her grave, I noticed a pile of stones that had been heaped by the cemetery wall — left over from burials, a displacement resulting from the exchange between the body and the earth. For me, the stones are a powerful reminder that we are bound to the land — of life and of death, of where we come from and where we return to.

Most graveyards have a pile of stones left over from burials. *Gravestones* is a response to those stones and the strength of feeling I have for Dumfries and Galloway. The stones in Room 1 were collected from the 108 graveyards shown in these photographs. The map on the wall shows the location of each graveyard. I am developing a much bigger version of *Gravestones* for the foot of the Lowther Hills. The project is being facilitated by the Buccleuch Estates and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Exhibition continues downstairs

Room 8

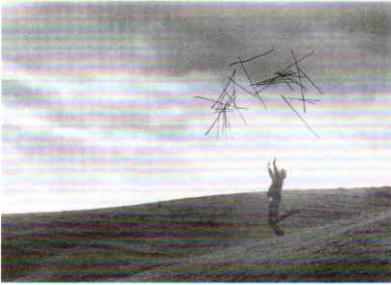
Films



I made films in the 1970s (see Room 9), and until around 2012 I confined much of my filmmaking to documenting rain shadows. It has always been important that I can roam unburdened by the need to carry a lot of equipment. That changed with the advent of digital cameras, which could take both stills and videos.

Room 9

Early work: 1975–1981



These works date to my time as an art student at Preston Polytechnic from 1975 to 1978 and the years immediately after. I was based at nearby Morecambe Bay, where some of these works were made. I went through one of those crises: What am I doing this for? Why am I going to college? And there was this vast expanse of Morecambe Bay. Sometimes it was the sea, sometimes it was just sand. One day, early in my first year, I took a spade onto the beach and started making marks. Art has made me look at the world, understand the world; it's made me see and engage with what's around me. Looking back at these works I can see that all the things I am interested in now were present in the work I made 50 years ago. The passage of time, chance, risk, engaging with the land.

Room 10

The 1980s

Most of the photographs I made in the 1970s were taken in black and white, and then from the early 1980s onwards I photographed in colour. I would make one or two sculptures each day. From a month's work, two or three pieces were successful. The 'mistakes' were very important. Then, as now, I felt each new sculpture was a result of knowledge accumulated through past experience, a good work the result of being in the right place at the right time with the right material. My sculptures can last for days or a few seconds — what has always been important for me is the experience of making. These works span the early-to-mid 1980s when I lived in Ilkley, Bentham and Brough and include some of the first works I made when I moved to Scotland, initially to Langholm and then Penpont.

Room 11

Snowballs

My first snow works date from January 1977, when I was a student. I rolled a snowball around trees in a wood on the outskirts of Leeds. A year or two years later I put a snowball in my mother's freezer which I brought out to melt in the summer of 1982 for an exhibition at Tatton Park, Cheshire. This was followed by a spring snowball that was exhibited at Coracle Press Gallery in London in June 1985. Daffodils picked up by the snowball as it was rolled appeared like yellow lights as they came to the surfaces during the melt. These were the origins of two summer snowball installations. The first was at the Old Museum of Transport, Glasgow in summer 1989. The second in June 2000, when snowballs were deposited on the streets of the City of London during the night. In both cases, the snowballs were made in Scotland the previous winter and stored in commercial frozen storage.

Top: Hedge crawl. Dawn. Frost. Cold hands. Sinderby, England. 4 March 2014, 2014 Bottom: Hazel stick throws. Banks, Cumbria. 10 July 1980, 1980. All courtesy of the Artist.