

## **WALK Statement February 2011 - Brian Thompson**

My research is based within Fine Art/ Craft practice and seeks to give new insights and approaches into the use of sculpture in giving the *genius loci* or a sense of chosen places. My work is topographical in nature and is part of a personal research project drawing together interests in a physical engagement with landscape through walking and related approaches to mapping with the developments of new craft approaches in making sculpture.

I am interested in how journeys explore landscapes, man-made or otherwise; how paths get worn, compress and build up over many generations. These journeys show the topography of the world, reveal something of its history and give insights into how we come to know and navigate.

These ‘walks’ actual or imaginary – are recorded through tracings from maps or aerial photographs and become the traced images used to make precision digital templates from which layers of sheet materials are cut each layer becoming a template for the succeeding layer. Through small increments of size, introduced by the process, the sculptures evolve tapering downward from top to base; marking, layer upon layer, in geological fashion, the time of their making.

A significant part of the development of the sculptural work is the approach to form and the considered use of materials and associated processes. Sometimes these become ‘patterns’ for casting or constructions in materials relevant to the location; such as wood, iron, glass, stone or lead.

The sculptures serve as records, memories, souvenirs or trophies.

The Underground Railroad series are based on the “safe routes” to freedom taken by slaves in the USA from a 19thC map. The pieces were cast into Iron in Indiana and are now part of the permanent collection of the Outdoor Sculpture Museum in Solsberry Indiana.

Other work relevant to WALK and using the same methodology, working from maps, GPS and aerial photographs of journeys and cast into a variety of materials are:

1. Walks taken by me in the UK and overseas - artist as tourist in the manner of the Grand Tour
2. Walks with artists
3. Historical Journeys; Artists, Poets or otherwise

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