Standing Coyote, 1981-82
students at St. Martin's in London, began to take long
cross-country trips in which they
documented their experiences with photographs.
What distinguishes Fulton
from the American land
artists and from Long is his
attitude toward nature. He
has never tampered with it
in his work—not even, as
Long might, to the extent of
moving stones or branches to
mark his passage. He is more
inspired by the walkers and
climbers of the Midlands and
the North of England and by
such naturalists as John
Muir than by other artists
and photographers, although
he admires the work of
Richard Long as well as the
straightforward landscape
photographs of the 19th-
century American, Timothy
O'Sullivan.

The photograph became
important to performance,
earth, and conceptual
artists, because it was
often the only evidence of
the art work which was either
temporal (performance) or
which few people would ever
see first hand (earthworks).
Like most artists who use
the camera as a tool of
documentation, Fulton is not
interested in the technical
aspects of the medium and
does not consider himself a
photographer. Whereas
the conventional landscape
photographer goes in search
of an image and follows
certain criteria for making
a good photograph, Fulton
considers the photography
secondary to the walk. For
Fulton, the search is for
the freedom from the routine
of daily life, for the
exhilaration which comes
from embarking on a lonely
and at times difficult
journey, the outcome of
which is unknown, and for
the altered consciousness
which results from solitude
and concentration. He also
seeks to keep in touch with
and bring to our awareness
the natural timelessness and
harmony that exist in the
world along side the stressful
and disturbing events of
which we are continuously
informed.

Fulton has made several
walking trips in Northern
California. In the spring
of 1980 he walked in Del
Norte and Humboldt Counties
and produced Yurok, depicting
footprints along a stretch of
beach on a foggy day. Fulton
takes advantage of the grain
that results from extreme
enlargement of the photograph
—the grainy sky emerges with
the granular sand of the
beach. San Andreas, which
focuses on a small patch of
ground, documents a walk in
Point Reyes also taken that
spring. After a walk in the
fall of 1981 in the Mt.
Lassen area, Fulton made
three works—Yana, Standing
Coyote, and Porcupine. All
but Porcupine combine an
enlarged black and white
photograph mounted on board
with a simple descriptive
caption. Standing Coyote
portrays the snow covered
ground and distant ever-
greens, suggesting the
silence following a snowfall
in the woods. One rock,
centered in the foreground,
is a monument to the
experience.

Fulton has again begun to
experiment with painting and
drawing. Porcupine, an
etching made at Crown Point
Preserve in Maine, does not
include a photograph.
Instead, Fulton produced a
two-part hand-drawn color
etching containing several
colors and considerably more
text than other works. Both
the color areas and words are
placed on the pages according
to their corresponding
positions in nature. The
uppermost page, brushed with
a soft grey reminiscent of a
cloudy sky, contains the
phrase, "sun melted snow
falling from the trees."
The transparent green-blue
background of the middle
section approximates the
color made by the sun shining
through the snow, while the
dominant white of the bottom
panel refers to the snow
itself on which Fulton saw
"tracks of a black bear."
Fulton collected pine needles
on his walk and laid them on
the wax ground surface of the
copper plates. The plates
were then run through the
press so that when the needles
were removed their shapes were
exposed on the copper and
subsequently etched. Scat-
ttered over the entire print,
they appear to be falling
from sky to ground. Perhaps
the most unexpected element
is the bold, red band which
borders the print on four
sides. The color refers to the
blood of a wounded porcupine which Fulton
followed for a while and for
which the piece is named.
The printed words, with the
economy and simplicity of
Haiku poetry, provide some
of the information found in
the photograph portion of his
other works. Though the
etching is visually different
from the photo/text pieces,
shares with them the
evocation of a much larger
experience.

Fulton was born in London in
1946. He attended Ham-
smith College of Art,
St. Martin's School of Art,
and the Royal College of Art
in London. He has traveled
extensively since 1968 and
currently lives in Canterbury,
Kent, Great Britain. His
works are in the collections
of many major museums,
including The Tate Gallery, London, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Constance Lewallen

Works in MATRIX:

Yurok/A Four Day Coastal Walk/Del Norte and Humboldt Counties California/Spring 1980, 1980, gelatin silver print mounted on board and Letraset, 51 x 34". Lent by Nicholas Medhurst.

San Andreas/An 18 Mile Road Walk on May 2 1980/Point Reyes California, 1980-82, gelatin silver print mounted on board and Letraset, 27 x 30". Lent by Thackrey & Robertson, San Francisco.


Yana/A Seven Day Walk in North Eastern California/ Ending on the Night of the October Full Moon 1981, 1982, gelatin silver print mounted on board and Letraset, 42 x 36". Lent by Thackrey & Robertson, San Francisco.


Selected one-person exhibitions: Galerie Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf, Germany '69, '71, '72, '74, '78; Galleria Sperone, Torino, Italy '70, '72, '74; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Holland '73; Sperone Westwater Fischer, NYC '76, '80; Claire Copley Gallery, L.A. '76; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland '77 (cat. pub.); Projects: Museum of Modern Art, NYC '78 (brochure pub.); Thackrey & Robertson, SF '80; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris '81.
