

SGI 24 Walking the Dog Sculptured glacial erratic

London Borough of Southwark

Walking the Dog sculptured glacial erratic, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, SE21 7AD

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Grid Ref: TQ 328 734

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Walking the Dog, by leading British sculptor, Peter Randall-Page, was presented by the Art Fund to the Dulwich Picture Gallery to mark its bicentenary in 2011. It is the first sculpture to be included in the Gallery's permanent collection. These three granite boulders (imported from Finland) are their natural shape, moulded by ice as they were transported by glaciers and deposited far from their origin as 'erratics' when the ice sheets melted, about 450,000 years ago. At that time, global sea levels were far lower and Britain was connected to mainland Europe by the ice sheets. In England the ice stretched as far south as Finchley, and Hornchurch in East London.

The sculpture refers to the three founders of Dulwich Picture Gallery. In carving these boulders the sculptor, Peter Randall-Page, was influenced by Sir John Soane's 'running dog' pattern visible on the external walls of the Gallery. The pattern is also known as the Vitruvian scroll or wave scroll. Earliest examples appear in Anatolia in the sixth millennium BC. Today these patterns are closely associated with Greek architecture.

Origin of the boulders



Photo: D. Clements

As it is not permitted to take eroded boulders out of the landscape, these boulders were collected from aggregate quarries in the Satakunta Region in Southwest Finland. When this sculpture was first installed you could clearly see the iron stained feldspar minerals that give the granite its pink colouring. At the time of collection it was noted that many of these brownish/red boulders were nearly identical in terms of rock type, colour and mineralogy, with very few variants, thereby pointing to a relatively local source nearby, and/or one of large size somewhat further away. It is possible they may have originated from the Obbnas granite, which is very similar in appearance.

Access

The sculpture is in the grounds of Dulwich Picture Gallery, Gallery Road, SE21 7AD and is free to visit during opening times of the Picture Gallery. It is served by the P4 bus from Brixton (Victoria Line) and West Dulwich Station is about 10 minutes-walk away.

References

Dulwich Picture Gallery (for opening times) www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Peter Randall-Page, for more information on other sculptures: www.peterrandall-page.com

Salonen V-P & Palmu J-P 1989. *On Measuring the Length of Glacial Transport by Geological Survey of Finland*. Special Paper 7, 25-32 http://tupa.gtk.fi/julkaisu/specialpaper/sp_007.pdf