



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Literatures,
Languages & Cultures



BRITISH
ACADEMY

for the humanities and social sciences

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY: LITTLE FIELDS, LONG HORIZONS
FULL PROGRAMME WITH SPEAKER ABSTRACTS

Thursday 13 July

PANEL 1 (10-11.30): AVANT COTTAGE GARDENER: FINLAY, CONCRETE
POETRY AND THE 1960s

Dr. Nancy Perloff: Ian Hamilton Finlay and Augusto de Campos: Two Concrete Trajectories

A comparison of the two foundational figures of concrete poetry, the Scottish Ian Hamilton Finlay and the Brazilian Augusto de Campos, offers intriguing new perspectives. Finlay and Augusto never met, but they enjoyed an intense correspondence during the 1960s and 70s.

Drawing upon correspondence that Augusto shared with me, as well as our own recent correspondence, this talk will consider both similarity and difference in their two trajectories. Both poets experimented with a reduced poetry, sometimes comprising only one or two words. Both reinvented aspects of the historical avant-garde by exploring wordplay, neologisms, and sonic rather than semantic affinities between words.

Yet the differences between their concrete poetry are far more striking and relate directly to the very different lives each led. A poet, translator, critic, and urbanite, Augusto has lived his entire life in São Paulo. Fascinated by sound and sound colors, he brought together the verbal, visual, and vocal, borrowing Joyce's term, the "verbivocovisual".

Finlay, by contrast, lived a rural life outside of Edinburgh, in Dunsyre in the Pentland Hills, where he created his magnificent garden, Little Sparta. He first wrote concrete poetry in 1963, guided initially by Augusto. His poetry contains references to the sea and to nautical themes, as well as to nature. He collaborates with printmakers, visual artists, and designers.

As this talk will demonstrate, the similarities and especially the differences between these two leading postwar artists shed new light on their careers and on the concrete poetry movement that they helped launch.

Dr. Nicola Thomas: 'auf dem land': Space, Place and Nation in Ian Hamilton Finlay and Ernst Jandl

In light of the forthcoming publication of Ian Hamilton Finlay's correspondence with his Austrian friend and collaborator, Ernst Jandl, it seems timely to revisit the creative and intellectual exchange between the two men (Hanneschläger, 2017). This paper does so by assessing the relationship to land, landscape, place and nation in their works.

It establishes some similarities between post-war Austria and Scotland, small cultural nations with fraught relationships to dominant neighbours. In both cases, the post-war period brought with it a need to rethink 'national' literatures and ideas of nation: in Austria, the dramatic caesura precipitated by the Second World War and the subsequent struggle to re-establish a viable poetic culture form the backdrop to Jandl's renewed engagement with earlier avant-garde generations. In Scotland, a different type of generational conflict dominated, centred around Finlay's vehement rejection of Hugh MacDiarmid's nationalist project. Reading their respective works in this context – and particularly their engagements with space and place – reveals various similarities between Finlay and Jandl's approaches to moving beyond these post-war crises of nationhood and nationalism. Both demonstrate a profound commitment to internationalism, multilingualism and creative exchange – Finlay in his correspondence and collaborative practice and Jandl through translation. This is combined with an emphasis on the specificity of place, both in the use of dialect and direct engagements with significant places in their work. Finally, their re-appropriations of earlier traditions of writing space constitute a rejection of the rationalism embedded in Anglo-American modernism: Finlay deploys the latent radicalism of the neo-classical pastoral, and Jandl draws on the embodied link to place inherent in Dadaist performativity.

Dr. Natalie Ferris: A New Cohesive Element: Ian Hamilton Finlay, Dom Sylvester Houédard and Abstract Art

"The artist has this disadvantage:
he has no equivalent of the word
"etc."

Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Table Talk of Ian Hamilton Finlay* (Mission BC: Barbarian Press, 1985), p. 5.

This paper will consider the extent to which Ian Hamilton Finlay's proposed 'new cohesive element' in poetry took as its source the models offered by abstract art and the ways in which this permitted the extension of literary forms beyond the confines of the page, with particular focus on the poem constructions and one-word poems. Evident from their longstanding correspondence, Finlay and Dom Sylvester Houédard were arguably the most sensitive of the British practitioners to the prospects offered by abstraction, adopting the critical vocabularies of constructivism, cubism, expressionism, fauvism, and suprematism to define the subtle tonal variations across the experimental reaches of the movement. Conceiving of concrete poetry as operating on a scale between 'heart', 'usurpment-symbolist-outburst-belowness', and 'mind', 'formal-careshaped-constructivist-serialised', both Houédard and Finlay recognised the full spectrum of abstract practice across a more intuitive expressionist approach and a cooler, more geometric command of language. By 1965, with the advent of the landmark international exhibition of concrete poetry at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 'Between Poetry and Painting', Finlay's poem-prints and Houédard's 'typestracts' occupied central positions in the wider developing critical discourse of concrete poetry. However, where Houédard's 'abstract art on a typewriter', dazzling sheets composed of overlaid characters, lines and marks, continued to experiment with the printed surface, Finlay drew upon the conventions of abstraction to build away from the page and picture plane. Drawing upon archival research and unpublished correspondence, this paper will place particular emphasis upon the encouragement Finlay took from the constructive designs of the German abstract artist and educator, Josef Albers.

PANEL 2a (12-1.30): FROM LINE TO CONSTELLATION: THE EARLY WORK, ITS CONTEXTS AND LEGACIES

Dr. Calum Rodger: From Stonypath to Little Sparta: Compass of the Non-Secular

This paper presents a digest of my PhD thesis, concerned with developing an interpretative model through which Ian Hamilton Finlay's vast and diverse body of work can be understood. Picking up on two axiomatic features of Finlay's work – its project to rethink the categories and potential of religious or reverential experience in a secular age, and its propensity for nautical imagery – this paper presents a 'Compass of the Non-Secular': an orientative tool with which we might fruitfully navigate Finlay's poetic cosmos.

With reference to the poet's work at Stonypath/Little Sparta and elsewhere, the paper will enumerate the four points of the non-secular compass – the poetic, the homely, the modern, and the classical – in order to show how any reading of the work should pay due attention to each of these 'poles', with its depth and value emerging from these four aspects in compound and tension. In so doing, it will show how the poetics Finlay develops at Stonypath/Little Sparta – a *topographical* poetics – is instrumental to the poet's 'non-secular' project, building on the formal innovations of modernist poetry to relocate poetry's locus from the *voive* to the *home*. It will also briefly consider Finlay's relationship to the avant-garde, proposing that his 'neoclassical rearmament' constitutes a radical modernism by other means, at the very moment when that radical spirit dissolves in the postmodern condition. These findings assert Finlay's singular importance in thinking through faith, secularism, modernity and postmodernity; they reveal, moreover, the underlying unity of oppositions which is the (literal) ground upon which the poet's work is made.

Dr. Alistair Peebles: Mansie Considered

"... many Orkney men are called 'Mansie', which is the diminutive of 'Magnus'". Thus Finlay's footnote to "Mansie Considers Peedie Mary", one of eight *Orkney Lyrics* that he published in 1960 in *The Dancers Inherit the Party*, and one of four poems of his that feature the name. As is well known, many of Finlay's rhyming poems are connected with Orkney, home indeed to "little fields, long horizons". Not only had the poet lived there, but he continued to hold the islands in deep affection, even if in strictly historical terms he was less acquainted with them than might be suggested either by that poetry, or by later biographical statements.

In Orkney, 2017 has been taken to mark the ninth centenary of the betrayal and execution at Eastertide of the Norse Earl Magnus. Later canonised, in due course a cathedral was founded in his name. These events are recounted in *Orkneyinga Saga* and elsewhere, and in the 20th century, George Mackay Brown made them central to his work. Such literary and material artefacts, as well as toponyms and personal and family names, are often associated with a strongly-felt sense of Scandinavian heritage in the Northern Isles, where within Britain, at least, the name Magnus and its variants may well be relatively more often encountered. Reflecting on the presence of "Mansie" in the literature of 20th century Orkney more generally, I consider the possibility that what prompted Finlay's usage was as much the incidence of that name in Orkney's literary landscape as among its people: a topic that also raises the question of Finlay's own place in that landscape today.

Dr. Viviane Carvalho da Anunciação: Ian Hamilton Finlay, Edwin Morgan and Brazil: Virtual and Concrete Exchanges

The objective of this paper is to examine the early creative exchange between Ian Hamilton Finlay, Edwin Morgan and the Brazilian Noigandres group. The term “Concrete” is generally applied to a variety of artistic movements that followed the post-war frustration with traditional forms of art. Part of a collective search for new artistic materials, Concrete Poetry is the product of two traditions that emerged in the fifties, one of the Bolivian-born Swiss writer, Eugene Gomringer, and the other the Brazilian Noigandres group formed by Haroldo de Campos, Augusto de Campos and Décio Pignatari (Bann 7). Through a productive dialogue, Gomringer and Noigandres brought together these two distinctive artistic projects and disseminated the movement worldwide. Through the analysis of the first private exchange of letters, journals, books and artistic objects between Brazilian and British Concrete Poets, more specifically Ian Hamilton Finlay and Edwin Morgan, I wish to shed some light on the beginning of cultural and artistic reception of the movement in the Scotland the United Kingdom. I also wish to argue that this personal form of distribution generated major changes in the poetic project of Concrete Poetry.

PANEL 2b (12-1.30): FROM CONCRETE TO LANDSCAPE: NEW MATERIALS AND MEDIA FOR POETRY IN THE 1970S AND BEYOND

Dr. Fiona Becket: Poetry in the Public Space: Ian Hamilton Finlay

The relationship explored in this paper is that between the ideal work of literature and the material manifestation of it. We are used to reading the literary work on the page, in a book, a pamphlet or postcard, for example. We also encounter poetry inscribed into more obviously resistant surfaces such as stone and precisely located (on monuments, in civic contexts, in galleries and gardens). We can read it inscribed for permanence or projected for impermanence onto some other three-dimensional object; contained in unexpected vessels (such as matchboxes); inked into living human skin; configured as light cells on a screen, a PDF, the product of algorithms, and so it goes on. That text is dependent on media is nothing new. That a post-War poetics (founded in part on the relationship between the textual, textuality and the materiality of surfaces) developed as a genuinely international phenomenon is less often acknowledged as a key aspect of modernist and contemporary poetry culture. The work of Ian Hamilton Finlay is central in this regard. Finlay’s work above all transforms public space and allows us to reflect on a new poetics that, in completely original ways, combines notions of work, language and ecology. Are we looking at the formation of an eco-poetics in Finlay’s work? If so, what is the relation between eco-poesis and technology in the production of work for public spaces? Finally, what is the relationship between Finlay’s public art and the particular phase of concrete and visual poetry which characterises his work?

Dr. Camilla Nelson: A Concrete Coalition of Language Environments

In his essay on ‘How to Read’ Harry Gilonis recalls Stephen Bann’s ‘long ago’ observation that ‘some works in [Ian Hamilton] Finlay’s garden are not so much garden features as transpositions of reading conventions into the environment; so the process works both ways,’ Gilonis adds (Gilonis in Cutts, 2006:122). Finlay’s treatment of the garden environment as a page, emphasises

the page as a set of material structures that we inhabit corporeally as well as conceptually. Through the comparison of a corporeal reading of the ‘small fields // long horizons’ wall texts at Stonypath with the bookwork *Canal Stripe Series 4*, this paper examines how Ian Hamilton Finlay’s garden expands the understanding and application of the literary paratexts of the book. What happens when a reading of these walls in a field/garden is transposed onto an attempt to read the book, and vice versa? Where does such formal de/re-construction lead?

Concrete poetry, with its emphasis on the material of literary composition and its affect on reading and writing behaviours as materially produced and sustained, challenges the integrity of the page and its associated literary behaviours. *Little Sparta* suggests a conceptual restructuring of literary norms through an innovative reorganisation of text as a space to be inhabited, expanding our horizons of what and how words can mean. This paper performs a concrete coalition of book and garden language environments in an effort to explore what the amplification and restriction of such reading practices means as part of a renovated ‘open field’ poetics.

Bibliography

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Charlie Jarvis: Word-Things in Space-Time

This paper addresses Ian Hamilton Finlay’s engagement with the interplay of language and materiality. Responding to Finlay’s work from the perspective of cultural geography, the paper uses the discipline’s interest in materiality and representation to explore the poet’s ideas regarding language and the literary work. Particularly, it mobilises concepts from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and from the Deleuze-inspired ‘new materialisms’, the diverse field of theories that emphasises and advocates the ontological and analytical primacy of dynamic ‘matter’ and the non-human. Drawing on their preoccupations, this paper seeks to forge stronger connections, by means of Finlay’s work, between new theories of materiality and literary research.

It argues that Finlay’s work, and his own comments on his practice, offer unique perspectives on interdisciplinary concerns including the concept of ‘impersonality’, the relations of matter and meaning, and the placing of literatures within material milieux. As such, the paper firstly situates Finlay in a genealogy within twentieth-century literary practice concerned with issues of materiality and impersonality. Secondly, it draws on Deleuze’s concept of ‘sense’ – as the ontological boundary between bodies and language – to analyse Finlay’s particular interrogation of the dynamic of language and materiality. Finally, it brings these concepts of sense and impersonality forward to affirm the analytical necessity of viewing Finlay’s works in their larger non-human contexts.

2.30-4: PANEL 3: BATTLES, FLYTINGS, REVOLUTION

Dr. Greg Thomas: Walled Gardens: Little Sparta and Spandau

This paper takes as its point of departure Ian Hamilton Finlay's engagement with the aesthetics and iconography of the Third Reich, in particular with the neo-classical aesthetics of Hitler's favoured architect Albert Speer. In the late 1970s, Finlay inaugurated a correspondence with Speer, whose avowed repentance for the sins of Nazism, via a series of candid post-war memoirs, had by that point earned him the moniker of "the Good Nazi". Their dialogue led to an unpublished book project, *A Walled Garden: A History of the Spandau Garden in the Time of the Architect Albert Speer*, based around a series of watercolour paintings by the artist Ian Gardner of Speer's two "sunken gardens", constructed in the grounds of Spandau Prison during his twenty-year sentence for war-crimes.

In spite of the controversy that such collaborations were always likely to incite, there is no case for rehashing the trite accusations of neo-fascism that dogged Finlay during this period. At the same time, such projects certainly beg the question of his motives in engaging so frontally with the artistic and cultural legacies of Nazism. Via a close engagement with Heidegger's 1935-36 essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" – from his 1950 volume *Holzwege* ("Woodpaths"), an intellectual touchstone for Finlay – and with Finlay's neo-Pre-Socratic sense of Heraclitean opposites, I will argue that *The Walled Garden* project makes the case for a redemptive post-war Romantic aesthetics, encapsulated in the images of Speer's garden, forged through an honest engagement with the cultural roots and legacies of Fascism. At the same time, the parallels implied throughout the book between Speer and Finlay himself – through the metaphorical associations drawn between their respective garden confinements, in Finlay's case compelled by his agoraphobia – seem intended to goad the liberal secular viewer-reader into a combative response. By this means, we are invited to complete the scenario of the "battle" in which so much of Finlay's later work seeks engagement.

Professor Yves Abrioux: Revisiting the Third Reich: Affects, Ethics, Poetics

More than ten years after the artist's death, the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay is in the process of being normalised. The garden at Little Sparta is being extensively documented, the allusions which animate its textual and iconographical components as much as Finlay's cards, prints, booklets, monuments, toys, etc., carefully explicated. It has become difficult to properly recall the bemusement, and indeed hostility, with which his multifaceted production was regularly received in his lifetime. The work on themes from the French Revolution no longer appears to stimulate much controversy. However, Finlay's recourse to motifs from the Third Reich throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s remains absent from this assuaging process. It is useful to remember that, on the occasion of the French government's approach to the artist in the run-up to the bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989, the presence of these motifs served as a pretext for a series of scurrilous personal attacks that led to the cancellation of a series of significant public commissions. My paper will recall certain details of what Finlay termed his 'French War', concentrating on the campaign conducted in the French press against one particular work—*Ovo*—first exhibited in Paris in the spring of 1987. Finlay's detractors forbore to name this work, let alone reproduce or correctly describe it. They grossly misrepresented other works by the artist and indeed attributed to him a series of non-existent, supposedly Nazi works.

The phantasmatic abjection thus imposed on Finlay in France may be deemed to invert the sublimating scholarly readings prevalent today. When the impact of his literalist appropriation of iconographical materials from intractable moments in history is not weakened, it is travestied. The consequence is not only to sidestep the politics of Finlay's oeuvre. It also risks devitalizing its poetics.

Keynote (4.30-5.45): PROFESSOR STEPHEN BANN

Finlay's Battles: A Cultural and Historical Context

Ian Hamilton Finlay's 'wars' have been generally regarded as powerful acts of individual protest against the intolerable positions taken up by corporate bodies such as the Arts Council and the Strathclyde Region. They have been extensively documented, both in contemporary press accounts and through the publicising activities of a group like the Saint-Just Vigilantes. Finlay's own retrospective interview pertaining to the 'Battle of Little Sparta' offers a specially vivid description of the course of that event. But there is a further type of question that arises in discussing the status and significance of these 'wars'. In what way were Finlay's combative actions - such as the decision to withdraw an exhibition from the Scottish Arts Council Gallery - consistent with a radically different understanding of the concept of artistic practice that was then developing more broadly in the world of contemporary art? To what extent did Finlay's unusual double role as a poet and artist involve him in negotiating barriers, but also offered new possibilities, in enabling him to shape the direction of his career? And how far did the emergence of contemporary cultural trends such as the rise of the notion of the 'Black Venus', and the prevalence of revisionist historical views of the French Revolution, play their part in provoking 'battles' in the course of his collaborative practice? Attention to such contextual factors does not, by any means, diminish the impact of his work. On the contrary, it anchors his artistic achievement all the more firmly within the history of his times.

Friday 14 July

Keynote (10-11.15): DR. DREW MILNE

Symbiotic Poetics: Ian Hamilton Finlay and the Politics of Nature

PANEL 4 (11.30-1): THE POLITICAL PASTORAL

Adrian Evans: Little Sparta: A Voyage Home From Modernism to Myth

Tracing its origins to Alberti's methods of triangulation, and Descartes' development of co-ordinate based mapping, Modernism has allowed us to exert control landscape without ever travelling through it. This, in turn, has allowed us to separate ourselves from the landscape, and to treat it merely as a resource, or a Heideggian 'Standing Reserve.' We no longer have to journey the land to identify it; we have freed ourselves from that narrative journey; the sequence of features, places and events which describe our travelling and inhabitation of the landscape, our

dialogue with Place. Significantly, having lost our occupation of and connection with the layered, hidden, haunted past, we have lost its myth.

This is clearly evident in the abstract compositions of modern architecture. The predominant, functionalist strain of modernism eschews representative or image based aesthetics which might relate it to Place. It clearly, physically, separates itself from the Landscape and treats it as a ground to the architecture's figure.

At Little Sparta, We can see the garden as a thesis. Individually, each artefact intervening in a notionally natural environ, creates a place, and the representational qualities of the work allow it to carry narrative and myth. As we navigate claustrophobic voyages in this landlocked seascape, exhausted by the intensity of its theatre, can we find the devices to enable an abstract modern architecture, through mediation with representation, to re-engage with its narrative, mythic landscape?

M.C. Hyland: Gates and Stiles: Reading Finlay's Boundary Poetics through the Long Eighteenth Century

From the road, one enters Ian Hamilton Finlay's Little Sparta through a gate bearing the inscription: "JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU CITOYEN DE GENEVE 1727." This date signifies not the year of Rousseau's birth, but instead, the last year before his teenage departure from Geneva and conversion to Catholicism: in entering Finlay's garden, we step into Rousseau's biography immediately before the first of his many periods of exile. This gate frames the negotiation of a property boundary (entering the garden) as a simultaneous crossing of a historical boundary. Elsewhere in the garden, Finlay theorizes gates and stiles as elements of a dialectic ("THESIS/ fence/ ANTITHESIS/ gate/ SYNTHESIS/ stile"), or as literary organizing principles (stone markers inscribed with the names of authors Finlay identifies as either "GATES" or "STILES").

Finlay's gates and stiles recast the instruments by which public footpaths traverse the boundaries of privately owned—and, to use a historically resonant term, *enclosed*—lands. This paper will read Finlay's gates and stiles as allegories of the long history of entanglement between literary production and private property. I will argue that these garden sculptures uniquely literalize the conflation of authorship with enclosure that originates in eighteenth-century English and Scottish legal debates around the establishment and extension of copyright law. Paying special attention to the way eighteenth-century thought around copyright tended to read *literary* property through discourses of *agricultural* production originating in Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, I will suggest a new locus for interrogation of Finlay's relationship to eighteenth-century poetics, aesthetics, and politics.

Dr. Stewart Smith: Et in Arcadia Ego: Ian Hamilton Finlay's Complex Pastoral

Ian Hamilton Finlay's 1976 sculpture 'Et In Arcadia Ego' presents the disturbing image of a Panzer tank rolling through a pastoral landscape of trees and rolling hills. In Poussin's famous painting of the same name, shepherds stand over a tomb, reminding us that death is a presence in Arcadia too. In Finlay's version death is represented by the violence of modern warfare and environmental depredation.

Can the pastoral ideal withstand such violence? As Ross Hair has noted, Finlay engages with instances of 'unrest' and dissonance to [as Thomas A. Clark puts it] "'throw into relief the trappings of pastoral stasis'" and address wider concerns. Rather than undermine the pastoral tradition, I suggest that these elements of dissonance and unrest help renew and extend it.

As I shall argue in this paper, Finlay's work encapsulates Leo Marx's concept of the complex pastoral, whereby an idealised vision is contrasted with a world that is more 'real'. Orkney and Perthshire provide Finlay with idyllic images of rural and domestic life, but the pastoral ideal is subject to a range of counterforces, including realism, irony and violence. Tensions between tradition and modernity, the landed gentry and the rural poor, animate his short stories and lyric poems. His garden at Stonypath/Little Sparta is both a dwelling and an imaginal realm, where the domestic and the pastoral are juxtaposed with imperial and revolutionary violence.

PANEL 5a (2-3.30): LONG HORIZONS: CREATIVE RESPONSES TO FINLAY'S WORK

Alice Tarbuck: "Ecology is Nature-Philosophy *secularized*" Ecologies of Form in the Garden-works of Thomas A. Clark & Ian Hamilton Finlay.

In *Detached Sentences on Gardening*, Finlay makes the bold claim that 'Ecology is Nature-Philosophy *secularised*'. This paper explores the nature of this 'secularisation' in the works of both Finlay and poet Thomas A. Clark (1944-).

I argue that in the works of Finlay and to a lesser extent Clark, the 'secularisation' of Nature-Philosophy is not a dismissal of its central ideas, but rather a diffusion of its ideas into ideas of form. I will take my lead from Pia Simig's assertion that "The sacred grove, once at least in imagination a natural occurring phenomenon, can now only be conjured indirectly through artistic (poetic), conventions or figures of speech (Finlay, Ian Hamilton, Pia Simig, Sam Rebben, and Prudence Carlson, *Einsamkeit Und Entsagung: Ian Hamilton Finlay: Zwei Gärten = Solitude and Renunciation: Ian Hamilton Finlay: Two Gardens*, [Heidelberg: Kehrer, 2010]. Unpaginated).

Taking the image of the grove, synonymous with Romantic transcendentalist Nature-Philosophy (*Naturphilosophie*) of Goethe, Hegel & Schelling, we discover the refiguring of idealist philosophies of natural unity in Little Sparta and Moschatel Press. Instead of transcendence, the viewer is offered fragmentary moments of engagement with the natural world, tempered by an emphasis on the cultural and man-made aspects of art. I will argue that innovative form allows Clark & Finlay to 'conjure indirectly' in new and engaging ways, that rework Nature-Philosophie for contemporary culture.

This paper is focuses on Finlay's later garden-works, and Clark's installations and garden project from the 1970s and 80s onwards.

Jack Thacker: "Detached Sentences on Gardening": Ian Hamilton Finlay and Alice Oswald

In 1990, Alice Oswald applied for the job of gardener at Little Sparta at Stonypath in Scotland, the garden of Ian Hamilton Finlay. Her interview consisted of rowing from side to side across

the lake at Stonypath while Finlay fired questions at her, questions relating more to the nature of ideas than of gardening. The interview sparked a correspondence between the two poet/gardeners lasting seven years; none of Finlay's letters informed Oswald if she had got the job, but served instead, as she puts it, as 'a series of footnotes to his extraordinary garden.'

On first appearances, Finlay and Oswald are very different poets. Finlay, the self-titled 'AVANT-GARDEner', saw little of value in the work of Ted Hughes, for example, and instead looked back to the pastoral tradition or the landscape gardening movement for inspiration. Oswald, on the other hand, is in many ways the inheritor of Hughes's position and harbours a deep suspicion of the pastoral. Despite these differences, however, in many ways Oswald inherits much from Finlay: his poetry as well as his garden continues to have a profound impact upon her work both on and off the page.

This paper will trace the influence of Finlay upon Oswald's poetry throughout her career spanning two decades, from the gardening poems of her first collection *The Thing in the Gap-Stone Stile* (1996) to the concrete poetry-inspired typographical experimentations of her most recent collection *Falling Awake* (2016).

Nick-e Melville: IHF, Man of Letters

Poet nick-e melville presents creative, concrete and found responses to the letters and shapes that make up Finlay's initials.

PANEL 5b (2-3.30): MODELS OF ORDER: FINLAY, THE VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFT

Dr. Diana Leca: Ian Hamilton Finlay's Subtle Poiesis

"And the farther you go towards
the true subtle thing, the lonelier it gets."
Ian Hamilton Finlay, *A Model of Order*
"(ethical project): I want to live according to nuance."

Roland Barthes, *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*

This paper makes a case for the *subtle* as a promising aesthetic category through which to encounter Ian Hamilton Finlay's later writings, particularly his poem/prints, "halfdrawings," and monostich poems. From the Latin *subtilis* meaning "fine, delicate," the word "subtle," as the *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* tells us, also connotes that which is abstruse or "not easily understood." In this paper, I will consider how the *subtle* slides across the semantic spectrum from the delicate and well-crafted (crucial aesthetic modes for Finlay), towards the obscure and elusive (i.e. impeding interpretation), and, finally, towards the clever, cunning, and deceitful. In his seminal essay "Art and Objecthood" (1967), Michael Fried argues that minimalist art is theatrical, blatant, even aggressive—the opposite, seemingly, of the subtle. However, close attention to Finlay's later poems reveals that fineness, restraint, nuance, and neutrality for him contain not only aesthetic, but also ethical dimensions. Indeed, in *A Model of Order*, in which the word "subtlety" crops up repeatedly, Finlay claims that it is "sensitivity" and not "understanding"

that constitutes his critical ethos and poetic practice. Thus, rather than celebrating what critics have called the intimidating “dumbness” of minimalist art—which effectively blocks meaning-making—Finlay’s subtle *poiesis* appeals for greater sensitivity in reading and viewing and for the act of withdrawing or suspending judgment. It is, I argue, the philosophical ideal of *ataraxia* (the rational indifference to desire) that marks his airy, ascetic abstractions. Via Roland Barthes’ emphasis on the “nuance” (that is, on the “*tiny, perfectly futile details*”) and using counterpoints in the visual arts (the pale palettes of Agnes Martin, Cy Twombly’s sea poems, and Louise Bourgeois’ emphasis on the “fragile”), this paper works to establish a better understanding of what Finlay calls his “subtle method.”

Kendra Sullivan: WAVE

In 2014, landscape architect Pierre Bélanger edited *Wet Matter*, a Harvard Design Magazine issue exploring “the oceanic turn” in the Western imagination, the onset of which he marks with United States’ President Obama’s 2008 invocation of the 1906 Antiquities Act to protect the Pacific Remote National Islands Marine Monument. But I would argue the oceanic turn occurred my earlier. Photographer and theorist Allan Sekula and his collaborator Noel Burch refer the sea “the forgotten space of our modernity” in their film about the 24-trillion dollar containerized shipping economy, *The Forgotten Space* (2010). Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre explains that “between fields, which are regions of force and conflict,” there are blind fields that remain invisible in spite of their proximity: in *Wet Matter* Bélanger argues that the oceanic ecologies – and more broadly water and its social, economic, and political flows – are one such invisible zone in spite of the conflictual forces at play on its surface and in its depths so influential in constituting land-based society.

In this paper, I will argue that Ian Hamilton Finlay’s maritime writing gives language and form to these forces. Comparing and contrasting his work with that of near-contemporary visual artist Bas Jan Ader’s fated journey on the *Ocean Wave* and Marcel Broodthaers’ *North Sea*, my presentation will look at the way Finlay’s visual poetics about the textual experience of being at sea and of sailing construct a unique and precise experience of an ocean that fundamentally connects rather than separates figure and ground as well as conceptual and physical reality. The formal properties of environmental writing are reflective of the particular capacity of humans to feel, perceive, and make sense of their experience of the physical world through language. Herbert Marcuse posits that ecoaesthetics “is the practice of creating an environment.” I argue that Finlay’s lived poetics renders legible the ocean and its relationship to modernity. His maritime work treats the reader, the writer, and the text as emergent properties of the ocean itself. The contingency of textual and concrete reality in his work can be summarized in Denise Levertov’s *The Reader*: “and as you read/ the sea is turning its dark pages,/ turning/ its dark pages.”

Dr. Lila Matsumoto: The Stitching of Her Wake: The Collaboration of Pamela Campion and Ian Hamilton Finlay

Finlay’s collaborative approach to art-making is well-documented, but the works he made with the embroider Pamela Campion have yet to be the subject of extended consideration. Campion was Finlay’s sole collaborator in embroidery: from 1972 to 1998 they created numerous pieces together, including Terra/Mare (1973), SEA PINK (1975), and a series of ‘French Revolution’

samplers (1988). No less significantly, Campion produced a host of works for Finlay's exhibitions not conventionally considered works of 'art', such as the swags and flags included in the French Revolution exhibitions and the felt slippers worn by visitors to the temple/gallery at Little Sparta. In this paper I will examine a selection of collaborative works made by Campion and Finlay to pose two key questions about the function of embroidery in these pieces. The first line of inquiry regards the idea of embroidery as a 'domestic' rather than 'public' art, historically imbued with associations of sentimentality, tradition, homeliness, and femininity. Taking into consideration Rozsika Parker's pioneering study on the relationship between women and embroidery, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the making of the feminine* (1984), I will speculate on the extent to which the idea of embroidery as domestic activity activates the works. Secondly, drawing on Finlay's and Campion's correspondences held at the Pamela Campion archives at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, I will consider the ambiguous border between craft and art which their collaborative process and works foreground.

PANEL 6 (4-5.15): IMAGINARY PORTRAITS: RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

Malcolm Fraser: Circumnavigation: Ian Hamilton Finlay at Little Sparta and Rousay

Finlay's concept of "Exile" was intimately linked to his agoraphobia. His illness, and its tendency to drive him away from the city and conventional society, led him to a deep consideration of "home" and place and belonging. (As Ian wrote, "Our true home may be found in exile.") His exile to Rousay has a beautiful correspondence to that to Stonypath, with Sue and the family they raised – as simple, platonic landscapes surrounded by the other of the sea or the landscape of the Pentlands.

His ability to link these landscapes, to those at the heart of the classical world that underpin our civilisation, was at the heart of his art; indeed the signing of the tall ash that was the only relief to the bleakness of Stonypath when he and Sue moved there, as "Mare Nostrum" – our sea, the Roman's name for the Mediterranean whose sound backgrounded their civilisation, as the wind in the ash backgrounded Little Sparta, could be seen as key to the whole Garden, and Ian's art.

"Tree and Sea are the same in Sound" (Ian Hamilton Finlay, 'Domestic Pensées 1964-1972')

I worked at Little Sparta in the 1980s, and would use my memories of our evening conversations, when Ian would talk about the personal and political in his art, its relationship to the classical world and to Scotland, and his relationship to the landscapes of Little Sparta and Orkney, to present these key dualities to the Symposium.

John Purser: Music, Time and the Suspension of Disbelief – Collaborating with IHF

The paper will focus largely on *Carrier Strike* – a work devised by Ian Hamilton Finlay, with models and photography by Carl Heideken and music by John Purser. It was Finlay's intention that the images should not only be in black and white but should be presented as a slide show with very slow changes between slides. He intended this as a counter to the increasing speed with which images were being thrown at the public – a speed which has not diminished in the ensuing years. Discussions about the actual pace of the changes was centred upon the pace of the music,

but differences were easily sorted and the work was produced to everyone's satisfaction. The images themselves, offering a domestic ironing board as an aircraft carrier and an electric iron as an enemy cruiser, called for a sense of playfulness which was none-the-less grounded in a very real and frightening world, and the music had to reflect this duality in such a way that disbelief could be suspended, much as it can be in story-telling, for *Carrier Strike* is a story.

The paper will consider the aesthetic dynamics behind the subject matter, the images and the music, and how these dynamics are used to work together to create a complex but unified whole.

Keynote (5.30-6.45) PROFESSOR SUSAN STEWART

"Between Spoils and Gifts"

This talk looks closely at Ian Hamilton Finlay's place in the art history of his time by considering his most fundamental departure from prevailing avant-garde practice: that is, his immersion in history. Focusing upon his "Roman" practices of epigraphy and spoliation and his larger transformation of the bounds of the *gesamtkunstwerk*, we can glimpse the many ways he pursued an art that could evade the novelty of the present. Hamilton Finlay took a long, difficult, and revisionary journey through the past in an effort to reach into the future.
