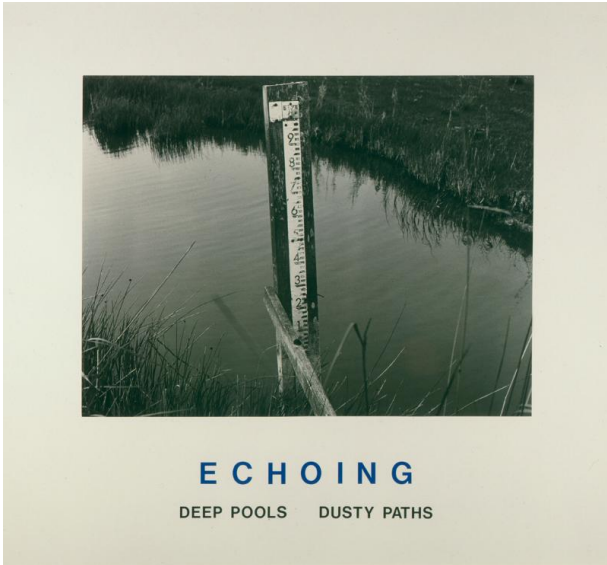


Basic Detail Report



Echoing (A Special Place)

Date

1989

Primary Maker

Doherty, Willie

Medium

Photograph

Description

"When I was invited to make a work for A SPECIAL PLACE I thought initially about making a piece in Derry, where I

have worked since 1985. However my decision-making was overtaken by events when my father died suddenly on Christmas Day 1988. In the days and weeks after his death I spent a lot of time trying to piece together all my memories of childhood and the importance of my father's influence upon me. I shared these memories with my family and we swapped stories and filled in the gaps that each other had missed out. One incident that my brothers and I all remembered vividly was of a day one summer when our father took us to the place where he had spent part of his childhood. We travelled most of the way by bus and then walked a few miles to an old abandoned cottage which was close to a railway viaduct. He told us stories of how he grew up there and showed us the deep pool where he learned to swim. We all remembered that day as one when he really explained a lot of things to us, in a very understated manner, which was his way. Every moment of that day seemed important and loaded with meaning. After his death I felt a strong need to revisit this place and this project provided me with an ideal opportunity. It was twenty years since I had been there so it took me a while to re-locate it precisely, but when I found it I recognised it instantly, as if I had only been there days and not years before. As soon as I saw the measuring level in the water I felt an almost physical sense of joy at finding something which I had lost. I wanted to keep this thing, so I took a photograph of it. Everyday thousands of photographs are taken for that same reason. Photography holds a unique relationship between our experience of reality and our memory of that experience. The photograph stands in for the actual experience and brings back a particular feeling or memory. In this sense, the photograph becomes about more than the moment when it was taken. My photograph was taken in 1989 but is about the memory of a day twenty years ago which was about the memory of thirty years before that. What fascinates me about this is not the possibility of reconstructing a sentimental version of the past but of touching on something which continues to provide a strong affirmation of being alive and a part of that past." Willie Doherty

Dimensions

Object: 51 × 56 cm