

Thinking With My Hands

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Photos courtesy John Shaw-Rimmington

On the theme of Art and Collaboration



"Does setting stones differently, vertical, slanted, putting triangles and seats into it turn it into art? Where does design become art? I really do not have much of an inkling. The purely functional can be aesthetically pleasing but does that make it art? Virtually everything I do is pure farm field walls, there is little scope for art. I have never particularly liked it when someone says that wall's a work of art, or you're an artist. I just build walls."

"Perhaps the 'mundane' can be raised by its actual execution if in the hands of the right individual(s). Perhaps even with a straightforward field wall there is some scope for artistry. Even the straight forward can be executed in a number of ways and to a certain extent there is something artistic in producing a good looking wall, something that many (perhaps the majority) of wallers within an agricultural imperative do not bring to their work. I like to make my walls flow and fit in with the landscape with lines which please the eye and neat tidy stonework which doesn't jar. But all this is in the eye of the beholder, if Jackson Pollock was a waller"



Jackson Pollrock?



"Where does the 'wing wall' (that we built in California) fit in? I think it dispels the worry that we'd peaked early with our 'pyro-mid', a pinnacle that we'd unlikely ever approach. I'm not sure how much any of it was to do with me, although the design did feel as if it was a very collaborative effort. I have an inkling that after your initial design most of the ideas seemed to come to 2 or 3 of us almost simultaneously. "

"As with all these things we seem to know instinctively that the end result will look right. It is perfectly proportioned for the space, and that is something you cannot possibly know, yet have to know from the outset. It could not be changed or amended half way through. We had an idea of what we wanted, had to work out how to fit it in, proportion it and then go with it. It was not entirely straightforward but really we came up with the ideal 'solutions' very quickly. There are the right number of bays, they curve in every direction by the right amount. "

"By god we're good but exactly why is perhaps a little indefinable. Had any one of us not been there, the wing wall would have worked, it would have been good, maybe great, I doubt that it would have been as good as it is. This wall and our collaboration is far greater than the sum of its parts."