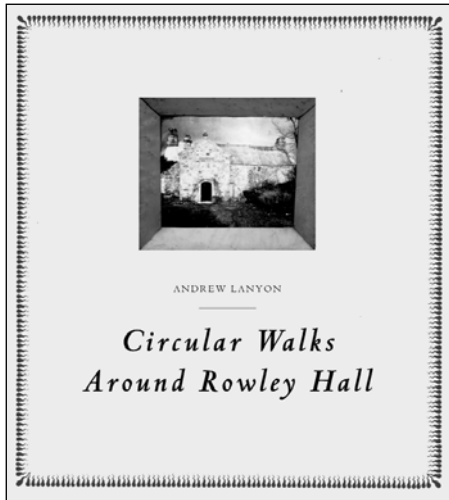


FROM ATLAS PRESS

Circular Walks Around Rowley Hall

by ANDREW LANYON

A novel in text and images



Category: Literary fiction / Art / Cultural Theory

Publication date: 12 October 2006

Extent: 176 pp., 17 x 19 cm, **Binding:** Paperback in slipcase

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Rowley Hall is a sanctuary for extremes, a place where the prosaic and the outlandish, the precise and the approximate, the straightforward and the contorted, the domestic and the geological combine.

The very fabric of the building has been shaped by how much each of its three main inhabitants constitute the dominant personality at any single moment. Someone might come to the door and ask for Vera, only to be told that at present there is mostly only Walter...

“Circular Walks” is a sort-of-novel that recounts the curious history of three characters: Vera, Mervyn and Walter Rowley; and of two locations: Rowley Hall and the Cornish town of St. Ives.

The human protagonists are three members of a family devoted to outlandish experimentation, mostly upon themselves or each other. Vera, the levitating psychoanalyst, explores the effects of geology on thought and language; Walter, a retired vivisectionist preys on artists in the hope of forcibly curing them of their vile creative habits; meanwhile Mervyn, his father, is busy eradicating his son’s efforts by secretly creating strange cinematic extravaganzas and sculptures disguised as scientific apparatus. Or at least that’s what happens on one level...

In fact this is an indefinable book in which text and image are given equal weight. A state of play (in both senses of the word) exists between them, words provoke images, and images text, and a literal visualisation of a joyous creativity is brought into being. It’s a *tour-de-force* that is at once gothic narrative, philosophical enquiry, comic novel, a eulogy of the tragic history of St. Ives and the Cornish landscape and an eloquent demonstration of the processes underlying its own creation.

Andrew Lanyon has been bringing out the Rowley books in beautiful limited editions for the past 20 years. This selection from the first 12 of them is the first time their remarkable content has been made more generally available. The author is the son of one of the foremost of the St. Ives artists, Peter Lanyon, and so was brought up in the strange atmosphere of a fishing village overwhelmed with “high culture”, his ambivalent feelings about this invasion underpin the narrative.

Simultaneously published by the same author: *A Fairy Find*, Portobello Books.

TO LAUNCH THESE PUBLICATIONS AN EXHIBITION of Andrew and Peter Lanyon will open at the Austin Desmond Gallery on 12 October. Contact Atlas or the gallery for an invitation.

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