

HOLT ● SMITHSON FOUNDATION**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****June 30, 2021**

Nancy Holt on a NYC rooftop, October 1977. Photo: Leandro Katz.
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The Archives of American Art and the Holt/Smithson Foundation are delighted to announce Nancy Holt's bequest of her works of art to the Foundation and her papers and other related materials to the Archives.

The papers of Nancy Holt (1938–2014), a founding member of the earth, land, and conceptual art movements, will now be a part of the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art. Holt's papers document the development of her art and ideas over the course of more than four decades, her network of artist peers, her personal life, and her care for the legacy of Robert Smithson. Holt and Smithson were married in 1963, and Holt managed his estate from 1973 until her passing in 2014. Holt's files include extensive documentation of both realized and unrealized works, exhibitions, publications, interviews, and her wide-ranging research interests. This bequest from the Estate of Nancy Holt brings Holt's papers together in the same institution with the widely consulted Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt papers, which she generously donated to the Archives in eight separate gifts between 1986 and 2011.

Nancy Holt's works of art are held by the Holt/Smithson Foundation, based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A pioneer of site-specific installation and the moving image, Holt recalibrated the limits of art. Across five decades she asked questions about how we might understand our place in the world, investigating perception, systems, and place. Holt's rich artistic output spans concrete poetry, audioworks, film and video, photography, slideworks, ephemeral gestures, drawings, room-sized installations, earthworks, artists' books, and public sculpture commissions.

Born in Worcester, Massachusetts, Holt grew up in New Jersey. She graduated with a degree in biology from Tufts University in 1960. Later that year, she moved to New York City and became a part of the downtown art world, sharing ideas with her artistic network that included Carl Andre, Michael Heizer, Joan Jonas, Sol LeWitt, Lucy Lippard, John Perreault, and Richard Serra.

Holt was attentive to the ways systems structure perception and understanding of place—be that the planetary cycles or language and architecture. In the mid-1960s, she worked as an assistant literary editor at the magazine *Harper's Bazaar*, and in 1966, she began creating concrete poems and text-based works. Her earliest exhibition was at the Dwan Gallery in New York in 1969, and her work was exhibited in vibrant spaces for experimental art throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Best known for her landmark earthwork *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76), Holt continued to expand what art could be and where it could be found throughout her life.

“Research and partnerships are at the heart of Holt/Smithson Foundation. The Archives of American Art is the perfect home for the Papers of Nancy Holt, and aligns with Holt’s lifelong dedication to research,” said Lisa Le Feuvre, Executive Director of Holt/Smithson Foundation. “We are committed to growing our partnership with the Archives to enable new scholarship on the enduring legacies of Holt and Smithson. Their work continues to resonate with artists working today.”

Liza Kirwin, Interim Director, Archives of American Art says, “The bequest of Nancy Holt’s papers and related materials will provide researchers with unparalleled resources for the study of her work. This important collection adds immensely to our already substantial holdings relating to both Holt and Smithson and joins the Archives’ oral history interviews of both artists. We look forward to working with Holt/Smithson Foundation and a global public to expand scholarship on Nancy Holt.

Notes:

About Nancy Holt

Nancy Holt’s work is held in major collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum für Gegenwartkunst, Germany; Utah Museum of Fine Arts; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In 2018 *Sun Tunnels* (1973-76) and *Holes of Light* (1974) were acquired by Dia Art Foundation, with support from Holt/Smithson Foundation. Works by Holt are permanently installed at public institutions including Miami University Art Museum, Ohio; University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth; Western Washington University; and University of South Florida.

In 2021, Holt’s work is the focus of *Light and Language* at Lismore Castle Arts in Ireland, bringing five decades of her work in conversation with five artists working today, and a solo exhibition across the Los Angeles and Berlin galleries of Sprüth Magers. The museums at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth College, and Western Washington University are presenting solo exhibitions in 2021 and 2022 respectively. In 2022 Holt is the subject of a major survey, *Nancy Holt: Inside/Outside*, at Bildmuseet, Sweden.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Points of View*, Parafin, London (2020); Dia Art Foundation, New York (2018); *Nancy Holt: Land Art*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2013); *Nancy Holt:*

Selected Film and Photo Works, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2013); and *Nancy Holt: Sightlines* (2010-12), a touring retrospective exhibition accompanied by a monograph edited by Alena J Williams.

In 2012, Nancy Holt was made a Chevalier of the of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government. In 2013 she was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the International Sculpture Center in New York. Holt received five National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, two New York Creative Artist Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of South Florida, Tampa.

About Holt/Smithson Foundation

In 2014, Nancy Holt willed Holt/Smithson Foundation into being. Nancy Holt (1938–2014) and Robert Smithson (1938–1973) transformed the world of art and ideas. Holt/Smithson Foundation develops their distinctive creative legacies. Collaborating with artists, writers, thinkers, and institutions, Holt/Smithson Foundation realizes exhibitions, publishes books, initiates artist commissions, programs educational events, encourages research, and develops collections globally from its headquarters in New Mexico.

www.holtsmithsonfoundation.org

About the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Founded in 1954, the Archives of American Art fosters advanced research through the accumulation and dissemination of primary sources, unequaled in historical depth and breadth, that document more than 200 years of the nation’s artists and art communities. The Archives provides access to these materials through its two research centers, exhibitions, and publications, including the *Archives of American Art Journal*, the longest-running scholarly journal in the field of American art. An international leader in the digitizing of archival collections, the Archives also makes nearly three million images freely available online. The oral history collection includes more than 2,400 audio interviews, the largest accumulation of in-depth, first-person accounts of the American art world.

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