

Memory Trace

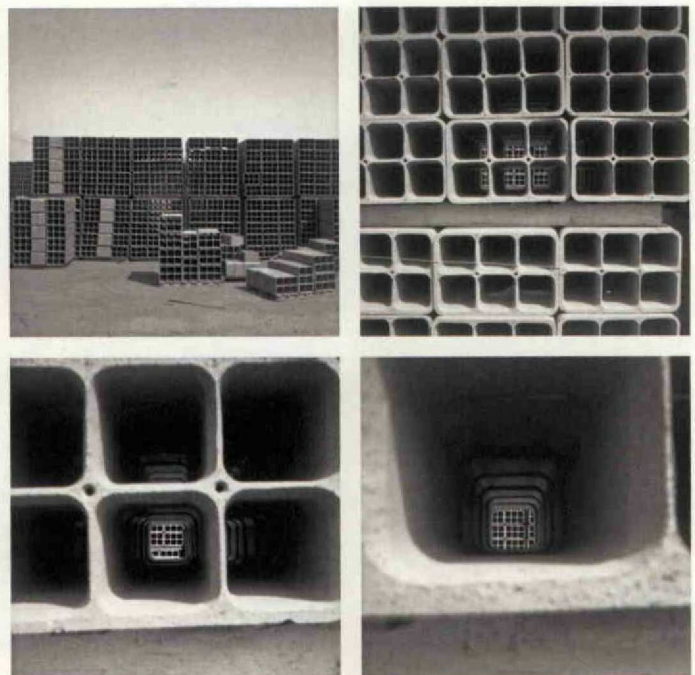
NANCY HOLT: PHOTOWORKS

HAUNCH OF VENISON, LONDON, 8 JUNE - 25 AUGUST

Nancy Holt is one of a group of important international artists who initiated the Land Art movement in the late 1960s, and a pioneer in site-specific art and film and video work. It has been over 40 years since the legendary 1968 *Earth Works* show launched the movement at New York's Dwan Gallery, so Haunch of Venison's decision to stage the first UK solo exhibition of Holt's work allows viewers to reflect upon the key themes that have come to define the movement, namely memory, perception, time and space.

Early Land artists, such as Michael Heizer, Richard Long, Walter De Maria and Robert Smithson, took revolutionary steps when they began to work outside of the studio and gallery and instead make work in the physical landscape. The movement was a rejection of the materialistic modern world and an exploration of our human relationship with the continuously shifting forces of nature. For some of the artists, including Holt, ecological issues and concerns about the destruction of natural environments were relevant factors.

For over four decades, Holt has created an extensive body of work comprising audiotapes, videos, photographs, site-specific installations, artist's books and major sculpture commissions around the world. Her most famous work to date is the *Sun Tunnels*, which consists of four large concrete tunnels that are 18ft long and 9ft in diameter, based in the Utah desert in the USA. The tunnels are aligned in pairs along an axis of the rising and setting sun on a summer or winter solstice; they act as viewing devices for the sky, the surrounding landscape and each other. Holt's primary aesthetic and social interests converge in this work, reflecting her determination to connect people with the planet and to render the vast spaces of the desert back down to a manageable human scale.



Nancy Holt, *Concrete Visions*, 1967. Composite inkjet print taken from 4 original 126 format b&w negatives.

Photography has always played a central role in Holt's work, both as a way of engaging with the landscape and a way of documenting site-specific projects. This show features over 100 photographs, including early work such as *Concrete Visions* (1967), an important project made on Dartmoor while visiting the UK with her husband the late Robert Smithson over 40 years ago, *Trail Markers* (1969), and *Western Graveyards* (1968), a series of photographs of dilapidated graves in the American west. www.haunchofvenison.com.

