

Directions to Sun Tunnels

Drive time from Salt Lake City is about 4 hours.

- Take I-80 west from Salt Lake City through Wendover to Oasis, Nevada.
- At Oasis, take Nevada Highway 233 through Montello, Nevada (minimal services may be available) back into Utah where the road becomes Utah Highway 30.
- About 10 miles past the state line is a sign for Lucin, a ghost town with no remaining buildings. There are two gravel roads on the right. Take the first one for five miles to Lucin.
- Cross the railroad tracks and continue on the same road for about two miles.
- Turn left and proceed about two miles and then right for 3/4 mile to *Sun Tunnels*. There is a parking area at the end of the road.

Tips for your visit

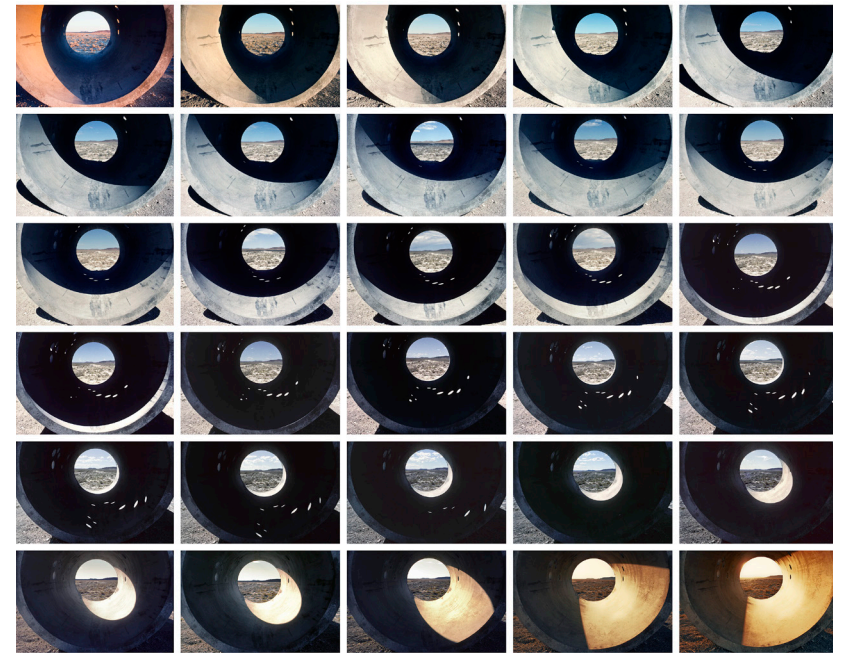
Consider the time of day and the weather. Fill up your gas tank before you go. Consider bringing a camera, a sketchbook, a blanket, sunscreen, lots of water, snacks, sensible shoes, and a hat. As with any trip to the desert, be prepared for unpredictable weather or automobile occurrences. Approach possible flash flood areas with caution. Phone reception may be spotty. In advance of your trip, tell someone where you are going and when to expect your return.

Nancy Holt, the creator of *Sun Tunnels*, welcomed everyone to stop by and experience her earthwork—and to even camp out on her land. “But please,” she asked, “leave everything the way you found it.”

A trip out to *Sun Tunnels* is an unforgettable adventure, but please remember that you are undertaking this journey at your own risk. The University of Utah and the Utah Museum of Fine Arts assume no liability whatsoever for personal injuries or property damages occurring while visiting *Sun Tunnels*.

Nancy Holt
Sun Tunnels, 1973–1976

Self-Guide



Nancy Holt, *Sunlight in Sun Tunnels*, 1976, thirty photographs of sunlight and shadow in one tunnel, photographed every half hour from 6:30 am to 9:00 pm, July 14, 1976. Composite from original 35 mm color transparencies, printed 2010. Purchased with funds from The Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Fund. UMFA2013.1.1 © Nancy Holt, licensed by VAGA, New York.

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Nancy Holt (American, born 1938–2014)

Sun Tunnels

1973–76

Site: Great Basin Desert, Utah

Materials: Concrete, steel, earth

Overall dimensions: 9 feet 3 inches x 68 feet 6 inches x 53 feet

Diagonal length: 86 feet

Each tunnel: 18 feet 1 inch x 9 feet 3 inches diameter

Nancy Holt is most widely known for her large-scale earthwork *Sun Tunnels*; however, she has created artworks in public places all over the world. The artist's interest in light, perspective, time, and space certainly influenced her photographs, films, sculpture, and installation art, but perhaps it is most magnificently illustrated in her earthworks. Earthwork, also known as Land art, emerged in the 1960s and changed the way people thought of art. Not only did it take art out of the gallery and museum, but it also took art out of the market. Many Land art sites are located in remote, uninhabited regions. We are lucky that *Sun Tunnels*, such an influential work of Land art, is within a day's drive from the UMFA.

Sun Tunnels consists of four massive concrete tunnels, each eighteen feet long and nine feet in diameter, laid out in the desert in an open X configuration. On the solstices, the tunnels frame the sun as it passes the horizon at sunrise and sunset. In the top of each tunnel, Holt drilled small holes to form the constellations of Draco, Perseus, Columba, and Capricorn. These holes, and the tunnels themselves, act as frames or lenses through which the visitor can view the surrounding sky and landscape of the Great Basin Desert.

To create her 1978 film *Sun Tunnels*, Holt camped for days on end in the barren desert. Holt's cinematic and photographic documents capture some of the nuances of light and shadow inhabiting the installation over time. But to fully experience this important work of Land art, climb into the tunnels, view the surrounding landscape through the cylindrical frames, and feel the desert air in Utah's Great Basin.



Experiencing *Sun Tunnels*

Walk around *Sun Tunnels*. As you walk, spend some time surveying the tunnels from up close and from a distance. Look through them. Experience the interior of the tunnels and the perforations in them. Listen. Notice the way the changing time of day and weather affect your perception. Look at the view of the surrounding landscape beyond the tunnels. Then look at the same area of landscape through a tunnel. How does the cylindrical frame change your personal experience of the landscape? Do you notice new things about the landscape when looking at a defined viewpoint?

Sun Tunnels responds to the orientation of the earth and celestial bodies. How does the changing angle of the sun affect your perception? As you explore the tunnels, do you feel a different relationship to the earth and sky?

Sun Tunnels is a site-specific work of Land art. The site itself was a very important consideration for the artist. Reflect on your journey to this site. How did traversing a distance of remote, untamed land make you feel? How does this impact the meaning of the work?