

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. Tell someone where you are going and when to expect your return.

A trip out to *Sun Tunnels* is an unforgettable adventure, but please remember that you are undertaking this journey at your own risk. 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 unreliable.

Leave No Trace

Nancy Holt, the creator of *Sun Tunnels*, extended an invitation to stop by and experience the structure—and to even camp on her land. “But please,” she asks, “leave everything the way you found it.”



Sun Tunnels is in the collection of Dia Art Foundation with support from Holt/Smithson Foundation, which furthers the legacies of Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt. The Utah Museum of Fine Arts (UMFA) partners with Holt/Smithson Foundation, Dia Art Foundation, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, and the Center for Land Use Interpretation to further advocate for *Sun Tunnels*.



Find programs, meet-ups, and resources for families at www.umfa.utah.edu/sun-tunnels.

ABOVE IMAGE | Holt shooting the *Sun Tunnels*, 1978. Photo by Lee Deffebach. Courtesy of Haunch of Venison Gallery, London.

Getting to *Sun Tunnels*

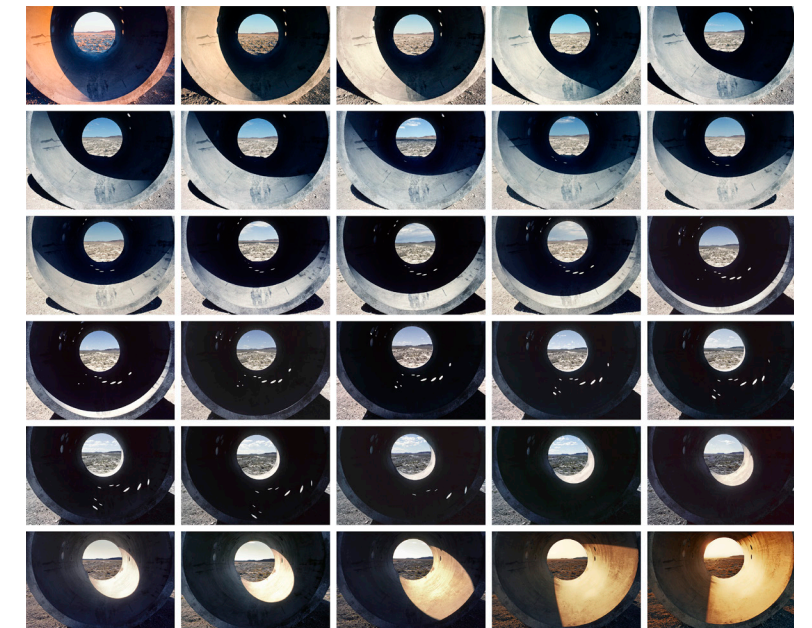


Drive time from Salt Lake City is about 4 hours.

- Take I-80 west from Salt Lake City through Wendover to Oasis, Nevada.
- At Oasis, take Nevada Highway 233 through Montello, Nevada (last gas, water, food, lodgings) back into Utah where the road becomes Utah Highway 30.
- About 8 miles past the state line is a sign for Lucin. There are two gravel roads on the right. Take the first one for five miles to Lucin (an empty town with no remaining buildings).
- 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.

Driving map courtesy of: AGRIC, DIGIT Lab, ESRI / The contents of this map are approximate. UMFA nor the DIGIT Lab are responsible for road closures and conditions which may be encountered using the map. We recommend using these directions as Google Maps may lead you on an unsafe road.

Sun Tunnels Self-Guide



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Nancy HOLT, American, 1938–2014, *Sunlight in Sun Tunnels*, 1976, printed 2012, composite inkjet print from original 35-mm color transparencies, Purchased with funds from the Paul L. and Phyllis C. Wattis Fund, UMFA2013.1.1

Nancy HOLT, *Sun Tunnels*, (1973–1976), concrete, steel and earth, Great Basin Desert, Utah. Overall dimensions: 9 feet 3 inches x 68 feet 6 inches x 53 feet. Collection of Dia Art Foundation with support from Holt/Smithson Foundation. Photograph by Nancy Holt, images courtesy of the artist and Haunch of Venison, London. © Nancy Holt, licensed by VAGA, New York



What is *Sun Tunnels*?

Sun Tunnels is a work of art created by Nancy Holt in 1976. It 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 you can view the surrounding sky and landscape of the Great Basin Desert.

Holt also created a film in 1978 to accompany the artwork. To create her film, *Sun Tunnels*, Holt camped for days in the desert. In Holt's cinematic and photographic documents, she observed nuances of light and shadow in the installation over time.

Why do you think Holt wanted her work to be so far away from developed areas?

ABOVE IMAGES | Nancy HOLT, *Sun Tunnels*, (1973-1976), concrete, steel and earth, Great Basin Desert, Utah. Photographs by Nancy Holt, images courtesy of the artist and Haunch of Venison, London. © Nancy Holt, licensed by VAGA, New York.

The desert site

"The idea for Sun Tunnels became clearer to me while I was in the desert watching the sun rising and setting, keeping the time of the earth. Sun Tunnels can exist only in that particular place—the work evolved out of its site."
 – Nancy Holt "Sun Tunnels." Artforum Vol.15, No.8 (April, 1977)

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 location. Think about the unpopulated land you traveled through, the dry desert air you breathed, or the vast sky overhead.

How did traveling a long distance to this remote place make you feel?

How does this contribute to the meaning of the work for you?

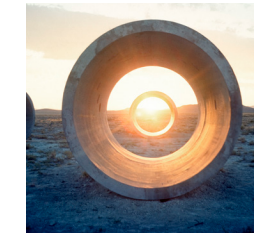
Nancy Holt was one of the pioneering artists working in Land art in the 1960s and 70s and is most widely known for her large-scale artwork, *Sun Tunnels*. However, she has created works in public places all over the world. The artist's interest in light, perspective, time, and space influenced her photographs, films, sculpture, and installation art, but perhaps it is best illustrated in her Land art.

Land art is created using a variety of materials, sometimes natural and sometimes human-made, like concrete, metal, or asphalt. Not simply sculptures situated in nature, earthworks are part of the landscape. They can be quite large and are often created far away from cities in remote places.

BELOW IMAGES | Nancy HOLT, *Sun Tunnels*, (1973-1976), concrete, steel and earth, Great Basin Desert, Utah. Photographs by Nancy Holt, images courtesy of the artist and Haunch of Venison, London. © Nancy Holt, licensed by VAGA, New York.



Explore *Sun Tunnels*



Walk around *Sun Tunnels*. As you walk, spend time looking at the tunnels up close and from a distance. Then look through them. Experience the inside of the tunnels and the holes in them. Feel the difference in temperature inside the tunnels. Listen: notice the way the sounds, light, and shadows change depending on the time of day, weather, or angle of the sun.

What words come to mind as you explore?

Explore the landscape

Look at the view of the surrounding landscape beyond the tunnels. Then look at the same area of landscape through a tunnel. Think about how the round frame changes your view of the landscape. Holt created *Sun Tunnels* to help us understand the vastness of space on a human scale.

Do you notice new things about the landscape when looking through one of the tunnels?

Explore the sky

Sun Tunnels responds to the orientation of the Earth and stars. The changing angle of the sun affect how the artwork looks. With one of the four constellations drilled into the side of each tunnel, the artwork inverts the sky and casts the stars and sun down to Earth.

How does the changing angle of the sun and the projections of the constellations affect your view of Sun Tunnels? How might this change throughout the course of a day, week, month or year?

ABOVE IMAGE | Nancy HOLT, *Sun Tunnels*, (1973-1976), concrete, steel and earth, Great Basin Desert, Utah. Photographs by Nancy Holt, images courtesy of the artist and Haunch of Venison Gallery, London. © Nancy Holt, licensed by VAGA, New York.