

Press Release

Nancy Holt

Mirrors of Light

November 26, 2021–February 5, 2022

Sprüth Magers, Berlin

Sprüth Magers

Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are delighted to announce Nancy Holt's (1938–2014) first solo exhibition at the Berlin gallery. *Mirrors of Light* presents the room-scale installation with the same title, a work from 1973/74 that is crucial to understanding Holt's notion of perceptual experience. Holt's practice navigates the complexities of light as artistic medium, physical reality, and aesthetic concept. It is an architectonic structure that channels projected light into a complex spatial experience.

Mirrors of Light I first featured at Bykert Gallery in New York in 1973 and was shown again at Walter Kelly Gallery in Chicago the following year, though the installation was adapted to each venue. The piece consists of ten circular mirrors, each 24 cm in diameter, mounted in a diagonal line on the wall. A spotlight installed on an adjacent wall points directly at them, causing the refracted light to appear as an inverted diagonal of fragmented ellipses in the gallery space. The result is an experience of doubling, as some of the projected light circles appear again as a re-reflection in the mirrors – as does one's own reflected image. Like so many of Holt's works, the installation enables a changed awareness of the body in space. The participatory aspect is key, as the artist emphasized in a 1980 interview published in Artforum magazine: "A perceptual structure is built into the sculpture. The work can be seen only in durational time—the time it takes to see it from many points of view."

After first engaging visual perception with her telescope-like *Locator* sculptures, Holt set about constructing specific, situational conditions that foregrounded the influence of light on spatial awareness. While *Mirrors of Light I* plays with the proliferation of light reflected in circular mirrors, *Holes of Light* (1973) explores the materiality of shadow using light projected through circular-shaped holes in a central partition wall. Just as the artist was realizing these two works, she was also translating their concepts to the landscape with her iconic *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76) in the Great Basin Desert, Utah. The circle is a recurring shape in Holt's oeuvre, who used it to both direct the gaze and to evoke the continuous movement of celestial bodies.

Nancy Holt (1938–2014) is among the most important figures of the earth, land, and conceptual art movements. A pioneer of site-specific installation and the moving image, Holt redefined the limits of art. She expanded the places where art could be found and embraced the new media of her time. Over five decades, she questioned how we might understand our place in the world, examining sites, systems, and perception. Holt's rich artistic output includes concrete poetry, audio works, film and video, photography, slides, ephemeral gestures, drawings, room-sized installations, artist books, and public sculptures. The exhibition *Nancy Holt: Inside/Outside* opens June 2022 at Bildmuseet in Umeå, Sweden, followed by *Nancy Holt: Locating Perception*, a solo presentation at Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles in September 2022. Other solo exhibitions in 2021/22 include those at the campus galleries of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Western Washington University, both sites of her public sculptures.

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For further information and press inquiries, please contact Felix Lorenz-Wohnhas (felix@spruethmagers.com).