

Press Information

**LAND ART**

14.07.–03.11.2019

Kunsthalle Krems



Nancy Holt, *Sun Tunnels*, 1976, Courtesy of the Holt/Smithson Foundation and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York © Bildrecht, Vienna, 2019

**Opening:** Sat, 13.07.2019, 6 pm  
**Press conference:** Fri, 12.07.2019, 11 am  
**Press photos:** <https://bit.ly/LandArtKunsthalleKrems>

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1969, the year of the Moon landing, also is the year in which Land Art got its name. Conceptually, the new genre was based on the idea that the Earth is an object, a substrate, to draw on. Moon travel also produced the first photographs of the Blue Planet from outside our atmosphere. The Earth becomes a canvas for artists, and the excavator their pen and brush. The earliest examples in particular are informed by a minimalist form vocabulary. Geometric structures are inscribed as monumental drawings on the surface of the world.

One of the significant art movements of the 20th century, Land Art originated in the late 1960s mainly from the USA. Environmental artists turned away from conventional exhibition spaces, turning instead to landscape as the contextual field of their art practice. Works are mostly created with, and from, nature, and dissolve into nature again.

Although Land Art is typically created outdoors in nature, artists soon also brought it to the gallery space as minimalist shapes and installations like piles of sand or circles of stones. Entitled *Earth Works*, the first exhibition opened as early as 1968 in New York gallery of Virginia Dwan. In 1969, it was Gerry Schum who coined the term Land Art to refer to nature-related art projects. He made several documentaries for German TV about land art projects by, mostly, American and also a number of European artists, among them pioneers in the field like Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria, or Robert Smithson.

2019 now marks the 50th anniversary of Land Art. Given the mostly ephemeral and processual character of the works, film and photography have come to be the adequate media for the documentation of the art. In the exhibition, we show two moving image works that depict iconic Land Art projects of the first hour: Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* of 1970, a mud-and-stone spiral piled up by loaders just off the shore of the Great Salt Lake in Utah, as well as Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels*, perforated massive concrete tunnels installed 1976 in the Great Basin Desert in Utah. The classics from the pioneer era of Land Art will be juxtaposed with a contemporary Austrian position. Josef Trattner's "sofa rides" navigate the space of landscape like in his most recent project, which followed the course of the Danube river from Donaueschingen, Germany, all the way to the Black Sea.

Curator: Florian Steininger

Artists exhibited:

Nancy Holt, Gerry Schum, Robert Smithson, Josef Trattner

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON THE ARTISTS

### Nancy Holt

Nancy Holt (b. 1938 in Worcester, Massachusetts, d. 2014 in New York, N.Y.) first graduated in biology before she started working in film, video, installation, and sound art in New York from the 1960s alongside artists like Michael Heizer, Carl Andre, Eva Hesse, Richard Serra, and her husband, Robert Smithson. She is best known for her Earth Works as well as for sculptures and installations in the public realm and counts among the pioneers of Land Art. One year before her death, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Sculpture Center in Hamilton, New Jersey. Her works have been included in collections of museums such as MoMA–Museum of Modern Art or the Whitney Museum of American Art.

### Gerry Schum

Gerry Schum (b. 1938 in Cologne, Germany, d. 1973 in Düsseldorf, Germany) studied at the German Institute for Film and Television in Munich and the German Film and Television Academy Berlin and worked as a cameraman and TV filmmaker in Berlin. In 1969, he developed a TV format entitled *Fernsehgalerie*. It was intended to make the broad audience of national public-service TV familiar with contemporary art. But only two shows were actually broadcast, namely, *Land Art* (1969, Sender Freies Berlin) and *Identifications* (1970, Südwestfunk). Gerry Schum is generally credited with having invented the term “land art.”

### Robert Smithson

Robert Smithson (b. 1938 in Passaic, New Jersey, d. 1973 in Amarillo, Texas) first took his inspiration as a painter and drawing artist from Abstract Expressionism, but soon came to see himself increasingly as an environmental sculptor acting in, and on, the landscape. In 1963, he married fellow-artist Nancy Holt. Smithson is known for his Earth Works *Spiral Jetty* (1970), *Broken Circle/Spiral Hill* (1971), and *Amarillo Ramp* (1973). He is considered a key figure of Land Art. Aged only 35, he died in a plane crash during a film shooting about *Amarillo Ramp*. His works have been included in collections of museums like MoMA–Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Tate Gallery of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art.

### Josef Trattner

Since 2004, Josef Trattner (b. 1955 in Semriach, Styria; lives and works in Vienna and Radlbrunn, Lower Austria) has been traveling European countries like Romania, Bulgaria, or Poland as well as Turkey with his pink foam rubber sofa. The sofa provides a platform, a meeting place where the artist sits down with guests he invites from the cultural scene for conversations about life, community, and culture. It becomes a social sculpture in the city and in the landscape. In 2016, Trattner went on what he called a “sofa ride” down the Danube River, from the Black Forest to the Black Sea. One sofa landing place along the way also was in Krems. The *Land Art* exhibition at the Kunsthalle Krems presents his *Donau-Sofafahrt* project with film and photo documentation. In the Dominican Church in downtown Krems, Josef Trattner is currently showing foam-rubber installations in an exhibition already opened on May 26 and running through October 13, 2019.

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### OPENING

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### PRESS CONFERENCE

Fri, 12.07.2019, 11 am

### PRESS PHOTOS

<https://bit.ly/LandArtKunsthalleKrems>

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### OPENING HOURS

Tue–Sun, Mon when holiday

From 10 am to 6 pm

### ADMISSION

Adults € 10

Reduced € 9

Family ticket € 18

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