

ROBERT SMITHSON

Casting a Glance: Dancing With Smithson
Curated by Lisa Le Feuvre

8 November 2025 – 24 January 2026
1120 Seward Street, Los Angeles, California 90038
Opening Reception: 8 November 2025, 6-8 pm



Robert Smithson gathering material for Nonsite "Line of Wreckage"
Bayonne, New Jersey (1968) Photograph: Nancy Holt

Robert Smithson with Leonor Antunes, Nairy Baghramian, Daniel Boyd, Tony Cragg, Tacita Dean, Pierre Huyghe, An-My Lê, Steve McQueen, Julie Mehretu, Ana Mendieta, Delcy Morelos, Bruce Nauman, Gabriel Orozco, Giuseppe Penone, Tavares Strachan, Álvaro Urbano, Adrián Villar Rojas, and James Welling

In 1968 Robert Smithson declared: "A great artist can make art by simply casting a glance." This exhibition takes him at his word. *Casting a Glance: Dancing with Smithson* invites eighteen artists to join him on the floor as partners who resist, improvise, and extend the rhythm of his thinking.

Casting a Glance tracks Smithson's trajectory from his early 1960s drawings that confront the crumbling ideals of European Modernism with a queer sensibility to his searing critiques of industrial capitalism and attention to geological timescales, positioning him as both provocateur and visionary. Smithson called for artists to infiltrate corporations, championed the agency of all earth-beings, choosing the exhausted edges of suburbia over charismatic metropolitan centers. His innovative conception of the site/Nonsite dialectic, his redefinition of what sculpture could be, and his conviction that art is a philosophical encounter with the Earth's surface converge in this vibrant dance among the artists on view.

Rarely seen works by Smithson — chosen in dialogue with the participating artists — capture his restless energy. His drawings of landmark earthworks, pseudo-minimalist sculptures, references to the occult and the erotic, sit alongside renderings of imagined islands and material experiments. Smithson asked urgent questions about place, decay, and the fictions of permanence. *Mirror Displacement Indoors* (1969), colloquially known as "Dead Tree," anchors the exhibition. It is comprised of an uprooted tree, with leaves and root ball intact, and double-sided mirrors inserted into the tangle of roots and branches. Over time the tree dries, the leaves fall, the earth falls from the roots, while the fixed structure of the mirrors remain stable. Decay and entropy are key concepts for Smithson, and are threads running through the exhibition.

The eighteen artists gathered here both challenge and align with Smithson's art and ideas. Tony Cragg's *In No Time* (2018) joins works by Leonor Antunes and Álvaro Urbano in a knot of arboreal forms, extending Smithson's fascination with trees and their mirrored lives. Delcy Morelos's grounded forms quietly speak to An-My Lê's charged landscape, which, in turn, suggests a kinship to Smithson's imagined islands. James Welling's *Barbizon* (2025) channels Smithson's dismissive obsession with constructed landscapes, while Giuseppe Penone's *Geometria nelle mani – ovale* (2005) stands in dialogue with Smithson's reclining, decaying tree. Ana Mendieta's earthworks resonate with Smithson's *Hypothetical Continents*, with both artists employing the photographic image to make their temporal sculptures immutable.

Smithson's speculative crystal universes are echoed in Pierre Huyghe's evocation of half-million-year-old selenite, while Tavares Strachan's redefinition of polar exploration rub against Smithson's mapping of New Jersey as a different kind of elsewhere. A rarely seen mirror table sculpture from Smithson's studio supports three hand scaled sculptures by Gabriel Orozco, reflecting the continuity of these mirrored surfaces into the present.

Nairy Baghramian's *Jupon Suspendu* (2017) folds her sculptural lexicon into the conversation, gently interrupting Smithson's hand-built Minimalism. Daniel Boyd's collages double back on Hercules, pushing against Smithson's conflation of camp bodies with classical statuary, while two scores by Bruce Nauman ask for a hired dancer to clear a room and telephone the artist. Adrián Villar Rojas's *Return the World X* (2012) shares time with Smithson's *Partially Buried Woodshed* (1970). Julie Mehretu's *Six Bardos: Luminous Appearance* (2018) which meditates on time, memory, and transcendence, is placed in dialogue with the atmospheric veils of color in Smithson's 1963 painting *Tear*.

Steve McQueen's *Broken Column* (2014) speaks directly to Smithson's acute attention to materiality and material history, while Tacita Dean's *Salt (A Collection)* (2013–14) from the Great Salt Lake slips beside Smithson's own drawings of *Spiral Jetty* (1970); both charting the eponymous film. Three moving image works complement the exhibition. *East/Coast West Coast*, made with Nancy Holt in 1969, is an improvised dialogue in which Holt and Smithson perform the stereotypical positions of American East Coast and West Coast artists of the late 1960s. Smithson described the thirty-five-minute film *Spiral Jetty* (1970) as "a set of disconnections, a bramble of stabilized fragments taken from things obscure and fluid, ingredients trapped in a succession of frames, a stream of viscosities both still and moving" – a phrase that reverberates across and through *Casting A Glance. Swamp*, from 1971, also made with Holt, is shot in the swamplands of New Jersey, Smithson's home state, a location he frequently returned to in his work.

About Lisa Le Feuvre

Lisa Le Feuvre is a curator, writer, and editor. In 2018 she became inaugural Executive Director of Holt/Smithson Foundation, the artist foundation dedicated to the legacies of artists Nancy Holt (1938–2014) and Robert Smithson (1938–1973).

Le Feuvre has curated more than seventy-five exhibitions as an institutional and independent curator, edited over thirty books and journals, spoken at 150 museums and universities across the world, and has published more than 125 essays and interviews with artists. Her recent curated exhibitions include *For What It's Worth: Value Systems in Art since 1960* at The Warehouse, Dallas, (2024, curated with Thomas Feulmer); *Robert Smithson / Teresita Fernández* at SITE SANTA FE, New Mexico (2024, curated with Fernández); at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio *Nancy Holt: Power Systems* and *Maria Hupfield: The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* (2025); and, on display through next year at the Farnsworth Art Museum, *Joan Jonas: An Island Departure* (with Jaime DeSimone). Le Feuvre's recent publications include the introduction to the compendium *Great Women Sculptors* (Phaidon Press) and texts on the artists Henry Moore, Kapwani Kiwanga, Delcy Morelos, Charlotte Moth, Lucia Pizzani, Robert Rauschenberg and Medardo Rosso.

About Holt/Smithson Foundation

Nancy Holt (1938–2014) and Robert Smithson (1938–1973) transformed the world of art and ideas. Holt/Smithson Foundation develops their distinctive creative legacies and is the hub of all things Holt and Smithson. Holt and Smithson recalibrated the limits of art, changing what art can be and where art can be found. Their art, writings, and ideas built the ground from which contemporary art has grown. Collaborating with artists, writers, thinkers, and institutions the Foundation realizes exhibitions, publishes books, initiates artist commissions, programs educational events, encourage research, and develops collections globally from its headquarters in New Mexico. Holt/Smithson Foundation was willed into being by Nancy Holt in 2014. We plan to terminate by 2038, a century after Nancy Holt (1938–2014) and Robert Smithson (1938–1973) were born. Learn more at holtsmithsonfoundation.org.

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