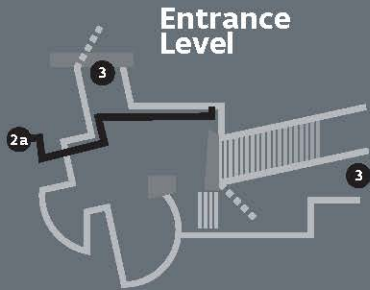


# LEARNING GUIDE Spring 2025

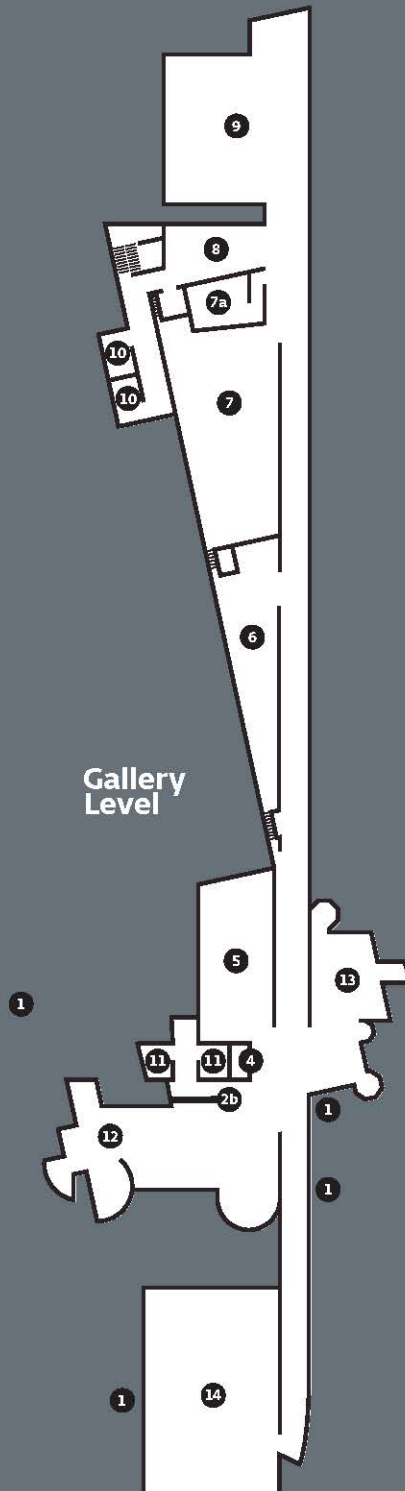
wexner center for the arts AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

# GALLERY MAP



## Map Key

- 1 Outpost Office\*
  - 2a Nancy Holt\*
  - 2b Nancy Holt
  - 3 Entrance
  - 4 The Box
  - 5 Gallery A
  - 6 Gallery B
  - 7 Gallery C
  - 7a Screening Room
  - 8 Reading Room
  - 9 Gallery D
  - 10 Bathrooms/Nancy Holt
  - 11 Bathrooms
  - 12 Heirloom Café
  - 13 Wexner Center Store
  - 14 Film/Video Theater
- \* Outdoor Locations



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# WHAT IS THE LEARNING GUIDE?



The Learning Guide is an educational resource intended to share information and inspire engagement with the exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Artworks are on view around, in front of, and on the building; in the lobby area; and within our five gallery spaces.

Around the building, visitors are invited to engage with Outpost Office's four architectural furniture pieces, *Color Block No. 2*. Nancy Holt's sculptural installation *Pipeline* wraps the building's exterior architecture and descends into the lower lobby. Video documentation of three of Maria Hupfield's performances is featured in The Box, an intimate gallery dedicated to experimental short films. Gallery A features the exhibition *The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* by Maria Hupfield, and Galleries B, C, D, and the Reading Room present the exhibition *Nancy Holt: Power Systems*.



This guide focuses on key themes in each exhibition. It considers them through analysis of featured artworks and prompts for thinking or discussion.

The guide also includes a glossary of key terms, highlighted in **bold** throughout the text, and activities to extend the experience beyond the galleries. The Learning Guide can be paired with resources featured in the Reading Room (located between Galleries C and D) for deeper engagement. Additional public programs accompany the exhibitions, some of which can be found on page 35. Check out the Wexner Center calendar at [www.wexarts.org/calendar](http://www.wexarts.org/calendar) to learn more.



[Opposite] Nancy Holt, *Missoula Ranch Locators*, 1972 (still). 16mm film, color, silent; 8:56 mins. Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.

[Left] Nancy Holt, *Sole Source*, 1983. Marlay Park, Dublin, Ireland. 2-inch diameter galvanized steel pipe, valve, and water, 10 x 16 x 16 ft. Rotation of valve wheel turns the flow of water on and off. When activated, the water flows into a historic eighteenth-century ha-ha ditch.

[Above] Maria Hupfield, Olivia Shortt, and SA Smythe, *Difference of a Shared Spirit*, 2024. A performative activation of Hupfield's installation *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* as part of the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art: *Precarious Joys* at 32 Lisgar St and Park. Image courtesy of the artist and the Toronto Biennial of Art. Photo: LF Documentation.

# THE PLAZA

## **Outpost Office: Color Block No. 2**

November 14, 2023–April 6, 2025

Curator Kelly Kivland

In 2023, Outpost Office was commissioned to respond to the architecture of the Wexner Center for the Arts by producing a series of four works titled *Color Block No. 2 (1–4)*. These are four large-scale, modular furniture units that activate various in-between spaces at the center. The Wexner Center building is one of the first realized examples of deconstructivism in the United States because it reimagined a historical campus armory building colliding with a modern grid. The center opened in 1989 and was designed by architects Peter Eisenman and Richard Trott.

Notice the similarities and differences between Outpost Office’s **installations** and the architecture of the center. These installations change the way we experience a building through context—reframing spaces, even those that we think we know well, into something new. People are encouraged to interact with the pieces by sitting, relaxing, and engaging with them, rather than simply viewing them, changing the dynamic usually experienced in a gallery or museum.

- Are the colors in the same family, or are they opposites?
- Do the shapes mimic forms seen in the Wexner Center’s design or do they contrast its angles and grids?



Outpost Office, *Color Block No. 2 (2 of 4)*, installation view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 2023. Photo: Phil Arnold.

### **Outpost Office**

Ashley Bigham (b. 1986, Cornersville, Tennessee) and Erik Herrmann (b. 1984, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania), both Associate Professors of Architecture at The Ohio State University's Knowlton School, founded Outpost Office in 2013. Outpost Office designs installations and buildings that challenge architecture's tendencies to build up a space with permanent structures. Outpost Office designs temporary structures and installations, including an award-winning series of robotic paintings called *Drawing Fields*, that reimagine engagement in public spaces.

# BUILDING EXTERIOR AND LOBBY

## ***Nancy Holt: Pipeline***

August 16, 2024–July 27, 2025

Curator Lisa Le Feuvre

- What is a **system**?
- What systems do you rely on in your everyday life?
- How do they work?

*Pipeline* is one of several works featured in the exhibition *Nancy Holt: Power Systems*. Holt created *Pipeline* on a 1986 visit to Alaska, after she observed the Trans-Alaska Pipeline cutting across the natural landscape. This system for extracting oil was imperfect, causing oil to spill across previously undisturbed natural areas that were inhabited by Indigenous peoples. *Pipeline* emerges from the exterior of the building, where it originates from within the landscape of the existing **self-sustaining** installation of Ohio native plants *Site set-aside* (2017–ongoing) by artist Michael Mercil. It travels inside through the upper to the lower lobby, slowly dripping an oil-like substance from a crack in the metal. We might ask ourselves, where does the oil go and what impact might that have on other living things? Is our reliance on oil worth the environmental cost?

*Pipeline* is the only work in the *Power Systems* exhibition that is not a **functional** system. While it appears to link into the architectural framework of the Wexner Center for the Arts, the oil that drips from it is not sourced from the **infrastructure** of the building. Despite this illusion, the presence of the oil causes us to question where in our local Ohio landscape the oil might be derived from.





Nancy Holt, *Pipeline*, 1986 (detail of indoor view). Steel and oil. Installation view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 2024.



Nancy Holt at the site of *Sky Mound* in 1985. I-A Landfill, Hackensack Meadowlands, New Jersey. Photographer yet to be identified.

**Nancy Holt** (b. 1938, Worcester, Massachusetts; d. 2014, New York, New York) was a member of the **Earth** and **Conceptual art** movements. Holt's rich artistic output spans **concrete poetry**, audio works, film and video, photography, **ephemeral** gestures, drawings, room-sized installations, earthworks, artists' books, and public **sculpture** commissions. Holt is most known for her **site-specific** installations, including *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76), a configuration of concrete tubes aligned with the solstices in the Great Basin Desert of Utah.

## EXHIBITION SUMMARY

# ***Maria Hupfield: The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)***

February 8–June 29, 2025

Curator Lisa Le Feuvre

Maria Hupfield's exhibition *The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* (2024) is a continuation of her work at the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art titled *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* (2024). This exhibition is composed of a room-sized sculptural installation filled with objects, platforms, and structures. The installation responds to the Wexner Center for the Arts' architecture and the layout of Gallery A, which takes an atypical shape due to the 12 ¼-degree angle around which the building is designed. The objects in the installation are intended to be activated within a set of guidelines. Visitors are encouraged to touch the dark-gray felt objects shelved at the edge of the room, while the light-gray felt objects on the center platform are only intended to be touched and used by the artist during in-gallery performances. The activation of the installation and the objects within it creates an interactive art experience that engages in dialogue with the visitor. It also seeks to **decolonize** the systems and structures of the museum, where art objects are traditionally protected from touch and engagement and displayed outside of their original contexts. The installation is a living sculpture, changing and evolving each time someone interacts with it.

The exhibition features a low central wooden platform adorned with painted neon-yellow graphics. On top of and suspended above the platform are **Jingle Scrolls**, large spirals of light-gray industrial felt edged with tin metal cones and bells. Wooden shelves with yellow graphic stripes are located throughout the space, holding smaller dark-gray felt objects adorned with jingle cones and bells. A video of Hupfield's performance at the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art is projected in the gallery, and three images are wheatpasted on the right-hand wall.



[Left] Maria Hupfield activating her work *Jingle Scroll*. Image courtesy of the artist. Photo: LF Documentation.

[Right] Maria Hupfield, *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)*, 2024 (detail). Industrial felt, bells, tin jingles, cotton fabric, and polyester thread, dimensions variable. Installation view at the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art: *Precarious Joys*.



**Maria Hupfield** (b. 1975, Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada) is a Toronto-based artist who merges **performance art**, installation, sculpture, and design. Her work draws from Indigenous First Nations storytelling traditions through art, scholarship, collaboration, and social justice. Hupfield is Martin clan and an off-reservation member of the Anishinaabe Nation belonging to Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario. She is an assistant professor of Indigenous digital arts and performance and a Canadian research chair of transdisciplinary Indigenous art at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Along with her husband, artist Jason Lujan, Hupfield is co-owner of Native Art Department International, an artist collective that seeks to work outside traditional notions of identity.

# THE BOX

## Maria Hupfield

*Maria Hupfield: The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* travels with a presentation of three **performance documents** in The Box. Hupfield's artistic **practice** focuses on collaboration—sometimes her thinking partners are other artists, writers, and musicians, and at other times they are objects, histories, and stories. In all of her performances, Hupfield works with sculptures as props, animating them to explore how objects develop agency and biography.

In *4 Bodies 1 Screen*, made in 2020 during quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hupfield invites artists T.J. Dedeaux-Norris, Ayana Evans, and Esther Neff to consider the relationship of the body to the screen and how we can build community across distant locations and borders. The four artists improvise from a score in four parts, thinking together via the screen.

*The Silver-Tongued Taste of Progress* (2018) considers relationships between artists and collectors by working with sound tools—handmade objects that are worn, carried, and activated through performance. Silver tongue is a slang term for settlers who negotiated treaties with Indigenous peoples only to break them as they sought and enacted their inequitable idea of progress. The performance responds to an object named the *Progress Vase*, which was created for the 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia. Made of silver, it is formed of cast figures that replicate inaccurate American origin stories.

In *The One Who Keeps on Giving* (2017), commissioned by The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Hupfield develops a performance with her siblings inspired by their mother's 1974 painting of the shores of Parry Sound in eastern Ontario. The title *The One Who Keeps on Giving* is an English translation of their mother's Anishinaabe name, and the painting is signed Peggy Miller—the anglicized version of her name.



Maria Hupfield, *The Silver-Tongued Taste of Progress*, 2018 (still). Documentation of a performance at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2018.



Maria Hupfield, *The One Who Keeps on Giving*, 2017 (still). Two-channel video. Performance with Hupfield family members Deanne, Johna, John, and Maria. Courtesy of the artist.

- ↘ Consider... how does our relationship to an object shift as it is presented and activated through display, performance, and video? How does its story evolve?

## GALLERY A

# Maria Hupfield

## Storytelling

- Take in all of the elements of this installation.
- What stories do you imagine it might be telling?

Maria Hupfield's artwork is grounded in Indigenous storytelling. *The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* recalls a well-known creature, the Fabulous Panther (*Mishibizhiw*), mythologized in Indigenous cultures of the Great Lakes region. The Fabulous Panther—one of many—is said to live in Lake Superior, the world's largest freshwater lake by surface area. Its form is that of a monstrous panther with spines along its back and a long tail. It is called by many names in the Ojibwe language, including *Mishibizhiw*. It is incredibly powerful, causing huge waves and dangerous swirling whirlpools when not appeased by offerings. The Fabulous Panther embodies power and energy but can also protect those considered worthy. It is a symbol of Indigenous cultural resilience.

The story of the Fabulous Panther is told through sculptural spirals of gray industrial felt. Hupfield frequently uses this material in her artworks, transforming everyday objects into soft, wearable sculptures. The spirals are adorned with metal tin jingle cones and bells, another common material in Hupfield's practice. The metal jingles typically adorn dresses worn by women to perform jingle dances in Ojibwe culture. The jingles are traditionally made from the rolled tops of tobacco cans (tobacco is a favorite offering to the Fabulous Panther). The jingle and the dance that activates it symbolize healing and protection in Indigenous culture.

The design of this installation, like many of Hupfield's previous installations, is illuminated by highlighter-yellow stripes and designs. What do they remind you of? Perhaps the neon-yellow stripes that mark the lanes of a road or caution tape that lines a hazardous site? Where would you find this color in nature?



Maria Hupfield, *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)*, 2024. Industrial felt, bells, tin jingles, cotton fabric, and polyester thread, dimensions variable. Installation view at the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art: *Precarious Joys*.

The color itself can convey many meanings and feelings, from the cautionary, to the electric, to the playful.

Together, the objects in Hupfield's installation tell many stories that continue to unfold as the work lives in the galleries. They speak of Indigenous cultural strength and history, of power and energy, creative innovation and playfulness, and healing and protection.

Maria Hupfield and Lisa Le Feuvre thank University of Toronto art history professor and curator Mikinaak Migwans for their sharing and guidance on the cultural knowledge of the Panther.

- Consider your own interactions with this work.
- What stories do you add to this artwork?
- What do you take away for yourself?

# EXHIBITION SUMMARY

## ***Nancy Holt: Power Systems***

February 8–June 29, 2025

Curator Lisa Le Feuvre

In the 1980s Nancy Holt created a series of artworks focused on the technical, ecological, and social conditions created by human-made environments. Called System Works, each artwork is designed as an installation that responds and adapts to its location, also called its **site**, with the intent to expose the systems that people rely on to function in their everyday lives. The exhibition *Nancy Holt: Power Systems* includes four of her System Works: *Pipeline*, which will remain on view in the Wexner Center's exterior and lower lobby through July 2025; *Heating System*; *Electrical Lighting for Reading Room*; and *Electrical System*. In addition to these System Works, photographs, a video sculpture, films, and drawings bring together a fuller picture of Nancy Holt's thinking around our relationship with systems.

Prior to her exploration of the built environment, Nancy Holt created artworks that explored interconnected networks in nature, including the movement of celestial bodies and the passage of time. Some of these artworks were located outdoors in dialogue with the landscape, taking the form of **earthworks**, while others were designed for urban environments and parks.

In all her artworks, Holt was interested in exploring how we observe the world around us. She described herself as a **perception** artist. Her first artworks were made in the late 1960s and took the form of concrete poetry, exploring how language is a tool of perception. Soon after, in 1971 she made her first sculptures from plumbing pipe welded into a T-shape. These Locators, as she called them, draw attention to the *how* of seeing as much as the *what* of seeing. In *Power Systems*, Holt's exploration of natural and human-made sources of power through functional artworks asks us to reconsider the concept of power.





Nancy Holt, *Electrical System (for Thomas Edison)*, 1982. Steel conduit, lighting and electrical fixtures, light bulbs, electrical wire, light switch, and electricity, 30 x 22 x 11 ft. 6 in. Installation view at John Weber Gallery, New York, 1982.

- **What power do we use?**
- **Where does it come from?**
- **Who controls it?**

## GALLERY B

# Nancy Holt

## Perception and Systems

The works in this gallery include drawings, photographs, and a video sculpture that explore Nancy Holt's thinking around perception and systems. Several of these artworks were completed and installed, such as *Waterwork* (1983), *Sole Source* (1983), and *Ventilation System* (1985–92). Others, such as *Sky Mound* (1984–), a reclamation of a New Jersey landfill, and *High Voltage* (1982), a project for the Brooklyn Bridge, were never fully realized.

A series of photographs featured here titled *Time Outs* (1985) takes a different view on systems and our relationships with them. *Time Outs* is a series of thirty-two black-and-white photographs of football games being broadcast on television. The images are grainy and blurry, emphasizing the fact that we are viewing the scenes through several intermediary devices, including the television and the artist's camera.

*Time Outs* is concerned not only with our awareness and understanding of the game, but also with the act of the game itself and the systems around it. Football, and sports more broadly, are highly organized systems. They are played by specific rules, by and for specific communities, in specific locations. There is a competition where someone wins and someone loses. Power is also at play here, but this time it isn't environmental; it is physical, monetary, and social. Football is a particularly strong symbol of community in our own city, Columbus, Ohio. *Time Outs* shows us that everything that we interact with in life is structured by a system, based on all different types of power, and established among diverse communities. Ultimately, systems can work to bring us together.



Nancy Holt, *Time Outs*, 1985. Thirty-two inkjet prints on archival rag paper from original 35mm transparencies, 18 x 27 in.

# GALLERY C

## Nancy Holt

### *Heating System*

- Wonder... what is this system designed to do?  
Turn the crank and find out.

*Heating System* (1984–85) is a **site-responsive** installation that fills an entire gallery with a network of metal pipes, crank wheels, and gauges. Like Holt's other System Works, this artwork is configured differently each time it is installed. The pipes are filled with hot water sourced directly from the Wexner Center's own water supply. The hot water in the pipes—a common system of heating in industrial buildings—makes them warm to the touch and increases the temperature of the gallery space.

Visitors are invited to interact with the work by turning a gate valve that increases or decreases the flow of hot water, affecting the temperature in the gallery. A metered drawing keeps a record of this activity, registering the temperature and humidity of the sculpture as it is changed by visitors over time. Nancy Holt described how she liked the idea of a sculpture making its own drawing.

Functionality was important to Holt in these works. We are made acutely aware that the system is functional as we feel the warmth circulating through the space.

The winding pipes and loops of *Heating System* prompt us to question the functionality of the design. Why might the pipes be placed in this orientation? Although the hot-water heating system in the pipes is functional, the playful design isn't necessary in order for them to produce heat.



# SCREENING ROOM

## Nancy Holt

### Films

#### *Sun Tunnels* (1978)

In her 1978 film *Sun Tunnels*, Nancy Holt documents the process of constructing her most famous artwork, *Sun Tunnels*, from 1973 to 1976. *Sun Tunnels* is a large-scale sculpture made of four concrete tubes aligned with the sunrise and sunset on the summer and winter solstices. The tubes each have smaller holes drilled through their sides, replicating the star patterns of four constellations. The 26-minute film shows each step in the construction process, beginning with the survey of the site in the Great Basin Desert of Utah. The film follows the many construction crews, engineers, and contractors who worked on the project, emphasizing the amount of planning and teamwork involved to execute the work as well as its huge scale. The artist herself makes an appearance, directing the construction crews during the installation.

Once the construction is complete, the film documents the work through various times of day and seasons, including the solstices, during which the tunnels align perfectly with the sun. The film is a record of the work's creation, a documentation of the labor that sculpture entails, and a way to experience the sculpture for those who cannot travel to its remote desert location.

- ↘ Consider... how do you experience *Sun Tunnels* through this film?



Nancy Holt, *Sun Tunnels*, 1978 (still). 16mm film, color, sound; 26:31 mins. Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.



Nancy Holt, *Revolve*, 1977 (still). Digitized video, black and white, sound; 77 mins. Distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York and Video Data Bank, Chicago.

### ***Revolve* (1977)**

In *Revolve*, Nancy Holt interviews her friend, the writer and filmmaker Dennis Wheeler (1948–1977), about his experience battling cancer. Holt stands off camera, prompting Wheeler with questions about his diagnosis and mental state during his treatment. She places Wheeler as both the narrative subject of the film and an object of perception, using three different cameras to show him from various viewpoints as he recounts his experience. The cameras circle around Wheeler, whose leukemia was in remission at the time of the filming in 1976, as he recounts the various stages and systems of his illness, cycling from diagnosis to treatment to healing. Holt's revolving camerawork and repetition of key moments of dialogue encourage us to take a multifaceted view of Wheeler's story as well, considering what it might mean to live with and beyond a life-changing experience.

- **Discuss...** how does changing the perspective of the camera influence the story being told in this interview?

# READING ROOM

## **Nancy Holt**

### *Electrical Lighting for Reading Room*

- **Pull the switch.**  
**How do you feel when you turn on the light?**

*Electrical Lighting for Reading Room* was created for the 1985 Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition *The Artist as Social Designer: Aspects of Public Urban Art Today*, which presented documentation of outdoor artworks. This installation is made of standard industrial materials and is both a sculpture and a site for gathering.

Like *Electrical System*, this work channels the electricity from the Wexner Center for the Arts to power individual light bulbs. Each bulb can be turned on or off by visitors via a pull chain, allowing people to illuminate their own space for reading. *Electrical Lighting for Reading Room* is installed in the Wexner Center's own Reading Room; the matching name for the space and title of this work were a serendipitous coincidence. Holt's self-directed, interactive installation also reflects the intent of the Reading Room, which encourages visitors to engage in the exhibitions at their own pace and explore resources in dialogue with the artwork currently on view.

- **If you could design an interactive installation for a public space, what would you design?**
- **How would people interact with it?**





Nancy Holt, *Electrical Lighting for Reading Room*, 1985. Electrical conduit, electrical wire, light bulbs, chains, steel cages, and electricity, 16 ft. x 24 ft. x 12 ft. Installation view of Nancy Holt / *Inside Outside* at Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden, 2022. Image courtesy of Bildmuseet. Photo: Mikael Lundgren.

## HINT

Explore the restrooms around the corner from the Reading Room to encounter another installation by Nancy Holt, titled *Visual Sound Zone: Washroom, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center*. This 6-minute audio recording recounts the details of a run-down washroom in which the piece was originally installed. In addition to the audio, you can read the score. Holt was interested in exploring how the way we describe the world around us influences the way we understand our surroundings.

- **How does the description of the original washroom interact with the architecture of the Wexner Center for the Arts?**

## GALLERY D

# Nancy Holt

## *Electrical System*

Nancy Holt produced several versions of *Electrical System*, a sculptural installation of a field of illuminated light bulbs supported by a grid of metal conduit tubing. *Electrical System*, like *Heating System*, is a **channel system** not a **production system**. It doesn't produce electricity; it harnesses it from the building itself, which in turn directs power from the Columbus power grid.

Holt was interested in revealing the mechanisms behind human-made systems. She hoped to expose the journey of raw materials, which are extracted from the earth and repurposed as fuel for our built environment. She said, "With electricity, the energy is being produced at a generating plant by plutonium, coal, or oil. The titles of my first one, *Electrical System (for Thomas Edison)* (1982), alludes to the name of the New York City generating station, Con Edison. The title turns one's mine to basic electricity, both in its discovery and in its generation. From deep within the earth, from the transformation of natural substances, energy is being produced, and this energy in the form of electricity travels through buried pipes and conduits into the walls of buildings."<sup>1</sup> Because we don't see these processes and have always lived with electricity, we take them for granted. Through her System Works, Holt asks us to question our indiscriminate use of energy and natural resources. Further, she asks us to consider who holds the power more broadly, not only to control the systems themselves, but to make the decisions that power our society.

1 Joan Marter, "Systems: A Conversation with Nancy Holt," *Sculpture* magazine 32, no. 8 (October 2013), <https://sculpturemagazine.art/systems-a-conversation-with-nancy-holt/>.



[Above and Left] Nancy Holt, *Electrical System*, 1982. Steel conduit, lighting and electrical fixtures, light bulbs, electrical wire, and electricity, 45 x 40 x 9 ft. 2 in. Installation view of Nancy Holt: *Locating Perception* at Sprüth Magers, Los Angeles, 2022. Photos: Robert Wedemeyer.

- **Consider, how many human-made systems have you used today?**
- **What sources of power do they require?**
- **What actions might you do differently to reduce your environmental footprint?**

# Dialogues between the Art of Nancy Holt and Maria Hupfield

Maria Hupfield and Nancy Holt create artworks that look quite different from one another, yet they have much in common through the ways in which they consider our relationship to the world around us. Both artists are engaged in **systems thinking**. They gather many elements together to build something greater than the sum of its parts. Each element in the system has a role to play and impacts other things around it. Both artists create systems that work within a set of guidelines. They are limited/constrained by factors such as material, space, availability of resources, or rules set forth by the artist themselves. Their installations are also built with the viewer in mind; they are only complete when activated by someone else. These artists ask us to consider how systems work, what powers them, how systems exclude and include, and to acknowledge our own place within them.

## ○————— **CONNECTING THEMES** —————○

### **Power as a physical, social, and spiritual concept**

What types of power are there?

Where does power come from and who controls it?

What power do you hold?

### **The impact of design**

How can design shape our interactions with space?

Why would an artist choose to use industrial materials?

How do objects acquire meaning? How does that meaning change when an object is in dialogue with other objects?

### **The social dynamic of systems**

How do systems shape our relationships with one another?

How does your identity influence your place within a system?

How do systems impact decision-making?

Can you ever be outside of a system?



Nancy Holt, *Pipeline*, 1986 (detail of indoor view). Steel and oil. Installation view at the Wexner Center for the Arts, 2024.



Maria Hupfield, Olivia Shortt, and SA Smythe, *Difference of a Shared Spirit*, 2024. A performative activation of Hupfield's installation *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)* as part of the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art: *Precarious Joys*. Image courtesy of the artist and the Toronto Biennial of Art. Photo: LF Documentation.

- Does viewing these two exhibitions together change the way you think about them individually?
- How does being invited to touch an artwork in a museum make you feel?
- What does it mean to challenge a system?



Nancy Holt, *Electrical System*, 1982 (detail). Steel conduit, lighting and electrical fixtures, light bulbs, electrical wire, and electricity. Installation view of *Nancy Holt: Light and Language* at Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford, Ireland, 2021. Photo: Jed Niezgoda.



Maria Hupfield, *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)*, 2024 (detail). Industrial felt, bells, tin jingles, cotton fabric, and polyester thread, dimensions variable. Installation view at the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art: *Precarious Joys*.

Scan the QR code to view complete checklists for the exhibitions discussed in this Learning Guide.



# GUIDED ACTIVITY

## Map Your Inner System

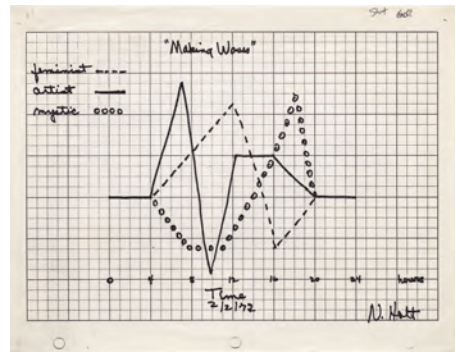
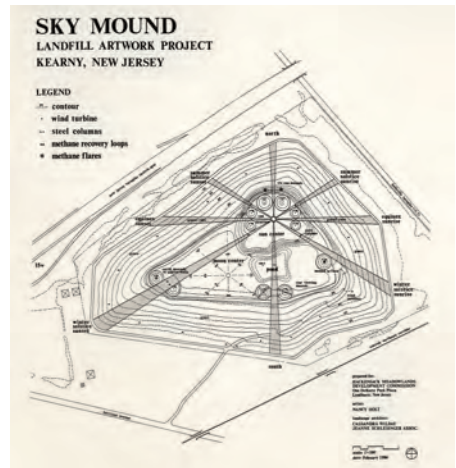
Both Nancy Holt's and Maria Hupfield's works make us consider how we observe and engage with the world around us as well as how they impact us. In this exercise, take a moment to reflect on how you engage in the environments you inhabit. Create a map of your inner systems.

### DRAW A SHAPE IN THE CENTER OF A PAGE.

In this shape, answer the first question in a few words or less. After you've answered that question, add a layer around the first shape and respond to the next question inside that new layer. Continue this process until you've reached the last question.

- Who are you?
- Who are your neighbors?
- What do you do in your day-to-day?
- What systems—physical, social, or spiritual—do you rely on?
- What communities do these systems bring you closer to?
- What is a rule you follow every day?
- How do you choose joy?
- Where does your power come from?
- What scares you?
- Do you have a secret? Will you share it?
- Where are you going? What are you looking forward to?

**WHEN DONE, DESCRIBE YOUR INNER SYSTEM TO A FRIEND OR GROUP.**



[Top] Nancy Holt, *Original Site Plan for Sky Mound*, 1986. Blueprint, 35 x 41 in.

[Above] Nancy Holt, *Making Waves*, 1972. Photocopy, 8 1/2 x 11 in.



# GLOSSARY

**Biimskojiwan:** Translates to *whirlpools* in Anishinaabe language.

**channel system:** A system that redirects energy from another, connected system.

**Conceptual art:** An artistic movement of the 1960s that emphasized the importance of the idea behind a work of art, its concept, as more important than its physical form. Conceptual art can be performance based, ephemeral, or use unconventional art materials. The movement has roots in Dada art of the 1920s—when Marcel Duchamp established that any object could be considered art if an artist deemed it so. Many other art movements, including Minimalism, Performance art, Earth art, Fluxus, and Arte Povera, are offshoots of this movement. Well-known Conceptual artists working in the US and Europe at this time include Eleanor Antin, Joseph Beuys, Stanley Brown, Joseph Kosuth, Yayoi Kusama, Sol LeWitt, Yoko Ono, Adrian Piper, Robert Rauschenberg, Elaine Sturtevant, and many others.

**concrete poetry:** Poems that combine design and meaning by using words, letters, typefaces, space, patterns, shapes, and other elements.

**decolonization:** The process of undoing colonial control of a region or people. This can involve liberating an occupied territory and peoples or the healing and recovery of colonized peoples to establish their own self-determination.

**Earth art:** Also known as Land art or Environmental art, Earth art is an international artistic movement of the 1960s and 70s that focused on the use of natural materials built into the landscape as ephemeral installations or site-specific sculptures. Recognized artists of Land art in the United States from this period included Nancy Holt; her husband, Robert Smithson; Michael Heizer; Beverly Buchanan; Ana Mendieta; Walter de Maria; James Turrell; and Michelle Stuart; among others.

**earthwork:** A site-specific installation made in (and often with natural materials extracted from) the landscape. Earthworks are often large in scale and located far from metropolitan centers. Earthworks are a prehistoric form of art but have more recently been adapted into a form of conceptual art, starting in the late 1960s.

**environmental footprint:** The effect that a person, company, activity, etc. has on the environment, for example the quantity of natural resources that they use and the amount of harmful gases that they produce.

**ephemeral:** Short-lived, existing briefly.

**functional:** Having a specific purpose or use.

**infrastructure:** The physical (buildings, roads, utilities, natural resources) or organizational (regulations, codes, management) structures necessary to operate in society.

**installation:** A designed construction, usually within a specific indoor or outdoor space, intended to be considered as art. Installations can feature a single medium or many different types of art.

**jingle:** A decorative metal cone, traditionally made from the lid of a tobacco can, used to adorn women's dresses in Ojibwe culture. The dresses are worn during a ceremonial dance, called the jingle dance, where the metal cones clink together as dancers move. The jingle, dress, and dance symbolize healing and protection. Legend says that a sick girl wore a jingle dress during a ceremonial dance and was healed as the dance progressed through the evening celebrations.

**perception:** The process of understanding the world around us through gathering, organizing, and analyzing information taken in by the senses (sight, touch, sound, taste, feel).

**performance art:** A form of art that involves activation or movement of the body. This type of art is durational, with an action or series of actions taking place over a specific amount of time.

**performance document:** A video recording of a performance artwork for the purpose of documenting and resharing the performance.

**point of view:** The perspective from which the viewer is considering something.

**power:** Functionally, the transfer of energy with which to accomplish work or a task over a specified amount of time. Power can also be a conceptual force employed socially or within the structure of a relationship to influence actions or

decisions or to enact change. Power of influence can be acted upon or generated anew through individual or collective agency, even in situations where it is not already evident or given.

**power structure:** The organization (division or balance) of power in a specific group or system. Different types of power structures include linear, circular, or hierarchical.

**practice:** In art, practice refers to an artist's ongoing body of work, including their concepts and ideas, methods, personal style, or preferred materials used for artmaking.

**production system:** A system that produces its own energy.

**sculpture:** A three-dimensional art object.

**self-sustaining:** The ability to maintain independently without assistance or interference.

**site-responsive:** An object that changes in relationship to changes in its location or physical surroundings.

**site-specific:** An object that is created with a particular location in mind. The work is often built directly on or within the site and could not exist in the same form in a different location.

**system:** A group of physical, social, or spiritual things that work together to achieve a common purpose.

**systems thinking:** A method of problem-solving that considers a holistic view of the world and investigates how individual elements influence one another.

# CURATORS' BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**Kelly Kivland** is the inaugural director and lead curator of the art program at Michigan Central. As an interdisciplinary curator, her collaborative practice explores the intersection of digital art, new media, performance, sound, and spatial practice. Her prior roles include head of exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts (2021–2024) and curator at Dia Art Foundation (2011–2021). Recent projects include Wexner Center exhibitions featuring artists Tanya Lukin Linklater (2024), Harold Mendez (2023), and A.K. Burns (2023). She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and a master's degree from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College.

**Lisa Le Feuvre** is a curator, writer, and editor. She is the inaugural executive director of Holt/Smithson Foundation, the artist-endowed foundation dedicated to the creative legacies of Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson. Between 2010 and 2017 Le Feuvre was head of sculpture studies at the Henry Moore Institute. She has curated more than 70 exhibitions as an institutional and independent curator, played a pivotal role in shaping academic and arts organizations, edited over 30 books and journals, spoken at museums and universities across the world, and has published more than 100 essays and interviews with artists.

# RELATED PUBLIC EVENTS

## EXHIBITION OPENING AND TALK

**Friday, February 7, 2025**

**Talk: Lisa Le Feuvre and Maria Hupfield**

**Moderated by Ohio Humanities Executive Director Rebecca Brown Asmo**

5:30–6:15 PM in Film/Video Theater

**Opening Reception**

6:30–9 PM in Lower Lobby and Galleries

## FILM/VIDEO

**Sunday, February 9, 2025**

**Nancy Holt: Short Films and Videos**

**Introduced by Lisa Le Feuvre, executive director, Holt/Smithson Foundation**

1 PM in Film/Video Theater

## PERFORMING ARTS

**Saturday, April 5, 2025**

**Maria Hupfield, Natalie Diaz, Lisa Le Feuvre, and Mikinaak Migwans**

***Channeling Greater Power***

6–7:30 PM in Performance Space

**Sunday, April 13, 2025**

**Counterpoints: Ohio State School of Music Performances**

3–4:30 PM in Galleries

Scan the QR code  
to visit [wexarts.org](https://wexarts.org)  
for details.



# PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY

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OUTPOST OFFICE'S PRESENTATION IS MADE POSSIBLE BY  
**Ohio State's Integrated Physical Planning Liaison Group**

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NANCY HOLT'S AND MARIA HUPFIELD'S PRESENTATIONS ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY



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FREE GALLERIES MADE POSSIBLE BY

**Adam Flatto**      The image shows the logo for the PNC Foundation, which includes a circular icon with a stylized 'P' and the text "PNC FOUNDATION".

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[Cover] Maria Hupfield, *The Supernatural Powers of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)*, 2024 (detail). Industrial felt, bells, tin jingles, cotton fabric, and polyester thread, dimensions variable. Installation view at the 2024 Toronto Biennial of Art: *Precarious Joys*.

[Back cover] Nancy Holt, *Electrical System*, 1982 (detail). Steel conduit, lighting and electrical fixtures, light bulbs, electrical wire, and electricity. Installation view of *Nancy Holt: Light and Language* at Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford, Ireland, 2021. Photo: Jed Niezgoda.

This Learning Guide was produced in conjunction with the following exhibitions: *Outpost Office: Color Block No. 2*, curated by Kelly Kivland, on view November 14, 2023–April 6, 2025; *Nancy Holt: Pipeline*, on view August 16, 2024–July 27, 2025, and *Nancy Holt: Power Systems*, on view February 8–June 29, 2025, curated by Lisa Le Feuvre and developed in partnership with Holt/Smithson Foundation; and *Maria Hupfield: The Endless Return of Fabulous Panther (Biimskojiwan)*, on view February 8–June 29, 2025, curated by Lisa Le Feuvre.

ISBN: 978-1-881390-74-9 [print] ISBN: 978-1-881390-75-6 [digital]

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024949527

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Unless otherwise noted: All images of works by Nancy Holt are © Holt/Smithson Foundation / Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York. All installation views of works by Maria Hupfield are courtesy of the artist; Galerie Hugues Charbonneau, Montreal; and Patel Brown, Toronto. Photos: Toni Hafkenscheid.

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Project Management **Jessica Knapp**

Texts **Dionne Custer Edwards, Rebecca Richardson, Sarah Robison**

Copyediting **Jessica Knapp**

Proofreading **Ryan Shafer**

Graphic Design **Pata Macedo**

Printing **Hopkins Printing**

Published by the Wexner Center for the Arts  
at The Ohio State University, 1871 North  
High Street, Columbus, OH 43210.

This book was printed and bound by Hopkins Printing on acid-free 100-percent postconsumer recycled content paper. The text is set in Fedra Sans and Fedra Serif, designed by Peter Bilak and issued by Typotheque.



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