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Oral history interview with Nancy Holt, 1992 July 6

Funding for this interview was provided by the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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Transcript

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Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Nancy Holt on 1992 July 6. The interview was conducted by Scott Gutterman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I was reading the biographical information. I was curious. You live in an apartment that looks out on New Jersey, but not the apartment that you grew up in. You grew up north of here.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, a little further north, but not that much further.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Actually it was closer to the George Washington Bridge, right?

NANCY HOLT: No, actually, closer to the Lincoln Tunnel. Actually, practically straight out from the Lincoln Tunnel. So, yes, so I'm looking out on my almost home state, but not actually my home state. I was born in Massachusetts.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I see.

NANCY HOLT: And I never really felt like a citizen of New Jersey because my parents were both from Massachusetts. My father was from New Bedford, and my mother was from Worcester, and I was born in Worcester. And they were thorough New Englanders, and only moved to New Jersey because my father worked for Dupont. He was an engineer, and was transferred there. And, of course, this was--he lived through the Depression. Anyone that lives through the Depression, of course, clung to their jobs. And it was also the age of the organization man. You know, the corporate loyalty.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: So when he got transferred, he went to New Jersey. He was told he was only going to be there for a couple of years, which he was very happy about. So they never bought a house. They rented for many, many years, thinking that we were about to move. And I was taught that living in New Jersey wasn't, like, real life. Like, real life happens somewhere else in New England. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: The capital of real life.

NANCY HOLT: [Laughs.] I was a little kid, you know? I really believe that. I mean, parents, really. They were not totally in the place where they were living. They were living in their heads--you know, in this fantasy life. They were cut off from the course. And so I sort of imbibed that, you know? So I thought, "Well, I'm kind of stuck here in New Jersey." [Laughs.] And every chance we got, we went up to Massachusetts. We went to the Cape in the summer. So when it came time for me to go to college, of course I had to go to school in Massachusetts. That was where the seat of all learning was. [Laughs.] Well, it's sort of true, too.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes.

NANCY HOLT: So I don't think I considered any schools that were not in Massachusetts. I went to Tufts.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: Primarily because I wanted to go to a co-ed school in Boston.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: It was two colleges then?

NANCY HOLT: It was Jackson and Tufts, but all the classes were together.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: It was a relatively small school with good academics. They had all the--you know, academics in the Boston area. I guess if you couldn't work in Harvard, you ended up at Tufts. [Laughs.] So it was pretty--I liked that, and I liked being in that area.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Despite the lack of connection with the place, and much more identification with New England--

NANCY HOLT: Well, wait. I would like to correct that, though.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Okay.

NANCY HOLT: I ended up, though, in advertently, becoming very much a New Jerseyite, in a non-mental way. I mean, I might have thought--I might have had a kind of detachment or distance in my mind, but I had really become a New Jerseyite. And looking back, I think growing up in New Jersey was a wonderful experience because it's a limbo place. It's a place where you don't have to live up to any images, whatsoever. [Laughs.] There's no way you have to be and nothing particular is expected of you.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Did that have any kind of larger resonance? It sounds almost like a portrait--not of all of the United States, but of aspects of the United States.

NANCY HOLT: Well, I don't think there are too many places like New Jersey, though. Because even Mississippi, you have a real culture there, you know, like a standard.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: But almost anywhere--Colorado or Montana or North Dakota you would have that you know?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Ohio was not part of that there. [Laughs.]

NANCY HOLT: [Laughs.] Well, that's sort of a borderline.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: [Laughs.] Okay yes, I think they're [inaudible] cousins.

NANCY HOLT: I always think that maybe Delaware also is a place like New Jersey.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right, I know what you mean about that--without strong regional traditions, just a middle zone.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, and in New Jersey, of course--surrounded by kind of like the decay of the industrial revolution. And New Jersey had the first highway culture. So you'd have these decaying nightclubs--burned down nightclubs along the highway, and it was close to New York.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And everyone disliked New York intensely. I was warned over and over again never to go to New York, and that's still the same today. I was back in New Jersey recently, and the people that live there still tell their children the same thing. "Stay away from New York. It's a very evil place." They project all their evil onto the city.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I think the city projects some of it back. [Laughs.] I guess maybe for a while, you grew up thinking along those lines, but clearly didn't wind up thinking along those lines, in terms of suspicion in the back of your mind.

NANCY HOLT: Well, no. Well, being young, New York was a place that offered all kinds of intrigue and mystery. However, I didn't grow up in a family that had any kind of cultural consciousness, and cultural pursuits were unheard of. Art was meaningless, so I lived twenty minutes from all the museums in New York, and I was never, ever taken to a museum--ever. And I had very poor art training, and no encouragement. It was, in that respect, very restricted. On the other hand, there was, like, a kind of rawness in New Jersey. And so there was like this energy, and this excitement about New York, and going to see the nightlife, and the strange people, and I would do that a lot--as much as I could. [Laughs.] I didn't go to museums. I came to the Village, and I looked at all the weird people, you know? [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Makes sense. What about the influence of the landscape? I mean, you talked about an industrial landscape. Was that impressing itself upon you, early?

NANCY HOLT: I think I was always intrigued by the oil refineries and the flames. And also, I could see-- from my bedroom window, I could see Manhattan, so I reversed the situation. So I had this distant-like glittering universe that was a forbidden universe. That I--I sort of snuck over there almost. So I had the sky and the buildings and the lights. I mean, it was pretty far away, but the city, you could see it. So I think that that sense--it threw me to concern, I think, with where the sky meets the earth. But in the east we don't have much of that experience. You have to go out west, to be knocked out by it. It's only trees and buildings, but my landfill project in New Jersey is unique in that that's a sight, in the midst of the metropolitan area. It's only fifteen minutes from here, and you have this big, vast open space, and you see the landfill forms touching the sky, and there are no trees or anything in the way. It's just this big, vast open space, and when you walk to the top of the landfill, you can see all of Manhattan, you can see Newark, you can see the Pulaski sky. You can see, maybe twenty miles in every direction and you are totally conscious of the sky, the same way as you would be out west. So it's sort of--it was an amazing place, in that respect that you feel like it's not the east coast, and yet, there you are, in the middle of Manhattan practically

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I saw some photographs of Jan Gruger [ph]. Did you see these? I forget what they're called, *Project New York*, or something, but they were shot from New Jersey to New York, from these very wide-open spaces. They're very odd. They're very eerie.

NANCY HOLT: She's from New Jersey.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Oh, is she?

NANCY HOLT: She and Bruce Boyce, who is her husband. I knew them when Bob was alive. That was our big connection with them, is that we were all from New Jersey, and we used to go out and talk about New Jersey, and how great it was, and how we missed it. [Laughs.] Our favorite diners. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, well, I guess she has a new book, I think it's new.

NANCY HOLT: Well, way back then--and that was in the early seventies. she would go to New Jersey all the time. She did a whole series of highway photographs with trucks. Do you remember those? Twenty years ago?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Not so much. Not so much. You know, I'm going to test this because it would be a real tragedy if it weren't working. I'm going to try to get back to the word tragedy

[Audio break.]

The area where you grew up was probably more residential.

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So it wasn't actually the area in your backyard.

NANCY HOLT: No, I lived on just a regular suburban street, in a phony Tudor house. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: [Laughs.] See that sounds nice. I grew up around a lot of phony Tudor houses. [They laugh.] Now when you go back and forth to New Jersey, there's so much--you pass through this veil of industry. Was that your experience, coming back in there, too? I guess it's been there for a long time.

NANCY HOLT: It's been there a long time. Yes, I mean, now there are newer industries, like industrial parks, and the Meadowlands Complex. Well, actually, the Meadowlands used to be the mosquito breeding area.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: We had a terrible mosquito problem in New Jersey, when I was growing up. They finally controlled it a little bit by polluting the wetlands, you know, by putting oil so that the little larvae couldn't develop. I think they just sprayed oil or something on top of the water.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Specifically to--

NANCY HOLT: To kill the mosquitos, but they were terrible, I must say. Back there, we were very happy they figured out a way of killing these larvae, because it was miserable!

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I'll bet.

NANCY HOLT: It was terrible.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, they could eat you alive. [Laughs.] Because when I think of the look of that area, I mean, I think of that project the *Dark Star Park*, but that's actually not the one--

NANCY HOLT: No, the one--that the landfill is on [laughs] you have me doing it now, no *Sky Land*.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. Right. I wondered how much was coming back from thinking about those places--those kind of nether places.

NANCY HOLT: I don't think so much with *Sky Land*. I think, actually, my sense of that kind of space came more when I went out west. And I'm bringing that experience to this kind of more western site. I was absolutely stunned when I went out west for the first time. Actually, I went with my cousin, Bob. It was 1968, and I just--I got off the plane in Las Vegas, and then it wasn't as built up as it is now. Where you got off the plane it was just this big, flat desert. The space, and the sky, and the sun just knocked me out. I didn't sleep for three days. And it was a very special experience where I felt that my inside and the outside were identical, somehow. That somehow I had been carrying this landscape within me, and suddenly there it was, without. And so I didn't have the normal kind of barriers--these person barriers. I was like out in the landscape at the same time I was in a body, at the same time, but I had no tiredness. You know, I was alert and just part of the universe. It was the most incredible. It lasted about three or four days, and it made all the difference to my life, and my perceptions, and my work.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So you weren't heading to go to Las Vegas? [Laughs.]

NANCY HOLT: No.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: You were to go somewhere near there? Was it a project that might--

NANCY HOLT: Yes. Well, actually, we were going out with Mike, he was doing some projects by a lake there. So we went with him, and we actually helped him do some of those early works. Then Bob collected some rocks you know, for some of his sites. So when I came back to New York, I was never the same person again.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: It sounds like a key transformation.

NANCY HOLT: It really changed everything.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Wow. Let me backtrack for the sake of chronology. You had started talking about going to Tufts and coming back to New England. Was your interest in art sparked there at

all? Or still not really?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I really didn't know much about who I was or what I was going to be when I was young. I was a late bloomer. I didn't—I had a difficult family life, really. I lived in a nuclear family, where I was the only child. There were no other adults. I mean we had no relatives. My parents had very few friends, and the ones they had, they had over a night to play bridge, I maybe said "hello" to them when they came to the door, and then I was sent to bed. And I never had a teacher that I connected with at all. I never met one adult that I had any connection with. Except, of course, the two [inaudible]. [Tape speeds up] And so that was my world--these two people and my mother—well she got--she sort of had a lot of emotional problems, and she was also very ill with a lot of different illnesses. So she wasn't really a role model for me. I didn't want to be like my mother. My mother was ill, and sick and confused. So I looked at my father and I thought, well, he's somebody who is out in the world. He's doing his job. They didn't seem to have very many interests. They didn't really enjoy life very much, but my father played tennis, he seemed to enjoy that. So I think that you know I only had the two choices, so I chose to be like my father. And that meant that I was--he was a scientist, so I decided that you know, that interested me. That was part of it I think. Another part was that I was fascinated with the world, you know like plants and animals. I didn't know that I was an artist. I was like, "Oh, look at that weird plant." [Laughs.] "It would be nice to know about these things." So I ended up going into biology. And now, when I look back, you know, we make all these categorizations that are totally false you know, just for the sake of being able to teach certain disciplines, but biology is so visual. And I remember taking a course in histology you know, the study of tissues and skin. We'd put things under the microscope--different dyes, and they'd turn different colors. It was incredible looking! And then I would draw them, you know?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Mm-hmm [affirmative] You'd draw them as part of the lab work, trying to draw?

NANCY HOLT: Yes, right. So then I got interested in-- at MIT they have a series of lectures about abstract expressionists and do you want to stop right now? [Tape Off/On]

NANCY HOLT: Did I give you back your big bag already?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, I put it back in here. I've never seen anything like that. So anyway, you were telling me about a series of lectures at MIT, that I guess you went to while you were in college.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, you know, as I say, I was very uneducated in the realm of art.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So you weren't studying art at all?

NANCY HOLT: Well, yes, at college I started to a little bit more, and I took a few art courses, you know, art history courses. So anyway, I went to these lectures at MIT, and that was what impressed me a lot. And although, the theory, I don't think it's very much of a theory, but at the time it meant something to me.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. And you don't remember who gave them?

NANCY HOLT: No, I don't. Then I started going to New York, in my junior year, alone. I had a friend at Barnard. So I started meeting people here, going to museums, and meeting artists. So I started to have more understanding. You know how it is.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. Although coming here while you were in college, and meeting artists it must have been a very strong interest that was developing.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, but I think it was more that I was kind of a rebel and suddenly I found other rebels you know? [Laughs.] I knew I just wanted to get out of college. I didn't want to fool around going to school--I thought I'll graduate, so I think in my junior year I knew that I was in the wrong field, but I didn't want to switch because then I would have to go to school longer. And I didn't see the value of going to school to study art, especially at that time, because it was after abstract expressionism, and they were teaching something that it was like not already alive, and there were these notions about feeling feelings that nobody has ever felt before you know. [Laughs.] Expression, and that wasn't my--ever--I was never, ever in that mode, and it would have been a very deadly thing for me to have gone to art school. I would have been repelled. So, fortunately, I [laughs]—

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Skipped that and just moved to New York.

NANCY HOLT: I moved to New York. And I learned a lot just by being around, and being with artists. And I was always sort of like conceptualizing my approach, although my art is not conceptual. I don't like the term applied to my art. My art, if anything, is perceptual, and I'm always wondering why that term didn't have more caché. Because it's really definitely is concerned with seeing. And there were other artists--Richard Serra and I, at the same time, were doing perceptual art. It's one of those hidden art movements that nobody picked up on. But he--like that last show he just had at Gagolian's, with the round forms. It's about seeing shapes, depending on where your position is in the room. So he's been doing that a long time.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Who were some of the artists at that time, you know, just moving here, that you were interested in?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I knew Bob, and he made a big difference. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Had you met him in Boston?

NANCY HOLT: Actually, my friend in Barnard brought us together at lunch, while I was here--like in my junior year of college. He had just been experimenting a little bit with Payote. Payote buttons--they used to have them on the street corners down there. They were legal. I mean, nobody knew what they were.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And I guess they made you pretty sick you know, like your stomach got upset, but people took them, anyway. So he had had, I guess, one of his first psychedelic experiences. Have you ever done it?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: No. [They laugh]

NANCY HOLT: Why not? [Laughs.] Wrong generation, right?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I guess, I don't know--close, but no cigar.

NANCY HOLT: You've got to do it. [Laughs.] Then you can talk to the rest of us.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Okay.

NANCY HOLT: The old-timers right? Although it's starting to be a thing that people are doing again.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: God, yes, and now everyone is afraid it messes with your gene structure.

NANCY HOLT: Only do it a few times, it's okay. Bob and I never did it more than a few times. Anyway, so it sort of like lingers you know, at least the experience is very profound, so you're in another state for a while. I've always thought that you know, so he met me when he was in this kind of altered state or something. So I really made this incredible impression on him. So he couldn't get me out of his mind.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: That may or may not have been the Payote. [They laugh.]

NANCY HOLT: So, anyway, he was always around, and always eager to see me.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: And he was working as an artist then? He was going to school?

NANCY HOLT: Oh, yes. He was already an artist. I don't know if you saw the show in Columbia, that was this year.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: No.

NANCY HOLT: There was a book, a new book out called *Robert Smithson on Earth*.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: No. Who put it together?

NANCY HOLT: They have a gallery up there, in Columbia, you know Judy Shy [ph] did the--

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Oh, I know her.

NANCY HOLT: They have works in there from 1957 of Bob's, or even 1955—I think he was seventeen or [inaudible]. He would have been seventeen. And you can see the later work in it. It's of a building that's half constructed. It's just amazing. And there were a lot of very early works.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Drawing or painting?

NANCY HOLT: No, it's a pastel drawing. He was an artist. He had his first one-man show when he was twenty or twenty-one. He was very successful in the early days. He was considered this incredible new artist, and he painted. He did all the paintings -- well, the show was called *Works on Paper* so there weren't too many paintings, but there were sort of paintings on paper. He was young, but he knew everybody. He gave the first party here in New York, with rock 'n' roll--Alan Ginsberg was there. It's recorded in Fred Mcdarra's book about the artist's world. It was in 1959. I remember it was 1959 because I was up at Boston, and I got invited to the party, and I think the letter that he sent me, inviting me, is in the Archives, because I kept it. It had drawings all on the sides of it.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Neat.

NANCY HOLT: But I didn't go. I thought he was kind of strange. [They laugh]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. So he was one of several people that you were getting to know, when you first moved here.

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: When were you starting to do stuff of your own?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I went through like a real--I don't know how to describe it. But I had to go through a whole inner-transformation before I could do my work. I had to understand a lot, I had to read a lot. I went for a meta-physical time, you know, a religious time. You know, I had to grasp a lot, my state of being had to come a certain way. So I really just sort of--and that was a very big thing with me, being versus becoming. Because all of my life I was becoming, becoming, and not really because I had been forcing all these that were not right for me. I had to shed them. I had to unlearn, and so I had to spend a period of time just doing that--just reading, thinking, being, living, you know-- living on next to nothing. You know, just doing the whole--seeing how little I could have, and just get away with the bare essentials of life. I had to find all that out, so it took me a while. I don't think I started doing any art until I was in my late twenties. In that respect, though, I was always in touch with other artists, and always having long, lengthy conversations. And I used to think of myself as being the most conceptual artist. Someone like Ian Wilson, who had taken it just about as far as it could go, in the art context, was still within his ego structure. And this was what I was interested in--breaking down the egos. He was having a show at a gallery, and he was still giving talks--people were coming, he was like the guru, you know? And he was still writing sentences, and framing them. And the whole conceptual thing, really acutally, used to greatly disturb me because those little sentences, and all the conceptual work was going off to Europe, packaged up. The Europeans loved it because they didn't have to spend much freight and insurance charges, and all that. It was like the hottest commodity art. You know, here he was trying to make the commodity mold, and it was the opposite. It could proliferate all over the place. I was very upset by this, and I used to attack these people all the time. And I felt that my doing nothing--I was taking the purest stand I could take. I thought I was an artist in the fullest sense, by doing nothing. So that was my art.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: But then, after taking a--and really, deeply feeling this--and it was very tough, you know. When everyone else around you is doing work and having things, and getting their names around--it is very, very had to consciously not do that.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: But then that all changed--actually, when I did my locator pieces--once again, when I went to the desert, it was like instantaneous. I woke up one morning, and I went to a welding place, and I made some of these locator pieces, and it was like over night I had produced some physical objects, and yet they were things that you looked at, but they weren't things you looked through. And this was very satisfying to me. It was like I wasn't creating anything, and yet I was creating something in order to have a void. All my work has been like

that even the latest piece I just did, which is like this elaborate system of pipes. They're all there in order for the air, and I gave form to the air within the pipes, and I'm moving the pipes with these spinning ventilators. And so the whole structure is--it's called *Hampton Air*. And that's consistent in everything I've ever done. That's probably the underlying consistency. So I mean like *Rock Rings*, I felt this huge, heavy, many ton work two feet thick—those walls are, just to have those holes. So it was somehow very consistent with where I had been before. Only suddenly, they were a little more physical. And they proliferated--the locators, once I started making them, I made lots of them. They were all over the place.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: And they were all to look through?

NANCY HOLT: Look through. Usually, I have them looking outside of the place. I would zero in on something you wouldn't notice at all until you looked through my locator, and then you'd be kind of startled, because you don't really see anything unless you're focused it's on it.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And then I got to playing with them. You would look through one, and you'd see the other. And then I started putting shapes on the wall that you look through, you know perfectly surrounded shape. And that way, I got interested in how light and sight were so connected, because you could shine a light through these things, and you could get different shapes as it went around the walls, and everything. I thought, oh, light and sight are so--I thought it wasn't all these people that in the Middle Ages, you know? With the idea that light emanated from the eyes. And that seems very real to me. So then I started working with light and holes, you know, shining light through holes, and making patterns, and doing whole room installations like that, and mirrors--bouncing light off of mirrors [inaudible]. And it was all very intangible. I was using light in a very concrete way, which everyone was very interested in that.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, Dan Flavin, and many others.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, but his light is--I was actually using projected light and making--it seemed that they had substance, and I would draw around the edges of it--of the nothing. His was about emanating light.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: I think his fluorescents have a certain substance, and they emanate light. I like his work a lot, but it's very different from what I'm talking about. His substance to ejected light. So anyway--

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So some of those pieces were in--when did you start showing some of those? I saw some of the first things were the Virginia Dwan, and John Weber--some group shows.

NANCY HOLT: My first one-person show in New York was at Ladutichi [ph]. Do you remember? Well, you weren't around then. It was in the old Kitchen space on---downtown.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Worcester?

NANCY HOLT: Yes. It's Worcester and Grand.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right, where the Ohio Theater still is kicking around a little bit.

NANCY HOLT: Well, anyway, that's where he was. He had a big gallery. He showed Mark di Suvero. He showed a lot of the real macho guys, and he really didn't show women. This was very unique that I had a show there, at that time because feminism really hadn't taken off.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. Were you interested in the feminist issues? Did you read about feminism, or think about it?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I was, once it became a conscious process. But I wasn't one of the ones that began it. But once it occurred to me that yes, these women were for rent, why hadn't I thought of that, you know? [Laughs.] Yes, I am a feminist and I had been.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So I can't believe that this forty-five minutes have--

NANCY HOLT: I'm sure it's up.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: You would think, but it's still spinning.

NANCY HOLT: Let me put the light on.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Maybe it's ninety per side. No, that can't be. Yeah that would have to be more than forty-five minutes. Well, maybe not exactly.

NANCY HOLT: Well we started at five minutes until eight.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Oh, well there you go. With the whole battery crisis--

NANCY HOLT: Oh I see. Well let me turn this light down a bit.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, it's bright. That's night.

NANCY HOLT: Is that good?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Perfect. So the first pieces weren't land issues?

NANCY HOLT: Well, they were, though, because the locator pieces--I did a piece in Montana with eight of them on the points of the compass in a rather large circle. They were larger locators than the ones that had been in the city, also. It was a site I specially selected because of the multiplicity of things that you could see through the locators. So you could see a mountain, and you could see a plane, and a ranch house.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So all this work in the show are after going out in 1968.

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: And seeing the western landscape.

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Then, were you as interested as showing gallery in New York, as you were taking it outside, in another place?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I should also say to you I was doing *Buried Poems*, which were very sight specific and very much in the landscape, and they were about the landscape in a certain sense. I would go around to different places, and a place would conjure up a person in my mind, and I would write a conceptual poem you know, a concrete poem, actually. I used to write concrete poems and that would be particularly for this particular person. And I would bury it in the ground in a--in a vacuumed container. And the person had a lifetime to pick it up, but they were very unique and unusual, and difficult places, usually like unnamed, uninhabited islands, in the Florida Keys.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So you had to do a lot of digging to get your poem.

NANCY HOLT: Well, it's not so much you have to do much digging, but you have to follow my map very carefully. And the map became a thing, too, because I would describe this or that, or the other thing you had to look for you know, and I also would read up on the history of the place, and the floor, and the farm. I would really immerse myself in the site and--but they were very private. They weren't meant for public consumption. It was, in a sense, working out of that--the being without the ego. I mean the next step really was to do something like that, where I did it for a particular person. No one knew I did it except the person that I did it for.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And then the locator pieces were a little more public, and they became a little later after the *Buried Poems*. Sometimes I think they overlap a little bit.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Would you want to document those early pieces? I mean did you document those early pieces?

NANCY HOLT: I have some of the original booklets, and things that I gave to people, or copies of them anyway.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: You mentioned trying to live on as little as you could. None of these pieces

are—were for sale.

NANCY HOLT: No. I never sold the locator pieces, and really now I'm--I've never pursued it. It's like going back into the past, and dredging up the old work. I've got them sitting in storage. Actually, the New Museum owns one of them. That's true. And I was in a show they did when they were still in their old spot.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: On Fourteenth?

NANCY HOLT: Yes, but they really need to be shown again, I guess. That needs to happen.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I'm sure they will. I'm just curious how you were able to make ends meet at that time. Just doing this, and doing that?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I took various part-time jobs. I taught three and four-year-olds half a day at the downtown community school. That was fun. I really enjoyed that. Let's see I was an assistant literary editor of *Harper's Bazaar*. That was the first magazine, really, in a popular way, to publish really good people, like Natalie Serope [ph] and Iris Murdoch and--well I can't remember who else, but anyway, some really good people. [Laughs.] I don't think they have that reputation now, but it was a way of getting some really first-rate writing into all the beauty salons in the country, so people could be exposed to that kind of writing.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: So I kind of liked that. That appealed to the populist in me. Although my job--

[End of side one, tape one]

[Side two, tape one]

NANCY HOLT: [In process] --they made all of the decisions, I was just there part-time, and I got to read all of the manuscripts that got sent in, unsolicited. And so I read a lot of Alan Ginsberg's father's stuff. He would send stuff all the time, but it was interesting. I would get to go out to lunch with Natalie Serope [ph], and go to these fancy restaurants uptown, which I just read about. [Laughs.] And I saw the inside of the New York magazine world.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: That's great. So you were doing various other things?

NANCY HOLT: Yes. I also had a roommate, when I first moved to New York, so that helped pay the rent.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Where did you live? Downtown?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I started out living on 10 East 95th, in this very little tiny apartment, but it had a little terrace, which was nice. And I shared this tiny little space with my friend. And then we moved to 75th Street and 23rd Avenue, and we had a much bigger place, but it was like in a railroad tenement. And then I moved downtown to a loft, four blocks away from here, which had a lot of mice. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: You had all that stuff. [Laughs.]

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I was just walking by Westbeth [Artist Community]. This is way before Westbeth was built? Was that built in the seventies, or something? The early seventies?

NANCY HOLT: Well it's been there, the building is the Bell Telephone Building.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: It became an artist co-op in 1971 or 1972. Or 1970, maybe, but the building I was in, which was Greenwich and 12th--was the pilot project for Westbeth.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: No kidding?

NANCY HOLT: It was the very first building that the city allowed people, loft livers, to be legal. It was up for auction, because the taxes had not been paid. It was a civic minded group who said,

"Well, let's make this building for artists." The Kaplan Fund--the furrier, he gave money towards it, and the city waived the taxes. So the place was re-done at that point, you know, got renovated to meet standards.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: This was in the mid-sixties or the late sixties?

NANCY HOLT: I don't know. It was in the sixties. I'm trying to remember if it was 1968.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I thought that the first artist conversions that the city allowed were in SoHo.

NANCY HOLT: No.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: George Maciunas.

NANCY HOLT: No. Ours was the very first. I think it was in 1966, maybe at the earliest.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. Maybe the SoHo stuff was later.

NANCY HOLT: SoHo didn't start until 1970.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. When they defeated the expressway. What else was I going to ask? I saw some of your early shows also involved video.

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Were you looking around at new forms, at new ways of doing things?

NANCY HOLT: Yes. Video--it sort of happened one day when Bob and I were visiting Joan Jonas and Peter Campas. It was in 1969, and that was maybe the first year that they had portable video equipment. And Peter had just gone out and rented the equipment, and none of us had ever used it. Both Peter and Joan became well known video artists.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: But that was the first day, and Bob and I made a tape, which is still shown to this day, which is called *East Coast/West Coast*. And he played the role of a west coast artist, and I played the role of an east coast--an east coast conceptualist. It was kind of funny, and Bob is totally out of character in this tape. It's like a put-down of California artists you know, so that was the beginning. Suddenly video was around, and I had friends who were into video. So I started thinking in that direction. In the beginning it was very fresh, you know, you notice sort of basic things that you were sort of used to now. So when I made my tape *Underscan*, which was in 1974, I used the under scanning device, which contracts the image. You use it on monitors to see, not only on home monitors, but on professional monitors. You want to see exactly what you're getting on the tape, which you can't see when it bleeds out along the edges. So it's a button that you push, and it contracts in, and it does something very interesting to still images, you know, here you have this expanded image. Then, if you push it halfway in, you get an elongated image, and then you get a very contracted image. So I did a tape that was based on--used that as part of its reason d'etre.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: But that was in 1974, but before then, I had done quite a few tapes where I had made like a mask for the camera, with holes that would open and close, and you would see different things as you opened them up. And I did an installation at the Clocktower. You can't see out of the Clocktower. You can't see the views, but I allowed--you could see the view of the monitor. I've had four monitors for the four windows. But I had a circle. You can only see a circle of what you could see outside, and that circle would move along, and people would--in the soundtrack would discuss what they thought they were seeing. I picked eight different people who totally--what I thought were the eight different ways of approaching, eight different philosophies--philosophical points of view. In fact, the work was called *Points of View*. It was, I thought, quite interesting, how people responded to seeing a fragment as it went along, and then, suddenly, you saw the whole image, and then there was always that element of surprise. Oh, they hadn't guessed it right. They had misinterpreted it, or whatever.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: We already mentioned some of this, but it seemed like from the beginning your goal was not to stay within the gallery format. You went to the conventional showing

format.

NANCY HOLT: The first show--the first pieces that I showed were the locator pieces, which, always in the beginning, pointed out the window.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And then, also, along with that, I was doing these tours of the gallery, which were these tape-recorded tours that people would take. They'd come in, and they'd put the phones in their ears, and they'd have this little tape recorder, and I would take them on a tour of the gallery, which would always be looking out the window, talking about something, and looking up at a crack in the ceiling.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: It sounds like an expanded look at what was both in and around the gallery.

NANCY HOLT: Yes. Anything that they are.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Were you looking at other people's stuff in galleries? There was clearly a movement among a lot of people to break away from, but would you also look at people who were more conventionally shy in galleries, with any interest?

NANCY HOLT: No. [they laugh] No, I must say, I thought they were all--painting was a total bore. No, I was only interested in--

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So were galleries like a necessary evil?

NANCY HOLT: Well, I guess the way I think about it is if you're an artist, you don't think just within that context. It amazes me that to this day most artists only think within that context. As if the past twenty-five years hasn't even happened. It's incredible, I mean galleries and museums have only been around for two hundred years, or maybe two hundred and fifty years, and it's just this tiny piece of history, and yet, it's infected artistic mentality to such an extent. I mean, creative people can only think within the walls of the museum and gallery. And art schools aren't doing anything, you know? I give quite a few lectures because that's the only way they can get any kind of exposure to the kind of work I do. Is to have me coming in to lecture, which isn't enough. I mean they're not teaching.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. How did you hope that people would get exposure? You didn't just see the gallery as the site where they could experience your stuff. Did you perceive it as having all sorts of things that kept you from perceiving the stuff?

NANCY HOLT: Certainly, yes. It is a sterile place, it's an art space. You prepare yourself to see art when you walk in--it's very limited. You do something in a public sphere, and you're affecting people that don't even know they're seeing art.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And people are bringing to it whatever they know, and they feel they can be engaged even if it's in a negative way. They don't feel like, oh, I don't know enough about this. There is like a --

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: A genuine response.

NANCY HOLT: A genuine response, a real engagement, so, yes. That was all restricted, but I just see the gallery area as being one of many areas where I could show my things. To me it's peripheral. It's strange, I'm showing right now at Guild Hall in East Hampton. I haven't shown in a museum in so long, and yet it's a perfect space because I'm half outdoors, and I'm half in. And how many places in Manhattan have that--sixteen-foot ceilings, and an outdoors that I can--it appears to penetrate the wall, and goes out. It's seventy-eight feet long. I mean, those opportunities--that kind of space is not here.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: Although there are spaces around that I have my eye on, you know, that would work the certain things. So I think it really is a matter of circumstance, and how you can make a certain site work for you. When your site is specific, that's the challenge, you know?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, I was reading in some of these pieces--talking about trying to put back

a sense of function to art. Trying to give back a sense of ritual.

NANCY HOLT: Not ritual.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: No?

NANCY HOLT: I mean it might be a byproduct, but that's not my intent, but where its function-- I'm interested in--well, these pieces I'm doing that have basic technologies--they all function. I mean they don't function in a big way.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right, but the hot water pipes.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, the water goes through, you know, it's like I did this piece in Ireland, these pipes up and down. You have these two little streams of water at the end. You know, it's laughable, there is humor in it. And this piece I just did in the Hamptons. All these pipes and everything and then you have these little ventilators spinning around, and I have some of them go real slow, and some of them are going like that--it's not about functioning in a big way, but it really makes you more conscious of, among many things, besides the form of it, and a lot of other things that are happening--of these systems that were so dependent on, that we relegate to the unconscious.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I was saying the writing systems, and the ducts.

NANCY HOLT: Yes, remind me, I'll give you the catalogs for the [inaudible], because I wrote them.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Oh, that I have. That I have.

NANCY HOLT: How did you get that?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: They gave it to me at John Weber.

NANCY HOLT: Oh, so you read the little essay that I wrote?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes. Yes, I did, actually [they laugh].

NANCY HOLT: That's my goal. I was trying to make a little brief statement about these pieces. I really would like to write something a little longer, but I had to get something out. But the work that's in there is the one I did in Finland.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Oh, right. It's a different piece.

NANCY HOLT: But also, by function, I mean something else, too. With the other pieces, like the *Dark Star Park*--there you have something that functions as a park, and it's a work of art at the same time.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: So really I mean that function means a lot of things, when I speak of it. And it was a landfill project, *Sky Mound*, here I am reclaiming landfills, and making them, again, a park art work, and a naked eye observatory, and a kind of wildlife preserve, in a sense. We put in a pond, and we have the sort of bushes. There are two hundred and fifty different kinds of birds in that area, so they'll be attracted--already they're hanging around. We put fish in a pond. So there's an ecological concern there, too. So that's what I mean by functioning. And then, also the methane collection system--collecting the methane to be sold to the local people as an alternate energy source, which is incredible, you know? Here we have these landfills, and they've got something very valuable.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And I've used part of the system to make the sculpture. In other words, it was coordinated to fit in with the overall plan for the sculpture was so that's function.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And that really fits in with the piping system--the landfill fits in with all these piping systems I've been doing.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right, so it's not just a question of public. I remember hearing John Newman talking about trying very hard to make something that is meaningful to him formally, and doing at a large scale, but he said not making it into a corporate chachka, you know, something that sits in front of a building.

NANCY HOLT: Yes.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: It made me think of that when you said, "How do people experience something?" I agree with you when they go to a gallery, there's a huge curtain drawn in front of their eyes. On the other hand, when they see something in front of a building on Park Avenue, even though they're outside and it's a little more direct. There's sort of this curtain of insignificance. It's there, but it's just something they walk around. Is it something that--do you try to actively engage people, or let them come to you?

NANCY HOLT: You know, usually, in the case of my work, there is no way that you can just walk around my work. You're going to walk through it, or under it, or in it, so you're immediately engaged with it, and that's the big difference, besides site specific work. I've never done a corporate commission. It isn't that I don't want to. I'd like to. I mean sure if it was a good site, or they had a lot of money--these corporations, from what I understand. But they do go for the very--the good material--the fine, elegant material. My work doesn't appeal particularly. I have been up for a couple corporations, and I am right now, actually. I might get it, if they like my work, but it's just an oddity that it hasn't occurred. But I do believe that corporations look for work that has a certain look that will reflect how you know, the quality and taste, and all that.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right, or an interest in it. The bag I brought is this elegant Guggenheim bag.

NANCY HOLT: Very tasteful. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Sponsored by Phillip Morris. [They laugh.] I remember the hot water piece.

NANCY HOLT: The hot water heating?

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Yes, I remember that very well. And I remember pulling away that gallery curtain--walking in and confronting and being confronted by--and liking it very much [Laughs.]

NANCY HOLT: I'm glad to hear it. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I really do. That is why I was excited from the get go.

NANCY HOLT: People are, by the way, reserved about walking within the works that I do in those spaces.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: I noticed that the--

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Well there was a big sign on the wall that said, "Caution, is very hot," or something.

NANCY HOLT: Can be hot. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Can be hot. I think I didn't get too close to it either, [laughs] but I looked at it for a good, long time. I'm interested in the ventilation system. I guess you've already said that the insistence on knowing a structure, and understanding a structure. Did you feel--it seems to connect with what you were saying earlier, that you had to think a long time before you could start. It would seem to me that you would have to get to know how one of these systems works before you can just set one up.

NANCY HOLT: Not really. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Would you just learn about the system by doing it?

NANCY HOLT: You know how plumbing works. You turn on the faucet.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: I don't know how plumbing works.

NANCY HOLT: Well, you just turn the faucet, and the water goes through. It's that easy. You hook into the existing plumbing system, and you put the pipes together. No, you don't have to know a lot about it. Actually, if I had another thing that goes into my work, I wouldn't be able to do the work. I'd have to depend on masons and plumbers and sheet metal workers. Actually, ventilation is probably the least skilled. I mean you just buy these ventilation ducts. It's hard to do it, to make it look good, because sheet metal bends so easily, and puckers so easily, but you just have to be careful.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: I work with a really good person, somebody who cared. So I do depend on--I don't know how to do plumbing, but I depended on my friends. You know, several artists that I know do plumbing, and my electrical pieces were done by artists.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: So it wasn't--I remember speaking with somebody else who was saying it was the experience of doing it, and being forced to learn about it that contributed to the overall texture of the piece.

NANCY HOLT: Not with me.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Not as much. No.

NANCY HOLT: No. Well, what I would say is this that I'm very much into the process of doing my works. I'm never an absentee artist.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: I'm there constantly. There are quite a few artists that do site specific work that allow a lot to happen when they're not there. I can't imagine that. I'm there every day, and I get very close to the people that I'm working with. In fact, I'm very particular about who I work with. I interview a lot of people. Like, if I have to get some concrete work done, I send out plans to maybe five or six different places, and talk to the different people, and usually you can find one who will see the work as a challenge, and who is happy to be involved with something like this.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: Most people want to do something that's pretty rote, you know, they don't want to get involved with something different. I'm so cautious for all these work for people that--

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Is it hard to find plumbers, masons--you said many of them are artists.

NANCY HOLT: Plumbers and electricians are artists, and actually, my first ventilation piece was with an artist, artisans. But when I do the big outdoor pieces, then I'm working with professional masons. Actually, like the piece-- *Rock Rings* piece is a very good example. I had to find the right mason, the right look for the rock and the deeply inset water joints. And I saw work that I liked, and I met the mason. And he was someone who really saw what I was trying to do. And he devoted, like three months of his life to doing this work. And it was the first time in his life that anything he ever did was going to be appreciated, in and of itself, and that has happened over and over again, with the different artisans that I've worked with. They throw themselves into their work because it's a monument to their skill.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And when we had the opening for *Rock Rings*, it was his night, and a lot of attention went his way. He talked about--he said it was as important to him as his wedding day, and he was going to bring his grandchildren there, when they grew up. So it's very moving. And then these people remained my friends. Al Pointer was his name. I've been seeing him--when I go out to the west coast. He went to see me, and I gave a talk in Santa Barbara at a public art conference. He came all the way up from Southern California. He was way down in Long Beach. So, you know. You make these connections with people. Like this piece I did in Saginaw, Michigan, the steel--the one that's the big half dome piece. I went to a steel company that had been there for four or five generations, and they really cared about the community you know, and did a good job. And it wasn't an art fabricator. I often don't go to art fabricators, but often I do. I do like working with very good art fabricators, but I've gotten some very good work done with just regular people.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: And most of these works have stayed--

NANCY HOLT: With me, you see, I've always done public art, from the very beginning. I mean I was doing it by nature, you know? And even people would invite me to be in a temporary art show. In the seventies, most sight specific people--people were doing these temporary structures, like Alice and Mary. They were doing these temporary wood structures that would come down at the end of the show. Of course, my indoor pieces are like that. But from the very beginning, anything outdoors I would always make it so strong that it was going to be there for centuries, and they generally ended up remaining. I mean even if it was a temporary art show, the work was still there like Art Park, [laughs] the work there I did in 1974--cools the water--they're not activated, you know the pools are there. They have put gravel in them, but any time I want, I can go up there and take the gravel out of the water. [Laughs.] So eighty--I would say ninety percent of my work is still permanent. And this is very different from other artists now, like in the eighties, who call themselves public artists, who really got into it in the early eighties. Like Mary Isin [ph], for example. Now she's known as a public artist, but she really didn't do a real permanent outdoor work until, maybe, 1982 or something like that.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. I'm thinking maybe it's a slightly different context, but I was talking with David Hammond, and he was saying it was very much his goal to put something in the community that would have an effect that would become part of the community. His work deals in a lot of social issues. Do you have a similar hope, that somebody will become landscaped, and change with landscape?

NANCY HOLT: Yes, well, I mean one thing in doing permanent work--the work goes through seasonal changes, there's no ideal time to see the work. You know, usually what is photographed on a nice, sunny, summer day, but I loved--and when I did lectures, I would show my work with snow. I've done work like up in Toronto, which is a drainage system, so it works the best in the rain. [Laughs.]

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right. See it in action.

NANCY HOLT: Yes. [Laughs.] So part of your question was see the work change. So I love to see the work change. A word like *Rock Rings* is mellowing, the rocks are getting to be more and more together, somehow. [Laughs.] I mean, they're bleeding into the mortar, and it all looks like one. I really like it. And *Sun Tunnels* is doing extremely well. They're still perfect. I thought they would be more like hairline cracks that open up, but that hasn't happened, yet. It's been a long time. And certainly of course with my sun related works, you know, the position of the sun, and always changing the nature of the work.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: As far as what he's talking about like having a political impact--well, I think the very fact that a work is necessary to the community. Like, if you do a park like *Dark Star Park* was the first park in the Roslyn section of Arlington, which is the fastest growing metropolis, really, in the United States. It's right across the Potomac, from Washington, D.C. They can't build high buildings in Washington, so they build them over in Roslyn. And they were building them a mile a minute, but not building any parks. They'd forgotten about people, so it was a tremendous need, and I felt I was meeting that need. That made a difference to me.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And trying to do *Sky Mound*. I say trying, because it keeps getting postponed, and I call it my life-long project. But that's you know, reclaiming a landfill, and transforming a dump into art, and there's a need for that, too. So in that sense, the work is political, but not in any kind of overt way. I think that art--well, for centuries, art was a necessary part of the environment. It met these needs of the people and then it got closeted in these museums and galleries.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Right.

NANCY HOLT: And that mindset is so strong, it has just latched onto brain cells, and there's that idea that--what is it called? It's the Sheldrake idea, Rupert Sheldrake. If I am offered resonance, or something like that--that there are cultural patterns that actually get distributed to the offspring, like just through resonance. And I really think that something like that has happened with the thinking with the galleries and museums. Well, it's also an art economic thing. Proliferation of museums that happened in the sixties and seventies and eighties, and the

economics of the galleries system, and art magazines catering to that, and critics only going in their little you know, gaze [laughs] to cover the things--I mean, it's a cycle. It's a system that feeds on itself.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: Mostly artworks are bought and sold as commodities.

NANCY HOLT: Right.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: And that being the strongest system going, or one of the strongest systems going, it very much transforms pictures and things, artworks--

NANCY HOLT: Well, it's strange working outside of the system as much as I do. I mean, I really just touch base with the system once in a great while. And I've lived without having any catalogs. You know, Europeans come over here to interview me, and to get me in a show. They go to the Museum of Modern Art to find, you to look, and they'll read about me before they visit me. Nothing.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: They don't have *Ransacked* or *Time Outs* it turns out?

NANCY HOLT: No, they do. They have my books, and they have my films, and they have my tapes, but you know, I haven't had a museum show and that's where you get a catalog. You have to have a museum show. Oh, I've had opportunities. I was very fussy, you know? I could have had all these mid-career things. I felt I had to have a lot of color. There was never a possibility, when it came along. So I've decided just to stay outside of the system. Why do I need that? I don't need that. I do all right without it.

SCOTT GUTTERMAN: That's all I got. [they laugh]

NANCY HOLT: Okay. [END OF INTERVIEW]