

SITE SANTA FE to Present *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson*

A groundbreaking exhibition placing two artistic practices in an  
intergenerational conversation

The exhibition is co-curated by artist Teresita Fernández and Lisa Le Feuvre, Executive  
Director of Holt/Smithson Foundation

Santa Fe, NM – May 21, 2024 – This July, SITE SANTA FE, in collaboration with artist Teresita Fernández and Holt/Smithson Foundation, presents the exhibition *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson*. Artist-led and conceptually driven, *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* is a subjective, intergenerational conversation between two practices, pulling the past into the present. The exhibition critically considers entanglements between place, site, seeing, and deep time through the artists' mutual engagement with material intelligence, geological agency, and cartographic fictions. Co-curated by Fernández and Lisa Le Feuvre, Executive Director of Holt/Smithson Foundation, the exhibition opens July 5, 2024, and will remain on view through October 28, 2024.

The exhibition is initiated by Fernández's long-term engagement with challenging socially constructed ideas about place and landscape and her immersive research on Smithson's art and ideas. For over 50 years Smithson's artistic practice has resonated with generations of artists and thinkers to consider the human impact on the surface of the planet. *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* brings, for the first time, Smithson's historic work into a direct conversation with an artist working today. Working with Holt/Smithson Foundation's collection and supported by key loans from museums around the country, Fernández and Le Feuvre worked to curate a selection of never-exhibited works by Smithson in dialogue with new and recent works by Fernández, offering an intimate exchange between a historic artist and an iconic contemporary artist.

“For the last thirty years my creative practice has unraveled ideas about land and landscape. To me, landscape is much more about what you don't see than what you do see,” says Teresita Fernández. “My work confronts these omissions and erasures by unearthing the layers of historic violence embedded in our ideas of place and site.

I'm interested in using the concept of landscape as a vehicle of critical engagement for actively locating ourselves in relation to the earth and to one another. I'm grateful to SITE SANTA FE and Holt/Smithson Foundation for collaborating with me on this exhibition and for amplifying perspectives that have historically been excluded from the discourse on art made with and about the land."

Both Fernández and Smithson's artistic investigations are rooted in conceptual, research-based practices that engage in intellectual questions and self-reflection in relation to matter, land, and place. Fernández's insistence on situating site and landscape in relation to human beings opens Smithson's work to be reexamined through the urgencies of the present. *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* will be installed through most of SITE SANTA FE's galleries in an immersive, winding configuration that intertwines both artists' practices, focusing on their creative engagement with the vast and intimate scales of continents and islands, inviting viewers to reflect on our planet and our relationships with the lands, seas, and skies that surround us.

The exhibition is built around artistic dialogue and a desire to reimagine historical assumptions and complexities of art addressing the land. The exhibition features over 30 works by Fernández made over the last three decades, including sculptures, site-specific installations, film, drawings, and new works created specifically for this context. Alongside this careful selection are over 30 works by Smithson spanning 1961 to 1973, a period when Smithson grappled with how the surface of our planet is shaped by human impacts on geological histories. *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* will be the largest display in a museum featuring Smithson's work since his 2004 retrospective.

Examining Smithson's and Fernández's works in unison creates an invitation to question and rethink the symbols and signifiers that are emblematic of Smithson's work: rocks, islands, palm trees, beaches, oceans, maps, and language that weave their way through his art and ideas. Throughout her work, Fernández has reimaged archipelagos, hurricanes, night skies, cave systems, oceans, dunes, underground rivers, and tropical forests in order to interrogate thresholds between natural phenomena and human-made devastation, centering the ways in which human beings are affected by the power systems that shape perceptions of place.

By rethinking the assigned meaning of these elements, *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* proposes a platform to question how place, land, and landscape are defined, critically asking who has agency in such spaces. To place these two names side by side is a provocation to initiate conversations across, between, and through intergenerational artistic production. Fernández takes a particular route in her conversation with Smithson, one which meanders through mangroves, islands, palm trees, roots, mirrors, and shorelines, unraveling points of connection and departure between the two artists. Her selection of never-before-shown and rarely seen works by Smithson offers an intimate perspective that distinctively comes from one artist questioning another.

“Holt/Smithson Foundation is committed to a critical engagement with why art matters. Artistic legacies are at their most powerful when they are addressed by artists working in our own times,” says Lisa Le Feuvre. “Teresita Fernández is an exceptional artist whose expansive approach to artmaking rethinks how we humans engage with the planet that we occupy, with an erudite attentiveness to the power of sculptural materiality. The conversation between Fernández and Smithson in this exhibition demonstrates the power of art to interrogate structures of power and perception.”

“*Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* is an exhibition that exemplifies SITE SANTA FE’s commitment to being an artist-centered program and an innovator in exhibition-making,” says Louis Grachos, Phillips Executive Director of SITE SANTA FE. “We are honored to have the opportunity to work with visionary artist Teresita Fernández and collaborate closely with Lisa Le Feuvre of Holt/Smithson Foundation for this unique intergenerational conversation between two vitally important artists.”

The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated publication with writings by both Fernández and Smithson, as well as commissioned critical texts, published in partnership with Radius Books.

SITE SANTA FE will celebrate the Grand Opening of *Teresita Fernández / Robert Smithson* during Tierra + Cosmos // Land + Cosmos, the organization’s Benefit Weekend (July 18-20, 2024), in honor of Teresita Fernández, featuring public programs including artist and

curator talks, a celebratory dinner under the stars, and other events. Find more information at [Tierra + Cosmos // Land + Cosmos - SITE SANTA FE](#).

### **ABOUT TERESITA FERNÁNDEZ**

Teresita Fernández (b. 1968) expansively rethinks what constitutes landscape. Her artistic practice and research move from the subterranean to the cosmic, from political borders to the elusive psychic landscapes we carry within. Unraveling the intimacies between matter, human beings, and locations, through large-scale sculptures, site-specific installations, film, and works on paper that are all materially and conceptually driven, Fernández seeks to reveal the inherent violence embedded in how we imagine and define place. Fernández's work poetically challenges ideas of power, visibility, and erasure in connection to site and landscape.

### **ABOUT ROBERT SMITHSON**

Robert Smithson (1938–1973) expanded what art could be and where it could be found. For over 50 years, Smithson's writings, artworks, and ideas have influenced generations of artists and thinkers to consider site-specificity and land in relation to conceptual and minimalist practices. From his landmark earthworks to his “quasi-minimalist” sculptures, Nonsites, writings, proposals, collages, drawings, and radical rethinking of landscape, Smithson's ideas remain relevant for our times. By investigating the conceptual and physical boundaries of knowledge, Smithson raised essential questions about our place in the world.

### **ABOUT HOLT/SMITHSON FOUNDATION**

Nancy Holt (1938-2014) and Robert Smithson (1938-1973) transformed the world of art and ideas. Holt/Smithson Foundation develops their distinctive creative legacies. Collaborating with artists, writers, thinkers, and institutions, Holt/Smithson Foundation realizes exhibitions, publishes books, initiates artist commissions, programs educational events, encourages research, and develops collections globally from its headquarters in New Mexico.

[www.holtsmithsonfoundation.org](http://www.holtsmithsonfoundation.org)

## **ABOUT SITE SANTA FE**

SITE SANTA FE is a dynamic, interdisciplinary contemporary arts institution guided by artists, rooted in New Mexico. Always placing artists at the center, SITE SANTA FE collaborates with a diverse range of artists to explore extraordinary ideas through innovative exhibitions and programs. SITE SANTA FE sits at the intersection of cultures and ideas, bridging local, regional, national, and international artistic communities, serving as a forum for creative expression and experimentation. SITE SANTA FE celebrates community and supports locally based artists through a variety of programmatic and exhibition opportunities. As a non-collecting contemporary arts institution, SITE SANTA FE remains flexible in order to respond to conversations of the moment and values the transformative experience of engaging with contemporary art.

[www.sitesantafe.org](http://www.sitesantafe.org)

## **Thank You**

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