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## Women Sculptors Today

**Working with Volume**

Featuring Judy Onofrio

# CELEBRATING NATURE

**“I work with the landscape, and I hope that the object and the land are equal parts.” — Maya Lin**

**M**any works of public sculpture are created to exist in or be part of the natural environment. Some not only interact with nature, they link architecture with its surroundings. Maya Lin's *The Wave Field* (near right) is located next to and has become part of the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan. Made of soil covered with grass, *Wave Field*'s **curving repeat patterns**, falling and rising five or six feet, suggest waves of water, air currents, radio, or light waves. Each set of curves blends into the next.



Viewers can **interact** with the work—walk across it, sit on the hills, find shelter in the valleys. Seen from the windows of surrounding buildings, the work's perfect **symmetry** (the composition is exactly the same on both sides), the **contrasting textures** of the windblown grass, the **convex and concave** shapes, and the **movement** caused by sun and shadow push aside the boundaries between art and nature.

*Tree/House* (above, right), by American sculptor Beth Galston is part of an outdoor sculpture park located just outside of New York City. Using wire mesh and metal tubing, the artist has constructed this **interactive** sculpture around four young birch trees. The **organic curves** of the trees will grow around and mesh with the **geometric angles** of the metal frame. The multilayered sculpture is an architectural enclosure in which to experience nature. As the artist puts it: “*Tree/House* is a place to dream and imagine, where one can be up in the air at the level of the treetops, viewing the New York skyline from a new perspective.”

Nancy Holt's public sculptures are also built outdoors. But they stand alone, usually in remote, out-of-the-way places. They emerge directly from the environment, and are connected to the geography and history of each site. *Sun Tunnels* (below, right) is located in the middle of the Utah desert. The work combines elements of contemporary

installation sculpture and those of an ancient solar observatory. In order to make hard-to-see astronomical events visible to the naked eye, *Sun Tunnels*'s four giant concrete tunnels are placed **diagonally** to each other in a large X shape. In this way they are able to frame sunrise and sunset on the shortest and longest day (called the solstice) of winter and summer. Holes drilled in the pipes are designed to isolate and project certain groups of stars onto the dark inside walls.

▶ **“I like my works to surround and enclose viewers while drawing their attention outward through layers of openings and tunnels.”**

— Nancy Holt

Nancy Holt b. 1938. *Sun Tunnels*, 1973-76  
Lucin, UT. 4 concrete tubes, each 18 feet long and 9 feet in diameter. ©Nancy Holt/Licensed by Vaga, New York, NY

▲ **“*The Wave Field* reveals the connectedness of art to landscape, and landscape as art.”**

— Maya Lin

Maya Lin b. 1959. *The Wave Field*, 1995. 90 x 90 feet. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Photo: Tim Thayer.



▲ **“My pieces create a sense of place, a moment of magic or transformation.”**

— Beth Galston

Beth Galston b. 1959. *Tree/House*, 1994. Expanded metal, steel tubing, 4 birch trees, 18 x 18 x 18 feet. Socrates Sculpture Park, NY. ©Beth Galston

