



VITO ACCONCI  
CARL ANDRE  
GERMANO CELANT  
PAULA COOPER  
WALTER DE MARIA  
VIRGINIA DWAN  
GIANFRANCO GORGONI  
MICHAEL HEIZER  
NANCY HOLT  
DENNIS OPPENHEIM  
CHARLES ROSS  
PAMELA SHARP  
WILLOUGHBY SHARP  
ROBERT SMITHSON  
HARALD SZEEMANN  
LAWRENCE WEINER

# troublemakers

## THE STORY OF LAND ART

SUMMITRIDGE PICTURES PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH RSJC LLC A FILM BY JAMES CRUMP "TROUBLEMAKERS"  
MICHAEL HEIZER WALTER DE MARIA ROBERT SMITHSON DENNIS OPPENHEIM  
SOUND DESIGN BY GARY GEGAN AND RICK ASH CINEMATOGRAPHY BY ALEX THEMISTOCLEOUS AND ROBERT O'HAIRE  
EDITED BY NICK TAMBURRI PRODUCER FARLEY ZIEGLER PRODUCER MICHEL COMTE  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER RONNIE SASSOON PRODUCED BY JAMES CRUMP WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JAMES CRUMP

Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, 1970. Photograph © David Maisel.  
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THE STORY OF LAND ART

## PRESS KIT

### **Troublemakers: The Story of Land Art** **A film by James Crump**

Featuring Germano Celant, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim, Robert Smithson, Nancy Holt, Vito Acconci, Virginia Dwan, Charles Ross, Paula Cooper, Willoughby Sharp, Pamela Sharp, Lawrence Weiner, Carl Andre, Gianfranco Gorgoni, Harald Szeemann.

Running time 72 minutes. Summitridge Pictures and RSJC LLC Present a Film by James Crump. Produced by James Crump. Executive Producer Ronnie Sassoon. Producer Farley Ziegler. Producer Michel Comte. Edited by Nick Tamburri. Cinematography by Alex Themistocleous and Robert O'Haire. Sound Design Gary Gegan and Rick Ash. Written and Directed by James Crump.

*Troublemakers* unearths the history of land art in the tumultuous late 1960s and early 1970s. The film features a cadre of renegade New York artists that sought to transcend the limitations of painting and sculpture by producing earthworks on a monumental scale in the desolate desert spaces of the American southwest. Today these works remain impressive not only for the sheer audacity of their makers but also for their out-sized ambitions to break free from traditional norms. The film casts these artists in a heroic light, which is exactly how they saw themselves. Iconoclasts who changed the landscape of art forever, these revolutionary, antagonistic creatives risked their careers on radical artistic change and experimentation, and took on the establishment to produce art on their own terms. The film includes rare footage and interviews which unveil the enigmatic lives and careers of storied artists Robert Smithson (*Spiral Jetty*), Walter De Maria (*The Lightning Field*) and Michael Heizer (*Double Negative*); a headstrong troika that established the genre. As the film makes clear, in making works that can never be possessed as an object in a gallery, these troublemakers stand in marked contrast to the hyper-speculative contemporary art world of today.

*Troublemakers* points out that land art was rife with contradiction and conflict, a site where architecture, landscape, sculpture, technology, archaeology and photography would all converge. Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, Cold War anxieties and other political uncertainties of the nuclear age, land artists often subscribed to a dystopian view of the future that questioned the military-industrial complex, consumerism and the banalities of modern life and culture.

The period was also marked by the release of the first image of the entire earth. Produced by NASA, such images turned the conceptual space of earth into a two-dimensional sphere; an object on which to conceivably draw, design and create. The most compelling land art sites offered viewers a means to imagine and negotiate the scale of the human body with the enormity of our planet. Land artists were exploring a larger canvas to work on while simultaneously seeking to create works that induced awe in the viewer, thus producing a new kind of pilgrimage and a new kind of visceral viewing experience. The film shows how nature performs in these works and alters them over time,

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sometimes radically reclaiming them, creating an ongoing competitive dialogue between artist and the natural world.

Using original footage produced with helicopters and rare re-mastered vintage footage from the period, Crump's cinematic journey takes viewers on a thrill ride through the most significant land art sites in California, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah, an immersive and physically transportive experience that movie goers will not forget.

### About the Director

**James Crump** made his directorial debut at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival with *Black White + Gray*, featuring the influential and legendary curator and art collector Sam Wagstaff and artist Robert Mapplethorpe. The film began airing on the Sundance Channel in March 2008. In 2013, *Black White + Gray* was named among Blouin ArtInfo's 20 Must-Watch Artist Documentaries.

A curator and art historian, Crump is also the author or co-author of numerous books and has published widely in the fields of modern and contemporary art. *Troublemakers: The Story of Land Art* is his second feature documentary.

### About the Producers

**Ronnie Sassoon** is an art historian, designer and collector of art of the 1960s and 1970s, chiefly zero and arte povera. After an early career of fashion design and advertising, she subsequently worked closely with her late husband, Vidal Sassoon, in product development, fragrance, advertising, marketing and promotion of the Vidal Sassoon brand worldwide. Today she resides in the second of two Richard Neutra homes for which she personally directed the restoration. Prior to this, she oversaw the restoration of architect Hal Levitt's most important Beverly Hills residence. She has served on the boards of art museums worldwide.

**Farley Ziegler** most recently produced the BAFTA-nominated film *Tim's Vermeer*, produced with Penn Jillette and directed by Teller, which followed inventor Tim Jenison and his pursuit to paint a Vermeer. She previously produced with Penn the hit comedy documentary, *The Aristocrats*. With producing partner Christina Ricci, she created and ran Blaspheme Films, their production company. As a production executive at Single Cell Pictures, she was instrumental in bringing Charlie Kaufman's *Being John Malkovich* to the screen. She served as story editor and creative executive for director Sean Penn at Clyde Is Hungry Films. She began her career in film as assistant to director David Fincher, working with the director at Propaganda Films on his groundbreaking commercials and music videos.

**Michel Comte** is a Swiss-born filmmaker and one of the most sought-after fashion and magazine photographers in the world. Comte's latest film is *The Girl From Nagasaki* which premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and is set to release in 2015 which marks the seventieth anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*, Comte has portrayed

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numerous celebrities from the world of art, film and entertainment, from Julian Schnabel, Jeremy Irons and Demi Moore to Mike Tyson and Michael Schumacher. Comte's advertising clients include Armani, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, Lancôme, Revlon, Ferrari, Jaguar and Mercedes Benz. On photo assignments for the international Red Cross as well as his own Michel Comte Water Foundation he has travelled to war zones and unstable areas in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sudan and Cambodia.

### Select Biographies

**Carl Andre** (born 1935) is an American minimalist artist recognized for his ordered linear format and grid format sculptures. His sculptures range from large public artworks to more intimate tile patterns arranged on the floor of an exhibition space. He is represented by Paula Cooper Gallery in New York, Konrad Fischer Galerie in Düsseldorf and Berlin, and Sadie Coles HQ in London.

**Vito Acconci** (born 1940) has been a vital presence in contemporary art since the late 1960s; his confrontational and ultimately political works have evolved from writing through conceptual art, bodyworks, performance, film, video, multimedia installation and architectural sculpture. Since the late 1980s he has focused on architecture and design projects.

**Germano Celant** (born 1940) is internationally acknowledged for his theories on *arte povera*. He is the author of more than one hundred publications, including both books and catalogues. He has curated hundreds of exhibitions in the most prominent international museums and institutions worldwide. Since 1977, he has been a contributing editor to *Artforum* and since 1991 he has been a contributing editor to *Interview*.

**Paula Cooper** (born 1938) was deemed "the idol of every young female dealer" by one observer. Cooper has lorded over the avant-garde art scene since the 1960s, when she ran a co-op gallery on West Broadway. Her eponymous New York gallery founded in 1968 is primarily known for the minimalist and conceptual artists it has represented and whose careers it helped launch. Such artists include Carl Andre, Jennifer Bartlett, Lynda Benglis, Jonathan Borofsky, Sophie Calle, Mark di Suvero, Walter De Maria and Sol LeWitt, among others.

**Walter De Maria** (1935 to 2013) was an American artist, sculptor, illustrator and composer. He lived and worked in New York City. De Maria's artistic practice was connected with minimal art, conceptual art, and land art of the 1960s. He realized land art projects in the deserts of the American southwest, with the aim of creating situations where the landscape and nature, light and weather would become an intense, physical and psychic experience. In his work, De Maria stressed that the work of art is intended to make the viewer think about the earth and its relationship to the universe. *Lightning Field* (1977) is De Maria's best-known work. It consists of 400 stainless steel posts arranged in a calculated grid over an area of one mile by one kilometer.

**Virginia Dwan** (born October 18, 1931) is an American art collector, art patron, philanthropist and visionary founder of the Dwan Light Sanctuary in Montezuma, New Mexico. A former gallerist,

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owner and executive director of the Dwan Gallery Los Angeles (1959–1967) and Dwan Gallery New York (1965–1971), a contemporary art gallery distinguished for its ground breaking exhibitions *10* and *Earth Works*, that helped identify the American movements of Minimal Art, Conceptual Art, and Land Art. Among the artists Dwan represented are Carl Andre, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Sol LeWitt, Walter De Maria, Dan Flavin, William Anastasi, Charles Ross and Fred Sandback.

**Gianfranco Gorgoni** (born 1941) is an Italian-born photographer who in the late 1960s and early 1970s photographed visual artists of the avant-garde. Gorgoni is chiefly recognized for his artful documentation of several important land art sites including Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* and Michael Heizer's *Double Negative*, and non-extant works by Walter De Maria. In addition to Smithson, Heizer and De Maria, among the artists Gorgoni has portrayed include Andy Warhol, Richard Serra, Joseph Beuys, Sol LeWitt and Agnes Martin.

**Michael Heizer** (born 1944) with Walter De Maria and Robert Smithson helped to create a new genre of land art or earth art which used the earth as its medium. After briefly attending the San Francisco Art Institute in 1963–64, he moved to New York in 1966. In 1967 Heizer began creating large earthworks, primarily in California and Nevada. For his first one-person show, at the Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich, in 1969, he removed 1,000 tons of earth in a reversed conical shape to create *Munich Depression*. He followed this with *Double Negative*, a displacement of over 240,000 tons of earth to make two vast incisions opposite one another on the edge of Virgin River on Mormon Mesa in Nevada. Heizer's next one-person show was at the Dwan Gallery, New York, in 1970, and that same year he exhibited in the International Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Major exhibitions of his work have been staged at institutions such as the Museum Folkwang, Essen (1979), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (1984). Heizer lives in Nevada, where he continues to work on *City*, a land art complex begun in 1972.

**Nancy Holt** (1938 to 2014) was an American artist most known for her public sculpture, installation art and land art. Throughout her career, Holt also produced works in other media, including film, photography, and writing artist's books. Three years after graduating from Tufts University, she married fellow artist Robert Smithson in 1963. Her involvement with photography and camera optics are thought to have influenced her later earthworks, which are "literally seeing devices, fixed points for tracking the positions of the sun, earth and stars." Today Holt is most widely known for her large-scale environmental work, *Sun Tunnels* (1973-6) in the Great Basin Desert in Utah.

**Dennis Oppenheim** (1938 to 2011) was an American conceptual artist, performance artist, earth artist, sculptor and photographer. From 1966 to 1968, Oppenheim's ephemeral earthworks included shapes cut in ice and snow, such as *Annual Rings* (1968), a series of rings carved in the snow on the United States/Canada border and *Gallery Transplant* (1969), in which he cut the outline of a gallery in the snow. Oppenheim was included with Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson and Walter De Maria in the important 1968 *Earth Works* exhibition at the Dwan Gallery in New

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York and in the 1969 *Earth Art* exhibition curated by Willoughby Sharp at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

**Charles Ross** (born in 1937) is an American sculptor and earthwork artist. In 1965, Ross began creating prism sculptures—minimal geometrical objects as perceptual vessels that alter the perception of the environments that surround them. These he first began exhibiting in one-person exhibitions at the Dwan Gallery in New York. In 1971, Ross began work on an earthwork known as *Star Axis*, which is a naked eye observatory and architectonic sculpture. *Star Axis*'s geometry is derived from the shifting relationship of earth to the sun and the north star.

**Willoughby Sharp** (1936 to 2008) was an internationally known artist, independent curator, independent publisher, gallerist, teacher, author, and telecom activist. Sharp curated the historically significant 1969 *Earth Art* exhibition at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York which was the first museum exhibition devoted to the genre. *Earth Art* included the work of Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria, Dennis Oppenheim, and Jan Dibbets among other artists. Sharp also co-founded the progressive art journal *Avalanche* (in publication from 1970 to 1976).

**Robert Smithson** (1938 to 1973) was an American artist famous for his use of photography in relation to sculpture and land art, of which he was an important forerunner. His most famous work is *Spiral Jetty* (1970), a three-part work whose most important component is a 1,500-foot long spiral-shaped jetty extending into the Great Salt Lake in Utah constructed from rocks, earth, and salt. On July 20, 1973, Smithson died in a plane crash, while surveying sites for his work *Amarillo Ramp* in the vicinity of Amarillo, Texas. Despite his early death, and relatively few surviving major works, Smithson has a following amongst many contemporary artists. In recent years, Tacita Dean, Sam Durant, Renée Green, Lee Ranaldo, Vik Muniz, Mike Nelson, and the Bruce High Quality Foundation have all made homages to Smithson's works.

**Lawrence Weiner** (born in 1942) is one of the central figures in the formation of conceptual art in the 1960s. His work often takes the form of typographic texts. Weiner created his first book *Statements* in 1968, a small 64-page paperback with texts describing projects. *Statements* is considered one of the seminal conceptual artist's books of the era. He was a contributor to the famous *Xeroxbook* also published by Seth Siegelaub in 1968. Weiner's composed texts describe process, structure, and material, and though Weiner's work is almost exclusively language-based, he regards his practice as sculpture, citing the elements described in the texts as his materials. In 1969, he was among the American contingent of artists that participated in the legendary exhibition curated by Swiss curator, Harald Szeemann, entitled *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle Bern.



# The New York Times

## Black White + Gray: A Portrait of Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe

A Collector and His Polaroid Passions

By STEPHEN HOLDEN

James Crump's documentary, "Black White + Gray: A Portrait of Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe," is a potent exercise in art-world mythography that might be nicknamed "The Prince and the Punk."

The prince was Wagstaff, a suave, dashing handsome museum curator and pioneering collector of photographs from an aristocratic New York background of which he was exceedingly proud. His protégé and lover, Mapplethorpe, who became a famous (and infamous) photographer, was the punk

who grew up in a working-class neighborhood of Queens and, under Wagstaff's tutelage, ascended to the upper reaches of art-world society.

Mapplethorpe, whom Wagstaff called "my shy pornographer," was also the older man's guide to the gay demimonde of extreme sex and drugs that flourished in New York in the 1970s and '80s and that provided the subject matter for Mapplethorpe's most notorious photographs. Both men died of AIDS (Wagstaff in 1987 and Mapplethorpe two years later).

The reputations of its subjects are almost certain to benefit from the film's portrayal of them as visionary aesthetes and collaborative geniuses at career management and the promotion of photography as a fine art with a high price tag. In the movie's many pictures of them, they exude the glamorous mystique of insolent movie and rock stars: think of James Dean and Jim Morrison but with a kinky gay twist. Talent, beauty, sex, death and finally pots of money; their story is a perfect storm around which to spin a profitable legend.

As affectionately remembered by the poet and rocker Patti Smith, who once lived with Mapplethorpe, and by art-world luminaries in New York and London who speak in grander, chillier tones, Wagstaff and Mapplethorpe were a diabolical power couple who lived and died in a mad pursuit of aesthetic

perfection and erotic sensation. Ms. Smith loved them both, and her tender recollections give the movie, narrated in lofty memorial tones by Joan Juliet Buck, a necessary thread of warmth.

Wagstaff was Mapplethorpe's ardent champion and, in some people's eyes, his inventor. Whatever the power dynamics between them (one commentator asserts that Mapplethorpe coldly used his mentor), they emerge as latter-day fin-de-siècle leather dandies, reminiscent in some ways of Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas. An intriguing fact is that they were both born on Nov. 4, exactly 25 years apart.

Because Mapplethorpe's story is already familiar, the movie devotes most of its time to Wagstaff, whose personal history is a classic case of repressed or closeted homosexuality belatedly and furiously unleashed. He grew up on Central Park South, attended Hotchkiss and Yale, was a fixture on the debutante circuit, joined the Navy in 1941 and later worked in advertising, which he hated.

In 1958 he enrolled at the New York University Institute of Fine Arts, studied art history and became a curator at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, where he arranged a major abstract expressionist exhibition, then startled the art world with his show "Black, White and Gray," the first minimalist exhibition at a major museum. He was 51 when he met the 26-year-old Mapplethorpe at a party.

Upon inheriting several million dollars he bought Mapplethorpe a studio loft on Bond Street and embarked on a frenzied shopping spree for photographs. His taste might be described as feverishly impassioned voyeurism closely related to his quest for sexual pleasure. In "A Book of Photographs," an influential selection of his fa-



FRANCESCO SCAVULLO EDITIONS

The collector Sam Wagstaff, left, and the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

## Black White + Gray: A Portrait of Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe

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favorite pictures, he wrote that they reflected "the pleasure of looking and the pleasure of seeing," which he compared to "watching people through an open window."

In addition to sexy pictures like the homoerotic photographs of George Platt Lynes, Wagstaff admired tough ethnographic and medical images. Every one of the pictures shown in the movie is haunting, with ominous undertones. No sooner had he amassed one of the world's most valuable collections than he sold it in 1984 to the J. Paul Getty Museum for \$5 million, and pursued a new passion, collecting American silver. One person who met him on the street in his final years remembers him as "an old man with AIDS dragging plastic bags of silver."

Now that the life and times of Andy Warhol seem to have been strip mined, at least for the moment, "Black White + Gray" sets the stage for a similar operation. Get ready.