



"This Ski-Resort-Turned-Sculpture-Park Carries the Spirit of Land Art into a New Era"

By Casey Lesser

October 12, 2026



Nancy Holt, *Starfire* (1986) at Powder Art Foundation. Courtesy of Powder Art Foundation. Photo by McCade Gordon for Powder Art Foundation.

Pioneering land artist Nancy Holt felt connected to the desert of the American West from her very first visit in 1968. A few years later, she discovered a stretch of "flat desert ringed by low mountains" in northwestern Utah, where she would create her best-known work, *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76): a quartet of 18-foot-long concrete cylinders positioned to capture the sunrise and sunset during the solstices. "I wanted to bring the vast space of the desert back to human scale," Holt wrote in 1977.

JESSICA
SILVERMAN

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

In the 1960s and '70s, while land artists like Holt, Robert Smithson, and Michael Heizer headed into remote landscapes, away from cities and galleries, another outdoor model was gaining ground. Founded in 1960, Storm King Art Center in New York's Hudson Valley helped popularize the modern sculpture park. In the decades since, destinations like Naoshima Island in Japan and Inhotim in Brazil have drawn droves of art lovers into nature.



Visitors to Powder Art Foundation's fall open house viewing Xu Zhen, *Hello* (2021-22). Courtesy of the artist and Powder Art Foundation. Photo by McCade Gordon for Powder Art Foundation.

Established in 2024, Powder Art Foundation (PAF) has been taking its own novel approach to the sculpture park, installing ambitious outdoor artworks across 8,000 acres of Powder Mountain, a sprawling ski resort in northern Utah. In winter, you can ski past a Jenny Holzer boulder, pause to ring a bronze bell by Davina Semo hanging from the trees, or glide beneath a string of chandeliers by Kayode Ojo. In summer and fall, the same works can be explored for free, along hiking trails that wind through the mountain.

Powder Art Foundation's vision

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

Powder is home to 16 artworks and counting, with new additions added each year and a forthcoming pavilion that will house a work by James Turrell. Led by chief creative officer Alex Zhang, PAF is transforming the ski resort, which is owned by Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings. The pair bonded over their shared love of Naoshima, known for its incredible art and architecture, though Hastings had a more practical pitch for Powder: "How about like Storm King on a mountain?"



Kayode Ojo *"...and that they hadn't heard us calling, still do not hear us, up here in the tree house..."* (2025) at Powder Art Foundation. Courtesy of Powder Art Foundation.

Zhang sought to find out: "Could you essentially retrofit a ski resort into a sculpture park, but still keep the soul and the character of the resort intact?" He envisioned the art program as a "whole new cultural layer" extending across the mountain. There's no target number of works, and no set criteria for the type of art or artist—each piece must feel right for the place.

Utah's history of land art and its ancient Indigenous petroglyphs were also important to the vision. Holt's *Sun Tunnels* and Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) are both within driving distance of Powder Mountain. And PAF partners with Dia Art Foundation, which owns those two works and

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

collaborates with the Holt-Smithson Foundation to preserve them. Holt is represented at Powder, too: Her *Starfire* (1986), comprising eight fire pits arranged to mirror the Big Dipper and North Star, has found a permanent home on top of the mountain, facing the sunset. For his part, Hastings said he doesn't collect art for himself; rather, "the collection is here," shared on the mountain.



PAF open house visitors hike beside Rose Wylie, *Pale-Pink Pineapple/Bomb* (2025) at Powder Art Foundation. Courtesy of Powder Art Foundation. Photo by McCade Gordon for Powder Art Foundation.

Hiking along the Powder art trail

One October morning, I joined a guided hike along the art trail, which you can start at the top of the mountain. The first three sculptures we encountered, all new for the 2026 season, sit nestled among tall evergreens and the flickering yellow leaves of aspen trees.

The first work is Rose Wylie's *Pale-Pink Pineapple/Bomb* (2025), a glossy, candy-colored painted bronze that stands more than 10 feet tall and resembles the titular fruit, with a cheeky

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508

fleshiness. It's a rare work for Wylie, who is primarily known for her paintings, and marks her first public sculpture in the U.S.



Jenny Holzer, *THE EYE* (2026) at Powder Art Foundation. ©Jenny Holzer. Featuring *The Promontory Moment from Nature* by May Swenson ©1994 by the Literary Estate of May Swenson. Used with permission of the Literary Estate of May Swenson. Photo by Kim Raff. Courtesy of Powder Art Foundation.

Just minutes away sits Holzer's *THE EYE* (2026), a 300-million-year-old quartzite boulder engraved with a line by Utah-born poet May Swenson's work *The Promontory Moment* (1956): "The eye also a sun wanders and all that it sees it owns." After a painstaking search for the right rock, Holzer had the text inscribed on-site to preserve the surrounding landscape. The piece reflects humanity's long history of leaving marks on the land and is the first of a body of work Holzer will create on the mountain.

Farther along is Shanghai-based artist Xu Zhen's *Hello* (2021-22), a twisting, snakelike Corinthian column that exemplifies his practice of colliding East and West. The work is perfectly perched on a mound, encircled by an aspen grove, and, like several works, can be seen from above on the ski lift.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508



(Right) Xu Zhen, *Hello* (2021-22) at Powder Art Foundation. Courtesy of the artist and Powder Art Foundation. Photo by McCade Gordon for Powder Art Foundation.

(Left) Visitors ring Davina Semo's *Mother* (2020-24) at Powder Art Foundation. Courtesy of the artist and Powder Art Foundation. Photo by McCade Gordon for Powder Art Foundation.

One of the art trail's most striking works is Nobuo Sekine's *Phase of Nothingness – Stone Stack* (1970/2025). The Japanese Mono-ha artist, who died in 2019, conceived the work in 1970 but never saw it realized. More than five decades later, his estate helped bring it to life. Rising about 19 feet, the sculpture is a pile of smooth stones gently leaning into the sky, set against a majestic view of the surrounding slopes and trees.

Perhaps the most unexpected work is Ojo's *"...and that they hadn't heard us calling, still do not hear us, up here in the tree house..."* (2025), 21 crystal chandeliers suspended among the trees. Bought from Amazon and reinforced to withstand the mountain's extreme weather, the ordinary fixtures take on an otherworldly presence.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508



Installation view of Nobuo Sekine, *Phase of Nothingness – Stone Stack* (1970/2025) at Powder Art Foundation. © Nobuo Sekine Estate. Courtesy of Powder Art Foundation. Photo by McCade Gordon for Powder Art Foundation.

Skiing with art

Come ski season, the experience transforms. Ojo's chandeliers sparkle above the snow, and Sekine's stones rise from a blanket of white. The resort has a team of "terrain specialists," effectively art handlers on snowboards, who maintain the works through winter.

Semo's three patinated bronze bells, *Mother* (2020–24), *Listener* (2020–24), and *Reflector* (2025), hang from trees near the tops of challenging runs, inviting skiers to ring them before descending.

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508



Installation view of Davina Semo, *Listener* (2020–2024) at Powder Art Foundation. Courtesy of Powder Art Foundation.

"I was thinking about skiing as an activity that's both exhilarating and where you're in your own head," Semo told me. "This moment of interiority where you're skiing and being able to have a moment of reflection before you go down a run."

Semo first visited Powder Mountain before much of the art had been installed. "It was kind of mind-boggling to imagine getting to put the work here," she said. "The landscape is so vast and natural."

It's similar to the overwhelming scale Holt faced in the desert, and an idea that inspired Zhang early on: "that relationship from the body to the art to the landscape."

**JESSICA
SILVERMAN**

621 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108
jessicasilvermangallery.com +1 415 255 9508