

Decades before computer programs and smartphone apps made digital manipulation commonplace, the photocopier offered novel ways to transform images. Negotiating the device’s associations with reproducibility and disposability, photocopy artists produced a variety of small edition prints.

The machine’s democratic availability at offices, local copy shops, and eventually people’s homes, as well as the low cost, enabled artists to experiment outside the confines of a traditional studio. Using the copier as both a camera and printing press, they achieved imaginative, often unexpected results.

Drawn from the Whitney’s collection, Experiments in Electrostatics focuses on three artists and one collective—Edward Meneely, Lesley Schiff, Robert Whitman, and the International Society of Copier Artists. The exhibition includes still lifes, portraits, abstractions, and collages, highlighting the possibilities for self-expression through a tool designed for easy duplication.

Experiments in Electrostatics: Photocopy Art from the Whitney’s Collection, 1966–1986 will be on view in the Susan and John Hess Family Gallery on the Museum’s third floor.

This exhibition is organized by Michelle Donnelly, curatorial fellow.
About the Whitney
The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists at a time when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for more than eighty years. The core of the Whitney’s mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists themselves, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art
Where We Are: Selections from the Whitney’s Collection
An Incomplete History of Protest:
Selections from the Whitney’s Collection, 1940–2017
Do Ho Suh: 95 Horatio Street
Calder: Hypermobility
Toyin Ojih Odutola: To Wander Determined
Jimmie Durham: At the Center of the World
Laura Owens
Experiments in Electrostatics:
Photocopy Art from the Whitney’s Collection, 1966–1986
Grant Wood: American Gothic and Other Fables
David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm; Friday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm. Closed Tuesday, except in July and August. Adults: $25. Full-time students and visitors 65 & over: $18. Visitors 18 years & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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