

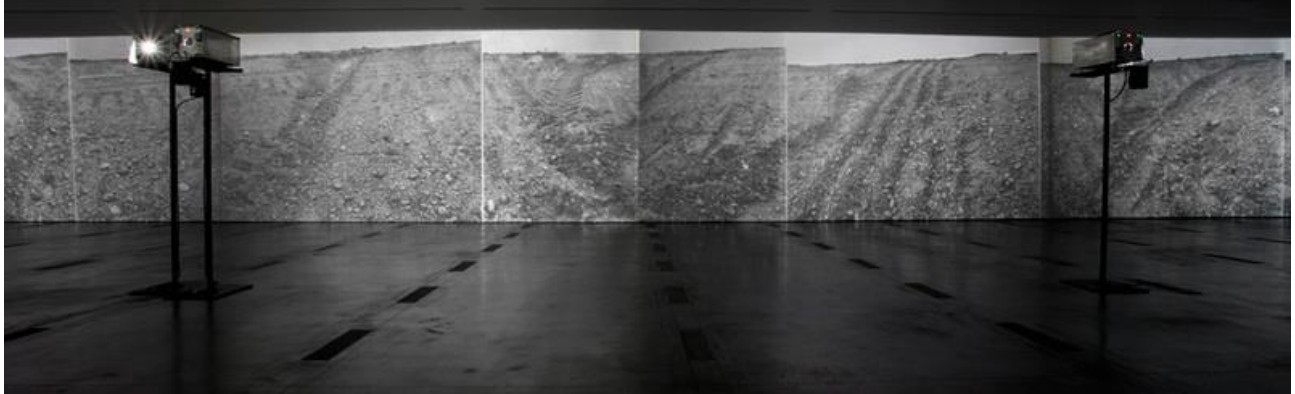
WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
Press Office

99 Gansevoort Street
New York City, NY 10014

pressoffice@whitney.org
(212) 570-3633

MEDIA ALERT



Michael Heizer (b. 1944), *Actual Size: Munich Rotary*, 1970. Six custom made aluminum projectors with steel stands and six black-and-white film transparencies mounted between glass. Dimensions variable. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Gift of Virginia Dwan 96.137
Photography © Museum Associates/ LACMA, CA

OPEN PLAN: MICHAEL HEIZER

MARCH 25–APRIL 10, 2016

Currently underway at the Whitney Museum of American Art is *Open Plan*, an experimental five-part exhibition using the Museum's dramatic fifth-floor as a single open gallery, unobstructed by interior walls. The largest column-free museum exhibition space in New York, the Neil Bluhm Family Galleries measure 18,200 square feet and feature windows with striking views east into the city and west to the Hudson River, making for an expansive and inspiring canvas. Since the late 1960s, Michael Heizer (b. 1944) has engaged with the natural environment to produce large-scale works of Land art. Many of these works are relatively inaccessible, located far from cities or else temporary in nature. From March 25 – April 10, *Open Plan: Michael Heizer* brings *Actual Size: Munich Rotary* (1970) into the space of the gallery. This is the first time this iconic work in the Whitney's collection will be shown in New York.

In 1969 Heizer excavated a form from the earth in an underdeveloped area on the outskirts of Munich, Germany, creating a negative space that he titled *Munich Depression*. Measuring one hundred feet in diameter, the excavation sloped very subtly upward from its center, which was sixteen feet deep. The work was destroyed a few months later, but not before Heizer made a complete 360-degree record of it comprising nine photographs taken from within the depression. Heizer subsequently developed a system of slide projections that allow his images of the depression to appear on the walls of a large interior space at actual size, as the title, *Actual Size: Munich Rotary*, suggests. The idea was to record the experience of standing at its center, where viewers would begin to lose track of the horizon as though the depression were endless. In the artist's words: "There is no beginning. There is no edge. . . . It was evanescent." Its photographic form does not simply document *Munich Depression*; it creates a parallel, independent work that emphasizes the tension between real space and its photographic counterpart.

In 1970, when *Actual Size: Munich Rotary* was made, slide projectors capable of enlarging images to over sixteen feet high were not commercially available. The ones used for this exhibition at the Whitney, which are part of the work, were specially designed and built by the inventor Maris Ambats. The Whitney acquired this pivotal work in 1996 and has worked in close consultation with the artist to restore it to its original appearance. Now, the Museum also has the space required to exhibit it.

Open Plan: Michael Heizer is organized by Deputy Director for International Initiatives and Senior Curator Donna De Salvo and Melva Bucksbaum Associate Director for Conservation and Research Carol Mancusi-Ungaro.

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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.

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