

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
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PRESS RELEASE

WHITNEY MUSEUM EXPLORES RARELY SEEN WORKS BY ROY LICHTENSTEIN CREATED IN THE LAST YEAR OF THE ARTIST'S LIFE



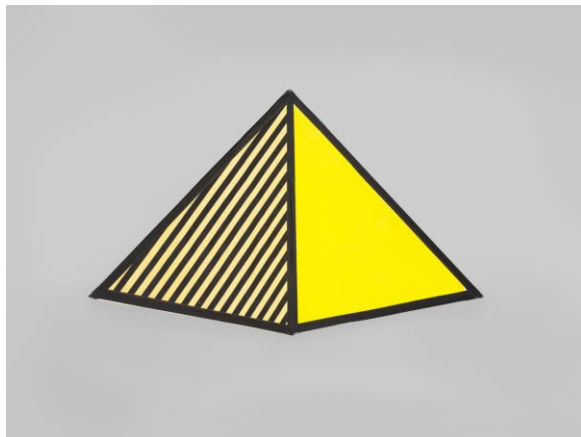
Now on view, Roy Lichtenstein: 1997 is a focused exhibition highlighting rarely seen works from the last year of the pioneering Pop artist's life.

New York, NY, September 17, 2026 — The Whitney Museum of American Art's current exhibition [Roy Lichtenstein: 1997](#) examines the final year of the artist's life and work. Already an established painter and Pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997) continued to develop his studio practice at age 73, pursuing ambitious projects, including two mural commissions, several large-scale sculptures, and a new series of prints. The exhibition highlights a period of sustained innovation for Lichtenstein as he expanded his visual vocabulary while continuing to engage with many of the themes and image references that shaped his career. Bringing together studies, prints, models, and other ephemera, many from the Whitney's collection, *Roy Lichtenstein: 1997* offers a focused look at his experimentation and ongoing interest in new technologies and their effects on image making. On view on the Museum's 3rd floor through June 1, 2027, this exhibition is presented in conjunction with *Roy Lichtenstein: Like New*, a major exhibition opening at the Whitney on October 11.

In 1997, Lichtenstein remained as innovative and productive as ever, working on a variety of adventurous projects decades after he helped introduce broader audiences to Pop art through his celebrated paintings inspired by comics and American consumer culture. Throughout his career, Lichtenstein's palette consisted mainly of primary colors and his signature bold black outlines. In his later years, however, he began to incorporate vibrant highlights of mint green and turquoise, coral and cyan, and moved away from using heavy outlines that characterized his earlier work, resulting in images that responded to the aesthetics of the emerging digital age. Even as he pursued new directions, Lichtenstein continued to reuse images and motifs from his own work, such as pyramids and brushstrokes, as well as referencing iconic works by artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Henri Matisse, as he had done throughout his career.

"Though still recognizably his own, these works attest to Lichtenstein's remarkable openness even five decades into his career—open not only to developments in art and technology, but to new techniques and approaches in his own working process," said co-organizer David Crane, Curatorial Research Associate at the Whitney Museum. "Because many of the works on view remain unrealized or unfinished, they provide a rare glimpse into the artist's hand at work."

"As a way to build off conversations prompted by the 5th floor's *Roy Lichtenstein: Like New* exhibition, David and I were drawn to several of the permanent collection's unfinished prototypes and studies from 1997," said co-organizer Nakai Falcón, Curatorial Assistant at the Whitney. "Engaging with the late-90s dawn of the internet, Lichtenstein's final experimental gestures serve as a visionary bridge between the constraints of physical reality and a transcendent future."



In September 1997, Lichtenstein died unexpectedly after falling ill the month prior, leaving a number of works unfinished. Several works were fabricated or completed posthumously, with others surviving only as sketches and maquettes. Among the works on view is *Chapel of the Eucharist Mural (Study)*, 1997, a study related to a mural for the Padre Pio Pilgrimage Church in San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy. Renzo Piano, the architect responsible for the Whitney Museum's current building in downtown Manhattan, was commissioned to design the church and invited Lichtenstein to contribute a mural to the site. Other projects include studies for a proposal from the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, to create a pair of murals for the building's lobby. With *Bellagio Hotel Mural: Still Life with Reclining Nude (Study)*, 1997, Lichtenstein explores the use

of color outlines and experiments with the flattening of perspectives in interior spaces. Seen together, the featured works reveal the developments in Lichtenstein's practice and approaches at the end of his career, while illuminating the breadth of work underway during his final months.

Roy Lichtenstein: 1997 is organized by David Crane, Curatorial Research Associate, and Nakai Falcón, Curatorial Assistant.

Press Kit

For press images, the exhibition checklist, wall labels, exhibition text, and other materials, please visit whitney.org/press/lichtenstein-1997.

PRESS CONTACT

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EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Generous support for *Roy Lichtenstein: 1997* is provided by David Bolger.

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 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 ninety 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, 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.

Whitney Museum Land Acknowledgment

The Whitney is located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape. The name Manhattan comes from their word Mannahatta, meaning "island of many hills." The Museum's current site is close to land that was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Sapponckanikan

("tobacco field"). The Whitney acknowledges the displacement of this region's original inhabitants and the Lenape diaspora that exists today.

As a museum of American art in a city with vital and diverse communities of Indigenous people, the Whitney recognizes the historical exclusion of Indigenous artists from its collection and program. The Museum is committed to addressing these erasures and honoring the perspectives of Indigenous artists and communities as we work for a more equitable future. To read more about the Museum's Land Acknowledgment, [visit the Museum's website](#).

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors twenty-five years and under and Whitney members: FREE. The Museum offers FREE admission and special programming for visitors of all ages every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month.

Image credit:

Lead image: Roy Lichtenstein, *Bellagio Hotel Mural: Interior with Painting of Reclining Nude (Study)*, 1997. Collage and graphite pencil on board: sheet, 36 × 51 3/4 in. (91.4 × 131.4 cm); mount, 38 × 52 7/8 in. (96.5 × 134.3 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Roy Lichtenstein Study Collection, gift of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation 2019.78. © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein/DACS 2026

Left to right: Roy Lichtenstein, *Wall Pyramid (Model)*, c. 1997. Tape, cut painted paper, cut printed paper, acrylic on foamcore, 13 1/2 × 19 1/2 × 4 5/8 in. (34.3 × 49.8 × 16.5 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Roy Lichtenstein Study Collection, gift of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation 2019.233. © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein/DACS 2026; Roy Lichtenstein, *Bellagio Hotel Mural: Still Life with Reclining Nude (Study)*, 1997. Collage and graphite pencil on board: sheet, 38 5/8 × 54 5/16 in. (98.1 × 138 cm); image, 36 1/2 × 52 3/16 in. (92.7 × 132.6 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Roy Lichtenstein Study Collection, gift of the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation 2019.79. © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein/DACS 2026

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