

WHITNEY

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PRESS RELEASE



Ed Ruscha (b. 1937), *Standard Study #2*, 1962. Opaque watercolor, pen and ink, and graphite on paper, 5 3/8 × 10 1/8 in. (13.7 × 25.7 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of The American Contemporary Art Foundation, Inc., Leonard A. Lauder, President 2005.64. © Ed Ruscha

THE WHITNEY HIGHLIGHTS GIFTS TO ITS COLLECTION FROM SOME OF THE MUSEUM'S GREATEST BENEFACTORS IN *SHAPING A COLLECTION: FIVE DECADES OF GIFTS*

Two smaller collection shows also go on view, one devoted to Hopper and contemporary photography, and the other to the art of Calder

NEW YORK, July 17, 2014—In anticipation of its imminent move downtown, the Whitney Museum of American Art is presenting *Shaping a Collection: Five Decades of Gifts*, a selection of works given to the Museum over the past fifty years by some of its most magnanimous donors. On view in the fifth-floor permanent collection galleries from July 17 to October 19, this will be the last permanent collection installation before the Museum's relocation; it coincides with the Jeff Koons retrospective, currently on view throughout most of the Museum, also until October 19.

While presenting only a small portion of the gifts the Museum has received during the last fifty years, this exhibition honors benefactors who recognized that a museum's collection is its foundation. Among those whose transformative gifts are on view are Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz, Sondra Gilman, Emily Fisher Landau, the Lannan Foundation, Leonard A. Lauder, Jean and Howard Lipman, Adriana and Robert Mnuchin, and Diane and Tom Tuft. The exhibition also features a number of gifts from artists, including works donated by Alex Katz, Brice Marden, and Andy Warhol.

Shaping a Collection: Five Decades of Gifts, organized by Dana Miller, curator of the permanent collection, focuses on artists who came to the fore between 1940 and 1990, an extraordinarily dynamic

period in American art. Each gallery is organized around a single artist, such as Brice Marden or Bob Thompson, or around a distinct period, such as the early 1980's graffiti-inspired scene of New York's East Village. It is impossible to imagine contemporary art without the precedents set by the artists in this presentation, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Agnes Martin, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, Ed Ruscha, and Andy Warhol.

From its inception, the Whitney's collection grew primarily through the foresight and generosity of individual donors, beginning with Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's personal collection of more than five hundred works of art. Today nearly two-thirds of the Museum's holdings were received as gifts; many of these works are now considered icons of the Museum's collection. In the five decades since Marcel Breuer designed the Whitney building at 945 Madison Avenue, the collection has grown from 2,300 to more than 21,000 works.

In spring 2015, the Whitney will resume its exhibition program when it opens its new Renzo Piano-designed home at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets, adjacent to the southernmost entrance to the High Line. For the inaugural exhibition, all of the galleries will be filled with works from the Museum's permanent collection. On the eve of the Whitney's move downtown, *Shaping a Collection* gives a small indication of the full depth of what's to come in the Museum's new home.

Edward Hopper and Photography and Collecting Calder

At the same time, the Whitney is devoting the galleries on its fifth-floor mezzanine to the work of the two artists with whom the Museum has been most closely identified, Edward Hopper and Alexander Calder. *Edward Hopper and Photography* (July 17–October 19, 2014), organized by curator Barbara Haskell, pairs a number of Hopper's most iconic paintings from the permanent collection with the work of contemporary photographers who share an interest in elevating everyday subject matter by manipulating light. The six photographers represented—Gregory Crewdson, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, William Eggleston, Steve Fitch, Todd Hido, and Stephen Shore—record mundane subjects, but endow their photographs with an emotional poignancy and mystery also found in Hopper's art.

The Whitney's collection is the largest repository of Alexander Calder's work in the world. *Collecting Calder* (July 17–October 19, 2014), presents a selection of Calder's sculptures and drawings, giving equal focus to two major aspects of the artist's oeuvre: *Calder's Circus* and the subsequent work in abstraction. For the former, Calder employed ordinary materials—wire, string, cork, wood, paper, bits of metal, and cloth—to create a miniature circus, whose acts he staged for friends and patrons as narrator and puppeteer between 1926 and 1931. His later mobiles, inspired in part by his visit to Piet Mondrian's studio in 1930, use an ingenious system of weights and counterbalances that allow each piece's suspended parts to move in response to air currents, retaining the movement of the circus performances. A selection of these works is also on view, along with a group of the artist's stables, or static sculptures. *Collecting Calder* is organized by curator Barbara Haskell.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world's leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 21,000 works by more than 3,000 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum's signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is constructing a new building, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space. Ground was broken on the new building in May 2011, and it is projected to open to the public in spring 2015.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

<i>Jeff Koons: A Retrospective</i>	Through October 19, 2014
<i>Shaping a Collection: Five Decades of Gifts</i>	July 17–October 19, 2014
<i>Edward Hopper and Photography</i>	July 17–October 19, 2014
<i>Collecting Calder</i>	July 17–October 19, 2014

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$20. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$16. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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