

WHITNEY

Press Release

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THE WHITNEY PRESENTS *THREE LANDSCAPES:* *A FILM INSTALLATION BY ROY LICHTENSTEIN*

CINEMATIC TRIPTYCH SHOWN IN ITS ENTIRETY AND
IN ORIGINAL 35MM FILM FORMAT FOR THE FIRST TIME

October 6, 2011–February 12, 2012



Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), Detail from *Three Landscapes*, 1970–71. Three-screen 35mm-film installation, color, silent; one minute (looped). © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

NEW YORK, September 20, 2011 – This fall, the Whitney Museum of American Art presents *Three Landscapes: A Film Installation by Roy Lichtenstein* on view from October 6, 2011 to February 12, 2012. This cinematic triptych, the product of a partnership between Lichtenstein, Universal Studios, and Joel Freedman of Cinnamon Productions Inc., has been restored by the

Whitney in close collaboration with the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, and is being shown in its entirety and in its original 35mm film format for the first time. The exhibition is curated by Chrissie Iles, the Whitney's Anne & Joel Ehrenkranz Curator.

In 1968, Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), one of the leaders of American Pop art, was invited by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to participate in their experimental Art and Technology program. Curated by Maurice Tuchman, the project placed artists from all over the world in residence with leading California-based industries, and exhibited the results of their collaborations. The artists included Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, Robert Whitman, and others.

Lichtenstein spent two weeks in residence at Universal Studios in Los Angeles in February 1969. After touring Universal's film laboratories and special effects facilities, he decided to make film loops of sky and water, projected on several screens in the gallery. The idea for the films relates directly to a group of kinetic landscape collages that he made in the mid-1960s, which used Rowlux--a prismatic plastic--alongside metal, mylar, vinyl, and motors or motorized rotating light tubes painted with several colored strips of gel paint to suggest moving water and light.

Returning to New York, Lichtenstein filmed on Long Island, primarily in Montauk, working with independent filmmaker Joel Freedman. The resulting one-minute film loops collaged footage of the sea and a tropical fish tank with a static Benday-dot pattern and still images of a blue sky, clouds, and a seagull. The still and moving images are divided by a thick black line that echoes the comic-strip images of his paintings, and creates a horizon line that rocks back and forth. The heavy black horizon line and the endless repetition of Lichtenstein's "moving pictures" produce a contradictory viewing experience, emphasizing the flatness of the picture plane while engaging the spectator in an ambient cinematic spectacle.

Lichtenstein hoped to make as many as fifteen film loops, but only three films were completed. Two were included in a showcase of Art and Technology collaborations in the U.S. Pavilion at the 1970 World's Fair in Osaka, Japan, and three were exhibited in the *Art and Technology* exhibition at LACMA in 1971 in 16mm format. *Three Landscapes* remains Lichtenstein's first and only film.

About the Artist

A leading figure in twentieth-century American art, Roy Lichtenstein was born in New York City in 1923. He studied at New York's Art Students League in the summer of 1940 before enrolling at Ohio State University where he received his B.F.A. in 1946 and his M.F.A. in 1949. There,

Lichtenstein began his career-long intrigues with ideas about visual perception, the odd signs and symbols of our modern culture, and an overarching desire to achieve compositional unity. In 1951, Lichtenstein had his first one-person show in New York. In 1962 he had his first solo show with the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York and soon became an internationally recognized leader of American Pop art with paintings using dramatically isolated images selected from serial war and romance comics and generic products, all depicted in primary colors and Benday dots, techniques and subjects borrowed from mass media. In the succeeding decade, he moved to Southampton, New York, and expanded his use of reproductions beyond advertising, postcard clichés, and comic books to encompass styles and movements in art history, architecture, and the decorative arts. In the 1980s, Lichtenstein returned to work in the city part-time, bringing with him an emphasis on expressive brushstrokes and artistic introspection. The decade also witnessed his completion of a number of public and private large-scale sculptural and painting projects. Lichtenstein's investigations of illusionism, abstraction, serialization, stylization, and appropriation continued in every media in the 1990s. As a distinguished painter, sculptor, and printmaker he received numerous honorary degrees and international prizes. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1995. At age 73, he was investigating another new fabricated reality, so called "virtual paintings." About to embark on a series of works based on Cézanne's bathers, the artist's explorations were cut short by his death from pneumonia in 1997. Two years later, the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation was established to advance the scholarship on his work.

Exhibition Support

Generous support for the conservation of this artwork is provided by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation.

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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 19,000 works by more than 2,900 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 moving forward with a new building project, 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 in May 2011, and the building is projected to open to the public in 2015.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Xavier Cha: Body Drama	Through October 9, 2011
Lyonel Feininger: At the Edge of the World	Through October 16, 2011
David Smith: Cubes and Anarchy	October 6, 2011–January 8, 2012
Real/Surreal	October 6, 2011–February 12, 2012
Three Landscapes: A Film Installation by Roy Lichtenstein	October 6, 2011–February 12, 2012
Aleksandra Mir: The Seduction of Galileo Galilei	October 20, 2011–February 19, 2012
Sherrie Levine: Mayhem	November 10, 2011 –January 29, 2012
Singular Visions	Through November 2011
Whitney Biennial	March 1–May 27, 2012
Designing the Whitney of the Future	On Continuous View

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: \$18. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$12. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only: \$6. 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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