

Guidelines for photographing, filming, and videotaping works of art at Whitney Museum of American Art

General

A member of the (Whitney Museum of American Art) WMAA staff must be present while any crew or individual photographer is in the building and working. All Press needs supervision.

All works in the collection of the WMAA must be photographed as installed. They cannot be unframed or moved to facilitate photography except by authorized Museum personnel with prior permission.

Works of art and their bases may not be touched, sat upon, or have anything draped or placed upon them as a part of the photographic or filming situation. Works of art may not be handled in any way except by authorized Museum personnel.

Camera crews and sound technicians must be particularly careful not to make sudden movements while changing shots. They must also be mindful of their electrical cords and the extension of equipment behind them.

Photographers will be interrupted if dangerously close to an artwork.

If a photographer or crew member is found to infringe these rules and guidelines, permission to photograph on future occasions may be withheld.

Lighting

If lights are being used a Registrar must be present.

Lamps

Lamps and any other equipment must be a distance of either nine feet or more from any work of art, or, at a greater distance from any work of art than the height of the stand fully extended, whichever distance is greater.

Any lamp or stand, which is free-standing, should have a person assigned to hold it, or it should be weighted with sand bags to prevent accidental toppling of the lamp towards any work of art.

No more than two lamps may be used.

Lamps must be switched off except when the photographer/cameraman is in the process of filming or engaging in an allied activity such as taking an exposure reading. Crews are encouraged to take such readings off of the actual subject to be photographed.

No work may be illuminated with photographic lights for more than two minutes consecutively or more than fifteen minutes in any one hour. Still photographers need to shutter their lights to minimize the amount of light striking surrounding works.

All lamps and flash lamps must have protective screens.

Light levels

Using HMI or Tungsten

- If HMI lights are used (preferred because they produce less radiant heat in relation to their light output than other lamps) they must be fitted with ultraviolet absorbing filters, and the light level may not exceed 100 foot candles.

WHITNEY

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- If tungsten lamps are to be used, the light level must not exceed 100 foot candles and both ultraviolet and infrared filters are required.

If neither HMI or tungsten are used then:

- Lighting for paintings and sculptures cannot exceed 15-20 foot-candles in total and can only be on the works of art for no more than 15 minutes.
- For works on paper, only available light may be used. No exceptions.

Please note that some media will melt, split, or spontaneously combust if exposed to light and heat of high intensity. Because art works made of these materials are very sensitive to light and heat, additional conditions may be imposed in such cases.

Larger Projects

The project registrar must check all equipment and will be present throughout the shoot.. Conservation should be consulted if the project is complex or questions arise about fragility of particular objects.