

Closing: “America is Hard To See” at The Whitney

September 25, 2015

by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

Hate it, love it, or feel a complete indifference, this weekend is the last chance to decide what you think about the first exhibition at the new Whitney Museum of American Art. “America is Hard to See” closes on September 27, 2015. Already removed from the New York City art museum exhibition are paintings and art that were exhibited on the Eighth Floor. Those chapters in the survey of American art focused on “Forms Abstracted”, “Machine Ornament” and “Music, Pink and Blue”.



Large Trademark with Eight Spotlights” by Edward Ruscha (b. 1937), 1962. Oil, house paint, ink and graphite pencil on canvas, 66 15/16 x 133 1/8 inches. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Mrs. Percy Uris Purchase Fund 85.41. © Ed Ruscha.

Also closing is Mary Heilmann’s outdoor installation *Sunset*, located on the Fifth Floor Outdoor Gallery. *Sunset* is a site-specific piece that aims to transform The Whitney’s largest outdoor gallery into a place of reverie, memory and leisure, according to the art museum.

Mary Heilmann became known in the 1970s for vibrant paintings that paired taut abstract forms with quivering line and vivid color often expressed through a stair-step motif within rectangular fields or through irregularly shaped canvases. The visual connection between the Whitney's architectural lines and details inspired Heilmann to enlarge a detail of one her paintings and print it on two large panels installed to transform the building facade into one of her canvases, [explained the museum](#).

Heilmann's interplay also extended to a group of sculptural chairs scattered on the terrace like a "shower of confetti." Adapted from furniture Mary Heilmann has displayed in homes and exhibitions, the chairs serve as elements in the installation as a whole while also encouraging visitors to sit, pause for a moment, interact with one another and consider the cityscape beyond.

"Museums are places to hang out," Heilmann told [The Whitney](#), "as are New York rooftops."



Installation view of Mary Heilmann: *Sunset* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, May 1, 2015-). Photograph by Marco Anelli © 2015. Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art.

"America Is Hard to See" is a survey of the history of art in the United States from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. Pulled entirely from The Whitney's art collect, the exhibition comprised over 600 art works. The exhibition aimed to develop the themes, ideas, beliefs and passions American artists tackled while making art within and against conventions at the time.

The exhibition title is drawn from a poem by Robert Frost. The phrase was also used by filmmaker Emile de Antonio for a political documentaries. The show is the most ambitious exhibition to date of the NYC art museum's collection. "America Is Hard to See" opened on May 1, 2015 when the Whitney reopened in its new downtown NYC location in the Meatpacking District.

To read what Hamptons Art Hub critic Charles A. Riley II has to say about the exhibition, click [here](#). His thoughts on the architecture of the new building can be found by clicking [here](#).

Also coming to a close is the Whitney's late night hours. When "America Is Hard To See" closes, the museum galleries and shop begin closing at 6 p.m. on Thursdays with the Studio Cafe closing at 5 p.m. For details, visit www.whitney.org.

BASIC FACTS: "America is Hard to See" and Mary Heilmann's *Sunset* remains on view through September 27, 2015. The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort St, New York, NY 10014. www.whitney.org.

Copyright 2015 Hamptons Art Hub LLC. All rights reserved.