



ARTE-WALLHOFF

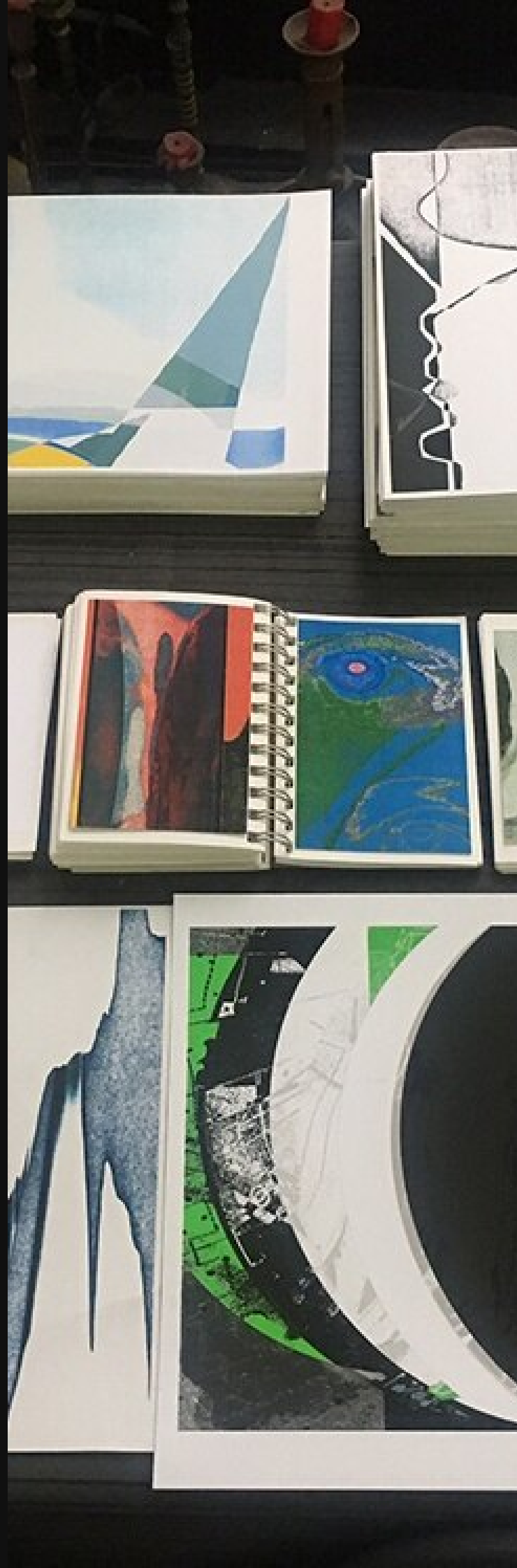
ARTIST DOSSIER / NEW YORK

Lesley Schiff

Painting with light

A collector dossier on the New York artist and pioneer of colour xerography.

BIOGRAPHY / PRACTICE / CHRONOLOGY / ATELIER / SELECTED WORKS
COLLECTOR EDITION / 2026



A painter who found a new kind of brush.



Selected work from the COM series

Lesley Schiff (b. 1951, USA) is a New York artist and pioneer of colour xerography. Her relationship with art began in Chicago, where her mother studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and Schiff entered its Junior School at the age of seven. She later studied painting at the Institute before moving to New York in 1974.

In New York, access to an early colour copier transformed her practice. Rather than using the machine simply to reproduce an image, she worked directly on its glass surface - arranging objects, moving them during exposure and using light as an active material.

Between 1979 and 1981, Schiff developed SEASONS, a portfolio of 24 images. The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the series in 1981, at a time when the museum had no established category for this new image-making process.

Her work has since moved between colour xerography, laser imaging, photography and interactive digital projects. Across these technologies, the central questions remain consistent: how images construct memory, identity, power and our perception of the world.

"I never intended to stop painting.
I just decided to start painting
with a modern tool."

LESLEY SCHIFF

Image, object, light and time.

Schiff's process sits between painting, photography and performance. The machine records not only the du

01

Painting with light

The copier's scanning beam becomes illumination and a moving brush. Colour is built optically rather than mixed on a palette.

02

Process as image

Objects shift while they are scanned. Streaks, blur, dust and particles remain as evidence of time, touch and translation.

03

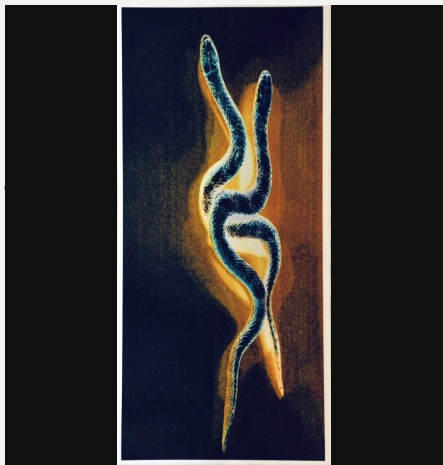
Layered symbols

Found images and cultural signs are isolated, repeated and superimposed. Familiar meanings become unstable in new constellations.

04

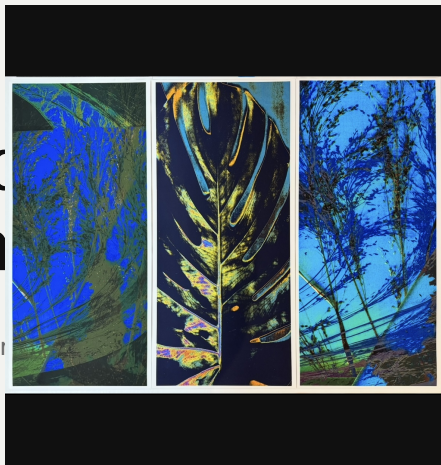
Expanded digital space

From prints to interactive works, technology opens the image to movement, comparison and discovery.



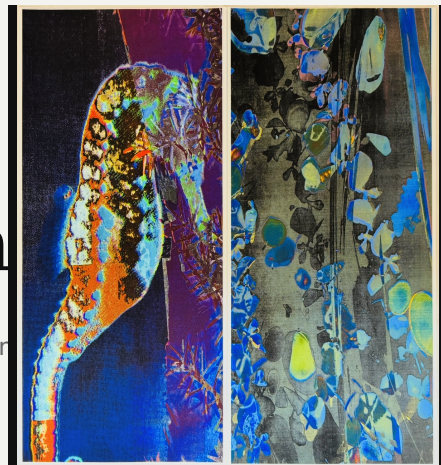
COM-01

Mono-Photo-Print



COM.TR-01

Trio Mono-Photo-Print



DOU-01

Duo Mono-Photo-Print



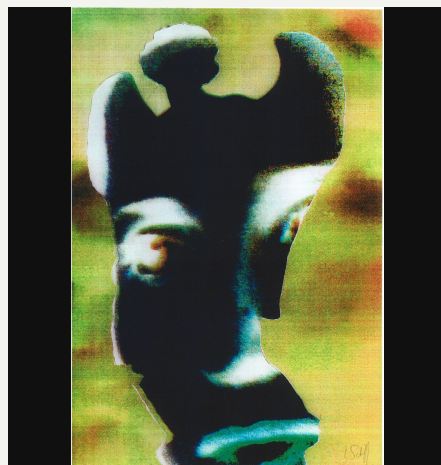
ANG-02

Angels, 2022



ANG-10

Angels, 2022



ANG-25

Angels, 2022

Five bodies of work, one continuous inquiry.

1979-1981

SEASONS

A 24-image portfolio that established the colour copier as a medium for original image-making.

1990s

**FACE VALUE / MONEY
TALKS**

Money, status and power are examined through the symbols and portraits embedded in currency.

1990s-2022

ANGELS

Historical and contemporary angelic motifs meet commercial culture and the visual language of everyday life.

1987-2017

**EYE LEVELS / DISTANT
SYSTEMS**

Changing points of view connect the human body, architecture, geography and the cosmos.

1978-2022

DO NOT PRETEND

A career-spanning interactive project arranged as an exploratory visual system inspired by the periodic table.

1951-1996

1951	Born in the United States.
Early years	Begins art education in the Junior School of the Art Institute of Chicago; later studies painting at the Institute.
1974	Moves to New York. Exhibition at the Aldrich Museum.
1975	Exhibits at 3 Mercer Street, New York.
1976	Exhibits at The Kitchen, New York.
1977	Basel Art Fair and Mike Steiner Gallery.
1979-1981	Creates the 24-image SEASONS portfolio.
1981	The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquires SEASONS.
1984	Exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center.
1992	Face Value shown at Rockefeller Townhouse, New York.
1996	Work enters the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

2002-2025

2002	Work enters the Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace; exhibitions with Arte-Wallhoff and Alexia Goethe Fine Art.
2004	Work enters the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
2017	Included in the Whitney Museum exhibition Experiments in Electrostatics.
2018	Presented at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Bob Dylan project receives editorial attention in Boston.
2021	Work enters the collections of Arts Brookfield and the Fleming Museum of Art.
2022	Launches Do Not Pretend: 1978-2022; Arte-Wallhoff presents The Angelic Collection.
2024	Arte-Wallhoff presents Money Talks.
2025	Arte-Wallhoff presents Flora, Fauna & Shimmering Worlds.

The image remains open: a meeting point of technology, memory, cultural signs and the artist's hand.

CURATORIAL SUMMARY

The working environment.

Images are gathered in sequences, tested in proximity and reconsidered across the studio. The floor and worktable become active fields of comparison.



Works arranged in the studio



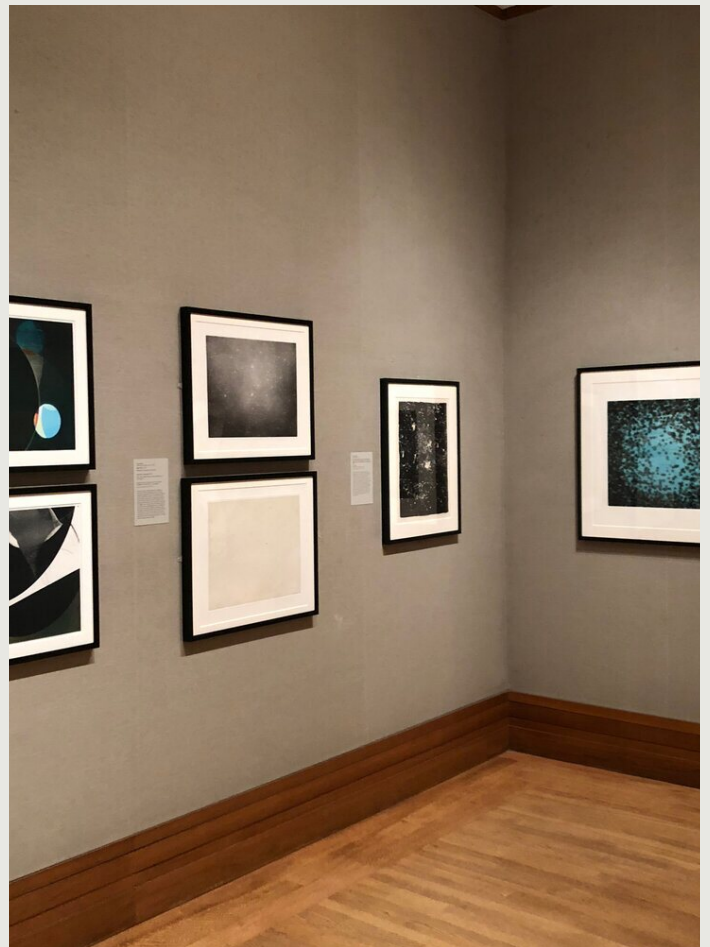
Atelier view, New York, 2017

From the studio to the institution.

Schiff's prints operate as autonomous images and as parts of larger visual systems. Installed in sequence, they create constellations across time, technology and cultural memory.



Installation impression

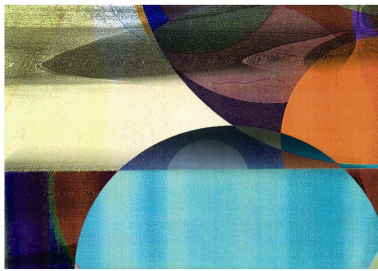


Works in an institutional setting

Serial works create a rhythm across the gallery wall.

An early digital language.

Museum acquisition, exhibitions and editorial attention position Schiff's work as a foundational contribution to electrostatic and digital image-making.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art has Acquired New Work by Lesley Schiff

July 14, 2016

The Museum's Department of Drawings and Prints has acquired fourteen pieces from Lesley's Distant Systems series—an ongoing statement about the unengineered simplicity of nature and the solar system.

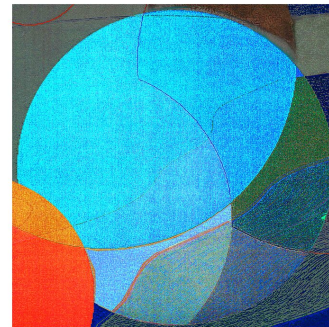
The newly acquired works are the first giclée prints to be collected by this department—continuing the tradition of innovation shared by the Artist and Museum.

In 1981, the Museum purchased twenty-four prints from Lesley's Seasons series—its first acquisition of color laser prints.

This is the third acquisition of Lesley's work by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

ACQUISITION AND DIGITAL-ART HISTORY



Distant Systems Will Exhibit in Kansas City

January 09, 2017

Lesley Schiff Studios is delighted to announce the exhibition of selected pieces from Miss Schiff's Distant Systems series—an ongoing exploration of the unengineered simplicity of nature and the universe.

The pieces will be included in a group exhibition entitled Defining Atmosphere at Westbarger Fine Art, a preeminent fine art gallery in Kansas City, Mo.

Defining Atmosphere will be open from January 10th to February 25th. A cocktail reception will be held on January 10th from 5-8pm in the exhibition space.

This exhibition follows the Metropolitan Museum of Art's acquisition of fourteen pieces from the same series, last year.

Distant Systems

KANSAS CITY PRESENTATION

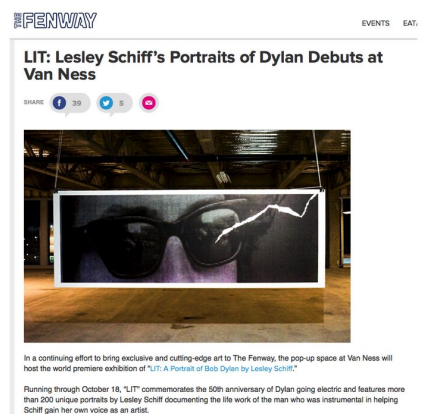


LIT Featured in Boston Magazine!

September 30, 2015

Boston Magazine

BOB DYLAN VISUAL BIOGRAPHY



LIT Featured on THEFENWAY

September 30, 2015

The FWA

INTERACTIVE PROJECT RECOGNITION

Collections, exhibitions and private holdings.

Selected collections

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Whitney Museum of American Art

The Museum of Modern Art

Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace

Yale University

Fleming Museum of Art

New York Public Library

David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art

Corporate and private

Goldman Sachs

Chase

JP Morgan

General Electric

Canon USA

Columbia Records

Mick Jagger

New York Telephone

Selected exhibitions

Basel Art Fair

The Kitchen

Chicago Cultural Center

Rockefeller Townhouse

Whitney Museum of American Art

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Weinberger Fine Art

Arte-Wallhoff

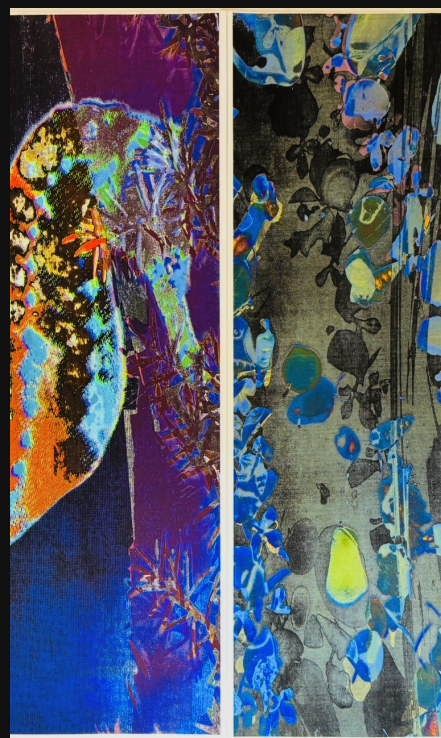
Explore the exhibitions and available works.



2022 / The Angelic Collection



2024 / Money Talks



2025 / Flora, Fauna & Shimmering Worlds



ARTE-WALLHOFF

SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART / BASEL / SINCE 1998

Private viewings and collector enquiries

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ARTIST DOSSIER / 2026

Prepared for clients and collectors