

Composed of works from the Michael Lowe collection, "Using Photography" consists of Conceptual Photography primarily from the 1960s and 1970s, as well as performance based photography. Both categories blur traditional views of photography as art or documentation and present photography as a more notional pursuit. As curator Donald Karshan suggested in 1970, "... the initial role of photography in Conceptual art was to document actions or phenomena. ... The naive view that underlies much early photography by Conceptual artists was that the camera was an 'opinion-less copying device'; it was a way of pointing at or indexing something in the world." The works in Using Photography alternate between original photographs and various photobased media that use photographic imagery as a point of departure. Many of the artists' books, posters, and other documents presented served as vehicles for photo-based art in the 1960s and 1970s. The democratic nature of printed matter appealed to artists less interested in the grand gestures of art production and focused more on the dematerialized aspects of art. Some pieces draw from their roots and were intended as informational works, however public fetishization and private collection has elevated the status of such pieces to rare commodity, much to the consternation of some. Artists include Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Christian Boltanski, Robert Cumming, Jan Dibbets, Hans Peter Feldmann, N.E. Thing, Les Levine, Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw, and Giuseppe Penone, among others.

Michael Lowe is a private dealer and collector specializing in conceptual and minimal art of the 1960s and 1970s. His collection and private gallery are housed in the former 1913 Cincinnati Free Press Company building located in downtown Cincinnati.