

MANUAL

The Collaboration of Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom, 1974-2024

March 7 – April 25, 2026

Reception: Saturday, March 7, 3-5 pm

Gallery Talk with Betty Moody 4 pm

In conjunction with FotoFest Biennial 2026

Moody Gallery is proud to present *MANUAL: The Collaboration of Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom, 1974-2024*, a survey exhibition of MANUAL's half-century-long artistic career. This show is on view March 7 – April 25, 2026.

Partners in life and art, Ed Hill (b. 1935) and Suzanne Bloom (1943-2025) met while serving on the faculty of the art department at Smith College in the early 1970s. By the time they met, Hill, a Massachusetts native, had already earned his master of fine arts degree from Yale University under the tutelage of Josef Albers. The Philadelphia-born Bloom had completed her graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied with Piero Dorazio, a disciple of the Futurists. Bloom and Hill married in 1974. Not long after, they formed MANUAL. In 1976, the duo relocated from Massachusetts to Texas to teach at the University of Houston. Moody Gallery began representing MANUAL in 1983. From 1984 to 2024, Moody Gallery orchestrated nineteen exhibitions of MANUAL's work, beginning with *Videology* (1984) and ending with *BEECH // BOOK; An Emblematic Pairing* (2024). The latter show drew upon work created during their Guggenheim Fellowship in Photography.

From the beginning, MANUAL sought to explore uncharted artistic and conceptual territories. Though they shared extensive training in other media, namely painting and drawing, MANUAL adopted photography as their primary means of expression. Their first photographic project was the *Hand Series* (1974), a collection of gelatin silver prints showing hands in action, perspectively isolated from bodies and faces. For their next series, entitled *Art in Context* (1974-1980), MANUAL created fifteen images that probe the relationship between original works of art and their reproductions, as well as separate art and art history from the museum context. Additionally, MANUAL executed two series that deal with nature as a primary theme: *Woodland Rituals* (1975-1976) and *13 Ways of Coping with Nature* (1981-1982). Shortly before acquiring a Sony computer in 1985, MANUAL completed *Videology* (1983-1984), a series of 120 photographic images shot from a monitor screen using a close-up lens. *Videology* features a wide array of pop-culture subjects, from a plastic Mickey Mouse to televangelist Jimmy Swaggart.

In the mid-1980s, MANUAL began incorporating digital photographic methods into their artmaking, layering words, lines, drawings, and images in their compositions. Additionally, they further experimented with appropriated and constructed imagery and superimposed text. Though MANUAL remained keen on photography throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the duo also experimented with video installations in their projects *After Nature* (1988) and *Forest\Products* (1990-1991). The latter was mounted as a show at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. From the mid-1990s onward, MANUAL focused on finding new ways to explore and express the relationship between the natural and man-made worlds. In 2002, Edward W. Earle curated *MANUAL: Two Worlds (The Collaboration of Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom)* at the International

Center of Photography in New York City. This retrospective later traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, where it was expanded and reorganized by curator Anne Wilkes Tucker. More projects followed, including a site-specific installation entitled *Archive Fever: A Digital Wonder Room* (2005) that was commissioned by the Hood Museum of Art. During their career, MANUAL received numerous awards and grants, including four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships.

Moody Gallery is open Tuesday - Friday 10:30 am - 5:00 pm and Saturday 11:00 am - 5:00 pm. For more information, please call or email the gallery at 713-526-9911 or info@moodygallery.com. "MANUAL: The Collaboration of Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom, 1974-2024" can also be viewed online at www.moodygallery.com.