

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



CLYFFORD STILL | MUSEUM





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## PRESIDENT'S AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Clyfford Still Museum had a big year in 2017. With both increased attendance in the galleries—where the Museum presented exhibitions curated by renowned artists and launched our most significant tech project to date—and expanded audiences beyond our walls, 2017 was a year for realizing untested potentials.

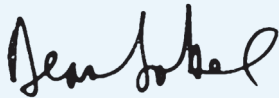
New community endeavors, expanded school programs, and successful exhibition offerings allowed CSM to serve 51,534 visitors in 2017, a 13% increase in participation from the previous year. Total attendance exceeded 50,000 for the first time since the Museum’s inaugural year.

Such unprecedented results prompted the most substantial visitor motivation research in CSM’s history. CSM retained Slover Linett (an audience research firm for the arts, culture, and informal science sectors) in a multi-year study to assist the Museum’s strategic inquiry into audience engagement: exploring what engagement looks like now and what it could look like in the future. The study marked the starting point for a broader process of discussion and experimentation; from here, the Museum intends to create ongoing tracking and feedback loops to support audience growth strategies and initiatives.

Digital projects at CSM also reached new heights this year and included the release of our new online collections portal: an open-access, user-friendly catalogue of 2,000 Still paintings, sculptures, and works on paper from the CSM collection. The portal at [collection.clyffordstillmuseum.org](http://collection.clyffordstillmuseum.org) provides high-definition images of each featured work along with dozens of options for filtering and sorting. The Museum also published photographic materials from the extensive Clyfford Still Archives, including hundreds of vintage photographs of exhibitions featuring Still that occurred during his lifetime. Following the successful launch of these resources in September, CSM website sessions in the fourth quarter increased 52% over 2017 levels, and the average session duration increased by 71%.

The Museum’s audience expansion also prompted change at the highest levels of CSM’s leadership. The Board of Directors welcomed two new members in late 2017: Albus Brooks, President of Denver City Council; and Bobby LeFebre, an award-winning writer, performer, and cultural worker. Brooks and LeFebre each bring deep connections to underserved cultural communities in Denver.

  
CHRISTOPHER HUNT  
President, Board of Directors

  
DEAN SOBEL  
Director



*Back row, from left:* Daniel Benel, Kent Rice, Curt R. Freed, M.D., Mark Smith, Christoph Heinrich, Judy Schiff, CSM director Dean Sobel, Sheila Bisenius, Gary Steuer, David C. Decke

*Front row, from left:* Albus Brooks, Jennifer Evans, Amie C. Knox, Christopher W. Hunt, Sarah A. Hunt, Jeremy Flug, Bobby LeFebre

*Not pictured:* Sandra L. Still Campbell, Ramey Griffin Caulkins, Robin Pringle Hickenlooper, Morris Susman, M.D.

## 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Daniel Benel
- Sheila Bisenius
- Albus Brooks
- Sandra L. Still Campbell
- Ramey Griffin Caulkins
- David C. Decker
- Jennifer Evans, treasurer
- Jeremy J. Flug
- Curt R. Freed, M.D.
- Christoph Heinrich
- Robin Pringle Hickenlooper
- Christopher W. Hunt, president
- Sarah A. Hunt, vice president
- Amie C. Knox, secretary
- Bobby LeFebre
- Kent Rice
- Judy Schiff
- Mark Smith
- Gary Steuer
- Morris Susman, M.D.



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

## EXHIBITIONS

### *Artists Select: Julian Schnabel*

January 20–April 2, 2017

Curated by Julian Schnabel in conjunction with Swedish designer Louise Kugelberg

Julian Schnabel curated a compelling installation of 60 of Still’s mature, abstract works, including a group of paintings the artist made late in life. Fifteen of Schnabel’s selections had never been on public view. Schnabel’s installation, conceived in conjunction with Swedish designer Louise Kugelberg, reversed the order in which visitors typically navigate the galleries and also included a visually arresting, salon-style hanging of smaller, early abstractions made during the mid-1940s.

Julian Schnabel (b. 1951) met Clyfford Still in New York City in 1977, a gathering captured in a photograph that, coincidentally, is now part of the CSM Archives. Schnabel emerged as a painter around 1980 and ushered in, almost single handedly, a return from the minimal and conceptual art practices of the 1970s to image-based art that defined the 1980s art world and continues to this day. Schnabel’s work frequently references history and art history and takes on the scale and appearance of abstract expressionist works. He is part of a generation of artists who gained prominence when abstract expressionism’s specter remained strong; several of its leading figures—like Still, De Kooning, and Motherwell—were alive and making important work.

Schnabel is also a highly celebrated filmmaker, particularly of films centered on single subjects including *Basquiat* (1996); *Before Night Falls* (2000, based on the memoir of writer Reinaldo Arenas); and *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007, based on the life of actor and author Jean-Dominique Bauby).



### *Shade: Clyfford Still/ Mark Bradford*

April 9–July 16, 2017

Curated in collaboration with Mark Bradford

Contemporary works and abstract expressionist masterpieces converged in *Shade*, a collaborative presentation by the Denver Art Museum (DAM) and Clyfford Still Museum. In this two-venue exhibition, paintings by renowned contemporary American artist Mark Bradford—who represented the United States at the 2017 Venice Biennale—were on view at the DAM, while a presentation of Still’s work selected in collaboration with Bradford was on view at CSM. *Shade* was complemented by a host of special events and programs. Jointly produced by CSM and the DAM, an original video featuring interviews with Bradford; Rebecca R. Hart, curator of modern and contemporary art at the DAM; and CSM director Dean Sobel accompanied the exhibition.

In *Shade*, Bradford underscored the legacy of abstract expressionism and explored abstraction’s power to address social and political concerns. The exhibition examined both his and Still’s unique relationship to black in their paintings, whether it is used to force viewers out of their comfort zones, evoke emotions, or confront conventional notions of race. As an African American painter, Bradford has long been fascinated by Still’s extensive use of black as a signature component of his work. Still made many statements about the color, referring to his canvases as “black suns” and “black monsters.”

“Black,” Still proclaimed, “was never a color of death or terror for me. I think of it as warm—and generative. But color is what you choose to make it.” Such affirmative references to blackness were unparalleled in a 1950s America divided by the early rumblings of the Civil Rights movement and the 1955 murder of Emmett Till.





# Artists Select: Roni Horn

July 21– September 24, 2017  
Curated by Roni Horn

American artist Roni Horn concluded 2017’s Artists Select series with an insightful examination of Still’s paintings from the mid-1940s to the end of his career. Known for her sculptures that appear as intense distillations of ideas and sensations from nature, Horn is also active in photography and language. Many of her works appropriate others’ writings, including poems and letters by Emily Dickinson, whom Horn admires for her ability to draw attention to, as she puts it, a “heightened sensibility” and a “sensitivity to visible and invisible events.”

Horn’s installation included several works never exhibited in Still’s lifetime or since, and represented—in a manner that became increasingly apparent as her installation unfolded—Horn’s unique visual sensibility.

The artist offered the following statement to introduce the exhibition:

*Clyfford Still’s daughters, Sandra and Diane, recall hearing the sounds of the palette knife scraping and scratching the canvas in the night as they lay in bed. They were sounds that went on throughout the night. Perhaps its regularity made it easier to sleep? Or the intensity of it kept them awake? Underlying this memory is the energy experienced in that domestic darkness; the energy of action sustained and sustained throughout the night, and night after night. Sliding, pushing, wiping, scraping, troweling thick masses of paint against and across the canvas. The energy to scale large spaces and strokes of great reach. The energy that resists and that limits control and goes hand-in-hand with these tools and actions. It’s the energy that’s palpable in all of Still’s mature work.*



# Still & Art

September 29, 2017–January 21, 2018  
Curated by senior consulting curator David Anfam

At the time of his mammoth 1979 retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Clyfford Still provocatively declared, “My work is not influenced by anybody.” While many observers have regarded this view as merely typical of the artist’s notoriously unyielding singularity, in hindsight Still’s words ring true at a deeper level. The concept of “influence” suggests external forces acting upon a passive mind. Still’s vision, however, was intensely active. His deep knowledge of world art history enabled him to “take and break” a wealth of images and ideas ranging from the distant to the recent past. *Still & Art* illustrated how he channeled these points of reference into his own intensely personal style.

Occupying all nine galleries of the Museum, the exhibition encompassed more than 80 Still paintings, works on paper, photographs, and sculptures. It broke new ground for the Museum by also including a wealth of images of other artists’ work—both in traditional printed reproductions, and by way of a handheld device that presented the Museum’s first augmented-reality experience—in striking juxtaposition with Still’s works. *Still & Art* began with Still’s acknowledgment of Old Masters he admired (among them Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, J.M.W. Turner, and Vincent van Gogh); progressed to his interrogation of near-contemporaries such as Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso; and concluded with epic canvases, pastels, and photographs that revealed the artist meditating on his own past production as well as the spirit of color-field painting, minimalism, and comparable avant-garde movements of the 1960s and ’70s.

This exhibition was generously supported in part by Daniel Benel and Lena Fishman. Additional support was provided by U.S. Bank and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). The augmented reality experience was made possible through a partnership with Google, the software developer GuidiGO, and media company RYOT.



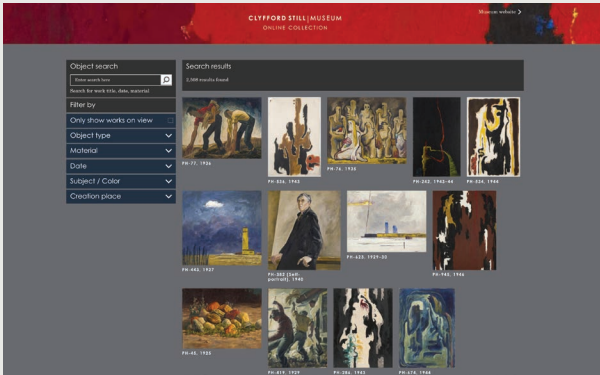


# MISSION HIGHLIGHTS

In November 2017, the Clyfford Still Museum approved a new strategic plan, one of five core documents required for the American Alliance of Museums’ (AAM) accreditation process that CSM began pursuing. In full collaboration with board members and senior staff at CSM, an updated Mission Statement, Institutional Code of Ethics, Strategic Institutional Plan, Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan, and Collections Management Policy were developed, submitted to, and approved by AAM as a part of the accreditation process.

Away from Denver, the Clyfford Still Museum Research Center hosted a new symposium in 2017, *Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper*. Held in January at Stony Brook Manhattan, it featured presentations by ten scholars: David Acton, William C. Agee, Dr. David Anfam, Eileen Costello, Charles Duncan, Dr. Jennifer Field, Helen A. Harrison, Robert Hobbs, Richard Schiff, and Katy Rogers. It was the third national symposium presented by the Research Center since 2013.

A Miami-based team, Scholl Creative, also began production of a feature-length documentary about Clyfford Still in 2017. Directed by Dennis Scholl, who has been honored with eleven regional Emmy awards for previous films, this new film takes full advantage of archival materials uncovered since the Museum’s opening, including the only audio recordings and movie footage of the artist known to exist. The project is expected to premiere at various venues across the country, including Denver, in 2019.



Back home, significant collections progress was made in 2017 with the hiring of Michal Mikesell, the Museum’s first paper conservator. Mikesell has focused on the treatment of the Museum’s works on paper collection while developing more in-depth preservation protocols. Ongoing work will involve materials research into modern papers Still used throughout his career, completing the full works on paper survey and housing project, and the completion of a conservation module within the collection management database. The module will include an exposure tracking system combining multiple data points per work—such as exposure time, exhibition lighting conditions, and information about a work’s sensitivity to light—and will calculate an average annual exposure recommendation for each artwork, a powerful tool for the long-term, consistent care of collection objects.

A three-year-long collaboration came to fruition in the summer of 2017 when the collection records for the Museum’s artworks and its archives were merged into a single research database—called a Collection Management System (CMS)—created to afford unprecedented access to information about the Clyfford Still Museum collections. By unifying these historically separate records, the customized database created new relationships among artworks, photographs, archival objects, and letters that enrich the understanding of Clyfford Still and his work. The successful launch of the Museum’s Online Collection and public Research Database in the fall was contingent upon this landmark achievement.

By the end of 2017, CSM staff had inventoried approximately 590 of the paintings in Denver’s collection—an increase of 51% since the end of 2016—and the Museum exhibited to the public 795 different works of art by Still since its 2011 opening.







## 2017 PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

2017 was the third consecutive year in which CSM eliminated most education and public program fees, an initiative designed to make the most impactful moments at the Museum accessible to everyone. As a result, 8,323 attendees experienced the Museum through free programs this year. Program highlights included a packed lecture by artist and filmmaker Julian Schnabel to start the year; an exciting and popular new partner—Alamo Drafthouse Cinema—for film/Still, the Museum’s acclaimed series of art films and films about art; and the addition of a fourth performance to the Museum’s increasingly popular series of summer lawn concerts, which stretched from June into September for the first time.

The Museum also presented a new partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association of Colorado, called SPARK, that offers gallery experiences designed especially for visitors with early-stage Alzheimer’s or dementia and their care partners. Participants visited the galleries with CSM’s specially trained education staff for an insider’s glimpse into the personal music collection of Clyfford Still. Patrons also engaged with Clyfford Still’s artworks and listened to music from his collection ranging from jazz to classical to world music.

The priority of learning and education is hard wired into the Museum. Clyfford Still was an active teaching professor throughout much of his adult life and the Museum has always had a strong educational mandate given its mission to foster the study of and engagement with its collections. inStill Gallery Experiences (which are immersive, discovery- and activity-based workshops that transform Museum galleries into a classroom for grades 4–12) hosted 1,730 students in 2017, an increase of 24% compared to 2016.



The Museum’s educational offerings also expanded all over the Denver metro area in 2017 thanks to a new outreach version of inStill dubbed inStill To Go. The Museum’s trained gallery teachers took their programs beyond the Museum’s walls to classrooms, libraries, and community centers in 2017, serving over 1,900 students and others in the neighborhoods where they live, dramatically increasing engagement with CSM’s programs and increasing services to residents throughout the city.







# NEW ENGAGEMENT

By donating the majority of his artworks to an entire American city rather than a specific entity, Clyfford Still made clear that he wanted his artwork to belong to the people. CSM strives to make the experience of Still's work available to as broad an audience as we have the capacity to reach.

In addition to more academic approaches to audience research and engagement, during 2017 the Museum continued connecting organically with community groups and new cultural partners. CSM has been most effective in diversity and inclusiveness endeavors when engaging with partners to advance symbiotic objectives. By combining resources with other cultural institutions and community groups, the Museum increased its work force and connected more organically to audiences unfamiliar with CSM and Still's artworks.

The Museum developed relationships with several institutions in 2017 to produce collaborative, inclusive programming. The National Poetry Slam hosted various events in the Museum during their annual festival. Lighthouse Writer's Workshop, together with Denver Arts & Venues, hosted programming at CSM for the NEA-sponsored initiative *The Big Read*, featuring the book *Citizen* by Jamaican-born author Claudia Rankine. The Art of Access was a day-long summer symposium—supported by Imagine 2020, Denver's Cultural Plan—designed to discuss how best to ensure full participation and engagement in the arts and culture for persons with disabilities. Presented by VSA Access Gallery, the Clyfford Still Museum was an event partner for this symposium with the Denver Art Museum, History Colorado Center, Phamaly Theatre Company, RedLine Contemporary Art Center, and the Alzheimer's Association Colorado Chapter.

CSM also established a Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Staff Taskforce in 2017. While originally formed to evaluate the accessibility of programs and activities to disabled visitors and employees, the taskforce took on additional endeavors: organizing quarterly staff awareness trainings on topics such as cultural competency and memory loss; launching free outreach programs for qualifying senior centers, libraries, and other community and student groups; prioritizing closed-captioning of all CSM produced videos on view at the Museum and on the web; and developing in-gallery exhibition didactics offered in large print and translated into Spanish.







2017 STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

James Barr  
Mark Colvin  
Victoria Eastburn  
John Eding  
Kristin Feldkamp  
David Finch  
Lydia Garmaier  
Kelly Merrion  
John Patterson  
Joan Prusse  
Sonia Rae  
Dean Sobel  
Sarah Wambold

COLLECTIONS

Jessie de la Cruz  
Emily Kosakowski  
Michal Mikesell  
Bailey Placzek  
Claire Roseland  
James Squires  
Farrah Taylor

VISITOR SERVICES

Erin Catron  
Virginia Dickinson  
Jessica Fowler  
Jacob Gutierrez  
Majken Koczara  
Gwendolyn Lopez  
Alexander McConnell  
Sheryl Patten  
Katherine Phillips  
Erin Poindexter  
Shayla Preeshl

EDUCATION & PROGRAMS

Patricia Ackerman  
Kealey Boyd  
Emily Bullard  
Michelle Fraser  
Lindsay Gustave  
Valerie Hellstein  
Allyson Johnson  
Cody Jorgensen  
Lauren Karbula  
Kenda Keenan  
Linda Keller  
Hayley Krichels  
Marilyn Lindenbaum  
Jennifer Miklosi  
Christina Peterson  
Annie Rim  
Alejandra Rodriguez  
Brittany Royer  
Gillian Terrace  
Melissa Thoet  
Kaitlyn Tucek  
Cory Vanzytveld  
Carin Wohadlo





## FINANCIAL REPORT

The summarized financial information below reflects year-end results for the Museum's operations during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017.

### SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For the year ended December 31, 2017

#### SUPPORT AND REVENUE

##### *Gifts and Grants*

Change in value of long-term pledges	\$42,030
SCFD	\$279,861
Grants from related entity	\$2,600,000

##### *General contributions*

\$491,284

##### *Admissions*

\$136,799

##### *Membership*

\$114,522

##### *Other*

\$165,684

##### *Investment income*

\$0

##### *Gain on interest rate swap*

\$7,568

#### TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE

\$3,837,748

#### EXPENSES

##### *Program Services*

Education and programs	\$718,793
Museum building and galleries	\$903,730
Exhibitions and collections	\$1,729,659

##### *Supporting Services*

General and administrative	\$1,307,230
Fundraising	\$146,555

#### TOTAL EXPENSES

\$4,805,967

#### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

(\$968,219)

(Excludes Clyfford Still Museum Foundation)





## CONTRIBUTORS AND SUPPORTERS

### \$100,000+

Fred and Jana Bartlit  
Bonfils-Stanton Foundation  
Scientific & Cultural Facilities District

### \$10,000–\$99,999

Anonymous  
Bank of America  
Deborah Buck  
Colorado Creative Industries  
Lena Fishman and Daniel Benel  
Jeremy and Angie Flug Foundation  
Curt and Nancy Freed  
Eleanor and Henry Hitchcock Charitable Foundation  
J. Landis and Sharon Martin Family Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts  
The Clyfford E. Still Endowment Fund  
U.S. Bank Foundation  
Wisecarver-Brown Charitable Trust

### \$2,500–\$9,999

Harmes C. Fishback Foundation Trust  
Google  
Lizabeth Lynner and James Palenchar  
Oath, Inc.  
Kent Rice & Ann Corrigan

### \$1,000–\$2,499

Governor John Hickenlooper and  
First Lady Robin Pringle Hickenlooper

### UP TO \$999

Too many to list, thank you!



MEMBERSHIP (\$1,000 LEVEL AND ABOVE)	
DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE (\$5,000)	
J. Landis and Sharon Martin	
Craig Ponzio	
CURATOR'S CIRCLE (\$2,500)	
Merle Chambers	
Josephine Cole	
Tony and Susan Krausen	
Fredric Kutner	
Joan Prusse and Robert Musgraves	
Robert and Myra Rich	
Margot Zallen	
CORPORATE PARTNERS (\$2,500)	
Liberty Media Corporation	
Room & Board	
LEADERSHIP CIRCLE (\$1,000 LEVEL AND ABOVE)	
Samantha Bennett	
Sheila Bisenius	
Monty Cleworth	
Hilary Donnelly	
Lori and Grady Durham	
Jennifer Evans and Jack Tankersley	
Suzanne Farver and Clint Van Zee	
Julia Haddad	
Edmond Horsey	
Amie Knox and James Kelley	
Harold R. Logan, Jr. and Ann Logan	
Lance and Jenifer Marx	
Laura and David Merage	
Rebecca Reynolds	
Judy and Rick Schiff	
Annalee and Wagner Schorr	
Mark Smith	
Judi Wagner	



## PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

COVER James Dewhirst	PAGE 6 Top: Justin Wambold; Bottom: Clyfford Still Museum	PAGE 13 Top: Justin Wambold Bottom: James Dewhirst	PAGE 18 James Wambold
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