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CLYFFORD STILL ARCHIVES & ADDITIONAL 400 ARTWORKS
BEQUEATHED TO CITY OF DENVER
Endowment fund to care for collection also established by artist's widow

(DENVER) The Clyfford Still Museum and the City of Denver announced today that it will be the recipient of the archives of the late American artist Clyfford Still and an estimated 400 additional artworks. These supplementary items will join the approximate 2,200 works of art from the estate of Clyfford Still, which were bequeathed to the City of Denver in August 2004, and together they will become the core of the Clyfford Still Museum planned to open in Denver in 2009.

The contents of Clyfford Still’s archives include the artist’s sketchbooks, correspondence, personal diaries, manuscripts of his own writings, photo albums, articles and reviews and personal library. The additional 400 artworks were possessions of the artist’s widow, Patricia Still, and include the only known sculptures by Still. In addition, the will of Mrs. Still establishes an endowment fund for the sole purpose of benefiting the collection once the Clyfford Still Museum is open to the public.

“The bequests from both Clyfford and Patricia Still’s respective estates, totaling roughly 950 paintings and 1600 works on paper, comprise about 90 percent of the artist’s entire output,” stated Dean Sobel, Clyfford Still Museum Project Director. “The opportunity to examine, study, and understand such a comprehensive compilation of material by an artist of Still’s caliber is virtually unparalleled at any institution in the world, whether a single-artist museum or otherwise.”

“In addition, the archives will not only afford the public the opportunity to learn more about Still and his creative evolution, but also the chance to gain further insight into the many artists with whom he communicated,” Sobel stressed. “Their letters and notes will be of considerable value in re-evaluating mid-century American art—a re-assessment that will surely be necessary once a larger view of Still’s art is made available to the public.”

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BACKGROUND

In August 2004, Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper and the City’s Office of Cultural Affairs announced that Denver had been chosen to receive the much sought-after 2,000+ piece private collection of works by the seminal American artist Clyfford Still (1904-1980).

Most of Still’s work had been hidden from public view due to the strict terms of the artist’s will in which he bequeathed his works to an American city that would create and maintain a museum devoted exclusively to his art. Since Still’s death in 1980, numerous cities had sought the collection by negotiating with his widow, Patricia Still, who passed away in August 2005.

The announcement was the culmination of months of discussions between the City of Denver and Mrs. Still. In January 2004, Mayor Hickenlooper traveled with Denverite Curt Freed, nephew of Patricia Still, and Denise Montgomery, director of the Office of Cultural Affairs, to New Windsor, Maryland, to visit with Mrs. Still about Denver as a possible home for the collection. During the meeting, Mayor Hickenlooper was able to impress upon Mrs. Still the dynamic, positive arts environment in Denver and his own deep passion for the arts.

With the gift of the collection secured and formal acceptance of the gift by Denver City Council, in February 2005 Dean Sobel was hired to direct the Clyfford Still Museum project. Former director and chief curator of the Aspen Art Museum, Sobel has an extensive background in museum leadership.

Under Sobel’s direction, the Clyfford Still Museum has established a Board of Directors comprised of leaders from within and outside the Denver community, which is in the final stages of selecting a site for the museum. Significant progress has also been made toward developing collections programs, fundraising and selecting an architect—all of which will be finalized and made public in 2006.

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For more information, please visit the Clyfford Still Museum website at www.clyffordstillmuseum.org.

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