

## CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM ANNOUNCES MAJOR NEW EXHIBITIONS AND UNPRECEDENTED LOAN IN CELEBRATION OF FIFTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

*Initiatives to Include Significant International Loan to Seminal Abstract Expressionism Exhibition, the First-Ever Survey of Still's Works on Paper, and Expansion of Museum's Innovative Artists Select Series*



The Royal Academy's north-facing entrance, Burlington Gardens. Photo by Hayes Davidson

Denver, CO—The Clyfford Still Museum announced today that it will present a series of major new exhibitions and initiatives in celebration of its fifth anniversary year, which begins in the fall of 2016. Highlights include: an unprecedented loan of nine paintings from the Museum's collection to the **Royal Academy of Arts** in London for a seminal exhibition on Abstract Expressionism opening September 2016—the first comprehensive survey of the movement to be mounted in Europe in over 50 years; the **first-ever survey of Still's works on paper**, exploring a rarely seen aspect of the artist's practice, opening in Denver in October 2016; and the expansion of the Museum's innovative *Artists Select* series, with contemporary artists **Julian Schnabel** and **Mark Bradford** curating works from the Museum's collection during 2017.

Since opening in November 2011, the Clyfford Still Museum has established itself as a dynamic and pioneering institution, redefining the potential for single artist museums. Over the course of the past five years, the Museum has mounted thought-provoking exhibitions and created innovative programming that has engaged both the local community and visitors from all 50 states and over 30 foreign countries. Through these initiatives the Museum has created renewed interest in Still's practice, bringing his work to the forefront of art-historical dialogues while also keeping it engaged with the contemporary landscape.

“From the outset, it has been our mission to redefine Still’s work in the art-historical canon, and to make this previously hidden collection accessible to a contemporary audience,” said Clyfford Still Museum Director **Dean Sobel**. “During our first five years in operation we have mounted exhibitions that explored major new discoveries about Still’s work, presenting it in a new light. We have been pleased with the overwhelmingly positive reception of Still’s work by our visitors who, in particular, appreciate the opportunity to explore Still’s artistic development over 60 years—from his early representational works to his mature abstractions. In celebration of our anniversary year we look forward to continuing to expand the ways we think about and understand Still’s work.”

Added Sobel, “The loan of some of Still’s finest masterpieces from our collection to the forthcoming exhibition at the Royal Academy represents an extension of the Museum’s mission to advance the work and legacy of Clyfford Still. The exhibition, which presents Clyfford Still, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Willem de Kooning as the pivotal figures of the movement, will provide people from around the world a once-in-a-lifetime chance to encounter these tremendous paintings in person and to reconsider the narrative around the Abstract Expressionism movement as a whole. Because this is an initiative that will help redefine post-war American painting, we felt it was critical that Clyfford Still be included in the strongest possible way.”

Over the past five years, the Clyfford Still Museum has provided unprecedented access to Still’s work, **presenting more than 650 works by Still in 15 exhibitions** at the Museum that variously looked at Still’s paths to abstraction; his achievements as a colorist; and his interest in myth as a basis for his evolving imagery, among others. The Museum has published four scholarly catalogues on Still, produced an hour-long documentary film on the artist’s life and work, hosted keynote lectures by national art and architecture critics, launched an innovative school visit program, discovered and digitized the only known moving images of Still, and hosted free programs to engage the Denver community.

In addition, the Museum has engaged in important partnerships with outside artists and dozens of institutions, both locally and nationally—another critical facet of its mission. Since opening, the Museum has held two national symposia, including a major collaboration with the **Getty Conservation Institute** on conservation techniques and materials used by the Abstract Expressionists. The Museum has also partnered with the **Denver Art Museum** on several projects, ranging from presenting complementary exhibitions to a screening of Matthew Barney’s *River of Fundament* to a four-part lecture series relating to the Denver Art Museum’s upcoming exhibition *The Women of Abstract Expressionism*. On November 18, 2016, the museum will kick off a **four-day festival** that celebrates five years of collaboration with Denver’s rich cultural community, including a partner breakfast, community open house and VIP cocktail bash, and a commemorative publication showcasing important milestones from the Museum’s first five years.

### **About the Still Museum Anniversary Programs**

Coinciding with its fifth anniversary, the Museum will loan nine paintings created between 1944 and 1958 to the Royal Academy of Arts in London for their exhibition **Abstract Expressionism**, co-curated by Clyfford Still Museum Senior

Consulting Curator David Anfam and Edith Devaney, Contemporary Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts. On view in London from September 24, 2016 – January 2, 2017 and then travelling to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (February 3 – June 4, 2017), *Abstract Expressionism* is the first comprehensive exploration of the artistic movement to be held Europe in over 50 years. The exhibition will present an ambitious re-thinking of our current understanding of this groundbreaking school of artists.

This exhibition represents one of only a few times in history that a significant body of Still's works have been shown in Europe, creating a rare opportunity for European audiences to encounter works by this seminal Abstract Expressionist painter. The nine paintings on loan will be presented in their own room within the exhibition, one of the two largest galleries at the Royal Academy.

On October 14, 2016 the Museum will open the first exhibition devoted to Still's graphic art, providing audiences with a revealing look at a rarely explored aspect of his artistic process. Taking over all of the Museum's galleries and featuring over 200 works, including ephemera drawn from the Museum's Archives, **Clyfford Still: The Works on Paper** will explore the centrality of drawing to Still's practice. The Museum's holdings include 2,300 works on paper, and this exhibition will draw on this remarkably intact collection (95% of the artist's total output) to look at how Still's drawing and painting practices inspired and complemented one another, culminating in some of his best-known works.

The Museum will also continue its pioneering **Artists Select** program, which launched in 2015 with an exhibition curated by visual artist and composer Mark Mothersbaugh. Throughout 2017, the Museum will feature curated exhibitions by contemporary artists **Julian Schnabel** and **Mark Bradford**. The impetus for this series stems from a desire to explore the way various fields of study and art forms, including music, literature, and philosophy, inspired Still by allowing various creative professionals to present Still through their own lens, while also showing the enduring impact Still has on contemporary artists working today.

### **ABOUT THE CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM**

The Clyfford Still Museum opened in November of 2011 to promote public and scholarly understanding of the life and work of Clyfford Still (1904–80). Considered one of the most important painters of the twentieth century, Still was among the first generation of Abstract Expressionist artists who developed a new, powerful approach to painting in the years following World War II. In addition to approximately 9,000 square feet of exhibition space devoted solely to the artist's work, the Museum also houses the Clyfford Still Museum Archives and the Clyfford Still Museum Research Center. The *Los Angeles Times* calls the Museum "a marvelous model for what a single-artist museum can be." *Smithsonian Magazine* describes the Museum as "among the best art museum experiences anywhere." The Museum was designed by Allied Works Architecture, which received the 2013 Design Award, 2012 Honor Award, and 2012 Craftsmanship Award from regional chapters of the American Institute of Architects for the project.

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