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Media Contact:
John Eding
720.354.4875
jeding@clyffordstillmuseum.org

CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM TO OPEN FIRST-EVER EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO ARTIST'S WORKS ON PAPER

Largest Exhibition to Date, in Celebration of Fifth Anniversary Year



Clyfford Still, PP-38, 1959. Pastel on paper, 12 x 17.75 in. (30.5 x 45.1 cm) © City and County of Denver / ARS, NY

Denver, CO—In celebration of its fifth anniversary year, the Clyfford Still Museum will present *Clyfford Still: The Works on Paper*, the first-ever exhibition of Still's drawings, and the largest exhibition of Still's work at the Museum to date. The exhibition, on view October 14, 2016–January 15, 2017, will feature more than 240 works, shedding new light on this integral but historically overlooked part of Still's creative process. Arranged chronologically, the exhibition will reveal the centrality of drawing to Still's practice and offer an intimate look at the evolution of his style from figuration to fully realized abstractions.

In addition to offering a chronological study of Still's works, the exhibition will offer an in-depth exploration of works in many different media, the majority of which have never before been on public view. Among the exhibition highlights will be a significant group of oil-on-paper compositions made between 1943 and 1944, selections from the more than 1,200 pastels that Still created in the final 10 years of his life, and a series of figurative portraits and landscapes—many featuring Still and his family—created in the mid-1920s. The exhibition also draws on the extensive Clyfford Still Archives housed at the Museum, featuring items such as technical studies made by Still while working in the San Francisco Bay Area shipyards during the onset of World War II and various sketches and notations that seem to lay out the abstract forms of his later work. The exhibition will conclude with the artist's final dated and signed work, a pastel-on-paper composition created in 1980.

“Five years into our deep dive into the creative process behind Still's revolutionary work, this exhibition reveals more about this mysterious artist than anyone could have considered possible when we opened,” says director and exhibition co-curator **Dean Sobel**. Senior Consulting Curator **David Anfam** adds, “Still's works on paper constitute a vast template and laboratory for the mechanics of Still's art as a whole. Famously, drawing reveals an artist's proficiency in a way that painting, with its more seductive materiality, can readily disguise.”

Despite the fact that Clyfford Still drew prolifically throughout his career, historically it has been next to impossible to view Still's works on paper; only seven are known to exist in public collections outside Denver. The variety and sheer volume of Still's drawings—more than 2,300 works in Denver's collection housed at the Museum, compared with approximately 830 paintings—attest to the significant role that draftsmanship played in his work, particularly when compared to his Abstract Expressionist contemporaries. Still explored graphite, charcoal, pastel, crayon, pen and ink, oil paint, gouache, and tempera, as well as lithography, etching, woodcut, and silkscreen. In some cases, paintings—including such breakthrough canvases as Still's *PH-235 (1944-N-No. 1)*, widely considered to be the first mature iteration of Abstract Expressionism—grew directly out of sketches or more finished drawings. On the other hand, many works are fully realized pieces in themselves rather than preparatory steps.

Clyfford Still: The Works on Paper is curated by CSM Director Dean Sobel, Senior Consulting Curator David Anfam, and Bailey Harberg Placzek, assistant curator and collections manager. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

EXHIBITION PUBLICATION

Using prototypes and open-source tools provided by the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Museum will produce its first digital publication on the occasion of this exhibition. The project will be designed to resist technical obsolescence and expand further than ever the reach and accessibility of the Museum's rich collection and vital scholarship.

EXHIBITION PROGRAMS

With the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, the Museum will co-host a symposium on Abstract Expressionist drawing on Wednesday, December 2, at Stony Brook Manhattan on Park Avenue South. Details and participants are to be announced.

Artist-led demonstrations and drop-in, hands-on activities for adults and children will take place daily in the exhibition's “Drawing Room,” a dedicated creation space and resource area surrounded by the works on view, where gallery teachers will lead creative projects with guests. Visitors will be able to contribute to a community-created art installation as well. Reading materials and video resources will also be available with exhibition-related content.

CSM FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

The Museum turns five on November 18, 2016, kicking off a year of special exhibitions and events that includes exhibitions curated by Julian Schnabel and Mark Bradford. More information is available in the CSM [Press Room](#).

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 20th 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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Media Contacts:

For Local Inquiries:

John Eding, Clyfford Still Museum: john@clyffordstillmuseum.org, 720-354-4875

For National Inquiries:

Megan Ardery, Resnicow + Associates: mardery@resnicow.com, 212-671-5178

Abby Margulies, Resnicow + Associates: amargulies@resnicow.com, 614-827-5810