

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

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Milwaukee Art Museum Announces Inaugural Special Exhibition in New Bradley Family Gallery

Sam Francis: Master Printmaker *celebrates major gift of Abstract Expressionist prints*



Milwaukee, Wis.—The Milwaukee Art Museum will present *Sam Francis: Master Printmaker*, sponsored by Sendik's Food Market, as the inaugural exhibition in the Bradley Family Gallery, a new 4,000-square-foot changing exhibition space in the Museum's renovated and expanded Collection Galleries. It will be on view November 24, 2015–March 20, 2016.

Debuting as part of the Museum's reopening celebration, *Sam Francis: Master Printmaker* honors

the 2009 gift of more than five hundred prints from the Sam Francis Foundation that made the Milwaukee Art Museum the largest repository of the artist's works on paper. It is the first time the works will be on view in Milwaukee.

American artist Sam Francis (1923–1994) is best known for his Abstract Expressionist large-scale paintings, innovative prints, and use of vibrant color. The exhibition's fifty lithographs, etchings, aquatints, and screenprints provide a cross section of the most significant print series of Francis's career.

"The Museum is honored to be a repository for the work of Sam Francis, a major force in twentieth-century painting and printmaking," said Margaret Andera, adjunct curator of contemporary art. "This exhibition is a rare chance to discover an artist's entire career, and the Museum's rich collection of works on paper."

Francis was one of the first post-World War II American painters to develop a reputation in the international art world. His work reflects his wide-ranging travels—from San Francisco to Japan to France—and artistic influences, including Impressionism and color field painting.

The vibrant colors associated with his paintings are equally in evidence in his prints, with stunning depths of inks he formulated himself. Printmaking was essential to Francis's process throughout his career, as an opportunity to explore ideas relating to clarity and the possibilities of color. Francis was also instrumental in encouraging fellow artists to explore

printmaking, and he invited artists to produce prints and artists' books at his two presses, the Litho Shop, founded in 1970, and Lapis Press, which began in 1984.

Upon their acquisition, the prints joined the Museum's Herzfeld Photography, Print, and Drawing Study Center, a repository of more than 15,000 rare prints, drawings, photographs, and book arts. In addition to housing the Museum's collection of works on paper, the Herzfeld Study Center contains a library of monographs on artists, catalogue raisonnés, and reference materials, along with object files and artist files.

Restored. Reinstalled. Reimagined.

The Milwaukee Art Museum, the largest visual art institution in Wisconsin and one of the oldest museums in the nation, is reopening its transformed Collection Galleries November 24. This fourteen-month, \$34 million project is the first-ever major reimagining of the Museum's two older building—the Eero Saarinen-designed War Memorial Center (1957) and the David Kahler-designed addition (1975)—and is designed to expand the space, dramatically reimagine the visitor experience, and set a new standard for twenty-first-century museums. When it reopens in November, the Museum will feature a welcoming new entrance that unites the Museum and Lake Michigan; a wine, coffee, and snack bar; an intuitive layout; more of its world-class Collection on view than ever before; new areas devoted to photography and design; and double the special exhibition space.

About the Milwaukee Art Museum

Prominently situated on the shore of Lake Michigan, the Milwaukee Art Museum campus welcomes over 400,000 visitors annually. The Museum was founded over 125 years ago and is the largest and most significant art museum in Wisconsin. It houses a rich collection of over 30,000 works, with strengths in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American and European art, contemporary art, and American decorative arts. It is the world's leading repository for work by untrained creators and has one of the largest collections of works by Georgia O'Keeffe. The Museum's celebrated Santiago Calatrava-designed Quadracci Pavilion, completed in 2001, showcases both Museum-produced and traveling feature exhibitions.

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Image: Sam Francis, *First Stone*, 1960. Milwaukee Art Museum, gift of the Sam Francis Foundation, California M2009.173. © Sam Francis Foundation, California / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by John R. Glembin.