Guggenheim Presents Expansive Exhibition of Mid-20th-Century Art from the Permanent Collection

Presentation Features Approximately 100 Works by Nearly 70 Artists

Venue: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York
Location: Rotunda Levels 2–6, High Gallery
Dates: June 8–September 12, 2012
Media Preview: Thursday, June 7, 10 am–noon

(NEW YORK, NY – May 23, 2012) — From June 8 to September 12, 2012, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum presents Art of Another Kind: International Abstraction and the Guggenheim, 1949–1960. Comprising approximately 100 works by nearly 70 artists, the exhibition explores international trends in abstraction in the decade before the Guggenheim’s iconic Frank Lloyd Wright–designed building opened in October 1959, when vanguard artists working in the United States and Europe pioneered such influential art forms as Abstract Expressionism, Cobra, and Art Informel. In the 1950s, many countries ended their postwar isolationism and entered a phase of cultural openness and internationalism. The prominent French art critic Michel Tapié declared the existence of un art autre (art of another kind), a term embracing a mosaic of styles, but essentially signifying an avant-garde art that rejected a connection with any tradition or past idiom. With works by Karel Appel, Louise Bourgeois, Alberto Burri, Eduardo Chillida, Lucio Fontana, Grace Hartigan, Asger Jorn, Yves Klein, Willem de Kooning, Georges Mathieu, Isamu Noguchi, Kenzo Okada, Jackson Pollock, Pierre Soulages, Antoni Tàpies, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Takeo Yamaguchi, and Zao Wou-Ki, among others, the exhibition considers the artistic developments of the post–World War II period and draws greater attention to lesser-known artists in the museum’s collection alongside those long since canonized.

Art of Another Kind is organized by Tracey Bashkoff, Curator, Collections and Exhibitions, and Megan Fontanella, Assistant Curator, Collections and Provenance, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

The Leadership Committee for Art of Another Kind: International Abstraction and the Guggenheim, 1949–1960 is gratefully acknowledged for its support.
Abstract Expressionism encompasses a diverse range of postwar American painting that challenged the tradition of vertical easel painting. Beginning in the late 1940s, Pollock placed his canvases on the floor to pour, drip, and splatter paint onto them. This gestural act, with variations practiced by William Baziotes, De Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, and others, was termed “Action painting” by American critic Harold Rosenberg, who considered it a product of the artist’s unconscious outpouring or the enactment of some personal drama. The New York school, as these artists were called due to the city’s postwar transformation into an international nexus for vanguard art, expanded in the 1950s with the unique contributions of such painters as James Brooks and Hartigan, as well as energetic collagist-assemblers Conrad Marca-Relli and Robert Rauschenberg. Other painters eliminated the gestural stroke altogether. Mark Rothko used large planes of color, often to express universal human emotions and inspire a sense of awe for a secular world. Welder-sculptors such as Herbert Ferber and Theodore Roszak are also counted among the decade’s pioneering artists.

The postwar European avant-garde in many ways paralleled the expressive tendencies and untraditional methods of their transatlantic counterparts, though their cultural contexts differed. For artists in Spain, abstract art signified political liberation. Dissenting Italian artists correspondingly turned to abstraction against the renewed popularity of politicized realism. French artist Jean Dubuffet’s spontaneous approach, Art Brut (Raw art), retained figurative elements but radically opposed official culture, instead favoring the spontaneous and direct works of untrained individuals. His work influenced the Cobra group (1948–51), which was founded by Appel, Jorn, and other artists from Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam. The Cobra artists preferred thickly painted surfaces that married realism to lively color and expressive line in a new form of primitivism.

Eventually taking root in France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Spain, Art Informel refers to the antigeometric, antinaturalistic, and nonfigurative formal preoccupations of many European avant-garde artists, and their pursuit of spontaneity, looseness of form, and the irrational. Art Informel is alternatively known by several French terms: Abstraction lyrique (Lyrical Abstraction), Art autre (Art of another kind), matiérisme (matter art), and Tachisme (from tache, meaning blot or stain). The movement includes the work of Burri and Tàpies, who employed unorthodox materials like burlap or sand and focused on the transformative qualities of matter. Asian émigré artists Kumi Sugaï and Zao were likewise central to the postwar École de Paris (School of Paris) and melded their native traditions with modern painting styles.

By the end of the 1950s, artists such as Lucio Fontana, Klein, and Piero Manzoni were exploring scientific, objective, and interactive approaches, and introduced pure monochrome surfaces. Other abstractionists engaged viewers’ senses and explored dematerialization, focusing on optical transformations as opposed to the art object itself, and investigating the effects of motion, light, and color.

Through the presentation of these varied styles and innovative developments in the post–World War II years, Art of Another Kind especially highlights paintings and sculptures that entered the Guggenheim collection under James Johnson Sweeney, the museum’s second director (1952–60). Following Solomon R. Guggenheim’s death in 1949 and the end of founding director and curator Hilla Rebay’s
tenure in 1952, Sweeney championed emerging avant-garde artists and augmented the museum’s existing modern holdings with new works. Sweeney had stated, “I do not believe in the so-called ‘tastemakers,’ . . . but in what I would call ‘tastebreakers’—the people who break open and enlarge our artistic frontiers.” His program of exhibitions and acquisitions considerably broadened the museum’s scope, and his vision included reconsidering the founding collection assembled by Solomon and Irene Guggenheim under Rebay’s guidance by uniting the abstract works by Vasily Kandinsky and other modernists with rarely seen representational works for a more complex perspective of the avant-garde in the first half of the twentieth century. Recently, the Guggenheim Museum highlighted his contributions to the institution in The Sweeney Decade: Acquisitions at the 1959 Inaugural, an exhibition featuring a selection of works that were first unveiled at the 1959 show in the museum’s new Wright building. On view in 2009 as part of the museum’s 50th-anniversary celebrations, The Sweeney Decade featured 24 paintings and sculptures from the 1950s collected under his leadership. Art of Another Kind offers a more comprehensive elaboration of his vision along with works that were added to the collection after his tenure.

Exhibition Installation
While the exhibition explores individual styles, diversity within abstraction, and artists often working independently of established groups or affiliations, works are loosely organized according to artists’ locus of activity and stylistic trends: New York school; Art Brut and Cobra; School of Paris; Spanish and Italian Informalism; Kinetic art; and, finally, late 1950s experiments with matiérisme, performance-based painting, and the monochrome. Highlights within the installation include Outburst (Éclatement, 1956) by Judit Reigl, newly acquired in 2012, and Alexander Calder’s Red Lily Pads (Nénuphars rouges, 1956), suspended in the upper ramps and visible from the rotunda floor below. The exhibition also includes the work of 11 living artists.

Visitors will have the opportunity to browse through historic exhibition catalogues produced by the first full-time publications department established during Sweeney’s tenure. Designed by the Swiss-born typographer and designer Herbert Matter, catalogues from the era helped shape the museum’s visual identity and chronicle the development of the art championed by the Guggenheim under Sweeney in the 1950s. Selected books will be available in the museum at iPad stations and online at guggenheim.org/new-york/exhibitions/publications/from-the-archives.

Extensive content related to the exhibition will be available on the Guggenheim’s website, which features a selection of supporting materials from the museum’s archives, including letters between artists and Sweeney, invitations to exhibitions, and historic photos of Guggenheim exhibitions. In addition, 20 works and several exhibition themes will be explored through short texts. Multimedia content including video footage and interviews with the curators will be added to the site once the exhibition opens to the public. For more information, visit guggenheim.org/anotherkind.

Catalogue
Art of Another Kind is accompanied by a fully illustrated, 200-page catalogue that includes essays by Bashkoff, Fontanella, and Joan Marter, Distinguished Professor, Art History, Rutgers University; an illustrated chronology; and short biographies of the artists whose work is reproduced in the plate section. The catalogue is available in a hardcover edition for $65 at the Guggenheim Store or online at
Education and Public Programs
A range of public programs is presented in conjunction with *Art of Another Kind*. Details will be posted on guggenheim.org/publicprograms. Highlights include the following.

**Film Screenings**
Fridays, June 8–September 28, 1 pm
Providing a deep context for visitors, weekly film screenings are organized into thematic series relating to current exhibitions, and include Guggenheim Archive Treasures, Hollywood in the 1950s, and Rineke Dijkstra Selects. Free with museum admission. Visit guggenheim.org/filmscreenings for complete schedule.

**The Perils of Progress: Artists and the Atomic Age**
Lecture
Monday, June 18, 6:30 pm
Joan Marter, Distinguished Professor, Art History, Rutgers University, discusses 1950s American sculpture as a rich, authoritative, and vibrant art. Just as Abstract Expressionist painting is now viewed in the context of the chaos and destruction of the atomic era, sculpture of this period shares a similar vision of the world in conflict. Reception follows. $10, $7 members, free for students with RSVP. For tickets visit guggenheim.org/publicprograms or call 212 423 3587.

**“Tastebreakers”: Art in the Afternoon**
Wednesdays, 1:30 pm
James Johnson Sweeney, Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1952–60), once said: “I do not believe in the so-called ‘tastemakers,’ . . . but in what I would call ‘tastebreakers’—the people who break open and enlarge our artistic frontiers.” This three-part series includes a creative-writing workshop, an artist-led walkthrough, and an art-historical tour, inviting fresh perspectives on *Art of Another Kind*. For each program: $10, $7 members, free for students with RSVP (limited availability). To register visit guggenheim.org/courses.

Karen Finley, June 20
Participants will explore a single painting through close looking and extensive discussion.

Jessica Dickinson, July 25
Artworks will be viewed through the eyes of a contemporary painter interested in “markers of a space outside of the verbal and within the visible.”

Agnes Berecz, August 15
Participants are invited to rethink the exhibition’s themes through a discussion of the cultural politics of painting in postwar Paris with Berecz, Visiting Assistant Professor, History of Art and Design, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn.
Guided Tours
Free with museum admission

Curator’s Eye: Led by exhibition curators
Friday, June 22, 2 pm – Tracey Bashkoff
Friday, September 7, 2 pm – Megan Fontanella

Conservator’s Eye: Led by museum conservators
Friday, August 3, 2 pm – Julie Barten

“Composing with Patterns”: Music at Mid-Century
Performance
Tuesday, July 10, 7:30 pm
John Cage, Morton Feldman, György Ligeti, and Karlheinz Stockhausen created music in response to the changing world following World War II. Listen to their experimental techniques such as improvisation, graphical notation, and serialism, experienced in dialogue with Art of Another Kind. Christopher McIntyre directs an ensemble in the museum’s Frank Lloyd Wright rotunda, and a talk by composer R. Luke DuBois precedes the performance. $20, $15 members, $10 students.

Public & Artist Interactions with Karen Finley: The Creative Act
Monday–Friday, July 16–20, 10 am–1 pm
Public & Artist Interactions is a program that invites contemporary artists to be collaborative partners in the creation of unique learning experiences. In conjunction with the art on view, this weeklong intensive explores 1950s globalism, the emergence of image culture in the postwar years, contemporary portraiture, and the nature of subjectivity. Taught by internationally acclaimed artist and educator Karen Finley, daily sessions include gallery talks, studio exercises, and a final reflection. $300, $200 members, $150 students (over 18). No experience required. Additional studio time and July 17 evening artist conversation included and strongly recommended. To register visit guggenheim.org/courses.

Summer Sunday Family Tours
June 10, 17, 24
July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
10:30 am - noon
Family-oriented tours that incorporate conversation and creative hands-on gallery activities. For families with children ages 5–10. $15 per family, $10 members, free for Family Members and Cool Culture families. Registration required at 212 423 3587, Monday–Friday, 1–5 pm. For more information visit guggenheim.org/familyprograms.

Sunday, June 24
Amazing Abstraction!
Families will explore 1950s abstract art in the exhibition Art of Another Kind.

Open Studio for Families
Sundays, July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Sunday, August 5
Noon–4 pm
Families are invited to visit the Sackler Center’s Studio Art Lab (on the museum’s lower level) and create an abstract work of art inspired by *Art of Another Kind*. Free with museum admission.

**Cobra: A Revolutionary European Avant-Garde Movement**

Lecture

Wednesday, September 5, 6:30 pm

Dutch art historian Willemijn Stovkis discusses the radical postwar Cobra movement, which took its name from its founding locations of Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam. Inspired by the art of so-called primitives, children, and the mentally ill, the group, which included Pierre Alechinsky, Karel Appel, and Asger Jorn, fostered idealistic, Marxist-inspired plans for a new folk art. Their heavy expressionism, full of fantasy beings, is seen as part of the international postwar tendency toward Art autre and Art Informel. Reception follows. $10, $7 members, free for students with RSVP. For tickets visit guggenheim.org/publicprograms or call 212 423 3587.

**About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation**

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. Currently the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation owns and operates the Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection on the Grand Canal in Venice, and provides programming and management for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin is the result of a collaboration, begun in 1997, between the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum of modern and contemporary art designed by Frank Gehry on Saadiyat Island, adjacent to the main island of Abu Dhabi city, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is currently in progress. More information about the foundation can be found at guggenheim.org.

**VISITOR INFORMATION**

**Admission:** Beginning June 8, adults $22, students/seniors (65+) $18, members and children under 12 free. Admission includes an audio tour of *Art of Another Kind* and an audio tour with highlights of the Guggenheim’s permanent collection and building available in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

**Museum Hours:** Sun–Wed, 10 am–5:45 pm; Fri, 10 am–5:45 pm; Sat, 10 am–7:45 pm; closed Thurs. On Saturdays, beginning at 5:45 pm, the museum hosts Pay What You Wish. Extended hours from 10 am–7:45 pm will be offered on Sun, June 24 and Mon, June 25. For general information call 212 423 3500 or visit the museum online at:

guggenheim.org
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For publicity images visit guggenheim.org/pressimages
User ID: photoservice
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Karel Appel
The Crying Crocodile Tries to Catch the Sun, 1956
Oil on canvas, 145.5 x 113.1 cm
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, 1976
© 2012 Karel Appel Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

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Alberto Burri
Composition (Composizione), 1953
Oil, gold paint, and glue on burlap and canvas, 86 x 100.4 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
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Eduardo Chillida
From Within (Desde dentro), March 1953
Iron, 98.4 x 27.9 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
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Photo: Robert E. Mates © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York

Willem de Kooning
Composition, 1955
Oil, enamel, and charcoal on canvas, 201 x 175.6 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
© 2012 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
Photo: Kris McKay/Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Asger Jorn
A Soul for Sale (Ausverkauf einer Seele), 1958–59
Oil with sand on canvas, 200 x 250 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Purchased with funds contributed by the Evelyn Sharp Foundation, 1983
© 2011 Donation Jorn, Silkeborg / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY / COPY-DAN, Copenhagen

Grace Hartigan
Ireland, 1958
Oil on canvas, 200 x 271 cm
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice
© Grace Hartigan Estate
Conrad Marca-Relli  
*Warrior*, 1956  
Oil and canvas collage on canvas, 215.9 x 127 cm  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
© Archivio Marca-Relli, Parma

Jackson Pollock  
*Ocean Greyness*, 1953  
Oil on canvas, 146.7 x 229 cm  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
© 2012 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Isamu Noguchi  
*The Cry*, 1959  
Balsa wood on steel base, 221 x 85.1 x 47.6 cm, including base  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
© 2012 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York  
Photo: Kris McKay/Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Judit Reigl  
*Outburst (Éclatement)*, 1956  
Oil on canvas, 136 x 160 cm  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
Gift of the artist in honor of Kálmán Makláry  
© Judit Reigl
Mark Rothko
*Untitled (Violet, Black, Orange, Yellow on White and Red)*, 1949
Oil on canvas, 207 x 167.6 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
Gift, Elane and Werner Dannheisser and The Dannheisser Foundation
© 2012 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
Photo: Kris McKay/Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Pierre Soulages
*Peinture, 20 novembre 1956* (1956), 1956
Oil on canvas, 195 x 130.2 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
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Photo: Kris McKay/Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Emilio Vedova
*Image of Time (Barrier) (Immagine del tempo [Sbarramento]*)*, 1951
Egg tempera on canvas, 130.5 x 170.4 cm
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice
© Emilio Vedova
Photo: David Heald/Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Takeo Yamaguchi
*Work - Yellow (Unstable Square [Fuantei shikaku]*)*, 1958
Oil on plywood, 182.6 x 182.6 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
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