

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 1991

PRESS RELEASE WILLIAMS COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

EXHIBITION OF WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF
BENNINGTON COLLEGE ON VIEW AT THE WILLIAMS
COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART, JUNE 15 - DECEMBER 8,
1991

Exhibited together for the first time outside Bennington, approximately 25 works of art from the collection of Bennington College will be on view at the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) from June 15 through December 8, 1991. Ranging from a 1922 Diego Rivera and a Josef Albers from the 1940s to a group of works by such renowned American abstract artists as Paul Feeley, Helen Frankenthaler, Ralph Humphrey, Agnes Martin, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, and Tony Smith, the exhibition reflects Bennington's active role in fostering the visual arts since it was founded in 1932. **Selections from the Collection of Bennington College** was organized by Linda Shearer, Director, WCMA, and Sally Shafto, Registrar, WCMA.

Well-known for its early support and encouragement of now celebrated artists such as Frankenthaler and

(more)

Noland, Bennington College established itself early as an educational institution that nourished experimentation in all the arts, and especially the visual arts. Most of the works in the exhibition are by artists and faculty members who have been or are currently associated with Bennington College. Among the first generation of artists who taught at Bennington in the 1930s was David Burluk, who in his native Russia was a founding father of Russian Futurism and later in Germany one of the organizers of Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), a group of avant-garde expressionist artists. Two works from the 1930s--Burluk's *Still Life with Shellfish*, and Stefan Hirsch's *Rocks*--reveal the influence of German expressionism.

Under the leadership of Paul Feeley, who taught at Bennington both before and after the Second World War, the art department developed into one of the best in the United States. Feeley, with colleagues Eugene C. Goosen and Tony Smith, committed Bennington to a more rigorously ideological orientation, and it was during this era that a number of artists, such as David Smith, Jackson Pollock, and Kenneth Noland became affiliated with Bennington. Goosen, recalling his years at Bennington, has written, "In all my experience I have never known a faculty which worked together more amiably and more intensely...what motivated us, I think was the struggle to recognize and to implement each other's basic passion for the subject we were teaching."

Over the past 60 years Williams and Bennington College have developed many informal associations, a logical outcome of the proximity of the two campuses; this exhibition continues that tradition. The Williams College Museum of Art is pleased to be able to present to the public works from the Bennington College collection in celebration of its rich history in the visual arts.

(more)

In conjunction with **Selections from the Collection of Bennington College**, a symposium is planned for fall 1991.

###

The Williams College Museum of Art is open Monday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is free. The Museum is wheelchair accessible.

For further information and photographs, call Zelda Stern or Susan Dillmann, 413-597-3180.

A portion of the Museum's general operating funds for this fiscal year has been provided through a grant from the Institute of Museum Services, a Federal agency that offers general operating support to the nation's museums.