

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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ARTIST'S CHOICE: ELIZABETH MURRAY

June 20 - August 22, 1995

An exhibition conceived and installed by American artist Elizabeth Murray is the fifth in The Museum of Modern Art's series of **ARTIST'S CHOICE** exhibitions. On view from June 20 to August 22, 1995, **ARTIST'S CHOICE: ELIZABETH MURRAY** presents more than 100 drawings, paintings, prints, and sculptures by approximately seventy women artists. The exhibition involves works created between 1914 and 1973, including those ranging from early modernists Frida Kahlo and Liubov Popova to contemporary artists Nancy Graves and Dorothea Rockburne. Murray focuses particular attention on artists who made their reputations during the 1950s and 1960s, such as Lee Bontecou, Agnes Martin, Joan Mitchell, when Murray herself was studying and forming her style.

This exhibition and the accompanying video and panel discussion are made possible by a generous grant from The Charles A. Dana Foundation. Organized in collaboration with Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, the **ARTIST'S CHOICE** series invites artists to create an exhibition from the Museum's collection according to a personally chosen theme or principle.

"I wanted, for myself, to explore what being a woman in the art world has meant," Murray writes in the exhibition brochure. "I wanted to weave together a sense of the genuine and profound contribution women's work has made to the art of our time."

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Installed in the Museum's third-floor contemporary painting and sculpture galleries, the exhibition is arranged in thematic groupings. Helen Frankenthaler's large *Mauve District* (1966) is assembled with paintings by Grace Hartigan and Mitchell, and sculptures by Bontecou, in an exploration of material and technique. Murray places *Sky Cathedral* (1958) by Louise Nevelson with works by Louise Bourgeois, Kahlo, and Marisol as she feels their work shares a common quality of "intense self-exploration." Cooler, more distant works such as *Friendship* (1963) by Martin, and others by Mary Bauermeister, Chryssa, and Bridget Riley form another cluster.

On view for the first time are several recent acquisitions, including *Lake George, Coat and Red* (1919) by Georgia O'Keeffe and three untitled drawings by Bourgeois. Murray also incorporates works from outside of the Museum's collection by contemporaries and friends -- Jennifer Bartlett, Louise Fishman, Jan Hashey, and Jenny Snider -- and a single work of her own entitled *A Mirror* (1963).

Born in 1940 in Chicago, Elizabeth Murray received her B.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago (1962) and her M.A. from Mills College, Oakland (1964). Now living in New York City, she has received an honorary doctorate from the Art Institute of Chicago (1992) and an honorary degree from the Rhode Island School of Design (1993). She has won numerous awards including the Skowhegan Medal for Painting (1986) and the Larry Aldrich Prize in Contemporary Art (1993), and has been member of the American Institute of Arts and Letters since 1992.

Murray has taught painting since the 1970s at institutions including Bard College, the Art Institute of Chicago, Princeton University, and Yale University and has lectured at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture.

Murray's work has been collected by major museums including The Museum of Modern Art, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. A major exhibition of her paintings and drawings, organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and the Committee on Visual Arts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, toured the United States in 1987-88. In 1988 her recent work was shown in an exhibition organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. At The Museum of Modern Art, Murray's work is displayed in the permanent collection of painting and sculpture, and was most recently featured in HIGH AND LOW: MODERN ART AND POPULAR CULTURE (1990).

One of the most highly regarded painters of her generation, Murray produces abstract color works on large, unusually shaped canvases. Relying on invented biomorphic forms as well as recognizable symbols -- punctuation marks, numbers, or letters of the alphabet -- Murray often creates multiple canvases, weaving them together into a single work.

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VIDEO

A video featuring Elizabeth Murray is screened throughout the run of the exhibition.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Monday, June 26; 8:15 p.m. Panelists: Linda Nochlin, Lila Acheson Wallace Professor of Modern Art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University; Marcia Tucker, Director, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and others to be announced. Tickets \$8.00; members, \$7.00; students and seniors, \$5.00. The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1. Tickets available at the Lobby Information Desk starting June 1; for information: 212-708-9795.

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For further information or photographic materials, contact Alexandra Partow,
Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.