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**THE ROSE ART MUSEUM  
PRESENTS**

***PRETTY RAW: AFTER AND AROUND HELEN FRANKENTHALER***

(Waltham, Mass.) – The Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University presents ***Pretty Raw: After and Around Helen Frankenthaler***, a groundbreaking exhibition that reconsiders the history of modern art and its renewed meaning for contemporary artists, February 11 – June 7, 2015, in the Foster Gallery. An opening reception will be held from 5-8pm on Tuesday, February 10.

*Pretty Raw* takes the work of the artist **Helen Frankenthaler** (1928-2011) as the point of departure for an alternative version of modernist art over the past 50 years, a story usually written as a series of male masters. In this new history, decoration, humor, femininity and masculinity, the everyday, sensual pleasure, artifice and illusion, and authorial control take center stage, as artists from the 1950s through the present explore the personal, social, and political meanings of sheer, gorgeous materiality.

**Katy Siegel**, the Rose's Curator-at-Large and organizer of the exhibition, asks, "How might it change our vision of the history of postwar American art to start with a female artist? How might it look seen through the lens of Helen Frankenthaler, whose paintings and image in the popular media take in so many of the questions modernism has suppressed? Beginning in 1950 and ending in 2015, *Pretty Raw* brings into focus a range of possible answers."

*Pretty Raw* begins by looking at the 1950s, when Frankenthaler worked in a context that included Grace Hartigan, Jane Freilicher, Dwight Ripley, Marie Menken, and other artists and writers affiliated with the Tibor de Nagy Gallery. The work from these years infuses Abstract Expressionist materialism with playfulness, figuration, and a spirit that is at once everyday and dramatically artificial, in a picture of the 50s radically different from the commonplace image of big egos and broad strokes.

Working outwards from this moment, the exhibition traces several related phenomena: the artistic innovations of poured paint and stained raw canvas; the social implications of decoration; authorial control vs. materiality; the body and painting; and the image of the woman painter and related questions of gender and identity.

The later sections of the show frame the intersection of feminism and painting in easel paintings, large-scale works and performances by feminist artists in the 1970s and early 90s. Men as well as

women embrace embodied role-playing and decorative motifs. While Frankenthaler herself, like many other women artists of her generation, preferred to distance herself from the feminist art movement, her example nonetheless was a powerful one for artists engaged in a feminist practice. As we approach the current moment, when the allure, social use, and bodily affect of color and form permeate contemporary art, *Pretty Raw* reveals the social implications and physical beauty already present in this history.

Selected artists: Helen Frankenthaler, Grace Hartigan, Jane Freilicher, Dwight Ripley, Larry Rivers, Nell Blaine, Al Leslie, Morris Louis, Jules Olitski, Sam Gilliam, Friedl Dzubas, Frank Bowling, Ralph Humphrey, Miriam Schapiro, Lynda Benglis, Harmony Hammond, Andy Warhol, Christopher Wool, Carroll Dunham, Polly Apfelbaum, Dona Nelson, Marilyn Minter, Kara Walker, Kathy Butterly, Jacqueline Humphries, Laura Owens, Mary Weatherford, Sterling Ruby, Ulrike Müller, Josh Faught.

## **ABOUT HELEN FRANKENTHALER**

**Helen Frankenthaler**, whose career spanned six decades, has long been recognized as one of the great American artists of the twentieth century. An heir of first-generation Abstract Expressionism, she brought together in her work—with prodigious inventiveness and singular beauty—a conception of the canvas as both a formalized field and an arena for gestural drawing. She was eminent among the second generation of postwar American abstract painters and is widely credited for playing a pivotal role in the transition from Abstract Expressionism to Color Field painting. One of the foremost colorists of our time, she produced a body of work whose impact on contemporary art has been profound.

Born in New York City in 1928, Frankenthaler's work is represented in collections worldwide, including Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Art Institute of Chicago; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Solo exhibitions include "Helen Frankenthaler: Paintings," The Jewish Museum, New York (1960); "Helen Frankenthaler," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1969, traveled to Whitechapel Gallery, London; Orangerie Herrenhausen, Hanover; and Kongresshalle, Berlin); and "Helen Frankenthaler: A Paintings Retrospective," Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (1989–90, traveled to Museum of Modern Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Detroit Institute of Arts), and "Giving Up One's Mark: Helen Frankenthaler in the 1960s and 1970s," organized by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY, in cooperation with the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation (on view through February 15, 2015). In 1981, the Rose Art Museum presented "Helen Frankenthaler, the 1950's," curated by Carl Belz.

For more information about Helen Frankenthaler or the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, please contact [info@frankenthalerfoundation.org](mailto:info@frankenthalerfoundation.org).

## **ABOUT THE ROSE ART MUSEUM AT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

Founded in 1961, the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University is an educational and cultural institution dedicated to collecting, preserving, and exhibiting the finest of modern and contemporary art. The programs of the Rose adhere to the overall mission of the university, embracing its values of academic excellence, social justice and freedom of expression. The museum's permanent collection of postwar and contemporary art is unequalled in New England and is among the best at any university art museum in the United States. Christopher Bedford has been the Henry and Lois Foster Director of the Rose since 2012.

Located on Brandeis University's campus at 415 South Street, Waltham, MA, the museum is free and open to the public Tuesday through Sunday, noon – 5:00 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.brandeis.edu/rose](http://www.brandeis.edu/rose) or call 781-736-3434.