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## The Newark Museum of Art Presents Major Retrospective of American Abstract Painter Norman Bluhm

Partnership with the artist's estate to organize  
*Norman Bluhm: Metamorphosis*

February 13 - May 3, 2020

NEWARK, NJ – In February 2020 The Newark Museum of Art opens *Norman Bluhm: Metamorphosis*, an exhibition showcasing five decades of the artist's abstract paintings. One of the most forceful American painters of the post-war period, Bluhm, who was born in Chicago in 1920, was a central figure in both the Parisian and New York art worlds. He is revered for his grand-scaled canvases in which he combines vigorous and expressive brushwork with a lavish sense of color and formal experimentation. The first museum exhibition to explore the full range of his prolific career, *Norman Bluhm: Metamorphosis* is an unprecedented, overdue reconsideration of his artistic production, with works dating from 1947 to 1998.

With many examples from the artist's estate, along with loans from public and private collections, the exhibition features 46 paintings and works on paper, including a number of rarely seen late works. Epically scaled, these multi-panel paintings from the 1990s will occupy two floors of the museum.

“We are thrilled to present the provocative *Norman Bluhm: Metamorphosis* as the first major exhibit to debut under our institution's new branding,” said Linda C. Harrison, CEO and Director of The Newark Museum of Art. “Visitors will be awestruck by the scale of this showcase and inspired by the vibrancy of Bluhm's work.”

A transnational artist with global interests, Bluhm's creative output reflects his multidisciplinary interests in mythology, poetry, and world history. He was profoundly shaped by the avant-garde movements and cultural histories of the post-WWII era. While Bluhm is best known for his

Action paintings of the 1950s and 1960s, the exhibition draws attention to the formative decade he spent in Paris from 1947 to 1956. In addition to works from The Newark Museum of Art collection, the checklist includes loans from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, among others.

With a largely chronological layout, *Norman Bluhm: Metamorphosis* presents several distinct bodies of work that trace the artist's stylistic evolution through the second half of the 20th century. Over time his energetic gestural paintings—classic works of Abstract Expressionism—gave way to works that increasingly referenced the human body, reflecting a lifelong practice of drawing from the female nude. Newark's installation integrates works on paper throughout the exhibition and celebrates Bluhm's process by featuring his actual work table—his surrogate palette—piled high with paint.

*Norman Bluhm: Metamorphosis* is organized by The Newark Museum of Art and curated by Tricia Laughlin Bloom, Curator of American Art at The Newark Museum of Art, and Jay Grimm, Guest Curator. A fully illustrated catalogue will be co-published by The Newark Museum of Art and Giles, Ltd. of London and available for purchase in the Museum Shop.

For further information, visit [www.newarkmuseumart.org](http://www.newarkmuseumart.org).

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Founded in 1909, The Newark Museum of Art is the largest art and education institution in New Jersey and one of the most influential museums in the United States. Its renowned global art collections, supported by significant holdings of science, technology and natural history, rank 12th among North America's art museums. The Museum is dedicated to artistic excellence, education and community engagement with an overarching commitment to broadening and diversifying arts participation. As it has for over a century, the Museum responds to the evolving needs and interests of the diverse audiences it serves by providing exhibitions, programming and resources designed to improve and enrich people's lives.

The Museum also encompasses the Ballantine House Victorian Mansion, the Victoria Hall of Science, the Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Planetarium, the MakerSPACE, the Billy Johnson Auditorium, the Alice Ransom Dreyfuss Memorial Garden, an authentic 1784 Schoolhouse, and the Newark Fire Museum.

The Newark Museum of Art, a not-for-profit museum of art and science, receives operating support from the City of Newark, the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State (a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts), the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the Prudential Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, the PSEG Foundation, the Estate of Phyllis and Sanford Bolton, the Wallace Foundation, and other corporations, foundations, and individuals. Funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations are provided by members and other contributors.