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Collected Works of Ary Stillman, Noted Abstract Expressionist, Donated to Columbia

NEW YORK, March 10, 2011 — A gift of 90 paintings and drawings will position [Columbia University](http://www.columbia.edu) as the most significant repository of the work of Ary Stillman (1891-1967), a mid-20th-century artist affiliated with the New York School of abstract expressionists. The recent donation from the [Stillman-Lack Foundation](#) also includes \$800,000 to establish an endowed fellowship fund for PhD candidates in modern art in Columbia's [Department of Art History and Archaeology](#).

Of the 15 canvases and 75 works on paper included in the donation, several have already been put on display in the department. The first 25 Stillman Fellows will be given a work of art from the collection in addition to financial support for travel and research related to the completion of their dissertations.

The Russia-born Stillman immigrated to the United States as a teenager. He spent much of the 1920s in Paris and became affiliated with the New York School of artists in the 1940s. His work, which evolved from representation to abstract expressionism over time, was exhibited widely during his lifetime and can be found in the permanent collections of many American museums.

“Having completed 12 solo and group exhibitions in the last five years, a well-received monograph, and a 2010 colloquium, we wanted Ary Stillman’s legacy to reside at a teaching university,” said foundation executive director Barry Lack. “Columbia was an obvious choice — for its distinguished tradition as a training ground for art historians and for its location in a major art center where Ary had lived, studied, and painted for many years. As a result, when we finish deaccessioning our collection, Columbia will be home to the largest single collection of Stillman’s works.”

“This new fellowship fund will help launch the careers of our PhD students who go on to become leading teachers, critics, and curators — with the remarkable gift of one of Stillman’s works hanging on their office walls,” said Professor Robert E. Harrist, Jr., chairman of the Department of Art History and Archaeology. “We are grateful to the Stillman-Lack Foundation for their generosity, and of course we will be the best stewards of the collection that we can be.”

Under the terms of a fundraising matching program at the [Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#), the Ary Stillman Fellowship Fund will receive \$1.2 million in additional support thanks to a commitment from the late John W. Kluge '37CC.

The first Stillman Fellow will begin study in fall 2011, with two fellows scheduled to be named each year beginning in 2012.

About Ary Stillman

Ary Stillman was born in Russia and received early training there before immigrating to Sioux City, Iowa, at age 16. He studied at the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League in New York and went on to live and work in Paris, in New York — as a member of the New York School — and in Mexico. Over his career, Stillman's work evolved from traditional representation to abstract expressionism — a reaction, he said, to the horrors of World War II. Somewhat overlooked in recent decades, the artist exhibited widely during his lifetime and is represented in the permanent collections of 46 museums in the United States and abroad, including major art museums in Baltimore, Buffalo, Columbus, Dallas, Houston, New Haven and Pittsburgh. The Stillman-Lack Foundation was established in 1967, upon Stillman's death, to preserve the artist's work and make it widely accessible. To learn more, visit www.stillmanlack.org

About Columbia University

A leading academic and research university, Columbia University continually seeks to advance the frontiers of knowledge and to foster a campus community deeply engaged in understanding and addressing the complex global issues of our time. Columbia's extensive public service initiatives, cultural collaborations, and community partnerships help define the university's underlying values and mission to educate students to be both leading scholars and informed, engaged citizens. Founded in 1754 as King's College, Columbia University in the City of New York is the fifth oldest institution of higher learning in the United States.

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