

CRAIG F. STARR GALLERY

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Helen Frankenthaler and David Smith

June 6 – August 8, 2014 at Craig F. Starr Gallery



NEW YORK, NY – *Helen Frankenthaler and David Smith* on view at Craig F. Starr Gallery, June 6 – August 8, 2014, celebrates the close friendship between two major American artists of the 20th century: Helen Frankenthaler (1925-2011) and David Smith (1906-1965). The exhibition will feature ten works by Frankenthaler – one painting and nine works on paper—alongside three sculptures by Smith.

Clement Greenberg, the renowned art critic and a mutual friend of the artists, first introduced Frankenthaler and Smith in 1950. They developed an enduring bond that would last until Smith's untimely death in 1965. The works on view in the exhibition were made during the course of their friendship, with the exception of Smith's *Portrait of an Eagle's Keeper*, 1948-49. Frankenthaler acquired this sculpture in 1951, and it remained a cherished part of her personal collection throughout her life. Other highlights include Frankenthaler's *Number 6*, 1957, and *Bolton Landing*, 1960, both made during visits to Terminal Iron Works, Smith's studio in Bolton Landing, NY.

Pairing smaller-scale, more intimate works by Frankenthaler with fully realized, relatively small Smith sculptures brings to light a subtle visual dialogue. The 13 works on view highlight the formal similarities between the artists' work and illustrate a parallel shift in their conception of pictorial space – from a figural abstraction to a new sense of openness and expansiveness. Both were deeply rooted in Cubism and Surrealism, shared a similar work ethic, and brought inventiveness to their materials. During their 15-year friendship, they visited each other's studios, vacationed together with their families, and exchanged correspondence.

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Frankenthaler and Smith at Craig F. Starr Gallery

A fully illustrated catalogue, published on the occasion, includes the first in-depth examination of the artists' friendship and mutual influence, written by Lauren Mahony, with an introduction by Clifford Ross (a nephew of Helen Frankenthaler) and Rebecca Smith (David Smith's daughter).

The publication also includes an excerpt from a never-before-published letter written by Frankenthaler to Smith and his then wife, Jean Freas. Within the text, Frankenthaler sketched several of Smith's sculptures and wrote: "David – I can't get some of the new (and older) work I saw out of my mind. My god it's exciting and you know I know it and mean it."

The exhibition is made possible with loans from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation and private collectors.

Craig F. Starr Gallery is located at 5 East 73rd Street between Fifth and Madison Avenues. Gallery hours are Monday-Saturday, 11:00am to 5:30pm in June, and Monday-Friday and by appointment Saturdays in July and August. For general information please view the gallery's website at www.craigstarr.com.

Image captions:

Left: Helen Frankenthaler, *Bolton Landing*, 1960, Gouache and pencil on paper, 19 ¼ x 12 1/8 inches. Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. Art © 2014 Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Right: David Smith, *8/6/53*, 1953, Steel and stainless steel, 72 x 32 x 13 inches, Private collection. Art © The Estate of David Smith/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

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