



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Family Gifts: Work by Freeman Butts September 4 - December 31, 2009

Reception and Gallery talk with Ray Campeau: September 4, 5-8 PM
Artini: Gifts, December 17, 5:30-9 PM

Missoula, MT / August 12, 2009 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / Ten years after the death of Freeman Butts, his estate generously offered to gift a selection of his work to six museums in Montana. These institutions, including MAM, met several times with Ray Campeau, the trustee of the estate, and made selections from the array to better reflect Butts' work already present in their collections. This rich gifting of works is intended to more fully frame the artist's legacy within the state. The institutions involved acknowledged no single museum in the state had the space or resources to accommodate the voluminous amount of Butts' work. Therefore, all six selected works to expand their collections, made a commitment to feature the work, and generate scholarship about Butts' influence on contemporary art. All of the museums agreed to lend and borrow the work with each other to further educate the public of the legacy of this important Montana painter. MAM is deeply indebted to the Freeman Butts family and wishes to thank Daisy Butts for her faithful support of MAM. We are also deeply grateful to Ray Campeau, Butts' longtime friend, in helping facilitate this important gift. Campeau will give a gallery talk on September 4th at 7 pm.

Butts was born and raised in California. During his early career in the Los Angeles area, he was influenced by Abstract Expressionism, prevalent at the time, and by the work of other artists on the scene, including Richard Diebenkorn, who were attempting to merge a figurative style with abstraction. One can easily see that Butts' spontaneous approach, his instinct to simplify, and his attention to the process of painting were rooted in those early years. More importantly, it is clear that his work matured and blossomed in Montana.

In addition to MAM, the other museums accepting Freeman Butts' work and committing to exhibiting his work are: Custer County Art Museum in Miles City, Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell, Holter Museum of Art in Helena, Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls, and Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings. Please visit their web sites to receive updates on ways that this impressive gift has been incorporated into their own exhibition schedule and programming.

MAM Exhibitions Curator Stephen Glueckert's complete essay about Freeman Butts "The Brush That Laughed" is available on MAM's website: missoulaartmuseum.org.

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact Stephen Glueckert, Exhibitions Curator, stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x226.

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. MAM educates, challenges and inspires the community through contemporary art. MAM preserves our emerging cultural heritage through the development and conservation of its art collection. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Wednesday-Friday 12-6PM, Saturday-Sunday 10AM-3PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.

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