For Immediate Release
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Frank Stella: Irregular Polygons
October 9, 2010 through March 13, 2011

The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College is pleased to mark its twenty-fifth anniversary with a major exhibition of paintings by Frank Stella from October 9, 2010, through March 31, 2011. Frank Stella: Irregular Polygons presents one of each of the artist’s eleven monumental compositions for the Irregular Polygon (1965–66) series, along with preparatory drawings, the 1974 print series Eccentric Polygons (based on the Irregular Polygons), and a selection of the artist’s latest works, the Polychrome Reliefs. Together these objects testify to an outstanding artistic career and provide an exciting opportunity to engage with the “complex simplicity” that is the paradox of Frank Stella’s art. The exhibition is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue written by its curator, Hood Director Brian Kennedy.

Frank Stella’s long and prolific career at the forefront of abstract art has revealed him to be a consistent innovator. He produces his works in series as he immerses himself in visual thinking and creating according to the principle of, in his words, “line, plane, volume, and point, within space.” Although based on simple geometries, the Irregular Polygons comprise one of the most complex artistic statements of Stella’s career. Each of the eleven compositions combines varying numbers of shapes to create daringly irregular outlines. Stella made four versions of each composition, varying the color combinations, and until now, all eleven formats have never been shown together. The Irregular Polygons mark a radical shift from Stella’s earlier striped paintings in their use of large fields of color. These asymmetric canvases play with illusion, confronting Stella’s previous emphasis on flatness while perpetuating his career-long exploration of space and volume in both painting and sculpture.

In 1985, the year the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College opened to the public, Frank Stella spoke at the annual convocation ceremony and received an honorary degree. In 1963 he had been an artist-in-residence at the college, making works for the series that became known as the Dartmouth Paintings, each of which was named after a city in Florida that he had visited while on a road trip there in 1961. In 1965–66, two years after
he left the Dartmouth campus, he named each of the eleven compositions of his *Irregular Polygons* series after small towns in New Hampshire—Chocorua, Conway, Effingham, Moultonboro, Moultonville, Ossipee, Sanbornville, Sunapee, Tuftonboro, Union, and Wolfeboro. During his boyhood, his father had brought him to a family camp near Ossipee for fishing trips in New Hampshire’s mountains, lakes, and rivers. Stella is delighted to have the opportunity to return to Dartmouth College as a Montgomery Fellow from October 17 to October 24, 2010. On Thursday, October 21, at 4:30 p.m., he will participate in a question-and-answer session in Dartmouth’s Spaulding Auditorium. This event is free and open to the public.

**About Frank Stella**

When presenting Frank Stella with the National Medal of the Arts on February 25, 2010, President Barack Obama described him as “obviously a legend for his accomplishments as one of the world’s most innovative painters and sculptors. His sophisticated visual experiments—often transcending boundaries between painting, print making, and sculpture—are modern masterpieces.”

Frank Stella burst on the New York art scene in 1958, when some of his “black paintings” were included in the exhibition *Sixteen Americans* at the Museum of Modern Art. Since then he has made an extraordinary contribution to the visual arts, consistently investigating pictorial ideas according to key artistic principles: “Line, plane, volume, and point, within space.” Stella was born in 1936 and attended Phillips Academy, Andover, and Princeton University, from which he graduated in 1958. He has lived in New York ever since. His consistent inventiveness has seen him make remarkable advances, building on pictorial and sculptural tradition.

In 1963, Stella was an artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College. By that time, he was making his powerfully influential shaped paintings, which he launched with his aluminum paintings (1960), and then pursued these ideas further with the irregularly shaped paintings known as *Irregular Polygons* (1965–66). From the 1970s onward, Stella has explored the arts of sculpture and print making; he continues to work assiduously today, and his art can be seen in the world’s major museums. At the age of seventy-four, he is without doubt one of the most significant artists of the last half century to work in the abstract tradition of painting, sculpture, and print making.
About the Hood Museum of Art

The Hood Museum of Art is dedicated to teaching and promoting visual literacy for all of its visitors. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 65,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with works of art and offers access to the rich diversity of its collections through ongoing highlights displays, special exhibitions, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events.

Additional images available upon request.

Image credit: Frank Stella, *Chocorua IV*, 1966, fluorescent alkyd and epoxy paints on canvas, 120 x 128 x 4 in. (304.8 x 325.12 x 10.16 cm). Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Purchased through the Miriam and Sidney Stoneman Acquisitions Fund, a gift from Judson and Carol Bemis ’76, and gifts from the Lathrop Fellows. © 2010 Frank Stella / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Steven Sloman.