

Hallie Ford *Museum of Art*

 WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

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Exhibition website: <https://willamette.edu/arts/hfma/exhibitions/library/2020-21/clifford-gleason.html>

Clifford Gleason: The Promise of Paint



SALEM, Ore. — The Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University will present the first major retrospective exhibition of Oregon artist Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978). Organized by professor emeritus and guest curator Roger Hull, “Clifford Gleason: The Promise of Paint” touches on all phases of Gleason’s art, and traces his career from the 1930s to the last months of his difficult life. The exhibition continues through October 31, 2020, in the Melvin Henderson-Rubio Gallery and the Maribeth Collins Lobby.

Hull says, “Gleason was a talented and highly original artist — arguably one of the more accomplished mid-century modern painters in the Pacific Northwest.”

Gleason grew up in Salem and spent his adult life in both Salem and Portland. He is generally not as well recognized as other Pacific Northwest modernists of his era, yet as early as the 1940s he was recognized in Salem as a cultural treasure, and in Portland as an artist worthy of many exhibitions — over 20 at the Portland Art Museum alone, three of them solo shows — between 1940 and 1978. Gleason’s early work tends to reflect European modernists, while by the 1960s, his art became more abstract, often inspired by the natural world. A grant from the Portland patron group Art Advocates allowed him to paint full-time in 1972-1973, a period that includes some of his most notable works.

Gleason also played a vital role in Salem’s cultural history. In the 1930s Gleason studied with Louis Bunce at the Salem Federal Art Center and designed the “Alice in Wonderland” mural for Bush Elementary School. In 2005, the mural was conserved and moved to North Salem High School, and represents Gleason’s earliest surviving work. In 1953, when the historic Bush House was placed in the care of the Salem Art Association, he took an active role in converting the house to an art museum and organizing exhibitions. He also helped found the Salem Art Fair, opened a short-lived gallery in downtown Salem, designed sets for the new Pentacle Theater, painted murals for a local law office, and generally immersed himself in Salem cultural activism.

Gleason could be a genial man-about-town, but prone to alcoholism as well as being homosexual in a repressive era, his position in the regional art world was at times problematic. He often lived in near-poverty and came to depend on the financial and organizational support of friends who recognized his talent. Hull says, “In paint, Gleason found the only realm in which he felt competent, confident, and successful; paint offered the promise of accomplishment.”

Financial support for this exhibition and accompanying book has been supported in part by gifts from the Wyss Foundation and an anonymous donor; with funds from the HFMA Exhibition Fund, the Maribeth Collins Art Exhibition Fund, and the Hallie Ford Exhibition Fund; and by general operating support grants from the City of Salem’s Transient Occupancy Tax funds and the Oregon Arts Commission.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

About the Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University

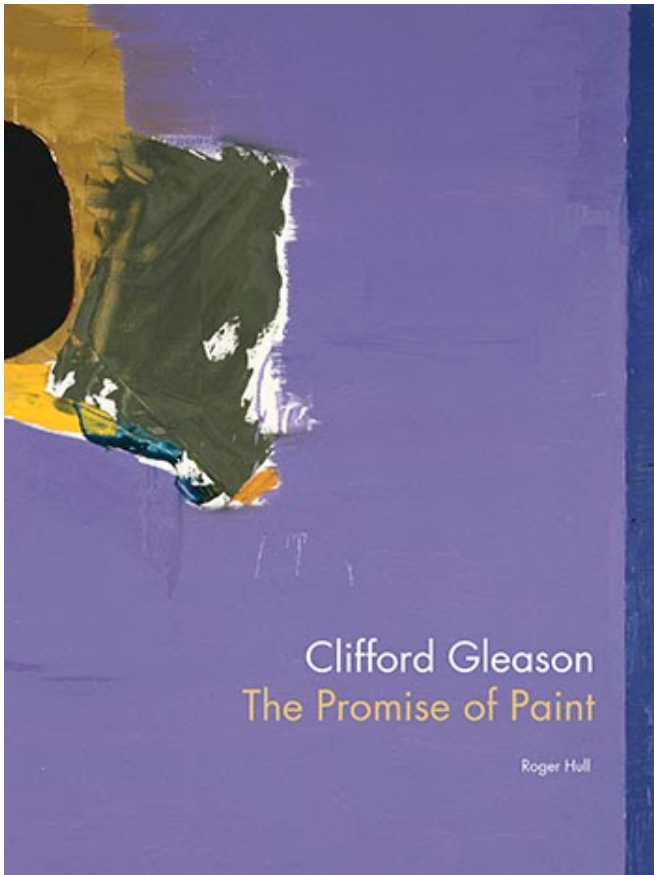
As one of the finest academic art museums in the Northwest, the museum features works by Pacific Northwest and Native American artists and includes a diverse collection of traditional European, American and Asian art, as well as artifacts that date from antiquity. Frequently changing major exhibitions range from classical to contemporary and include educational opportunities for children and adults, as well as important publications.

The museum is located at 700 State St. in Salem. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. The galleries are closed on Sunday and Monday. General admission is \$6, \$4 for seniors and

\$3 for students 18 and older. Students 17 and under and children are admitted free. Admission is free for everyone on Tuesdays.

PLEASE NOTE: due to Covid-19 the museum's hours and guidelines are subject to change as federal and state guidelines evolve. Please check the museum's website for the latest information and possible timed entry updates at willamette.edu/go/hfma or call 503-370-6855.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



| A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |

The exhibition is accompanied by a book written by Roger Hull that chronicles Gleason's career and places his work within the broader context of contemporary and Pacific Northwest art.

2020

96 pp., hardcover, color illustrations

Distributed by Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, OR

To order, call: 503-370-6855

Available at the Hallie Ford Museum of Art

\$24.95

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES

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For assistance contact Andrea Foust at 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu



Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978), "Blue Passage," 1973, oil on canvas, 68 x 38 in., Collection of Dorothy and Brooks Cofield. Photo: Aaron Johanson.

| A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |



Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-2011), "Strange Plant," 1961, oil on canvas
30 x 24.5 in., Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR, Gift of
Marian Milligan and William Dugan, 2006.006.002.

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Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-2011), "Green Butterfly," 1972-1973, oil on canvas, 68 x 38 in.,
Collection of Dorothy and Brooks Cofield.

| A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |



Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978), "Mural for Donald Young Law Office," Salem, 1950, oil on Masonite, 82.75 x 28.75 in, Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR, Gift of Kenneth Sherman in honor and memory of Donald A. and Opal Young, 2000.062.007.

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Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978), *Untitled*, 1957, gouache and graphite on crinkled paper, 15 x 14 in., Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR, Gift of Eloise Ebert, EBE94.001.

| A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |

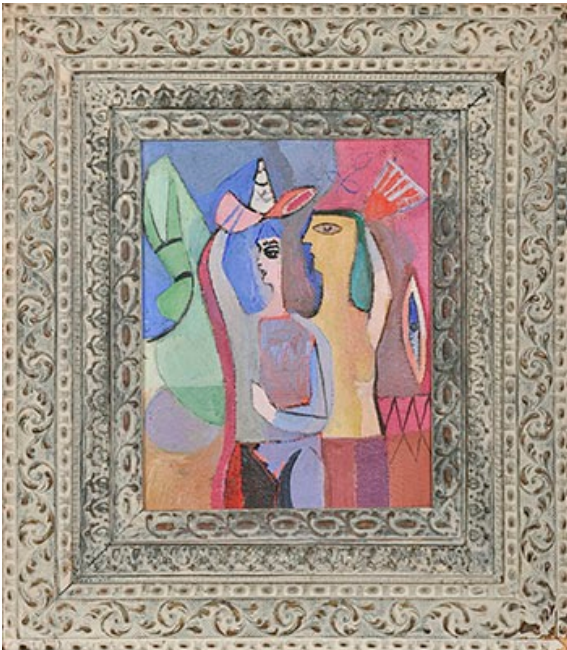


Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978), *Still Life with Spools*, ca. 1939, oil on board, 45.25 x 32 in., Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR, Maribeth Collins Art Acquisition Fund, COL.98.07.

| A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |



Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978), "Belcrest Still Life," 1947, oil on Masonite, 11.52 x 9.5 in., Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR, Gift from the Maurice Hudkins Collection in memory of C. Ronald Hudkins and Betty-mae Hartung Hudkins, 2005.019.026. | A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |



Clifford Gleason (American, 1913-1978), "Female Clown with Circus Dummy," 1947, oil on Masonite, 10.25 x 8 in., Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, OR, Gift from the Maurice Hudkins Collection in memory of C. Ronald Hudkins and Betty-mae Hartung Hudkins, 2005.019.025. | A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |



Clifford Gleason in his studio, Salem, Oregon. 1960s. Photo by Bob Crist. Collection of Bob Crist.
| A high-resolution image is available: call 503-370-6867 or email museum-art@willamette.edu |

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

Interviews can be arranged with Roger Hull by calling [503-370-6867](tel:503-370-6867) or by email at museum-art@willamette.edu