



Palm Springs Art Museum

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PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM PRESENTS GERALD CLARKE: FALLING ROCK
ON VIEW JANUARY 18-MAY 21, 2020

First major solo exhibition of contemporary Native American artist

PALM SPRINGS, CA (Oct. 18, 2019) – Palm Springs Art Museum is presenting the first survey and major solo exhibition of contemporary Native American artist Gerald Clarke, on view beginning on January 18, 2020. “We are extremely proud to display the first survey of Gerald Clarke’s work,” says Louis Grachos, the museum’s JoAnn McGrath Executive Director and CEO. “As a member of the Cahuilla Band of Indians, his work addresses issues that are vital and particular not only to our local community but to those on the national stage.” *Gerald Clarke: Falling Rock* will feature approximately 80 works that track the development of the artist’s career from the mid-1990s to the present.

Clarke is an artist, cowboy, university professor, tribal leader, and Indian (his preferred identity). Living with his family on their ancestral land near Anza, California, Clarke raises cattle as his father, grandfather, and other Cahuilla Indians have done since the Spanish Colonial period. Combining various media in his sculptures, paintings, and installations, Clarke derives artistic inspiration from his homeland’s cultural heritage and its desert and mountain environment, expressing traditional ideas in surprising and contemporary forms.

“Gerald Clarke’s diverse artistic output resonates with histories of assemblage, pop, conceptual, and politically engaged art produced by both Native and non-Native artists,” says Rochelle Steiner, Chief Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs and Programs. “He utilizes humor and wit to expose historical and present-day issues, bringing a critical perspective to pressing social, economic, and environmental concerns from his native Cahuilla perspective. Clarke’s work is relevant widely as issues of justice in contemporary society are top of mind.”

The title of the exhibition comes from a childhood experience of Clarke’s. As he drove with his father through the mountains to the Cahuilla reservation, Clarke noticed several “falling rock” warning signs and—not knowing what they meant—asked his father. “He told me that Falling Rock was the name of the last ‘free’ Indian that never surrendered to the white man. Wherever you see a falling rock sign marks a place where Falling Rock was seen attacking passing cars,” Clarke says. “As a kid, I would always look to see if I could see him, angry and free . . . and it is in this spirit that I create art.” In Clarke’s

childhood imagination, the personification of Falling Rock as the tenacious and rebellious Indian becomes analogous to his practice and an underlying theme throughout his art.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a robust public program with events to be announced, and also school groups exploring Clarke's multi-disciplinary work. Emily Clarke, the artist's daughter, will be presenting a workshop on storytelling and poetry as part of the museum's Teen Arts Academy.

Gerald Clarke: Falling Rock will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue including new scholarship about the artist's work. Co-edited by Christine Giles, Curator, and David Evans Frantz, Associate Curator, at Palm Springs Art Museum, the publication will be distributed internationally by Hirmer Verlag and produced by the award-winning designer Kimberly Varella of Content Object. This publication will feature introductory texts by Giles and Frantz, as well as an essay by Ashley Holland (Cherokee Nation) on the uses of language in Clarke's work; an interview between Clarke and author Gordon Johnson (Cahuilla/Cupeño) on the importance of Native community and heritage; and descriptions of Clarke's artworks. As a lasting record of Clarke's first survey exhibition, this catalogue will be an invaluable resource for future scholarship on his work and contemporary Native American art more broadly.

This exhibition is organized by Christine Giles, Curator.

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Exhibition Season Sponsors: David Kaplan & Glenn Ostergaard, Brautigam-Kaplan Foundation, the Herman & Faye Sarkowsky Charitable Foundation, the Mary Ingebrand-Pohlad Foundation, and Yvonne & Steve Maloney.

For more information about Palm Springs Art Museum exhibitions, programs, and events, please visit psmuseum.org or call (760) 322-4800.

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About Palm Springs Art Museum

Palm Springs Art Museum is the largest cultural institution in the Coachella Valley and includes three locations in Palm Springs and Palm Desert. The flagship building, located in downtown Palm Springs, features compelling art exhibitions, a vast permanent collection, and the Annenberg Theater, all in a 150,000-square-foot, architecturally significant building. The Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, features exhibitions and programming that explore the rich topics of architecture and design. Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert occupies The Galen, an 8,400-square-foot, Silver LEED-certified building, and features rotating exhibitions and special collections. The Galen is surrounded by the four-acre Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden.