

Images available upon request

Visionary Artworks by Two Celebrated Artists in *Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings* Presented at Denver Art Museum

40 works by artist pair Oldenburg and van Bruggen highlight the artistic process and master draftsmanship behind the creation of their renowned larger-than-life sculptures

DENVER – May 8, 2018 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) announced today *Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings*, an exhibition presented in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, opening at the DAM Oct. 7, 2018. The survey of collaborative works by contemporary artists Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen presents 39 drawings and one sculpture spanning the artists' careers from 1961 through 2001. Organized by the DAM and curated by Julie Augur, adjunct curator of drawings, the exhibition offers an intriguing and insightful look at works on paper by two extraordinarily innovative contemporary artists well known for their monumental and imaginative sculptures that can be seen in major cities throughout the world, including Denver, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Tokyo, Berlin, Milan and more.

"*Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings* provides us with the unique opportunity to unveil the playful and curious process and artistic vision of two beloved contemporary artists whose work, *Big Sweep*, is permanently situated in front of the museum and proudly welcomes visitors to the DAM every day," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director at the DAM. "With a keen eye and generous spirit, Julie Augur has curated a masterful survey of work by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, exclusively for the Denver Art Museum and our visitors."

The exhibition presents a chronological survey of works highlighting the ingenious ways in which Oldenburg and



van Bruggen appropriated and re-invented form. Beginning with studies of Oldenburg's first and well-known monumental soft sculptures of the 1960s, *Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings* reveals a collaborative evolution of work that culminates with drafts of their large-scale painted metal sculptures of the late 1990s and early 2000s. The drawings represent the conception of an artistic idea, striking visual representations of manifested creations where line and form playfully intertwine the surreal and the natural elements of a landscape.

Oldenburg once said, "If you're true to the art process, it's by nature metamorphic. Line especially can do anything, can be anything."

The exhibition presents artworks on loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Oldenburg and



van Bruggen studio and Ryobi Foundation Collection as well as one work from the DAM's permanent collection. Notably, this exhibition includes an exclusive presentation of eight drawings of the monumental *Big Sweep* sculpture located outside the DAM, giving visitors the unique opportunity to view the creative process and ideas behind one of the most beloved outdoor sculptures in Denver.

"The drawings in this show demonstrate Oldenburg's agility and wit with his loaded line," Augur said. "His stunning leap of imagination to go from portraying everyday objects as ideas for grand monuments to the fabrication of these objects was a huge breakthrough. Over the years, it became a tremendous pleasure for me to see where his fantasy would lead him. Whether a seemingly loose, relaxed drawing, or a tight mechanical line drawing, his creations never fail to amuse and challenge one's perception of a space well filled."

Oldenburg (American, b. 1929 in Sweden), a life-long artist, was artistically inspired at a young age by the toys of his childhood. His ever-playful aesthetic made him a significant contributor to the pop art movement of the 1960s, which he joined after he became a U.S. citizen in 1953 and moved to New York in 1956. Oldenburg met Dutch art historian and curator van Bruggen (American, b. 1942 in the Netherlands, d. 2009 in the United States) in 1970. The pair began collaborating artistically in 1976 and were married in 1977, van Bruggen herself becoming a U.S. citizen in 1993. Oldenburg, 89, lives and works in New York.

Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings will be on view on level 2 of the Hamilton Building in the Gates Family Gallery from Oct. 7, 2018–Jan. 6, 2019,

and will be included in general admission which is free for members and youth 18 and under.

EXHIBITION SPONSORS

Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings is presented in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and supported by the Eleanor and Henry Hitchcock Foundation.

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THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

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IMAGE CREDIT LINES

Image 1: Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, *Soft Shuttlecocks, Falling, Number Two*, 1995. Graphite pencil, pastel, and charcoal on paper; 27-1/4 x 39-1/4 in. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York: purchase, with funds from The Lauder Foundation, Evelyn and Leonard Lauder Fund 99.51. ©2018 Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Digital Image © Whitney Museum of American Art, N.Y.

Image 2: Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, *Proposal for a Sculpture in the Form of a Pan and Broom*, 1997. Pencil and pastel on paper; 30 x 40 in. Collection Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. ©2018 Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen.