San Francisco, CA (February 15, 2019)—SFMOMA has announced plans to sell Mark Rothko’s *Untitled, 1960*, following a review of its collection and working within the deaccessioning guidelines of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD). Proceeds from the sale will be used to purchase works for the museum’s collection as well as to establish a new endowment fund for future acquisitions. The museum’s primary goal with this deaccession and sale is to broadly diversify its collection, enhance its contemporary holdings and address art historical gaps.

Rothko’s *Untitled, 1960* has not been exhibited at the museum since 2002, unlike Rothko’s beloved monumental masterpiece, *No.14, 1960*, which remains permanently on view in the museum and is a cornerstone of SFMOMA’s collection. *Untitled, 1960*, will be sold in May through auction at Sotheby’s in New York.

“From our founding in 1935, we have consistently developed exhibitions and collected works of art of the highest quality—pushing boundaries, embracing fresh ideas and creating new ways of looking at our world. We will sustain our commitment to excellence and innovation by approaching our programming and collection with the same creativity and future-focus as the artists with whom we work,” said Neal Benezra, Helen and Charles Schwab Director of SFMOMA. “With a spirit of experimentation, diversity of thought and openness to new ways of telling stories, we are rethinking our exhibitions, collections and education programs to enhance accessibility and expand our commitment to a global perspective, while sustaining our dedication to Bay Area and California art.”
SFMOMA’s collecting policies and procedures provide the criteria used in the consideration of deaccessioning. Criteria include: that the object is either outside the scope of the collection or is duplicative; to initiate deaccession, the work cannot be created by a living artist; works by living artists are not to be sold except to acquire a superior work by the same artist, and then only with the agreement of the artist.

SFMOMA has deaccessioned works in the past. The museum acquired Rothko’s masterpiece *Untitled, No. 14*, 1960 through funds from the deaccession of Claude Monet’s *The Seine at Argenteuil*, 1875, which was outside the scope of the museum’s collection. In 2012, two other deaccessions led to the acquisition of exceptional works by Dorothea Tanning and Romare Bearden. The museum deaccessioned and sold Pablo Picasso’s *Bust of Sylvette*, 1954 and Edward Hopper’s *Bridle Path*, 1939, and in turn acquired Tanning’s *Self-Portrait*, 1944 and Bearden’s *Three Men*, 1966–67 among other works.

“SFMOMA is very fortunate to have rich holdings of Mark Rothko, including his undisputed masterpiece *No. 14*, 1960, which was acquired in the late 1990s as the result of another strategic deaccession. The proceeds from the sale will allow us to make great strides advancing our mission to diversify the collection,” said Gary Garrels, Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture. “Janet Bishop, Thomas Weisel Family Curator of Painting and Sculpture, and I are creating a focused plan and list of priority acquisitions. Works will be proposed to our Accessions Committee for review as early as May 29, 2019.”

**ABOUT SFMOMA**

SFMOMA is dedicated to making the art for our time a vital and meaningful part of public life. Founded in 1935 as the first West Coast museum devoted to modern and contemporary art, a thoroughly transformed SFMOMA, with triple the gallery space, an enhanced education center and new free public galleries, opened to the public on May 14, 2016. Since its inaugural year, the expanded museum has welcomed more than one million visitors annually.

**San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**

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