

Cleve Gray Bio

1918 Born September 22, in New York City.

1924-32 Attends Ethical Culture School in New York City.

1929-33 Begins formal art training in New York with Antonia Nell, a pupil of George Bellows.

1933-36 Attends Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts; studies painting with Bartlett Hayes. Wins the Samuel F. B. Morse Prize for most promising art student.

1936-40 Attends Princeton University and graduates summa cum laude, with a degree in Art and Archaeology. Studies painting with James C. Davis and Far Eastern Art with George Rowley, for whom he writes his thesis on Yuan dynasty landscape painting.

1940-41 Lives for several months after graduation in Mendham, New Jersey; then moves to Tucson, Arizona.

1942 Exhibits landscapes and still lifes at Alfred Messer Studio Gallery in Tucson before returning to New York to join the United States Army.

1943-46 During World War II, serves in England, France, and Germany, where he makes color drawings of wartime destruction. After the liberation of Paris in August.1944 studies informally with André Lhote and Jacques Villon. After the war, continues studies with Lhote and Villon under the GI Bill. Exhibits Paris work at Galerie Durand-Ruel, American Painters in Paris.

1946-47 Returning to New York, paints London Ruins series, working on it through 1948. New York Times critic Edward Alden Jewell picks Gray's painting London Ruins #1 for Critic's Choice exhibition at Grand Central Art Gallery, New York City. Joins Jacques Seligmann Gallery and has first solo New York exhibition.

Exhibits at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Annual Exhibition; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Paintings of the Year; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, Abstract and Surrealist American Art—34th Annual; Research Studio, Maitland, Florida, Eighteen Young American Painters. Returns to Arizona.

1948 Travels and draws throughout France and Italy. Exhibits at Jacques Seligmann Gallery, New York, London Ruins; Art Institute of Chicago, 58th Annual Exhibition; Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, Biennial Exhibition.

1949 Moves to Warren, Connecticut. Exhibits at Jacques Seligmann Gallery, New York; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 21st Biennial Exhibition; Art Institute of Chicago, 58th Annual Exhibition.

1950 Exhibits at Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Young American Painters; Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, Works by Cleve Gray, American Artist.

1951 Exhibits at Brooklyn Museum, New York, International Watercolor Exhibition; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, Young Painters U.S.A.; Dayton Art Institute, Ohio, The City by the River and the Sea; Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, Contemporary American Painting; wins University of Illinois Purchase Award; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 146th Annual Exhibition (subsequent exhibitions: 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964).

1952 Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 62nd Annual Exhibition.

1953 Completes Apocalypse Series, allegorical and figurative works. Exhibits at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 63rd Annual Exhibition.

1954 Completes Ghandi {sic} Praying. Exhibits at Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama, Steel, Iron, Men; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, American Paintings, 1954; Des Moines Art

Center, Iowa, American Paintings 1954; Jacques Seligmann Gallery, New York; Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 64th Annual Exhibition.

1955 Continues landscapes of Arizona and still lifes, working on them through early 1958. Still strongly influenced by Jacques Villon. Exhibits at Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 24th Biennial Exhibition; Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York, Italy Rediscovered.

1957 Marries writer Francine du Plessix. Exhibits at Jacques Seligmann Gallery, New York; Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, 20th - Century Works of Art; Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, solo exhibition.

1958 Travels through France and Spain; begins using largely black-and-white palette. Exhibits at Solo Gallery, Richmond, Virginia, Cleve Gray; Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan, 1st Biennial Exhibition.

1959 First son, Thaddeus, born in November. Completes first sculpture in plaster. Last exhibition at Jacques Seligmann Gallery, New York. Exhibits at Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture.

1960 Summer months spent in France and Italy. Begins Maratea series, which continues through 1961. Becomes contributing editor of Art in America. Joins Staempfli Gallery, solo exhibition. Exhibits at Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, Eight from Connecticut; Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan, 2nd Biennial Exhibition.

1961 Second son, Luke, born in April. Begins lithography at the Pratt Graphic Art Institute, New York. Starts work on the Etruscan series. Wins the Ford Foundation Purchase. Exhibits at Galerie Internationale, Washington, D.C.; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Abstract Expressionists and Imagists; Tokyo, Japan, 6th International Art Exhibition; John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis, Contemporary Drawings; The

Art Center in Hargate, St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, Drawings USA/61; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 27th Biennial Exhibition.

1962 Completes Altamira, first significant manifestation of the vertical element in his painting. Exhibits at Staempfli Gallery, New York; Trabia Morris Gallery, New York, Art of the Americas; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 157th Annual Exhibition.

1963 Completes Reverend Quan Duc, first artistic response to the crisis in Vietnam. As artist-in-residence at Oklahoma Art Center, Oklahoma City, under auspices of Ford Foundation Program, exhibits paintings. Completes Oklahoma, acquired by The New School of Social Research, New York, where it is later accidentally destroyed. Exhibits at Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 28th Annual Exhibition; The Art Museum, Princeton University, Response; Instituto de Cultura Hispanica, Madrid, Arte de America y España; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Annual Exhibition. Solo exhibitions at Jerrold Morris International Gallery, Toronto; Galeria Grattacielo, Milan, Italy; and Solo Gallery, Richmond, Virginia.

1964 During the summer, drives across the Peloponnesus and sails through Greek Islands. Develops a vertical form, initially based on studies of the female figure. (Vertical form later culminates as the dominating image in Threnody, 1973.) Paintings evoke classical origins: Delphi, Crete, Ios, the Augury series, and the Mycenae series. Exhibits at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 159th Annual Exhibition; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Friends Collect. Solo exhibitions at Staempfli Gallery, New York, Recent Paintings; and The Art Center in Hargate, St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, Drawings USA/64.

1965 Returns to Greece and the Aegean in the summer. Completes series of small canvases evocative of the two trips to Greece. Exhibits at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Annual Exhibition; Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences, Virginia, American Drawing Biennial; De Cordova and Dana Museum,

Lincoln, Massachusetts, New England Art: Prints; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts, New England Regional Drawing Exhibition. First exhibition at Saidenberg Gallery, New York.

1966 Translates Marcel Duchamp's *A l'Infinif*. Begins, with *Francine*, a period of several years of intense involvement with the anti-Vietnam War movement. Emphasizes the vertical form again in *Demeter* and the *Demeter Landscape Series*, the first of a number of series dealing with ancient earth goddesses. Begins to work almost exclusively in acrylics. Exhibits at Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, *Recent Still Lifes*; The Art Center in Hargate, St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, *Drawings USA/66*.

1967 Completes a series on Gaia, Greek goddess of the earth and of death, followed by the *Ceres* series. Exhibits at Florida State University Art Gallery, Tallahassee, National Lithography Exhibition; University Art Museum, Berkeley, California, *Selections 7967*. Last solo show at Saidenberg Gallery, New York, the *Ceres* series.

1968 Upon sculptor's death, edits *David Smith* by David Smith, published by Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968, reprinted by Thames & Hudson. At the New York City branch of the Parisian printer Moulrot, produces color lithographs inspired by the *Ceres* paintings. Completes the *Hera* series. Becomes a trustee of the Rhode Island School of Design, serving until 1979. Exhibits at The Art Center in Hargate, St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire.

1969 Exhibits at Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., *Loan Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*; Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, *Reductive Vision*; Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, *American Painting and Sculpture, 1948–1969*; Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts, *Seven Decades—Seven Alumni of Phillips Academy*.

1970 Joins Betty Parsons Gallery. Appointed to the Board of

Trustees, New York School of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture (until 1975). Edits John Marin by John Marin, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970. First solo exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, Paintings and Painted Forms. Sneed Hillman Gallery, Rockford, Illinois, solo exhibition; The Graphics Gallery, San Francisco, Cleve Gray: Prints and Drawings. After trips through Morocco, begins Morocco series and Tamengrout series. For thirtieth reunion of the class of 1940, The Art Museum, Princeton University, holds a retrospective dedicated by Gray to the students killed at Kent State University. Under the auspices of the Ford Foundation, lives in Hawaii for six months with family as artist-in-residence at the Honolulu Academy of Art. The retrospective held at Princeton travels to Hawaii. Exhibition at the Honolulu Academy is followed, several months later, by work completed in Hawaii during his residency. Hawaii series continues well into 1971.

1971 Second exhibition, at Honolulu Academy of Arts, of work painted during term as artist-in-residence. Returning to Connecticut from Hawaii, works on many small bronze sculptures using the lost wax process. Visits Spain with family in August and begins the Sheba series upon returning home. Edits Hans Richter by Hans Richter, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971. Exhibits at Museo Universidad de Puerto Rico, Lithographias de Ia Coleccidn Moulot; Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul, Drawings USA/71; Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul, Drawings in St. Paul (through 1972).

1972 Commissioned by Bryan Robertson, director of the Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, to create paintings for a gallery designed by Philip Johnson measuring 90 feet by 60 feet by 22 feet. Begins work on this project, entitled Threnody, which culminates in a suite of fourteen contiguous panels, each approximately 20 feet square. Exhibits Hawaiian paintings at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York; The Art Museum, Princeton University, New Jersey, European and American Ant from the Princeton Collections.

1973 Completes Threnody as a memorial to the dead of both sides in the Vietnam War. Travels to East Africa with family.

Exhibits at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, 29 Bronzes; Sneed Hillman Gallery, Rockford, Illinois. 1974 Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, opening of Threnody. Exhibited through 1976. Threnody reinstalled in 1979, 1983, 1984, 1987, 1992—93, 1996. Exhibits at Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, Nine Connecticut Artists; Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, Triptychs. About fifteen years later, destroys most of Triptychs series. First trip to Nantucket with his family.

1975 Begins the Supplement series, followed by the Conjugation and Conjunction series, and the Lateral series. A liturgical vestment based upon his designs is completed for St. John's Episcopal Church, Washington, Connecticut. Spends six weeks in Jerusalem with family, as guest of Mayor Teddy Kollek. Exhibits at Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, exhibition of working drawings, studies, photographs, and a scale model documenting the making of Threnody. In March travels to England.

1976 Joins Board of Trustees of the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, a position held until 1978. Exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, the Conjugation and Conjunction series. Exhibits at American Embassy, Bucharest, Rumania, Arte Americana Contemporana. Completes Milk Street series in Nantucket, small paintings with shaped canvas. Begins Nantucket series.

1977 Completes Warren series, which soon evolve into large vertical paintings. Exhibits at Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Cleve Gray: Paintings, 1966—1977. Exhibition travels to the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio; Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois. Late in the year, Gray family travels in Egypt, inspiring later work. Appointed Commissioner on the Connecticut Commission for the Arts (until 1982). Exhibits at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New Acquisitions.

1978 Completes Hatshepsut series and Rameses series. Produces Perne series, inspired by William Butler Yeats's poem

"Sailing to Byzantium." Exhibits at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York; Cathedral Museum of Art, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, Sacred Images—East and West.

1979 Exhibition of Perne and Hatshepsut series at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York; Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut, exhibition of Perne and Warren series. Threnody reinstalled at the Neuberger Museum from June to August. Exhibits at Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, Los Angeles, California, and Parsons School of Design, New York, New York/A Selection from the Last Ten Years; Sneed Gallery, Rockford, Illinois, 20th Anniversary Exhibition; Rockland Center for the Arts, Maine, Works on Paper, U.S.A.

1980 Invited as artist-in-residence at the American Academy, Rome (where Francine is writer-in-residence). In Rome, using acrylic mixed with Carrara marble dust, begins work on the Roman Walls series. He later produces prints based on the same theme. Exhibits Roman Walls at the American Academy. In the summer, travels to Caracas, Venezuela, at the invitation of American Ambassador William Luers and the United States Information Agency. Exhibition at Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Roman Walls. Returning from Caracas, enlarges exploration of calligraphic line with the Here series and the Man and Nature series. Late in year, begins an association of many years with Irving Galleries, Palm Beach, Florida. Exhibits at Commune di Udine, Civici Musei e Gallerie di Storia e Arte, Arte Americana Contemporanea; Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, Cleve Gray; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana, Painting and Sculpture Today.

1981 In January, returns as visiting scholar to the American Academy in Rome. Completes the Zen series, works on paper with a brush and bamboo pen, a continuation of Man and Nature series. Exhibits at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, New Paintings—Roman Walls; Michael H. Lord Gallery 700, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Stamford Museum and Nature Center, Connecticut, Classic Americans: XX Century Painters and Sculptors.

1982 Returns to the American Academy in Rome in January.

Back in the United States, completes a set of vestments for St. James Episcopal Church in Farmington, Connecticut. Travels to India, Indonesia, and Japan under the auspices of the U.S.I.A. on a lecture tour with Francine. Before leaving Japan, Grays stay in Kyoto, Japan's religious capital, and he studies city's Zen gardens. Kyoto gardens inspire Zen Gardens series of 1982 and 1983. Exhibits at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, Group Exhibition; Washington Art Association, Washington Depot, Connecticut, works on paper.

1983 Threnody reinstalled at the Neuberger Museum for six months. Completes the Zen Gardens series and the Bridge series. Paints Rocks and Water series. Exhibits at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, Zen Gardens; Betty Parsons Gallery, New York: Painting—7±7+7; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut; Benjamin Mangel Gallery, Philadelphia; G. Fox, Hartford, Connecticut, Ten by Cleve Gray—Lithographs; Silvermine Guild Center for the Arts, New Canaan, Connecticut, Silvermine '83.

1984 Threnody reinstalled at Neuberger Museum, January to June. From the American Academy in Rome, travels to Czechoslovakia and Austria. While at the American Academy in Rome, completes a series on paper inspired by the celebrated umbrella pines of Rome. These works are called Embassy series when exhibited at the Prague residence of Ambassador William Luers, where Roman Walls are also shown. In Prague, visits the Old Jewish Cemetery near the Altneuschul Synagogue, which inspires In Prague series. Back in the United States late in the year, designs a large altar cover for the Bicentennial Festival of the Episcopal Church, Diocese of Connecticut. In the fall, travels to China with Francine and other writers as guest of the People's Republic. Exhibits at Armstrong Gallery, New York, In Prague, 1984; Fairweather Hardin Gallery, Chicago, From the East: Eastern Influence on Western Artists; Griffin-Hailer Gallery, Washington Depot, Connecticut, Small Paintings; Gallery Two Nine One, Atlanta, Georgia, Cleve Gray; Fairweather Hardin Gallery, Chicago, Cleve Gray, Zen Gardens; Robert L. Kidd Associates/Galleries, Birmingham, Michigan, Cleve Gray— There Series.

1985 At the American Academy early in the year, begins a series of works on paper, Holocaust, which signals the return of the human figure to his work. From Rome, travels to West and East Berlin and writes an article, illustrated with his photographs, for Art in America about the paintings on the Berlin Wall. Begins a series of paintings entitled Sleepers Awake! based on the Holocaust works, quickly followed by the Resurrection series.

1986 Returns to Rome. Later exhibits at Armstrong Gallery, New York, Cleve Gray: A Small Retrospective, 1934-1986; Fairweather Hardin Gallery, Chicago, Zen Gardens; Armstrong Gallery, New York, Resurrection Series; Benjamin Mangel Gallery, Philadelphia, Resurrection Series; Paris—New York—Kent Gallery, Kent, Connecticut, Roman Walls; Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut, Connecticut Masters; The Jewish Museum, New York, Jewish Themes/Contemporary American Artists; Metropolitan Museum and Art Center, Coral Gables, Florida, 50 Works: Selections from the E. F. Hutton Collection (In Prague #22).

1987 Last year at American Academy in Rome; paints large works on paper, including Dancers and Flightsong series, most of which he later destroys. In April, receives the 1987 Governor's Connecticut Art Award. Paints Four Heads of Anton Bruckner, later acquired by the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut. Threnody reinstalled at the Neuberger Museum, February—June. Exhibits at Paul Mellon Arts Center, Choate Rosemary Hall School, Wallingford, Connecticut, Cleve Gray; Brooklyn Museum, New York, Cleve Gray Works on Paper, 1940-1986; Armstrong Gallery, New York, Cleve Gray; New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut, Cleve Gray Works on Paper, 1940-1986; Duke University Museum of Art, Durham, North Carolina, Cleve Gray: Recent Paintings; Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, A Contemporary View of Nature; Virginia Lynch Gallery, Tiverton, Rhode Island, Roman Walls; Westport Arts Center, Westport, Connecticut, New York, New York.

1988 Awarded the Commission for the Outdoor Art at the Station Competition, Union Station, Hartford, Connecticut. The 636-foot-

long mural in porcelain enamel tile, entitled Movement in Space, is installed on the terminal facade in September. Cataract #2 (1984) purchased by United Technologies Corporation for installation at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Paints the Rope Dancer series and the Breaker series. Completes Stations, an on-site environment of painted paper and wood at the Paris—New York—Kent Gallery, Kent, Connecticut. Exhibits at The Art Guild, Farmington, Connecticut, Cleve Gray: A Decade of Work, 1977-1987; BachelierCardonsky Gallery, Kent, Connecticut, Cleve Gray. Begins Late Zen series.

1989 Paints Holocaust Triptych #1 and Holocaust Triptych #2. As part of the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, show, Connecticut Artists, creates an on-site installation entitled Enter, Entrance, Exit. Exhibits at Paris-New York—Kent Gallery, Kent, Connecticut; Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York, Barnard Collects: The Educated Eye; The Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut, The Connecticut Biennial.

1990 Holocaust Trip tychs exhibited in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine as part of the Concert of Holocaust Remembrance in November, sponsored by the Interfaith Committee of Remembrance. Paints the Lovers series, Broken Horizon series, and the Edge series. First exhibition at Berry-Hill Gallery, New York, Cleve Gray: The Painted Line; Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, Connecticut; Cleve Gray: The Painted Line; Central Connecticut State University, Samuel S. T. Chen Art Center, New Britain, Connecticut, Cleve Gray Paintings, 1980-1990.

1991 Completes Inside Out, an on-site installation on the exterior of the Paris-New York-Kent Gallery, Kent, Connecticut, with a selection of small paintings in the interior. Begins Considering All Possible Worlds series. Exhibits at Berry-Hill Gallery, New York, Cleve Gray: New Work; Eva Cohon Gallery, Chicago and Highland Park, Illinois, Cleve Gray.

1992 Threnody reinstalled at the Neuberger Museum, March to August. Awarded an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Hartford, West Hartford, Connecticut.

1993 Begins The Thrust series and the What is the Question? series. Begins and completes an extensive group of painted canvas collages, the first since 1965.

1994 Paints the Imaginary Landscape series, the Golgotha series, and the Firmament series. Exhibits at Neuberger Museum, Inspired by Nature.

1995 Completes the Eumenides series based on Aeschylus's Oresteia trilogy. Paints a series of portraits of the composer Bela Bartok. Exhibits at Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, Cleve Gray: Romantic/Modern.

1996 Threnody reinstalled at the Neuberger Museum, January to June. Exhibits at Berry-Hill Gallery, New York, The Eumenides Series; Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York at Purchase, Cleve Gray: The Art of Memory—Threnody; Zen Gardens Series; In Prague Series.

1997 Completes Elements IV commissioned for a residential building in Dallas, Texas. Elected as Honorary Trustee, Rhode Island School of Design. In midyear, he begins Space series.

1998 Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A suite of five paintings, the last of the Eumenides series, is acquired by the Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine. Harry N. Abrams publishes *Cleve Gray*, with text by Nicholas Fox Weber. Volume coincides with traveling exhibition of Gray's work held at Butler Institute, Youngstown, Ohio; The Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine; and the Neuberger Museum (with reinstallation of Threnody).

-Compiled by George Lechner, adjunct professor of Art History, University of Hartford, and Archivist, Cleve Gray Collection