

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOHN BUTTONPAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS
FROM THE ESTATE

November 29, 2007 – January 5, 2008

ClampArt is proud to present an exhibition of paintings and drawings from the estate of artist, John Button (1929-1982). This is the first solo exhibition of significant scale of the artist's work in nearly twenty years—since his traveling museum retrospective of 1989-90 organized by the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Born in California, John Button was educated at the University of California, Berkeley, before moving to New York City in the early 1950s. Amidst the frenzy of Abstract Expressionism, Button remained true to his interest in realism, and is now most commonly associated with such New York School artists as Fairfield Porter, Jane Freilicher, and Alex Katz. Button was a contemporary and friend of poets Frank O'Hara and James Schuyler, and they appear as the subjects of some of his portraits. While artists such as Mark Rothko and particularly Willem deKooning were of great significance to Button, he was, as Bill Berkson has written, "an aesthete in the strict sense of one who maintains a moral—or even religious—preference for the beautiful." He continues, "The scaled-up perceptual intimacy his best paintings assert is part of what the realist wing of the New York School developed, beginning in the '50s, as a counterthrust to—as well as an absorption of—abstraction's headlong specifying of applied paint."

John Button's best-known paintings are neo-Romantic cityscapes often with a dramatic upward-looking vantage in which architectural elements are found tucked along the edges of the canvas and the main subject is the effect of light and color in the sky.

Less familiar are the figurative works the artist created throughout his career. Exhibited for the first time in a solo show will be a series of pencil and charcoal sketches largely from the early 1970s. These drawings of male nudes—studio models from the School of Visual Arts, where Button taught, as well as personal acquaintances—are described by writer, Tim Dlugos: "The settings and the artist's tools are as stripped down as the models: a naked man, a pencil, and a sheet of paper. Button creates erotic tension in these drawings not by addition . . . but by a remarkably effective process of subtraction."

John Button's work is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; among many others. ClampArt is the sole representative of the estate. For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Image top: © Estate of John Button, "Rooftops: Silver Towers," 1975, Oil on canvas, 38 x 52 inches.

Image bottom: © Estate of John Button, "Untitled," c. early 1970s, Pencil on paper, 11 x 14 inches.

