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MENCONI + SCHOELKOPF PRESENTS

RECONSTRUCTING RALSTON CRAWFORD

NOVEMBER 4TH – DECEMBER 13TH, 2019

From November 4th through December 13th, 2019, Menconi + Schoelkopf presents *Reconstructing Ralston Crawford*, an exhibition of major paintings and the prints, photographs, and drawings that place these works in a new context.

Ralston Crawford (1906–1978) is often classified as a Precisionist, and while many of his early works do engage the crisp lines and impersonal industry of the movement, that appellation tells only a part of the story. His paintings from the 1930s and early 1940s were in the “immaculate” style, but all along he harbored a fascination with growth, change, and decay. Early watercolors, often swept up into the triumphalist narrative of construction, can also be read as demolition. This ambiguity is central to Crawford’s work across his long career. The only painter to witness the tests of nuclear weapons at Bikini Atoll, Crawford emerged from the 1940s with an appreciation for the two sides of the coin of atomic age: awesome power, for creation or destruction. In the post-war years, he turned to photography and print making to embrace subjects like New Orleans jazz funerals and maritime junkyards: vibrant celebrations of life in the presence of death. The arc of his career moved to the extreme opposite of Precisionism, considering the obsolete and discarded as relics for veneration. With these twin themes exposed as poles Crawford’s career, *Reconstructing Ralston Crawford* demonstrates that both the shiny and the tarnished were present in his work throughout his career. A dozen paintings along with drawings, prints, photographs, and ephemera will reconstruct the narrative of his career to highlight the coequal themes of creation and destruction.

On view from November 4th through December 13th, 2019. The gallery is open to the public 9:30 to 5:30, Monday through Friday, and by appointment, at 22 East 80th Street, New York, NY, 10075. Visit www.msfineart.com or email info@msfineart.com, or call (212) 879-8815 for more information.