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For Immediate Release

Catskill Artist David Byrd's Home & Studio Opens to the Public July 8th

The David Byrd Estate is pleased to announce that artist David Byrd's (1926-2013) home and studio will be open to the public on weekends from July 8th through September 30th, 2017. The hours are 11am-5pm or by appointment. A retrospective exhibition, *David Byrd, A Life*, is featured at the home, located at 2205 Pine Swamp Road, Sidney Center, NY. The Estate will hold an end-of-season celebration there to honor Byrd's life and legacy on Saturday, September 30th at 3p.m., during which selected items from the David Byrd Estate will be auctioned in an old-time country auction.

This open house is a rare opportunity to see the unique stone and salvaged wood residence Byrd designed and built on 12 bucolic acres in the Catskills. In near isolation, Byrd spent the last 25 years of his life constructing the home and creating hundreds of paintings and drawings, sculptures, and a book about the people, places and situations that haunted his memory. At the age of 87 Byrd saw the first public exhibition of his work. When he died, his home contained almost every work of art he ever created. With fortress-like walls and a light filled studio, the structure is an extension of Byrd's aesthetic and a window into the artist's reclusive life. The home's simple, elegant contours echo the gentle Delaware County landscape, and its distressed woods and patinas reflect Byrd's interest in collecting objects from the past—old bottles, tools and antiques that he found in barns and at auctions in the area.

In the exhibition *David Byrd, A Life*, curators Jessica Farrell and Jody Isaacson offer a selection of work from all facets of Byrd's life: a painful childhood in foster homes in Springfield, Illinois; scenes of Brooklyn, NY in the early 1940's; portraits of the mentally ill veterans he cared for at the Montrose V. A. Hospital from 1958 – 1988; landscapes from his commute to work.; characters from the country auctions he attended regularly; and the

everyday scenes of people and places in and around Delaware County, NY. Byrd's artwork invites viewers to question the forces that shape a life, and how we, in turn, shape others' lives. In Byrd's own words, "I tried to paint because I had the remote idea that it might serve me in my behavior to others."

In addition to a large body of artwork and a book about his experience in the psychiatric ward, the home contained years of Byrd's letters. These writings shed light on the artist's solitary life and his struggle to balance the construction of a home with his artistic practice. Byrd writes, "The war with the house continues. I'm seeing rocks in my soup I'm so preoccupied with them. It feels like I'm building the pyramids. It goes on forever.. I am looking forward to painting again and adventure. Well painting anyhow. I know adventure—in painting."

Greg Kucera of Greg Kucera Gallery in Seattle, WA. says, "Here is that great anomaly in the art world: a fully formed artist, with a tremendous history of painting, untouched by the commercial world, but deserving of a place within the history of 20th century art."

The opening of David's Byrd's home and studio is the first stop on David Byrd: Ten Stops, an art pilgrimage that follows the life and artistic trajectory of David Byrd from Brooklyn to Cooperstown, NY, with a final stop in Seattle. For more information about the David Byrd home, *David Byrd: Ten Stops* or to download a map visit: www.davidbyrdestate.com or call Jody Isaacson at 607-369-3059.

About David Byrd: *David Byrd, born in Springfield, Ill, was a child of the Great Depression, one of five children of a single, impoverished mother and a father who killed himself when David was a young boy. Mental illness coursed through his family. At the age of 16, he escaped to Brooklyn, NY. After serving in World War II, David attended the Ozenfant School of Fine Art in NYC on the G.I. Bill. For 30 years, Byrd balanced an art practice alongside a career at the Veteran's Administration Medical Hospital in Montrose, NY where, as an orderly, he cared for psychiatric patients. In 1988, Byrd retired from the V.A., bought land and began building his home and studio, stone by stone. At the age of 87, he saw his first exhibition. When Byrd died, his home contained almost every work of art he ever created. In near isolation, he was finally free to paint.*