## Introduction

During the 10 years that took America from effervescent heights to the depths of economic devastation, New York State transformed the nation. Roaring into the Future: New York 1925-35 is a pioneering exploration that celebrates the Empire State as the driving force behind the creation of 20th-century modernism. From Buffalo to Brooklyn, artists, designers, and manufacturers generated avant-garde art, fashion, technology, decorative arts, and music that resulted in the century’s most important artistic revolution.

When France invited the United States to send their new and original designs to the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, the World’s Fair held in Paris in 1925, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover declined because he could not find any modern American goods. However, the Fair proved to be a tremendous catalyst for modern design in the United States via those Americans who visited the Exposition or saw its highlights, mainly French, in an exhibition that traveled to major museums throughout the United States. Over the next decade—encompassing the Jazz Age and the Depression—Americans interpreted European precedents and invented new forms to suit a modern American lifestyle. Although this period is often called Art Deco today, the term was not adopted until 1968. New York State’s artists, architects, and designers played a pivotal role in making the State the epicenter of modernism. Modernism, often called Modernistic, in New York was not one style but rather it was an expression of a vital youthful spirit that embraced the new. Modernism appeared in elegant Art Moderne designs based on classical historical precedents, faceted skyscrapers and objects influenced by Cubism, brawny Machine Age wares using the vocabulary of machine parts, and sleek Streamlined products reflecting aerodynamic principles of speed. Across the State, New Yorkers designed, manufactured, and distributed new, nationally influential works, often made with innovative materials, that reflected the seismic post-World War I shifts in social customs, women’s rights, race relations, and technological discoveries. By 1935, New York, rather than Europe, was synonymous with modernism.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Automobile, 1928
The H. H. Franklin Manufacturing Company

Custom body by Merrimac, Dual Windshield (Engine: Air-cooled 6-cylinder, 46 hp)

Courtesy of the Northeast Classic Car Museum

Today, few people associate New York State with auto manufacturing, but in the early 20th century cars were made in cities across the state—Buffalo, Rochester, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Long Island City, and Queens—including nearby Syracuse. Automobiles changed the lives of Americans, making locations near and far accessible and convenient, especially the commute from suburb to city. Carmakers vied with each other to lure customers with the latest designs in rounded edges and linear decoration that emphasized speed.

The H. H. Franklin Manufacturing Company introduced the Airman Series in 1928, named for the famed aviator Charles Lindbergh who was an avid Franklin fan. The cars were equipped with front-wheel breaks for the first time. The marketing copy read:

Just as dauntless as today’s Aviators—sharing many of the airplane’s engineering and travel advantages—the Airman is first to attain the new standard of speed set by aviation—more miles per day with less fatigue, higher average speed maintained for hours at a time….To know the joy of speed in comfort, to know truly exhilarating performance, you must challenge the highways in an Airman.

We thank Carbone Auto Group, established in Utica in 1929, for sponsoring the loan of the Franklin automobile.
Cover of Vogue, May 1, 1928, enlarged
Georges Lepape (French, 1887-1971) France, illustrator
Vogue (1892-present), New York, New York

Courtesy of the Condé Nast Collection

Artist George Lepape made his first visit to New York in 1926 at the behest of Vogue publisher Condé Nast and found that the “New York skyline burst upon him like a series of arresting exclamation-points.” He captured this memory of urban skyscrapers on Vogue’s May 1, 1928, cover, with the sleek modernity of the buildings reinforced by the straight lines of the woman’s slim dress. The image of Lepape’s stylish New Yorker, holding a powder compact and studying her rouged lips, speaks to the growing acceptance of cosmetic use, once associated with prostitution, among young, fashionable women. An influential style arbiter, Vogue magazine brought news of changing trends in fashion and beauty from high society in Paris and New York to women across the country.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian

Smoking Stand, 1928
Cast metal, paint, earthenware

Arthur von Frankenberg (1887-1965)
New York, New York, designer
Frankart, Inc. (1921-1961)
New York, New York, maker

Collection of Dr. Alan Plotnik
Naked statuettes embellishing useful objects for the home became a symbol for new freer attitudes towards sensuality in the early Modernist era. Sculptor Arthur von Frankenberg, Director and President of Frankart, Inc., designed a popular and prolific line of “art-metal” objects including lamps, ashtrays, smoking stands, and bookends adorned by classically-inspired nude femme fatales in striking poses. Frankart helped bring affordable high-style accessories to the middle-class home.

The patented skyscraper metal stand supporting a Fulper ceramic bowl reflects the large market for smoking paraphernalia and developers’ frenzied competition to build the tallest building. Frankenberg’s skyscraper is similar in design to the Shelton Hotel, midtown New York’s first skyscraper, where Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O’Keeffe resided on the thirtieth floor.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

**Lower Manhattan**, 1930
Egg tempera on canvas mounted on Masonite

**Reginald Marsh** (American, 1898-1954)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Edward W. Root Bequest, 57.195

Reginald Marsh spent 1925 to 1926 in Europe studying old master artists and, upon his return, marveled that “New York City was in a period of rapid growth, its skyscrapers thrilling by growing higher and higher.” Marsh was in a hurry to capture the city’s energized spirit. He tramped all over town, rode subways, attended movies and burlesque shows, and boarded tug boats to sketch and photograph the Manhattan skyline. Marsh painted with quick-drying egg tempera, which suited his ambitions for displaying the city’s vitality.
For this vista, Marsh kept the composition lively: he painted the choppy harbor waves with short brushstrokes, he created a variable pattern between the sunlit skyscrapers and the shadows they cast, and he complemented the sky’s swelling clouds with the tugboat’s billowing smoke. In all, Marsh created a vivid portrait of the restless city he loved.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

*New Yorker Cover*, October 10, 1925

New York, New York, designer
Conde Nast
New York, New York (1892-present), publisher

Courtesy of Conde Nast

Ilonka Karasz designed over 180 covers for The *New Yorker* magazine from 1925 to 1973. This cover shows Karasz’s clever use of Cubist imagery in portraying Jazz Age New York, including a bobbed flapper in a Big Apple skirt, skyscrapers, and the implements of gambling. Although Karasz was a prolific designer of objects, she was best-known for her illustration work in magazines read by the cultural sophisticate. A bowl designed by Karasz is on view in the Domestic Life and Home Entertainment section of the exhibition.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Although the United States was not represented at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes in 1925, the World’s Fair held in Paris, the Exposition had a tremendous effect on New York’s art and design. The Exposition presented European modernism as it had developed after World War I. A privately funded American commission of manufacturers, writers, artists, architects, curators, and retail personnel visited the Exposition and reported on their findings. At the close of the fair, an exhibition of highlights from the Exposition, mainly French, traveled to museums in major American cities. Artists and designers, including some who had visited the Exposition or the traveling exhibition and others who had emigrated from Europe, were inspired to interpret the various European schools of modernism in their own work.

Initially, the most influential European modern designs were French reinterpretations of classical historical styles. These designs were executed in the most luxurious traditional materials and techniques by Sue et Mare, Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, and Edgar Brandt, or by Jean Puiforcat and Pierre Chareau who used more daring abstracted shapes still employing sumptuous materials. Following their lead, New York’s designers updated traditional historical forms and decoration to appeal to the country’s conservative tastes. The iconography of the classical world was the most influential: Greek and Roman styles and all their subsequent reinterpretations in the Renaissance, the Federal and Empire periods, the Beaux-Arts era, and the Colonial Revival. Sometimes historical modernist designs employed new materials such as aluminum and Bakelite. Probably the most famous New York example of the Art Moderne style is Rockefeller Center.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Washington Square, New York, 1928-1932</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oil on canvas</td>
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**William C. Palmer** (American, 1906-87)
As an art student, William Palmer aspired to be a muralist for wealthy clientele who might commission a screen like this for their chic homes. Here Palmer places himself at the center of a lively scene on a clear day in one of New York City's most famous parks. The even lighting and orderly composition tell us this is the artist's urban ideal. Fashionably dressed women, young mothers with their children, an artist with her portfolio, pigeons, and an alert terrier surround him. The fold at the center of the screen carries the viewer well into Fifth Avenue, where the hubbub of the streets includes pedestrians navigating automobile and bus traffic. In the distance we can see the silhouette of the newly built Empire State Building, which stands in contrast to the 19th-century buildings surrounding Washington Square Park.

In the 1940s, Palmer became Director of the Munson-Williams-Proctor School of Art, a position he held until he retired in 1973.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

*Modernistic Pattern*, ca. 1927
Wallpaper mounted on Masonite

**Charles E. Burchfield** (American, 1893-1967)
Buffalo, New York, designer

**M. H. Birge & Sons Company** (1834-1982)
Buffalo, New York, maker

Burchfield Penney Art Center, Gift of Dr. Edna M. Lindemann, 1974, 1974.048.000

Charles E. Burchfield wrote about this wallpaper pattern: “They asked me for a ‘Modernistic pattern’ and this is what I ‘cooked up.’ It was very
successful.” Burchfield, who went on to become a successful artist, worked at M. H. Birge & Sons in Buffalo from 1921 to 1929, where he became the head designer for wallpapers and textiles.

“Modernistic” was often a catchall phrase for any design viewed as progressive. Objects in the Art Moderne style drew inspiration from traditional and international sources. In this instance, Burchfield adapted his earlier *Chinese Garden* scenic wallpaper, which was based on nineteenth-century French wallpapers and early hand-painted Chinese wall coverings, by adding stylized fronds and flowers to create a contemporary pattern.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Dogs with Ball Balustrade**, ca. 1925  
Wrought Iron

**William Hunt Diederich**  
(American, born Hungary, 1884-1953)  
New York, New York, designer and maker

D. Wigmore Fine Art, Inc., New York

Artist and sculptor William Hunt Diederich turned his talents to decorative objects including furniture, lighting, weathervanes, fire screens, trivets, and ceramics. Generally they depict silhouettes of hunting animals, reflecting his childhood in Hungary on his father’s horse farm and forming a pun on his middle name. In his interconnected compositions of elongated and stylized forms, as seen on this balustrade, he evokes the animals’ dynamic movement. Diederich transformed rural materials, techniques, and folklore themes into modern useful objects. From time to time Diederich designed ornamental fixtures for private commissions such as staircases and balustrades.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Side Table, 1926
Mahogany, mahogany and amboyna veneers, inlays of ivory, celluloid, ebony, and lightwood, painted metal

Company of Master Craftsmen,
Flushing, Queens, New York (active 1925-49) 
maker

W. & J. Sloane,
New York, New York (active 1843-1985), retailer

Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of J. Davenport Wheeler, Ph.B. 1858, 1997.7.1

The Company of Master Craftsmen based this side table on a similar model by Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann, a renowned French cabinet maker who was known for luxuriously crafted interiors, furniture, and decorative objects that drew inspiration from early 19th-century styles. The Company of Master Craftsmen adapted Ruhlmann’s patterns, but made their furniture affordable for middle-class Americans by utilizing modern machinery in production and making economic concessions in decoration. On this table, painted metal substitutes for silk tassels and white celluloid for some of the ivory inlay.

W. J. Sloane and The Metropolitan Museum of Art formed an alliance to manufacture high-quality historical and modern furnishings inspired by the museum’s collection. In the fall of 1926, W. & J. Sloane, the retailer for the Company of Master Craftsmen, displayed this elegant side table and the rest of the bedroom suite for which it was made at an exhibition held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. Here, leading retailers showcased furnished rooms to instruct the public on Modernist trends. At a time before multiple forms of mass media including television, these types of exhibition were exceptionally influential in establishing style.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Gazelle Bowl**, 1935  
Glass  

**Sydney Biehler Waugh** (American, 1904-63)  
New York, New York, designer  
**Steuben Glass Inc.**, Steuben Division,  
Corning Glassworks (1903-present)  
Corning, New York, maker  


Steuben, based in Corning, New York, has set the standard for American art glass design. The Gazelle Bowl was Steuben’s first major engraved work and the first to employ all of the company's glassmaking techniques: blowing, cutting, polishing, and copper-wheel engraving. The combination of weightiness and volume with embellishment came to be the hallmark of Steuben wares. The elegant, engraved gazelles leaping around the circumference of this bowl recall ancient Greek vases decorated with friezes of running animals or athletes. New York’s designers used classical imagery to update traditional historical forms and decoration to appeal to the country’s conservative tastes.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Greek Dance, 1926
Bronze, wood base

Carl Paul Jennewein
(born Germany, American, 1890-1978)
Larchmont, New York, designer

Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Mel A. Shaftel, B. A. 1965

Classical imagery was an important influence for modern designers, especially in the Art Moderne style. Carl Paul Jennewein, a neo-Classical sculptor, spent three years traveling through Italy and Greece, absorbing inspiration from the past. Upon his return to New York in about 1920, he received numerous commissions for architectural sculpture. One of the first was a commission for the Philadelphia Art Museum building, designed in the style of the Parthenon in Athens (built in 447-432 B.C.E.). For the pediment, Jennewein created thirteen polychrome sculptures of Greek gods and goddesses to great acclaim.

While working on this project, Jennewein executed Greek Dance in 1926 in an edition of twenty-five. Here Jennewein isolated a single lithe figure whose delicate step is grace itself. The clean lines of ancient Greek and Roman art appealed to a taste for the sleek and streamlined and the idealized female nude became an icon of the Modern style.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Pablo Picasso and Georges Braques were pioneers of Cubism, one of the most influential visual art styles in the twentieth century. Rejecting representation and three-dimensionality, they and their followers reduced and fractured objects into flat geometric forms and depicted them from multiple and contrasting vantage points. In 1913, the International Exposition of Modern Art in New York City, known as the “Armory Show,” introduced Americans to European Cubism. In particular, Marcel Duchamp’s cubist painting Nude Descending a Staircase caused a sensation. Thereafter, American artists who studied in Paris, as well as European émigrés who came for better opportunities, brought Cubism to New York. However, World War I distracted Americans from art and Cubism began to manifest its effect on decorative arts, architecture, performing arts, fashion and literature only after 1925. While the avant-garde embraced Cubism in its varied and often luxurious art forms, the general public found this “modernistic” style too extreme; it flowered for only several years.

Skyscraper Bookcase, ca. 1927
Maple, Bakelite

Paul T. Frankl (American, born Austria, 1886-1958) New York, New York, designer
Various cabinet makers, New York, New York, makers


Paul Frankl, an émigré architect from Vienna, translated the skyscraper form in a collection of furniture designs that he sold at his gallery in midtown Manhattan. His stepped-back vertical bookcases represented the very trademark of New York, and by extension, a distinctly American modern icon—the soaring zigzag-formed steel-framed skyscraper. Frankl’s use of Bakelite, the first entirely man made plastic, for details in this bookcase added an additional progressive element to the design.

Similarly, although New York City passed a zoning law restricting the height and bulk of buildings in 1916, to allow light to penetrate the canyons between the towers, the results of the new formula did not begin to manifest until the mid-1920s. The city’s most famous skyscrapers in the form known as the tapering “setback style” or the “wedding cake style,” including the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings, rose in the early 1930s. Thus, skyscrapers resembling the faceted objects depicted in Cubism and visually translating the complex polyrhythms of jazz became symbols of New York and modernism in the eyes of the world.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Although Bakelite was invented in 1907 in Yonkers, designers began to use it in furniture and decorative arts only in the mid-1920s.

With his wildly popular *Skyscraper* line, which was displayed in exhibitions and publicized in the press, Frankl strove to create designs of a truly modern American character and to educate the public to understand and embrace Modernism. In 1928, he founded the American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen (AUDAC) to develop and promote the work of early Modernists.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Study in Form (Forms in Space)</strong>, 1923</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ink and graphite on pale cream-colored, thin wove paper</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>John Storrs</strong> (American, 1885-1956)</th>
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<td>Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum purchase, 90.26</td>
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Howard Cook created a striking contrast of old and new New York in this view of lower Manhattan. He placed the steeple of Trinity Church, which stands at the corner of Broadway and Wall Street, nearly in the center of the composition. In the foreground there are two- and three-story buildings with parked cars, all scaled to humans who might be walking along the city street. They are in the shadows of sleek, modern skyscrapers that are so anonymous most do not even have windows. With the flat facades of these temples to industry, Cook wove a rhythmic pattern of light and shade, abstraction and naturalism.

Mary E. Murray, MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Delmonico Building, 1927
Lithograph on paper

Charles Sheeler
American (1883-1965)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Gift of Edward W. Root, 53.354

Delmonico’s was a popular New York City restaurant in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It closed during Prohibition due to a loss of patronage. The building, on Fifth Avenue at 44th Street, was razed and in its place rose the 36-story Central Mercantile Bank Building. So famous was the restaurant, however, the new structure was referred to as the Delmonico Building, as in the title of Charles Sheeler’s lithograph.

Sheeler emphasized the height of the newly constructed skyscraper by depicting it from sidewalk level looking up (and up and up). He also focused on a blank white wall rather than the building’s ornamented façade, the details of which might distract attention from the striking angle of ascent.

[source: Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History / The Metropolitan Museum of Art]

Mary E. Murray, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Wall Street, 1925
Lithograph on paper
Arnold H. Ronnebeck

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Gift of Edward W. Root, 53.157
Building a Babylon, 1929
Drypoint on paper

Martin Lewis
American (1881/83-1962)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum Purchase, 81.22

Babylon was an ancient Mesopotamian city about 60 miles southwest of Baghdad. It is referred to several times in the Bible, always unfavorably (look at the Book of Revelation, chapter 17), which is how the name became synonymous with self-indulgent pleasures.

In this image Martin Lewis, a master intaglio printmaker, exploited etchings potential for strong light and dark contrasts to create a dramatic night time scene. The point of view is from the bottom of a deep dig, well below street level. A lone anonymous figure wanders through the construction site for a high-rise apartment building. Lewis disliked the idea of this kind of residence:

I would certainly hate like hell to have to live in these crowded beehives . . . You may be sure, however, that they will be filled just like a wasp's nest or beehive, and without doubt the future city dweller will take on the insect character more or less determined by the structured limitations of his dwelling place.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Gift Kodak Camera, October 1930
Leather-covered metal, chrome-plated and enameled metal, glass

Cedar presentation box, 1930
Lacquered cedar, chrome-plated and enameled metal

Walter Dorwin Teague (American, 1883-1960)
New York, New York, designer
Eastman Kodak Company
Rochester, New York, (1892-present), maker


Eastman Kodak in Rochester led the way in the development of photographic technology. The firm contracted with Walter Dorwin Teague, soon after he established his industrial design firm in 1927, to create a line of affordable cameras geared to the amateur photography market. He designed the No. 1A Gift camera for the 1930 Christmas season. Embellished with a colorful Cubist-enameled inlay and packaged in a matching cedar box, Teague transformed a piece of practical equipment into a modern fashion accessory. Although this camera was advertised as “[o]ne of the finest looking Kodaks ever offered” for any man or woman, from the time of its founding Kodak focused on the female market with advertisements picturing an independent vibrant woman holding a camera; she was dubbed the “Kodak Girl.” Kodak encouraged women in their role as mothers to record the key moments in family life—birthdays, holidays, graduations—for posterity.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Cocktail Service, ca. 1928
Silver plate, parcel gilt, and cork

Elsa Tennhardt (American, born Germany, 1889-1980), New York, New York, designer
E & J Bass Inc., New York, New York (1890-ca. 1930), maker

Collection of Dr. Alan Plotnik

This “interesting iced-drink set in an extreme modernistic pattern” was featured in Harper’s Bazaar as an excellent Christmas gift for men and appeared in the 1931 Hollywood film Bachelor Apartment. During Prohibition the set could not be advertised as a cocktail service.

The designer Elsa Tennhardt was primarily a painter and art instructor and part of the Austro-German émigré circle of artists in New York City. In 1928 she designed a series of silver-plated, Cubist-inspired tabletop and vanity articles based on faceted triangular forms and triangular decorations for E & J Bass. In addition to skyscrapers and cubist art, Tennhardt was most likely inspired by Erik Magnussen’s innovative Cubic coffee service (1927) where he broke up surfaces into angular planes; the Gorham Manufacturing Co. dubbed the set “Lights and Shadows of Manhattan.” [See photograph below]

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sky-scraper Cocktail Shaker</strong>, 1928</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Silver plate, patinated silver-plate</strong></td>
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**Louis M. Rice** (American, 1872-ca. 1933)
New York, New York, designer

**Apollo Studios** division of Bernard Rice’s Sons, Inc. (active ca. 1899-1959)
New York and Brooklyn, New York, maker

Collection of John C. Waddell

During Prohibition, cocktail shakers were commonly marketed as “beverage shakers” to avoid the allusion to alcoholic drinks. Louis M. Rice designed an Apollo Sky-scraper line of silver-plated tabletop items in abstracted, stepped back forms. A 1928 advertisement described the pattern as “sky-scraper bodies with black smoke-stacks as handles.” The beverage shaker’s innovative form and handle were awarded U.S. patents and presented as emblematic of Modernistic design and life.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
In her autobiography, Margaret Bourke-White described how she began working for Fortune magazine:

In the spring of 1929, I received a telegram from a man I had never met:

HAVE JUST SEEN YOUR [OHIO STEEL MILL] PHOTOGRAPHS. CAN YOU COME TO NEW YORK WITHIN WEEK AT OUR EXPENSE.

It was signed: HENRY R. LUCE and under his name: TIME, THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE. I very nearly did not go. For two days the telegram lay unanswered, and then the yeast of New York began to work.

When I arrived, the inevitable portfolio under my arm, Mr. Luce and his associates explained that they were planning to launch a new magazine of business and industry—FORTUNE, they planned to call it—and they hoped to illustrate it with the most dramatic photographs of industry that had ever been taken. Did I think this was a good idea, he wanted to know?

“A good idea? This was the very role I believed photography should play. I said yes and went back to Cleveland to pick up my belongings. Before I left again for New York, I wrote my mother: ‘I feel as if the world has been opened up and I hold all the keys.’

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
The Empire State Building could serve as a poster child for Roaring into the Future. A muscular symbol of American ingenuity, it was built in 410 days, under budget, and completed three months before deadline; it remained the tallest building in the world for 42 years.

Lewis Hine was hired to document all aspects of the skyscraper’s construction. His images of the skyboys—the iron and steelworkers who labored far above Fifth Avenue creating the structural girding—proved the most arresting aspect of the series. Hine framed them within their handiwork against a hazy backdrop of the East River or Lower Manhattan far below. Perhaps most impressive was Hine himself, also aloft and at work with a 4x5 Graflex camera.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
In 1927 Stuart Davis created a still life with the unlikely combination of a rubber glove, an electric fan, and an eggbeater. Inspired by Cubism, he experimented on compositions for a year to arrive at a wholly mature and individual style. Davis consistently grounded his compositions in observed objects, but he abstracted them (often to the point where they were no longer recognizable) to create artistic compositions governed by color, form, planes, and line.

The type of subject I am now interested in representing is characterized by simple, geometrical solids. That many of the younger artists are similarly interested in various ways probably indicates that this type of form has greater contemporary aesthetic utility than other types.

*Stuart Davis, 1927*

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Instruments, ca.1927</th>
<th>![Image of Musical Instruments]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oil and sand on canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan Matulka</td>
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<tr>
<td>(American, born Bohemia, 1890-1972)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, New York</td>
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Middle Manhattan Movement  
*(Abstraction, Lower Manhattan)*, 1928
Transparent watercolor with graphite and charcoal on textured watercolor paper

**John Marin**
American (1870-1953)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum Purchase, 54.5

American painter John Marin lived in Paris between 1908 and 1911, at the very moment Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque developed the painting style called Cubism. When Marin returned to the United States, he applied this Modernist vision of simultaneity to both urban and rural landscapes.

Marin composed *Middle Manhattan Movement* as a balance between representation and abstraction. The upper half of the composition evokes looming office buildings and street lamps, while the alternating light and dark pattern in the lower portion expresses lively action of figures and traffic against store fronts.

Marin celebrated the city’s vibrant street life by creating a rhythmic interplay of forms in the manner of a jazz composition. There are few fixed points to stabilize the image; lines keep the eye moving in a circular direction.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
**Study in Pure Form**, 1924
Stainless steel, copper, and brass

**John Storrs** (American, 1885-1956)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum purchase, 83.9

This elegant work marks a significant break from traditional sculpture. Storrs was one of the first 20th-century sculptors to create work abstracted from representational subject matter. While *Study in Pure Form* was inspired by skyscrapers, Storrs presented the piece as a non-objective design exercise, and chose modern materials over traditional choices of bronze or marble. In 1922 he wrote:

Let the artists create for your public buildings and homes forms that will express that strength and will to power, that poise and simplicity that one begins to see in some of America’s factories, rolling-mills, elevators and bridges.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

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**Nightlife: Jazz, Prohibition & Cocktail Culture**

Jazz, based on African-American music, arrived from New Orleans and became the focus of urban nightlife, especially in New York. Jazz combined with Prohibition (the law making the manufacture, transportation and sale of alcohol illegal) created a new underground culture in America’s major cities centering around illegal bars called speakeasies that ranged from shabby to elegant. New York City had 32,000 of these secret venues where an array of cocktails—Gin Rickeys, Side Cars, and Bee’s Knees—were served. Many speakeasies featured jazz to bring in patrons who wildly danced the Breakaway, the Charleston, the Black Bottom, and the Lindy Hop, all based on African-

After The Jazz Singer introduced the “talkies” in film in 1927, people flocked to grand movie palaces. For movies and theater, composers created popular songs frequently influenced by jazz. Artists and designers translated the lively syncopated rhythms of jazz into the innovative decoration of nightclubs, restaurants, theaters, film sets, and the accouterments of cocktail culture including fashion, jewelry, cigarette holders and lighters, cosmetic cases, shakers and glasses.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
American precedents. Jazz bands and dance routines also entertained patrons at The Cotton Club and The Savoy Ballroom in Harlem and other legitimate nightclubs.

**Small’s Paradise**, ca. 1935
from *Harlem Document*
Gelatin silver print

**Aaron Siskind** (American, 1903-91)

George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, Gift of Aaron Siskind

Early in his career, Aaron Siskind was a documentarian working with the New York Photo League. The League championed photography as a tool for social improvement. Between 1932 and 1940, Siskind shot images of children, street life, commerce, and socializing in Harlem. Eventually, this collection was published in a book titled *Harlem Document*.

Small’s Paradise nightclub opened in October 1925 at 2294 7th Avenue, near 135th Street. Most of the big Harlem clubs had African-American entertainers who performed for white audiences. Ed Small, by contrast, was African American and his clientele was integrated. Small’s was famous for its waiters who danced the Charleston and sometimes wore roller skates.

Mary E. Murray, MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Martha Graham, 1931
Gelatin silver contact print

Edward Steichen
(American, born Luxembourg, 1879-1973)

George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, Bequest of Edward Steichen, under the direction of Joanna T. Steichen

From 1923 to 1938, Steichen was chief photographer for Condé Nast publications (Vogue and Vanity Fair) making him the Annie Liebovitz of his day. His black-and-white portraits of artists, actors, and politicians are as dramatic as they are glamorous.

Martha Graham is considered the founder of modern dance, credited with revolutionizing human movement in much the same way Picasso revolutionized painting. She studied with Ted Shawn from 1916 to 1923, then taught at the Eastman School of Music, where she developed her experimental choreography. In 1926, she established the Martha Graham School for Contemporary Dance.

Graham’s dance is grounded in passionate movement. She was fearless about staging the human form awkwardly in service to expression. In this portrait, Steichen captures the mystery and power of this great innovator.

Mary E. Murray, MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
**Nightlife: Vanity Fair’s Intimate Guide to New York after Dark** (New York: John Day Company) Book, 1931

John Day Company (1926-1974), New York, New York, maker

Charles G. Shaw (American, 1892-1974), New York, New York, author

Raymond Bret-Koch (French, 1902-1996), illustrator

Westsider Books, New York

In *Nightlife* Charles Green Shaw, a freelance writer for the *New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair* and later an abstract artist, takes the reader on a tour of nightclubs, speakeasies, restaurants, and other entertainment venues throughout Manhattan. Amusing illustrations by Raymond Bret-Koch convey the guide’s irreverent insider tone of what kind of crowd and cover charge to expect.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

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**Untitled (Nightclub Scene in Blue and Black)**, ca.1925

Gouache on paper mounted to paperboard

**Aaron Douglas** (American 1899-1979)

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, New York
“Musical Instruments” Carpet, 1932
Wool and cotton

**Ruth Reeves** (American, 1892-1966)
New City [sic], New York, designer
**A. and M. Karagheusian, Inc.**
New York, New York (ca. 1900-64), maker

Gift of Geoffrey N. Bradfield, 1986
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1986.136

Radio City Music Hall opened to the public in 1932 as a center for lavish entertainment, an intent reflected in its fashionable interior. Donald Deskey, interior coordinator and furnishings designer of Radio City Music Hall, hired Ruth Reeves to create textile wall-coverings and a vast carpet for the floors of the Grand Foyer, staircase, and three mezzanines.

In her *Musical Instruments* carpet, Reeves called on her years of fine art study in the United States and seven years with the French painter Fernand Leger in Paris to produce a lively Cubist pattern where rectangular blocks contain undulating and overlapping geometrically abstracted banjos, guitars, accordions, piano keys, saxophones, and harps embellished with sinuous curves and dots. The interplay between the static and moving forms resulted in a jazzy composition appropriate for a music hall.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Mary Louise Cecilia Guinan (1884-1933), was born in Waco, Texas, and lived a colorful life as a real cowgirl, a movie cowgirl in early Hollywood, a vaudevillian, and a nightclub hostess during the Prohibition era of the Roaring ‘20s. Known as Texas, she greeted the swell and gangsters alike to her speakeasies with a big “Hello, sucker!” and carried noise-making clappers like the one in her hands in the painting. Her clubs were often raided by police, because alcohol was of course outlawed, though Texas insisted she served only mixers.

Reginald Marsh aptly captured the garish entertainment of Texas’s joint. We, the viewers, are caught up in the mix of the show girls in their gaudy costumes and the leering patrons, all of whom are shoved to the very front of the composition, practically tumbling into our space. We can almost hear Texas shout her trademark, “Let’s give the little lady a great big hand!”

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Americana Print: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes Textile, 1926
Printed silk

Ralph Barton (American, 1891-1931)
New York, New York, designer
Stehli Silks Corporation (Swiss, American subsidiary ca. last quarter of 19th century-1957)
New York, New York, maker

Gift of the Stehli Silks Corp., 1927

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 27.149.11

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes depicts men in top hats pursuing a blonde woman while ignoring several brunettes. Ralph Barton, a famous cartoonist for the New Yorker and other publications, created the design for Stehli Silks’ Americana Prints collection (second series). He had just illustrated Anita Loos’s runaway bestseller of the same name published in 1925, the same year as F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, another book epitomizing the Jazz Age.

Loos adapted Gentlemen Prefer Blondes as a Broadway play (1926-27) and Paramount Pictures released a silent film version in 1928, now lost. Barton’s printed dress silk design for Stehli reflects the influence of dynamic Italian Futurist art. Fifty thousand people viewed Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and other Stehli Americana fashion printed silks by celebrity artists at the R.H. Macy’s Exposition of Art in Trade of 1927. The exposition was a collaborative endeavor of the department store and the Metropolitan Museum of Art to educate and market modern design to the public.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Flapper Dress, ca. 1925
Silk, rhinestones, beads

Sadie Nemser
(American, born Austria, ca. 1886-1966)
New York, New York, designer
Nemser Gowns, Inc. (1922-31)
New York, New York, maker

Collection of John H. Davey, New York, New York

Nemser Gowns, Inc., led by Joseph and Sadie Nemser, produced one-of-a-kind originals as well as ready-made dresses. New York City, where the firm was based, led the nation and the world in ready-to-wear garment manufacturing. Supported by a steady supply of immigrant labor, the women's ready-made clothing industry was boosted by the new fashion for simple, easy to produce garments during the 1920s. To New York consumers, Nemser advertised an up-to-date silhouette, which by the mid-1920s featured abbreviated hemlines and a flat, columnar shape, ideal for decorations like the ornate beading of this “flapper” dress. The fashions of the flapper—a young woman who defied many of society's conventions—emphasized motion, flamboyance, and a straight, uncorseted body. The flapper’s short skirts initially appeared shocking during the early 1920s, but gradually became the prevailing fashion for most women.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Evening Dress, 1928
Silk, chiffon, satin, cotton, rhinestones, lace, and crepe

Peggy Hoyt (American, 1893-1937)
New York, New York, designer and maker

Collection of The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan
89.492.559

Peggy Hoyt founded her namesake business in New York City in 1915, becoming one of the country’s leading designers of women’s custom clothing. She staunchly refused to create wholesale designs; each of Hoyt’s dresses was one-of-a-kind. Many of the clients who visited Hoyt’s stately salon, located in the Philip Rhinelander mansion on East 55th Street in New York, were wealthy and elite, like Elizabeth Parke Firestone (1897-1990) who married into the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company family. Hoyt provided women with an alternative to the boyish flapper look, favoring softer, romantic designs, as seen in the delicate drapery of Firestone’s dress. Creative and elegant use of rhinestone embellishment was another of Hoyt’s specialties. In April 1933, Vogue praised her “attention to fine detail that is remarkable in this, the machine age.”

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
**Dress**, ca. 1927
Silk velvet, chiffon

**Coughlin-Davenport** (ca. 1912-unknown)
Albany, New York, designer and retailer

New York State Museum, Albany, New York

The straight lines of 1920s fashion acted as a canvas for lavish patterning, with influences drawing from the exotic and the artistic. Lacking stiff construction and falling loosely on the wearer’s body, garments such as this emphasized both comfort and beauty. Emancipation from the corset and other restrictive clothing echoed the greater freedoms for women overall. In dressing the modern woman, the proprietors of the Albany design and retail house Coughlin-Davenport, Josie S. Coughlin and Anna C. Davenport, were also part of something modern, joining the growing numbers of women earning independent livings. Although the label remains relatively unknown, Coughlin-Davenport was prestigious enough to feature in *Vogue’s* Shoppers’ and Buyers’ Guide during the 1910s.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian

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**Women & Fashion**

Young, independent, opinionated, and fashionable women known as flappers shocked the establishment with their behavior and dress. Disillusioned by the carnage of World War I and emboldened by obtaining the right to vote in 1920, women rebelled against Victorian conventions by smoking, drinking, driving, and petting in public, while dancing wildly to jazz music in illegal speakeasies during Prohibition. Many worked while putting off matrimony and motherhood. They believed they were equal to men and deserved the same rights and prerogatives. Their rebellion against conventions was particularly manifested in their
fashion choices. Women, sporting short bobbed hairstyles and made up in scarlet lips and darkly kohled eyes, dressed in skimpy waist-less dresses that came only to an inch below the knee, placing more focus on elegant footwear. Underneath they wore a flimsy, short, one-piece, unconstructed “step-in,” eschewing corset, brassiere, or petticoat.

This abbreviated, geometric, elongated, boyish style prevailed until the stock market crash in October 1929, which ushered in a more sober and conservative era. Then the silhouette became slender and feminine: hemlines fell; dresses, often cut on the bias, revealed womanly curves with natural waists; longer hairstyles incorporated soft waves; and costume jewelry replaced the genuine. New materials like rayon and improved fastenings such as zippers appeared. The Garment District in Manhattan, built in the 1920s, was the fashion center of the nation. Initially producing ready-to-wear copies of imported Parisian couture, when French fashion exports dropped precipitously during the Depression, the industry shifted to American designers who came into their own.
Hat, 1930s
Wool felt, silk, cotton, beads, stones

Lilly Daché (American, born France, ca. 1893-1989), designer and maker

Collection of John H. Davey, New York, New York

Designer Lilly Daché was one of New York’s most prominent milliners, opening her first store at the end of the 1920s. A colorful and exuberant fashion authority, Daché believed that hats should harmonize with the wearer’s clothing, appearance, and hairstyle. This was especially important during the 1930s, when hat styles once again revealed the head and hair. Daché installed special fitting rooms for blondes and brunettes in her showroom, decorated in gold and silver respectively, each designed to enhance and flatter the clients’ hair color. While fashions may have sobered somewhat during the Depression era, there were hints of fantasy, frivolity, and exoticism in hats, at which Daché excelled. High profile clients for her trend-setting designs included Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Shoes, 1920s
Silver gilt leather, fuchsia satin, rhinestones

Fenton brand (1924-post 1991)
Saks Fifth Avenue (1898-present)
New York, New York, maker and retailer

Torso Vintages, San Francisco

Department store Saks Fifth Avenue began promoting its private label shoe brand, Fenton Footwear, as early as 1924, the same year it opened the doors at its famous Fifth Avenue location. The shoes were modeled on a special “high-arched, narrow-heeled” Fenton last (a shoe form shaped like a human foot). Department stores like Saks emphasized the vast variety of merchandise they carried, as Jazz Age accessories changed rapidly to meet the demands of consumers. Shoe design flourished as footwear became a focal point under short hemlines, and motifs often reflected the arts and the zeitgeist. The silver gilt leather and fuchsia satin of these shoes form a striking linear pattern, which curves around the foot, evoking the energy, speed, and motion of 1920s fashions. The highly popular t-strap design was also thought to better brace the foot for dancing.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Germaine Monteil (American, born France, 1898-1985), New York, New York, designer Germaine Monteil, Inc. (1929-42), New York, New York, maker

Collection of John H. Davey, New York, New York

Germaine Monteil founded her fashion line at the end of the 1920s, after others admired the clothing she made for herself. Sold at high-end stores like Bonwit Teller, Monteil’s clothing was among the best—a fact reflected by its prices. Monteil recalled to Women’s Wear Daily, a newspaper written for the clothing trade, that her fashions cost up to $1,000 in 1938, over $17,000 today adjusting for inflation. The designer was as well known for her cosmetics as for her clothing. As early as 1935, she was producing customized lipsticks to match the colors of her garments. Monteil excelled at “young, limber lines,” a perfect fit for the elongated, sophisticated silhouette of 1930s fashion. Crisscrossed panels, strategically placed at the waist of this dress, help to highlight a slim body and feminine curves.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Evening Wrap, 1923-25
Silk velvet, metallic thread, coral beads

Amsterdam, Inc., (1922-37)
New York, New York, designer and maker

Collection of John H. Davey, New York, New York

Jack Amsterdam, proprietor of Amsterdam, Inc., was a prominent leader among New York’s Garment District luxury coats and wraps manufacturers. In addition to frequent business trips to Paris to see the latest trends, Amsterdam was an official delegate of the American Commission to the Paris Exposition of 1925. This evening wrap, retailed by Bonwit Teller where Amsterdam’s sister Rose was the coat buyer, is a ready-to-wear American interpretation of Paul Poiret’s Parisian couture.

Poiret’s use of “Orientalist” shapes and embellishment influenced the Amsterdam coat’s draped unstructured form and its exuberant embroidery in gold thread and coral beads. The cut blue velvet fabric portrays Egyptian Revival motifs that were wildly popular during the Jazz Age after the discovery of King Tut’s tomb in 1922. Amsterdam, Inc. wholesaled their wraps to retailers throughout the nation, thereby bringing the most modern fashion to American women.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
"Americana Print: Manhattan," Textile, 1925
Printed silk

Clayton Knight (American, 1891-1969)
New York, New York, designer
Stehli Silks Corporation
(Swiss, American subsidiary ca. last quarter of 19th century-1957),
New York, New York, maker

Gift of the Stehli Silks Corp., 1927

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 27.150.3

With the goal of creating distinctly American themes and spurred on by what he saw as part of the U.S. delegation at the Paris Exposition in 1925, Kneeland “Ruzzie” Green, the art director at Stehli Silks, initiated and oversaw the Americana Prints collection from 1925 to 1927, one series for each year. Green’s commissions to famous artists, designers, cartoonists, and celebrities produced the most avant-garde and zany printed dress silk fabrics of the day using contemporary imagery and modern art styles. In the acclaimed Manhattan pattern, Clayton Knight employed the facetted geometry of Cubism and the dynamism of Italian Futurism to evoke the accelerated pace of the skyscraper city. The Metropolitan Museum included Americana Prints dress silks in its 1926 Industrial Arts exhibition. The next year Manhattan and other examples of the Americana collection were seen by 50,000 people who attended the R.H. Macy’s Exposition of Art in Trade, a collaborative endeavor of the department store and the Metropolitan Museum of Art to educate the public and to market modern design.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
J.C. Leyendecker’s illustrations of idealized Ivy League students or young businessmen in single or double-breasted suits were often associated with manly sports. \textit{Tally Ho!} is the original artwork for Kuppenheimer’s October 11, 1930, advertisement in the \textit{Saturday Evening Post}. Leyendecker illustrated the advertisements for Kuppenheimer & Company men’s clothing firm (1876-1997) for over two decades beginning in 1908.

During the prosperous Jazz Age and the consequent growth in communications and magazine publication, advertising consumer goods became a business in its own right. In his book on advertising called \textit{Propaganda} (1928), Sigmund Freud’s nephew Edward Bernays urged advertisers to appeal to the powerful unconscious motives that men and women conceal from themselves such as sexual attraction, applying his uncle’s psychological theories.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
The Arrow Style Book, 1928
Printed paper

Joseph C. Leyendecker
(American, born Germany, 1874-1951)
New Rochelle, New York, designer
Cluett, Peabody & Co. & Inc. (1851-present)
Troy, New York, maker

Collection of the Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy, New York

The idealized modern Arrow Collar Man (featured in the company’s advertisements from 1905 to 1930) was one of the earliest and most successful branding campaigns in history, despite the homoerotic overtones of artist J. C. Leyendecker’s work in which his illustrated males were modeled on his life partner Charles Beach. Attached soft, pointed shirt collars became the norm from the mid-1920s instead of stiff, high, detachable collars. In 1928, the makers of Arrow collars and shirts, Cluett Peabody in Troy, New York, invented Sanforization as part of the manufacturing process, permitting the cotton shirt to be uniformly pre-shrunk and to fit permanently.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

Hat, ca. 1935
Suede, silk

Siegel’s of Buffalo (ca. 1904 - ca. 1959)
Buffalo, New York, maker and retailer

Collection of Lana Turner

Soft, conical caps were just one of the many styles of headwear popular during the early to mid-1930s. Fashion editors enthusiastically
announced that hats had become more individual and distinct, in contrast to the seeming uniformity of the cloche during the 1920s. By 1932, hats with high crowns, which further elongated the sylphlike lines of fashion, were a new trend. “The whole object,” wrote Vogue in August of that year, “is to keep you looking slender, to draw out your height to its last possible inch.” Hats served other purposes as well. Readily mass-produced and fairly affordable, they became an easy way to enliven a simple ensemble.

Siegel’s Millinery Co. was a successful manufacturer, retailer, and wholesale distributor of hats like this one. At its height Siegel’s was affiliated with around thirty stores in Buffalo and Western New York State.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian

*Hat in foreground of image*

**Plaid Cloche Hat**, ca. 1925
Silk

**Gage Brothers** (American, 1856- ca. 1954), Chicago, Illinois, and New York, New York, maker

Private Collection

The cloche, a bell-shaped hat with a tall crown fit closely to the head, sat atop a head of sleekly bobbed hair, capping the streamlined look of the roaring, racing twenties. Fashion magazines declared its overwhelming popularity, making it the predominant style in headwear during the early to mid-1920s. A wide range of patterns and applied details accompanied this simple hat shape, from floral to Cubist motifs. Most millinery firms responded quickly to the demand for the cloche. Founded in Chicago in 1856 as a leader in imported and domestically-produced hats, Gage Brothers opened a New York headquarters around 1915, stationing designers there to add a sophisticated “New York touch” to the company’s product line. Gage’s advertisements touted a product ideal for
the modern flapper: hats with “individuality—in the mode and out of the ordinary.”

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Peep-Toe Linen Shoes</strong>, 1930s</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leather, linen</td>
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**Matrix brand** (1923–ca. 1966)
**E.P. Reed & Co.** (American, ca. 1868–ca. 1954) Rochester, New York

Private Collection

E.P. Reed & Co. trademarked the Matrix brand in 1923, claiming eight years of research and experimentation had preceded its debut. Dubbed “Your Footprint in Leather,” the Matrix featured an insole that was pre-molded to the rounded contours of the foot. At the time, Rochester, New York, was one of the most important centers for shoe production, and the Matrix is an example of the ready-to-wear industry’s attempts, through innovation in materials and manufacturing, to make better products for the growing population of middle-class consumers. In 1934, *Vogue* praised the advances shoe manufacturers like Reed had made in designing comfortable shoes that were also pretty. To keep up-to-date on the latest trends and the needs of busy, modern women, the company established a style studio in New York City shortly after the first Matrix shoe was released.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Shoes, 1930-1935
Leather, cotton

Fenton brand (1924-post 1991)
Saks Fifth Avenue (1898-present)
New York, New York, maker and retailer

Collection of Lana Turner

A 1930 advertisement praised the durability and functionality of the Fenton shoe: “It walks… and it dances… thousands of miles every season.” Practicality factored into a woman's shopping decisions during the Depression. With less money to spend, women carefully calculated their purchases. Clothing and accessories had to hold up well under repeated use for a fashion season and beyond. The color palette of shoes during the early 1930s is sometimes characterized as subdued, sober, or even dismal, especially when compared to that of the previous decade, but neutral colors, basic shapes, and minimal decorations amounted to a smart and versatile purchase. Exclusive store labels like Fenton provided middle-class consumers with high fashion at reasonable prices, but still carried the luxury status of the Saks Fifth Avenue brand.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Floral Cloche Hat</strong>, ca. 1923</th>
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<tr>
<td>Silk, buckram, cotton, metallic thread</td>
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Alexander Hats (dates unknown), New York, New York, maker

Private Collection

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<tr>
<th><strong>Mirror and Brush Set</strong>, 1928</th>
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<tr>
<td>Celluloid, glass</td>
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**Edwin B. Langsdorf**, (American, 1902-30)
New York, New York, designer

**Pyramid Company**, a division of S. Langsdorf & Co., Inc. (last quarter 19th century; incorporated 1922-32), New York, New York, maker

Collection of John C. Waddell

This celluloid plastic vanity set would have adorned a woman’s dressing table where she styled her hair and applied her make-up and perfume before a day out or a night on the town. Edwin B. Langsdorf, son and nephew of the German émigré founders of S. Langsdorf & Co., “Manufacturers of Toilet and Manicure Requisites and Fancy Leather Goods,” created the striking stepped black and white sunray pattern mirror and brush set. So new, original, and ornamental was the design that Langsdorf was granted a patent.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Purse, 1920-39
Gold, platinum, enamel, silk

**Tiffany & Co.** (1837-present)
New York, New York, maker

Tiffany & Co. Archives, I2014.05

Accessories were key wardrobe components for the smartly dressed woman—the finishing touch. As *Vogue* wrote in March 1929, “accessories are objects of utility and of extravagance and so they must be of good quality, carefully worked out.” During this period, accessories designers drew inspiration from other cultures, including the Far East, as can be seen in the elegant enameling on the frame of this purse. Function also factored into the design of handbags, as makers took into account the modern woman’s need to chicly stow away personal items, like the money she was now earning and the makeup she was now wearing.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
**Cigarette Case, 1920-39**  
Gold, diamonds, rubies, and enamel

Tiffany & Co. (1837-present), New York, New York, designer and maker

Tiffany & Co. Archives, A1993.52.04

Like drinking, smoking became synonymous with modern living during the Jazz Age. For the first time, women smoked in public. Portable elegant cigarette cases accompanied the independent woman day and night. This lavish gold example in a green and black enameled fir tree design in an “Oriental” landscape, monogrammed in diamonds, is part of a matching cosmetic set.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian

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**Compact and Lipstick, 1920-40**  
Enamel, nephrite, diamond, and gold

Tiffany & Co. (1837-present), New York, New York, designer and maker

Tiffany & Co. Archives, A2008.21

In the 1920s it became acceptable for women to apply make-up in public. Purse-sized containers for powder, rouge, and lipstick became elegant fashion accessories. Asian motifs and materials were popular as in this enameled gold compact and lipstick ensemble.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Cigarette holder made for the Stork Club.
New York, New York, ca. 1935
Plasticized paper, electroplated gold-color metal, plastic

Collection of Carolyn Hsu, New York, New York

Celebrities—including the upper crust, film stars, and show girls—gathered at the luxurious Stork Club in midtown Manhattan, the nation’s and perhaps the world’s most famous nightspot. Originally founded by Sherman Billingsley, an ex-bootlegger, and two mobsters in 1929, it moved twice after raids by Prohibition agents and police. In 1934, it remained under Billingsley’s ownership and found a permanent home at 3 East 53rd Street until it closed in 1965.

Cigarette holders in a wide range of materials were fashion accessories for the modern woman in public and private. Before filtered cigarettes were the norm, holders also served a practical purpose by protecting smoker’s lips from tobacco flakes and fingers from nicotine stains. This souvenir cigarette holder reflects the trend in women’s fashion for smoking accessories.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

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Jewelry

The Paris Exposition of 1925, particularly its display of Cartier fine jewelry, was a catalyst for New York modern jewelry design. During the Jazz Age, Tiffany & Company, Oscar Heyman, Dreicer & Co., and others created American versions of modern themes. Exotic influences from Asia, Egypt, Africa, and India informed designs and materials including the use of colorful gemstones, often in geometric patterns, combined with platinum, jade, rock crystal, lapis lazuli, agate, lacquer, and enamels. Flapper clothing revealed bare arms to display wristwatches, cuff bracelets, and colorful—often multiple—bangles, and bobbed hair

At the same time, less expensive, light-hearted celluloid jewelry imitating amber and ivory gained popularity among the fashionable set dancing the latest steps at speakeasies.

Beginning in the early 1930s during the Depression, bigger was better; large sculptural and curvaceous brooches, sizable ear clips, wide bracelets, massive rings, and convertible jewelry were the rage particularly among the Hollywood set. Some sought pared-down and streamlined jewelry with Machine Age
showed off dangling earrings. Narrow headbands, bandeaux, replaced tiaras. Long necklaces or strands of cultured pearls dangled on straight-lined, waist-less dresses.

vocabulary. Affordable costume imitations of glamorous jewels and plastic jewelry in an increasing variety of playful motifs and bright colors became de rigueur for everyone.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator and Jane Adlin, Decorative Arts Historian

**Clip Brooch**, 1935-1939
Platinum, diamond, and sapphire

**Tiffany & Co.** (1837-present)
New York, New York, designer and maker

Tiffany & Co. Archives, A2014.10

Convertible jewelry was a major trend of the 1930s. Double clip brooches could be worn separately as dress clips or joined as a larger brooch. When together, this brooch appears as the popular “swirl” motif of the period, but when uncoupled each component becomes the head of a bird with a sapphire eye.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

**Brooch**, 1920s
Diamond, platinum

**E.M. Gattle & Company** (1890-1940)
New York, New York

Macklowe Gallery, New York
### Brooch/Watch, 1920s
Diamond, ruby, emerald, enamel, platinum

Tiffany & Co. (1837-present), New York, New York

Macklowe Gallery, New York

The *giardinetto* motif, especially popular in 18th and 19th-century Italy, was updated by E.M. Gattle and Tiffany & Company who created these “little gardens” in the trend to geometricize and abstract natural forms. Here one brooch displays a monochromatic pattern of varying diamond shapes and the other, which discreetly flips to a watch, boasts an electrifying contrast of colors and diamonds.

Jane Adlin, Decorative Arts Historian

### Ring, 1930s
Diamond, emerald, platinum

**Trabert & Hoeffer Mauboussin** (1936-53)
New York, New York

Macklowe Gallery, New York

American jeweler Trabert & Hoeffer merged with the French firm Mauboussin to create high-style jewels for Hollywood films and the discerning woman. The best known of THM's lines was *Reflection* with the tag line, “Your Personality in a Jewel.” The customer participated in the design of a piece by mix and matching colored gemstones and various metals in pre-made settings. This streamlined *Reflection* ring with smooth surface reflected the silhouette of New York skyscrapers.

Jane Adlin, Decorative Arts Historian
**Bracelet, ca. 1925**  
Platinum, diamonds, and sapphire  
**Tiffany & Co.** (1837-present), New York, New York, designer and maker  
Tiffany & Co. Archives, A2013.03

**Bracelet, 1935**  
Gold, platinum, and diamond  
**Tiffany & Co.** (1837-present), New York, New York, designer and maker  
Tiffany & Co. Archives, A2012.38

Tiffany & Company dominated the New York market for American women who did not buy their jewelry in Paris or from the French branch stores in New York City. Tiffany’s narrow bracelet of diamonds and sapphires in an overall geometric pattern was very much of the moment, taking its cue from the Paris Exposition of 1925. Bracelets of the 1930s were bolder and wider than in the 1920s. The diamond and emerald bracelet appeared in *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vogue* in 1933. In the 1930s wide bracelets of diamonds in varied shapes exhibited new technologies in cutting stones to emphasize brilliance; Tiffany & Company was known for its larger stones. *Vogue* featured a very similar diamond bracelet on October 15, 1935, in a setting by Elsie de Wolfe.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
| **Bracelet**, ca. 1933  
Platinum, diamond, and emerald beryl  
**Tiffany & Co.** (1837-present), New York, New York, designer and maker |

Tiffany & Co. Archives, A1999.10

| **Wristwatch**, ca. 1930  
Diamond, sapphire, platinum  
**Oscar Heyman & Brothers** (1912-present)  
New York, New York |

Macklowe Gallery, New York
**Wristwatch**, 1920s
Diamond, seed pearl, platinum, gold

**Dreicer & Company** (1868-1926)
New York, New York

Macklowe Gallery, New York

Wristwatches had been invented as a convenience for soldiers in combat during World War I. In the 1920s, they were miniaturized for women in bracelet form and became popular to wear with the new sleeveless women’s fashions. Dreicer & Company and Oscar Heyman designed jewelry using platinum, a white metal that was lighter and more malleable than gold. Whether using colored or monochromatic gemstones, patterns became more geometric and symmetrical, greatly differing from the naturalistic and organic forms of Art Nouveau.

Jane Adlin, Decorative Arts Historian

**Brooch** (convertible to two dress clips), ca. 1936
Rhodium-plated metal, glass
**Alfred Philippe** (American, born France, ca. 1900-70; Trifari: 1930-68) designer; **Trifari** (1925-present), New York, New York, maker

Collection of Lori Zabar

During the Depression, costume jewelry mimicking real metals and gemstones became socially acceptable and economically necessary. Trifari, one of the first and most successful costume jewelry companies, produced well-made and affordable adornments for the sophisticated woman and for several Broadway musicals.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Bangle bracelets**, ca. 1925 [two]
Celluloid, glass, paint
Collection of Corinne Davidov

**Hand Brooches**, ca. 1935 [three]
Bakelite or Catalin
Collection of Dr. Robert Lerch

Man-made plastics, known as *phenolics*, were the major American innovation in modern jewelry materials. The first successful semi-synthetic thermoplastic was cellulose, a part-natural fiber. Often set with rhinestones or metal, celluloid and its colorful cellulose-based successors flourished in 1920s jewelry. In the latter part of the decade, non-flammable, injection-molded, entirely synthetic Bakelite (invented in Yonkers in 1907) jewelry appeared. It was most often in black and amber because Bakelite was difficult to color. After the Bakelite patent expired in 1927, other companies patented brightly hued and clear plastics including Catalin, Marblette, and Prystal. By 1935, plastic jewelry dominated the costume market. Although many New York companies thrived in the phenolic jewelry trade, such as Alta Novelty Company (1931-1941) known for its highly carved bracelets, generally individual designs have not been documented to their makers.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Carved Bangle Bracelets, 1932-1935 [three]
Bakelite or Catalin
Collection of Dr. Robert Lerch

Brooch, 1928
Glazed ceramic mounted on silver
Sargent Johnson (American, 1888-1967)
Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, New York

<table>
<thead>
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<th><strong>Harlem Renaissance</strong></th>
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| The Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south to the cities of the north and west, joined by immigrants from the Caribbean, fundamentally altered the history of African Americans and of American history and culture. African Americans from the south left for economic and political reasons—to escape poverty, discriminatory Jim Crow laws, and voting restrictions—for manufacturing jobs in major cities, including New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Saint Louis. By 1920, there were 150,000 African-Americans living in New York City, mainly in Harlem, and by 1930 that number had more than doubled to 330,000.

Harlem became a dynamic center of African-American artists, sculptors, musicians, writers, poets, dramatists, dancers, and intellectuals. Entertainment venues in Harlem featuring African-American performers such as the Apollo Theater attracted New Yorkers from all over the city. This electric movement, known as the Harlem Renaissance today and... |
the New Negro Movement then, was based upon the idea that the innovative work of this group could challenge pervading racial stereotypes and promote racial and social integration. Major figures of the Harlem Renaissance included artists Aaron Douglas and Raymond Barthe; writers and poets Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston; musicians Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong; and singer Ethel Waters.

Drawing upon African and African-American culture, African Americans influenced all art forms in America. As director of the fledgling civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), W. E. B. Du Bois offered prize competitions for African-American artists and writers and published their work in the organization’s magazine, The Crisis. The Urban League showcased the work of African-American artists in its journal Opportunity. William E. Harmon, a white benefactor, provided black painters and sculptors with exhibitions and awards through his eponymous foundation. Another white man, the German émigré Winold Reiss, brought attention to the Harlem Renaissance when he was chosen by the social welfare journal Survey Graphic to make portraits of the major figures in the movement for a special issue entitled “Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro” published on March 1, 1925. Alain Locke, a key philosopher and author in Harlem, edited the issue. When Locke expanded the issue into an anthology that became the manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance, he chose Reiss to illustrate The New Negro: An Interpretation published in 1925.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

**Mural Study for Cravath Hall, Fisk University**, 1929

Gouache on illustration board

**Aaron Douglas** (American, 1899-1979)

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, LLC, New York, New York

Douglas had established himself as a premiere visual artist of the Harlem
Renaissance when he was invited to create murals for Cravath Hall at Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee. Fisk was founded in 1866 as a school for African Americans and Cravath housed the University Library.

Douglas described his paintings for this space as a “panorama of the development of Black people in this hemisphere, in the new world.” His imagery begins with enslaved Africans leaving their homeland and then captures the African-American experience working in fields and in cities, as scientists and musicians.

Douglas returned to Fisk in the later 1930s as professor of art, a position he held until his retirement in 1966.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bravado, Defiance, Flight, and Surrender</th>
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<tr>
<td>from Emperor Jones, 1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodcut on paper</td>
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Aaron Douglas (American, 1899-1979)

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, LLC, New York, New York

Eugene O’Neill’s 1920 play The Emperor Jones tells the story of Brutus Jones, a one-time Pullman porter and escaped convict from the United States who becomes a despotic leader in a Caribbean country. The play is a cautionary tale against tyranny, inspired by the United States’ interventions in Haiti.

Aaron Douglas created woodcuts from the drama using modernist picture-making techniques, such as flat pictorial space and an expressive play of pattern. These tools create mood, setting, and narrative in a masterful marriage of minimal form used to maximum effect. The simple suggestion of boots and a buttoned, belted jacket in the first two images convey power. Jones embodies Defiance with an open-legged stance.
and pointed gun, showcased in bold silhouette. The black-and-white billow of smoke from the weapon parallels the pattern of water and fish at his feet. In the third and fourth images, *Flight* and *Surrender*, Jones is barefoot, stripped of his uniform and posed in cowering fear.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

| Printed paper |
| **Winold Reiss** (American, born Germany, 1886-1953), New York, New York, book decorations and portraits, designer |
| Private Collection |

Winold Reiss, a prolific and talented white German émigré artist, graphic and interior designer, and teacher, brought attention to the Harlem Renaissance. The journal *Survey Graphic* commissioned Reiss to make portraits of the movers and shakers in the movement for a special issue, “Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro.” Alain Locke, the editor of the issue, used Reiss’s portraits again when Locke expanded it into an anthology in book form, *The New Negro*. The book by Locke, a philosopher and writer, became the manifesto of the Harlem Renaissance, or New Negro Movement, which sought to challenge racial stereotypes and promote integration by demonstrating the talents of educated African Americans.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
German-born Winold Reiss moved to the United States in 1913 and soon made a name for his skill in portraiture. In 1925, he was invited to contribute images for a special Harlem issue of the magazine *Survey Graphic* edited by Alain Locke (1885-1954), a leading intellect of African-American thought and culture. Reiss drew pastel portraits, including this one, of notable figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

Mrs. Sari Price-Patton was social secretary to A’lelia Walker, daughter of Madame C.J. Walker, creator of the multimillion-dollar empire of hair care products for African American women. A’lelia hosted artists and society types, from both uptown and downtown, overseen by Patton. Reiss depicts her as reserved and quietly stylish. The young woman sports the latest in bobbed haircuts and her black dress is adorned with geometric ruffles of a yellow fabric. A visitor to A’lelia’s parties described Patton as having a manner of “stiff dignity.”

Mary E. Murray  
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

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*Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life Cover*, February 1925  
Printed paper  
Winold Reiss  
(American, born Germany, 1886-1953), designer  

Private Collection  
Winold Reiss designed a cover for *Opportunity* magazine that
incorporated an African mask and contemporary geometric design. *Opportunity*, the journal of the National Urban League, promoted and featured the literary and artistic work of African Americans.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

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Printed paper

**Winold Reiss** (American, born Germany, 1886-1953), New York, New York, book decorations and portraits, designer

Private Collection

Winold Reiss, a white German émigré who believed in the importance of diversity, designed and illustrated *The New Negro*. His portraits of prominent African Americans, sensitively executed without the period stereotypes, were exhibited in several venues including the 135th Street Harlem New York Public Library branch and the Utica Public Library Art Gallery in 1925.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Dan Mask**, 1935  
Pastel on sandpaper  
**Norman Lewis** (American, 1909-79)

Lewis’ artistic interests ranged widely, from European Modernism to illustration and, as a young painter, he visited the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) regularly as part of his self-education. In 1935, MoMA featured the exhibition *African Negro Art*, at which Lewis drew these masks. This image of the Dan mask is particularly vibrant, but in both drawings, Lewis captured the striking sculptural form and rich tones of wood in shadow and light.

On loan from Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, New York

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**Ivory Coast Baulé Mask**, 1935  
Pastel on paper  
**Norman Lewis** (American, 1909-79)

Lewis created this vivid image of an African mask from an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, which he visited regularly from his home in Harlem.

Lewis scholar, Ruth Fine, describes the artist’s worldview, shaped by his roots in Harlem, which informed his acute sense of style in every aspect of his experience, dress, art, music, and living environment; his commitment to community within both the sphere of art and a larger civic engagement; and his awareness of race both as an energizing and a discriminatory factor in the life of black Americans.
| Domestic Life & Home Entertainment | Lack of servants and smaller spaces dictated a new way of entertaining at home such as cocktail and bridge parties, and buffet dinners. The demands of modern living popularized easy-to-maintain aluminum and chrome serving pieces, instead of silver, and ceramic dinnerware, rather than fine porcelain. Implements for parties appeared including electric coffee urns, food warmers, and toasters. Repeal of Prohibition in 1933 initiated a demand for drinking paraphernalia. Increased smoking, especially among women, stimulated the market for accessories: ashtrays, cigarette boxes, lighters, match safes, and smoking stands. Almost universal access to electricity created a market for time saving appliances: refrigerators, irons, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, and indoor bathrooms. Electric radios and phonographs became staples of home entertainment. |

With the majority of Americans living in urban centers by the 1920s and the construction of high-rises to house them, apartment life became the norm. Exhibitions in museums and department stores in New York City, the epicenter of American progressive style, promoted modern domestic furniture and useful objects for living and entertaining in smaller informal spaces. Initially these designs for domestic use were in the Art Moderne or Skyscraper/Cubist styles, but, after the Depression set in, the emphasis shifted to mass-produced and affordable designs for homes, which were called “machines for living.” While earlier home goods reflected French influence, the new pared-down approach was mainly inspired by designs of the German Bauhaus and the European International Style. Some hard-hit progressive manufacturers, anxious to stimulate sales, hired newly minted industrial designers to provide modern attractive products at a reasonable price. | Lori Zabar, Guest Curator |
**Milkweed design for cretonne textile, 1929**
Gouache with charcoal on paper mounted on board

**Charles E. Burchfield** (American, 1893-1967) Buffalo, New York, designer  
**M. H. Birge & Sons Company** (1834-1982)  
Buffalo, New York, maker

Burchfield Penney Art Center, Gift of the Charles E. Burchfield Foundation, 1975, 1975.087.000

Artist Charles E. Burchfield, chief designer for M. H. Birge & Sons Company in Buffalo, designed wallpapers and coordinating textiles. *Milkweed* is a dynamic composition of white and poppy red flowers shooting down through a landscape of abstracted trees, leaves, birds, and wavy linear patterns. He was influenced by Japanese prints for this fabric design. It would have made for a lively upholstered sofa or armchair in a modern home interior. Burchfield later gained renown for his paintings of nature, which also demonstrated his inspiration from Japanese prints.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
"Manhattan" Cocktail Service,
designed 1934, introduced 1935
Chromium-plated brass

Norman Bel Geddes (American, 1893-1958)
New York, New York, designer
Revere Copper and Brass Inc.
(1801-present; in Rome, New York, 1928-present), Rome, New York, maker

Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903, Fund, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut 1982.31A-J

With the end of Prohibition in 1933, cocktail paraphernalia proliferated for home entertainment. Industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes created an abstracted Manhattan cityscape in his cocktail service: a skyscraper tower with set-back cap (shaker) towering over lower buildings (cups), located on the stepped island of Manhattan (tray). Ribs on the shaker and goblets provide visual interest and function as grips on the sleek gleaming chromium-plated surfaces. Revere Copper and Brass Inc. of Rome, New York, sold this machine-made ensemble as part of its affordable giftware line.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Footed Plate, 1928
Silver-plate

Albert F. Saunders (American, 1877-1964)
East Syracuse, New York, designer
T.N. Benedict Manufacturing Co. (1894-1953) East Syracuse, New York, maker

Collection of John C. Waddell

The year 1928 was a banner year for Cubist and skyscraper-inspired silver and silver-plate designs. While influenced by luxurious Art Moderne European examples, New York companies such as the T. N. Benedict Manufacturing Co. of East Syracuse strove to produce stylish affordable items for “the modern woman in her modern home.” For this silver-plate circular footed plate in Benedict’s Modernistic hollow-ware line, the designer Albert L. Saunders used stamped overlapping hatched and plain triangular forms; he applied winged handles to produce a Cubist-faceted object that looks like it is about to rotate or levitate on its own. Saunders, Chief Designer at Benedict from 1907 to 1946, received a number of patents for the Modernistic series he introduced in 1928.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Glass Vase, 1932
Glass

Walter Dorwin Teague (American, 1883-1960)
New York, New York, decoration designer

Frederick Carder (American, born England, 1863-1963), Corning, New York, form designer

Steuben Division (1903-present)
Corning Glass Works, Corning, New York, maker

Collection of John C. Waddell

In 1932, the Steuben Division of Corning Glass Works reorganized management to meet the challenge of marketing luxury goods in the Depression. The firm contracted with industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague to create a new image for the company. Inspired by contemporary European and especially Scandinavian pale and colorless glass, Teague devised a line of clear glass decorated with cutting or copper-wheel engraving in simple geometric designs geared to appeal to wealthy Americans. For a number of objects within the line, such as this vase, Teague used Classical forms previously designed by Steuben’s co-founder and former in-house designer Frederick Carder.

At this time Corning chemists invented a revolutionary pure lead crystal glass called 10M. It was the first glass to allow the full spectrum of light to pass through, including ultraviolet rays, providing a very high index of refraction to produce dazzling brilliance and unsurpassed clarity. Teague adopted 10M for much of his line and from Teague’s time onward virtually all Steuben glass was colorless, a material that became synonymous with Modernism. While Teague set Steuben on the path to Modernism, his designs did not sell well and his one-year contract was not renewed.
**Aluminum Pitcher**, ca. 1932
Spun aluminum, wood

**Russel Wright** (American, 1904-1976)
New York, New York, designer
**Russel Wright, Inc.**
(ca. 1930-1937, New York, New York), maker

Collection of John C. Waddell

The Depression stimulated designers and manufacturers to produce stylish machine-made goods attractive to the careful consumer. Russel Wright, in collaboration with his wife Mary, created and marketed dinnerware, furnishings, and accessories for informal home entertainment using inexpensive materials and innovative methods. As part of their Informal Serving Accessories line, Wright introduced spun aluminum serving pieces at the end of 1931. Aluminum was light; impervious to tarnish, peeling, or chipping; and easy to fabricate. He juxtaposed “cool” aluminum with “warm” accents such as wood, cork, and rattan.

Wright was a key player in making the aluminum object an icon of modernity by bringing utilitarian aluminum out of the kitchen and into the living and dining rooms. Mary Wright marketed the Informal Serving Accessories line with casual-themed parties and encouraged retailers to do the same in store displays: Sunday Night Supper, Midnight Snack, After Bridge, Porch Picnic, and Tennis Refreshments. Like a number of his contemporaries, Russel Wright signed and marked his designs as a means of creating a respected American brand.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Once in a While Napkins, 1934
Printed linen

Marguerita Mergentime (American, 1894-1941) New York, New York, designer
Glendale Linen Company
New York, New York (1930s-1944), maker

Loan from Virginia Bayer, Mergentime Family Archive, New York, New York

Marguerita Mergentime revolutionized the field of mass-produced table and bed linens. She introduced coordinating tablecloths, placemats, napkins, and printed bed sheets in bold colors and witty motifs often inspired by modern and folk art or contemporary culture. While designing napkins Mergentime took into account how they would look in various folded permutations on the matching or contrasting tablecloth.

Once in a While was one pattern among several she named with phrases from the libretto of Gertrude Stein’s operetta Four Saints in Three Acts. Mergentime was likely to have seen the opening performance at the Wadsworth Atheneum in February 1934. Mergentime’s Once in a While, asymmetrical and color-blocked like paintings in the De Stijl movement (the Dutch version of Cubism), and four other geometric table linens, were included in the 1934 Industrial Arts Exposition held at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Desk Lamp, 1933
Chrome-plated steel, brass

Gilbert Rohde (American, 1894-1944)
New York, New York, designer
Mutual-Sunset Lamp Manufacturing Company, Inc. (1910-93),
Brooklyn, New York, maker

John C. Waddell Collection, Gift of John C. Waddell, 2000, Lent by The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 2000.600.16

During the Depression, a number of companies contracted with industrial
designer Gilbert Rohde to entice consumers with new machine-made
products at affordable prices. Through exhibitions in New York City and
his own travel, Rohde was well aware of the tubular chrome-plated steel
furniture designed at the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany. His streamlined,
u-shaped, chrome-plated desk lamp made of tubular metal parts seems
about to take off for flight. It made its debut in Rohde’s Design for Living
House at the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. Rohde
was one of the first New York-based designers to bring modern design to
national manufacturers such as the Heywood-Wakefield Company and
Herman Miller Furniture Company.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Lounging Pajamas**, 1934-35  
Silk satin weave

**Jessie Franklin Turner** (American, 1881-1956) designer and maker

Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence  
Anonymous gift, 56.013

Jessie Franklin Turner, active in her own business from 1922 to 1942, helped to establish an American style identity. At a time when many New York couturiers still looked to Paris for cues, *Vogue* was of the opinion that Turner stood apart, rejecting any design influence from the style center. A renowned colorist, Turner’s use of vertical color blocking, a modern art trend, accentuated the long, leggy lines of fashionable 1930s clothing.

Turner was an internationally influential designer of garments for ease and leisure, such as negligées and tea gowns; the latter was her specialty. Increasing cultural attention on relaxation, leisure, and informality helped to popularize the lounging pajama as a stylish ensemble for at-home entertaining. By the beginning of the 1930s, variations on the pajama were also beginning to venture outside the home to sites of recreation, like the beach, or to informal dinners with friends.

Jennifer Farley Gordon, Ph.D., Fashion Historian
Prong Vase, ca. 1930
Translucent green and alabaster lead glass; blown, tooled, and applied

Frederick Carder (American, born England, 1863-1963), designer
Steuben Division, Corning Glass Works
Corning, New York (1903-present), maker


The hand-blown Prong vase, designed by Frederick Carder, was available in varied numbers of “prong” flower-holders. The triangular-shaped prongs formed a dynamic sunray pattern popular in the early modern period. Frederick Carder, director at Steuben in Corning, New York, from 1903 to 1932 and then art director at Corning Glass Works until 1959, invented over 100 new glass colors and numerous innovative techniques for handcrafted art glass that rivaled Louis Comfort Tiffany’s. Carder introduced the translucent colors green and alabaster in the 1920s.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Bowl, ca. 1934**  
Earthenware  

**Ilonka Karasz** (American, born Hungary 1896-1981)  
New York, New York, designer  
**Buffalo China** (1901-2003)  
Buffalo, New York, maker


Ilonka Karasz arrived in New York City in 1913 from Hungary; in New York she became an important member of the progressive émigré design community centered on German émigré Winold Reiss and his art school in Greenwich Village. Her training at the Royal School of Arts and Crafts in Budapest enabled her to design in a wide range of media.

While employed by the Buffalo China Company from 1934 to 1937, she designed this bowl as part of the “Lamelle” pattern available in a variety of solid colors and in white with linear decoration. Exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's contemporary American industrial art show in 1934, the shapes of the simple solid color pieces in the “Lamelle” line showed the influence of Hungarian folk art on Karasz's mass-produced designs. But the wavy lines connecting the figures and flowers on this bowl evoke the flowing movement of the Streamline style. While working for Buffalo China, Karasz created two china patterns for the Broadway Limited, the Pennsylvania Railroad's deluxe train from New York to Chicago.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Cigarette Box**, patented 1935
"Textolite" plastic, chrome-plated steel


**General Electric Plastics Department**
(1930-2004), General Electric (1892-present), Schenectady, New York, maker

Gift of Patricia E. Kane, Ph. D. 1987, and W. Scott Braznell, Art. A. 1967
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, 2001.126.10

Early plastics mimicked natural materials. By the 1920s they were used in household objects for their own aesthetic qualities. In 1930, General Electric in Schenectady founded a Plastics Department headed by Edward C. Sloan. The company produced a series of boxes in its trademark Textolite plastic that it marketed jointly with tobacco and perfume companies. For Brown-Williamson Tobacco Corporation, GE made an elegant Classical-style demi-lune cigarette container with Streamlined radiating and vertical line molded ornament for home display and use.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Born in New York City, and after decades of honing their outrageous comedy skills nationally on vaudeville stages, The Marx Brothers returned to New York and became the toast of Broadway in 1924 when they starred in the madcap musical revue, “I’ll Say She Is.” The success of this show led to the creation of the musical comedies, “The Cocoanuts” (1925-26) and “Animal Crackers” (1928-29) written by noted playwright and satirist George S. Kaufman.

As the 1920s were coming to a close, New York was the center of the growing film industry. Paramount Studios in Astoria, Queens, was home to major silent film stars Rudolph Valentino, Gloria Swanson, and the Gish Sisters.

With the advent of talking pictures, Paramount was eager to draw from the wealth of talent on nearby Broadway, and signed the Marx Brothers to film adaptations of their popular Broadway shows. “The Cocoanuts,” released in 1929, was filmed during the day as “Animal Crackers” was performed on Broadway during the evening. Following the close of the stage play, “Animal Crackers” was filmed and released to rave reviews on September 6, 1930, becoming the fourth most popular film at the U.S. box office for that year. The Brothers then moved to Hollywood for the remainder of their career after revolutionizing stage and screen comedy in New York.

*One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas
How he got in my pajamas, I don’t know.*
—Groucho Marx, *Animal Crackers.*
New York City was the center of the fledgling movie industry during the “Silent Era.” In 1920, Adolph Zukor opened a film studio in Astoria, Queens that became the New York home of Paramount Pictures. Here they produced over 120 silent and “talkie” films. Claudette Colbert, Edward G. Robinson, and Tallulah Bankhead made their talking movie debuts in films made at the Astoria studio. The Marx Brothers transferred their talents from Broadway to the screen in Astoria, where they filmed their first two movies: *The Cocoanuts* (1929) and *Animal Crackers* (1930).

The movies introduced many Americans to cutting-edge interior design. Popular films depicted luxurious versions of modernism in urban New York penthouses, swank bathrooms, nightclubs, hotels, executive suites, and ocean liners. Especially during the Depression, audiences enjoyed escaping into a fantasy of privilege. No other medium provided as effective a means of promoting modern design.

*Joe Schmidt, Director of Marketing and Communications*
The Cotton Club presents Rhythmania: “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea” by Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler Sheet Music, 1931

Mills Music Publishers, New York, New York, maker

Printed paper

From the Estate of David A. Sinnott

In 1923, notorious New York bootlegger and gangster Owney Madden opened the Cotton Club at 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue in Manhattan’s Harlem district as a venue to sell his illegal beer to the Prohibition crowds. Though entertainment featured African-American jazz artists, it was a “whites-only” club and black performers were not allowed to mix with the club’s clientele.

Musical revues at the Cotton Club helped launch the careers of many legendary artists including Duke Ellington, whose orchestra served as the house band from December 1927 to June 1931. *Rhythmania* was Ellington’s first revue at the club and featured vocalist Adelaide Hall. Ellington received national exposure through broadcasts over New York radio stations. Eventually, in deference to a request by Ellington, the Cotton Club slightly relaxed its policy of excluding black customers.

*Joe Schmidt, Director of Marketing and Communications*
## The Machine Age & Streamlining

Between the World Wars, science and industry produced a new age of machinery that transformed American life: electricity for almost every home; household machines for cooking and cleaning; fast communications including widespread telephones, radios, and motion pictures; and high speed transportation, especially automobiles. Machines became symbolic of Modernism. During this period, often called the Machine Age, the appearance of manufactured goods reflected the sleek, impersonal forms of industrial products and components such as wheels and cogs.

As the Depression deepened, designers shifted from custom-made objects to mass-produced designs. Companies, anxious to reverse diminishing sales, hired industrial designers to create attractive modern designs. New materials, such as Bakelite, Formica, and chrome-plated metals, played a large role in the production of affordable furniture and household accessories. Often new designs were in streamlined forms that reflected recent scientific experiments in reducing wind resistance in vehicles such as cars, airplanes, ocean liners, trains, and other high-speed modes of transportation. This facet of Modernism was called the Streamlined Style or Streamlining. Many manufacturers in New York State produced innovative objects in new materials during in the Machine Age and Streamlined Styles.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Almost all Americans had access to electricity except for those living on farms by the late 1920s. In 1932, Niagara Hudson, the nation’s largest utility company, completed its headquarters in Syracuse, New York, to serve the “Great Corridor” of industry from Buffalo to Albany. The building is now occupied by National Grid and known as the Niagara Mohawk Building. The architects expressed its purpose through its steel-framed, stepped-back, ziggurat form clad in brick, black Vitrolite (pigmented structural glass), and chrome. The building rises up seven stories to a central tower adorned by “The Spirit of Light,” a chrome sculpture fabricated in Buffalo, and a dramatic indirect lighting program. It continues to be an outstanding example of Art Deco architecture and a
symbol of the Age of Electricity. In the lobby, four Vitrolite glass sandblasted murals by Ettlinger Co. of Buffalo dynamically depict aspects of the energy industry: “Illumination,” “Transmission,” “Generation,” and “Gas.”

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>&quot;Normandie&quot; Pitcher</strong>, 1935</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chromium-plated brass</td>
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**Peter Müller-Munk** (born Germany, American 1904-67), New York, New York, designer

**Revere Copper and Brass Inc.** (1801-present; in Rome, New York, 1928-present), Rome, New York, maker

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Matthew Newman in honor of Patricia E. Kane’s twenty-fifth anniversary at the Yale University Art Gallery

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut 1994.81.1

The lavish *Normandie* French ocean liner arrived in New York City on her maiden voyage in June 1935. Less than three months later, Revere Copper and Brass, Inc. in Rome, New York, introduced the “Normandie” pitcher by silversmith and industrial designer Peter Müller-Munk. Although Revere claimed the shape was inspired by the *Normandie’s* leaning smokestacks, Müller-Munk’s pitcher looks more like the ship’s innovative prow, which tapered to a dramatic point. Its shiny chromium body and aerodynamic teardrop shape further evokes speed and movement, the key elements of the Streamline style. Such machine-
made sleek, simple forms without ornament reveal the influence of the Bauhaus in Germany and the International Style in architecture (the latter introduced to America by a Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1932).

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

**Plate for the S.S. Leviathan**, 1930  
Porcelain

**Lee Schoen** (American, 1907-94)  
New York, New York, designer  
**Onondaga Pottery Company** (1879-1966) Syracuse, New York, maker

Purchased with a gift from Dr. and Mrs. Matthew Newman  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut 1992.99.1

Architect Eugene Schoen designed the nightclub on the American ocean liner S.S. Leviathan. During Prohibition American ships were “dry,” losing business to European lines. To attract passengers, Schoen created a dramatically vibrant *Club Leviathan* for which his son Lee designed coordinating linens and tableware. Lee’s plate had a spare asymmetrical design with central abstracted ship at sail motif and wavy lines of water on the rim; the design reveals the simplicity and forward motion of the Streamline Style. Streamlining celebrated the speed and glamour of travel on ocean liners and trains.

Onondaga Pottery Company produced its “Syracuse China” pure white vitreous porcelain for hotels and restaurants.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Coquette Lamp**, copyright 1934 (back right)
Chromium-plated brass, black satin copper, glass

**Norman Bel Geddes** (American, 1893-1958)
New York, New York, designer
**Revere Copper and Brass, Inc.** (1801-present; Rome, New York, 1928-present), maker

Collection of Michael and Christine Hoke, Rome, New York

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**“Masque” Lamp**, ca. 1936 (back left)
Chromium-plated brass

**Helen Dryden** (American, 1882-1972)
New York, New York, designer
**Revere Copper and Brass, Inc.** (1801-present; Rome, New York, 1928-present), maker

Collection of Michael and Christine Hoke, Rome, New York
**Saturn Ashtray**, ca. 1936 (front)
Chromium-plated brass, copper, Bakelite

**Revere Copper and Brass Inc.**
(1801-present; Rome, New York, 1928-present)
Rome, New York, maker

Collection of Michael and Christine Hoke, Rome, New York

The Mohawk Valley location of Revere Copper and Brass, Inc. has a long history of metal manufacturing. To stimulate sales during the Depression, Revere commissioned popular freelance industrial designers to create eye-catching affordable and functional giftware with a modern sensibility. In Norman Bel Geddes’s saucy Coquette Lamp of an abstracted flirting woman, the “eyes” are clips to hold the “hat” shade onto the frosted glass globe above the ruffled “collar.” Helen Dryden, one of the best-known female industrial designers, created a lamp with a face like a Modigliani painting or an African mask. The tilting Saturn planet ashtray includes a central cigarette holder that flips down to discard the ashes and cigarette butts into the non-flammable Bakelite base.

*Lori Zabar, Guest Curator*
Skyscraper Radio, 1931-33
Plaskon (plastic), metal, glass

John Gordon Rideout (American, 1898-1951) and
Harold L. van Doren (American, 1895-1957), designers
Air-King Products Company, Brooklyn, New York (ca. 1931-present),
maker

Purchased with funds given by Walter Foundation, Brooklyn Museum,
85.9

Radio was the chief form of home entertainment during the Jazz Age and
the Depression, bringing news, music, fiction, and advertising to
American living rooms and parlors. By 1925, there were 2.75 million
receivers and by 1930, 12 million people owned radios. At the time of its
introduction, the Air-King Skyscraper radio was among the first all-plastic
molded radio cabinets in America and the largest. Instead of using wood,
radio makers turned to molded plastic for its low cost and ease of
manufacture. Unlike Bakelite, which was mainly black or brown because
it was hard to produce in color, Plaskon, a newly developed lightweight
plastic introduced in 1931, could be made in an assortment of colors.
This machine for domestic entertainment incorporates several themes of
the period: Skyscraper form, Egyptian Revival ornament, Machine Age
material, and Streamline ribbed bas-relief detail.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
Table, 1927-31
Bakelite and extruded aluminum

Donald Deskey (American, 1894-1989)
New York, New York, designer
Deskey-Vollmer, Inc. (1927-31)
New York, New York, maker


Exposure to the art world in Paris, the Bauhaus in Germany, and the Paris Exposition of 1925 helped transform American architect, artist, and designer Donald Deskey into a pivotal figure in American Modernism. With his design partner Philip Vollmer, he ran Deskey-Vollmer, Inc., a small manufacturing company and gallery that produced furniture, lighting, and screens, often experimenting with new industrial materials.

Deskey’s use of Bakelite for the top and base of this table was not only fashionable but solved the maintenance problems of a new social activity—the cocktail party, popular despite Prohibition. Bakelite resisted cigarette burns and withstood alcoholic beverages. In the 1930s, Deskey and his contemporaries used extruded aluminum, often combined with Bakelite and other industrial materials to create simple yet bold ensembles. Despite terrific press coverage, the Deskey-Vollmer line may have been too progressive and was not a commercial success.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Side Chair**, ca. 1935
Aluminum, leatherette, rubber

**Warren McArthur** (American, 1885-1961)
Rome, New York, designer

**Warren McArthur Corporation** (1930-1948)
Rome, New York (1933-1936), Rome, New York, maker

Modernism Benefit Fund, Brooklyn Museum, 1990.95

Warren McArthur invented and patented a line of modular, tubular, lightweight, anodized-aluminum furniture that could be manufactured, assembled, or disassembled inexpensively. Discouraged by his lack of sales in Los Angeles, in 1933 he and a few craftsmen moved to Rome, New York, where two officers in the Rome Co., a metal bed and furniture manufacturer, provided him with financial backing, a retail and wholesale outlet, a building, and raw materials.

McArthur created and popularized an original American aluminum version of European International Style tubular steel furniture originally devised by Europeans such as Marcel Breuer, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier. As in this side chair, McArthur’s interchangeable, standardized, tubular parts were connected by circular washers and usually sat on black circular pads. Anodized aluminum does not tarnish or corrode, making it suitable for indoors and out. His sleek Machine Age designs were particularly popular for hotels, restaurants, trains, and ocean liners.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Standing Floor Lamp**, ca. 1928
Brushed chromium over brass, iroé

**Walter von Nessen** (American, born Germany 1889-1943), New York, New York, designer

**Nessen Studio, Inc.** (1927-54)
New York, New York, maker

Collection of Mark McDonald, Ltd., Hudson, New York

Trained as an architect in Berlin, émigré Walter von Nessen was a pioneer of modern lighting design. He combined the classical torchère form with Machine Age aesthetic triple cone shade and metal disk ornament in chromium-plated base metal. This was one of the earliest adaptations of chromium-plated base metal for domestic use; the process had become commercially available only in 1924. Borrowing from indirect lighting design in theaters, von Nessen’s floor lamp created dramatic effect by bouncing light off the ceiling.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

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**The Machine Age Exposition**, May 16-28, 1927
Cover of Catalogue (enlarged)

**Fernand Léger** (1881-1955)

The Machine Age Exposition in May 1927, held at 119 West 57th Street in Manhattan, introduced New Yorkers to the interconnected relationships between current international architecture, engineering, industrial arts, and modern arts.

Artist Louis Lozowick assisted in organizing the 1927 *Machine Age Exposition* and wrote an essay for it, “The Americanization of Art.” Below is an excerpt:
The history of America is a history of stubborn and ceaseless effort to harness the forces of nature. . . of gigantic engineering feats and colossal mechanical construction . . .

The dominant trend in America of today . . . is towards order and organization which find their outward sign and symbol in the rigid geometry of the American city: in the verticals of its smokestacks, in the parallels of its car tracks, the squares of its streets, the cubes of its factories, the arc of its bridges, the cylinders of its gas tanks.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

**Psychological Abstract Portrait of Ted Shawn**, 1929
Oil on canvas

**Katherine Dreier**
American (1877-1952)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Purchased in honor of the Museum's current and former docents, 96.29

Ted Shawn (1891-1972) was a pioneer of modern dance in the United States. The founder of Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival in western Massachusetts, Shawn believed that “dance communicates man’s deepest, highest, and most truly spiritual thoughts and emotions far better than words, spoken or written.” Katherine S. Dreier was a pioneer in her own way. She organized exhibitions and lectures to introduce United States audiences to European avant-garde art. In addition to being a curator, Dreier was also a painter. In keeping with the abstract themes of dance and spirit, Dreier here used abstract forms and symbolic colors to capture the dynamism of Shawn’s modern dance.
Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

*Louis Lozowick*, 1929
Gelatin silver print

**Ralph Steiner** (American, 1899-1986)

*Hudson Bridge*, 1929
Lithograph on paper

**Louis Lozowick**
American (1892-1973)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute. Gift of Edward W. Root, 53.336

Louis Lozowick and Howard Cook were two of many artists who were enthralled by the George Washington Bridge, an engineering marvel when it opened in 1931 and an aesthetic marvel still. At the time, it was twice as long—at 3,500 feet—as any existing suspension bridge.

When Lozowick created his image, the Bridge’s towers were in place but the span and roadbed had not yet been built. Lozowick placed the impressive structure within the context of other means of modern transportation, the locomotive and the airplane. Train and plane here, though, seem dwarfed in comparison.

Mary E. Murray
Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
**Brooklyn Bridge**, 1930
Lithograph on paper

**Louis Lozowick**
American (1892-1973)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Gift of Edward W. Root, 53.332

The Brooklyn Bridge links lower Manhattan to Brooklyn across the East River. Designed by John Roebling, a Prussian immigrant, the Bridge has become an iconic symbol of American engineering and ingenuity. Its handsome Gothic arches and elegant span have inspired artists since its opening in 1883.

Artist Louis Lozowick assisted in organizing the 1927 *Machine Age Exposition* and wrote an essay for it, “The Americanization of Art.” Below is an excerpt:

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Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
**New Hudson Bridge**, 1931
Lithograph on paper

**Howard N. Cook**
American (1901-80)

Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Gift of Edward W. Root, 53.256

While Louis Lozowick's image of the George Washington Bridge emphasizes its towering height as seen from afar, Howard Cook placed the viewer on a platform at the Manhattan end of the span. We, with the woman in the foreground, can admire the impressive engineering of the cables and riveted beams, the expanse of the road, and the great distance to the Hudson River below. How small the passing boat seems.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
George Washington Bridge, 1933
Gelatin silver print

Margaret Bourke-White (American, 1904-71)

George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, museum accession
**March of the Dynamos (Hydro-Generators, Niagara Falls Power Company), 1928**
Toned gelatin silver print

**Margaret Bourke-White** (American, 1904-71)

George Eastman Museum, Rochester, New York, museum accession

Margaret Bourke-White was fascinated by the operations of factories, which she felt were well suited for her modern medium, stating: “there is power and vitality in industry that makes it magnificent for photography.”

In fact, Bourke-White’s modernist photographs helped create a taste for machine aesthetics. Hired by corporations and publishers such as Henry Luce (for *Fortune* magazine), Bourke-White created images that captured the beauty in industrial engineering and architecture. She emphasized the rhythm of patterns—sometimes, as she does here, to the point of abstraction.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
Portable Phonograph, RCA Victor Special, Model M, ca. 1935
Aluminum, chromium-plated steel, velvet, and plastic

John Vassos (American, born Romania, 1898-1985), New York, case designer
Alfred Weiland (American, 1887-1975) and
Selden T. Williams (American, 1892-1983) mechanism designers
RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc.
(1901-present), New York, New York

John C. Waddell Collection, Gift of John C. Waddell, B.A. 1959, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut 2010.158.2

Radio broadcasts of the latest jazz, songs, and dance crazes spurred listeners to purchase records of their favorites for home entertainment. In 1935, in-house designer John Vassos at Radio Corporation of America (RCA) encased new technology in a zippy streamlined portable phonograph, enabling users to listen and dance on picnics and rural vacation homes in locations without electricity. All one had to do was raise the cover of the shiny, lightweight, aluminum case—detailed like a speeding automobile—and crank up the mechanism that operated a turntable for the records stored in the chromium-plated sleeve provided on the other side. Industrial designer Vassos created a corporate identity for RCA over 43 years by designing their products, logos, and offices.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator
**Kodak Baby Brownie Camera**, July 1934  
Bakelite, metal, glass

**Walter Dorwin Teague** (American, 1883-1960), New York, New York, designer  
**Eastman Kodak Company** (established 1892) Rochester New York, maker

Gift of Eastman Kodak Company  

With the *Baby Brownie*, industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague met Kodak’s challenge to design an inexpensive yet stylish camera to compete with other low-priced domestic and foreign cameras on the market. A small, light, compact box in chic black Bakelite with streamlined ribs housed the entire works, including a pop-up viewfinder. It was Kodak’s first injection-molded plastic camera. Teague received and assigned to Kodak a patent for the innovative Bakelite casing. He believed that designing primarily for sales led to unsatisfactory work while designing according to engineering requirements produced greater beauty and better sales. From the time of its founding in 1892, Kodak made a line of affordable point-and-shoot Brownies easy enough for a child to use.

Lori Zabar, Guest Curator

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**City of the Future, Panel II**, ca. 1935-36  
Oil on canvas

**Winold Reiss**  
(American, born Germany, 1886-1953)
Longchamps restaurants were popular dining establishments for a middle-class clientele. The chain charged comparatively affordable prices and was renowned for their chic décor, to which artist Winold Reiss contributed.

Reiss designed the *City of the Future* murals for the Longchamps in the Continental Building at 1450 Broadway. This is one of three panels in the composition that is characterized by stylized, forward-looking architecture, engineering, and transportation, painted in a dazzling palette. During the Great Depression, the promise of a bright and prosperous tomorrow created an uplifting environment for diners.

Mary E. Murray
MWPAI Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art