

*Subject to Change: Art and Design in the 20th Century*, June 25, 2012–November 18, 2012

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Vienna Knit Art, manufacturer  
Austrian  
A. & L. Tirocchi, dressmaker  
American, 1913-1947  
*Sport suit*, ca. 1928  
Wool; machine knit  
Gift of L. J. Cella III 1990.129.63

The multicolored patterned knit “skyscraper” motif of this sport suit links the modernist aesthetic in art with the contemporary “sportif” ideal of femininity. By the late 1920s, new fabrics, predominantly knits, and radically different shapes appeared in casual clothing designed for sport and leisure activities. From Hollywood to the South of France, the modern woman was living publicly more than ever before. Film and fashion magazines captured the stylish elite looking glamorous, insouciant, and altogether adventurous in their sport suits, pants, playsuits, and culottes. The Tirocchi dressmaking shop acquired this knit ensemble from Europe and would have sold it to their stylish and elite Providence clientele.



Japanese  
A. & L. Tirocchi, dressmaker, retailer  
American, 1913-1947  
*Length with Pattern of Triangles*, ca. 1920  
Rayon and gold metallic thread; jacquard weave  
Gift of L. J. Cella III 1990.129.72

The narrow width of this cloth suggests that it was woven in Japan, while the bold lamé Jazz Age triangle pattern and the fact that it was sold at Providence’s A. and L. Tirocchi shop indicate that it was made for the Western market. With the opening of Japan to the West in the mid-19th century, European and American artists, including Frank Lloyd Wright (see the desk and stained-glass nearby), embraced Japanese aesthetics and its purely decorative elements into their work. Likewise, Japanese artists began incorporating European Art Deco forms such as the dynamic crystalline geometry seen here into



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their designs for both the domestic and foreign markets. Commerce and artistic influences flowed between East and West, especially as Japanese manufacturers took advantage of their weaving expertise to market their luxury fabrics in Europe and America.

Nigerian; Yoruba

*Woman's wrapper cloth*, mid-late 1900s

Cotton; plain weave, stitch resist printed (adire alabere)

Gift of John Davis Hatch in honor of Olivia Eggleston Phelps Stokes

1991.013.23



The pattern of otherworldly hand imprints on this textile was created by stitching the outlines of the motif with raffia thread, which prevented the deep blue indigo color from seeping into these areas when the cloth was immersed in the dye bath. A cloth like this would have been worn as a wrapped garment, instantly recognizable as a Yoruba woman's unique craftsmanship. Indigo-dyed adire (resist-dyed) cloth has been intensively traded across West Africa since the early 20th century, while the indigo dye itself—a symbol of wealth, abundance, and fertility—has a much longer history of trade and worldwide distribution. The late 20th century has seen interest in the adire art form spike farther afield, with Yoruba artisans teaching technique workshops across Europe and North America.

Abraham Walkowitz

American, 1878-1965

*Cityscape*, 1912

Charcoal on paper

Anonymous gift 1992.001.132

As a young artist studying at the Académie Julian in Paris in 1907, Abraham Walkowitz was surrounded by the Cubist innovations of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque (examples of which are on view in the adjacent room). Returning to New York, he embraced the style with his own inflection. In this work, a flurry of activity at street level is suggested by a flow of abstract marks through the canyon of skyscrapers. Sharp angles, calligraphic dashes, and v-shaped lines provide an impressionistic, energetic description of a dynamic city.



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Hiroshi Sugimoto  
Japanese, b. 1948  
*Tyrrhenian Sea, Scilla*, 1980  
Gelatin silver print  
Partial gift from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Barnett Fain  
2001.80.101

When Hiroshi Sugimoto moved to the United States from Japan in 1970 photographers were primarily capturing the fleeting imagery of street life. Interested instead in representing an extended sense of time through photography, he looked to serial and systematic methods being used in Minimalist sculpture and Conceptual art. This picture of the Italian sea is from a series of long exposures of sky and water where the horizon line is always at the center of the picture—a modest plan that has yielded a highly varied body of work dependent on the light, water, air, and atmosphere. “Mystery of mysteries,” Sugimoto writes, “water and air are right there before us in the sea. Every time I view the sea, I feel a calming sense of security, as if visiting my ancestral home; I embark on a voyage of seeing.”

Manuel Alvarez Bravo  
Mexican, 1902-2002  
*The Stations (Las Estaciones)*, 1940  
Gelatin silver print  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 2002.63

This image, like many of Manuel Álvarez Bravo's photographs made in the 1930s and '40s, is graphically strong yet exudes an air of mystery. We want to know more about the young woman who gazes down from the train window and her relationship to the unseen figure whose hand grasps the frame. The type of train pictured here is an icon of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), haunted by the soldiers and their female traveling companions Bravo would have grown up seeing. Yet the confident expression of the young traveler in the window appropriates the train for a new generation.



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El Lissitzky  
Russian, 1890-1941  
Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky, poet  
Russian, 1893-1930  
R.S.F.S.R. State Publishing House, Moscow-Berlin  
Russian  
*For the Voice (Dlia golosa)*, 1923  
Construction-paper cover, letterpress text, illustrations, and  
typographic designs  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2006.92.1

El Lissitzky, too, was a convert to Malevich's revolutionary use of total abstraction to express the spirit of the new Soviet society. He built on Malevich's flat, geometric shapes in an attempt to bridge painting and architecture. *For the Voice* is a book of thirteen poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky that Lissitzky set into a dynamic design he hoped would provoke readers to recite aloud and spread their provocative content. Lissitzky liked to call himself an architect of the page; he created this design using only the elements in the compositor's type-case: letters, rules, bars, bullets, and so on. A tour-de-force of hand typesetting, the design was executed by a Berlin typesetter who did not know Russian.

Leo Narducci, designer  
1932  
*Dress*, 1969  
Wool, metal studs; jersey knit, appliqué  
Gift of the artist 2010.38.2

RISD Apparel graduate Leo Narducci has had many successes in the fashion industry since his start in the early 1960s. A few months out of college, he secured a design job for the sportswear firm Loomtogs, a position that put him at the center of New York's fashion industry.

Just a few years later, in 1965, he won the prestigious Coty American Fashion Critics' Award. Narducci presented this striking metal-studded, double-knit wool dress as part of his Fall 1969 collection, which featured a group of wool jerseys that originated from Providence's own Lebanon Knitting Mills. This particular piece came down the runway as the finale for the show.



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Kiki Smith  
American, b. Germany, b. 1954  
*Bird*, 1998  
Etching on paper and glassine  
Gift of Glenn Gissler 2011.110.41

In the early 1990s Kiki Smith turned her attention from visceral sculptures and works on paper relating to the human body to the natural world. "I started to notice all these images from around the world of bird-humans," she stated in an interview, "how birds become stand-ins for souls, that our identity is deeply, sometimes tragically connected with the natural world. So I began making bird sculptures." This piece displays her experimental approach to materials and processes by transforming an etching into three dimensions with the addition of a gently folded transparent wing.

Edward Steichen  
American, 1879-1973  
*William Merritt Chase, from the journal Camera Work, April 1906*,  
1906  
Photogravure on paper  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott Burns 2011.111.1

Edward Steichen's portrait of William Merritt Chase, with his distinguished silhouette in top hat and coat, captures the American Impressionist painter's reputation for charismatic flamboyance. The artist's hand and self-assured expression are highlighted within a dark, soft-focus ground typical of such Pictorialist works, which reacted against the mass-produced objects of the industrial age. Here, great care was taken to craft the photogravure from the artist's negative and beautifully mount it on Japanese paper for the small circulation journal *Camera Work*, where this photograph first appeared.

Rifat Ozbek, designer  
1953  
Ozbek, design house  
1984 - 2008  
*Jacket from the "White Voodoo" collection, Spring/Summer 1998*  
Nylon, plastic sequins; appliqué  
Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 2011.47

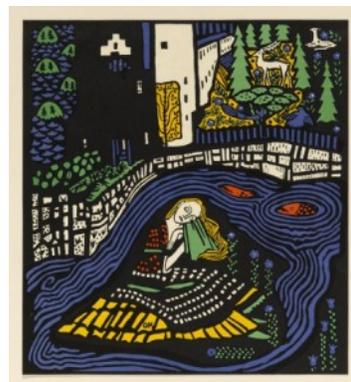
Rifat Ozbek, a self-declared anthropologist of fashion, is known for combining global design influences in his collections. Naomi Campbell wore a version of this jacket on the runway when it was presented in 1998 at Ozbek's first presentation in New York. He titled the collection "White Voodoo." Quite a literal exploration of the theme,

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the jacket's vivid and densely sequined imagery is closely based—in technique, color, and pattern—on the vodou flags made as temple banners in Haiti that beckon the good will of particular deities. In the jacket we see the checkered heart shape of Ezili, the goddess of love, and Bosou, the three-horned bull, a spiritual “body guard” often invoked for protection.

Oskar Kokoschka  
Austrian, 1886-1980  
Wiener Werkstätte, publisher  
Austrian, 1903-1932  
*Untitled, , plate one from the portfolio The Dreaming Boys (Die Traumenden Knaben), 1908*  
Color linocut on cream paper  
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 24.486.1

In 1907 Fritz Wärndorfer, the financial backer of the Wiener Werkstätte, the leading design workshop in Vienna, commissioned Oskar Kokoschka, then a student at Vienna's Kunstgewerbeschule (School of decorative arts), to make an illustrated fairytale for his children. Instead, Kokoschka created a haunting story of awakening adolescent sexuality set on far-off islands, away from the modern city. The flat bright colors and sharp black outlines are in keeping with the ornamental style favored by Viennese textile designers at the time (see example at left). This image of a sleeping woman served as the title page, its dreamy, fantastical quality setting the tone for the rest of the book's illustrations.



Richard Neutra  
American, b. Austria, 1892-1970  
*Interior Perspective (Music Room) of the John Nicholas Brown "Windshield" House, 1936-1938*  
Diaz print with colored pencil and graphite  
Gift of the Richard J. Neutra Office 39.142.10

Richard Neutra's design for Windshield House—a summer home on New York's Fishers Island—exemplifies the International Style of modernist architecture. Associated with the German Bauhaus school, whose founder Walter Gropius called him a “lonely pioneer” of modernism in America, Neutra subscribed to the purist belief that a modernist building must be functional and unornamented. Here he adheres to the style's technical precision, expression of structure, lightening of mass, and incorporation of brand-new products, such as aluminum windows, linoleum, and Buckminster Fuller's one-piece Dymaxion bathroom. Weeks after Neutra's house for the John Nicholas Brown family was completed in 1938, it was severely damaged by a hurricane. Rebuilt and occupied by the Brown family



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until 1959, it was destroyed by fire in 1973.

H.R. Mallinson & Co., manufacturer

American, 1915-1937

*Franklin's Key to Electricity, from the "Early American Series", 1929*

Silk; plain weave, screenprinted

Gift of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities

57.083.100D

After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, American industry was forced to take stock of its own shortcomings in design. A campaign termed "Designed in America" was inaugurated by the clothing and textile industries. Silk fabric manufacturer H.R. Mallinson & Co., in New York City, was a prime force in the campaign, and the company's design team continued throughout the 1910s and 1920s to produce patterns that celebrated American cultural identity and the American national spirit. RISD has in its collections over a dozen different boldly designed patterns produced for the Early American print series of 1929. This series followed upon the enormous success of the American National Park series of 1926, Wonder Caves of America of 1927, and American Indian of 1928.



Carolyn Schnurer, designer

American, 1908 - 1998

*Day dress, 1955*

Cotton; plain weave, screenprinted

Gift of Design Laboratory, the Brooklyn Museum 61.095.3K

Carolyn Schnurer's cheerful printed dress exudes the uniquely American character of the New Casual mode of dressing that arose during the 1950s in response to the trends of outdoor living and aesthetic sportiness. Promoted by the designs of innovators like Charles and Ray Eames, the mid-century modernist designer couple from California, outdoor, informal events revolutionized how Americans thought about entertaining. Dress for such occasions was both practical and stylish, and the wearing of cotton lent a relaxed and playful tone to the era. Schnurer's cohesive textile and apparel designs flourished in this atmosphere, in which Americans sought an aesthetic free from the dictates of Europe. Her print patterns derived from many visits to the collections of the Museum of Natural History and Metropolitan Museums in New York, as well as extensive travels across the world.



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Rose Carraer-Eastman, dressmaker  
American, 1896 - 1940  
Rose Carraer, dressmaking firm  
ca. 1896-ca. 1940  
*Evening dress, ca. 1915*  
Silk, sequins; net, velvet, plain weave, appliqué  
Gift of the estate of Miss Ethel Merriman 68.108.23

When this confection of gossamer net, lush velvet, and dazzling sequins was made for Miss Ethel Merriman, Rose Carraer was one of the favored dressmakers to the wealthy women of Providence's East Side. Her birth name, Rose Carragher, appears among the practicing Providence dressmakers by 1896, and the 1900 City Directory indicates that she had set up shop in downtown Providence and had anglicized her name to Rose Carraer. This gown was made during the heyday of local dressmakers, skilled artisans who worked closely with their clients to carefully select the textiles that they would then craft into a perfectly balanced custom ensemble. Like many others, Rose Carraer turned to women's ready-to-wear after 1924, when the fashion for women changed from layered and draped dresses such as this one to a more simplified, and easily reproducible, silhouette.



Jim Dine  
American, b. 1935  
*This Sweet Sweet Baby, 1970-1971*  
Collage and mixed media on paper  
Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 71.070

Because Jim Dine brought objects from everyday life into his work, he is often associated with the Pop Art movement, yet Dine's work is more about his own life and memories. The heart repeated throughout this piece is a symbol he used frequently at that time to stand in for his wife. The pound note recalls the time he spent in London in the late 1960s. Perhaps the vegetables relate to an interest in gardening or remind him of supplies in his family's hardware stores. The cloth in the center seems to be his tool for the loose and energetic application of charcoal that is the ground for this collage—evidence of Dine's description of himself as "a student and child of Abstract Expressionism."



Vija Celmins  
American, b. 1939  
Cirrus Editions, Ltd., printer  
*Untitled Portfolio, 1975*  
Lithograph on handmade Twinrocker paper  
Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 75.110

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Vija Celmins has been creating highly detailed images of ocean waves, clouds, the night sky, and the desert floor since the early 1970s. Based on a black-and-white photograph, this lithograph's meticulous drawing slows our gaze, calling our attention to the varied design and brightness of each individually delineated star. When viewed overall, the image seems to stretch beyond the sheet in depth and expanse.

Aaron Siskind  
American, 1903-1991  
*Kentucky 13*, 1951  
Gelatin silver print  
Gift of Mr. Richard L. Menschel 77.146.23

This image of a chalk drawing isolated on a dark, rough surface is among Aaron Siskind's many photographs of walls and distressed surfaces that suggest the passage of time and human activity. On close inspection the marks are indecipherable but perhaps suggestive of the night sky. On more distant viewing the marks begin to suggest imagery—perhaps a child held between two adults—but they never fully resolve themselves, leaving interpretation open to the viewer.



Bonnie Cashin, designer  
American, 1915-2000  
Philip Sills & Co., manufacturer  
American, 1946 - 1977  
*Jacket and skirt ensemble*, 1967  
Wool, leather; plain weave  
Gift of Philip Sills 80.171.14A

This nubby blue-and-green woolen ensemble features the textured materials and uncluttered simplicity characteristic of the designs of California-born Bonnie Cashin. Espousing a minimalist sensibility in American fashion, Cashin created modern silhouettes distinguished by the juxtaposition of pure lines, layered compositions, and bold and unusual fabrics. For years Cashin worked with the innovative textile designer Dorothy Liebes, who defied, among other fashion taboos, the dressmaking dictum: "Blue and green must never be seen." Cashin's collaboration with the leather company Sills & Co., a relationship that lasted for more than twenty years, is evident in leather components and trim that accents the woven textiles of her ensembles.



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Vitaldi Babani, designer  
French, 1895 - 1940  
Babani, design label, retailer  
French, est. 1895  
*Tea gown, ca. 1920*  
Silk, metallic-wrapped yarn; velvet, embroidered  
Gift of Lorraine Howes 83.035.1

This tea gown, worn when luxuriating and entertaining in the privacy of one's own home, directly references the rich textiles, lavish surface decoration, and loose silhouette of Middle Eastern dress. Such garments were generally donned by adventurous women who, in shirking the constraints of the corset, found inspiration in the dress reforms advocated by their forebears who were part of the Aesthetic movement. The designer and importer Vitaldi Babani followed the model of the great oriental emporium Liberty of London by creating and selling designs such as this, as well as Middle Eastern and Eastern goods and textiles, and perfumes. Babani even developed a special sewing machine, the "Sphinxia," for applying metal thread chain-stitch embroidery like the decoration on this gown.

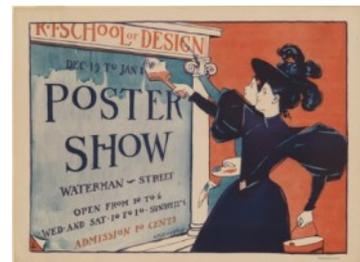


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Claire McCardell, designer  
American, 1905-1958  
Claire McCardell Clothes by Townley, design label  
American, est. 1940  
*Day dress*, ca. 1952  
Cotton  
Gift of Mrs. Warren Teixeira 85.173.3

Celebrated for her modernity and hailed as the creator of the "American Look," Claire McCardell championed comfort and function as her primary design criteria and simplified clothes in ways unheard of at the time. Made with no rigid understructure, this lightweight dress typifies her designs in its casual air, lack of extraneous decoration, and celebration of functional elements such as brass hook-and-eye closures and a wrap tie. McCardell entered the fashion industry when World War II, rationing, and a moratorium on travel to Paris limited the resources available to American designers. Despite such restrictions, McCardell radically altered the impression that one had to go to France for great fashion. From the start of her career, she wanted to design ready-to-wear or mass-produced clothes and championed unpretentious fabrics and unusual hardware for fastenings and hooks. Her clothes called for a new posture and relaxed attitude.

Sydney Richmond Burleigh  
American, 1853-1931  
Providence Lithograph Co., printer  
*RI School of Design Poster Show*, 1895  
Color lithograph on paper  
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke 96.068



László Moholy-Nagy  
American, b. Hungary, 1895-1946  
*Composition*, 1923  
Color lithograph  
Collection from Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Chazan TL83.2012

In 1922, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy—deeply influenced by Kazimir Malevich's Constructivist principles (see the plate at left)—promoted his views in the avant-garde journal *MA (Today)*. Constructivism, he wrote, "expresses the pure form of nature—the direct color, the spatial rhythm, the equilibrium of form. The new world of the masses needs Constructivism because it needs fundamentals that are without deceit. ... Constructivism is the socialism of vision." Moholy-Nagy made this design of overlapping rectilinear shapes for a portfolio

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presenting the work of the faculty of the Bauhaus, shortly after he took a teaching position at the influential German school of art, craft, and design.