

*Subject to Change: Art and Design in the 20th Century*, June 1, 2012-November 30, 2012

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

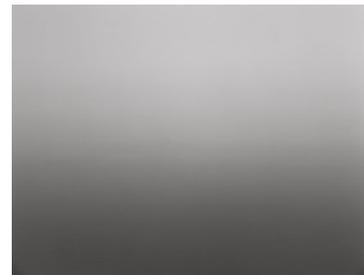
Abraham Walkowitz  
American, 1878-1965  
*Cityscape*, 1912  
Charcoal on paper  
Anonymous gift 1992.001.132

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.



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."



# RISD MUSEUM

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.



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

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 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.



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

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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.

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.

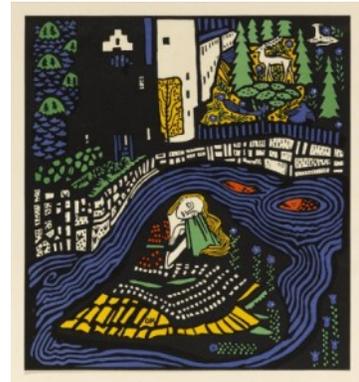
Edward Steichen  
American, 1879-1973  
*William Merritt Chase, , from the journal Camera Work, April 1906*1906  
Photogravure on paper  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott Burns 2011.111.1

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.

# RISD MUSEUM

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  
Diazo 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 until 1959, it was destroyed by fire in 1973.



# RISD MUSEUM

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, designer

American, b. 1939

Cirrus Editions, Ltd., printer

*Sky, from the portfolio Untitled Portfolio*, 1975

lithograph

Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 75.110.4

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.



# RISD MUSEUM

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

