

Subject to Change: Art and Design in the 20th Century, December 1, 2012-June 2, 2013

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Paul Strand
American, 1890-1976
Gateway, Hidalgo, from the The Mexican Portfolio, 1933
Photogravure on paper
Transfer from the RISD Library 1992.136.20

Paul Strand was in Mexico at the invitation of the Mexican government when he created this image, part of a portfolio of twenty photographs that in their sequence reflect a cinematic narrative of rural life through its people, architecture, religious objects, and land. In this image, Strand captures a gateway from the country's colonial past as a composition of light and shadow looming imposingly over a modest village structure in the background. He seems to convey how pre-revolutionary Mexico continued to haunt the landscape.



Aaron Siskind
American, 1903-1991
Chicago 42, 1952 (printed ca. 1980)
Gelatin silver print
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Chazan 1999.87.2.7

Aaron Siskind's photograph plays on the ambiguity between representation and abstraction, presenting a recognizable slice of the real world as a flat, repetitive pattern. He regularly sought out images in the environment that could read metaphorically; walls and distressed surfaces that reflect the passage of time and human activity were frequent subjects. Here the grid of painted and dripping marks read as text and seem to reflect a basic urge toward communication.



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Robert Rauschenberg
American, 1925-2008
Gemini G.E.L., printer
Earth Crust, from the series "Stoned Moon", 1969
Color lithograph on paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 1999.91.3

In 1969 Robert Rauschenberg attended the launch of the Apollo 11 that sent Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the moon. The technological marvel of space exploration penetrated the public imagination throughout the sixties, and Rauschenberg, an artist who had always been sensitive to the popular culture of the time, created a series of prints using NASA photographs, engineering diagrams and maps as a response to this defining experience of a generation. The series title, "Stoned Moon," refers to both the medium of lithography (a technique that uses limestone as its matrix), the mineral samples brought back by the astronauts, and the drug culture of the era.



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 shortly after he began teaching at the Bauhaus, 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



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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.

James Siena

American, b. 1957

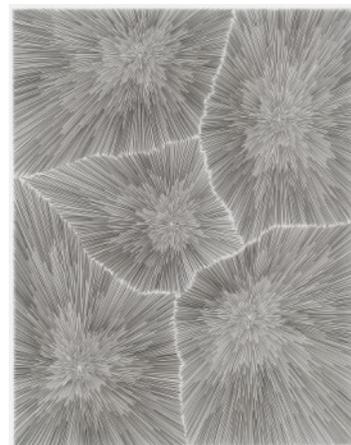
Harlan and Weaver Intaglio, publisher

No Man's Land, 2004

Engraving with light blue gampi chine colle on Magnani Pescia paper

Walter H. Kimball Fund 2010.10

James Siena's complex geometric abstractions are as much about the process of creating as they are about the final image. An initial idea dictates the structure the image will take, but the lines are intuitively positioned as the work progresses. For this engraving, he began with the center point at the image and created lines that radiated from that point, increasing the number of radiating lines as he moved further from the starting point toward the space between the lines radiating from the four other points. The title of the print, refers to the blank spaces between the clusters of lines. The crispness of the engraved line contributes to the optical sparkle of the composition



Mark Bradford

American, b. 1961

Untitled, from the series "Merchant Posters" 2007

Collage with sanding and scraping

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2010.43

Mark Bradford collects flyers, signs, and various advertisements to create collages that he describes as "paintings." He transforms his collected materials through layering, gluing and sanding, a process that can be seen as a metaphor for constant state of flux that the signs signal in his commerce-filled south Los Angeles neighborhood. The work is a part of the series, "Merchant Posters," which stems from his background as a third-generation merchant in a vibrant multiethnic community. The texts he brings to the foreground, in this piece "POLICIA" and "Auto Auction," often reflect the challenging cultural and political issues within the neighborhood.



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Vija Celmins
American, b. 1939
print, 1995
Offset lithograph on perforated paper
Gift of Glenn Gissler 2011.110.53

Vija Celmins's images often address limitless spaces: the surface of the ocean without a horizon, a starry sky, or outer space. The rectangular shape of the paper breaks the illusion of continuous space and artificially cuts out a slice of the boundlessness. The border's effect is heightened by the stamp format of this image: it repeats the rectangle over and over again in sharp contrast to the sphere of the planet and the shapelessness of space. The perforation between the repeats calls attention to the physical reality of the paper, and lets the paper become an extension of the image.



Egon Schiele
Austrian, 1890-1918
Seated Woman in Profile, 1909
Graphite and colored pencil on brown paper
Gift of John Copland in memory of Peter Farago and Virginia Lynch
2012.50

Egon Schiele, along with Oskar Kokoschka (whose painting you see to the right,) is known as a major figure of Austrian Expressionism, a style that sought to express inner emotional states rather than outer physical reality through line quality and color. In this new gift to the collection, Schiele's soft pencil lines articulate a female figure lost in thought. The subtle touches of unnatural color in her hair and the decorative patterning of her dress draw the viewer into a similar contemplative state of looking.



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

In 1936, Nicholas and Anne Brown commissioned Richard Joseph Neutra to build their family a summer home on Fisher Island. The house was completed two years later, and became known as the "Windshield House" for its large expanse of glass. An admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright's work, Neutra gave a large role to the surrounding landscape and vegetation in his building design. In this drawing of the music room, the wall-length window allow free view of the house's surrounding and downplays the division between inside and outside,



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interior and landscape.

Alvin Langdon Coburn

British, 1882-1966

Gravure Mark Twain XXII: From Men of Mark, 1913

Photogravure on paper

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. V. Duncan Johnson in memory of Julia Angier Ewing and Colby Mackinney Keeler 80.003

Alvin Langdon Coburn's portrait of Mark Twain was made for the photographic book *Men of Mark*, a collection of portraits of authors, politicians, and artists who made a mark on modernism at the turn of the century. In this picture, Twain strikes a dandyish pose that recalls his first published short story, in which he makes fun of a dandy who wants to impress the ladies, only to be humbled by an unflappable squatter. The soft focus, expressive textures, and light-bathed atmosphere heighten the elegance of his stance. They are also characteristic of Pictorialist photography, a movement which intended to defend photography as a medium capable of artistic expression and worthy of being considered fine art.



Louis Lozowick

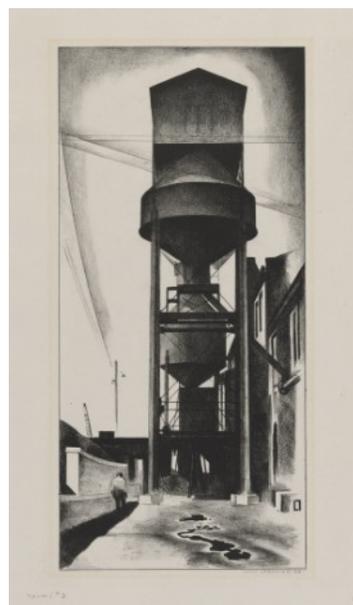
American, b.Russia, 1892-1973

Tanks #3, 1930

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Pearl and Ernest Nathan 85.037

Tanks #3 shows an industrial landscape with water tanks simplified to geometric shapes and a figure in the foreground diminished by the structure's sheer size. During Louis Lozowick's travels in Europe, he formed a close relationship with Lazlo Moholy-Nagy and El Lissitzky (whose works are on view nearby) and modified their geometric abstract language for his own depictions of the modern urban environment. In contrast to their celebration of the machine age as a liberating force in society, Lozowick seems to suggest how overwhelming the changes could be on people.



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Ethel Reed

American, 1874 - 1910?

Geo. H. Walker & Co. Lithographers, printer

Copeland and Day, publisher

Arabella and Araminta Stories, 1895

Color lithograph on paper

Gift of James Morris 96.039

Ethel Reed was one of the few women artists of the turn of the century to gain recognition for graphic design in her lifetime. After studying the traditionally feminine genre of miniature painting, she turned her attention to book illustration and poster design. **Arabella and Araminta Stories** is a collection of children's stories by Gertrude Smith about the twin sisters Arabella and Araminta, who loved picking poppies. Her meandering lines recall the decorative style of Art Nouveau, but her floral motifs---here, the poppies---carry symbolic meaning and narrative links to the book beyond decoration.

