

Subject to Change: Art and Design in the 20th Century, March 1, 2011-October 31, 2011

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Lill Tschudi, Swiss, 1911-2001, designer
Sticking Up Posters, ca. 1933
Color linocut on oriental paper
Gift of Lill Tschudi 1989.040

This group of vibrant color linocuts includes the work of Claude Flight, who taught at the Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London, and two of his most talented students, Sybil Andrews and Lill Tschudi. Flight promoted the use of linoleum, a distinctly modern material, for the creation of modestly scaled prints that captured the vitality of contemporary life. Flight's *Swing-Boats* (at far left), with its repetitive stylized design conveying speed, depicts an amusement-park swing in exhilarating motion. Andrews's print also makes use of repetition to convey intense activity, and her acidic palette further contributes to the vigor of men loading orange crates. Tschudi, inspired by watching men paste up posters at a Paris Metro stop, uses a profusion of geometric patterns to animate her composition.



Pere Català Pic, Spanish, 1889-1971
Untitled, ca. 1935
Gelatin silver print
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2001.33

Pere Català Pic, a leading Spanish advertising photographer of the 1930s who went by the trade name "PIC", designed his business card using photomontage, a technique associated with constructivist photographers such as El Lissitzky. This card is in fact reminiscent of Lissitzky's *The Constructor*, 1925, a self-portrait photomontage that pictured him with the tools of his trade and a dominant central eye. Here, Pic rephotographed his combined photographic and typographic elements so that the image would appear seamless.



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El Lissitzky, Russian, 1890-1941

Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky, Russian, 1893-1930, poet

R.S.F.S.R. State Publishing House, Russian, Moscow-Berlin

For the Voice (Dlia golosa), 1923

Construction-paper cover, letterpress text, illustrations, and typographic designs

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2006.92.1

For the Voice is a book of thirteen poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky that El Lissitzky set into a dynamic design he hoped would provoke readers to recite aloud, spreading the poems' provocative content. Lissitzky, who called himself an "architect of the page", created this design using only the elements of the compositor's type-case: letters, rules, bars, bullets, and so on. The book is a tour-de-force of hand typesetting, executed by a Berlin typesetter who did not know Russian. Lissitzky had been deeply influenced by Kazimir Malevich (whose ceramic design can be seen to the left) and his revolutionary use of total abstraction to express the spirit of the new Soviet society.



Laurie Simmons, American, b. 1949

The Boxes (Ardis Vinklers) Library/Detail II, 2005

Silver-dye bleach print (Ilfochrome) on Flex paper face-mounted to Plexiglas

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2006.94

The title of this piece refers to Latvian artist Ardis Vinklers's light boxes, which Laurie Simmons purchased at an antiques show and used as a stage for a series of photographs. While the male and female figures initially seem like lighthearted stereotypes of 1950s gender roles, the apparent distance in their relationship is poignant. Since the late 1970s, Simmons has used personal memories filtered through television, advertising, and film to reflect the social and cultural constructs of her youth. In addition to the figures, the mid-century design in this piece reflects the era in which Simmons grew up.



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Kara Walker, American, b. 1969, (RISD MFA 1994, Printmaking)
Vanishing Act, 1997
Ink wash over etching on paper
Paula and Leonard Granoff Fund 2010.112

Kara Walker's horrific *Vanishing Act* alludes to 19th-century minstrel shows, but her depiction speaks more openly about the complex love-hate relationship of a mammy and her charge than period performances ever would have. It also implicates the viewer, who watches from the perspective of the audience in the foreground. The piece represents a work in progress: the broad, ink-wash strokes seen here amid the fine, etched lines indicate where Walker would later apply aquatint to the etching plate to complete the finished state. Francisco Goya used aquatint in the early 19th century to portray some of the most egregious acts of his time; Walker has said that her interest in the medium is a deliberate evocation of this precedent.



Richard Neutra, American, b. Austria, 1892-1970
Perspective View of the John Nicholas Brown "Windshield" House,
1936-38
Diazo print with colored pencil, graphite, and gouache on paper
Gift of the Richard J. Neutra Office 39.142.3

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.



Félix Edouard Vallotton, Swiss, 1865-1925
Night (La Nuit), 1895
Woodcut on cream paper
Museum Works of Art Fund 50.033

This night scene was economically carved from one woodblock and printed simply in flat black. To create the image Félix Vallotton cut away the white areas---the elegant house, curving pathway, foliage, and lovely reflections of the house and stars---to suggest a lake in the foreground. Vallotton accentuated the woodcut's potential for



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abstraction, which he understood through studying Japanese prints, by limiting himself to contrasting black and white. Highly inventive prints such as this were widely exhibited and published in France in the 1890s and contributed to a revival of interest in the medium.

Robert Rauschenberg, American, 1925-2008

Post Rally, 1965

Lithograph on paper

Museum Membership Fund 66.274.10

Robert Rauschenberg gathered this print's seemingly random assortment of images---President Johnson, sports figures, street scenes, soldiers---from discarded engraved plates used to print the *New York Times*. Their accumulation emulates the bombardment of information one might encounter flashing across a television screen. The raucous drawing, added after the images were applied to the lithographic stone, further suggests the explosive effect of media and consumerism in the 1960s. Rauschenberg is famous for including objects from life in his art. The cane references an accident he had the night before creating the print; he broke his foot following the final performance of "First New York Theatre Rally"---hence the title of the piece, *Post Rally*.



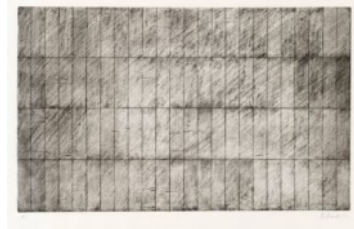
Brice Marden, American, b. 1938

Grid II, 1971

Etching, aquatint, and scraping on Rives BFK paper

Twentieth Century Graphics Fund 72.055

Brice Marden's composition is a simple linear division of a rectangle. He began by dividing the etching plate vertically into three panels, then divided those in half, and those in half again. The horizontal divisions were last. These are not perfect, mechanical lines; slips of the hand and random scratches are evident along with intentional marks. By scraping the aquatint surface diagonally, Marden creates a texture not unlike brushstrokes. The effect speaks to the artist's interest in the tactile, gestural, and expressive qualities of Abstract Expressionist painting, which he engages with great restraint.



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Jasper Johns, American, b. 1930

Good Time Charley, 1972

Color lithograph on handmade paper

Museum purchase with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts 73.100

This print, a reworking of Jasper Johns's 1961 painting *Good Time Charley*, suggests the artist's delight in the variety of ways in which he can reproduce elements from the painting with both hand and mechanical techniques. In the painting, an actual ruler is affixed to the work's surface. In the print, the ruler appears again as a photographic reproduction, with the addition of metallic ink on the wing nut, along with a mark similar to one in the painting, here inscribed with the word "scrape" along its path. Sensuous ink washes whose effects are only achievable through lithography fill the background within a precisely ruled border that alludes to the painting's wooden frame. *Good Time Charley* comes from an inscription on a metal drinking cup Johns attached to the ruler on the painting. In the print, the cup is a flat silver shape overprinted with the title inscription. Such lively variations exemplify Johns's constant exploration of representation and meaning through various media.



Doris Ulmann, American, 1882-1934

Untitled, ca. 1930

Platinum print on Japanese tissue

Georgianna Sayles Aldrich Fund 74.111

Doris Ulmann's quiet interior, devoid of people, draws the viewer to imagine its occupant and perhaps even the hands that furnished it. The multi-paned window casts a soft natural light over the simple handmade chair and table and the ceramic vessels on the windowsill. The abstract sensibility of the composition---a design in rectangles and ovals---and its soft focus recall Ulmann's early study with Clarence White, a Pictorialist photographer who advocated suppressing detail in favor of an expressive reading of the image. Closely aligned with the handcrafted works of the Arts and Crafts movement, Pictorialism was an apt style for Ulmann's documentation of the character, livelihood, and craft traditions of a rural America she believed was vanishing.



Aaron Siskind, American, 1903-1991, (RISD Faculty 1971-1976,
Photography 0

Martha's Vineyard 104A, 1954

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Mr. Robert B. Menschel 77.145.10

In the 1940s, in response to the trauma of World War II, Aaron



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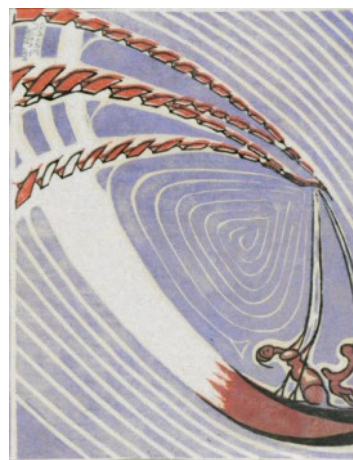
Siskind turned away from documentary photography to explore a more personal, metaphoric vision, most famously in his images of walls showing signs of age or deterioration. The stone walls on Martha's Vineyard provided a powerfully graphic and emotional subject whose varied structures suggested to him the dynamics of human relationships. This image is one of the denser segments of wall that he photographed, with all of the rocks tightly supporting one another and small rocks bearing the immense ones on top, silhouetted against the sky.

Claude Flight, English, 1881-1955

Swing-Boats, 1921

Color linocut on thin tracing paper mounted on black/brown paper
Mary B. Jackson Fund 79.027

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Larry Silver, American, b. 1934

Penn Station, New York, 1951 (printed later)

Gelatin silver print

Gift of William and Jeryl Silverstein 82.136

This image captures three boys silhouetted by light filtering through the doors of the original, now demolished Pennsylvania Station in New York. Shot from above, its design evokes European modernist photography and is remarkably sophisticated considering that the photographer was just seventeen at the time, not much older than the faces smiling up at him. Larry Silver was then attending the High School for Industrial Arts in New York. He absorbed the lessons of some of the most important photographers of the time, including *LIFE* photographer W. Eugene Smith, through his participation in the Lower East Side's Photography League.



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Théophile Alexandre Steinlen, French, b. Switzerland, 1859-1923
Chemins de fer de l'Ouest, 1900
Color lithograph on paper
Gift of the Fazzano Brothers 84.198.788

Designed for a poster that would entice viewers to vacation in Normandy, Brittany, Mont St. Michel, and the island of Jersey by way of the French railway company Chemins de fer de l'Ouest, this print impression was never printed with text advertising the destinations. Like many poster designs of the period, this one shows a strong influence of Japanese prints, evident here not only in the fan format, but also in the large areas of flat color, the patterning, and the gradation of color. Especially clever is how the skirt of the white dress, an unprinted area of the sheet, creates the lower edge of the fan design.



Sybil Andrews, Canadian, b. England, 1898-1993
Oranges, 1929
Color linocut on cream oriental paper
Gift in memory of Alan Ostrow by his friends 85.026

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