

ART  
OF  
ILLINOIS



# ART OF ILLINOIS

AN EXHIBITION OF  
FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS  
PRESENTED IN

## THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE

---

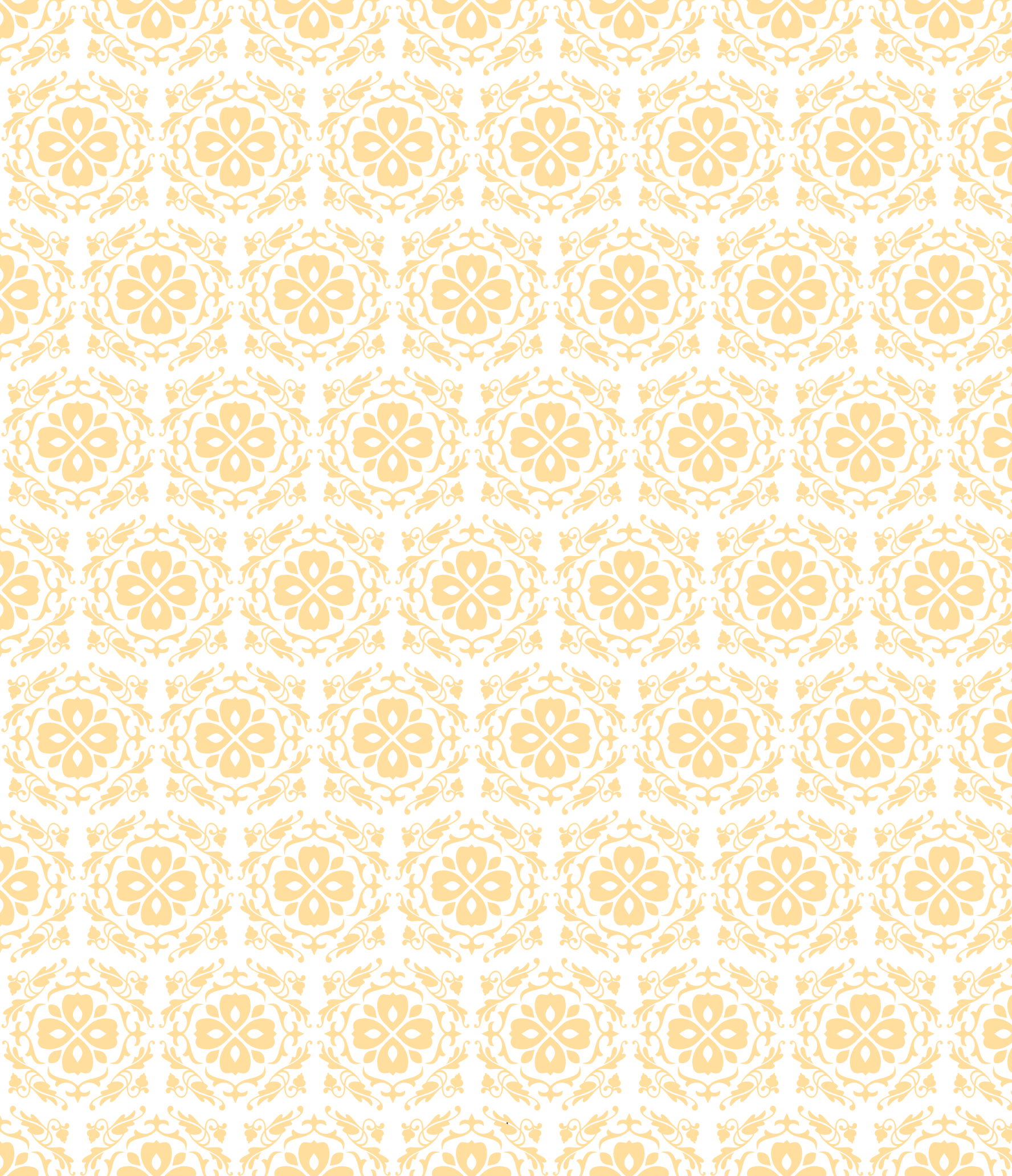
THE ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S MANSION  
SPRINGFIELD, IL

---

EST. 1855



*FEATURING WORKS BY CENTURIES OF  
ARTISTS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE  
FROM THE FINE STATE OF ILLINOIS*



*table of contents*

Foreword 6  
*Diana Rauner, First Lady of Illinois*

Introduction 8  
*John H. Bryan, Jr.,  
Joseph P. Gromacki, and  
Leslie S. Hindman*



Beautiful and Useful: Decorative Arts of Illinois 12  
*Sharon S. Darling, co-curator*

Decorative Arts 20



Artland Illinois: a brief introduction 96  
*Wendy Greenhouse, co-curator*

Fine Arts 106



# Foreword

## *Welcome to the Illinois Governor's Mansion: The People's House*

Art and architecture are mirrors. They reflect not only our past but also our evolution to today and tomorrow. With the openings of *Art of Illinois* and the reimagined Illinois Governor's Mansion, we have a unique opportunity to engage with the people and places that mightily influenced the Illinois we have become and aspire to be.

The Governor's Mansion, built in 1855, has been witness to the state's—and some of the nation's—most transformative events. From this home, our governors fought to free slaves, unshackle laborers, deploy troops for the great wars, lift families from the ravages of the Great Depression, and guide a fragile world at the onset of the Nuclear Age.

*Art of Illinois*, the first exhibition to be featured in the Mansion's newly defined public spaces, captures some of these transformations as well. The 93 magnificent pieces on display—from the masterful hands of Illinois artisans, craftspeople, sculptors, and painters—deliver both historical insight and cultural wonder. That they arrive at this 200th birthday moment for the state is a fitting start to the next life of a home that, in its newest iteration, earns its place among Illinois Historic Places as The People's House. In use for more than 160 years, the Illinois Governor's Mansion is the third oldest continuously occupied state executive mansion in the United States. Just as they do with all things, time and use would take its toll periodically on the Mansion. The need for repairs most often spearheaded renovation. And such was the case in 2015 when Governor Rauner and I came to Springfield.

By then, nearly 40 long years had passed since Governor Richard Ogilvie and his wife, First Lady Dorothy Ogilvie, charged James T. Hickey and Lowell Anderson of the Illinois State Historical Library with overseeing a \$3 million effort to renovate the Mansion. Their challenge was to preserve features from the original 1850s architecture and its antique decorated interior. Thanks to that effort, the Mansion entered the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

With this recent renovation, the goal was more expansive. We wanted to bring Illinois into the home in ways that had not been envisioned in past renovations. We saw the Mansion as both residence and symbol, the latter of Illinois statesmanship, inclusion, and hospitality. The Mansion, of course, will continue to be the home of the state's chief executive, but now its look is both stately as befits Illinois' heritage and—in keeping with the irrepressible midwestern openness of our citizens—richly inviting.

The 2018 Mansion is surrounded by a majestic landscape that frames the striking sight of the structure. Its interior now accommodates a mission of history, education, and appreciation. There are public spaces for visitors to gather and learn from period art and exhibits once featured in the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. There is space to showcase Illinois fine and decorative arts and a Visitors Center. Trained docents help elevate the experience for our visitors seven days a week. For the first time, the Mansion is ADA accessible.

This work could not have been completed without the tireless efforts of the Illinois Governor's Mansion Association and the blue-ribbon group of men and women who lent their expertise and their love of Illinois to the project. We owe each one our gratitude for their enthusiastic embrace of our mission and their unrelenting zeal to achieve it.

Finally, it has to be noted that this milestone in the history of the Mansion has been reached without using taxpayer dollars. Nearly \$15 million was raised from private sources to pay for the renovation.

My husband and I made a promise to update the Mansion and return it to the people of Illinois as a cultural and civic treasure. The reopening is a promise kept to the citizens of the state, the culmination of a tremendous effort to restore the residence to serve its true purpose as...The People's House.

*DIANA RAUNER  
First Lady of Illinois  
Chair, Illinois Governor's Mansion Association*



# Introduction

This exhibition catalogue depicts artistic works, including paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts objects, the earliest created more than 750 years ago, the most recent in 2016, and all presented in 2018 at the Illinois Governor's Mansion in Springfield. As part of the celebration of the Illinois Bicentennial, these exhibited artworks, defined as "Art of Illinois," have been installed for public viewing to coincide with the opening of the newly renovated Governor's Mansion.

The exhibition contains 27 paintings, 7 pieces of sculpture, and 59 works of functional and beautiful decorative arts, many of which have a special connection to the history of the Governor's Mansion and its occupants over the years. Of the 93 objects in the exhibition, 71 of them are loaned for the exhibition by public museums and private collectors located in Illinois; whereas, 22 of the works are the property of the State of Illinois.

The idea for this exhibition evolved from State of Illinois First Lady Diana Rauner's decision to renovate and reimagine the primary purpose of the Illinois Governor's Mansion. Under her leadership, the Illinois Governor's Mansion Association and its fine and decorative arts committee then determined that the aim of this renovation would be to enhance the experience of the Mansion's visitors, and thus inspire and educate our visitors about the historical and artistic accomplishments of the people of Illinois.

We truly believe that art holds the power to motivate and inspire its audiences and transform the world in which we live in a positive way. It is our hope that, through this celebration of the artistic achievement of artists and artisans of Illinois, visitors will leave feeling a sense of civic pride in our state and its people.

To produce this exhibition, we are especially honored to have enlisted three remarkably accomplished and talented individuals as the curators and designer of *Art of Illinois*.

To serve as the curator of the fine art portion of this exhibition, we are pleased to have Dr. Wendy Greenhouse, a Chicago-area independent art historian who specializes in American art of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She has widely published, lectured, and curated exhibitions on the art and artists of Chicago, at area institutions including the Chicago History Museum, The Terra Museum of American Art, the Brauer

Museum of Art at Valparaiso University, DePaul Art Museum, Illinois State Museum, and the Union League Club of Chicago.

The curator for the decorative arts portion of this exhibition is Sharon S. Darling who is currently an independent decorative arts historian living in St. Charles, Illinois, with a special expertise in Chicago's decorative art and industrial history.

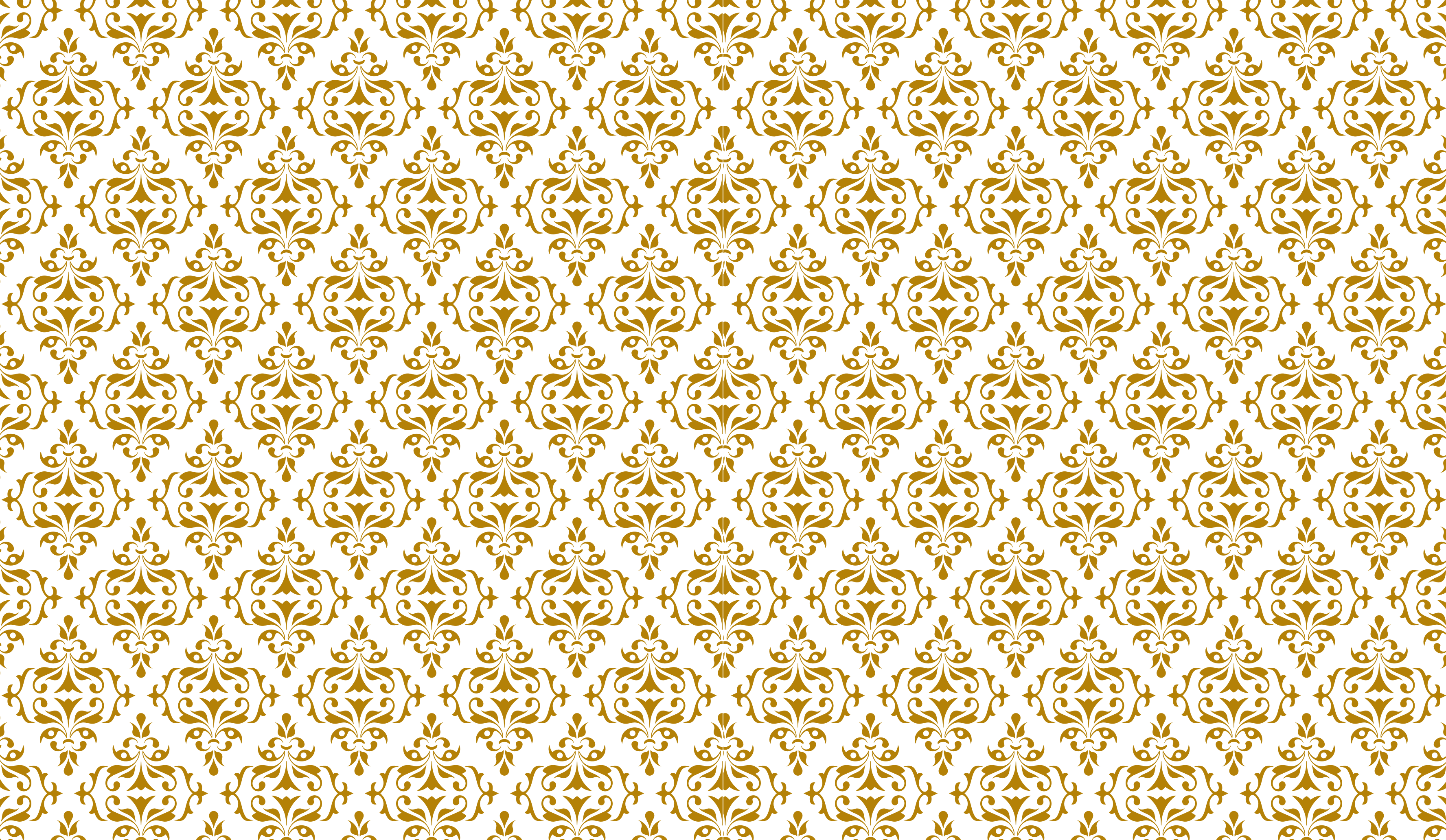
Sharon Darling has previously served as curator of decorative and industrial arts at the Chicago History Museum and as the director of the Motorola Museum. She has produced numerous books, essays, and exhibitions on Chicago furniture, metalware, art pottery, and Arts and Crafts jewelry.

The designer of our exhibition is John Vinci, a renowned Chicago architect and preservationist. Throughout his extraordinary career, John Vinci has been the designer for more than 50 major museum exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago and other prominent museums throughout the United States.

The Governor's Mansion of the State of Illinois is now 133 years old. Throughout its history, the Mansion has been primarily known as the residence of the family of the state's governor and as a venue for ceremonial events. In its new 2018 version, the Mansion has been transformed into a place that truly celebrates our most enduring legacies, art and art history.

It is surely noteworthy that this exhibition, Art of Illinois, is likely the first ever such public presentation of historical art identified with the state of Illinois. With that thought in mind, we sincerely hope that this landmark exhibition records a time when the display of Illinois art became a defining feature of the Illinois Governor's Mansion and a high point of civic pride for the citizens of Illinois.

*JOHN H. BRYAN, JR.,  
JOSEPH P. GROMACKI, AND  
LESLIE S. HINDMAN*



# Beautiful and Useful:

## *Decorative Arts of Illinois*

On January 10, 1856, when Joel A. Matteson, Illinois' tenth governor, hosted his first official reception in the newly completed Governor's Mansion, guests were served on porcelain imported from Europe, in rooms furnished with sofas, chairs, and gilt-framed mirrors shipped from New York or Boston. Nonetheless, the *Illinois State Journal* noted, "some very handsome extension tables, and bureaus, &c. made expressly for the splendid mansion of the Governor" had been procured from the shop of local cabinetmaker John Hutchinson.<sup>1</sup> Like most early Illinois furniture makers, Hutchinson's establishment combined furniture making with undertaking, supplying coffins and a "good hearse with two horses" in addition to sofas, bedsteads, tables, and various cabinet goods. Trained in Philadelphia, Hutchinson arrived in Springfield from his native Pennsylvania in the early 1830s. He proudly introduced steam-powered machinery into his shop in 1849.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1850s, Illinois was still a frontier state. Elaborately carved or veneered mahogany and rosewood furniture was imported from the East by way of St. Louis or New Orleans; however, less ornate pieces made of native walnut, maple, and cherry were crafted within the state. Nearly every Illinois hamlet had a local cabinetmaker who could provide a few pieces of simple and well-made furniture. Other household goods were supplied by chair makers, weavers, coopers, tanners, silversmiths, and other "mechanics," as such practical artisans were called. Many had migrated west from southern or eastern states in the 1820s and 1830s. Others arrived in the 1840s from Germany, Ireland, England, and other parts of western and northern Europe—drawn to Illinois by promises of jobs, cheap land, and freedom. Early craft industries were closely allied with the state's agricultural economy; in many cases, practitioners were considered primarily as farmers and secondarily as craftsmen.

Unseen by visitors, the kitchen in the Governor's Mansion in those days would have contained a supply of practical Illinois-made ceramic food and storage containers intended for everyday use. Throughout the state, potters plied their craft using the native materials indigenous to their location, as had Native Americans living in the area since Pre-Columbian times. By the early 1830s, several production regions had been established in the state. The U.S. Industrial Census of 1840 listed 23 potteries in Illinois; by 1860, more than 74 were known to exist.

Most of the earliest documented potters made redware, which had a porous earthenware body, meeting the demand for kitchen ware, flower pots, roof and drainage tiles, and sewer pipe. Except in the Lead

Mine District around Galena, redware was soon replaced by the more durable stoneware, which was stronger and had a density that required no glaze to be waterproof. High quality stoneware clay, found in west-central Illinois in a belt that stretched from Rock Island to Alton, was the source for potteries operated in Brown, Scott, Greene, and Madison counties.

Early ware, hand formed by master potters, consisted largely of plain jugs, jars, crocks, churns, pitchers, and other utilitarian pieces essential for storing and processing food. Jugs in various shapes and sizes were required for transportation and packaging of liquids, particularly whiskey, which was widely consumed and was also used for medicinal purposes. Some potters applied a salt glaze, others used a brown Albany slip; a few decorated their wares and stamped their name on their wares, but the majority remained plain and unmarked.

Before the Illinois Central Railroad was chartered to lay tracks across the state in 1851, the major mode of transportation for people and goods was still the steamboat, which caused the building of canals and the commercial predominance of towns located either on Lake Michigan or on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The state's population was concentrated along these water routes, and much of the interior remained sparsely settled. The appearance of several railroads in the 1850s greatly expanded the commerce and population of Illinois, with Chicago quickly rising to predominance as the nation's rail center. By 1860, Illinois ranked second in the nation in rail mileage, and it was the fourth most populous state in the Union.

Illinois, with its abundant supply of quality clay as well as coal, developed into a major pottery producing state in the late nineteenth century. By the 1870s, advancements in ceramic production techniques initiated at eastern manufactories began to filter west, with an influx of eastern capitalists and skilled craftsmen looking at Illinois for manufacturing sites. Small family-operated workshops, typified by the Kirkpatrick's pottery in Anna, were replaced by large stoneware factories operated at production centers across the state, including Macomb, Monmouth, Peoria, Rock Island, and White Hall. In 1875, the Peoria Pottery Company alone produced 500,000 flower pots, 36,000 fruit jars, and 100,000 milk pans.

In addition to potteries producing utilitarian and garden ware, specialized works supplied clay building materials such as bricks, tiles, and architectural terra cotta, with large factories operating in Blue



Island, Chicago, Galesburg, Ottawa, and Terra Cotta. Located along major railway corridors, these new ceramic factories supplied the state and much of the trans-Mississippi West with stoneware and construction materials.

Railroads also gave Illinois' furniture makers access to lumber and markets, which they combined with a skilled immigrant labor supply, primarily German and Scandinavian craftsmen. By 1870, fifty percent of Chicago's cabinetmakers had been born in Germany, ten percent in Scandinavia, and another sixteen percent represented a mixture of craftspeople from other European countries.<sup>3</sup> Within the city, the abundance of trained workers, coupled with advances in labor-saving woodworking machinery, encouraged specialty production, with factories specializing in chairs, parlor or bedroom furniture, frames for upholsterers, carvings, school and commercial furniture, even musical instruments. There

was also room for custom shops, with highly skilled woodcarvers like Gustav F. Behm producing notable one-of-a-kind pieces for wealthy local patrons. Chicago-made furniture was soon found throughout midwestern and far western states, as farmers transported their livestock and products to Chicago by rail and used their profits to purchase household furnishings that were shipped home.

In Rockford, the arrival of large numbers of Swedish immigrants after the Civil War led to the establishment of an important furniture industry surpassed only by Chicago and Grand Rapids in the Midwest. By 1877, 16 plants were operational in the city, employing nearly one-fourth of the city's workingmen. Here too, plants specialized, producing so many library and dining room case goods that Rockford became known as the "Bookcase Town." Closely allied with the furniture business were plants supplying mirrors, glass, mattresses, and woodworking machinery. Similar growth occurred in Illinois industries

producing decorative metalwork, glass, clocks, pianos, and harps.

In 1893, Chicago and the state's ascendancy as an industrial powerhouse was recognized when the city hosted the World's Columbian Exposition, a world's fair celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World. In the Illinois State Building, the largest of all state-sponsored exhibition halls at the time, all aspects of its residents' activities from agriculture to zoology were on display. Of special interest, and receiving much publicity, were the exotic parlor and bedroom furnishings hand-carved by Carthage farmer William H. Bartels, on display in the private suite of Governor John Peter Altgeld.

But not all Illinois residents celebrated or profited from the perceived prosperity accompanying the state's growth and progress. Beginning in the 1890s, the ideals and design aesthetics of the Arts

*Reacting to the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, Arts and Crafts practitioners embraced simplicity of line, durable honest materials, and the human touch.*

and Crafts movement found a sympathetic audience among Illinois art workers, educators, and others involved in progressive cultural and social reforms. Reacting to the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, Arts and Crafts practitioners embraced simplicity of line, durable honest materials, and the human touch. Societies, guilds, and schools spread the "craftsman ideal" and promoted handworkmanship as a moral regenerative force. Less a style than an approach to the making of objects, the Arts and Crafts philosophy found tangible expression in the revival of traditional handicrafts—particularly metalwork, ceramics (art pottery and hand-painted china), furniture, stained and cut glass, leatherwork, printing, and weaving.

After 1900, shops specializing in Arts and Crafts goods could be found in most Illinois cities. Women established the first workshops in Chicago devoted exclusively to the production, exhibition, and sale of artistic items made according to the new philosophy. One of the earliest, and one which would play an important role in the renaissance of handwrought Chicago metalwork, was operated by Clara Barck Welles, who co-founded the Kalo Shop in Chicago in 1900 and the Kalo Arts Crafts Community in Park Ridge. The Kalo Shop, which operated for 70 years, was the training ground for many jewelers and silversmiths who established their own shops in Chicago, Evanston, DeKalb, and Park Ridge. Jessie M. Preston and other female metalworkers maintained studios in Chicago's Fine Arts Building, where they produced unique jewelry and household furnishings. Other highly skilled metalsmiths, newly arrived from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, produced handwrought silver tableware, trophies, and



Silversmiths in the Kalo Shop workshop at 32 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, around 1914. Author's Collection.



The cabinet shop at Rockford Standard Furniture Company, Rockford, in 1901. Benson Stone Co., Rockford, Illinois

jewelry at the Jarvie Shop, Petterson Studios, Chicago Art Silver Shop, Lebolt & Company, or Marshall Field & Company's craft shops, to name but a few.

Women dominated the field of china painting, artistically hand-painting porcelain blanks to create the "fancy china" popular at the time. Practitioners, who could be found in virtually every Illinois town and city, ranged in skill from members of the elite Atlan Ceramic Art Club—a select group of Chicago's finest female china painters—to artists offering lessons in small town art shops, to hobbyists painting in their homes. Annual exhibitions were held in homes, studios, museums, art shops, and department stores throughout the state. As early as September 1895, the Chicago Ceramic Association's exhibition included entries from 147 cities and entertained 5,000 visitors. Within a decade, Pickard China Company and smaller commercial studios in Chicago employed large numbers of professional male and female artists to produce large quantities of fine hand-painted china for the specialty and gift markets.

Many producers adapted industrial standards to Arts and Crafts aesthetics, using machines to assist the worker and employing mass production techniques to moderate the cost of their goods. This was particularly true in ceramics, where some of the largest producers of "art pottery" were primarily engaged in the manufacture of utilitarian clay products or architectural terra cotta. Gates Potteries, a subsidiary of the American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company, produced Teco ware in strikingly



A china-painting class taught by Atlan Ceramic Art Club member Jeanne M. Stewart in 1904. Author's Collection.



Workmen unloading Teco art pottery at Gates Potteries, a subsidiary of the American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company, in Terra Cotta (now Crystal Lake) around 1905. Author's Collection.

modern shapes at Terra Cotta (now Crystal Lake) after 1899. On a smaller scale, the Norse Pottery began making art pottery in Rockford in 1903. In East Dundee, the Haeger pottery transitioned from making bricks and flower pots to art pottery in 1914; in Monmouth, Western Stoneware added a new line of art ware in 1919; the Cliftwood Art Potteries opened on the site of Morton Earthenware Company in 1920.

The popularity of elaborately decorated "brilliant" cut glass reached its peak, with at least a dozen large glass cutting firms active in Chicago and St. Charles by 1906. Steam, gas, and later electric-powered machines—along with the invention of steel cutting wheels and better brushes—allowed the craftsman to turn out high quality work. The flow of European immigrants brought both experienced entrepreneurs and skilled craftsmen to put American technology and assembly-line techniques to good use.

To meet the demand for handcrafted furniture, some large furniture and department stores added custom cabinetmaking shops. In Chicago, the Tobey Furniture Company introduced Tobey Handmade Furniture, while Marshall Field & Company added a custom furniture workshop to its interior design department.

Illinois architects who worked in the style now known as the Prairie school incorporated the Arts and Crafts movement's principles in their interior designs. One outstanding example is the Springfield residence designed for Susan Lawrence Dana by Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1902. Now the Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site, the house's interior incorporates custom furniture, art glass, and ceramics made by Chicago firms.

The Linden Glass Company, one of many small art glass studios operating in Chicago, fabricated the intricate windows and lampshades in the Dana-Thomas House. Essentially a handcraft industry, the making of stained glass windows for churches and residences or shades for the newly popular electric lamps required few tools and little equipment; the process could be undertaken anywhere from a small workshop to a large factory, providing work for thousands of highly skilled craftsmen.

Although many of these craft-based industries survived World War I, the years after 1918 were marked by dramatic changes in those Illinois industries producing household objects. Electrical devices became an important part of modern life, with cabinets for radios, and later televisions, produced in large numbers by many Illinois furniture makers. New materials such as aluminum and tempered glass resulted in exciting new forms, while the new profession of industrial design joined the form and function of common household products ranging from tea sets to toasters.

Chicago, leveraging its reputation as the Great Central Market for the output of regional furniture makers, became the site of the American Furniture Mart in 1924, followed by the Merchandise Mart



for home furnishings in 1930. Architectural styles—particularly modern and international—exerted a strong influence on decorative design. Illinois designers and companies were truly playing key roles in the evolution of modern furniture design. Factories in Chicago, Geneva, Rockford, and St. Charles engaged in what would become a major trend—the manufacture of metal and plastic furniture.

Industrial expansion in the 1920s was followed by decline during the following decades, brought on first by the Great Depression and, after 1941, by America's involvement in World War II. In the postwar years many of Chicago and Rockford's larger furniture manufactories relocated their factories to southern states in search of cheaper labor and lower overhead costs. Nevertheless, Illinois retained a prominent position in the industry, although as a result of design and marketing innovations rather than volume of production. A striking development was the establishment of a great variety of small furniture-making firms by European refugees and returned servicemen, often in collaboration with other members of their families.

*The studio craft movement, characterized by small studios set up for one-of-a-kind production, remains a dominant force within Illinois today.*

The state's largest potteries, responding to the availability of tin and glass containers, adjusted to competition by converting production to inexpensive tableware or industrial ceramics, which could be marketed to a larger consumer population. Western Stoneware successfully produced large quantities of stoneware containers for home and commercial use well into the twentieth century; it made design history in the early 1950s when it engaged internationally known designer Eva Zeisel to design a modern line of fine stoneware. Haeger Potteries remained a successful family-owned business until 2017, when, like Western Stoneware, it too fell to overseas competition.

Postwar financial prosperity also led to a renaissance of artistic craft in the state, in which designers began creating works that revived historic handicraft methods and rejected mass-production. The studio craft movement, characterized by small studios set up for one-of-a-kind production, remains a dominant force within Illinois today. Independent studio artists working with wood, glass, clay, textiles, or metal using traditional craft processes to produce decorative objects can be found in every section of the state. Like traditional objects of decorative art, studio craft works serve or allude to a functional or utilitarian purpose, although they are often handled and exhibited in ways like fine art.

1. "Fine Furniture," *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield, Illinois), December 12, 1855.
2. *Illinois Weekly State Journal* (Springfield, Illinois), August 22, 1849.
3. John B. Jentz, "Furniture," *Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago* ©2005 Chicago Historical Society.

**Sharon S. Darling**, co-curator *Art of Illinois*, is an independent decorative arts historian who lives in St. Charles, Illinois. While curator of decorative and industrial arts at the Chicago History Museum, 1972–1986, she conceived and produced a series of award-winning exhibitions and publications on Chicago creativity. Publications include *Chicago Metalsmiths* (1977), *Chicago Ceramics & Glass* (1979), *Decorative & Architectural Arts in Chicago* (1982); *Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft & Industry* (1984), and *Teco: Art Pottery of the Prairie School* (1989); and *The Legacy of Harry J. Lucas; Northwestern Terra Cotta Company* (2013). She served as director of the Motorola Museum in Schaumburg, 1986–2007. Since then, she has contributed essays on Arts and Crafts jewelry, art pottery, and furniture made in Chicago and Illinois for various exhibition catalogues and publications. Darling graduated with Honors in History from North Carolina State University. She holds a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Duke University and a Master of Management degree from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.



Decorative Arts





## Middle Mississippian Pottery Fulton County, Illinois (1240–1280 A.D.)

These examples of Mississippian culture pottery were excavated from the pre-Columbian Native American Emmons site in Fulton County, Illinois. The location, on the edge of a bluff bordering the Illinois River, was used as a cemetery; several unique and rare items were found interred with the burials. At the time of its discovery, the land was owned by Merrill Emmons of Astoria, Illinois, who undertook extensive excavations of the site in the 1950s, before Illinois law protected prehistoric cemeteries. His family donated these pieces to the Illinois State Museum in 1993.

The Mississippian period began about 1,000 years ago (A.D. 1050) and continued in Illinois until around A.D. 1450. Archaeologists use the term *Mississippian* because many of the major centers of this culture occur along the Mississippi River valley.

Mississippian people lived throughout southern and west-central Illinois. Some 2,379 sites have been recorded within the state, mainly along major rivers and streams. Near East St. Louis, Mississippian people built Cahokia, one of the largest Native American cities in North America. Cahokia Mounds is now a State Historic Site and a National Historic Landmark. In the central Illinois River valley, between Beardstown and Peoria, Mississippians established at least seven large towns inhabited by 500 or more people as well as numerous smaller sites. Dickson Mounds Museum, part of the Illinois State Museum, is built around a Mississippian cemetery not far from one of these towns.

Mississippian ceramics took many forms, from earplugs to cooking and storage pots, serving dishes, bottles, and figural sculpture. Effigy pots were made in many shapes, including forms that depicted animal imagery; for instance, the ducks that were seasonally abundant in the area.

Mississippian women made pottery from local clays that were tempered with crushed freshwater mussel shells to keep the clay paste from rapidly shrinking and cracking during the drying and firing process. Occasionally, handles or figural shapes were attached during construction. After the work had dried sufficiently, the vessel was open-fired using wood fuel. Ceramics sometimes were painted, decorated with incised motifs, or highly polished. A smaller number received painted design motifs.

Pottery containers were used for storing, preparing, serving, and eating food. Although hunting and gathering and the cultivation of native plants remained important to the community, Mississippian economy was heavily based on corn agriculture, some cultivation of other non-native plants, such as squash and beans, in northern Illinois.

Illinois State Museum website: Mississippian.  
[http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat\\_amer/pre/htmls/miss.html](http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/pre/htmls/miss.html)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

*Resist-painted bottle*  
 Earthenware, 6 × 7½ inches

*Handled bowl*  
 Earthenware, 4½ × 3½ inches

*Bird effigy bowl*  
 Earthenware, 10¼ × 4½ inches

*Beanpot*  
 Earthenware, 6¾ × 4 inches

Courtesy of the Illinois State Museum, Illinois Legacy Collection

## Galena Pottery Galena, Illinois (active 19th century)

Some utilitarian pottery made in Illinois in the nineteenth century was whimsical as well as useful. This small redware sitting dog, with head facing straight forward and round incised circles for eyes, functions as a string or yarn holder. Threads from the ball, placed inside, were pulled through two small holes on its back. Made in the Galena area of local clay, the dog wears a coat of green and brown spotted glaze. Formed in a mold, it was made in imitation of those produced in the Staffordshire district of England.

The presence of distinctive red clay and the abundant availability of lead ore in the Galena area supported the production of a regional redware pottery in Jo Daviess County commonly referred to as “Galena Pottery”—a common utilitarian, low-fired, red-paste earthenware with a clear lead glaze. (The word *galena* means sulfide of lead.) Glazes were rich and varied, particularly those acquiring haphazard coin spots or splatters of brown during firing.

Although several potters worked in the Galena area by 1850, the major redware producer in the region was the D. A. Sackett Company, often referred to as the Galena Pottery Company. Established in Galena in 1843 and, although not continuously owned by the Sackett family, the company remained in business through the late 1890s. There were additional potteries in the nearby small village of Elizabeth.

Items commonly produced in the Galena area included bowls, wide-mouth storage jars, jugs, preserve jars, butter churns, and bottles. Flower pots, chamber pots, and spittoons were made on a smaller scale. Drainage tiles, used by farmers to remove excess water from their fields, were another common product.

All wares were manufactured using hand production methods. The earliest wares bore few decorations, although some had simple thumbnail impressions and coggle wheel patterns. Later wares featured a wider range of decorative techniques, including varied coggle wheel decorations, colored glazes, or appliqued decorations. Preserve jars and crocks often featured thick edge moldings or grooved necks; flower pots were rimmed with piecrust molding.

Although redware production in Illinois declined dramatically by the 1860s, the industry continued in the Galena region through the nineteenth century. The substantial growth of the dairy industry in northern Illinois and nearby Wisconsin, which utilized a large quantity of milk pans and churns, is one hypothesis to explain the lasting demand. The farm wife used milk pans for separating cream from milk placed in the large bowls; churns were needed to process milk fat (cream) into butter.

..... Horney, Wayne B. *Pottery of the Galena Area* (East Dubuque, IL: The Author, 1965).

..... Mansberger, Floyd. *Redware Production in the Lead Mine District of Northwestern Illinois: Summary of Recent Archaeological Research* (Springfield, IL: Fever River Research, 1995).



*Dog String Holder, c. 19th century*  
Lead glazed stoneware, 9 × 7 inches  
Collection of Galena-Jo Daviess County Historical Society



## Anna Pottery Anna, Illinois (active 1859–1896)

Snakes! Snakes fascinated and inspired Wallace Kirkpatrick (1828-1896), who operated a large stoneware pottery in Anna, Illinois, with his brother Cornwall (1814-1890) between 1859 and 1896. Wallace advertised for live ones in agricultural magazines and exhibited masses of “tamed” snakes in a wire cage at the brothers’ pottery and at fairs. Individual snakes were modeled as palm-sized figures and life-size lawn ornaments; swarms of them slithered on his unique whiskey jugs.

This Anna Pottery whiskey jug, made by Wallace around 1880, cleverly juxtaposes twelve articulated timber rattlesnakes with three men. The snakes slither out from within the jug and tangle across its surface. Two young men dive head first into the jug, while the bedraggled head of an old man emerges from within, only to be attacked by snakes, one of which serves as the jug’s handle. Is the jug warning against the perils of drinking whiskey? Or is it a cynical slap at the Prohibition movement then gaining strength in Illinois and throughout the country?

Cornwall Kirkpatrick, who served as mayor of Anna from 1872 to 1877 and again from 1883 to 1885, was alert to political and social issues. He produced outsized “directory” urns and floor vases across which he incised scores of proper names and advertisements copied from published sources, such as city directories, corporate reports, and prize lists for local and regional fairs.

Local flora and fauna also inspired the brothers’ creativity. Pottery garden stools were shaped like tree stumps; one-of-a-kind cemetery markers like huge flower pots. Pig-shaped whiskey flasks featured incised railroad routes running over them from nose to tail; frogs peeked up from the bottom of mugs.

Such eccentric and whimsical novelty ware was made as a sideline to their regular business of utilitarian crockery, such as crocks, fruit jars, and jugs. Other useful items included firebrick, chimney pots, windowsills, roof and drainage tile, and stems for tobacco pipes.

The Kirkpatrick brothers exhibited their pottery at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876 and the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, as well as at numerous local and regional fairs.

After Cornwall and Wallace died, the Anna Pottery remained in the Kirkpatrick family until 1900; it closed in 1910.

Denker, Ellen Paul. “*Forever Getting Up Something New*”; *The Kirkpartricks’ Pottery at Anna Illinois, 1859–1896* (Thesis, University of Delaware, 1978).

Mohr, Richard D. *Anna Pottery-Plagiarism as Art*, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, November 7, 2003–January 4, 2004. Exhibition catalog.

Mohr, Richard D. *Pottery, Politics, Art: George Ohr and the Brothers Kirkpatrick* (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2003).



William Wallace Kirkpatrick (1828, Urbana, Illinois–1896, Anna, Illinois), designer

### *Whiskey/Temperance Snake Jug, c. 1880–1890*

Stoneware, 12 × 10 inches

Collection of Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois on behalf of its Krannert Art Museum, Gift of the Department of Ceramic Engineering, UIUC, Ries Collection, 1980-5-54

## Peoria Pottery Company Peoria, Illinois (active 1864–1902)

Jugs for whiskey, cider, and similar liquids were standard productions at the Peoria Pottery Company in the 1870s and 1880s. Not hand-turned, the jugs were formed in plaster of Paris molds that assured great regularity in size, shape, and thickness. Then a distinctive brown glaze, dubbed “Peoria Glaze” by the company, was applied.

Although several small pottery firms operated in Peoria by the late 1850s, the Peoria Pottery Company, opened in 1864, was the most successful, producing large quantities of utilitarian stoneware for 38 years. The pottery’s principal owner after 1876 was Lydia Moss Bradley (1816–1908), a wealthy local bank president, philanthropist, and the founder of Bradley Polytechnic Institute (now Bradley University).

Taking advantage of Peoria’s excellent transportation networks and the state’s extensive clay and coal resources within easy transport distance, Peoria Pottery supplied much of Illinois and the western markets with high quality stoneware products. Salt-glazed stoneware, hand-turned and often with blue decoration, was replaced in the 1870s by molded wares with a distinctive dark Albany-like slipped glaze that often attained a high sheen and a dark pumpkin color—the “Peoria Glaze.”

Peoria Pottery’s products were utilitarian: fruit and canning jars, butter pots, churns, cuspidors, pitchers, and water coolers, along with bowls, crocks, and jugs in a variety of sizes. Output was prodigious: in April 1875, the *Peoria Daily Transcript* reported that the pottery produced 500,000 flower pots, 36,000 fruit jars, and 100,000 milk pans each year. They also produced thousands of bricks, along with terra cotta lawn ornaments, window boxes, and umbrella stands. The company’s two traveling salesmen, constantly on the road, assured that tons of pottery was sold every day.

After 1888, they also offered a variety of plain or decorated “whitewares” that included pitchers, toiletry, and tableware. According to the *Peoria Journal Transcript*, Peoria Pottery Company exhibited “fine dinnerware in delicate pastel colors, including pale green and salmon” at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. The pottery ceased business in 1902, as a result of the era’s consumers’ increasing preference for storage containers of tin and glass.

Mansberger, Floyd R., with Eva Dodge Mounce.  
“The Potteries of Peoria, Illinois,” (Springfield, IL:  
The Foundation for Historical Research of Illinois Potteries,  
1990) Circular Series vol. 2 no. 1.

“Peoria Pottery Company,” *History of Peoria County, Illinois*  
(Chicago: Johnson & Co., 1880): 559–560.



*Jug, 1870–1902*  
Slip-glazed stoneware, 12¼ × 9 × 10 inches  
Collection of the Peoria Historical Society





**Lyon & Healy** Chicago, Illinois (active 1864–present)

“Let’s build a harp that will no longer worry its owner because of its liability to get out of order easily; let us build a harp that will go around the world without losing a screw,” declared George W. Lyon in the 1870s, when he noticed his company’s repair shops received a constant stream of harps frequently requiring a great amount of work. At the time, Lyon & Healy was in the piano business, and the sole Chicago-area representative of Steinway & Sons. The firm had been operating since 1864, when a Boston music publisher dispatched Lyon and Patrick J. Healy to Chicago to start a sheet music shop to sell his publications.

After years of research and development, Lyon & Healy built its first harp in 1889. At the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893, the company’s exhibition of harps received a supreme diploma by the jury of awards for its many improvements to this ancient instrument. The company’s earliest harps highlighted the woodworking skill of its artisans with delicately inlaid marquetry and highly embellished floral carving gilded with gold leaf, as many still do today.

Although styling evolved over the years, Lyon & Healy harps continue to combine the latest technology with old-world craftsmanship. Both the woodworking for the harp and metalworking for the mechanism have been executed in-house by skilled craftsman in the company’s Chicago factory since the 1890s. Sitka Spruce, noted for strength, resilience and rich resonance, is used for the frame of the body and, most importantly, the soundboard of the harp. Hard Maple forms the column, neck, and body—chosen for its visual distinctiveness as well as for its structural vitality. Because the strings pull with up to 2,000 pounds of pressure, the harp’s structural foundation must be extremely strong. Lyon & Healy artisans have maintained Healy’s commitment to a practice of old-world craftsmanship while embracing new-world innovations to build “the finest harp in the world” for 154 years.

*Lyon & Healy 150th Birthday Festival 1864–2014* (Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 2014).

*The Lyon & Healy Harp* (Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 1989).

*Harp, Model 175, 1896*

Hard Maple frame, Sitka Spruce soundboard, 70 × 38 inches

Courtesy of Lyon & Healy Harps, Chicago





**Aurora Silver Plate Manufacturing Company** Aurora, Illinois  
(active 1869–1919)

On his 78th birthday in 1892, William F. Dickinson, president of the Aurora Silver Plate Manufacturing Company, received a handsome gift from his board of directors: an ornate silver-plated tilting ice water pitcher on a stand, complete with two goblets. Typical of the firm's creations, it was heavily embellished with engraved floral decorations and soldered filigree. A year later, the company displayed similar pieces at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Founded in 1869 as the Chicago Silver Plating Company, the firm operated for just a few months before moving southwest to Aurora, where it was renamed the Aurora Silver Plate Manufacturing Company. There, in a new four-story factory, a powerful rolling mill turned "white metal"—probably an alloy of tin—into long, flat sheets from which workers shaped hollowware and flatware, which were then silver-plated. Styles and ornamentation were of such quality that it rivaled solid silver, but cost only about one-tenth as much. Hollowware was made in every conceivable pattern and shape, varying in size from salt dips to umbrella stands. Food service items like serving dishes and utensils were most common, but they also made lamps, card receivers, even trophies. Flatware was offered in dozens of patterns, with full lines of serving utensils. In addition to silver-plated white metal, they produced planished tin ware with white metal trimming, gold-plated goods, and gilt-washed items.

Many pieces were incised with birds, landscapes, insects, tree branches, or animals. Others were embellished with soldered decorations—birds, squirrels, dogs, chicks, butterflies, flowers, and other fanciful creations.

In 1920, Evanston silversmiths David and Walter Mulholland purchased the company and renamed it Mulholland Brothers. The brothers had supplied handwrought silver to the Cellini Shop and retail jewelers between 1914 and 1917. They in turn sold the business to new owners around 1924. Renamed Mulholland Silver Co., the firm turned out a handsome line of electroplated nickel-silver tableware and pewter until 1932.

.....  
 Hausmann, Richard A. "The Silver Sunrise; A Brief History of the Aurora Silver Plate Mfg. Co.," *Silver* Part I vol. 7 no. 2 (March–April 1975): 12–16; Part II vol. 8 no. 3 (May–June 1975): 12–15.  
 .....  
 Evon, Darcy L. *Hand-Wrought Arts & Crafts Metalwork & Jewelry 1890–1940* (Schiffer Publishing Co., 2013).  
 .....



*Tilting Ice Water Pitcher on Stand with Two Goblets, 1892*  
 Electroplated nickel, 24 × 11 × 10 inches  
 Inscription: PRESENTED TO/ Wm F. Dickinson/PRES'T. OF AURORA S.P. MFG. CO./  
 on his 78th Anniversary/ BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE COMPANY/ - April 19th 1892.  
 Collection of Aurora Historical Society

**William H. Bartels** Carthage, Illinois (1848, Hanover, Germany–1932, Carthage, Illinois)

A reporter visiting the World’s Columbian Exposition (the 1893 Chicago world’s fair) wrote: “If you are especially lucky you may be shown when you visit the Illinois building Gov. Altgeld’s chambers and reception room. In the executive chamber is the pride of the state; the finest and most valuable suite of parlor furniture that ever came to Chicago.”<sup>1</sup> Some of the wood used in making the furniture was once part of an old farm fence; other wood supposedly came from the beams of the old Mormon temple in Nauvoo, Illinois.<sup>2</sup>

The rail fence originally stood near Carthage, Illinois, on the farm of William H. Bartels, a remarkably skillful wood carver who originally fashioned the furniture for his own home. He whittled a complete suite of parlor furniture from white oak; he then carved a bedroom ensemble using oak and birch.

Artistically carved parlor furnishings loaned to and on display at the Exposition included a fireplace mantel topped by a mirror frame cabinet, chair, and a sofa with an ornate three-panel back. A high-back bed, dressing cases, an armchair, and smaller chairs stood in the bedroom. Although reminiscent of furniture forms popular in the 1880s, Bartels’ designs were entirely original, with ornament drawn from his natural surroundings, using wild roses, oak leaves, and ferns as the basis for most of his decorative work.

Bartels began carving the pieces in 1879; while convalescing from typhoid fever, he passed the time by whittling one of the old oak fence rails with a jackknife. Piece by piece, each requiring months of patient work over eight years, he carved the furniture for his farmhouse. Eventually, he gave up farming and took up carving as a full-time occupation.

Bartels was born in Hanover, Germany in 1848. He came to the United States at the age of nine with his parents, who settled on a farm near Carthage in Hancock County, Illinois. At some point, he left to work in Chicago but returned to look after the family farm and his aged mother after his father died in 1879. He clerked at a Carthage hardware store in the 1890s, which he eventually purchased and operated until the mid-1920s.

Bartels, who never married, kept the furniture in his possession until his death in 1932. Arthur H. Black, a friend from Dallas City, Illinois, bought the entire collection at the auction of Bartels’ estate. After Black died in 1948, his widow kept the collection until 1966, when she lent it to the Illinois State Museum. When Black’s son decided to sell the collection in 1980, it was sent to Sotheby’s auction house in New York. Governor James R. Thompson raised the funds and personally placed the winning bids to purchase both suites for the Illinois Governor’s Mansion.

1. “Gov. Altgeld’s Apartments,” *The Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL), April 26, 1893.

2. “He Carves Wood Well; Mr. Bartels, of Carthage, and His Fine Exhibit,” *The Inter-Ocean* (Chicago, IL), August 9, 1893.

“Open to the People; Illinois State Building Is to Be Dedicated Today,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), May 18, 1893.

“Hand-carved Furniture Forms Museum Display,” *State Journal-Register* (Springfield, IL), June 18, 1972.



*Bedroom Suite*  
Handcarved furniture in oak and birch  
1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois  
Collection of the Illinois Governor’s Mansion Association



*Parlor Suite*  
Handcarved furniture in oak and birch  
1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Illinois  
Collection of the Illinois Governor’s Mansion Association



## Atlan Ceramic Art Club Chicago, Illinois (active 1893–1923)

In February 1893, Florence Pratt Steward organized 15 of Chicago’s most talented female china decorators to create an exhibition of their work in the Woman’s Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Calling themselves the Atlan Ceramic Art Club, they made a creditable showing, winning 18 medals, more than any other club in the country.

The Atlan’s goal was to develop a style of ceramic decoration that would be “original” and “distinctly American.” Toward this end, members adopted “conventional” decoration—the stylization and original configuration of plants and other motifs drawn from nature—as the only acceptable style for their work. It soon became the club’s trademark.

In 1898, seeking professional guidance in design, they engaged Florence Koehler, a talented artist and china painter, who showed them how to use enamel paints on porcelain and introduced the club to her philosophy of Historic Ornament, which advocated deriving conventionalized designs from different cultural traditions—Egyptian, Persian, Arabic, Moorish, East Indian, Chinese, and Japanese. The chocolate pot decorated with stylized Japanese chrysanthemums by Eva E. Adams is an example of the Club’s 1898 course work in Historic Ornament.

The concept of Historic Ornament intrigued Atlan members, who worked to perfect their technique in the various styles for several years. In 1910, Florence Steward exhibited a “conversational set”—a dessert service with each of its seven place settings inspired by one of the seven cultural traditions.

Helen Frazee, who maintained a studio in the Auditorium building, was proficient in figural work, landscapes, and floral studies as well as colorful and imaginative stylized designs. She is credited with the first application of conventionalized designs in low relief enamel on pale yellow Satsuma pottery, which became a hallmark of the club.

Atlan membership was restricted to 25 Chicagoans and a few outsiders, although associate members, who could participate in the annual club training courses, often numbered more than 60. Various members served as president until 1910, when founder Florence Steward was elected director general for life. Most of the active members were professional china decorators, many of whom were graduates of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Several maintained studios where they taught china painting and sold their work; others worked out of their homes. Beginning in 1894, the Atlan Ceramic Art Club held much-anticipated exhibitions of their work at the Art Institute of Chicago. Annual exhibitions continued for 31 years, until the Club merged with the Technic Art League (formerly the Chicago Ceramic Art Association) in 1923. Its memory lives on in the Atlan Ceramic Club Fund, established by members to purchase ceramics for the Art Institute of Chicago’s permanent collection.

..... Darling, Sharon S. *Chicago Ceramics & Glass* (Chicago Historical Society, 1979): 12, 17–29.

..... Steward, Florence. *The History of the Atlan Ceramic Art Club of Chicago, Ill., 1893–1902*. Typewritten manuscript, Chicago History Museum.

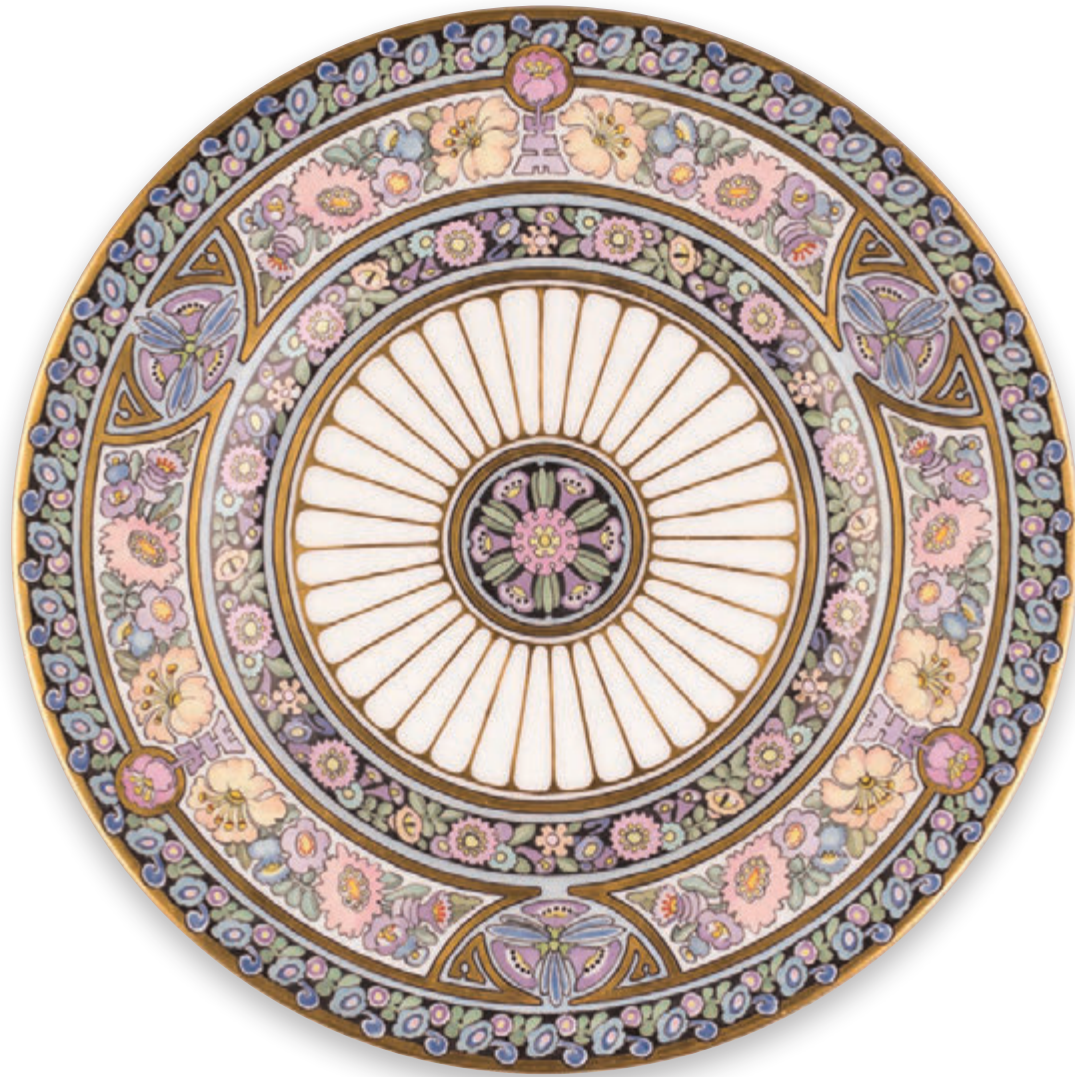


Eva E. Adams (1853, Dubuque, Iowa–1943, Charlevoix, Michigan), decorator  
**Chocolate pot, 1898**  
 Porcelain, 8 ¼ × 5 inches  
 Private Collection



**Atlan Ceramic Art Club** Chicago, Illinois (active 1893–1923)

---



Helen Fenton Frazee (1858, Fairport, New York–1923, Chicago, Illinois), decorator

*Plate, c. 1900*

Porcelain, 10½ inches in diameter

Collection of Chicago History Museum, Gift of Mrs. Clifford Nolan, Sr.

OPPOSITE:

Florence Donovan Pratt Steward (1851, Auburn, New York–1921, Chicago, Illinois), decorator

*“Japanese” Place Setting from Conversation Set in Historic Ornament, 1910*

Porcelain

Cup: 3¼ inches in diameter

Saucer: 5½ inches in diameter

Plate: 8¾ inches in diameter

Inscription: Smiles crown the welcome and make every dish a feast.

Collection of Chicago History Museum, Purchase





## Gustav Frederick Behm Chicago, Illinois (1856, Stralsund, Germany–1926, Chicago, Illinois)

Gustav Frederick Behm, one of Chicago's most celebrated wood carvers, was often called upon to create highly ornamental presentation pieces, such as the mahogany desk and chair he created for Chicago hotel supplier Albert Pick as a wedding gift in 1892. Ornamented with relief profiles of Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller, the desk was accompanied by a chair with a wooden seat that had been carved to resemble leather upholstery secured to the frame with brads. He carved so many copies of the wooden chair seat that he patented the design in 1907.

Born in Germany in 1856, Behm first studied woodcarving with his father, who was a skilled violinmaker and wood worker. In Chicago by 1887, he worked in a studio on the North Side in the city's predominately German neighborhood. Advertising himself as an "artistic wood carver," Behm executed commissions for wealthy Chicagoans ranging from desks to substantial one-of-a-kind dining room suites—complete with table, sideboard, and matching chairs. Many of his dining tables were round, supported by a central pillar that incorporated a unique extension feature that he patented in 1906.

Behm was an instructor at the Art Institute of Chicago from 1890 through 1895 and was a designer and carver of harps for the Wurlitzer Company for almost 20 years. He designed and carved an innovative harp for Wurlitzer that won the highest award at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915.

Three years before his death in 1926, Behm completed *Resurrection Morn*, a religious carving many regarded as "the greatest piece of woodcarving in the country." Behm worked for 28 years to complete the circular bas-relief plaque showing Jesus looking down at a woman weeping at his tomb, the design of which he copyrighted in 1925. Over five feet in diameter, it was carved from a solid log of mahogany sent from Africa to the World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago in 1893.

Several desks carved by Behm feature silhouettes of German poets and literary figures in cabinets above writing tables lavishly carved with scrolls and griffin heads. A mahogany library table with legs and apron ornately carved by Behm now in the Governor's Mansion Collection was used as a desk by Governor James R. Thompson while his private office in the Governor's Mansion was being renovated in 1986.

Darling, Sharon. *Chicago Furniture* (Chicago Historical Society, 1984).

"People at Their Desks," *State Journal-Register* (Springfield, IL), April 25, 1986.

"Rites Held for G. F. Behm, Noted Carver in Wood," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), May 9, 1926.

White, James Terry. "Gustav Behm," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (1927).



### *Desk and Chair, 1892*

Made for Chicago hotel supplier Albert Pick, Sr. (1869–1955) on the occasion of his wedding to Gertrude Frank in 1892.

Mahogany

Desk: 64 × 48 × 25¾ inches

Chair: 43 × 19 × 24 inches

Collection of Chicago History Museum, Gift of Mrs. Albert E. Pick, Jr.



## Pickard China Company Chicago and Antioch, Illinois (active 1894–present)

When former cut glass and artware salesman Wilder A. Pickard (1857–1939) and his wife Minnie launched the company bearing their name in 1894, it was the first commercial studio devoted to volume production of fine hand-painted china for the specialty and gift markets. The company began on a small scale, supplying porcelain blanks to female art students who worked in their Chicago homes, decorating the “fancy china” using mineral paints.

In 1905, Pickard opened a large new studio complex in Chicago’s Ravenswood neighborhood with a staff of 50. By then, the company was successful enough to hire professional artists, many of whom were drawn from Chicago’s large population of highly trained European immigrants. Employees represented many nationalities: French, English, German, Austrian, Bohemian, Hungarian, Polish, and Russian.

Pickard artists developed their own unique patterns with little more supervision than the periodic evaluation of new designs. Among the most celebrated were Robert Hessler, who specialized in stylized designs; Curtis Marker, who excelled at painting flora, landscapes, and ornate birds; Englishman Edward S. Challinor, known for unique landscapes and roses; and Florence James, who demonstrated considerable flexibility in style and subject, whether naturalistic florals or simple borders. It was customary for Pickard artists to sign their work.

In 1911, the company introduced etched gold, a unique process in which the vitreous glaze on the surface of the china was eaten away using hydrofluoric acid. Etched-gold bands added a touch of luxury to Pickard’s colorful hand-painted patterns; its all-over-gold china etched with floral designs was so popular that it was widely imitated by competitors.

A year later, Pickard launched a very successful line of “vellum scenics,” whose delicate pastel colors, applied in matte-finish paints, gave a soft velvet feel and amplified the dreamy mood the scenes portrayed.

By the 1920s, the company’s output had expanded to include hand-painted sets of dinnerware, along with dessert services, tea sets, and after-dinner-coffee services, plus vases and dresser sets. The company was known for its wide variety of exquisite patterns, elegant gold and platinum borders, and artistic renderings of flowers, fruits, figurals, and picturesque scenes.

When Wilder’s son, Austin Pickard, joined the business in the late 1920s, he began experiments in developing a fine china dinnerware body. Finding suitable clay in the northern Antioch area, he moved the company to its present location in 1937. A year later, the company introduced the warm white china with the lion trademark still used today.

In the 1950s, the company responded to changing consumer tastes and a shortage of skilled artists by replacing wholly hand-painted designs with simpler patterns, all-over-gold, decals, monograms, and hand-decorated details. Pickard China remains a family-owned business producing fine Illinois-made ivory and white hand-decorated porcelain dinnerware for retail, government, gift, and food service/commercial customers in its Antioch factory to this day.

The Pickard Collectors Club, whose membership includes many children and grandchildren of Pickard artists, actively shares information and sponsors exhibitions of Pickard porcelain and glass.

Ingram, Tim, and Harry Poulos. *Pickard China, An American Tradition* (Pickard Collectors Club, 2009). Exhibition catalogue, Lake County Discovery Museum.

Platt, Dorothy Pickard. *The Story of Pickard China* (Everybody’s Press, 1970).

Reed, Alan B. *The Collector’s Encyclopedia of Pickard China* (Collector Books, 1995).



Robert Hessler (1872, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania–1961, Chicago, Illinois), designer and decorator

*Cake Plate, “Encrusted Linear,”* 1919–1922

Porcelain

10 $\frac{7}{8}$  × 10 inches

Private Collection

Robert Hessler (1872, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania–1961, Chicago, Illinois), designer  
Isadore Bardos, decorator

*Tea Set, “Encrusted Linear,”* 1919–1922

Porcelain

Teapot 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches; Sugar bowl 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches; Creamer 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  × 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches

Private Collection

**Pickard China Company** Chicago, Illinois (active 1894–present)

---



Edward Stafford Challinor (1876, Stoke Upon Trent, England–1951, Antioch, Illinois), decorator  
**Lemonade Pitcher, “Walled Garden,” 1912–18**  
Porcelain, 6 × 8 inches  
Collection of Sherry Schellenbach



Curtis Henry Marker (1882, Green, Ohio–1936, Chicago, Illinois), decorator  
**Vase, “Chinese Peacock,” 1925–1930**  
Porcelain, 12¾ × 6 inches  
Collection of Sherry Schellenbach



## Heinz Cut Glass Company St. Charles, Illinois (active 1902–1927)

In 1910, Otto Heinz carefully cut an intricate pattern on the blank surface of the large glass vase that he was planning to present as a wedding gift to his June bride, Elizabeth Koenneker. The success of the piece depended upon the precision with which he held it against the grinding stone, which revolved on a machine called a frame, following a pattern of fine red lines drawn on the crystal vase.

Otto was an expert cutter who designed his own patterns. He also developed a method for polishing cut glass pieces by dipping them in acids rather than buffing them with fibers. This made the glassware more brilliant and crystal clear. At the time, the popularity of “brilliant cut glass,” as such ornately cut pieces were called, was at its peak.

Otto was one of three brothers—Emil, Richard, and Otto—who owned and operated the Heinz Cut Glass Company in St. Charles. The Heinz brothers worked in the Chicago factories of Pitkin & Books and the American Cut Glass Co. before launching the Monarch Cut Glass factory with Herman and Frank Kotwitz in 1901. A year later, they bought out the Kotwitz brothers and operated in Chicago as Heinz Bros. In 1905, when a committee of prominent St. Charles businessmen offered incentives to move their works, the brothers moved into a modern two-story factory building in the small Kane County town.

The Heniz Cut Glass Company became one of the largest cut glass cutting factories in the Midwest, selling their products throughout the United States and Europe. Their line included more than 600 items of glass tableware—ranging from perfume bottles and tumblers to lemonade sets and large punch bowls. Most of the heavy glass blanks they used were purchased in Europe. At its peak, about 100 cutting frames were in use, with the factory employing about 90 persons.

In 1913, as the fashion for heavy cut pieces waned, Heinz began cutting and decorating thinner, more delicate American-made glass tableware and mirrors. After World War I, they closed their factory and operated with a small staff in rented quarters until shuttering the business in 1927.

Young, Ellsworth. “Heinz Cut Glass Company,” *The Hobstar* vol. 15, no. 9 (American Cut Glass Association, June 1993): 1, 6–7.  
 “Where Glass is Cut; Factory Running at a Good Clip,” *St. Charles Chronicle* (St. Charles, IL), October 27, 1905, and various newspaper clippings at the St. Charles History Museum.

OPPOSITE:

Otto W. Heinz (1882, Buckow, Germany–1967, St. Charles, Illinois), designer and cutter

**Vase, 1910**

Cut glass, 14 × 7¼ inches

Collection of St. Charles History Museum, St. Charles, Illinois



## Gates Potteries Crystal Lake, Illinois (active 1899–1930)

Founded in 1881, William Day Gates' firm, American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company in Terra Cotta (now Crystal Lake), manufactured architectural terra cotta, one of the basic construction materials used in sheathing the new skyscrapers being built in Chicago and other major cities. Around 1899, Gates introduced a unique line of art pottery that he called Teco ware, a contraction of terra cotta, made by a subsidiary, Gates Potteries.

The decorative pottery made by Gates Potteries was a natural outgrowth of Gates' architectural terra cotta business. Making Teco pottery kept the company's skilled workmen—sculptors, chemists, mold-makers, finishers, and various clayworkers—busy during the slow periods between orders for terra cotta. The same manufacturing processes and kilns were used for producing and firing the pottery. The use of industrial methods of production also allowed Gates to market Teco ware at moderate prices.

Teco art pottery relied on shape and glaze rather than decoration for its appeal. A cool matte green, with some variation in shade and texture, was the staple glaze through their period of highest production, from 1902 until 1909. After 1909, various autumn-inspired colored glazes supplemented the green.

Although an amateur potter, Gates turned to company employees, local artists, and friends in the building industry for assistance in creating unique and distinctly modern shapes. Fellow Chicago Architectural Club members, as well as prominent architects, such as William LeBaron Jenney and Frank Lloyd Wright, provided highly original forms. Architect William J. Dodd, a Jenney protégé, contributed several designs, including a jardinière with lily pads, buds, and arum leaves in relief, inspired by the lily pond located at Gates' factory.

Fritz Albert, his chief architectural modeler between 1893 and 1909, not only sculpted the elegant forms in clay but contributed striking avant-garde designs of his own. Gates himself designed many shapes, ranging from simple vases to architectonic pieces with straps and buttresses. Artists Blanche Ostertag, Holmes Smith, and Orlando Giannini contributed designs. Giannini's art glass company also fabricated shades for Teco lamps as well as American's stunning glass pavilion at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. By then, Gates Potteries offered nearly 300 shapes.

Teco was made sporadically through the 1920s. In 1930, Gates sold American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company to George A. Berry, Jr., who reorganized the company as American Terra Cotta Corporation in 1935. In addition to its architectural construction products, the company made garden pottery under the name of Teco Potteries from the mid-1930s until 1952.

Darling, Sharon S. *Teco: Art Pottery of the Prairie School* (Eric Art Museum, 1989).

Darling, Sharon S. *Chicago Ceramics & Glass* (Chicago Historical Society, 1979).



LEFT TO RIGHT:

Fritz Wilhelm Albert (1865, Cocceye Neud, Germany–1940, Chicago, Illinois), designer

***Teco Vase 310, with Twisted Leaf Blades, 1902–1906***

Glazed earthenware, 18¼ × 6¼ inches

Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois

***Teco Vase 313, Ear of Corn, 1905***

Glazed earthenware, 16 × 15 inches

Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois

***Teco Vase 117, with Oblong Voids, 1905***

Glazed Earthenware, 13½ × 5 inches

Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois



**Gates Potteries** Crystal Lake, Illinois (active 1899–1930)

---



William James Dodd (1862, Quebec, Canada–1930, Los Angeles, California), designer  
*Teco Jardinère 086, with Water Lilies, 1902*  
Glazed earthenware, 9 $\frac{5}{8}$  × 10 inches  
Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois

OPPOSITE:

*Teco Lamp, c. 1906*  
Overall height 24 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches

**Teco Loving Cup or Lamp Base 500G:**  
William Day Gates (1852, Ashland, Ohio–1935, Crystal Lake, Illinois), designer  
Glazed earthenware, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  × 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches

**Lamp Shade:**  
Giannini & Hilgart, Chicago (active 1899–present), maker  
Orlando Giannini (1860, Cincinnati, Ohio–1928, San Diego, California), designer  
Art glass, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 14 inches  
Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois





## Norse Pottery Company Rockford, Illinois (active 1903–1912)

“Not only new to Rockford, but new to all America,” declared a local newspaper reporter visiting the city’s Norse Pottery in 1905. “The cardinal idea of the line is the reproduction of the forms and decorations of antique bronze, found in exhumations of the old Norse and Greek arts,” he explained, noting “the appearance of the work is that of old bronze, after exhumation from long hidden places in the earth, the cutting of the figures being colored with the effects of verdigris.”<sup>1</sup>

With forms so old that they were new, Norse Pottery’s distinctive wares—most incised with complex knotwork or geometric tracery, others ornamented with lizards or gripping beasts—were translations of ancient bronze relics excavated in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. To preserve the semblance of the originals, the redware bodies were rubbed with a black pigment stain, then antiqued with light green, and highlighted with gold. Most forms were classic, but some were new shapes like plant stands or tobacco jars incised with ferns, oak leaves, grapes, or other “modern effects.” A few were examples of Greek or Egyptian art.

The unique “Nordic flavor” designs were the work of Thorvald P. A. Samson (1873–1947) and Louis Ipsen (Ipsen) (1870–1940), two professionally trained potters from Denmark who immigrated to Edgerton, Wisconsin, to work for Pauline Pottery in 1891. They produced terra-cotta busts and figurines at their own American Art Clay Works for a few years before establishing the Norse Pottery Works in 1903. As its sole employees, the men manufactured, designed, and decorated each piece. They moved to Rockford when Arthur W. Wheelock, owner of a large retail and wholesale crockery store, agreed to underwrite the operation and market its products.

Chartered as Norse Pottery Company in 1904 with Wheelock as majority owner, the new Rockford enterprise operated in a well-equipped building with two kilns, using clay drawn from the west bank of the Rock River. Samson and Ipsen, who functioned as designers and mold makers, supervised employees drawn from the city’s large Scandinavian population. At first, the pottery was sold principally through Wheelock’s stores; later, agents marketed it throughout the Midwest. A large catalogue, *The Story of Norse Pottery*, illustrated 113 pieces and explained the origin of each design.

Starting with only a dozen models in 1904, the pottery was offering 129 different designs by the time it ceased production in 1913. By then, Samson and Ipsen had left the company. Norse pottery continued to be sold through 1917, when Wheelock retired from the crockery business.

1. “Rockford Has Place in Arts; Norse Pottery Has Its Reproductions of Antique Bronzes Nearly Completed; A Novelty in Ceramics,” *Daily Register-Gazette* (Rockford, IL), April 18, 1905, p. 1.

“New Pottery for Rockford; A. W. Wheelock Will Start Manufacture of Goods,” *Morning Star* (Rockford, IL), October 27, 1904.

Norse Pottery Company, *The Story of Norse Pottery Ware*, 1906. Chicago History Museum.

“Pottery Factory in Rockford,” *Rockford Republic* (Rockford, IL), March 8, 1905.

Rockford’s Little Known Crafts, No. 1: The Norse Pottery Makers, *Morning Star* (Rockford, IL), August 12, 1906.

“Pottery Has Good Market; First Season of Manufacture of Norse Line Sees Popularity Well Developed; New Catalogue Out,” *Daily Register-Gazette* (Rockford, IL), October 10, 1906.

“The Norse Pottery Company,” *Glass and Pottery World* vol. 11 no. 12 (December 1904):26.



LEFT-TO-RIGHT:

*Covered Urn*, 1903–1912  
Glazed earthenware, 6 × 4 inches  
Collection of John Danis

*Lizard Vase*, 1903–1912  
Glazed earthenware, 12¼ × 7½ inches  
Collection of John Danis

*Jardinière*, 1903–1912  
Glazed earthenware, 8 × 12 inches  
Collection of John Danis

## Haeger Potteries East Dundee, Illinois (active 1871–2016)

Haeger Potteries was a family business, managed by four successive generations, which began in 1871 when German-born David H. Haeger purchased an existing brickyard producing bricks, drain tile, and flower pots in East Dundee. The company began its art pottery production when his son Edmund hired well-known ceramic engineer J. Martin Stangl, formerly with Fulper Pottery of New Jersey, in 1914.

The first piece of Haeger artware was a classic Greek vase nicknamed named “Adam;” a companion vase, called “Eve” followed in 1915. Both featured a lustrous ebony color that would become one of the company’s highly regarded glazes. The first customer to purchase the new artware line was Marshall Field & Company, Chicago’s most prestigious department store. (In 1971, Haeger reproduced the landmark piece, “Adam,” in celebration of its 100th Anniversary in a boxed, numbered series in a Gold Tweed glaze.)

By the 1920s, Haeger was offering a huge variety of vases, flower holders, informal tea and tableware, bookends, candlesticks, and lamps. The use of efficient industrial methods allowed the company to supply its artistic ceramics to department stores, art shops, gift shops, and florists at reasonable prices.

Haeger constructed a complete pottery manufacturing facility at Chicago’s 1934 Century of Progress Exposition where 42 full-time employees turned out over 5,000 pieces of pottery per day. The modern manufacturing methods juxtaposed with ancient Pueblo Indian pottery methods, demonstrated by Native American master potters Maria and Julian Martinez, created a sensation.

In 1938, under the direction of 3rd generation son-in-law Joseph F. Estes, Haeger introduced a new line of artware and lamps called Royal Haeger that featured smooth, flowing lines and innovative glazes. Royal Arden Hickman, chief designer from 1938 to 1944, contributed significantly to the new Royal Haeger line. Hickman’s highly acclaimed designs included his iconic black panther, a sleek elongated stalking cat first produced in 1941.

The critical and consumer success of Haeger Potteries prompted the hiring of many additional name designers to broaden its ceramic lines: among these were Eric Olsen, chief designer from 1944 to 1972; C. Glenn Richardson (1972–1992); Kevin Bradley (1992–2016) and an Italian craftsman-showman, Sebastiano Maglio (1963–1995), who created hand-thrown items as well as those adapted for production.

The broadest and best-selling line in American artware by the 1940s, Royal Haeger evolved to include dinnerware, vases, figurines, planters, and lamps. New lines introduced in the 1950s and onward included Studio Haeger, Haeger Awards, and The Potter’s Mark, which included designs solicited from freelance artists. Facilities expanded with the acquisition of two plants in Macomb, Illinois, to produce florist trade items and lamps.

In the late twentieth century, as imports from overseas competition increased, Haeger, under the 4th generation leadership of Alexandra Haeger Estes (great-granddaughter of the founder) continued to add new colors and products, including a line of bakeware. Eventually, unable to compete, Haeger Potteries closed its doors after 145 years in June of 2016.

Keilman, John. “Haeger Potteries of East Dundee Closing after 145 Years,” *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), May 31, 2016.

Paradis, Joe and Joyce. *The House of Haeger, 1914–1944: The Revitalization of American Art Pottery* (Schiffer, 1999).

Paradis, Joe and Joyce. *The House of Haeger, 1944–1969: The Post-War Era* (Schiffer Pub., 2004).



Johann Martin Stangl (1888, Hoft, Germany–1972, Flemington, New Jersey), designer  
**“Eve” (E-39), 1915–2016**  
**“Adam” (E-1), 1914 (reproduced 1971)**  
 Glazed earthenware  
*Eve* 4 × 5¾ inches; *Adam* 8½ × 3¼ inches  
*Eve*: Private Collection  
*Adam*: Collection of John and Nancy Wendt



Royal Arden Hickman (1892, Portland, Oregon–1969, Mexico), designer  
***Stalking Black Panther*, 1941–2016**  
 Glazed ceramic, 4 × 27 inches  
 Private Collection of Alexandra Haeger Estes



## The Kalo Shop Chicago, Illinois (active 1900–1970)

When Chicagoan Harry Logan Monroe (1869–1930), district manager for the General Electric Company, completed his 30th year with the company in September 1918, he received an elegant sterling silver tray engraved with the names of his Chicago colleagues. Handwrought at the Kalo Shop, the tray was the first of several silver sets presented to Monroe by the company before his death in 1930. The trays and hollowware display characteristics typical of Kalo silver: heavy, with softly rounded or melon-lobed bodies, half-round wires applied to scalloped rims, and a surface sheen with barely visible hammer marks.

In 1918, the Kalo Shop was the largest and most prestigious of the Chicago area shops making handwrought metalwork and jewelry favored as unique gifts for weddings, anniversaries, and other special events. Co-founded in 1900 by Clara Barck Welles and five female graduates of the School of the Art Institute, the shop started as a design studio offering leather goods, weaving, and handmade jewelry. After Welles incorporated the shop in 1905, it operated in Park Ridge as the Kalo Arts Crafts Community, selling an extensive line of crafts out of its shop in Chicago's Fine Arts Building.

Recruiting its first professional silversmith in 1907, the Kalo Shop began offering the finely crafted hammered silver tableware that soon became its hallmark. The Kalo Shop operated in Park Ridge until 1914, when Clara Welles consolidated its workshop with its retail outlet in Chicago. During World War I, with producers facing shortages of silver and of male workers, the shop relied on sales of small items crafted by a team of women designers.

Besides being an astute businesswoman who knew how to market her luxury products, Clara Welles took an active role in advancing women's suffrage and increasing their participation in the arts. Among her many activities, she headed the publicity committee of the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association in 1913 and was a longtime member of the Cordon Club, an organization promoting women in the arts.

The Kalo Shop flourished in the 1920s, with Welles employing more than 30 workmen recruited from a pool of well-trained and talented Scandinavian immigrant silversmiths. Unlike many metal and jewelry shops, it survived the 1930s Depression, albeit with a skeleton crew. The shop occupied various downtown locations until 1936, when it moved to 222 S. Michigan Avenue, where it remained for 34 years.

In 1939, Welles retired to California. She gave the shop to the four remaining crafts workers in 1959: Robert Bower, shop manager; and silversmiths Yngve H. Olsson, Daniel Pederson, and Arne Myhre.

They continued to produce silver in the traditional Kalo styles, along with new designs reflecting their Scandinavian heritage, until the last silversmith died in 1970.

.....  
Darling, Sharon S. in association with Gail Farr Casterline,  
*Chicago Metalsmiths* (Chicago Historical Society, 1977).

.....  
Evon, Darcy L. *Hand-Wrought Arts & Crafts Metalwork & Jewelry  
1890–1940* (Schiffer Publishing Co., 2013).



Clara Barck Welles (1868, Ellenville, New York–1965, San Diego, California), designer  
Presented to Harry Logan Monroe (1869–1930)

### *Tea Set, 1928*

Sterling silver

Teapot: 11 × 10 inches

Creamer: 4¼ × 6 inches

Sugar bowl: 5¼ × 4¼ inches

Tray: 18¼ × 11¼ inches

Tray Inscription: "Harry Logan Monroe / September 13, 1928/ Fortieth Anniversary/with  
General Electric Company/ From His Associates / (25 names)"

Collection of Melissa Monroe Dockum

**The Kalo Shop** Chicago, Illinois (active 1900–1970)

---

Clara Barck Welles (1868, Ellenville, New York–1965, San Diego, California), designer  
Presented to Harry Logan Monroe (1869–1930)

***Engraved Tray, 1918***

Sterling silver, 14¼ inches in diameter

Inscription: “1880 1918/ September Thirteen/ Presented to/Harry L. Monroe/District Manager  
General Electric Company/ by/ His Friends and Associates/ Local Office and Department  
Managers/ Chicago District/ (15 signatures)”

Collection of Melissa Monroe Dockum





## The Jarvie Shop Chicago, Illinois (active c. 1900–1917)

In 1907, a group of Chicago artists, musicians, poets, architects, and art enthusiasts founded The Cliff Dwellers Club as a place to engage in lively discussion in a clubhouse perched on the peak of an urban cliff, or skyscraper. When the club moved into a penthouse atop Orchestra Hall in 1909, they adopted Native American motifs as appropriate décor, commissioning a mural of a Navaho family, and designing Indian motifs for china and napkins used in their dining room, the Kiva. To celebrate the club's third anniversary, president Charles L. Hutchinson commissioned a punch bowl from metalsmith and fellow member Robert Riddle Jarvie. This stunning handwrought silver bowl emulates the corrugated baskets handwoven by the Anasazi, examples of which Jarvie could have seen at the Field Museum.

Apparently Jarvie's aptitude for metalworking came instinctively, for there is no record of his receiving any formal training. Born to Scottish parents in New York, Jarvie moved to Chicago from Minneapolis in 1893. He worked for the city's Board of Transportation, and was promoted to superintendent in 1901. Occupying his leisure hours with various crafts, he began experimenting with metalworking in 1900. That year he exhibited his work in the Third Annual Chicago Arts and Crafts Exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Jarvie and his wife, Lillian Gray, operated a series of home workshops until 1905, when they opened The Jarvie Shop. By then he was nationally known as "The Candlestick Maker" for the elegant cast brass, bronze, and copper candlesticks he exhibited in regional Arts and Crafts exhibitions and advertised in homemaker magazines. In 1910, the shop began offering objects handwrought in silver as well as copper and brass after hiring John P. Petterson, a skilled Norwegian-trained Swedish silversmith.

Jarvie's ability to create unusual and appropriate presentation pieces attracted the attention of Arthur G. Leonard, president of the Union Stock Yard Company, who invited him to move his business to the Chicago Stock Yards in 1912. There he created trophies for the International Livestock Exposition and other competitions, in addition to cast and handwrought tableware, library accessories, sconces, and lighting fixtures.

When the United States entered World War I, Jarvie closed his shop and served in France and England under the auspices of the National War Work Council of the YMCA.

After the war, Jarvie worked as a salesman at C. D. Peacock in Chicago, while his wife was employed as a secretary at Northwestern University in Evanston. When she retired, the couple moved to the Scottish Old Peoples Home in North Riverside, where he died in November 1941.

Darling, Sharon S. in association with Gail Farr Casterline, *Chicago Metalsmiths* (Chicago Historical Society, 1977).

Evon, Darcy L. *Hand-Wrought Arts & Crafts Metalwork & Jewelry 1890–1940* (Schiffer Publishing Co., 2013).

Maher, Thomas K. *The Jarvie Shop: The Candlesticks and Metalwork of Robert R. Jarvie* (Turn of the Century Editions, 1997).

McGoey, Elizabeth (ed.). *American Silver in the Art Institute of Chicago* (Art Institute of Chicago, 2016).



Robert Riddle Jarvie (1865, Schenectady, New York–1941, Chicago, Illinois), designer

### *Punch Bowl for The Cliff Dwellers Club, 1910*

Sterling silver, 10½ inches high and 16¾ inches in diameter

Inscription on bottom of bowl: THE/CLIFF-DWELLERS/Jarvie/1910/PRESENTED BY/CHARLES-L- HUTCHINSON  
The Cliff Dwellers Club of Chicago

**The Jarvie Shop** Chicago, Illinois (active c. 1900–1917)

---



Robert Riddle Jarvie (1865, Schenectady, New York–1941, Chicago, Illinois), designer  
*“Alpha” Candlestick, 1903–1917*  
Brass, 11¼ × 5 inches  
Private Collection



*“Tota” Candlestick, c. 1906*  
Copper, 14 × 7¾ inches  
Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois



*Candelabrum, c. 1904*  
Brass, 14 × 7¼ inches  
Inscription on base: *Only 4 of these candlesticks made, this being No. 1.*  
Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois



*Kappa Candelabrum, c. 1906*  
Silver plated, 14 × 12 × 12 inches  
Private Collection



**Jessie M. Preston** Chicago, Illinois (1873, Oak Park, Illinois–1962, Baldwinsville, New York)

“Miss Jessie Preston is a young Chicago artist, the maker of a candlestick that promises to light her path to fame,” predicted a newspaper reporter in 1900, describing its ingenious floral form: “Three stems rise from a base of twining fish. They are turned naturally as they rise about 15 inches from the base. The stems separate and branch off, and small blossoms at the top form the candle holder.”<sup>1</sup> When her new design went on sale, four dozen were ordered in less than a week.

Jessie Marion Preston first gained recognition as a designer of cast bronze candlesticks and candelabrum whose graceful lines incorporated art nouveau sinuousness in the form of water lilies, thistles, morning glories, or similar floral motifs. She went on to become one of the country’s foremost craftswomen in the new field of art jewelry.

Born in Oak Park, Preston was one of the first female graduates of the School of the Art Institute’s decorative design course to earn her living as a metalsmith and jeweler. After graduating in 1896 and completing a year of postgraduate study, she opened a studio in the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue, where she fashioned her distinctive candlesticks in brass, copper, and silver. It was there she also made silver and gold jewelry set with semi-precious stones.

Preston exhibited her handwrought jewelry and metalwork in the Arts and Crafts exhibitions held annually at the Art Institute of Chicago from 1902 through 1911 and in similar shows in Minneapolis, Indianapolis, and other midwestern cities. A teacher as well as a practitioner, she offered instruction in jewelry-making to readers of *The Sketch Book* in 1905 and taught metalworking at Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts in 1907 and 1908. She offered her work through the Artists Guild of Chicago after 1911.

During World War I, Preston contributed her skilled hands to the war effort. In 1918, she closed her Chicago studio and moved to France under the auspices of the Red Cross, where she taught vocational crafts and assisted Chicago artist Grace Gassette in making prosthetics for wounded soldiers. After the war, she registered the graves of American soldiers in France.

Preston studied at the Sorbonne and made jewelry in Paris until 1934, when she returned to the United States to live in New York City. Under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), she conserved rare books for the New York Public Library. Her retirement years were spent in the small town of Baldwinsville, New York, where she died at the age of 88 in 1962.

1. “The Lady of the Candlestick,” newspaper clipping, undated c. 1900 in scrapbook of Jessie Preston, Art Institute of Chicago, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, 2005.3.

Darling, Sharon S. *Chicago Metalsmiths* (Chicago Historical Society, 1977)

Evon, Darcy L. *Hand-Wrought Arts & Crafts Metalwork & Jewelry 1890–1940* (Schiffer Publishing Co., 2013).

McGoey, Elizabeth (ed.). *American Silver in the Art Institute of Chicago* (Art Institute of Chicago, 2016).



*Candelabrum with Water Lilies and Fish*, c. 1901

Bronze, 18 × 12 × 11 inches

Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois

**Jessie M. Preston** Chicago, Illinois (1873, Oak Park, Illinois–1962, Baldwinsville, New York)

---



*Tabletop Box, c. 1912*  
Bronze, 11½ × 8¼ × 3 inches  
Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois



*Desk Set, c. 1902–05*  
Bronze  
Inkwell: 11½ × 7½ × 4⅜ inches  
Box: 4⅜ × 2⅝ × 1¾ inches  
Letter opener: 8 inches in length  
Ink wipe: 2¾ × 2 inches  
Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois



**Henri Anton Eicher** Park Ridge, Illinois (active 1909-1919)  
(1876, Zurich, Switzerland -1923, Park Ridge, Illinois)

Made in Park Ridge by Henri Anton Eicher, the Kalo Shop's first silversmith foreman, this handwrought silver coffee set displays classic Park Ridge-era Kalo characteristics: softly hammered surfaces, paneled bodies, rectangular handles, half-round wire outlining rims, and an applied monogram that personalized the set for the owner.

The Swiss-born Eicher, his future wife Asta, and her mother immigrated in 1907 from Copenhagen, Denmark, where he had worked as a silversmith. Joining the Kalo Shop in 1909 as manager of its silversmiths, Eicher established a studio workshop in his Park Ridge garage and barn, where he and other Kalo silversmiths worked in their off-hours. The barn/workshop also served as an incubator for the Randahl Shop, the Volund Shop, and Eicher's own business, H. A. Eicher, which he established in 1915.

Sterling silver items produced in Eicher's shop included tea and coffee services, water pitchers, fluted bowls, salad servers, bread trays, and vases, as well as cufflinks and other small jewelry items. He is also known to have made a silver chalice for St. Mary's Catholic Church in Park Ridge. Eicher displayed his handwrought sterling silverware in a showroom in the Heyworth Building in Chicago, where he retained a manufacturer's agent to sell the goods to jewelers and specialty shops throughout the country.

Eicher, assisted by four to six part-time silversmiths, executed silver pieces designed by Asta until about 1919, when he developed mental illness. After his death in 1923, Asta retained the shop's silversmiths for several years, before closing the studio and executing silver work on commission for the Kalo Shop.

In 1931, her resources depleted, Asta became entangled with a confidence man who posed as a wealthy suitor during their brief mail-order courtship. Assuming that Asta was rich, he lured her and her three children to West Virginia, where he murdered the whole family. The sensational trial of the "Bluebeard of Clarksburg" made headlines around the world.

Evon, Darcy L. "Henri Anton Eicher," *Hand-Wrought Arts & Crafts Metalwork & Jewelry, 1890-1940* (Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2013): 80-82.

Lofthouse, Patricia. "The Murders of the Eicher Family of Park Ridge in Quiet Dell, West Virginia," *Chicago Tribune*, triblocal.com, October 12, 2014.



Henri Anton Eicher (1876, Zurich, Switzerland-1923, Park Ridge, Illinois), maker

***Coffee Service, 1915-1923***

Sterling silver

Tray: 24 ½ × 15 inches

Coffee pot: 8 ¼ × 8 ¾ inches

Sugar bowl: 3 × 5 inches

Creamer: 3 × 5 inches

Collection of Crab Tree Farm, Lake Bluff, Illinois

## Frank Lloyd Wright (1867, Richland Center, Wisconsin–1959, Phoenix, Arizona), designer Art Glass Window for Ward W. Willits House Chicago, Illinois

In his designs for Prairie-style houses, Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright expanded the frontiers of residential stained glass both in use and in design. He combined bold geometric groups of color with clear polished plate glass to form complex rectilinear designs. To hold together the small pieces of glass and support the entire pane, he specified rigid comes—dividers and supports between sections of glass—of zinc or brass rather than malleable lead. Instead of puncturing the facade with individual windows, he set bands of decorative leaded glass casement windows, termed “light screens,” throughout the entire building. Similar decorative art glass in doors, lamps, and ceiling lighting reinforced the key elements in the architecture’s design and created a harmonious whole.

One of the first houses in which the Prairie-style aesthetic was fully visible was the Highland Park home that Wright completed for Ward W. Willits in 1902. A large two-story structure of wood frame and stucco, it contains more than 100 art glass windows. Their pattern is resolutely rectilinear, with very little color, although gold leaf sandwiched between pieces of clear glass provides warmth and sparkle.

At the time, Willits was vice-president of Adams & Westlake, a large railroad supply house that operated its own brass and bronze foundry. Artist Orlando Giannini, employed by Adams & Westlake from 1894 to 1898, may have introduced Willits to Wright, for whom he was painting a pair of murals in the architect’s Oak Park home.

Orlando Giannini became a partner in the art glass firm of Giannini & Hilgart in 1899. Ohio-born Giannini (1860–1928), trained as a sculptor, was the studio’s designer; Frederick “Fritz” Hilgart (1867–1943), trained as a glass cutter in his native Germany, managed the shop and fabricated the glass. The firm executed art glass windows and glass mosaic tiles for numerous Chicago architectural firms, including commissions for Wright. The Willits glass work is attributed to the firm based on Giannini’s association. The company also designed and created art glass lampshades for Teco art pottery made by the Gates Potteries in Crystal Lake.

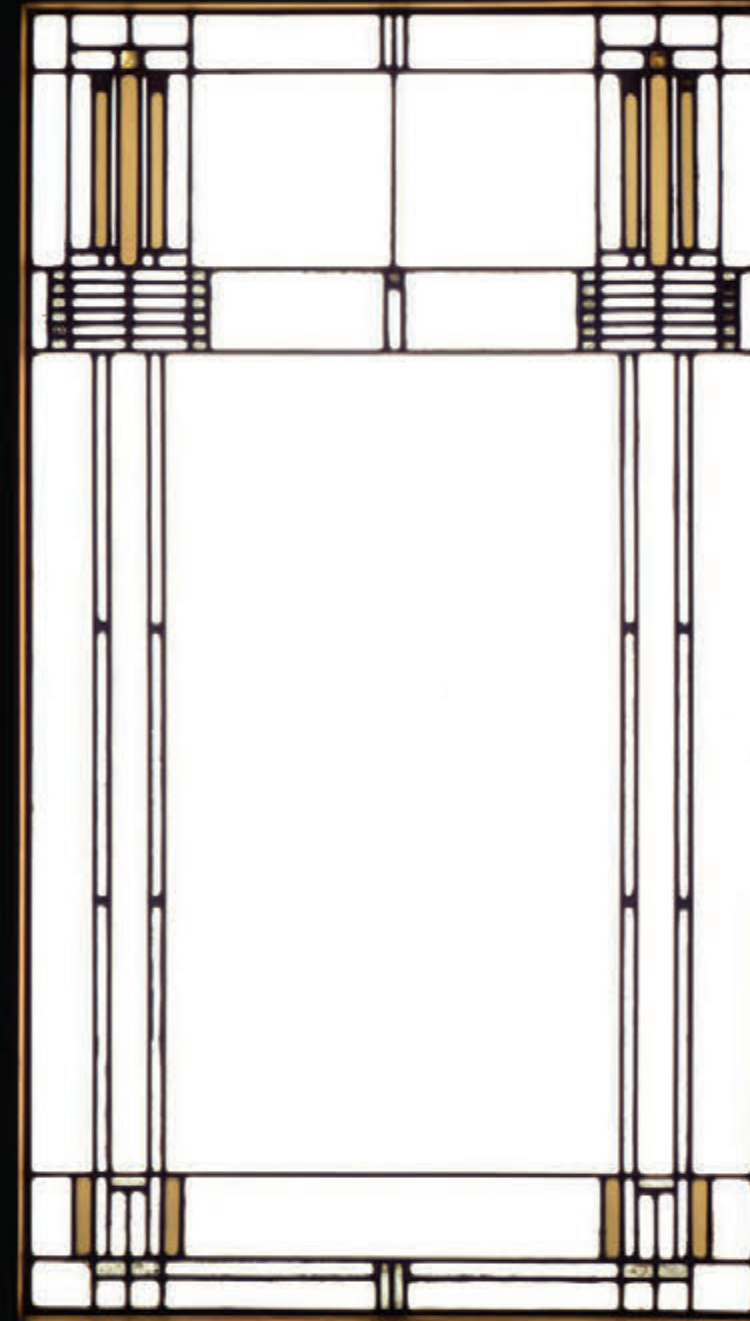
Although Orlando Giannini left the firm around 1907, it continued to operate; Giannini & Hilgart still exists in Chicago under different ownership.

Giannini & Hilgart Studios: *Decorative Glass, Glass Mosaic, Ecclesiastical and Domestic Memorial and Figure Windows* (Chicago: Giannini & Hilgart Studios, c. 1905).

Hanks, David A. *The Decorative Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright* (E. P. Dutton, 1979).

Heinz, Thomas A. *Frank Lloyd Wright Glass Art* (Wiley, 1994).

Sloan, Julie L. *Light Screens: The Leaded Glass of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Rizzoli International, 2001).



Giannini & Hilgart (active 1899–present), Chicago, Illinois, maker  
*Art Glass Window for Ward W. Willits House, Highland Park, 1902*  
Clear glass, opalescent glass, gilded glass, zinc comes, 34 × 26¼ inches  
Collection of Chicago History Museum, Gift of the Willits Robinson Foundation



**Frank Lloyd Wright** (1867, Richland Center, Wisconsin–1959, Phoenix, Arizona), designer  
**Dana-Thomas House Dining Chair** Chicago, Illinois

When Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright designed this straight-backed oak chair for the dining room of Susan Lawrence Dana’s new Springfield house in 1902–04, dining in upper-class homes was a formal affair. Most women wore rigid corsets, and an upright posture at the dinner table was the expected etiquette. When placed around the dining table, the chairs’ tall backs of vertical square slats created an airy screen, invoking a sense of privacy that encouraged conversation.

Susan Lawrence Dana (1862–1946) was a widowed heiress with a flamboyant personality who loved to entertain. Recognizing a kindred spirit, Wright worked with her and a dream budget to design and build one of his largest and most ambitious Prairie-style houses. Evoking the native prairie landscape of the Midwest, the principles of its design were strong horizontal lines, flat or hipped roofs with broad overhanging eaves, windows grouped in horizontal bands, integration with the landscape, and discipline in the use of ornament.

Wright preferred built-in furniture for his structures, as a means of controlling the total interior scheme. Tables, cabinets, desks, and other case pieces exhibited “carefully calculated horizontality,” recalling the extended cantilevers of the exterior roofs. Movable pieces were designed for a specific location to create a balanced and unified composition. For the Dana House, Wright designed three similar tables that could be placed together for seating large groups in the dining room. Each table included supports that would slide out from under the tabletop to hold extra leaves. The home was renamed the Dana-Thomas House to honor Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Thomas, a successful medical publisher and his wife, who purchased the house in 1944 and were dedicated to its preservation over the 36 years that they owned it.

While carefully assembled and finished by hand, Wright’s designs for the Dana furniture took advantage of the absolutely straight lines made possible by modern woodworking machinery. To bring out “the nature of the materials”—in this case the grain of seasoned oak—Wright specified that furniture be stained rather than varnished. Construction details were rarely visible, and each element was finished with equal care, so that the pieces could be admired in the round. Indeed, Wright’s furniture, exemplified by that completed for Susan Lawrence Dana, can be regarded as architectural sculpture rather than merely utilitarian objects—part of a thoughtfully considered larger sculptural whole.

Acquired from the Thomas family by the State of Illinois in 1981, it is now an Illinois State Historic Site, a National Historic Landmark on the Register of National Historic Places, and open to the public as the Dana-Thomas House. It retains much of its original furniture, art glass, and decorative light fixtures, in fact, housing the largest and best-preserved collection of site-specific Wright objects.

Hanks, David A. *The Decorative Designs of Frank Lloyd Wright* (E. P. Dutton, 1979).

Heinz, Thomas A. *Frank Lloyd Wright Interiors & Furniture* (Gibbs Smith, 1994).



*Dining Chair for Susan Lawrence Dana House, Springfield, 1902*

Oak, 51 × 18¼ × 17¼ inches

Collection of Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

## Tobey Furniture Company Chicago, Illinois (active 1856–1954)

“In point of design, quality of materials and integrity of construction, each piece of Tobey Handmade Furniture is as perfect as the highest artistic skill and the best available craftsmanship, painstakingly directed toward the achieving of our ideals, can make it,” promised the Tobey Furniture Company in advertisements placed in *House & Garden* and similar homemaker magazines.<sup>1</sup> Inquirers were sent a beautifully printed booklet that tactfully explained the philosophy underlying the character and artistry of the company’s distinctive, albeit expensive, furniture.

The Tobey Furniture Company, a retail furniture dealer in Chicago since 1856, became manufacturers in 1870 when it acquired a local cabinet shop. Special designs for architects and interior designers were executed along with furniture for the store’s retail customers and for stock. It also offered a wide variety of fine furniture purchased from manufacturers.

In 1888, Tobey’s president, Frank B. Tobey, secured the services of Wilhelm F. Christiansen, an excellent Norwegian cabinetmaker who became partner in a subsidiary firm—the Tobey & Christiansen Cabinet Company. From then until his death in 1918, Christiansen supervised the factory where 40 cabinetmakers and 35 finishers and polishers made the high-quality, expensive furniture that placed the Tobey Furniture Company in the top rank of American furniture makers.

Beginning in 1898, Tobey advertised the exclusive line made in their own factory as Tobey Handmade Furniture. Chairs, sofas, tables, and desks, as well as bedroom and dining room suites were made in a variety of styles from solid mahogany, curly maple, or weathered oak. While many pieces were plain almost to severity, others featured elaborate forms and hand-carved details inspired by eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English and American furniture.

In 1901, the company introduced several designs that echoed the exuberant curvilinear lines and organic forms embodied in the distinctive art nouveau furniture promoted as “the new art” at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Tobey’s “New Art” line, executed in fine mahogany, included a Drawing Room suite comprising tables with supports of swirling leaves, and chairs and sofas whose curvilinear forms were accented with bursts of naturalistic foliage. According to *Furniture World*, the pieces were exact reproductions of pieces shown at the Paris Exposition.

By September 1905, the company’s pieces had become so popular that the company opened a retail store in New York City where it sold only Tobey Handmade Furniture. The line was offered until 1930, when the demand for furniture declined with the onset of the Great Depression.

- 1. *House & Garden* 12 (1907): 23.
- 2. *Furniture World* 2 (March 14, 1901): 19.



Tobey-Christiansen Cabinet Company, maker  
**Card Table, 1901–1910**  
 Mahogany, 39¼ × 36 × 18¼ inches  
 Collection of Chicago History Museum



**Cellini Craft, Ltd.** Evanston, Illinois (active 1933–1957)

When Evanston metalsmith Hans Max Grag designed and made this aluminum chafing dish and candelabra in the late 1930s, he combined three popular modern materials: aluminum; colorful ceramic tile; and Bakelite, an early heat-resistant plastic. It is an example of a line of aluminum tableware called *Argental* (meaning silver-like), introduced by Cellini Craft, Ltd. in 1933. Advertised as “new, lightweight, silver-like, non-tarnishing, strong as steel but entirely hand wrought,” *Argental* was stylish but inexpensive—an important factor during the Great Depression, when few could afford to purchase costly sterling silver tableware.

Cellini Craft, Ltd., was a subsidiary business of The Cellini Shop, a small Evanston retailer specializing in handwrought jewelry and silver tableware, owned by brothers Ernest and Walter Gerlach. Ernest, trained in Marshall Field & Company’s crafts shops in Chicago, opened the shop in 1914; Walter, who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, joined him as designer and silversmith in 1919. Hans Grag, who had owned an art metal studio in his native Germany, joined the firm around 1926.

Soon after Hans Grag’s arrival, they began making hollowware in hammered aluminum in addition to handwrought silver. He executed experimental designs in silver-plated copper. If they sold well, they would be reproduced in quantity in sterling, silver plate, or aluminum. In 1933, Walter Gerlach and Grag formed Cellini Craft, Ltd. with New York giftware dealer Max Wille, whose role was to create a national market for the firm’s *Argental* products.

In its Evanston workshop, Cellini Craft metalsmiths hammered out a wide range of serving pieces—everything from syrup pitchers to sugar bowls and creamers; butter knives to salad servers; and trays in a variety of sizes. Casserole dishes with Pyrex® inserts were particularly popular, with some lids decorated with ceramic tile, Bakelite knobs, or colorful enamel escutcheon plates. While labor-saving machinery was used to form bodies of some hollowware, complex pieces combining many shapes and materials, such as this chafing dish and candelabra, were entirely made by hand.

After Hans Grag and Max Wille ended their affiliation with the company in 1949, Cellini Craft was reincorporated by Walter Gerlach and his siblings, Ernest and Martha. They continued to market their products nationally until 1957, when the Cellini Craft patterns were sold to brothers Scott and Julius Randahl, who operated a metalsmithing shop and retail store in neighboring Skokie.

MeWilliams, Mary. *Art, Craft & Argental: The Cellini Shop in Evanston, 1914–1973* (Evanston History Center, 2015). Exhibition catalogue.



Hans Max Grag (1903, Neumunster, Germany–1965, Nevada, California), designer  
***Chafing Dish & Candelabra, 1933–1949***  
 Aluminum, ceramic, Bakelite  
 Dish: 10 × 14 inches in diameter  
 Candelabra: 7¼ × 8½ inches  
 Collection of Mary B. McWilliams

**West End Furniture Company** Rockford, Illinois (active 1890–1940)  
**and**  
**E. H. Scott Radio Laboratories** Chicago, Illinois (active 1925–1949)

Home radios were a coveted new communications technology in the 1920s when Gustaf A. Stockhus, manager of Rockford’s West End Furniture Company, brought home one of his company’s latest productions: an elaborately handcarved radio console. Resting upon cabriole legs, the walnut cabinet featured roses, leaves, scrolls, shells, and a lion’s head on its base; cupids played musical instruments on each of its doors. Inside was a new radio supplied by E. H. Scott of Chicago.

Gustaf Stockhus was the son-in-law of John Herman Lynn, a Swedish immigrant who organized West End Furniture Company in 1890. Employing up to 150 workers, the company manufactured medium and higher priced bookcases, sideboards, tables, and dining room suites—as well as its new line of radio cabinets—distinguished by hand carving by skilled artisans, rather than power-driven machinery. Guided by its company motto of “correct designs, correct construction, correct finish, correct price,” West End refused to sell to Chicago mail-order houses such as Sears, Roebuck & Co., Marshall Field, and Montgomery Ward. The company maintained a showroom in Chicago’s American Furniture Mart, as well as a factory showroom, until it ceased business in 1940.

West End was one of Rockford’s many Swedish-American-owned furniture factories in the 1920s, when the city’s furniture industry was at its peak. In 1925, some 50 firms turned out furniture in myriad styles and price ranges for homes, offices, and stores, in addition to producing clocks and pianos. Others made products used in or associated with furniture, such as veneers, varnish, mirrors,

or cabinet hardware, and woodworking machinery itself. Several were “co-operative” factories that were owned and operated by their employees, a common but short-lived movement in the Illinois furniture industry.

The radio installed in the cabinet was made in Chicago by E. H. Scott Radio Laboratories, whose high-quality radios were considered leading edge technology from 1925 to 1949. Chicago was an important manufacturing center for radios—the first major consumer electronics products—in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as for televisions from the end of World War II through the early 1970s.

“A Look Back...The Story of Rockford Furniture,”  
*Rock River Times*, July 1, 1993.

Clark, Jim, Kent King & Dave Poland, *The E. H. Scott Radio Collectors Guide* (BookPatch, 2016).

*Rockford’s Furniture Industry* resource packet compiled by the Midway Village Museum Collections Department.

“The Furniture Map of Rockford,” *Rockford Furniture Herald*, April 1925. Rockford Public Library website.

Lundin, Jon W. *Rockford: An Illustrated History* (American Historical Press, 1996).

Olson, Ernst Wilhelm. *The Swedish Element in Illinois: Survey of the Past Seven Decades* (Swedish-American Biographical Association, 1917).



*Radio Console, 1920*

Walnut, 63 × 37 × 18¾ inches

Collection of Midway Village Museum, Rockford, Illinois





**Abel Marius Faidy** Chicago, Illinois (1894, Geneva, Switzerland–1965, Chicago, Illinois), designer

Few works capture the essence of the Jazz Age and America’s premier urban image—the skyscraper—better than the chairs designed by Chicago architect-designer Abel M. Faidy in 1927. Constructed of figured maple and satinwood veneer, and banded with black, the ziggurat shape of the burgundy leather-upholstered chair back echoes the setback shape of the familiar 1920s skyscraper, which was designed to allow more sunlight to the street below.

The chair is part of a 14-piece suite that once filled the combined living-dining space of Charles and Ruth Singletary’s small penthouse apartment in Chicago. Designed for compact urban living, each case piece was multi-functional: the bases of the dining and side tables were fitted with cabinets and drawers; a low-backed chair merged into the back of the cabinet telephone stand; a cabinet, sectioned and grooved to hold sheet music, hung on the wall. The suite was said to have been made in the custom furniture workshop of Marshall Field & Company in Chicago.

The furniture’s dramatic design echoes the unconventional personalities of the couple who commissioned the suite. Chicago entrepreneur Charles Emory Singletary, founder of a subscription book distributorship, and his wife Clara Ruth Palmer, a voice teacher and pianist, were both prominent in Chicago’s literary and musical circles from the 1920s through the 1960s.

Abel M. Faidy was a Swiss-born architect who studied in England and Germany before immigrating to California in 1914. Four years later he moved to Chicago, where he designed commercial interiors. In the 1920s, having developed a reputation for creativity and originality in furniture and interior design, he worked as a freelance architectural designer. He designed stark, sleek interiors for showrooms, offices, and stores, as well as for private patrons, and supplied furniture designs to the city’s major furniture manufacturers. He also taught at the Chicago Academy of Design for several years.

Charles and Ruth Singletary moved the “skyscraper” suite from penthouse to penthouse until Ruth’s death in 1965. It was then purchased by one of her music students, from whom it was acquired by the Chicago History Museum in 1977.

.....  
 Darling, Sharon. *Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft & Industry, 1833–1983* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, and New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984).

.....  
 Davidson, Jean. “After All These Years, Abel Faidy Gains Recognition He Longed For.” *Chicago Tribune*, May 8, 1983.

.....  
 Miller, Nory. “If I Can’t Solve This, I’d Rather Die: Abel Faidy’s Extraordinary Design Quest.” *Inland Architect* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1971): 7–13.  
 .....



Marshall Field & Company Workshop, Chicago, Illinois, maker  
**Skyscraper Chair, 1927**  
 Maple, satinwood, leather, 55¼ × 21⅝ × 22 inches  
 Collection of Chicago History Museum

## The Howell Company Geneva and St. Charles, Illinois (active 1867–1980)

The Howell Company's table no. 810 is an example of the simplified, mass-produced metal furnishings that became readily available to many Americans in the 1930s. While its streamlined form suggested urbane sophistication, the durable, lightweight materials used in its construction made it eminently practical for use in the home—where interiors, and indeed living, were becoming increasingly casual.

Developments in steel and other innovations in metal production in the 1920s and early 1930s had a major impact on furniture design. One of the most dramatic processes produced seamless steel tubing. This new material had the combined advantages of being light, strong, and reasonably inexpensive.

Beginning as a foundry in 1867, the Howell Company produced fluting and sad irons in its Geneva, Illinois, factory until 1923, when it converted operations to make cast-iron furniture. It began producing seamless, chromium-plated, tubular steel frames for modern-styled furniture trademarked "Chromsteel" in 1929. Howell gained national attention when its tubular steel furniture was widely used to furnish model houses and various commercial buildings at Chicago's 1934 Century of Progress Exposition.

During that world's fair, William McCredie, Howell's co-owner, met and hired Wolfgang Hoffmann—who had designed furnishings for one of its model houses—as chief designer for his furniture factory. Hoffmann, the son of famous Viennese architect Josef Hoffmann, was considered one of America's best "modern" designers; his interiors and furnishings were featured in exhibitions, department stores, and newspapers.

From 1934 to 1942, Hoffmann worked exclusively for Howell, designing a wide variety of stylish yet affordable chromium-plated tubular steel furniture for the home and helping commercial clients with their business interiors. Hoffmann was granted at least 29 furniture design patents, all assigned to the Howell Company. When the factory converted to wartime production in 1942 during World War II, Hoffmann left the company and opened Wolfmann Studio in Geneva, where he pursued a successful career as a commercial and industrial photographer until his death in 1969.

In 1935, the Howell Company moved their headquarters to St. Charles, where they expanded both their dinette and commercial furniture lines. The company had showrooms in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles in addition to a permanent display in Chicago's American Furniture Mart.

In 1954, Acme Steel Co. (later Interlake, Inc.) purchased Howell—along with subsidiaries Geneva Modern Kitchens, Elgin Kitchens, and Stanley Corporation—and operated plants in Illinois, Wisconsin, and California. Burd, Inc. acquired the company in 1975 and discontinued operations at the St. Charles plant five years later.

Darling, Sharon. *Chicago Furniture* (Chicago Historical Society, 1984).

"Howell Co. May Close City Plant," *St. Charles Chronicle* (St. Charles, ILL), January 16, 1980.

*Howell Modern Chromsteel Furniture*, Catalog No. 16, 1936.



Wolfgang Hoffmann (1900, Klosterneuburg, Austria–1969, Geneva, Illinois), designer

**Table No. 810, 1936**

Chromium-plated steel, Howelite (Bakelite and laminated hardwood), 18 × 34 × 20 inches

Collection of Carl and Elizabeth Safanda



## Chicago Flexible Shaft Company (later Sunbeam Corporation) Chicago, Illinois (active 1893–1980s)

The sleek chrome-plated *Maxwelton Braes* Sunbeam *Coffeemaster* service set—with its black ribbed handles and wrapping of thin black lines—is a classic of 1930s Depression-era streamlined design. Promoted by its maker as a “smart modern” tableside cooking appliance, the service set included a seven-cup cylindrical server, a vacuum brew-top with filter, 700-watt brew-and-serve heating element, along with creamer, sugar bowl, and circular tray.

Chicago Flexible Shaft Company began in 1893 as a manufacturer of flexible driveshafts, mechanical sheep shears, and other time-saving barnyard machines. In 1910, the company introduced its first home appliance, an electric iron (*Ironmaster*) under the brand name Sunbeam. The Sunbeam *Mixmaster* appeared in 1930, along with a toaster (*Toastmaster*) and a coffeemaker (*Coffeemaster*). By 1946, the appliances were so successful that the firm’s name was changed to Sunbeam.

The coffee server’s cylindrical design was patented as “a pitcher” in 1934 by Michael W. McArdle (1874–1935), president of the Chicago Flexible Shaft Company. With the company since 1905, the Wisconsin-born lawyer worked in the company’s sales and advertising departments before serving as general manager. He was named president in 1927.

McArdle helped design many of the Sunbeam products, as well as the tools and processes used to manufacture them. It is said that he often brought the prototypes of Sunbeam products back to his hometown of Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, to be tested by his sister-in-law, whom he credited with many subsequent improvements.

An avid golfer, McArdle began building a golf course and clubhouse on land that was formerly the McArdle family farm in Baileys Harbor in 1929. He chose the resort’s name from the line in the song, “The Ballad of Annie Laurie”—“Maxwelton braes are bonnie.” (Annie’s father was the first baronet of Maxwelton in Scotland; *brae* means hillside.) It also alluded to his family’s Scots-Irish heritage and the Scottish origins of the modern game of golf.

Suffering from cancer, McArdle died in May 1935, shortly before the modernistic set was advertised for sale. It is not known if the set was intended for use in the lodge and cottages at Maxwelton Braes or named in memory of its designer.

Matranga, Vicki. “Housewares History: Ever Think of Coffee Drinking as Romantic? Savor a Sip of 1930s Glamour,” International Housewares Association, [Blog.housewares.org](http://Blog.housewares.org), August 22, 2011.

“M. W. McArdle, 60, Dies in Chicago,” *Green Bay Press-Gazette* (Green Bay, WI), May 17, 1935.

“Michael McArdle’s Memorial is Bonny Maxwelton Braes,” *Milwaukee Journal* (Milwaukee, WI), June 16, 1935.

Williamson, Patti. “Michael McArdle: Bailey Harbor’s Benefactor,” *Door County Living*, September 1, 2012.



Michael William McArdle (1874, Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin–1935, Chicago, Illinois), designer  
**“Maxwelton Braes” Coffeemaster Service Set, 1934**  
 Chrome-plated metal, 13¼ × 14¼ inches overall  
 Private Collection

## Western Stoneware Company Monmouth, Illinois (active 1906–present)

Western Stoneware Company was created in 1906 through the merger of seven long-established stoneware and pottery plants operating in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa. Monmouth Pottery Company in Monmouth, Illinois became Plant One and served as the main office until the 1950s; Weir Pottery Company, also in Monmouth, was Plant Two. Other plants operated in the Illinois communities of Macomb and White Hall. Originally a manufacturer of utilitarian containers such as crocks, churns, and jugs, Western Stoneware offered its first art ware in 1919, followed by artistic dinnerware in the 1930s.

In 1953, the company hired Eva Zeisel (1906–2011), a well-known designer of mass-produced ceramics, to design a new line of fresh, informal dinnerware that would appeal to modern post-war consumers. She maintained her studio in New York City, but was living in Chicago where her husband, Hans Zeisel, was a professor at the University of Chicago Law School.

Zeisel had never made dinnerware out of stoneware, but was familiar with it from Central and Eastern Europe. She had worked as a designer at ceramic factories in her native Hungary, as well as in Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s, before immigrating to the United States in 1938.

She began with drawings and paper cutouts, then carved shapes to give them greater finesse. In addition to conventional shapes, she created whimsical bird-shaped bowls, covered casseroles, cruets, and tea sets, many in familial shapes that complemented each other. The designs were cleverly functional: basic casseroles had lids that allowed for stacking; heads on the bird-shaped dishes formed handles or became ladles; wings on the bird-shaped teapot formed the lid.

Zeisel also designed patterns and developed a technique for their application. She created playful patterns featuring fish, birds, stars, rosettes, and scrolls from potato stamps, then had rubber stamps made for use in hand printing the patterns onto the pottery. Pieces featured a new Cloud Gray glaze rather than the light tan color of traditional salt-glazed stoneware.

The Eva Zeisel Fine Stoneware line, marketed by her own design studio in 1953, garnered substantial orders, but it was short-lived. Western Stoneware, facing a general production slowdown, closed not long after. When the company reopened under new owners, the special kiln developed to produce the Zeisel line had been destroyed in a devastating factory fire.

Western Stoneware produced a wide variety of stoneware food containers through the 1970s; it specialized in crocks, bakeware, and giftware from the 1980s through 2006. Since then, the company has focused on art ware and specialty products.

Western Stoneware has undergone several changes in ownership since 1956. Former employees Ursel and Gene Wade were among owners of the company from 1967 through 1973; their son David Wade and his wife, Linda, purchased Western Stoneware in 2014, and continue to produce pottery in Monmouth.

Hamilton, William. "Eva Zeisel, Ceramic Artist and Designer, Dies at 105." *New York Times* (New York, New York), December 30, 2011.

Luna, Kay. "Just Shy of the Century Mark, Western Stoneware Calls It Quits" *Quad-City Times* (Davenport, IA), March 19, 2006.

Moore, Pat, editor, Pat Kirkham, Pirco Wofframm, *Eva Zeisel: Life, Design, and Beauty* (Chronicle Books, 2013).

"Western Stoneware (Warren County)," Building Entrepreneurial Communities, University of Illinois Extension, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2017.

Western Stoneware Company website, [www.westernstoneware.com](http://www.westernstoneware.com).



Eva Zeisel (1906, Budapest, Hungary – 2011, New York City, New York), designer  
***Eva Zeisel Fine Stoneware, 1953***  
 Glazed stoneware  
 Plates: 11 inches in diameter  
 Pitcher [not shown]: 11 × 9 inches  
 Western Stoneware Company Collection of David Wade



## U.S.S. *Illinois* Silver Service:

**C. D. Peacock** Chicago, Illinois (active 1837–present), designer

During World War II, Illinoisans were excited that the U.S. Navy was planning to name one of its new battleships the U.S.S. *Illinois* (BB-65). It would be the third naval ship to bear this name; the second *Illinois* (BB-7) had served in various capacities from 1901 until 1941, when she was renamed *Prairie State*.

It had long been a tradition for the state for which a battleship was named to supply a complete service of silverware for the vessel. Thus, in April 1943, a delegation of Illinois naval veterans proposed that the Illinois General Assembly appropriate \$20,000 to provide a sterling silver service for use in the officers' mess on the new *Illinois*. Two months later, the legislature approved the funding as well as a 20-member commission to represent Illinois when the battleship was launched sometime in 1944. Most of the cost of the service was met by private donations.

Designs and bids were solicited from five of the nation's largest silversmithing firms, but all declined, claiming a shortage of silver or of skilled craftsmen. Then C. D. Peacock, one of Chicago's foremost retail jewelers, agreed to furnish the service. They, in turn, contracted Watson Company, manufacturing silversmiths of Attleboro, Massachusetts, to fabricate the elegant 359-piece set.

As designed by C. D. Peacock, each piece of hollowware—large and small punchbowls, tea and coffee services, and various serving pieces—featured the seals of the U.S. Navy and State of Illinois and the name U.S.S. *Illinois*, embellished with violets, the Illinois state flower. Also included were candelabra, goblets with dolphin stems, and 18 place settings of flatware. It was estimated that 4,000 ounces of silver would be required to produce the set.



Watson Company began making the service using its quota of silver allowed by the War Production Board, the government agency which regulated the allocation of precious metals and other raw materials during the war. When Watson ran out of silver before the service was completed, the Board denied its request for a priority allocation, despite appeals from the state's lieutenant governor.

The U.S.S. *Illinois* was only one-quarter completed when Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945, effectively ending the war. Work was stopped on the 45,000-ton battleship and it was among those scrapped in 1948.

By then, however, the elaborate silver service had been completed. On June 7, 1949, representatives from the U.S.S. *Illinois* legislative commission formally presented the service to Governor Adlai E. Stevenson for use in the Illinois Governor's Mansion.



Watson Company, Attleboro, Massachusetts (active 1880–1955), maker

### U.S.S. *Illinois* Silver Service, 1943–1948

Sterling silver

Collection of Illinois Governor's Mansion Association

## First Official State China:

**C. H. Pillivuyt & Cie.** (Mehun-sur-Yevre, France , active 1853- present), maker

This tureen was part of a large china service commissioned for the Illinois Governor’s Mansion, probably by First Lady Helen Judson Beveridge in 1873. It features an interpretation of the 1868 state seal: an eagle holding a banner in its beak with the words “State Sovereignty” and “National Union,” perched on an orb inscribed “1818”—the year in which Illinois became the 21st state.

It was made in France by the firm of C. H. Pillivuyt & Cie., a leading producer of porcelain that enjoyed an international reputation, having won a gold medal at the International Exposition in Paris in 1867. It is possible that Mrs. Beveridge viewed the company’s wares at the 1873 Vienna International Exposition when she spent May through October of that year touring Europe. She may have joined the large delegation from the state visiting the world’s fair in Vienna, while Governor Beveridge remained in Illinois.

Shortly after John L. Beveridge assumed the governorship in January of 1873, the state legislature appropriated funds for the refurbishment and refurnishing of the “dilapidated” and scantily furnished Governor’s Mansion. Mrs. Beveridge personally supervised its refurnishing, including the selection of china. The 1874 report of the state auditor notes that Governor Beveridge was reimbursed “for amount paid for table furniture purchased for Executive Mansion.” Unfortunately, the pattern and maker of the subject pieces were not identified in the notes. One assumes that the new dinner service arrived in time for the Beveridge’s first official reception at the Mansion on January 20, 1874.

In 1883, when Governor Cullom held a New Year’s Day reception, guests enjoyed a table “spread with a handsome service of decorated china.”<sup>1</sup> But not all were impressed with the quality of what was most likely the state’s first official china. In 1890, a discerning reporter visiting the Mansion during Governor Joseph W. Fifer’s term, described the service as “too common to grace the table of a Governor,” noting that: “The china is decorated with what is supposed to be the coat of arms of Illinois, but the decorator has taken such liberties with it one would hardly recognize the design were he not informed of what was intended.”<sup>2</sup>

The French service was still in use in June 1903, when multiple place settings and serving pieces were visible in a photo of the state dining room taken during a luncheon held for President Theodore Roosevelt. As late as 1918, a reporter called attention to “the famous Mansion china, which has been in the possession of the house since Governor Beveridge held office.”<sup>3</sup>

1. “Reception Day,” *Illinois State Journal*, January 2, 1883, 6:1
2. “Gov. Fifer’s Home,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1/6/1890, p. 1.
3. “Many Brilliant Weddings Have Been Solemnized in Governor’s Mansion in Past,” *Illinois State Register* (Springfield, IL), June 23, 1918.



*State China Tureen, 1873*

Porcelain, 9 × 12¼ inches

Collection of the Illinois Governor’s Mansion Association



## Official State China: Pickard China Company Antioch, Illinois (active 1894–present)

When the state’s governors host a formal dinner in the Illinois Governor’s Mansion, the table is set with the official State China, made by the Pickard China Company based in Antioch, Illinois. Each porcelain dinner plate features a wide gold band acid-etched with scrolls and flowers, surrounding a gold State of Illinois seal. The rims of complementary pieces are decorated with a narrower etched band and the state’s seal. The service includes five-piece place settings, cream soup bowls, and serving pieces.

The china service was designed in 1971 by First Lady Dorothy Ogilvie, who conferred with designers at Pickard to produce a unique pattern for use in the Governor’s Mansion after its 1972 renovation. To finance its purchase, each of the state’s Woman’s Republican Clubs donated at least one place setting; local chapters of The Questers also contributed funds. Governor Jim Edgar and his wife, Brenda, replaced pieces and added to the service between 1991 and 1999.



Pickard China Company is a family-owned business located in Antioch, Illinois, since 1937. The company was founded in 1894 by Wilder A. Pickard, a Chicago businessman and salesman who started a china decorating business using imported porcelain china “blanks” hand-painted by artists. In 1905, the company built a studio in the Ravenswood neighborhood of Chicago, where a staff of 50 artists, many trained in Europe, hand decorated over a thousand different designs on china that was sold in jewelry, department, and art stores.

During the 1920s, Pickard began exploring the possibility of manufacturing his own porcelain. His son Austin worked with ceramic engineers to develop their own china body and glaze; by 1936, they had perfected both. The result was china that is lightweight, delicate in color, highly translucent, strong, and durable. In 1937, the company moved from Chicago to Antioch, where they had access to suitable clay mined in Lake County and southern Wisconsin. Pickard has produced exclusive fine china for heads of state around the world, as well as many prestigious hotels, restaurants, and corporations. In 1977, Pickard obtained a contract with the U.S. Department of State to produce crested and uncrested porcelain china services for all United States embassies and diplomatic missions across the globe, and it has done so ever since. It has made fine china for the White House, Air Force One, Camp David, and both houses of the U.S. Congress.

Pickard remains a retail-based manufacturer of fine dinnerware, producing china for retail, government, gift, and food service/commercial customers.

McGinty, John. “Pickard China: An American Tradition,” *Northwest Quarterly* (Winter 2010–2011).

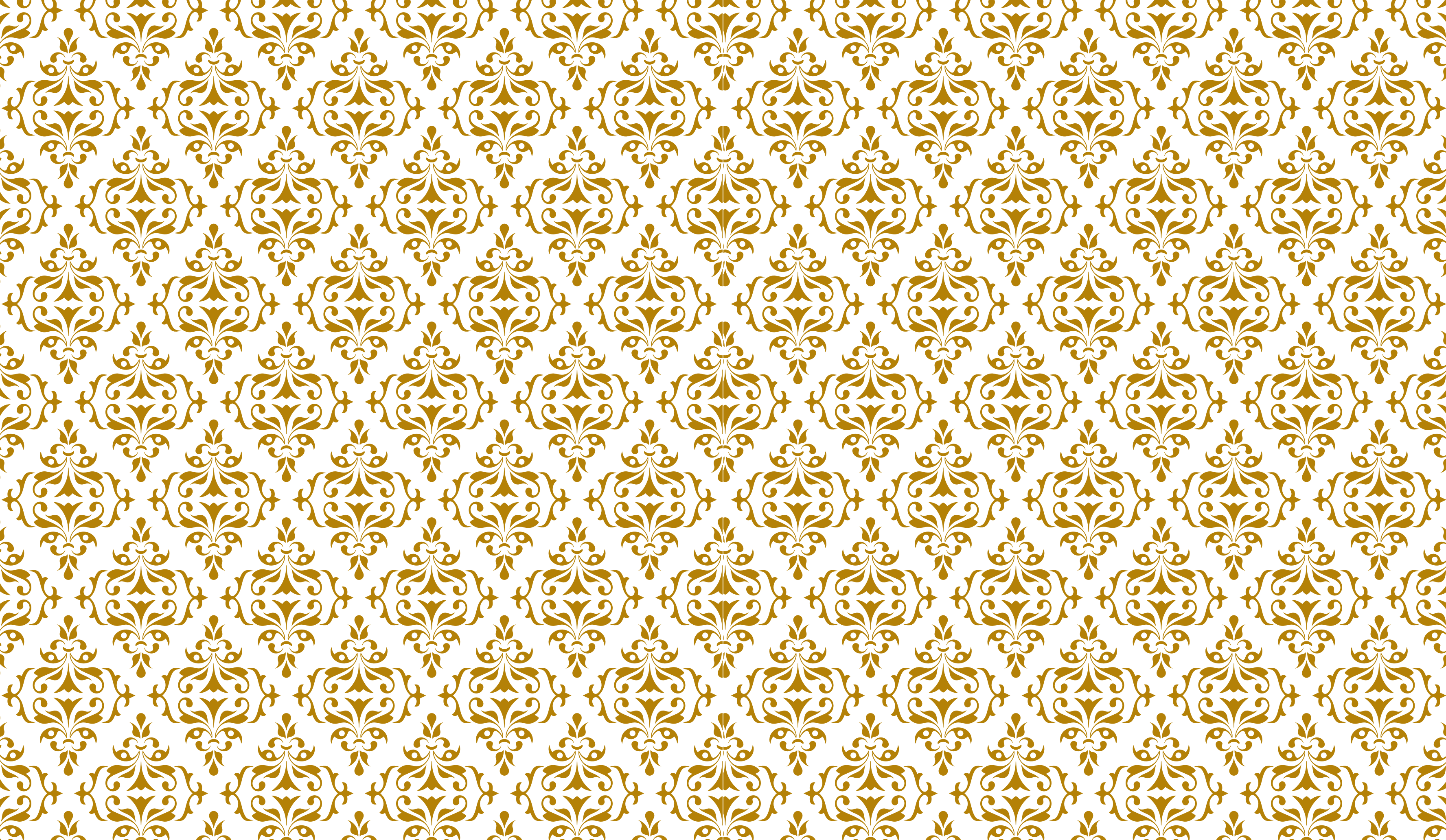
“New State China Designed by Dorothy Ogilvie,” *Morning Star* (Rockford, IL), September 30, 1971.

Platt, Dorothy Pickard. *The Story of Pickard China* (Everybody’s Press, 1970).

Reed, Alan B. *The Collector’s Encyclopedia of Pickard China* (Collector Books, 1995).



Pickard China Company  
First Lady Dorothy Shriver Ogilvie (1922–2016), designer  
***Illinois State China Service, 1971***  
Porcelain, plate 10¾ inches in diameter  
Collection of Illinois Governor’s Mansion Association





# Artland Illinois:

## *a brief introduction*

On the way to something else (if not someplace more desirable), Illinois is the “crossroads of a continent,” according to the subtitle of one state history.<sup>1</sup> It shares, perhaps epitomizes, the Midwest’s identity as a place defined in part in relation to other regions—or, more negatively, by what it is not. The region is the “inter ocean,” according to the title of a newspaper once published in Chicago (a city that sits on America’s “third coast”). Alternatively, it is “inland,” as in the name of Bradley University’s Inland Visual Arts Center, a collaborative research project dedicated to “the visual narrative of America’s geographic interior.” To Midwesterners, the region is the heartland; to outsiders, “flyover country,” or, more specifically, “the great middle, lacking extremes, lacking diversity.”<sup>2</sup>

For writer and Illinois native Dave Eggers, however, the state is something far edgier and more interesting: it “ranks first in contradictions, in self-delusions, in strange dichotomies.”<sup>3</sup> This might equally describe Illinois’ artistic legacy. Product of the state’s “crossroads” character, it is nothing if not diverse. Illinois’ artists have included women as well as men; immigrants, migrants, and the native-born; the self-taught and the professionally trained; the internationally celebrated and the virtually unknown; homebodies and exiles. They are, in short, Americans. The art they have made is equally varied. It has both engaged local place and transcended or repudiated it, hewed to academic tradition and rebelled through formal experimentation and provocative representation, embodied collective aspiration and expressed deeply personal visions. The settings in which Illinois’ artistic legacy is preserved and presented across the state also range widely, from museums, private collections, and commercial galleries to colleges and libraries, art associations and historic sites, schools and private clubs, and other less likely settings where it is often “hidden in plain sight,” acknowledged as décor but invisible as collective heritage. For many of us, even Chicago’s historical art remains, as scholar Neil Harris has written, a “closely guarded secret.”<sup>4</sup> So much more so the art of Illinois, whose dichotomous character begins with the striking contrast between its vast rural expanse and its great metropolis.

As administrative units with geographic borders defined by accidents of history and geography, states are unlikely, indeed arbitrary, delimiters of artistic identity—an identity

chosen *for* rather than *by* artists themselves. What is an Illinois artist? The state’s “crossroads” status makes this question especially fraught, for artists, along with artistic ideas, have come and gone across Illinois’ porous borders since frontier days. The state has claimed as its own many artists who spent more of their lives away than not, but who nonetheless had a significant cultural impact on Illinois. Boston-born and Paris-trained painter George P. A. Healy, for example, served as a founder of Chicago’s fledgling art life in the mere dozen years he spent in the young city. Native Chicagoan John Storrs lived in France for much of his life but left his mark on his hometown with such iconic works as the statue of *Ceres* that tops the Chicago Board of Trade Building. What makes an artist a Chicagoan or an Illinoisan may be in the eye of the local beholder, measured by their influence on the home community if not by the character of their creative expression.

Diversity and fluidity have equally marked the art life of the state throughout its two centuries, as a glance through the history reveals. At the time of the state’s birth, in 1818, the vast frontier lands of the young nation were already attracting visiting view-makers. Artists traveling through Illinois recorded the wonders of its prairies and rivers, native inhabitants, and burgeoning settlements for viewers in the nation’s eastern population centers. With the beginnings of settlement, itinerant portrait artists arrived, stopping in such towns as Galena, Vandalia (the state’s first capital), and Springfield (its successor) to leave behind likenesses of local worthies, politicians, and ordinary men and women with means.

With the nation’s very few art academies concentrated in East Coast cities in the pre-Civil War era, many artists were self-trained. To make a living creating objects regarded as useless luxuries on the frontier of settlement required flexibility. Traveling widely to find work, artists might offer lessons to interested amateurs eager for cultural attainments, thereby helping to spread art-making and appreciation. They adapted their skills to the range of consumer demand, undertaking decorative or sign painting or portraying livestock or houses as well as their owners. Although he worked into the early twentieth century, self-taught artist Olof Krans of Galva exemplified the pragmatic versatility of an earlier generation of artists: now known primarily for his easel paintings, he spent much of his career as a decorative and sign

painter who could also handle gilding, glazing, and paper-hanging, create stage backdrops, and even make portrait photographs (from a mobile “studio”).

Chicago’s art has long been regarded as standing in for that of the state as a whole. Yet the city was a relative latecomer as a site for art-making and collecting, emerging as the art center of Illinois in the 1860s. Its booming wealth and population attracted a sufficient concentration of resident artists to support an essential cultural “infrastructure” that included art academies, clubs, exhibitions, and journalism, if not sympathetic dealers and patrons supportive of home artists. Chicago became a national, as well as statewide, center for making, studying, and exhibiting fine art. At the heart of the city’s art life was the Art Institute of Chicago, founded in 1879 as the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts: its leadership reflected the local business and professional elite’s commitment to ensuring that Chicago had culture as well as commerce, paintings along with pork.

*Chicago’s art has long been regarded as standing in for that of the state as a whole. Yet the city was a relative latecomer as a site for art-making and collecting, emerging as the art center of Illinois in the 1860s.*

Soon, the Art Institute’s rapidly growing school, along with abundant work in applied and commercial arts fields such as illustration, was drawing aspiring artists to the city. This drain of talent from the hinterland was in turn replicated in a constant outflow of artists from Chicago as they sought even greater opportunity and further training on the East Coast and abroad. The young Lorado Taft was so sure he wanted to be a sculptor that he went straight from his hometown of Champaign to Paris, before settling in Chicago. Study abroad bolstered prestige at home, but many artists took the opportunity to desert Chicago altogether, even as new arrivals took their place. This instability in the community of local practitioners, which become a permanent feature

of the city’s art life, also kept it open to new influences and ideas. Chicago art collectors as well as artists demonstrated both a deep conservatism born of cultural insecurity and a pioneering receptivity to new developments such as impressionism, of which Chicagoans Bertha and Potter Palmer were among the earliest American collectors.

Women were prominent among the young artists moving from rural areas to Chicago in the late nineteenth century. There, many acquired practical skills in applied arts or art teaching as well as the academic training considered essential to a professional fine art career; more than a few, among them Rockford’s Belle Emerson Keith, furthered their education in eastern U.S. cities and abroad. Those who remained there—or, like Keith, returned to their hometowns—might cultivate a modest livelihood, teaching locally and participating from afar in exhibitions and artists’ organizations in Chicago and elsewhere.

Professionally trained local artists, along with a largely female contingent of art supporters and patrons (many associated with local women’s clubs), were the mainstays of the varied art-related organizations that sprang up in many Illinois cities and towns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These groups were essential to fostering a sense of cultural community and to providing practical opportunities for preliminary study and exhibiting. In Peoria, the Ladies Art Society, founded in 1878, held the city’s first art exhibition; the Men’s Sketch Club, formed in 1890 for art study, soon became the mixed-gender Peoria Art League, a center for social as well as artistic activity. The Decatur Art Class was formed in 1880 by interested amateurs, and by the mid-1910s the Decatur Municipal Art League and the Decatur Institute of Civic Art were hosting frequent exhibitions as well as art classes.

In their efforts to enrich hometown art life, these and similar downstate organizations invited professionally trained artists from Chicago and elsewhere as instructors, lecturers, exhibitors, and jurors. In Jacksonville at the turn of the century, both an art association created in 1873 and a School of Fine Art (originally part of Jacksonville Female Academy) showcased the current work of Chicago and St. Louis as well as local and Springfield artists. Such activity both linked small local art communities to the larger national art world and facilitated an exodus of talent in its direction. Chicago was not the exclusive destination for ambitious young artists from the heartland: art centers in southern areas of the state were oriented at least as much toward St. Louis, for example. Meanwhile, Chicago-area communities as far out as Aurora and Elgin were gradually drawn into the artistic orbit of the metropolis as many of its artists took up residence in its burgeoning suburbs. In acknowledgment, in 1913 the Art Institute’s annual Chicago artists’ show was renamed the “Chicago and Vicinity” exhibition.

Increasingly connected to urban America, Illinois’ smaller industrial cities manifested many of the cultural trends developing in Chicago and elsewhere. Among them was the rise of public art in the wake of the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, an innovative model for the coordinated application of monumental painting and sculpture in architecture and city planning. One of many prosperous downstate cities that took note was Peoria. In 1896, its newly erected public library building was grandly embellished with a series of murals on lofty themes embodied in classically draped female figures incongruously set against a backdrop of local Illinois River scenery. Such an ambitious assertion of local identity reflected another important development stimulated in part by the astounding success of the world’s fair. Illinois landscape artists who had earlier traveled to Europe, New England, and the American West for their subjects now had a reason to stay home. Chicagoans in particular escaped the congested city for seasonal colonies across the Midwest, including at such picturesque spots



as Fox Lake and Oregon, Illinois. For city-dwellers, the selective artistic interpretation of the state's pastoral landscape offered not only an expression of regional pride but also an escape from near-at-hand reality.

At the turn of the century, cultured Illinoisans prided themselves on keeping abreast of current trends in art, but they also upheld traditional standards, often deriding radical new developments as transitory aberrations. Most locals were unprepared for the startling examples of radical modernism they encountered at the so-called Armory Show, a traveling exhibition of avant-garde European and American art presented at the Art Institute in 1913. By the late 1910s, some younger and more progressive Chicago artists, notably Manierre Dawson, were trying their own experiments in abstraction and other radical "isms." In the following decade, the city's progressive artists formed their own organizations and rebelled against the standards of the Art Institute's prestigious juried exhibitions through such groups as the No-Jury Society of Artists. They united in support of artistic freedom and individuality, rather than endorsing or adopting any particular style or approach.

The ranks of Chicago's modernist artists reflected the city's status as a destination for immigrants, with such artists as William S. Schwartz and Emil Armin drawing inspiration both from contemporary developments in art and from their ancestral heritage. As an important destination for African Americans moving north during the Great Migration that began around World War I, the city nurtured a flowering of black culture in visual art as well as music and literature. Art Institute-trained painter Archibald J. Motley Jr. (whose family



International Exhibition of Modern Art/Armory Show, The Art Institute of Chicago, March 24–April 16, 1913  
Institutional Archives, The Art Institute of Chicago.  
Photo courtesy The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY.

had migrated to Chicago even earlier, in the 1890s) pioneered the artistic interpretation of everyday African American urban life in his jazz- and blues-inflected images of the city's vibrant Bronzeville neighborhood. In the 1920s and 1930s, the work of these and other Chicago artists gave a particularly urban flavor to regionalism, the national artistic movement that focused on the ordinary American worker and citizen.

Downstate art communities watched these developments from a safe distance while expanding their reach in response to the populist impulses of the Progressive and New Deal eras. The exclusive fine arts clubs and societies of the late nineteenth century evolved in the 1910s and 1920s into art associations and art leagues with a focus on broad-based art education and appreciation, occasionally admitting a cautiously progressive outlook on emerging trends. As a longtime teacher at the Springfield Art Association, where she had first studied art, Lillian Scalzo, for example, brought home the lessons of her subsequent study at the Art Institute and at the Chicago Bauhaus, an innovative school of art and design that encouraged modernist abstraction.



Children painting murals at the Springfield Art Association.  
Photo courtesy Springfield Art Association.

The heyday of downstate and suburban art associations in the prosperous 1920s coincided with a spirit of statewide identity in the arts. The All-Illinois Society of the Fine Arts and the Illinois Academy of Fine Arts, separate organizations formed in 1926, aimed to promote and coordinate art activity statewide. Both organizations' memberships and exhibitions were overwhelmingly dominated by Chicago-area practitioners and patrons. Nonetheless, the Friends of Illinois Art, a patrons' offshoot of the Illinois Academy of Fine Arts, succeeded in laying the foundation for what remains the only dedicated public collection of art from across Illinois—a "permanent art gallery for Illinois" at the Illinois State Museum in Springfield, which had been founded in 1877 to document the natural history of the state.<sup>5</sup>

A decade later, the Illinois Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was another ostensibly statewide endeavor, albeit one created by the federal government. The IAP and other Depression-era artists' relief programs in Illinois were also overwhelmingly oriented toward practitioners from Chicago and vicinity, even as the mural paintings destined for small towns highlighted local history and settings. The WPA programs treated downstate regions more as recipients than as generators of fine art creativity and as historical and potential sites of craft production, an attitude confirmed by the documentary work of the

WPA's Index of American Design and reified in the establishment of craft workshops under the auspices of the WPA's Art and Craft Project. When the WPA funded a program of community art centers across the nation to promote art in culturally underserved communities, the only one established in Illinois was sited, not surprisingly, in Chicago: the South Side Community Art Center quickly became an important incubator for African American talent, counting sculptor Marion Perkins, for example, among its many associated artists.

In relation to the New York art world, Chicago artists had long shared the sense of marginalization that their downstate counterparts felt in relation to the big city. By the 1940s, art in Chicago had begun to follow its own distinct paths. Hometown art manifested a decided tendency toward surrealism, fantasy and dream imagery, and deeply personal, visionary expression, as revealed in the intimately scaled autobiographical paintings of Gertrude Abercrombie and the obsessively detailed painted grotesqueries of Ivan Albright. Notwithstanding Chicago's reputation for adherence to figural representation, the city produced its own brand of abstract art influenced not least by the Chicago Bauhaus and its successor institutions. They encouraged an experimental interplay of art and design, the industrial and the organic, as in the work of Richard Koppe, among others.

Developments in Chicago art after World War II are dizzying in their variety. The influence of surrealism remained powerful as Chicagoans largely defied the dominant aesthetic of abstract expressionism, with its privileging of purely formal considerations. Even the abstract art of Chicagoans—for example, the paintings of Miyoko Ito and the sculptures of Richard Hunt—allude to natural and man-made forms. More typically, Chicago artists favored deeply affective figural imagery and looked to indigenous and “outsider” art as inspirations. In the 1960s and 1970s, the loosely defined movement called Chicago Imagism took its cues from “low-brow” culture and mass media: its adherents, Ed Paschke and Roger Brown among them, combined deliberate vulgarity, raw humor, distorted bodily imagery, and scathing social commentary. A more active engagement in contemporary social and political concerns motivated Chicago's feminist art movement, in which Ellen Lanyon played a central role, and the rise of grassroots expression in outdoor mural-painting in black and Latino neighborhoods, where Marcos Raya first made his mark. The public art movement, among others, has had its echoes beyond Chicago: in his hometown of Joliet, for example, Javier Chavira began his career in the mid-1990s participating in a city-wide mural-painting program sponsored by the organization Friends of Community Public Art. An activist spirit continues to infuse the work of many Chicago artists who view creative practice as an intersection of the cultural and the political.

By the time Chicago Imagism became the first movement to win national attention as a “Chicago school,” in the 1980s, the city had solidified its reputation as a home for creative spirits, albeit one strongly marked by a Second City attitude of scrappy resistance to indifference. Meanwhile, the relationship between Chicago and Illinois' small art centers had been rebalanced as the national art world underwent a process of decentralization and fragmentation. Notwithstanding a brief flowering of innovative commercial and nonprofit galleries in the 1980s, Chicago had never supported a robust market for hometown, much less regional, artists. In the postwar era, the declining power (and eventual termination) of large serial contemporary exhibitions with a national or regional scope—notably the Art Institute's long-running American art and “Chicago and Vicinity” shows—further diminished the city's specific importance for downstate artists.

At the same time, the nature of art communities in Illinois' college and university towns shifted with the postwar expansion of campus art programs, which attracted artists from across the nation to join their faculties. From out of state, Carolyn Plochmann and later Harold Gregor arrived in Carbondale and Bloomington, respectively; sculptor Nita Sunderland was teaching in Mexico when she returned to her native central Illinois to become the first female professor of art at Bradley University, her alma mater. In rural Illinois, the presence of such professional working artists with their heterogeneous practice injected a cosmopolitan element into some former conservative satellites of the Chicago art world. It also catalyzed the creation of college collections and galleries that nurtured and supported creative activity



Nita Sunderland at work in her studio, circa 1995, from a photo in the announcement for her exhibition *Figure & Metaphor: Nita Sunderland, Sculptor* at the Lakeview Museum, Peoria (now the Peoria Riverfront Museum), 1995. Courtesy of Peoria Riverfront Museum.



beyond campus, while former patron-run art associations and leagues, notably in Quincy, reinvented themselves as broad-based community art centers. In many respects, the art-life of downstate communities has returned to the state of independence from Chicago that marked their early eras.

Beginning in the 1960s, which ushered in a new golden age for state and federal arts funding, the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, took a leading role in supporting the creation and dissemination of contemporary art across the state as well as documentation of Illinois' historical art. Much of this work was effected by the Illinois State Museum through its collecting and exhibiting activities, often in partnership with institutions around the state. Between the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the museum's opening of branch galleries in Chicago, Lockport, and Rend Lake and artisans' shops in Springfield, Rend Lake, and Chicago testified to the vitality of artistic production across Illinois and in particular brought greater awareness of it to Chicago. Despite recent curtailments of these extensions, the museum continues to embody an understanding that Illinois' collective artistic identity is the default property of the State itself. This exhibition of Illinois art past and present in the "People's House" of Illinois is an especially apt acknowledgement that the state's artistic legacy belongs to all. As the examples here demonstrate, Illinois remains as much a "crossroads" of creative activity as ever. Its art may be an expression of contradictions, self-delusions, and strange dichotomies. It is equally an art of home.

#### Selected Bibliography

Gerdts, William H. *The South and the Midwest*. Vol. 2, *Art Across America: Two Centuries of Regional Painting 1710–1920*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1990.

Greenhouse, Wendy, and Susan Weinger. *Chicago Painting 1895 to 1945: The Bridges Collection*. Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press with the Illinois State Museum, 2004.

Kennedy, Elizabeth, ed. *Chicago Modern 1893-1945: Pursuit of the New*. Chicago: Terra Museum of American Art and Terra Foundation for the Arts, distributed by University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Lyons, Channy. *Peoria Women Artists through 1970*. Peoria Heights, IL: Wilde Press, 2005.

Madden, Betty I. *Art, Crafts, and Architecture in Early Illinois*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974.

Mavigliano, George J., and Richard A. Lawson. *The Federal Art Project in Illinois 1935–1943*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

Taft, Maggie, and Robert Cozzolino, eds. *Art in Chicago: From the Fire to Now*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.

1. Lois Carrier, *Illinois: Crossroads of a Continent* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

2. *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), xxii.

3. Dave Eggers, "Illinois" in Charles Esche, Kerstin Niemann, and Stephanie Smith, *Heartland* (Chicago: Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago; Eindhoven, The Netherlands: Van Abbemuseum, 2009), 52.

4. Neil Harris, "The Chicago Setting," in Sue Ann Prince, *The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde: Modernism in Chicago 1910-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 3.

5. *Catalogue of the First Art Exhibition by Members of the Illinois Academy of Fine Arts in the Galleries of the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois* [Springfield, IL: Illinois State Museum, 1926, [3].

**Wendy Greenhouse** is a Chicago-based independent art historian who has written extensively on Chicago's art and artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the Chicago History Museum, where she served as curator of paintings and sculpture, she organized the first retrospective exhibition on Archibald J. Motley Jr. and co-authored the catalogue (1991). Among her many other publications are co-authored collection catalogues for the Union League Club of Chicago (2003), the Terra Foundation for American Art (online; 2005–2010), and the M. Christine Schwartz Collection (online; 2009–2018), and exhibition catalogues for *Chicago Painting 1895 to 1945: The Bridges Collection* (2004), Illinois State Museum; *Chicago Modern, 1893-1945: Pursuit of the New* (2004), Terra Museum of American Art; and *Re: Chicago*, DePaul Art Museum (2011). Greenhouse is also a co-author of *Art in Chicago: From the Fire to Now* (University of Chicago Press, 2018). She earned a BA in History and a PhD in the History of Art at Yale.



Fine Arts





## Gertrude Abercrombie (1909, Austin, Texas–1977, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Between Two Camps*, 1948

Oil on Masonite, 12 × 16 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Gift of Marian and Leon Despres

“It is always myself that I paint,” Gertrude Abercrombie once said.<sup>1</sup>

*Between Two Camps*, one of the artist’s many covert self-portraits, refers to changes in her personal life at the time it was painted. In 1948, Abercrombie both divorced her first husband and remarried. In this image, according to the artist, the two tents divided by the taut cord of a flying kite represent her two marriages. A white pennant, signal of surrender, flutters atop the tent on the left. The other is pitched against a solid staircase—like that in front of the artist’s rowhouse home on Chicago’s South Dorchester Avenue—at the top of which Abercrombie herself stands, waving a pink flag in triumph. There is little suggestion of hope in this scene, however. The landscape is bleak and barren. The tents are flimsy structures offering only ephemeral shelter, the stairs lead nowhere, and the flying kite is constrained by its anchoring cord, all suggesting insubstantial promises and thwarted possibilities.

Raised mostly in Aledo, Illinois, Abercrombie had an active career in Chicago from the 1930s to the 1970s as a member of progressive circles of visual artists and jazz musicians. She painted prolifically, making diminutive, meticulously executed images of nearly empty landscapes and stripped-down interiors. An odd assortment of recurring particular animals, objects, and solitary figures—often self-portraits—charge her dream-like paintings with symbolic narratives inspired by her own life, family relationships, and psyche. While Abercrombie’s imagery was highly personal, her art was firmly rooted in surrealism, a literary and artistic movement that developed in Paris in the mid-1920s and found a lasting following among both artists and collectors in Chicago.

1. Abercrombie quoted in Susan Weinginer, *Gertrude Abercrombie* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Museum, 1991), 24.



## Ivan Albright (1897, North Harvey, Illinois–1983, Woodstock, Vermont)

### *Self-Portrait, 1934*

Oil on canvas, 29¼ × 19¼ inches

Collection of New Trier High School District 203

Ivan Albright's unconventional self-portrait shows the formally attired artist relaxing, cigarette in hand, as he sits behind a table bearing a variety of delicate decorative objects, including a large crystal ashtray. One hand to his cheek, he fixes the viewer with a penetrating gaze. Albright was only in his mid-30s when he made this likeness: he exaggerated the wrinkles and furrows of his face and hands and tinged his hair silver as if to anticipate the ravages of time. The portrait emphasizes both the life experience that gives depth and distinction to each individual and our shared fate of inevitable bodily decay.

Albright's earliest finished oil self-portrait, this work is one of many in which the artist unsparingly explored his own persona and charted the visible progression of age. It was created for the easel painting division of the Illinois Art Project, a Depression-era federal relief program that sponsored art for schools, libraries, and other public buildings. Participating artists commonly depicted typical Americans and everyday life, but Albright chose this highly personal subject, which he rendered with unsettling effect.

Ivan Albright and his twin brother, sculptor Malvin Albright, were the sons of successful Chicago painter Adam Emory Albright. They grew up modeling for their father and eventually shared a studio with him. Before beginning his studies at the Art Institute of Chicago, Ivan worked as a medical illustrator in France during World War I, an experience that gave him a clinical knowledge of the human body and its vulnerabilities. By the mid-1920s he had found his distinct artistic voice in obsessively detailed and uncompromisingly realistic portraits, character studies, and still lifes that gave modern expression to time-honored philosophical concerns with the passage of time, the decay of worldly things, and the vanity of human ambition.





## Anthony Angarola (1893, Chicago, Illinois–1929, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Judas*, 1928

Oil on canvas, 20 × 24 inches  
Collection of Bernard Friedman

Head bowed and body enfolded in a voluminous dark blue cloak, the Judas in Anthony Angarola's somber painting is a solitary figure whose hunched form is echoed in the rocky landscape behind him. The beloved apostle who betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, Judas is usually shown with Christ and the other apostles or as having hanged himself in remorse for the betrayal. Angarola chose instead to humanize Judas as a figure of sorrow and regret. By suggesting his capacity for repentance, the image invokes alternate readings of the Christian story in which his act of treachery is the catalyst for humanity's salvation.

Born in Chicago to impoverished Italian immigrants, Angarola was drawn to themes of suffering and compassion in his art. In addition to *Judas*, he painted scenes from the story of Christ and of St. Francis. More often, he created sympathetic portrayals of society's outcasts and the marginalized immigrant communities found in industrial cities in the American heartland. Widely respected by his contemporaries for his art, Angarola was also revered for what one described as his "gentle, meditative, and compelling spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Angarola was identified with the modernist movement among Chicago artists in the post-World War I era. This painting, with its emphatic sense of structure and patterned brushwork, exemplifies his interest in pure composition applied to the representation of objective reality. While committed to an art for his time, Angarola was also deeply inspired by the paintings of early Italian Renaissance masters, whose influence is evident in the monumental forms and flattened rendering of space in *Judas*.

1. Bernard Teevan, "Angarola's Meditative Art,"  
*International Studio* 81 (Sept. 1925): 70.



## Emil Armin (1883, Radautz, Romania–1971, Chicago, Illinois)

### *The Open Bridge*, 1930

Oil on Masonite, 22 × 27 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Gift of Susanna and Matthew Morgenthau  
in Memory of their Mother, Irma Thormann

Raised to allow boats with tall masts to pass, the twin arms of a red metal drawbridge suggest the city’s welcoming embrace in Emil Armin’s buoyant painting *The Open Bridge*. The nervous energy of densely layered paint strokes animates Chicago’s proud skyline, a dense forest of soaring towers sandwiched between an agitated sky and the river’s choppy water. Armin’s work captures the excitement of urban life and the mood of exuberant optimism that marked the 1920s. It was painted at a turning point in the artist’s career: a decade after completing his studies at the Art Institute of Chicago, Armin was the subject of several solo exhibitions and of a monograph book.

Having arrived in Chicago as an impoverished immigrant from Romania at the age of 22, Armin was particularly sensitive both to the city’s opportunities and to its modern character. He became a mainstay of local modernist art circles in which freedom of individual expression was the sole doctrine. In his paintings, prints, and carved sculptures, Armin synthesized contemporary artistic trends with inspiration drawn from his Jewish roots and from the peasant traditions of the American Southwest and his native Eastern Europe. Above all, he declared, “the way an artist finds it necessary to live in modern times will automatically assert itself in his work, if he is a true and independent artist.”<sup>1</sup> One of Armin’s several celebratory images of the Chicago waterfront and skyline, *The Open Bridge* offers his adopted city as an exhilarating icon of modernity.

1. Armin quoted in Maureen A. McKenna, *Emil Armin 1883–1971* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Museum, 1980), 8.





## Macena Barton (1901, Union City, Michigan–1986, Chicago, Illinois)

### *The Lobster, 1946*

Oil on canvas, 28 × 36 inches  
M. Christine Schwartz Collection

The delectable foods in Macena Barton’s still life evoke a variety of tastes and tactile sensations, hinting at the pleasures of the feast. Art critic Clarence Bulliet facetiously suggested that this “luscious table piece . . . errs a bit as art, perhaps, by forcing the gastric juices to accumulate in the stomach [sic] of the onlookers.<sup>1</sup> The pimento-stuffed olives, Swiss cheese, and bakery spritz cookies are everyday foods that might have been found in the artist’s own kitchen in Chicago’s Tree Studios building. The lobster, in contrast, is a luxury item. Its undulating surface is strangely echoed to the left in the knobby contours of the challah, a braided bread made for celebrations in Jewish tradition, in which consumption of shellfish such as lobster is forbidden. Macena Barton was not Jewish, but she often injected her images with sly humor and unsettling juxtapositions of this kind.

*The Lobster* is a modern interpretation of a still life tradition with its roots in seventeenth-century Dutch art, examples of which Barton knew from her studies at the Art Institute of Chicago in the early 1920s. In those works, the lobster often symbolizes not only luxury but also instability for its ability to crawl both forward and backward. The rumpled cloth, the partly peeled lemon, and the knife balanced diagonally on the table’s edge in Barton’s painting also “quote” directly from Dutch precedent. But the common American foods, the simple pine table, and the brilliant tints of the objects and background all place this image firmly in the artist’s time and place.

A Michigan native who spent her career in Chicago, Barton is now recognized as one of the city’s foremost surrealist painters of her generation. Reputedly the first American woman artist to create a nude self-portrait, she painted portraits and still-life arrangements as well as fantasy images and straightforward cityscapes.

1. C. J. Bulliet, “Still Lives That Live,” *Arts Magazine* 21 (Apr. 15, 1947): 9.



## Roger Brown (1941, Hamilton, Alabama–1997, Atlanta, Georgia)

### *Lost America*, 1989

Oil on canvas, painted wood frame, 86 × 49¾ inches

Chicago History Museum, Museum Purchase, Photo courtesy of The School of the Art Institute and the Brown Family

Hands clasped behind his back and gaze averted, a thoughtful Abraham Lincoln strides across a shallow stage-like space in Roger Brown's painting *Lost America*. His pose recalls the popular image of the martyred sixteenth president, a compassionate man burdened by the tragedy of the Civil War, as a Christ-like Man of Sorrows. Lincoln's universal, rather than historical, identity is further emphasized by the surreal setting, with its perfectly symmetrical twin ailanthus trees (known for their toughness, invasive habit, and rank odor) under a stylized yellow-and-white sky. Without his example of moral leadership in the face of contemporary social inequity and racial injustice, the title implies, America is lost indeed. To underscore Lincoln's symbolic significance for the nation, Brown painted the Stars and Stripes of the American flag on the canvas strip frame.

Especially after the advent of the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s, Brown's art was deeply attuned to the political and social issues of the time, from militarism and the savings and loan debacle to the homogenization of mass culture and the challenges of living as a gay man in America. Brown couched his biting but also subtly humorous commentary in a style inspired by vernacular art and popular culture imagery, of which he was an avid collector. The influence of billboards and circus banners, with their boldly simplified, powerfully persuasive imagery, is evident in his icon-like image of Lincoln. Brown painted several satirical images of contemporary world leaders and historical figures.

Brown was a native Alabamian who was profoundly sensitive to his family's Southern heritage. He studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and emerged in the late 1960s as a major figure in the homegrown artistic movement known as Chicago Imagism. Inspired by so-called outsider art and pop culture, Imagist art is characterized by personal fantasy, irreverent satire, and grotesque distortion used to unsettling effect.





**Javier Chavira** (Born 1971, Villa Juarez, San Luis Potosí, Mexico)

*Red Organism*, 2002

Terra-cotta and acrylic paint, 16 × 8 × 7 inches

Collection of the artist

Javier Chavira's *Red Organism* evokes a seedpod and seeds or a mother and her babies. Its largest component appears as a series of nested vessels into which the two smaller companion pieces can be inserted or arranged nearby, according to the viewer's preference. With its open forms, flowing shapes, and red-earth coloration, the work explores the relationship between the organic and the abstract, between surface and interior, and between the brittle fragility of terra-cotta walls and the yielding softness of curves. According to the artist, line, whether in a drawing or a sculpture, must have "grace as if to mirror nature, like the graceful ridges of a sand dune or the contour of a kidney bean."<sup>1</sup>

Chavira created *Red Organism* as an MFA student in a ceramics course at Northern Illinois University; at the time, he was undecided whether to pursue a career in ceramics or in painting. The sculpture itself grew organically. Fascinated with the process of artistic creation, Chavira favored the slow, labor-intensive technique of coil building over wheel throwing when working with clay. He was inspired by the practice of Native American potters of the Southwest to finish the larger piece by burnishing the surface with stones. Crossing the boundaries of mediums, he painted the smaller components.

Born in Mexico, Chavira grew up in Joliet, Illinois. He started his career painting murals there while still an undergraduate at Governors State University, where since 2003 he has been a professor of painting and drawing. Now primarily a painter, Chavira creates meticulously crafted works that combine abstraction and realism and that reflect a continuing focus on artistic process.

1. Artist's statement about *Red Organism*, email to author, Nov. 9, 2017.



## Manierre Dawson (1887, Chicago, Illinois–1969, Sarasota, Florida)

---

### *Desert*, 1920

Oil on Masonite, 22 × 28 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Gift of Dr. Lewis Obi, Frank McKeown, and Lefferts Mabie

---

When he painted *Desert*, Manierre Dawson likely had never experienced such terrain firsthand. Still, rhythmic lines and shapes in warm gold colors call to mind the graceful loops and whorls of wind-carved stone or sand. Rising above a curving line that suggests a horizon are spiky dark forms like the angular limbs of denuded trees. Dawson does not depict the desert landscape so much as he creates a non-objective composition from conventional ideas of its characteristic colors and forms. Like the desert landscape itself, Dawson's composition is both beautiful and forbidding, inviting and alien, saturated with light and infused with mystery.

With little formal instruction in art, Dawson began making highly original paintings while still in high school in his native Chicago. He was working as an architectural draftsman when in 1910 he made what are now considered among the earliest entirely non-objective paintings, independent of the experimental abstraction then being developed by avant-garde European and American artists.

Later in 1910, Dawson visited Europe and New York. Encouraged by his encounters there with contemporary art and artists, he participated in several American exhibitions. Yet in 1915, he withdrew from the art scene and also abandoned architecture, moving to rural Ludington, Michigan, to take up fruit farming. Ever an experimentalist, Dawson continued to paint, however, and he also began making sculpture. Although his exile from the art world was self-imposed, the bleak mood of *Desert* may reflect the artist's sense of isolation and discouragement, while the rounded forms near the center of the painting, some tinted red and green, evoke the fruit whose cultivation was then occupying most of his daily attention. Only slowly, in the decades since his death, has Dawson's artistic achievement received its due recognition.





## Frederick Fursman (1874, El Paso, Illinois–1943, Saugatuck, Michigan)

### *Maizie under the Boughs (No. 16, Saugatuck, Michigan), 1915*

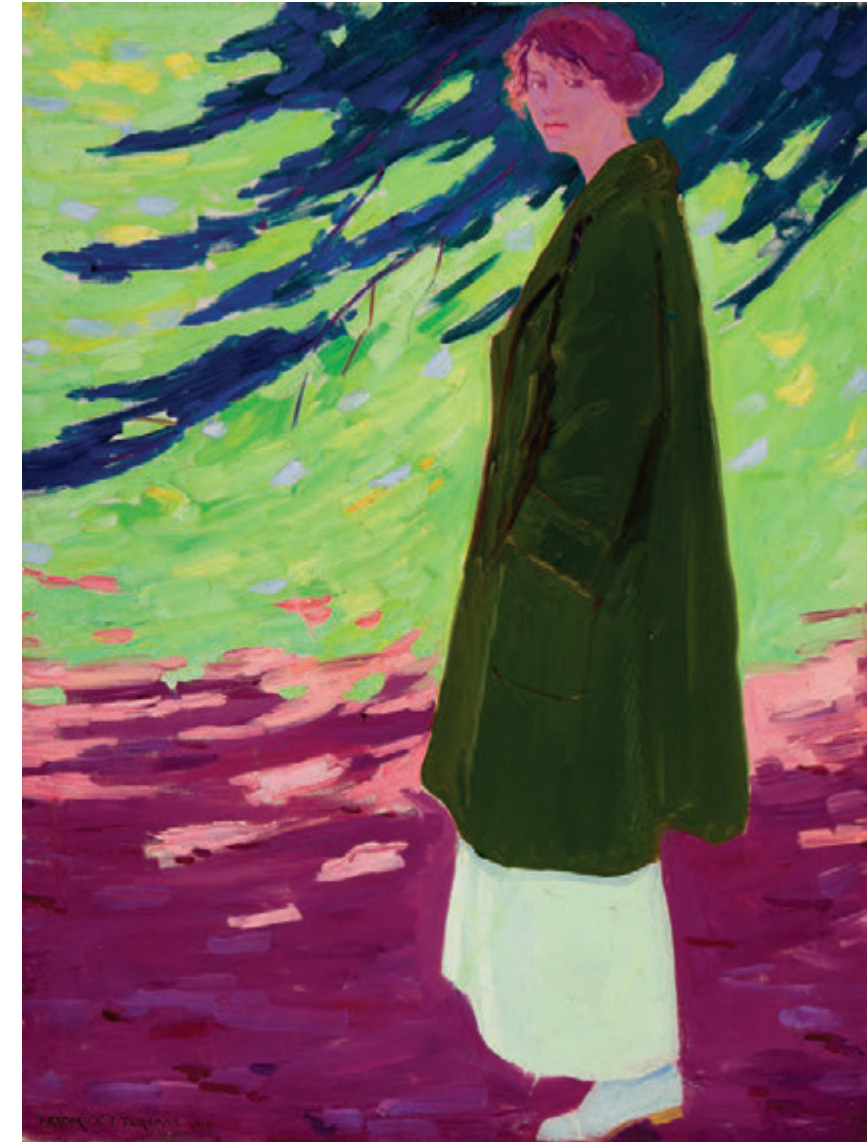
Oil on canvas, 40 × 30 inches

M. Christine Schwartz Collection

Frederick Fursman's *Maizie under the Boughs (No. 16, Saugatuck, Michigan)* is a study in the distorted visual perception that results when eyes abruptly transition from full sunlight to deep shadow. Forms are flattened and the colors of familiar things, from flesh to evergreen foliage, shift to unexpected hues. In the painting's featureless background, divided strokes of thick paint mimic the vibrating optical effect of midday glare. Thus the ordinary becomes strange in this interpretation of an otherwise commonplace subject: a young woman standing in the shade of a tree on a bright day. The painting suggests the emotional as well as physiological dimension of sight and the highly subjective nature of sense perception.

The female figure posed outdoors in bright daylight was a standard subject for American figure painters at the turn of the twentieth century. Under the influence of European modernist art, Fursman used the subject as a pretext for experimenting with abstract composition as he focused on the purely visual effects of color and light. *Maizie under the Boughs* is one of several paintings for which the artist posed a female model standing in or near the deep shade of woods. Most were made during the summers that Fursman spent in Michigan as an instructor and director of the Summer School of Painting at Saugatuck (now known as Ox-Bow), and they may have been intended to serve as aids in teaching outdoor figure painting.

A native of El Paso, Illinois, Fursman studied art in Chicago and Paris. He initially worked as an illustrator, eventually becoming a successful painter and a popular teacher in Chicago, Milwaukee, Kentucky, Colorado, and Winnipeg, Canada, in addition to Saugatuck.



## Eve Garrison (1903, Boston, Massachusetts–2003, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Untitled (Artists at Work)*, c. 1949

Casein on paper, 22 × 27¾ inches

Corbett vs. Dempsey LLC

Eve Garrison's untitled painting presents a rural landscape as a collage-like assemblage of sharply angled fractured planes arbitrarily tinted in bright colors. Dominated by the blocky form of a black house or barn, the scene includes vignettes of everyday life in pairs of figures: a man on a ladder above another figure on the ground by a truck or other vehicle; two men in conversation, or argument, at the lower left; a pair of chickens; and two blonde long-haired girls in pink near the building. The most prominent twosome is a man and a woman seated in the foreground. Linked by the strong red and blue of their clothing, both appear to be absorbed in drawing.

Born Eve Josephson in Boston, Garrison attended the Art Institute of Chicago, graduating in 1930, and the Society of Arts and Crafts in Detroit. She also studied engineering in Detroit and went on to work in engine design. Garrison spent much of her long artistic career in Chicago, evolving through a dizzying variety of styles and approaches that eventually included surrealism, expressionist abstraction, "sculptured oils" with heavily worked surfaces incorporating everyday found materials, and dynamic geometric works that anticipated pop art.

During the 1930s and 1940s, while Garrison was employed by the easel division of the WPA's Illinois Art Project, a statewide artists' relief program, she painted straightforwardly naturalistic portraits, Chicago cityscapes, and landscapes of Colorado and Mexico. In 1947, when she studied in the artists' colony at Woodstock, New York, she began to experiment with abstraction inspired by analytical cubism. This painting is one of several dating to the late 1940s, when Garrison began shifting toward the fully developed abstraction that would dominate her painting in the following decade. As if anticipating that, both draftsmen pictured here appear to be working on abstract compositions, oblivious to the prosaic objects and incidents that surround them.





## Harold Gregor (Born 1929, Detroit, Michigan)

### *Flatscape #106*, 2010

Acrylic on canvas, 60 × 66 inches

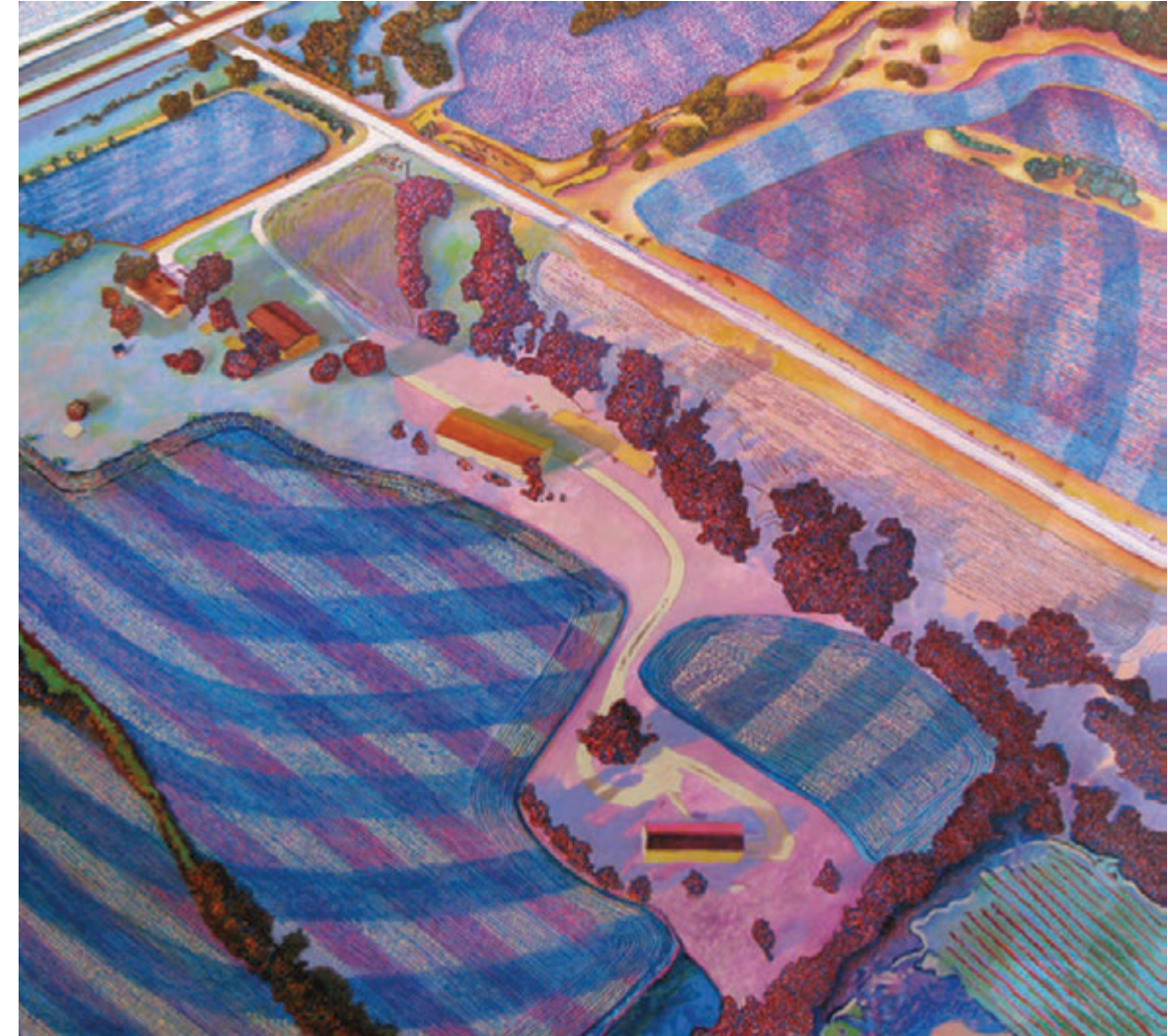
Collection of the artist, Courtesy of the Tory Folliard Gallery

In Harold Gregor's *Flatscape #106*, raking sunset light accentuates complex patterns of striations overlaid by concentric circles, the unintentionally lyrical effect of methodical crop cultivation. Seen from above, the flat terrain of rural Illinois is unified by a harmonious range of vivid tints. The familiar landscape is envisioned as a nearly abstract arrangement of color, line, and shape.

Prairie farmland has been Gregor's primary artistic subject since he settled in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1970 to teach at Illinois State University. Three years later, inspired by a farm scene printed on a cornmeal bag, he began painting his series of aerial views that he titled "Illinois flatscapes." Derived from photographs taken from low-flying airplanes, these large paintings use striking color, pattern, and texture to draw our attention to the unseen beauty of a landscape purposefully molded by human activity.

A Detroit native, Gregor studied art theory and art history as well as studio art. Early in his career, he resisted trends toward social realism, abstract expressionism, and pop art instead applying the exacting techniques of photorealism to rural subjects. Gregor has made easel paintings, watercolors, and mural paintings in a variety of styles for some six decades. His Illinois work focuses on both intimate trailside spots and broad panoramas of landscapes explored by walking, driving, and flying. His aim, according to the artist, is to suggest "an affirmative sense of place that reminds us of our shared concerns about the land."<sup>1</sup>

1. Harold Gregor quoted in David M. Sokol, *Changing Perspectives: The Landscapes of Harold Gregor* (Des Plaines, IL: Oakton Community College, 2016), 16.



## George P. A. Healy (1813, Boston, Massachusetts–1894, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Self-Portrait*, 1867

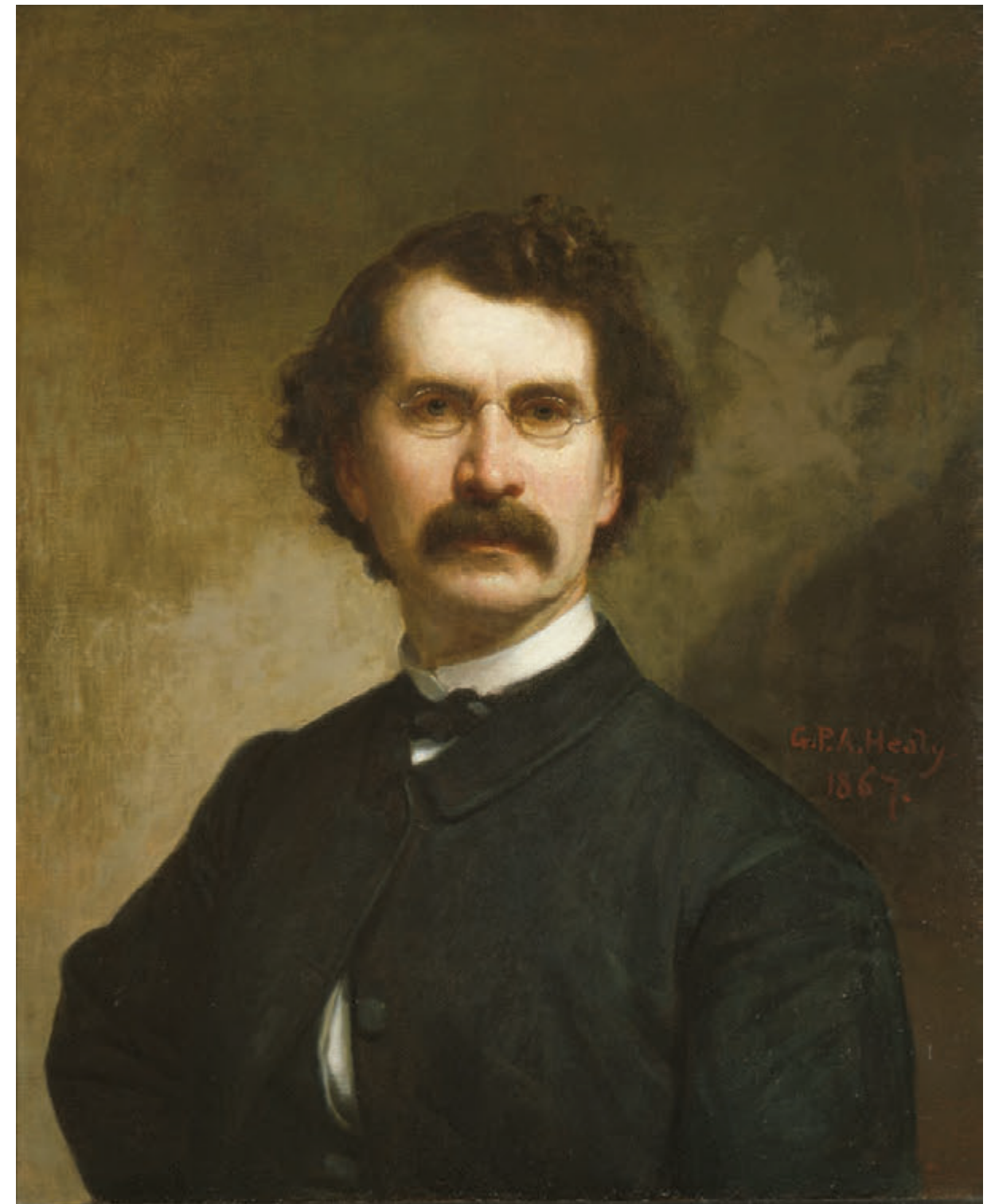
Oil on canvas, 28<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches

Collection of Chicago History Museum, Gift of Mr. Ezra Butler McCagg

The direct gaze and dramatic lighting of George Peter Alexander Healy's 1867 *Self-Portrait* captures the self-assurance of an artist at the height of his powers. The pose, with his right hand thrust into his coat, was typical in eighteenth-century aristocratic portraiture before it assumed more imperious associations from its use in a famous portrait of Napoleon. For Healy, who had painted European and American heads of state for French king Louis Philippe, the gesture communicates cosmopolitan sophistication. The confident manner in which he applied paint, capturing texture and volume while leaving evidence of brushstrokes, reflects Healy's assimilation of current painting fashion in Paris, a center of the art world for Americans in the Civil War era.

The son of an Irish ship captain, Healy was born in Boston. He was largely self-trained when, with the encouragement of local patrons, he went to France to begin a brilliant career as one of the most popular portrait painters of his generation. In 1855, a chance meeting in Paris with William Butler Ogden, former mayor of Chicago, induced Healy to try his fortune in the booming young city. The arrival of this internationally acclaimed painter galvanized Chicago's fledgling art life and elevated standards for art along with expectations for the city's future as an art center. In the course of a dozen years in Chicago, during which he was often absent to execute important commissions, Healy painted hundreds of its citizens, reportedly leaving in 1867 to escape his own popularity.<sup>1</sup> One of several self-portraits, this work dates to Healy's last year in Chicago and may have been made as a memento to leave with local admirers, one of whom later donated it to the Chicago Historical Society (now the Chicago History Museum). Back in Europe, Healy's success continued as he painted crowned heads, celebrities, and even a pope, but he returned to his adopted hometown near the end of his life.

1. Marie de Mare, *G. P. A. Healy, American Artist: An Intimate Chronicle of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: David McKay, 1954), 225–226.





## Richard Hunt (Born 1935, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Hybrid Figure*, 1977

Welded Corten steel, 64 × 32 × 26 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Museum Purchase through funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and Illinois Arts Council

*Hybrid Figure* typifies the abstract sculptures of Richard Hunt in its use of metal's tensile strength to evoke graceful, soaring movement and ephemerality as well as power and stability. His goal, says the artist, is "a resolution of the tensions between the sense of freedom one has in contemplating nature and the sometimes restrictive, closed feeling engendered by the rigors of the city."<sup>1</sup> This work is one of several from a long-running series in which the title word "hybrid" suggests the combination of organic and industrial forms. Emerging from the work's integrated base, its upright and branching elements dynamically engage surrounding space as they hint simultaneously at a standing figure with outspread arms, the wings of a bird or an aircraft, and fingers of flame. Like a utilitarian product of industry, the steel sculpture's dark surface bears marks of the welding and burnishing processes used to create it, honoring the expressive role of the artist's hand in the creative act.

Born on Chicago's South Side, Hunt began his art education as a seventh-grader in the junior program of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he later earned a fine arts degree. To save on the cost of materials, he began constructing sculptures from scrap metal and other discarded objects. Hunt received early recognition as an artist: New York's Museum of Modern Art bought one of his works when he was still a student, and in 1971 he was the first African American sculptor to have a major solo exhibition at the museum. Over the past five decades, Hunt has created numerous monumental public works of art, in addition to smaller free-standing or wall-hung sculptures and drawings. His *Hybrid Muse* of 1985 appears in the logo of the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

1. Richard Hunt, quoted in Samella S. Lewis, *African American Art and Artists* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 209.



## Miyoko Ito (1918, Berkeley, California–1983, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Sacramento*, 1975

Oil on canvas, 46 × 34 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Courtesy of the Illinois State Museum Society

With its soft, warm colors and suggestions of a light-bathed landscape glimpsed through a window, Miyoko Ito's *Sacramento* is an elegy to the artist's native state. The structured composition's lines and shapes hint at iconic elements of the landscape of California's Central Valley: expansive vistas of flat cropland, the rounded forms of distant mountains, and the orb of the setting sun. To subtly modulate and texture her planes of soft color, the artist applied a paint-laden brush in short strokes. Evoking rather than representing her subject, Ito honored the nature of memory as a highly subjective language of sense impressions that assume a dream-like intangibility over time. "Allusive abstraction" is how she and several other like-minded Chicago artists aptly described their approach to non-representational but suggestive painting.<sup>1</sup>

For her late paintings, Ito often attached the canvas edges to the stretcher with nails driven only partway into the wood, stipulating that the painting be left unframed. Her distinctive treatment of her canvases emphasizes the fundamental materiality of her medium and complements the elemental purity of her non-objective painted compositions.

Born in Berkeley, California, Ito with her husband was interned along with more than 100,000 other Japanese Americans after the start of World War II. Following studies at the University of California at Berkeley and at Smith College, she settled in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood in 1944 and enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Ito once described herself as "a painter wife who has raised two children," and she struggled to continue her art, painting at home in a spare bedroom.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, by the 1960s she was recognized as an important figure in the development of abstract painting in her adopted city. When Ito painted *Sacramento* in the mid-1970s, she was a fellow at MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. In her fellowship application, she wrote that her art was influenced by the landscapes of both Japan, where she spent five years of her childhood, and California.

1. *Art in Chicago 1945–1995* (New York: Thames and Hudson; Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996), 259.

2. Ito's application for a MacDowell Colony fellowship, reproduced in *Miyoko Ito* (Berlin: Veneklasen/Werner, 2012), unpaginated.





## Belle Emerson Keith (1865, Rockford, Illinois–1950, New York, New York)

### *Home Views (Expectations)*, 1892

Oil on canvas, 26 × 37 inches

Collection of Rockford Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Edward O. Lathrop (Mary Emerson Lathrop)

A young woman in a white gown sits casually on the landing of a stairway in a well-appointed Victorian interior in Belle Emerson Keith's *Home Views (Expectations)*. The woman's attention is fixed on a distant view of open fields seen through a window. The flat prairie landscape outside contrasts with the interior's polished wood, oriental rugs, and potted plants—signs of wealth and gentility that complement the figure's studied idleness.

Keith referred to this painting as *Home Views*. It acquired the alternate title *Expectations* because the model for the woman, Mrs. Dora E. Herrick Loucks, was pregnant at the time she posed. A secretary at Emerson Carriage Company, the manufacturing concern owned by Keith's father, Mrs. Loucks is said to have been visiting the Emerson household on business when the artist asked her to pose. The title *Expectations* may refer not only to the woman's anticipation of motherhood but also to the promise of the coming season, for the bare fields in view are tinged with the green of early spring. In 1892, Keith's own artistic expectations were likely high. She had just returned from two years of study abroad at a time of burgeoning opportunities for women artists and growing excitement in the region as not-far-distant Chicago prepared to host the great World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

Born into one of Rockford's founding families, Keith attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts and studied art in Munich and in Paris before her marriage in 1898 to Rockford physician Darwin Keith. Active in local art circles, Keith painted portraits, landscapes, and figural works, but she is also celebrated in her hometown as the founder of Keith School (now Keith Country Day School), a private elementary school.



## Richard Koppe (1916, St. Paul, Minnesota–1973, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Black Wires*, 1950

Oil on canvas, wire, and wood, 32<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 43 × 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches  
 Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Museum Purchase

By combining the flat surface and color of a painting with a sculpture's three-dimensionality, Richard Koppe's *Black Wires* adds shadow, light, and potentially movement itself as artistic elements. Concretely deconstructing forms into their component planes and lines, it is one of several "constructions" that Koppe made around 1950, when he was exploring spatial relationships in related paintings. Inspired by the interchangeability of theatrical sets, Koppe created *Black Wires* to allow the insertion of alternate backgrounds that "can be 'played' for the eyes as phonograph records are 'played' for the ears," in his words.<sup>1</sup>

Working in painting, drawing, and sculpture as well as interior and product design, Koppe believed that "abstract does not exclude a subject."<sup>2</sup> The varied tapered shapes in *Black Wires* can suggest simultaneously the graceful contours of organic forms, such as birds and leaves, and of man-made objects, from boat hulls and sails to airplane wings and fuselages. Koppe developed his lines and shapes not from conscious reference to these things, however, but "out of the idea of a painting"—that is, on the basis of design principles. This approach reflected the artist's education at the New Bauhaus (now IIT Institute of Design), the revolutionary school founded in Chicago in the late 1930s by modernist artist and designer László Moholy-Nagy.

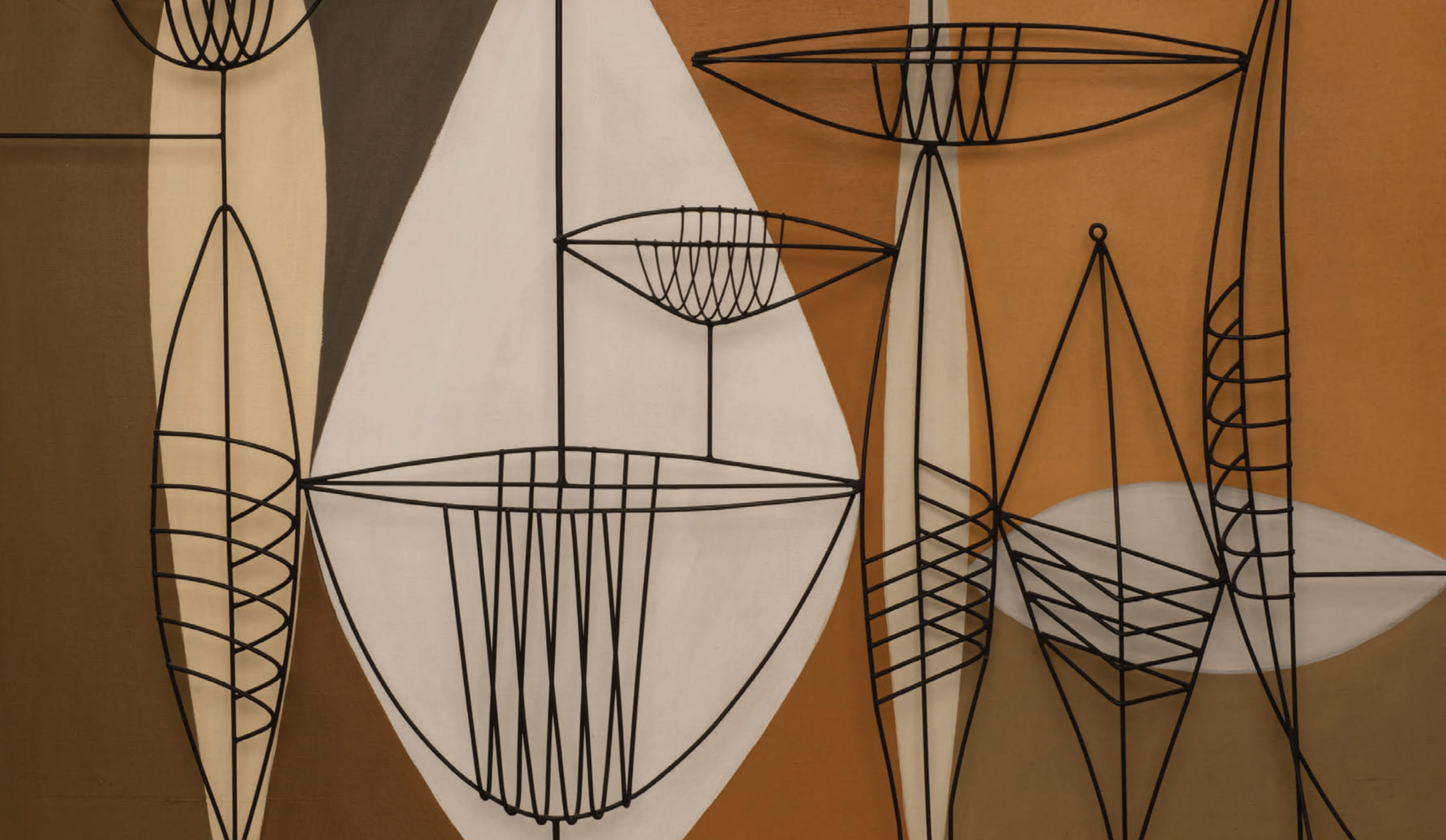
Koppe received important fine arts training in his native St. Paul, Minnesota, before studying at the Institute of Design, where he later taught. His work as a fine artist and designer was informed by the school's goal of bridging the two fields and its experimental approach to technology and new materials in both. The taut lines and swooping curves of *Black Wires* typify the design aesthetic now called mid-century modern, with its emphasis on informality, playfulness, and the intersection of the biomorphic and the industrial.

1. Koppe quoted in *University of Illinois Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois College of Fine and Applied Arts, 1950), 185.

2. Koppe quoted in TS "Richard Koppe" (possibly produced by a gallery), unpaginated, in Richard Koppe pamphlet file, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago.









## Olof Krans (1838, Sälja, Sweden–1916, Altona, Illinois)

### *It Will Soon Be Here*, c. 1897–1910

Oil on canvas, 22 × 35¾ inches

Bishop Hill Old Settlers' Association, Bishop Hill State Historic Site, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

In this detailed harvesting scene, men and women load hay onto wagons as a storm threatens from the left. Artist Olof Krans titled his painting to emphasize the urgency of their work. A boy lounging by the waiting oxen may be a subtle self-portrait: as a youth, Krans had joined other boys in the utopian colony of Bishop Hill, Illinois, in caring for the oxen that were essential to the community's farming operations.

Bishop Hill was founded in 1846 by spiritual leader Erik Jansson and his adherents, who emigrated from their native Sweden in search of religious liberty. Krans's family followed them four years later. In addition to farm work, young Olof apprenticed with a decorative painter of signs, houses, and wagons. Eventually settling in nearby Galva, Illinois, he became a successful decorative painter, advertising his ability to undertake "house, sign, carriage and ornamental painting, graining, glazing, gilding, and paper hanging."<sup>1</sup> Krans recorded the colony's history in portraits and in images such as this of farming activities remembered from his youth. *It Will Soon Be Here* celebrates agrarian bounty and the cooperative working life of the colony, while acknowledging the challenges of wresting a living from the land.

Olof Krans has become one of Illinois' most celebrated so-called self-taught, or folk, artists. His paintings of the Bishop Hill colony's early decades uniquely document this utopian community, one of many founded throughout the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

1. Advertisement, quoted in *The Art of Olof Krans: A Prairie Vision* (Peoria, IL: Peoria Riverfront Museum, 2014), 29.





## Dulah Evans Krehbiel (1875, Oskaloosa, Iowa–1951, Evanston, Illinois)

### *Mountains of the Blue Moon*, 1924

Oil on canvas, 23 × 24 inches

Collection of The Krehbiel Corporation

Idealized female figures in clusters of twos and threes people the fantastical mountainous landscape of Dulah Evans Krehbiel's *Mountains of the Blue Moon*. The broad gestures, studied poses, and vaguely classical attire of these almost faceless women hint at an undefined allegory or symbolic narrative. Casting a cool blue tone over the scene, the crescent moon is a traditional emblem of youth or adolescence. The woman's slender, flat-chested forms represent the modern women's fashion ideal of the 1920s in both body type and dress. Yet they may also indicate a state of transition from childhood to womanhood: unlike conventional embodiments of maternity, these women do not interact with the infants sharing the scene along the bottom edge of the canvas. Krehbiel conjures an imaginary world of female self-sufficiency, harmony, and transcendent beauty.

An Iowa native, Dulah Evans arrived in Chicago to study art and became a successful commercial and graphic artist. She settled in suburban Park Ridge with her husband, fellow artist Albert Krehbiel, whose professional ambitions shaped her early career. Dulah did not become a serious painter until midlife, when she began a series of paintings of idealized women in fantasy landscapes, of which this is one. Their advent coincided with a crisis in her marriage that may be reflected in her images' aspirational themes of female empowerment, spiritual transformation, and self-actualization. At the time, the Krehbiels were spending time in Southern California, a vital center for artistic experimentation in religion and philosophy as well as visual art. Dulah shared her interests in figuration and fantasy with fellow artists there and at home in Chicago.





## Ellen Lanyon (1926, Chicago, Illinois–2013, New York, New York)

### *Ogden-Lake*, 1954

Egg tempera and gold leaf on Masonite, 25½ × 31½ inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Museum Purchase

With its naïve perspective compressing space and distorting objects, Ellen Lanyon's *Ogden-Lake* brings a child's sense of wonder to the prosaic infrastructure of urban mass transit. The Ashland Avenue station of Chicago's Lake Street "L" (elevated) train line appears as if seen from an upper story of a building just east at Ogden Avenue. The track bed is a floating highway surmounting the West Side's aging industrial architecture. Bridging the tracks, the station sports a mismatched pair of structures that playfully echo the L's elaborate Victorian station houses of the 1890s. Several riders wait on the bridge over the tracks, while at the left a man begins the ascent from street level. Tracks, railings, girders, and electrical wires form a lacy network superimposed on the mosaic of angular planes that make up the ground.

While studying at the Art Institute of Chicago, Lanyon was introduced to the museum's collection of late medieval and early Renaissance paintings, with their painstaking technique of egg tempera painting. She drew on that inspiration, as well as her everyday experience, for her Chicago cityscapes of the late 1940s and 1950s, which emphasize the grittiness of the city's decaying architectural fabric. As a student, Lanyon later recalled, she saw the world from the perspective of her daily rides on the L: "And I did many cityscapes that were definitely influenced by the fourteenth and fifteenth century artists' architectural distortion and the way they looked at things."<sup>1</sup>

A painter and printmaker, Lanyon was a Chicago native who was instrumental in the founding of several important artists' organizations before she moved to New York in 1983. Like many Chicago painters who emerged in an era dominated by abstract expressionism, Lanyon rejected artistic formalism in favor of evocative figural imagery derived from fantasy and surrealism.

1. Lanyon quoted in *Ellen Lanyon & Philip Pearlstein: Objects/Objectivity* (Chicago: Valerie Carberry Gallery, 2011), 5–6.





## Herman Menzel (1904, Chicago, Illinois–1988, Winnetka, Illinois)

### *The Woman in Orange*, c. 1936

Oil on canvas, 22½ × 26½ inches

Collection of David and Susan Ford Curry

His rod held upright, a fisherman strikes a graceful dance-like pose as he stands on the Chicago lakefront in Herman Menzel's *The Woman in Orange*. Dominating the composition and uniting its bands of sky, water, and land, the figure is balanced by two others—a youth reaching down toward a fish flopping on the pier and the eponymous woman in an orange dress seated on the shoreline's blocky boulders. The decorative arrangement of blue, pink, and lavender clouds filling the sky reinforces the apex of a triangle formed by the fisherman, who looks out toward sailboats on the horizon. The separation between the figures, none of whom face the viewer or each other, and their isolation from the distant pleasure-craft hint at the social inequities and economic privations of the Depression era, when the painting was made.

Menzel grew up in a German American enclave on Chicago's South Side and learned to paint in local commercial art schools. He also studied in rural Woodstock, New York, where he developed a deep love of nature. Isolated by early deafness, Menzel was a reclusive figure supported throughout his career by his wife, Willa Hamm Menzel, a successful advertising artist. Although he remains little known today, Menzel's paintings reflect some of the concerns that preoccupied many of Chicago's modernist artists from the 1920s through the 1950s. His interpretations of everyday subjects, from urban life to rural and backwoods scenery, are fraught with a sense of mystery and hushed expectation that links him to the strong current of surrealism in the Chicago art of his time. Showing the shoreline just north of Navy Pier, *The Woman in Orange* is part of a group of Chicago lakefront fishing and swimming scenes that Menzel painted in the late 1930s, many of which are tinged with his characteristic mood of loneliness and subtle unease.



## Archibald J. Motley Jr. (1891, New Orleans, Louisiana–1981, Chicago, Illinois)

### *The Jazz Singers*, c. 1934

Oil on canvas, 32½ × 42½ inches

The Federal Art Project Collection of Western Illinois University: Courtesy of the Fine Arts Program,  
U.S. General Services Administration New Deal art project

Arranged as if on a stage before the viewer, the oddly assorted choristers in *The Jazz Singers* vary by body type, expression, and attire, suggesting a spontaneous gathering of individuals from different social and economic spheres. United in song, they also share an identity as African Americans. Archibald J. Motley Jr. found many of his subjects in the Bronzeville neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. His images highlight the rich social variety that gave the area its legendary creative vitality in the interwar period. Motley's imagery emphasizes Bronzeville's renowned music scene, which nurtured the development of both jazz and the blues. Often featuring street musicians, club bands, and dancers, his paintings make use of syncopation, pattern, and repetition inspired by musical composition.

Motley was a well-educated, light-skinned African American who grew up in a predominantly white Chicago neighborhood and studied at the Art Institute of Chicago's prestigious school and in Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship. Forging an artistic career on the narrow overlapping borders of two societies separated by race, he wanted his art to bridge their divide by "express[ing] the Negro honestly and sincerely."<sup>1</sup> In his portraits, character studies, and scenes of everyday life such as *The Jazz Singers*, Motley was the first artist, black or white, to focus on the urban context of modern African American experience. His portrayals' humor and even caricature, which may strike today's viewers as offensive, went unchallenged by the largely white art audience of his time. But they hint at the artist's somewhat ambiguous relationship to his own racial identity, and at Motley's ability to view his community critically as well as affectionately.

*The Jazz Singers* is one of several works Motley made while working for Depression-era federal relief projects sometimes collectively called the WPA. Beginning in 1934, a unique government arts program funded Western Illinois University's acquisition of art for public spaces on campus, including this painting.

1. Motley's artist statement in J. Z. Jacobson,  
*Art of Today: Chicago 1933* (Chicago: L. M. Stein, 1932), 93.





## Chris Pappan (born 1971, Colorado Springs, Colorado)

### *Dropping into Creation, 2014*

Acrylic and glitter on molded plywood skateboard deck with wire, 32 × 8 × 2 inches

Collection of the artist

Adapted from an historical photographic portrait, the dignified Native American in Chris Pappan's *Dropping into Creation* is rendered naturalistically against a simple backdrop of glitter-enhanced red handprints on a black ground. Said to have been named Makes Them Cry (as translated into English), the man was a member of the Osage people, whose Mississippian ancestors built Cahokia, an ancient metropolis that survives in the Cahokia Mounds in southwestern Illinois. The figure's elongated legs refer to the Osage creation story, according to which people grew their legs long to step down out of the sky world and onto the earth. The exaggerated proportions of his feet accentuate the contrast between Makes Them Cry's traditional dress and his contemporary footwear. These are fashionable Vans, an iconic brand of skateboarding shoes Pappan has tinted to exactly match his subject's robe. The portrait itself is painted on the underside of a skateboard deck, predrilled for attaching a pair of "trucks," or wheel assemblies. In the lingo of skateboarding, "dropping in" is starting a run from the top of a ramp. Pappan, who claims membership in the Osage tribe and the closely related Kaw or Kansa nation as well as the Cheyenne River Sioux, titled his work to juxtapose his people's origins with contemporary life ways.

In his art, Pappan reworks historical imagery and materials such as ledgers and maps to critique the dominant culture's distorted, often reflexively racist perceptions of native peoples. With their playful but pointed interweaving of traditional and contemporary references, works such as *Dropping into Creation* also proclaim that "we are still here!," in the artist's words, and that Native American culture belongs to the living present as well as the historical past. The hand motif seen in the background of this painting is widespread in indigenous cultures: asserting present physical being, it stands as evidence of existence here and now.

Pappan grew up in Arizona and graduated from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, before moving to Chicago in 1993. He studied briefly at the Art Institute of Chicago and has established an international career.



## Ed Paschke (1939, Chicago, Illinois–2004, Chicago, Illinois)

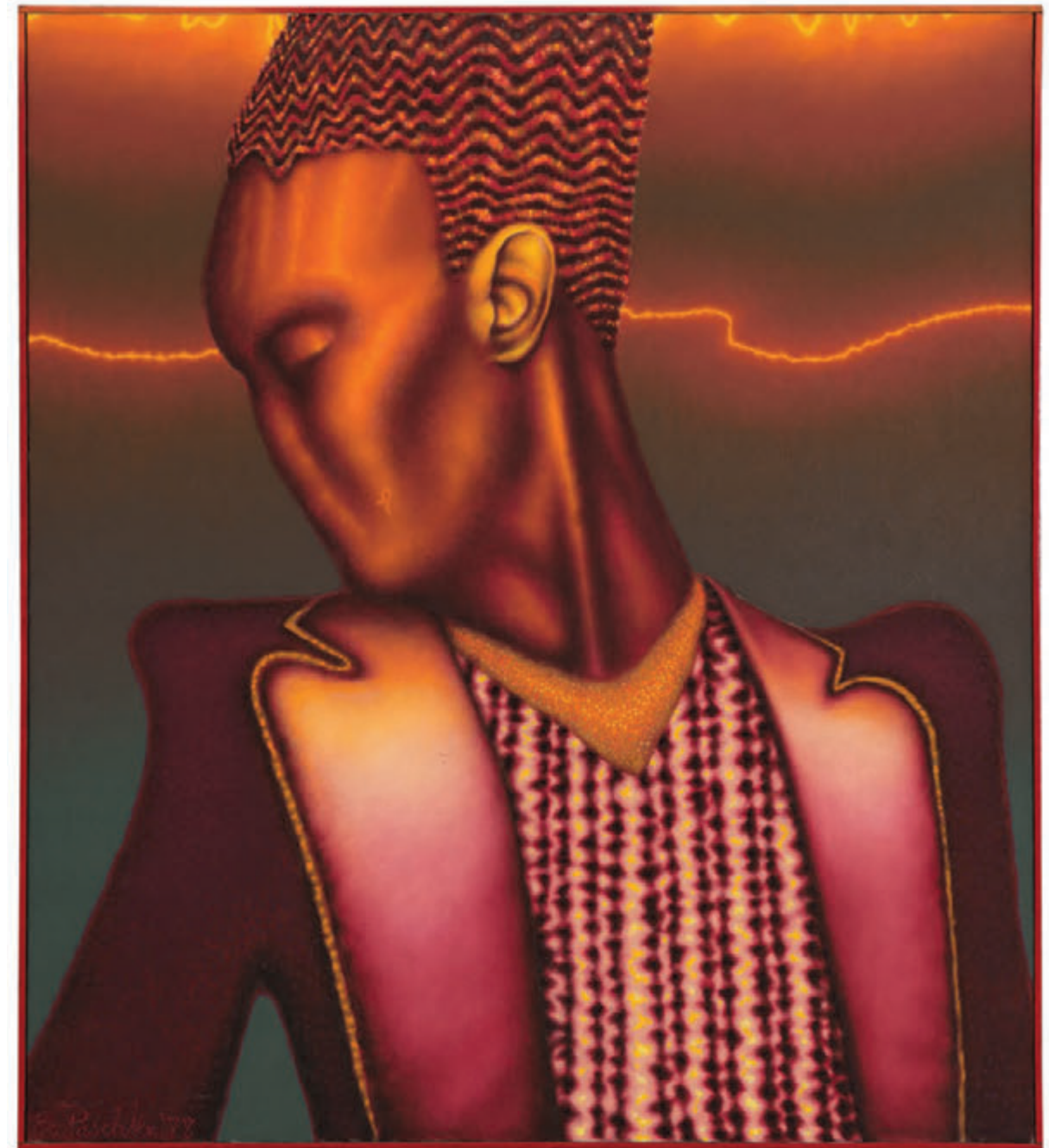
### *Savoy*, 1978

Oil on linen, 38 × 34½ inches  
Private collection

Head and gaze averted, the androgynous figure in Ed Paschke's *Savoy* both invites and repels scrutiny as it strikes an elegant pose reminiscent of high fashion imagery. In contrast to the highlighted and detailed ear turned toward the viewer, the nose and mouth are virtually effaced. Series of jagged lines in the figure's hair and clothing and the vivid streak across the background evoke the crackle of an electrical charge and recall flickering patterns of static flashing across an analog TV screen. Saturated with hot color, Paschke's unsettling image reflects his fascination with electronic media and its effects on perception. At the time he painted *Savoy*, the artist later recalled, he was inspired by crude news footage of airplane hijackings carried out by masked terrorists. Paschke began to depict faces with features removed, as here, before he moved on to paint masked faces and masks themselves.

Paschke's title recalls the Savoy Ballroom, the name of two separate popular dance and music venues—one on Chicago's black South Side and the other in Harlem in New York City—that were nationally famous from the 1920s until the 1950s. Painted decades after both ballrooms closed, *Savoy* references a bygone era of live entertainment in which glamour was a mutual performance of display and spectatorship. Its practice died with the rise of TV, which effectively turned breaking news of events such as hijackings into home entertainment.

Part of the group of artists known as the Chicago Imagists, who emerged in the 1960s, Paschke was deeply inspired by media imagery, popular culture, and the cult of celebrity. At one time he considered becoming a filmmaker. Before earning his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on the G.I. Bill, Paschke created spot illustrations for *Playboy* magazine; made drawings for weapons manuals while on assignment in the U.S. Army; worked for a commercial display company; traveled to Mexico, Europe, and New York; and served as a psychiatric aid in an institution for the mentally ill—all experiences that informed his art. A widely acclaimed artist, Paschke was also an influential professor at Northwestern University.





## Marion Perkins (1908, Marche, Arkansas–1961, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Skywatcher*, c. 1948

Marble, 26½ × 4¼ × 22 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Transfer from The Peace Museum

A study in tense expectation, the seated figure in Marion Perkins' *Skywatcher* turns his head to look back and up, grasps his ankle with one hand, and clenches the other into a fist on his thigh. The artist hand-carved the sculpture from a shallow block of marble whose original rectilinear form is echoed in the man's rigidly straight back. His intent skyward gaze and painfully twisted posture suggest a threat all the more terrifying because it is undefined. Agonizingly aware, the figure is powerless in his seated position and self-immobilized as he grips his bent leg.

*Skywatcher* is probably the first of several upward-gazing male figures that Perkins conceived in 1945 after the United States dropped atom bombs on two Japanese cities. The artist believed that a public memorial to the bombings' victims would find no acceptance in America until sometime in the future, "when we have repudiated the crimes which at present make us the most feared and hated nation."<sup>1</sup> His "skywatcher" sculptures both evoke the terror felt by the victims and give universal expression to Perkins' deeply held political convictions as a passionate advocate of civil and human rights.

Born near Little Rock, Arkansas, Perkins grew up on Chicago's South Side, where he spent the rest of his life. Largely self-taught as an artist, he often sculpted from salvaged materials while supporting his family by menial work. Yet Perkins was no outsider: gregarious and intellectual, he belonged to a talented generation of writers and artists who made Chicago a thriving center for African American creativity in the 1930s and 1940s. His work was well received in exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago, which purchased one of his sculptures in 1951.

1. Perkins quoted in Daniel Shulman, "Marion Perkins: A Chicago Sculptor Rediscovered," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 24, no. 2 (1999): 271, note 56.



## Carolyn Plochmann (Born 1926, Toledo, Ohio)

### *Country Store*, c. 1958

Oil on Masonite, 23<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 29<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub> inches

Collection of the University Museum, Southern Illinois University

Carolyn Plochmann has written that her painting *Country Store* “is at once a composite and a fragment” of the typical “friendly” neighborhood stores found in southern Illinois. It demonstrates her “usual way of working—illustrating no specific incident but attempting to symbolize graphically an accumulation of opinions, experiences, and, I hope, some insights.”<sup>1</sup>

Here, the incongruously varied group gathered in front of a local grocery includes an aging woman with two small children, an African American boy, and another youth wearing the skullcap and sidelocks of Jewish tradition and holding a pole that supports a *tzedakah* (charity) box. The contemplative, even haunted expressions of the principal figures endow *Country Store* with the aura of quiet mystery and timelessness that has characterized Plochmann’s art throughout her long career. Rich detail, delicate technique, and the enigmatic juxtaposition of figures and objects for dream-like effect all link her work to the artistic mode known as magic realism.

*Country Store* is the first in a group of paintings by Plochmann published in 1959 in a portfolio entitled *University Portrait*, a companion volume to *The Ordeal of Southern Illinois University* by her husband, philosophy professor George Kimball Plochmann. While most of the portfolio’s nine paintings show campus scenes and vignettes of academic life, *Country Store* focuses on the ideal of local community, reflecting the artist’s experience as a resident of the Carbondale area, where she continues to live.

Born Carolyn Gassan, the artist received early recognition of her talent in her native Toledo, Ohio. After graduate studies at the University of Iowa, she was hired as art supervisor of Southern Illinois University’s Training School, resigning upon her marriage to embark full time on a long and critically successful artistic career.

1. *University Portrait: Nine Paintings by Carolyn Gassan Plochmann* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, [1959]), 9, 11.





## Marcos Raya (Born 1948, Guanajuato, Mexico)

### *Psychedelia*, 2016

Acrylic on canvas, 88 × 67 inches  
Collection of the artist

A storm of energetic lines and shapes leaps off the artist's sketchpad and onto a large framed canvas in Marcos Raya's self-portrait entitled *Psychedelia*. Raya shows himself in his signature pork pie hat and dark sunglasses as he works intently in his studio. The eccentric animated forms exploding from his fertile imagination refuse to be bound by the conventions of representation that govern most of the image. From the surface of the picture-within-the-picture, they overflow into the studio space and beyond, onto the frame of *Psychedelia* itself. These fantastic forms, like the painting's title, recall drug-induced hallucinations and the 1960s drug scene.

Born into a working-class family in rural Mexico, Raya moved to Chicago's Taylor Street neighborhood as a teenager and then pursued art studies at the Windsor Mountain School in Lenox, Massachusetts. He returned to Chicago in 1979 and opened a studio in the Mexican immigrant neighborhood of Pilsen. The self-described "outlaw artist of 18th Street" became a leader in Chicago's Mexican American political mural movement and a witness to the ravages of gangs, poverty, and drugs on his community. His vast body of work—paintings, murals, collages, installations, photographs, and assemblages of found objects—addresses powerful themes of politics, violence, sexuality, and the dissolution of individual humanity through mechanization, war, political corruption, and addiction.

Here, Raya presents himself as a mature artist yet seated in the cramped Pilsen studio that he first occupied. Images on the wall behind him refer to his early paintings, the idyllic Massachusetts landscape around his school, his teacher Allen Thiekler, and patron saints he believes have protected and guided him through a four-decades-long career. *Psychedelia* is both a monument to the process of creation and a record of Raya's own self-invention as an artist.



## Lillian Scalzo (1900, Springfield, Illinois–1984, Springfield, Illinois)

### *The Illinois State Register Building, c. 1945*

Watercolor and gouache on paper, 14 × 11 inches

Collection of the Springfield Art Association

With its stripped-down forms and fanciful color, Lillian Scalzo's view of the *Illinois State Register* building offers a modern take on the dignified downtown architecture of her native Springfield. Parked cars, commercial signs, and lampposts lend the image a distinct informality that hints at the influence of jazz and popular graphic design, along with the deliberate distortions and simplification characteristic of modernist art.

This work is one of a group of paintings on paper depicting scenes in Springfield's business district that Scalzo made in the 1940s. At the time, the building housing the *Illinois State Register* newspaper (now the *State Journal-Register*) was also known as Herndon's, for the venerable women's clothing store housed on its ground floor. Clad in pale brick, but not white as shown in Scalzo's image, it was notable for its facade's vertical emphasis, a distinctive feature of 1920s design. Although the building still stands on South Third Street near the intersection of East Capitol Avenue, the older neighboring structures shown here have given way to parking lots. Scalzo's images of "contemporary" Springfield have unintentionally become records of a vanished commercial and architectural era.

Scalzo studied music before attending the Springfield Art Association (SAA) and the Art Institute of Chicago. In the late 1930s, she also enrolled at Chicago's New Bauhaus school (later the IIT Institute of Design), where founder László Moholy-Nagy's innovative integrated approach to art and design gave her the "most valuable training that I had."<sup>1</sup> In Springfield, Scalzo developed a broad program of art instruction at SAA, where she conducted classes for the rest of her career. Scalzo both taught and practiced a wide range of mediums, from printmaking and painting to pottery, copper enameling, and fiber arts.

1. Transcript of 1976 interview with Scalzo, 7–9, Oral History Collection, Archives/Special Collections, University of Illinois at Springfield, available at <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/uis/id/3900>.





## William S. Schwartz (1896, Smorgon, Russia–1977, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Outskirts of Galena*, 1938

Oil on canvas, 29<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 35<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Courtesy of the Fine Arts Program,  
Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration. Commissioned through the New Deal art projects

A lowering gray sky contrasts with colorful buildings in William S. Schwartz's *Outskirts of Galena*. The scene is composed according to landscape convention, with tall vertical elements framing the view on either side and a pathway leading into the distance. The hilly, verdant setting, in which the scattered structures are cozily ensconced, also conforms to a traditional ideal of landscape beauty that intimates the peaceful coexistence of man and nature, a theme reinforced by the presence of two small figures on the road. While the fanciful tints of the buildings inject a playful note, the stark electrical poles on the right emphatically situate the scene in modern rural America. Galena is located in the hilly Mississippi River Valley in far-northwestern Illinois. Today a popular tourist destination, it was for decades a sleepy memorial to its boomtown heyday in the mid-nineteenth century.

*Outskirts of Galena* is one of Schwartz's many works made for the Illinois Art Project, one of the federal relief programs known collectively as the WPA. The art it sponsored tended to favor "typical" people and places, with an emphasis on life in the American heartland. The prominent electrical poles in this painting pay homage to another important initiative of the New Deal economic program: rural electrification.

Schwartz was a multitalented painter and printmaker who studied art in his native Russia before emigrating to the U.S. in his teens. He arrived in Chicago in 1916 to train at the Art Institute. Adept at portraiture, figural work, and abstract composition as well as landscape, the prolific Schwartz became one of the city's most critically successful modernist artists. Village memories from his Russian boyhood inspired Schwartz's early images; in the 1930s, in works such as *Outskirts of Galena*, he brought a comparable spirit of romantic fantasy to his interpretation of the midwestern rural scene.



## Arthur Sieving (1902, Manito, Illinois–1974, Springfield, Illinois)

---

### *Jitterbug Dancers*, c. 1950

Carved wood, 23½ × 8 × 6½ inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Gift of the Artist

---

Locked in an embrace, two figures seem to swing to a lively beat in Arthur Sieving's playful *Jitterbug Dancers*. As the woman bends her knees, her skirt twisting with the checked movement of her body, she looks up; her taller partner, meanwhile, turns his head to rest his cheek against her head in an affectionate gesture. The contrasting angles of his thrusting left foot and her bent legs suggest their syncopated action as each partner counters the other's momentum.

Sieving carved his sculpture from a single block of wood, leaving the marks of his chisel evident in the heavy base that supports the dancers. Their forms, in contrast, are streamlined into rhythmic facets that twist with their movement to capture the dynamic nature of the dance. The jitterbug, an exuberant swing dance also called jive or jump, is characterized by freewheeling acrobatic swings and lifts. Popularized in the U.S. during the 1930s by entertainers such as Cab Calloway and Benny Goodman, it became an international craze during World War II as American troops introduced it around the world.

The stylized appearance of *Jitterbug Dancers* hints at Sieving's awareness of modern art, but he probably was self-taught as a sculptor. Born on a farm in central Illinois, Sieving spent his adult life in Springfield. He worked for a painting contractor before becoming a professional magician and ventriloquist. Dissatisfied with the available dummies, he took up wood carving to create his own, eventually becoming a skilled maker of dioramas and models. Beginning in the late 1940s, Sieving constructed dioramas and he carved model dinosaurs, portrait busts, and other display aids for the Illinois State Museum. There, a sculpture titled *Jitterbugs*, presumably this work, was featured in his solo exhibition in the early 1950s.





## John Storrs (1885, Chicago, Illinois–1956, Mer, France)

### *Woman and Soldier*, 1940–1951

Terra-cotta with applied gouache paint,  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$  inches

Estate of the Artist, Photo and loan courtesy of Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago/New York

A somber-faced woman supports a man's limply sagging body in John Storrs' *Woman and Soldier*. Notwithstanding the sculpture's diminutive proportions, its powerful lines and stylized forms tangibly express the woman's determined strength and the impotence and vulnerability of her unconscious burden. The work suggests a pietà, the traditional image of Mary holding the nearly nude body of the crucified Christ. Here, the woman is draped in a blue cloak like that worn by Mary in Christian tradition. *Woman and Soldier* pointedly addresses the human cost of war by invoking Christian themes of suffering, charity, and endurance through faith. Married to a French woman, Storrs lived through World War I as a resident of France, and thereafter war became a theme of his work. During World War II, he was twice imprisoned by the Germans in concentration camps, an experience that profoundly affected him both psychologically and physically.

Storrs made small painted terra-cotta sculptures as early as the late 1910s. He modeled and cast *Woman and Soldier* in 1940, creating three known copies subsequently differentiated by their surface treatment. In 1951, he finished this particular version by applying gouache (an opaque, water-based paint), highlighting the woman's form but leaving the soldier untouched. By that date, the ailing artist had taken up less physically demanding techniques, including the practice of painting terra-cotta sculptures created years earlier.

Storrs was a Chicago native who spent much of his career in France, with frequent return visits to his hometown. An innovative modernist who created figural as well as abstract works in various sculpture, painting, and printmaking mediums, he was inspired by the abstract art of contemporaries and by so-called primitive art. The son of an architect, Storrs was also influenced by Chicago's modern architecture, particularly the streamlined aesthetic of its Art Deco structures. Storrs collaborated with many architects: in Chicago his best-known work is *Ceres*, a modern interpretation of the goddess of grains, which crowns the 1928 Chicago Board of Trade Building.



## Nita K. Sunderland (Born 1927, Newton, Illinois)

### *Figure and Image*, c. 1960

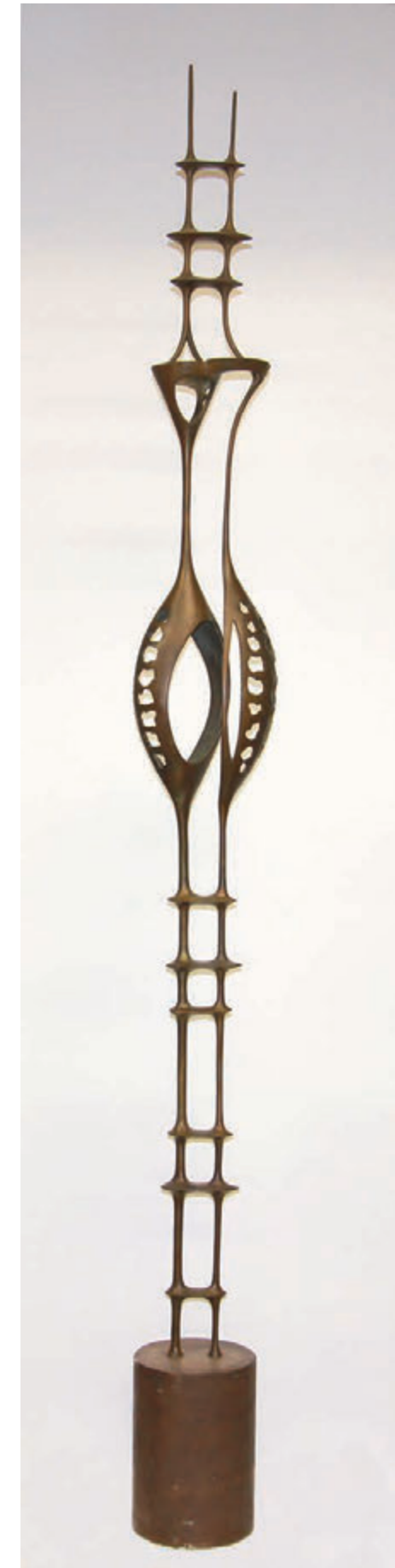
Bronze on plaster base, 94 × 10 × 6 inches

Peoria Riverfront Museum Collection, Gift of Dr. Michael Luthy in memory of John and Armedia Totten

At nearly eight feet in height, Nita Sunderland's *Figure and Image* has the commanding presence of a regal figure abstracted to its basic components, including a crowned, flaring head and a rounded torso pierced by a series of openings that mimic spinal vertebrae. The artist has described the work's interlocked vertical forms as a "double figure"—perhaps suggesting a single body and its reflection.<sup>1</sup> Erect, elegant, and stately, the slender welded bronze sculpture recalls the stylized ancient and medieval images of kings, queens, prelates, and warriors that have inspired Sunderland throughout her career, from royal tomb effigies to chess pieces. Indeed, *Figure and Image* is one of a suite of single and grouped vertical figures—Sunderland's favorite—from which she developed her "chess set" series of the early 1970s.

Growing up in rural Newton, Illinois, Sunderland wanted to create things even as a small child. She soon taught herself carpentry, and in school she lobbied to be allowed to take shop class with the boys, whom she helped with her superior welding skills. Sunderland studied art at Bradley University and taught at Mexico's University of Michoacán, later returning to Bradley as the university's first female professor of art. Throughout her career, Sunderland challenged prejudices against a woman's ability to create large-scale sculpture in difficult materials such as stone and metal. Mastering techniques of carving, welding, and casting, she created figural and abstract sculptures in a variety of materials, as well as making prints and drawings. Sunderland's public works of art are found throughout Illinois, including in Chicago and in Peoria, her longtime home.

1. Nita Sunderland interviewed circa 2015  
by Kristan McKinsey, audio at  
<http://iwa.bradley.edu/riverfront/sunderland>.





## Lorado Taft (1860, Elmwood, Illinois–1936, Chicago, Illinois)

### *The Solitude of the Soul*, modeled 1901, cast 1994

Bronze, 29 × 15 × 12 inches

Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois on behalf of its Krannert Art Museum,  
Museum Purchase through the Harlan E. Moore Charitable Trust Fund

Reproduced at right is an identical cast from the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Their backs to each other and eyes closed, the four figures in Lorado Taft's *Solitude of the Soul* are connected by touch but otherwise isolated—"blind, groping, and clinging to each other," in the sculptor's words.<sup>1</sup> The idealized nudes, two women and two men, symbolize the shared existential loneliness of the individual. This is Taft's early rendering of his first major work of ideal sculpture: originally modeled in plaster and later cast in bronze, *The Solitude of the Soul* took final form in a life-size marble version carved on commission for the Art Institute of Chicago in 1914. In contrast to the monumental marble, the bronze retains evidence of the spontaneous process of creation as the artist rapidly modeled the original soft plaster with his fingers.

Born in Elmwood, Illinois, and trained in Parisian art academies, Taft was Chicago's most prominent public sculptor in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, as well as a prolific writer, generous educator, and tireless advocate for art and artists in his hometown. Like many of his contemporaries, Taft believed that the city's relentless commercialism and mind-boggling pace of change demanded public works of art that would foster community cohesion in a metropolis known more often for competition and conflict. He sought to express universal ideas in his sculptures through an aesthetic language of idealization, uplift, and beauty. Beginning in the 1910s, Taft's unwavering adherence to traditional artistic values made him a target of derision for the city's modernist rebels. Nonetheless, his most important works still grace the streets and parks of Chicago and other American cities.

1. Taft quoted in Judith Barter, Kimberly Rhodes, and Seth A. Thayer, *American Arts at The Art Institute of Chicago: From Colonial Times to World War I* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago; distributed by Hudson Hills Press, New York, 1998), 286.





## Julia Thecla (1896, Delavan, Illinois–1973, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Remembering*, 1966

Tempera, charcoal, lacquer, pencil, and collage on board, 10 × 10 inches

Collection of Bernard Friedman

Faces and figures with softly rounded, childlike features seem to float in the dark blue surface of the night sky in Julia Thecla's mysterious painting *Remembering*. Pigeons roost in a tree's slender bare branches, through which appears a moon-like orb. The artist lapped the opaque dark blue of the background over blended and layered pastel hues, creating forms that are at once ghostlike and crisply defined, confusing the spatial relationships between objects and background. The scene evokes the unreality of the dreams of sleep and of daytime reveries. Perhaps these imaginings emerge from the two linked heads near the center of the composition—one with eyes closed and the other awake, like two states embodied in a single individual. *Remembering* suggests the nature of recollections from distant childhood, which assume the strangeness and illogic of dreams due to time's eroding effects and also to the disconnect between a child's and an adult's perception of the world.

A native of rural Delavan, Illinois, who arrived in Chicago to study at the Art Institute, Thecla found a sympathetic environment for her highly individual work within the city's progressive art circles of the 1930s. An independent spirit during a time of many barriers for women artists, the diminutive Thecla cultivated an eccentric childlike persona that complemented her art. Little girls, ballet dancers, bunnies, birds, and llamas recur in her intimately scaled fantasy paintings. She typically worked in water-based translucent and opaque paints applied to artist's board, manipulating her materials in innovative ways, as in *Remembering*. Thecla's cryptic and suggestive images offer glimpses into an alternate reality of dreams, fairy tales, and magical or extraterrestrial worlds.





## Rudolph Weisenborn (1881, Chicago, Illinois–1974, Chicago, Illinois)

### *Chicago, 1928*

Oil on canvas, 48 × 80 inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Gift of Gordon and West Weisenborn

Angular and curving forms, rendered in smoothly shaded planes and strong color, comprise Rudolph Weisenborn's monumental *Chicago*. Without showing the city objectively, it suggests the powerful physical presence of a metropolis famed for its modern architecture, industrial might, and economic vitality. The painting associates the artist's hometown with the optimism of the 1920s, an era that celebrated modernity and the promise of new technologies and urban living. The artist described it as "an interpretation of the spirit of Chicago . . . It doesn't represent anything pictorially. To me the painting is interesting as a construction almost any way I hang it."<sup>1</sup>

Weisenborn spent his peripatetic youth as a miner and cow-puncher in the West before studying art in Denver, Colorado. Returning to his native Chicago in time for the Armory Show of 1913, he soon became a leader among the city's avant-garde artists and an organizer of such anti-establishment groups as the Chicago No-Jury Society of Artists. Passionate, combative, and uncompromising, Weisenborn dedicated himself to bringing modern art to his hometown. He was a pioneer in abstract painting in Chicago as both an artist and an educator. In the 1920s, when many of Chicago's artists embraced modernism, Weisenborn was virtually alone in his experiments in abstract composition, but he also created representational images. Weisenborn made drawings and prints as well as paintings; among his mural paintings are several he completed for the WPA's Illinois Art Project, a Depression-era artists' relief program.

*Chicago* demonstrates Weisenborn's goal of making each canvas "a vital organization instead of a static composition."<sup>2</sup> When exhibited in the Art Institute of Chicago's annual exhibition of American art in 1928, it generated considerable attention as the first non-objective work ever exhibited by a Chicagoan.

1. Weisenborn quoted in Elizabeth Kennedy, ed., *Chicago Modern 1894–1945: Pursuit of the New* (Chicago: Terra Museum of American Art and Terra Foundation for the Arts, distributed by the University of Chicago Press, 2004), 160.

2. Rudolph Weisenborn, "Abstract? Absolutely!," TS in Rudolph Weisenborn Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 856, frame 18.









---

This book was published on the occasion of the exhibition  
**ART OF ILLINOIS**

© 2018

All rights reserved

Published by

Illinois Governor's Mansion Association

a not-for-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization

P.O. Box 5444

Springfield, IL 62705

illinoismansion.org

1,000 copies of this book were printed on

100# Endurance text and 100# Loop Feltweave Cover

by Envision, Bloomingdale, Illinois

ISBN: 978-0-692-09959-9

PRINTED IN ILLINOIS

Editor: Amy Theobald Ross, Sugarpie Project

Designer: Jason Pickleman, the JNL graphic design

This project has been generously supported in part  
by grants from the Illinois Arts Council Agency,  
and the Terra Foundation for American Art.



---

p. 2 Matt DeBackere

p. 20 Zoë Bare

p. 23 Chris Young

p. 25 Galena-Jo Daviess County  
Historical Society Collection

p. 27 Krannert Art Museum

p. 31 Zoë Bare

p. 33 Aurora Historical Society

p. 35 Matt Ferguson

p. 37 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 43, 44, and 45 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 47 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 49, 50, and 51 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 53 www.davidolsonphoto.com

p. 55 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 57 and 59 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 60 and 61 Zoë Bare

p. 62 and 63 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 65, 66, and 67 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 69 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 73 Jennifer Caldwell

p. 77 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 78 and 79 Keith French

p. 83 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 85 Thomas A. Gleason

p. 87 Linda Wade

p. 89 James T. Hickey

Mansion Files Collection

p. 91 Jennifer Caldwell

p. 92 and 93 Jennifer Caldwell

p. 106 Nathan Keay

p. 109 Dannyl Dolder

p. 111 Nathan Keay

p. 115 Doug Carr

p. 117 Zoë Bare

p. 119 William H. Bengston

p. 121 Javier Chavira

p. 123 Dannyl Dolder

p. 125 Zoë Bare

p. 127 Zoë Bare

p. 133 Chris Young

p. 135 Samantha Comerford

p. 137 Rockford Art Museum

p. 139 and 140 Doug Carr

p. 143 Bishop Hill State Historic Site,  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

p. 145 Dorothy Dare

p. 147 Doug Carr

p. 149 Zoë Bare

p. 151 Tyler Hennings, The Federal Art  
Project Collection of Western Illinois  
University, Fine Arts Collection,  
U.S. General Services Administration

p. 153 Nathan Keay

p. 155 Nathan Keay

p. 157 Doug Carr

p. 159 Jeff Garner

p. 161 Nathan Keay

p. 163 David Blanchette  
Studio 131 Photography

p. 165 Nathan Keay

p. 167 Chris Young

p. 169 Tom Van Eynde

p. 173 LACMA public domain  
www.lacma.org

p. 175 Zoë Bare

p. 177 and 178 Nathan Keay

---

FRONT COVER:

William S. Schwartz (1896, Smorgon, Russia–1977, Chicago, Illinois)

*Outskirts of Galena*, 1938

Oil on canvas, 29¾ × 35¾ inches

Illinois Legacy Collection, Illinois State Museum, Courtesy of the Fine Arts Program,  
Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration. Commissioned through  
the New Deal art projects

BACK COVER:

Atlan Ceramic Art Club Chicago, Illinois (active 1893–1923)

Florence Donovan Pratt Steward

(1851, Auburn, New York–1921, Chicago, Illinois), decorator

*“Japanese” Place Setting from Conversation Set in Historic Ornament*, 1910

Porcelain

Plate: 8¾ inches in diameter

Inscription: Smiles crown the welcome and make every dish a feast.

Collection of Chicago History Museum, Purchase



---

Established in 1972, the Illinois Governor's  
Mansion Association is a private, charitable  
corporation that aims to preserve and oversee  
the restoration of the People's House. In  
February 2015, the non-profit board put this  
mission to practice, embarking on a two-year  
renovation project of the Mansion. The project  
aims to preserve the People's House for  
future generations and make Illinois' history  
accessible for all.

#### **Illinois Governor's Mansion Association Board of Directors (2018)**

Gov. Jim Thompson, *Chair Emeritus*

First Lady Diana Rauner, *Chair*

Lori Spear Montana, *Vice-Chair*

John Nicolay, *Vice-Chair*

Kim Robinson, *Treasurer*

Nancy Bunn, *Secretary*

John H. Bryan, Jr.

Christine T. Dudley

Jeff Evans

Andrew M. Faville

Rob Funderburg

Christina Kemper Gidwitz

Joseph P. Gromacki

Leslie S. Hindman

Sara Wojcicki Jimenez

MK Pritzker

Trisha Rooney

Laura Schultz

Anne-Marie St. Germaine

Andy VanMeter



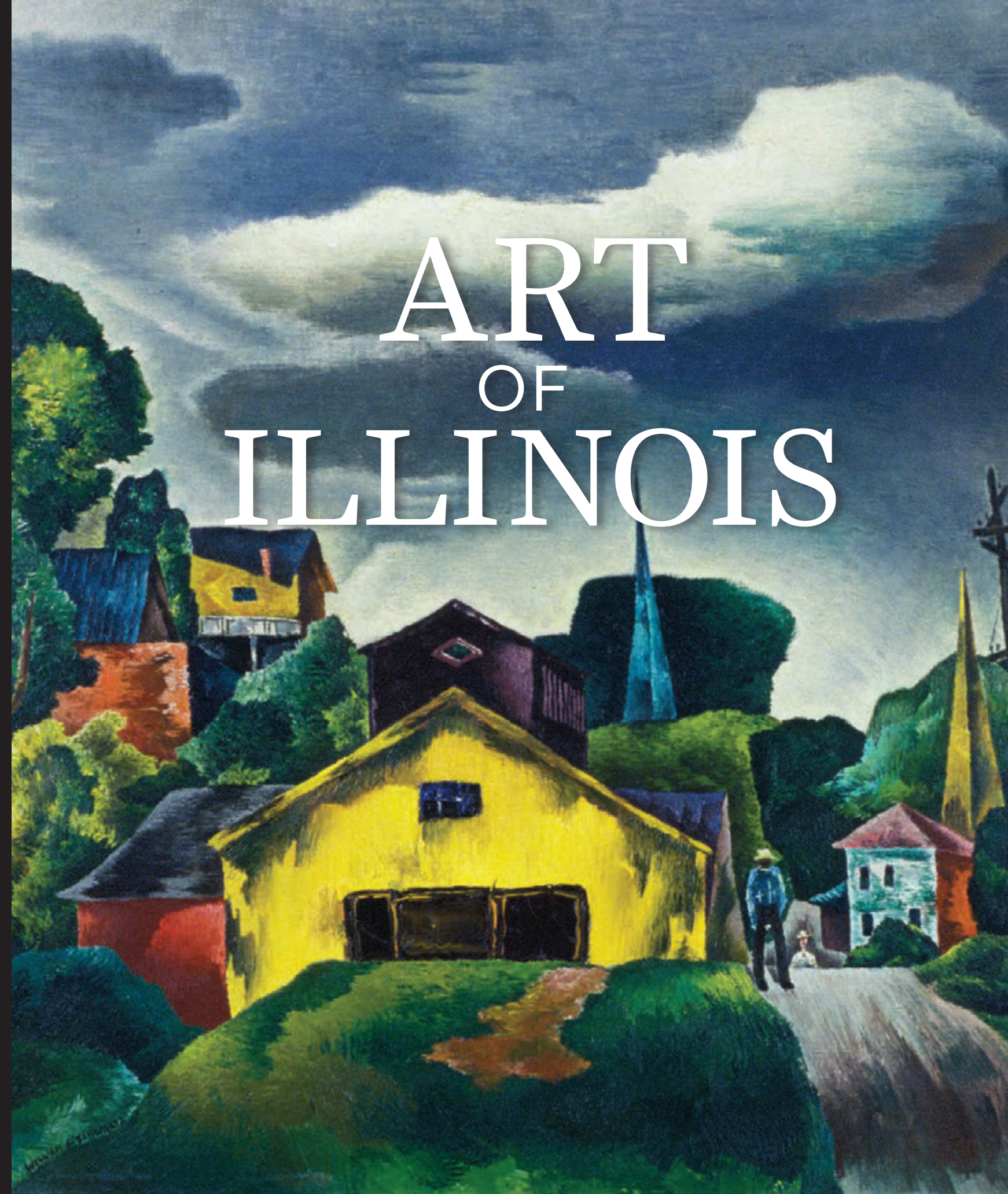


The Governor's Mansion, built in 1855, has been witness to the state's—and some of the nation's—most transformative events. From this home, our governors fought to free slaves, unshackle laborers, deploy troops for the great wars, lift families from the ravages of the Great Depression, and guide a fragile world at the onset of the Nuclear Age.

*Art of Illinois*, the first exhibition to be featured in the Mansion's newly defined public spaces, captures some of these transformations as well. The magnificent fine and decorative artworks on display—from the masterful hands of Illinois artisans, craftspeople, sculptors, and painters—deliver both historical insight and cultural wonder. That they arrive at this 200th birthday moment for the state is a fitting start to the next life of a home that, in its newest iteration, earns its place among Illinois Historic Places as The People's House.

Mrs. Diana Rauner, First Lady of Illinois  
and Chair, Illinois Governor's Mansion Association

ART OF ILLINOIS




# ART OF ILLINOIS

ISBN 978-0-692-09959-9




9 780692 099599 >



—••——••—

*This book, and the exhibition it documents, would not have been possible without the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Illinois Arts Council Agency; Diana Rauner, First Lady of the State of Illinois, and Chair of the Illinois Governor's Mansion Association; John H. Bryan, Jr., Joseph P. Gromacki, Leslie S. Hindman, and the members of the Fine and Decorative Arts Committee of the Illinois Governor's Mansion Association.*

—••——••—

# ART OF ILLINOIS



*This book, and the exhibition it documents, would not have been possible without the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art; the Illinois Arts Council Agency; Diana Rauner, First Lady of the State of Illinois, and Chair of the Illinois Governor's Mansion Association; John H. Bryan, Jr., Joseph P. Gromacki, Leslie S. Hindman, and the members of the Fine and Decorative Arts Committee of the Illinois Governor's Mansion Association.*

