

PRESS RELEASE

Connecticut’s creative legacy shines in ‘Connecticut Modern: Art, Design, and the Avant-Garde, 1930-1960’

Exhibition features works by 20th-century masters Alexander Calder, Helen Frankenthaler, Louise Bourgeois, Jasper Johns and others

Greenwich, CT - Celebrate Connecticut as a center of international artistic innovation with “Connecticut Modern: Art, Design, and the Avant-Garde, 1930-1960,” on view through Jan. 7, 2024 at the Bruce Museum. The exhibition transports visitors to three decades in the 20th century when European artists settled in the New England state and transformed the region into a hub for arts, architecture and design. Paintings and sculptures by Alexander Calder, Anni and Josef Albers, Helen Frankenthaler, Barbara Chase-Riboud, David Hare, Walker Evans and other renowned artists chronicle this creative period in Connecticut’s history that has largely gone unnoticed.

“‘Connecticut Modern’ features an extraordinary selection of modern works of art and design by many of the greatest talents of the 20th century, as well as offering what we believe is a surprising and compelling context for their creation,” said Kenneth E. Silver, Ph.D., adjunct curator of art at the Bruce Museum. “For three decades, Connecticut was the beating heart of the modern movement in America. ‘Connecticut Modern’ celebrates this notable period and shines a light on Connecticut’s critical role in 20th-century art and design.”

Alexander Calder’s move from Paris to Roxbury, Connecticut in 1933 precipitated a mass migration of transplanted Parisian artists to the Nutmeg State. Soon, sculptor David Hare moved near the Calders, husband and wife painters Yves Tanguy and Kay Sage settled in Woodbury and Rose and André Masson moved to nearby New Preston. Significant artists of the Magic Realist mode also lived and worked in Connecticut, including Peter Blume, Pavel Tchelitchew and Paul Cadmus. French sculptor Louise Bourgeois relocated to Easton in 1941 and the great painter Arshile Gorky lived in Roxbury. Pioneering Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer as well as Philip Johnson and Eliot Noyes built innovative houses in New Canaan in the late 1940s.

“Connecticut Modern: Art, Design, and the Avant-Garde, 1930-1960” showcases the seminal works by these 20th-century masters and spotlights Connecticut’s role in artistic innovation.

The exhibition is curated by Kenneth E. Silver, professor of art history at New York University, and sponsored by Bank of America, lead sponsor of the new Bruce, and Lugano Diamonds. Additional support is provided by Hollis Taggart Galleries, NY.

“Bank of America is committed to supporting local cultural institutions to help enrich our communities and build greater cultural understanding through the arts,” said Bill Tommins, president, Bank of America Southern Connecticut. “As part of our decades-long partnership with the Bruce Museum, we look forward to sharing ‘Connecticut Modern: Art, Design, and the Avant-Garde, 1930-1960’ with museumgoers and highlighting the work of artists who helped solidify Connecticut’s role as a leader in the arts.”

“Serving our communities and giving back have always been at the heart of Lugano Diamonds. As we establish our presence in Greenwich with our new salon, we are deeply committed to championing the arts and look forward to supporting the Bruce Museum with its world-class exhibitions that continue to inspire,” said Moti Ferder, co-founder and CEO of Lugano Diamonds.

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About the Bruce Museum

Located in Bruce Park overlooking Greenwich Harbor, the Bruce Museum is a community-based, world-class institution that offers a changing array of exceptional exhibitions and educational programs to promote the understanding and appreciation of art, science and the intersections between the two disciplines. Now considered ahead of its time for taking this multidisciplinary approach over a century ago, the Bruce Museum is at the heart of contemporary efforts to bring together art, science, technology and creativity to generate moments of discovery and dialogue.

The first exhibition at the Bruce Museum took place in 1912 and featured works by local artists known as the Greenwich Society of Artists, several of whom were members of the Cos Cob Art Colony. Their works formed the nucleus of the Museum's art holdings and continue to be a strength of the collection, which has expanded to focus on global art from 1850 to the present. Other strengths include Ancient Chinese sculpture, Native American Art, the Hudson River School, modernist works on paper, and photography. Parallel development of the natural sciences includes strengths in the mineral and avian collections. In all, the community, through its generosity, has built the Museum’s varied collections of art and natural science to over 30,000 objects.

In 2019, the Museum, which is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, broke ground on a new building which doubled the size of the museum and tripled the exhibition spaces. The new Bruce opened April 2, 2023, featuring state-of-the-art exhibition, education and community spaces, including a changing gallery for art and five new permanent galleries in the William L.

Richter Art Wing; a changing gallery for science; a permanent science exhibition, “Natural Cycles Shape Our Land”; three classrooms in the Cohen Education Wing; a café, an auditorium and grand hall. When the outdoor spaces are completed in summer 2024, the new Bruce campus will feature a sculpture-lined, landscaped walking path and inviting spaces for relaxation and contemplation—natural enhancements to Bruce Park and an anchoring connection to Greenwich Avenue.

About Bank of America

Bank of America is one of the world’s leading financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small and middle-market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk management products and services. The company provides unmatched convenience in the United States, serving approximately 68 million consumer and small business clients with approximately 3,900 retail financial centers, approximately 15,000 ATMs and award-winning digital banking with approximately 56 million verified digital users. Bank of America is a global leader in wealth management, corporate and investment banking and trading across a broad range of asset classes, serving corporations, governments, institutions and individuals around the world. Bank of America offers industry-leading support to approximately 3 million small business households through a suite of innovative, easy-to-use online products and services. The company serves clients through operations across the United States, its territories and more than 35 countries. Bank of America Corporation stock (NYSE: BAC) is listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

About Lugano Diamonds

Founded by Moti and Idit Ferder in 2004, Lugano Diamonds is a private international diamond and jewelry company that creates exquisite, one-of-a-kind wearable works of art. With initial inspiration taken from the gem rather than the design, Lugano’s expert artisans create each piece of jewelry with meticulous attention to detail and to the highest standard. With a passion for building relationships, community and philanthropy, Lugano Diamonds believes in being good stewards for both their clients and their communities, a vision realized by supporting various philanthropic efforts, giving back and making a strong social impact. Lugano Diamonds has salons located in Newport Beach, California; Aspen, Colorado; Palm Beach, Florida; Ocala, Florida; Houston, Texas; Washington, D.C. and Greenwich, Connecticut. A London salon is set to open in 2024. <https://luganodiamonds.com>

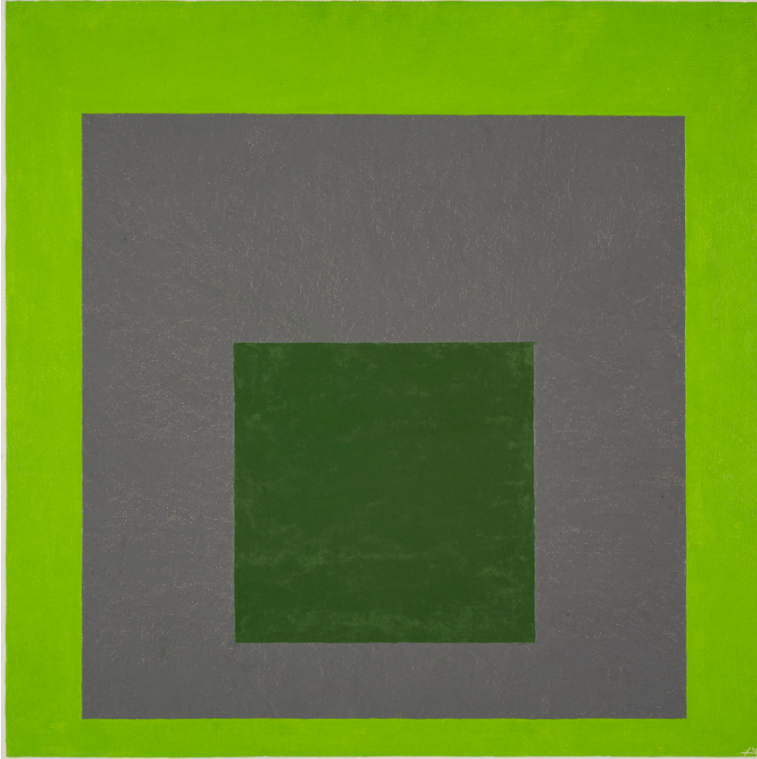
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Josef Albers (American, b. Germany, 1888–1976)

"Study for Homage to the Square: Green Tension," 1951

Oil and casein on Masonite, 24 x 24 in.

Private Collection

© The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, 2023

Photo: Paul Mutino



Charles Sheeler (American, 1883-1965)

"On a Connecticut Theme," 1958

Oil on canvas, 19 1/8 x 29 1/8 in.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Lawrence H. Bloedel Bequest

Photo Credit: Digital image © Whitney Museum of American Art / Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, NY



Katherine Dreier (American, 1877-1952)

"Explosion," 1940-47

Oil on canvas, 24 1/16 x 29 15/16 in.

Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Katherine S. Dreier to the Collection Société Anonyme



Alexander Calder (American, 1898-1976)

"Big Bird," 1937

Sheet metal, bolts, and paint, 88 x 50 x 59 in.

Calder Foundation, New York

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George Marinko (American, 1908-1989)

"Hypothetical Gallipot," c. 1938

Oil on Masonite, 5 x 7 in.

Collection of the Mattatuck Museum; Gift of Mr. George Heard Hamilton, 1978