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HIGHLIGHTS OF PERMANENT COLLECTION FEATURED IN SERIES OF NEW EXHIBITIONS

“ENERGIZING THE EVERYDAY: GIFTS FROM THE GEORGE R. KRAVIS II COLLECTION” OPENS SPRING SEASON OF REFRESHED SECOND-FLOOR GALLERIES

APRIL 27, 2016

“Energizing the Everyday: Gifts from the George R. Kravis II Collection,” opening April 28, celebrates the exceptional gifts from the collector to Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. On view through March 2017, the exhibition will display some of the most important modernist objects—from radios to furniture—alongside contextual works drawn from the museum’s collection.

“‘Energizing the Everyday’ celebrates a remarkable gift from a preeminent collector of industrial design, George Kravis,” said Caroline Baumann, director of Cooper Hewitt. “George’s generosity, along with his passion and keen eye for collecting, bolsters Cooper Hewitt’s holdings as one of the foremost industrial design collections in the United States.”

Cooper Hewitt’s renovation, completed in 2014, allows for the museum’s rich and diverse collection of 210,000 historical and contemporary design objects to be exhibited as never before. Additional exhibitions on view this spring in the second-floor galleries dedicated to the permanent collection include “Passion for the Exotic: Louis Comfort Tiffany and Lockwood de Forest” in the Teak Room; “Hewitt Sisters Collect: Tiles and Ironwork,” featuring concentrated displays of tiles and ironwork; and “Fragile Beasts,” a display of nearly 75 grotesque ornament prints and drawings from the 16th and 17th centuries featuring fantastical creatures.

“ENERGIZING THE EVERYDAY: GIFTS FROM THE GEORGE R. KRAVIS II COLLECTION”

“Energizing the Everyday” recognizes the collecting vision of Kravis and its synergy with Cooper Hewitt’s broad and diverse collection of modern and contemporary design. An early interest in records and a background in broadcasting inform Kravis’ enthusiasm for and knowledge of radios, televisions and technology. As Kravis’ passion for design grew, he expanded his collecting efforts beyond American electronic devices to include industrial design and furnishings for the home and office from the United States, Europe and Asia. This exhibition features highlights of the Kravis collection dating from the early 20th century to the present. From lighting and furniture to tableware, textiles and office equipment, the exhibition makes visual and material connections across time and geography.

As a collector, Kravis is interested in the object’s purpose, form, manufacture and materials while also considering the user and the design process. The design of these objects enhanced the day-to-day endeavors of the home and workplace, as well as travel and leisure activities. The rigid geometry of Norman Bel Geddes’s 1935 skyscraper-like Manhattan Cocktail Set, the humor of Cesare Cassati’s and C. Emanuele Ponzio’s 1968 Pillola Lamps and the social concerns reflected in Olafur Eliasson’s Little Sun Solar-Powered LED Lantern of



2012 are among the many historic and contemporary themes evoked in “Energizing the Everyday.”

A related publication, *100 Designs for a Modern World*, Skira Rizzoli, April 2016, focuses on Kravis’ collection as a whole and serves as an accessible reference on industrial design in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

“PASSION FOR THE EXOTIC: LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY AND LOCKWOOD DE FOREST”

This exhibition in the “Passion for the Exotic” series (on view now) highlights works by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) in the context of the Carnegie Mansion’s Teak Room designed by Tiffany’s former business partner Lockwood de Forest (1850–1932) in 1902. Alongside a Tiffany dragonfly lamp owned by the Carnegie family and important loans of a Daffodil lamp, an inkwell box and a fire screen on loan from the collection of Richard H. Driehaus and a turtleback chandelier lent by Macklowe Gallery, this installation gives the visitor an opportunity to experience the interplay of Tiffany and de Forest’s designs as would have been possible in Andrew Carnegie’s era.

Tiffany’s tireless experimentation with new materials, motifs and radiant hues is explored through a range of glass production. He was fascinated with many of the objects that he and de Forest brought back from the Middle East, and that de Forest sent from India. Both men delighted in pattern, as can be seen by the harmonious combination of Tiffany’s work in de Forest’s setting.

“FRAGILE BEASTS”

“Fragile Beasts” (on view June 11 through January 2017) will feature nearly 75 grotesque ornament prints and drawings from the 16th and 17th centuries showing how artists turned elements from nature into otherworldly beings. The exhibition will highlight rarely seen works on paper from Cooper Hewitt’s permanent collection and Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Library’s rare book collection.

Creatures, fearsome or playful, graceful or rigid, take their place in dense and sinuous designs for locks, ewers, rings, tapestries, stained glass and more. These intimately scaled works, often measuring just a few inches, are at times erotically charged and at others moralizing. Centuries later, these drawings and prints open a window to the imagination of artists and designers as the Age of Exploration unfolded around them.

An accompanying coloring book will be published by Cooper Hewitt and distributed in the U.S. by Artbook | D.A.P and worldwide by Thames & Hudson UK. Edited by Caitlin Condell and illustrated by Magali An Berthon, the coloring book is filled with hidden monsters and sleeping serpents, chimeras, dragons and gargoyles inspired by grotesque ornament prints from the Italian and Northern Renaissance. Retail: \$12.95.

ONGOING

The second floor also features ongoing exhibitions that highlight aspects of Cooper Hewitt’s renowned collection, including “Hewitt Sisters Collect,” the first exhibition to share the story of Sarah and Eleanor Hewitt. The sisters established a museum within Cooper Union in 1897

modeled on the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, which later became the basis of Cooper Hewitt's collection. The next installation (on view May 14 through April 2017) will feature an extensive display of ceramic tiles and ironwork, two areas collected in depth during the era of the Hewitt sisters. *Sarah & Eleanor: The Hewitt Sisters, Founders of the Nation's Design Museum*, a free brochure chronicling the lives of the sisters and their creation of the nation's first design museum, will be available at Cooper Hewitt in May.

A collection of 18th- and 19th-century staircase and architectural models, donated to Cooper Hewitt by Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw, are currently on view in the Models & Prototypes gallery. The staircase models provide insights into the important role of architectural models and design prototypes.

The interactive Immersion Room now features more than 200 examples of Cooper Hewitt's extraordinary collection of wallcoverings, one of the largest in North America, and allows visitors to select their favorites or draw their own designs and then project full-scale versions onto the gallery walls.

SPONSORS

"Passion for the Exotic: Louis Comfort Tiffany and Lockwood de Forest" is made possible in part by The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. Restoration of the Teak Room is supported in part by the American Express Historic Preservation Fund.

"Hewitt Sisters Collect" is made possible by generous support from Nancy Marks. Additional support is provided by Margery and Edgar Masinter and the Smithsonian Women's Committee.

The Immersion Room is made possible by major support from Amita and Purnendu Chatterjee.

ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. On Dec. 12, 2014, Cooper Hewitt reopened in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, which offers 60 percent more exhibition space to showcase one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. The renovation of the Carnegie Mansion and museum campus was recognized with LEED Silver certification. Currently on view are nine exhibitions and installations featuring hundreds of objects throughout four floors of the mansion, including the fifth installment of the museum's contemporary design exhibition series, "Beauty—Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial," "Thom Browne Selects" and "Pixar: The Design of Story." Visitors can experience a full range of new interactive capabilities, including exploring the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, drawing their own designs in the Immersion Room and addressing design problems in the Process Lab.

Cooper Hewitt is located at 2 East 91st Street at Fifth Avenue in New York City. Hours are Sunday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden and Tarallucci e Vino cafe open at 8 a.m., Monday through Friday, and are

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accessible without an admissions ticket through the new East 90th Street entrance. The museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Public transit routes include the Lexington Avenue 4, 5 and 6 subways (86th or 96th Street stations) and the Fifth and Madison Avenue buses. Adult admission, \$18; seniors, \$12; students, \$9. Cooper Hewitt members and children younger than age 18 are admitted free. Pay What You Wish every Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m. The museum is fully accessible.

For further information, call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at cooperhewitt.org and follow the museum on twitter.com/cooperhewitt, facebook.com/cooperhewitt and instagram.com/cooperhewitt.

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