

COOPER HEWITT

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COOPER HEWITT TIMELINE

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1846

On August 10, the United States Congress passed legislation founding the Smithsonian Institution as an establishment dedicated to the “increase and diffusion of knowledge,” and President James K. Polk signed it into law that same day.

1853

Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (known as the Cooper Union) was established on Sept. 17, with Peter Cooper spreading the mortar for the cornerstone of the Foundation Building, which still stands at 7 East 7th Street, New York City.

1859

Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art opens, with one floor dedicated to the Women's Art School (created by Susan Carter in 1852), overseen by the Ladies Advisory Council.

1897

Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration opens at the Women's Art School with a collection donated by Eleanor and Sarah Hewitt—granddaughters of industrialist Peter Cooper.

1898

Industrial magnate Andrew Carnegie purchased land for his home, far north of where his peers were living, allowing him to build a large private garden that is one of the only such spaces in Manhattan.

1902

The Carnegie Mansion, designed by Babb, Cook & Willard, was completed, and Andrew, wife Louise, and five-year-old Margaret Carnegie arrive at 2 East 91st Street for the first time on December 12.

1949

Carnegie Corporation leases the Mansion to the New York School of Social Work (which was renamed the Columbia University School of Social Work in 1963).



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1963

Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art announce they are disbanding the museum. A committee to save Cooper Union Museum was formed. 260 members rallied to keep the Cooper Union collection together and in New York City.

1966

Carnegie Mansion is named a National Historic Landmark.

1967

American Association of Museums (now the American Alliance of Museums) endorses the Smithsonian's decision to acquire Cooper-Hewitt Museum as part of the national collections.

1969

Carnegie Corporation offers the Carnegie Mansion as a new home for Cooper-Hewitt, which was being vacated by the School of Social Work; Secretary of the Smithsonian S. Dillon Ripley appoints Lisa Taylor as director, who served as director until 1987.

1976

Carnegie Mansion opens as Cooper-Hewitt Museum, The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design, with the inaugural exhibition *MANtransForms*.

1988

Dianne Pilgrim appointed director of the museum and served until 2000.

1998

Agnes Bourne Bridge Gallery opens, creating a link between the Mansion and the Miller and Fox houses located on 90th Street.

2000

The *National Design Triennial* exhibition series was created to regularly present critical overviews of key developments in American design. The series now encompasses a global focus, showcasing design solutions from around the world.

Inaugural National Design Awards established as a project of the White House Millennium Council to promote design as a vital humanistic tool in shaping the world.

2001

Paul Thompson appointed director of the museum and served as director until 2009.

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2006

Capital campaign launches for renovation project.

Launch of National Design Week, which makes great design widely accessible to the public through interactive events and programs for all audiences across the country.

2010

Bill Moggridge appointed director of the museum and served until his death in 2012.

2011

National Design Library moves from the museum to the townhouses at 9 East 90th Street as part of Phase One of the renovation project.

Mansion renovation project begins and Cooper Hewitt initiates a three year program of traveling exhibitions that travel the nation and the globe, as well as off-site education programs, including “Design in the Classroom.”

2012

Cooper Hewitt Design Center in Harlem opens to serve as off-site education space during the renovation project.

2013

Caroline Baumann appointed director of the museum.

Cooper Hewitt launches national “Design in the Classroom” program, which teaches 21st-century skills by using design as a tool across the curriculum.

2014

The renovated and re-named Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum opens to the public on December 12.

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