

Artists Around a Table:
Artmaking and Merrymaking,
1927-1952



Peggy Bacon
Alexander Brook
John Carroll
Adolf Dehn
Mura Dehn
Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Jules Pascin

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Des Moines Art Center

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Ashton Cooper

Artists Around a Table takes its starting point from two scenes of art world bonhomie that are held in the Des Moines Art Center's collection: John Carroll's *Artists Around a Table* from 1928 and Peggy Bacon's *A Few Ideas* from 1927. Carroll and Bacon were both part of a vibrant social network of artist-printmakers who moved between New York City, Woodstock, Paris, and beyond in the early decades of the 20th century. In surveying the overlapping circles of these artists and their friends and lovers, this exhibition explores the camaraderie that propelled the quest for a modern American art in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. In addition to Carroll and Bacon, all of the artists featured in this show—including Alexander Brook, Adolf Dehn, Mura Dehn, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Jules Pascin—constructed figurative lithographs inflected with humor and merrymaking. In these works, portraiture and caricature often go hand in hand, as they depict their colleagues and confidantes, as well as the world around them, with lovingly exaggerated and cheeky portrayals.

In an article titled “American Lithography,” published in the British art magazine *The Studio* in 1929, American artist and critic Walter Gutman noted the playful yet profound quality of the lithographs (a type of print made by drawing on a stone or metal plate) made by this group of printmakers. He wrote:

Lithography is still young ... [s]o
our artists can feel themselves still to be makers
of a tradition and free to play with it. It is probably because of
this freedom that one of the dominant tendencies in American emotional
life, its optimistic disillusionment, finds its most complete pictorial expression
in lithography. That is, novels such as those of Oliver Herreford [sic], Sinclair Lewis,
[Theodore] Dreiser and [Ernest] Hemingway find their counterparts in the whimsies
of Peggy Bacon, the satires of Raphael Soyer and Mabel Dwight, the sarcasms of
[Reginald] Marsh and [John] Carroll, and the cynicism tempered with sentiment of
[Yasuo] Kuniyoshi and [Charles] Locke. While painting too often is still striving
for grand emotions, lithography is fortunate enough to reflect the actual
sentiments of the day, and is likely therefore to be considered
in the future as the valid art of our time.¹

Gutman's paradoxical idea of “optimistic disillusionment” is apt for artworks that, as he points out, traffic in satire and sarcasm but are still somehow sincere in their depictions of their makers' real social worlds, including lifelong friends, occasional lovers, and creative peers. Gutman predicts that art admirers in the future will place a high value on these depictions of everyday life and emotions—as opposed to the “grand” ones in seemingly more serious and ambitious work. Despite Gutman's confident prognostication, most of these artists are no longer household names and are not included in canonical surveys of American art of the 20th century. Yet, their prints lay waiting in most of the major museum collections in the United States, as they were lauded and collected widely in their day, both by museums and middle-class collectors through the gallery Associated American Artists. Indeed, among a vast collection of thousands of prints in the Art Center's collection, works by Carroll and Bacon (which I had never seen before) caught my eye and ultimately offered an engrossing record of a group of progressive and adventurous young artists who came in and out of each other's lives for a half century. In investigating their coterie, I have charted the webs of connection that held these artists together and sprinkled in some tidbits of gossip along the way. Gutman's prophetic supposition of nearly a hundred years ago that, in the future, it would be easy to connect with these depictions of “the actual sentiments of the day” turns out, for me, to be true. The works of Carroll, Bacon, and their peers offer a compelling account of what it felt like to be part of a group of young artists striving to create careers and community in a rapidly changing world, while having a lot of fun along the way.



John Carroll (American, 1892–1959), *Artists Around a Table*, 1928, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.109. Photo by Rich Sanders.

Clockwise from left: Mura Dehn, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Inez Carroll, Adolf Dehn, John Carroll, and Katherine Schmidt.

When he made *Artists Around a Table* in 1928, John Carroll was in his mid-30s and at the beginning of a successful painting career in the US. Born in Wichita, Kansas, Carroll had an itinerant youth before becoming known for “theatre personality portraits” that appeared in *Town & Country* magazine starting in 1919.² Around 1920, Carroll moved to Woodstock, New York, where he found mentorship from George

Bellows and Eugene Speicher, who were both prominent artists, teachers, and members of the Woodstock Art Colony (founded in 1902, it is thought to be “America’s first intentionally created year-round arts colony” and was an important site for most of the artists included here).³ After teaching for a year at the Art Students League—a school founded in New York City in 1875 as a riposte to the more conservative, classical pedagogy of the National Academy of

Design and, again, a key place for these artists—Carroll received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1927 that allowed him to take a tour around Europe before settling in Paris.⁴ Playful correspondence from Carroll to his gallerist Frank K. M. Rehn in April 1928 shows the artist exploring the Mediterranean island of Corsica:

“Dear Frank -
Don’t be so damned
light with your letters - Here I
am over here working my head off and
all you do is just stay at home and have a
lot of fun. I have to get up at six o clock every
morning in order to drink my daily portion of
wine, then I have to spend a certain amount
of time getting sunburned on the beach,
then it takes time to go sailing, besides
dancing in the cafés every night,
and I sometimes have time to
work a little.”⁵



John Carroll (American, 1892–1959), *Self-portrait*, 1928, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.72. Photo by Rich Sanders.



John Carroll (American, 1892–1959), *Inez Carroll*, ca. 1928–29, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.73. Photo by Rich Sanders.

Artists Around a Table was made after Carroll returned to Paris and features three artist couples, all American expats living in the city: Carroll and his spouse Inez Carroll, a concert pianist; artist couple Katherine Schmidt and Yasuo Kuniyoshi; and dancer Mura Dehn and her artist husband Adolf Dehn. Carroll depicted them all as slightly exaggerated versions of themselves. The friendly intimacy of the scene is reinforced by the circular, closed loop of their bodies huddled around a café table, while the curving lines of the bodies in the foreground draw us into the fray.

A party photo taken circa 1930, after the Carrolls and the Dehns had returned to New York, shows the couples goofing around with several other artists in their circle. Carroll is at the center of the photo sporting a sly smile. According to a *LIFE* magazine profile of the artist, he was “[b]uilt like a pugilist” and “love[d] outdoor sports and good rowdy parties.”⁶ In *Artists Around a Table*, Carroll seems to burlesque his own boxer-like features and love for drink, drawing himself with a strong jawline and thick moustache as he holds aloft a wine glass. The hard angles of Carroll’s shoulders and forehead contrast humorously with fingers that are rendered in cartoonishly wavy lines—perhaps a winking nod to the deleterious effects of a long night of imbibing vino.

During his time in Europe, Carroll also made individual lithographic portraits of several women, including his wife, Inez. In all these prints, Carroll subtly exaggerates his sitters’ features. Strong contrasts between dark and light create images that seem to glow, and his subjects’ disembodied heads and necks heighten this ethereal effect. In the late 1920s, Carroll captured the likenesses of lone Robinson and Marion Greenwood, both young American artists living and working in Paris. Greenwood was studying at the Académie Colarossi, a progressive school that had not only long permitted female students to enroll but also gave them access to nude male models in life drawing classes.⁷ The sculptor Isamu Noguchi was Greenwood’s classmate and became a lifelong “friend and sometimes lover.”⁸ Noguchi’s bust of Greenwood from 1929 features the same striking, almond-shaped eyes that Carroll captured in his print



John Carroll (American, 1892–1959), *Marion Greenwood*, 1927–28, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.75. Photo by Rich Sanders.



Peter A. Juley & Son, group portrait, c. 1930. © Peter A. Juley & Son Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Front row, left to right: Hervey White, Lucile Blanch, John Carroll, Arnold Blanch, Ernest Brace, and Reeves Brace. Back row, left to right: Farrell Pelly, Mura Dehn, Inez Carroll, and Adolf Dehn.

(and that can also be seen in a photograph from 1940, in which Greenwood is second from the left around a crowded table).

In 1928, Carroll also made a picture of artist Katherine Schmidt that portrays her with the same swanlike neck seen from the back in *Artists Around a Table*. Schmidt was at the center of a group of young artists who came up together at the Art Students League in the late 1910s and early 1920s. They were mentored by artist and teacher Kenneth Hayes Miller, whose class first became mixed gender during Schmidt's time at the school.⁹ Her classmates—including Bacon and Brook—became lifelong friends and, in the case of Kuniyoshi, her spouse. This group, which artist Reginald Marsh christened the “Miller gang,” can be seen clowning around in a photo taken by Kuniyoshi circa 1921.¹⁰ In other archival party photos from 1925, Schmidt and Kuniyoshi are front and center at a costume ball.



John Carroll (American, 1892–1959), *Katherine Schmidt*, 1928, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.74. Photo by Rich Sanders.

Distinct from artists in the same period who pursued modernism through languages of abstraction, the artists in the Miller gang absorbed the realist lessons of their teachers and used them to create their own takes on modern urban life. From the beginning, the Art Students League was affiliated with what scholars have termed “American Realism,” which generally refers to an interest among American artists in non-idealized depictions of contemporary life. Thomas Eakins, who was an early board member of the League, was an influential figure famous for his paintings of medical surgeries. Both Robert Henri (who advocated for journalistic depictions of everyday life, including the slums of New York) and his student George Bellows (known for gritty images of urban life, especially boxing matches) were prominent teachers at the school. Kenneth Hayes Miller, too, made ordinary city dwellers the subject of his work, most famously in images of women shopping. In the 1910s, the Miller gang artists took classes with Miller and Bellows, among other teachers, at the League.¹¹

While the Miller gang artists are not as well-known today as their peers who worked in abstraction, they were widely shown



John Carroll (American, 1892–1959), *Ione Robinson*, 1929, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.71. Photo by Rich Sanders.

and lauded at the time, especially in the circles of Whitney Museum founder and artist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. Before opening her eponymous museum in 1930, Whitney had established the Whitney Studio Club in 1914, a salon, school, and exhibition space for emerging artists that she ran with Juliana Force, who would eventually become the founding director of the Whitney Museum.¹² As a young artist, Schmidt would do “odd jobs for Mrs. Force,” as she recollected.¹³ When asked to describe the Whitney Studio Club, Schmidt said,

“ O h ,
it was so gay!
I remember our
younger years as always
being spring. Everybody
met to dance and have
fun. Everyone was so
alive.”¹⁴

Several of the Miller gang members were enmeshed in the scene at the Studio Club—Peggy Bacon's husband, artist Alexander Brook, became its assistant director in the early 1920s.¹⁵

In addition to being an important social space, the Whitney Studio Club set out to create opportunities for American artists, who were often overlooked for their European peers. In a *New York Times* article from 1931, Force explained that the Whitney Studio Club was founded because “there were few galleries where liberal American art was welcome.” She explained: “A limited number of Americans were included in the ‘modern’ exhibitions occurring from time to time, but very few artists were enabled to show their work consistently.”¹⁶ Schmidt, Bacon, Kuniyoshi, Brook, and their group



Yasuo Kuniyoshi, group of seven artists at a party at the home of Yasuo Kuniyoshi, c. 1921. Katherine Schmidt papers, c. 1921–71. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Clockwise from left: Alexander Brook, Isabella Howland, Peggy Bacon, Niles Spencer, Dorothy Varian, Katherine Schmidt, and Betty Spencer.



Albert A. Freeman, *Cafe Society Uptown*, New York, 1940. Yasuo Kuniyoshi papers, 1906–2016. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Left to right: Lila Refregier, Marion Greenwood, unidentified guest, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Sara Mazo Kuniyoshi, Anton Refregier, and Hannah Small.

of friends all showed their prints, paintings, and drawings at the Studio Club and were part of these early efforts to create networks of support and exhibition opportunities for American artists at the beginnings of their careers. They were also in pursuit of a good time.

In an interview from 1973, curator Paul Cummings asked Bacon, “What were the 1920s like for you?” She replied, “It was very exhilarating. Also, it was very rowdy. I think the 1920s were terribly rowdy in the group that we belonged to. I think it was a deplorable time, really. We had fun but it was a matter of too much drinking and too much carrying on, generally. I don’t think we were very well behaved.” Cummings interjects: “Well, it was Prohibition, wasn’t it?” “Yes,” Bacon explains.

“Everybody had to boast about how drunk they were the night before.”¹⁷

The drinks are certainly flowing in Bacon’s 1927 print *A Few Ideas*, which captures her group of friends carrying on at the home of painter George Biddle in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, a small hamlet about 45 miles north of New York City. Bacon’s signature humor is evident in her witty transcription of an art world get-together and its myriad personalities, including portraits of the Carrolls, Kuniyoshi, Schmidt, Brook, and their friend Jules Pascin, among several others. Bacon’s composition is crowded and humming with activity.

A cacophony of contrasting shapes—lunging elbows, jutting legs, and bobbing heads—creates a sense of liveliness. The same year Bacon made this print, many of the artists



Stowall Studios, Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Katherine Schmidt, c. 1925. Rosalie Berkowitz collection of photographs, 1927–50. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Stowall Studios, group at a costume party, with Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Katherine Schmidt at front center, c. 1925. Isabella Howland papers, 1899–1979. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

depicted were part of a show at Wanamaker’s Galleries (an art gallery within the Philadelphia department store) organized by, among others, Edith Halpert, who was the owner of the Downtown Gallery and is now widely considered to be the first notable woman art dealer in the US.¹⁸ According to Bacon, “she was a very unpleasant person. But she got together a very good group of artists.”¹⁹ Bacon, Brook, Dehn, Kuniyoshi, and Pascin all showed at the Downtown Gallery, which was the first commercial art gallery in Greenwich Village. Rather than importing art from Europe, the gallery supported a diverse roster of living American artists including Jacob Lawrence, Georgia O’Keeffe, Ben Shahn, and many others.²⁰

From her student years, Bacon was an unparalleled chronicler of the social spaces of the emergent modern art scene in New York. She is best known for her skill at caricature and satire, and she frequently took artist friends as her subjects, including in depictions of Bellows’s painting class and Sloane’s lectures at the Art Students League, life drawing classes at the Whitney Studio Club, and the hoi polloi of contemporary art exhibitions. Bacon remembered completing her first caricatures in 1918: “I started in the Bellows class making caricatures of everybody. It was a wonderfully funny group of people. And Bellows himself with that egg-shaped head, that hard-boiled egg of a head.”²¹ In addition to



Alexander Brook (American, 1898–1980), *Model and Cat*, 1942, lithograph on paper. Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Gift of Dr. Stanley Potocki, M.D., 1975.18.

being a keen observer of the art world, Bacon frequently turned her attention to regional scenes, as in *Promenade Deck*, 1920, and *Clams and Clodhoppers*, 1933. She also wrote and illustrated dozens of mass market books, including the 1934 volume *Off With Their Heads!*, which contained lampoons of Georgia O’Keeffe, critic and humorist Dorothy Parker, and composer George Gershwin, who created the symphonic poem



Peggy Bacon (American, 1895–1987), *A Few Ideas*, 1927, drypoint on paper. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Sharon Simmons Art Acquisitions Fund, 2025.10. Photo by Rich Sanders.

Left to right, in foreground: Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Jane Belo, John Carroll, Louise Hellstrom, George Biddle, Jules Pascin, and Katherine Schmidt. Left to right, in background: Josh Billings, Alexander Brook, Armin W. (“Pat”) Riley, Peggy Bacon, Inez Carroll, and Mary Lamb Riley.

An American in Paris in 1928. Bacon did not exclude herself from observation, harshly describing her appearance as “Pin-head, parsimoniously covered with thin dark hair, on a short dumpy body. [...] Personality lifeless, retiring, snippy, quietly egotistical.”²²

In her caricature of Kuniyoshi in *Off With Their Heads!*, Bacon described her friend as “dreamy and introspective” with an “air of absent indifference” and “remote as though overhearing a conversation in the next room.”²³ This description aligns with the depictions of Kuniyoshi in both Bacon’s *A Few Ideas* and Carroll’s



Peggy Bacon (American, 1895–1987), *Promenade Deck*, 1920, drypoint on paper. Stanley Museum of Art; museum purchase, 1977.69.

Artists Around a Table, in which he looks out appraisingly, with his chin perched serenely on his curled fingers. Despite their standoffish depictions of him, Kuniyoshi was a fixture of the New York art world (and its parties) where he moved fluidly among many groups of artists from his student days in the 1910s well into the postwar period (in fact, he is seen to be grinning widely in most of the archival photos I found). Kuniyoshi’s

dealer Edith Halpert remembered him as an enthusiastic reveler: “I’d talk about the shows I was planning and so on, and this was a very businesslike meeting, and then I’d say, ‘Any gripes?’ And Kuniyoshi would always get up and say, ‘Let’s have more parties.’ That was his gripe. He just wanted more parties.”²⁴ In 1947, Kuniyoshi became president of the Artists Equity Association, a role that led to him overseeing its 1950 benefit costume ball, to which a 21-year-old Helen Frankenthaler famously showed up dressed as Pablo Picasso’s *Girl Before a Mirror*.²⁵ Photos from that night show Kuniyoshi crowded around a circular table, in a composition not unlike Carroll’s print of two decades prior.

Kuniyoshi had enrolled at the Art Students League in 1916, after a decade of traveling around



Peggy Bacon (American, 1895–1987), *Clams and Clodhoppers*, 1933, drypoint on paper. Figge Art Museum, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, 2014.13

the US following his arrival from Japan in 1906 at age 17.²⁶ Along with the Carrolls, Dehns, and Schmidt, Kuniyoshi worked in Paris in 1928 where he completed two dozen lithographs at the famed workshop of Edmond Desjobert, who collaborated with many American expats in these years.²⁷ Kuniyoshi’s prints capture topless women in the scintillating cafés along the Boulevard Clichy in Montmartre, a bullfight, and female acrobats. *Trapeze Performers*, 1928, was one of Kuniyoshi’s first lithographs of circus performers, which became a favorite subject of his, as evidenced by the later prints *Burlesque Queen*, 1933, and *Wire Performer*, 1938. In *Trapeze Performers*, the artist places an emphasis on the tactility of the swinging performer’s costume. The tulle that encircles her waist is rendered in a dense field of looping lines, alongside tiny half circles that indicate ruffled trim along its edges. A delicately sketched-in, falling handkerchief released from her open hand is a haptic reminder of the performer’s gravity-defying display.

Kuniyoshi was far from the only American artist kicking around Paris in 1928. His friend Adolf Dehn was living in Montparnasse where he frequented the neighborhood’s unlimited array of nightlife establishments including basement cabarets, dance halls, and brothels. In a letter home, penned in 1928, Dehn wrote, “Life in Paris is simply glorious. One never wants to go to bed it

is so glorious— and daybreak is best of all.”²⁸ Like

Kuniyoshi, Dehn made prints with Desjobert. He depicted “aperitif hour” in Paris’s outdoor cafés; bistro scenes; the Grand Guignol theater, which specialized in horror shows; and numerous music and dance performances. In the print *Lohengrin*, 1928, Dehn captured a lavish performance of the Richard Wagner opera, perhaps



Seymour Lipton, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and others at the Artists Equity Ball, December 1950. Seymour Lipton papers, 1900–1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Peggy Bacon (American, 1895–1987), *Off With Their Heads!*, third edition, (Robert M. McBride & Company, 1934). Caricatures of Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Georgia O’Keeffe.

the production that took place at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in December of that year.²⁹ In Dehn's farcical print, the tenor playing the title role flings his head back as he belts his notes from a gaping mouth rendered as an outsized black void. His rotund, serpentine body contrasts comically with a slender, long-necked swan at his left.

Dehn's immersion in Parisian performing arts was probably owed in part to the interests of his spouse, dancer Mura Dehn. Born in Odesa (then part of Russia), Dehn trained in a modern, Isadora Duncan-informed style of dance but became obsessed with jazz after meeting Josephine Baker in Paris in the mid-1920s.³⁰ When she immigrated to America in 1930 with Adolf, Mura began filming the Black performers at Harlem's Savoy Hotel ballroom and formed

the Traditional Jazz Dance Company in 1932.³¹ A rare 16mm film from 1937 shows her performing to Duke Ellington's "East St. Louis Toodle-0o" with Roger Pryor Dodge, her dance partner and collaborator in the US.

While the Dehns were in Paris, they met artist Jules Pascin, who was born in Bulgaria but moved to Paris in 1905 at age 20.³² Evading service in the Bulgarian army during WWI, Pascin lived in the US from 1914 to 1920, when he became an

American citizen, only to return to Paris where he was known as the "prince of Montparnasse" (Ernest Hemingway recounts an evening with Pascin in 1923 at the famed restaurant Le Dôme in his memoir *A Moveable Feast*).³³ Pascin was about ten years older than the Miller gang artists and many among this younger generation cited him as an important influence.³⁴ Pascin was known for freewheeling, satire-tinged erotic prints and depictions of the Parisian demimonde of the early 20th century. His print *Au bal* shows a scene from Le Bal Blomet, a cabaret in Montparnasse widely popular in the 1920s that was known for Caribbean music.³⁵ Pascin draws the patrons of the nightclub from the perspective of the stage.



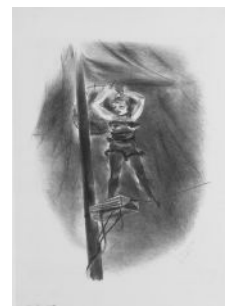
Adolf Dehn (American, 1895–1968), *Lohengrin*, 1928, lithograph on paper. Stanley Museum of Art; museum purchase, 1978.20.



Yasuo Kuniyoshi (American, 1889–1953), *Trapeze Performers*, 1928, lithograph on paper. Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, OP97.

The thin lines he uses to outline these spectators do not totally enclose the shapes of heads, necks, and arms, necessitating the viewer to lean in and look carefully to ascertain the characters and relationships rendered.

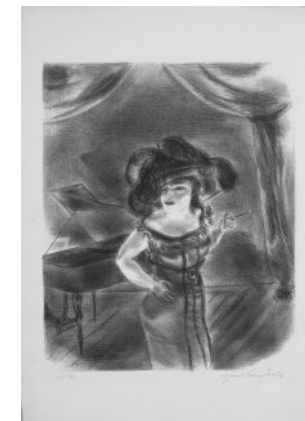
In *A Few Ideas*, Pascin is part of the group in the foreground of the image. With a sly grin and arched eyebrows, he points across the table to John Carroll and Yasuo Kuniyoshi. Katherine Schmidt, with her long, elegant neck, sits at his left. As ever, the group appears to be in the midst of an engaging debate or perhaps some friendly ribbing, or, then again, maybe someone is revealing a particularly tantalizing piece of gossip. Bacon's lighthearted print is emblematic of this group of friends who earnestly strove to create new forms of American modernism while employing tactics of merriment and caricature. The records of their lives and the artworks they left behind show these artists to be deeply social creatures, ever inspired by the people, places, and parties that constructed their worlds. ☉



Yasuo Kuniyoshi (American, 1889–1953), *Wire Performer*, 1938, lithograph on paper. Des Moines Art Center; Gift of Dwight Kirsch to the Truby Kelly Kirsch Memorial Collection, 1956.21. Photo by Rich Sanders.



Roger Pryor Dodge (American, 1898–1974) and Mura Dehn (Ukrainian American, 1905–1987), *East St. Louis Toodle-0o*, 1937, single-channel video, 16mm transferred to digital. Courtesy the Roger Pryor Dodge Estate.



Yasuo Kuniyoshi (American, 1889–1953), *Burlesque Queen*, 1933, lithograph on paper. John C. Huseby Print Collection of the Des Moines Art Center through Gift, 1991.51. Photo by Rich Sanders.



Jules Pascin (American and Bulgarian, active France, 1885–1930), *Au bal*, from "Tableaux de Paris," 1927, drypoint on white wove paper. John C. Huseby Print Collection of the Des Moines Art Center through Bequest, 1994.266. Photo by Rich Sanders.

Endnotes

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6. "John Carroll's Glamorous 'Pinky,'" *LIFE*, May 13, 1940, 118.
7. Joanne B. Mulcahy, *Marion Greenwood: Portrait and Self-Portrait—A Biography* (University of Alabama Press, 2025), 36.
8. Mulcahy, 38.
9. Paul Cummings, oral history interview with Katherine Schmidt, December 8–15, 1969, Archives of American Art, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-katherine-schmidt-12892>.
10. Ellen Wiley Todd, *The "New Woman" Revised: Painting and Gender Politics on Fourteenth Street* (University of California Press, 1993): 73.
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13. Cummings, oral history interview with Katherine Schmidt.
14. Cummings, oral history interview with Katherine Schmidt.
15. Cummings, oral history interview with Katherine Schmidt.
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17. Cummings, oral history interview with Peggy Bacon.
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19. Cummings, oral history interview with Peggy Bacon.
20. "Historical Note," Downtown Gallery records, 1824–1974, bulk 1926–1969, Archives of American Art, Washington, DC, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/downtown-gallery-records-6293/series-2>.
21. Cummings, oral history interview with Peggy Bacon.
22. Peggy Bacon, *Off With Their Heads!* (Robert M. McBride & Company, 1934), unpaginated.
23. Bacon, *Off With Their Heads!*, unpaginated.
24. Harlan Phillips, oral history interview with Edith Gregor Halpert, 1962–63, Archives of American Art, Washington, DC, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-edith-gregor-halpert-13220>.
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27. Jocelyn Pang Lumsdaine and Thomas O'Sullivan, *The Prints of Adolf Dehn: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987), 8; Richard A. Davis, *Yasuo Kuniyoshi: The Complete Graphic Work* (Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1991), 144–191.
28. Pang Lumsdaine and O'Sullivan, 8.
29. Lucien Fugère, et al., recording of "Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame" and "Lohengrin" at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées for Columbia, <https://archive.org/details/2-marise-beaujon-georges-thill-lohengrin-wlx-768>.
30. Jennifer Dunning, "Mura Dehn, Dancer, As Subject and Chronicler," *New York Times*, December 16, 1987, Section C, 22, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/12/16/movies/mura-dehn-dancer-as-subject-and-chronicler.html>.
31. Dunning, "Mura Dehn."
32. Alfred Werner, *Pascin* (Abrams, 1963), 15, 19.
33. Werner, *Pascin*; Richard D. Sonn, *Modernist Diaspora: Immigrant Jewish Artists in Paris, 1900–1945* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 161; Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (Jonathan Cape, 1964), 88.
34. Harlan Phillips, oral history interview with Edith Gregor Halpert.
35. Le Bal Blomet, <https://www.balblomet.fr/the-fabulous-destiny-of-the-bal-blomet/>.

Exhibition Checklist

- Jules Pascin
St. Antoine
1915
Drypoint on paper
Sheet: 8 7/8 × 10 in. (22.5 × 25.4 cm)
Image: 3 3/4 × 4 3/4 in. (9.5 × 12.1 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter O. Stamats, 1978.202
- Peggy Bacon
Promenade Deck
1920
Drypoint on paper
Sheet: 11 × 14 in. (27.9 × 35.6 cm)
Image: 6 × 8 1/2 in. (15.2 × 21.6 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Museum purchase, 1977.69
- Jules Pascin
Dance of Salome
ca. 1920
Intaglio on paper
Sheet: 22 1/2 × 30 in. (57.2 × 76.2 cm)
Image: 18 × 22 1/2 in. (45.7 × 57.2 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ross, 1973.57
- Jules Pascin
Reclining Female Nude
1925–30
Chinese ink on paper
Sheet: 10 × 8 in. (25.4 × 20.3 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Museum purchase, 1978.33
- Peggy Bacon
A Few Ideas
1927
Drypoint on paper
Sheet: 12 3/16 × 14 1/2 in. (31 × 36.8 cm)
Plate: 7 7/8 × 10 in. (20 × 25.4 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Sharon Simmons Art Acquisitions Fund, 2025.10
- Jules Pascin
Au bal, from "Tableaux de Paris"
1927
Drypoint on white wove paper
Sheet: 12 15/16 × 9 13/16 in. (32.9 × 24.9 cm)
Plate: 10 1/2 × 8 5/16 in. (26.7 × 21.1 cm)
John C. Huseby Print Collection of the Des Moines Art Center through Bequest, 1994.266
- Yasuo Kuniyoshi
The Bather
1927
Lithograph on paper
Frame: 22 7/8 × 18 1/2 × 1 in. (58.1 × 47 × 2.5 cm)
Sheet: 15 3/4 × 11 1/2 in. (40 × 29.2 cm)
Plate: 10 3/8 × 9 1/2 in. (26.4 × 24.1 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Jim and Ellen Hubbell, 2020.24
- John Carroll
Marion Greenwood
1927–28
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 11 5/8 × 8 3/4 in. (29.5 × 22.2 cm)
Image: 10 1/4 × 7 5/8 in. (26 × 19.4 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.75
- John Carroll
Artists Around a Table
1928
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 12 7/8 × 17 3/16 in. (32.7 × 43.7 cm)
Image: 9 5/8 × 10 13/16 in. (24.4 × 27.5 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.109
- John Carroll
Katherine Schmidt
1928
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 12 3/4 × 9 15/16 in. (32.4 × 25.2 cm)
Image: 8 1/4 × 6 3/8 in. (21 × 16.2 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.74
- Adolf Dehn
Lohengrin
1926
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 14 1/8 × 21 1/2 in. (35.9 × 54.6 cm)
Image: 10 5/8 × 16 in. (27 × 40.6 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Museum purchase, 1978.20
- John Carroll
Self-portrait
1928
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 12 3/4 × 9 11/16 in. (32.4 × 24.6 cm)
Image: 8 7/8 × 7 1/2 in. (22.5 × 19.1 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.72
- John Carroll
Inez Carroll
ca. 1928–29
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 12 7/8 × 9 13/16 in. (32.7 × 24.9 cm)
Image: 6 3/4 × 5 1/2 in. (17.1 × 14 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.73
- Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Trapeze Performers
1928
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 18 1/8 × 12 3/4 in. (46 × 32.4 cm)
Image: 12 3/4 × 9 in. (32.4 × 22.9 cm)
Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, OP97
- John Carroll
Circus Scene
1929
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 18 × 13 1/2 in. (45.7 × 34.3 cm)
Image: 15 1/2 × 11 11/16 in. (39.4 × 29.7 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.76
- John Carroll
Ione Robinson
1929
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 14 × 10 3/4 in. (35.6 × 27.3 cm)
Image: 9 3/8 × 7 in. (23.8 × 17.8 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.71

Exhibition Checklist Continued

- Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Burlesque Queen
1933
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 16 × 11 7/16 in. (40.6 × 29.1 cm)
Image: 11 3/4 × 9 5/8 in. (29.8 × 24.4 cm)
John C. Huseby Print Collection of the Des Moines Art Center through Gift, 1991.51
- Peggy Bacon
Clams and Clodhoppers
1933
Drypoint on paper
Sheet: 12 1/2 × 13 5/8 in. (31.8 × 34.6 cm)
Image: 8 1/8 × 9 7/8 in. (20.6 × 25.1 cm)
Figge Art Museum, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, 2014.13
- Peggy Bacon
Off With Their Heads!
1934
Book, third edition, signed by the author
New York: Robert M. McBride & Company
- Adolf Dehn
Boats and Dunes, Martha's Vineyard
1934
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 11 7/16 × 15 7/8 in. (29.1 × 40.3 cm)
Image: 9 5/8 × 13 9/16 in. (24.4 × 34.4 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth E. Hartman, 1966.40
- Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Woodstock
1936
Intaglio on paper
Sheet: 8 × 11 1/2 in. (20.3 × 29.2 cm)
Image: 6 × 8 in. (15.2 × 20.3 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Gift of the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), X1968.181
- Roger Pryor Dodge and Mura Dehn
East St. Louis Toodle-Oo
1937
Single-channel video, 16mm transferred to digital
Courtesy the Roger Pryor Dodge Estate
- Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Wire Performer
1938
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 19 7/16 × 13 3/4 in. (49.4 × 34.9 cm)
Image: 15 1/2 × 12 in. (39.4 × 30.5 cm)
Des Moines Art Center; Gift of Dwight Kirsch to the Truby Kelly Kirsch Memorial Collection, 1956.21
- Adolf Dehn
Western Sunflowers (or Colorado Sunflowers)
1941
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 12 × 16 1/8 in. (30.5 × 41 cm)
Image: 10 1/8 × 14 in. (25.7 × 35.6 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Gift of Alan and Ann January, 2002.65
- Alexander Brook
Model and Cat
1942
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 16 × 12 5/8 in. (40.6 × 32.1 cm)
Image: 11 1/4 × 8 1/2 in. (28.6 × 21.6 cm)
Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Gift of Dr. Stanley Potocki, M.D., 1975.18
- Adolf Dehn
Haitian Mardi Gras Processional
1943
Gouache on paper
Sheet: 15 × 22 1/16 in. (38.1 × 56 cm)
Image: 13 1/4 × 21 3/8 in. (33.7 × 54.3 cm)
Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, 1950.906
- Peggy Bacon
Serious Thinkers
ca. 1945
Ink on paper
Sheet: 7 1/2 × 10 in. (19.1 × 25.4 cm)
Des Moines Art Center; Gift of Dwight Kirsch to the Truby Kelly Kirsch Memorial Collection, 1971.30
- Adolf Dehn
Cornucopia and Her Pestilential Sister—Famine
1949
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 17 × 21 in. (43.2 × 53.3 cm)
Image: 13 × 17 in. (33 × 43.2 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Gift of James A. Leach and Elisabeth F. Leach, 2015.273
- Adolf Dehn
Lake in the Garden of the Gods
1949
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 11 1/4 × 15 3/8 in. (28.6 × 39.1 cm)
Image: 9 1/4 × 13 3/8 in. (23.5 × 34 cm)
Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Keith Shaver in honor of Mary and Roy Shaver, 2013.20
- Adolf Dehn
Market in Haiti
1949
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 16 7/8 × 20 3/4 in. (42.9 × 52.7 cm)
Image: 12 7/8 × 17 in. (32.7 × 43.2 cm)
Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Gift of the Artist, OP35
- Adolf Dehn
Minnesota Landscape
1952
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 9 1/4 × 13 1/2 in. (23.5 × 34.3 cm)
Figge Art Museum, City of Davenport Art Collection, Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, OP36
- Jules Pascin
Der Malade au Carlos Labordie (The sickness of Carlos Labordie)
Date unknown
Ink on paper
Sheet: 13 3/4 × 10 in. (34.9 × 25.4 cm)
Stanley Museum of Art; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ross, 1969.337

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Artists Around a Table: Artmaking and Merrymaking, 1927–1952*, organized by the Des Moines Art Center, April 25 – August 30, 2026, located in the John Brady Print Gallery.

Exhibition curated by Associate Curator Ashton Cooper, PhD.

Exhibition identity and collateral designed by Now Now.



Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc.
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desmoinesartcenter.org

Artists

Peggy Bacon
Alexander Brook
John Carroll
Adolf Dehn
Mura Dehn
Yasuo Kuniyoshi
Jules Pascin

Around

Jane Belo
George Biddle
Josh Billings
Arnold Blanch
Lucile Blanch
Ernest Brace
Reeves Brace
Inez Carroll
Marion Greenwood
Louise Hellstrom
Isabella Howland
Sara Mazo
Kuniyoshi
Farrell Pelly
Roger Pryor Dodge
Anton Refregier
Lila Refregier
Armin W. Riley
Mary Lamb Riley
Ione Robinson
Katherine Schmidt
Hannah Small
Betty Spencer
Niles Spencer
Dorothy Varian
Hervey White

a Table

New York
Paris
Woodstock

Artmaking
and
Merrymaking
1927–1952