This portrait by George Platt Lynes shows Kirstein in his army uniform. Though he served in World War II as a Private from 1943 to 1945, he found ways to contribute his cultural expertise beyond the parameters of his rank. He was assigned to the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section (as a "Monuments Man"), which recovered European art looted by Nazi forces. He also wrote a survey report of French art and an article on French film during the German occupation. Because of his enlistment, he was unable to install the exhibition *The Latin-American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art*, which featured acquisitions he had made for MoMA in South America, but he was given leave to attend the opening.

1459 - METRO GRAY

“Until the opening in 1929 of the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art there was no place in Boston or Cambridge for the regular exhibition of modern art and decoration,” proclaims a promotional pamphlet. With his undergraduate classmates Edward Warburg and John Walker III, Kirstein arranged groundbreaking shows in two rooms on the second floor of the Harvard Cooperative Building. This sampling of exhibition brochures presents the dizzying variety of topics the ambitious young founders brought to their city, even as they attended to their college coursework.

1461-Sterling Silver

This selection of ephemera reveals the remarkable ambition and clear-eyed vision Kirstein and his college classmate Varian Fry displayed in creating the literary journal *The Hound & Horn,* its title taken from Ezra Pound’s poem “The White Stag.” Even as they conceived the journal’s purview, they formulated a graphic language, demonstrating from the start a sense of what it takes to build an institutional identity. The logo, which had two generations of designs—the first by Rockwell Kent—appears on letterhead (with the address indicating a move from Cambridge to New York), rejection cards, and the magazine’s covers. Issues shown in the case at right include contributions by such writers as Pound, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, and Katherine Anne Porter, as well as the sculptor Gaston Lachaise, the photographer Walker Evans, and the filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, all of whose works appear elsewhere in this exhibition.

Kirstein sat for this portrait while he was in London for a New York City Ballet performance at Covent Garden and to organize the exhibition *Symbolic Realism in American Painting: 1940–1950* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Though that show was limited to American artists, including many on view in this exhibition, Kirstein asserted in his catalogue essay that "symbolic realism is no private American property." He cited the British Freud as an example of an international figure aligned with this tendency toward "sharpness and penetration" in technique and the intent "to find a coherent set of symbols, objective yet humane," in subject matter.

1461-Sterling Silver

Freud's *Portrait of Lincoln Kirstein*, alongside portraits by Pavel Tchelitchew and Michael Leonard, in Kirstein's townhouse at 128 East 19th Street in New York. Photo by Jerry Thompson

These portraits of Kirstein were taken by two photographers with whom he was close personally and professionally. Jay Leyda—a filmmaker and MoMA film curator—captured him in profile, while Walker Evans shot him brooding during the period they collaborated on Evans's series of Victorian houses (on view later in the exhibition). Both show Kirstein, who grew up in Boston in a wealthy Jewish family, as a young man in his twenties, freshly graduated from Harvard and poised for a six-decade career as a patron and promoter of the arts.

Johnson dedicated the monument based on this model, ultimately composed of cantilevered concrete blocks, to his former Harvard classmate and MoMA colleague. "I admire Lincoln Kirstein. . . . He is a great poet and a great citizen and he's founded a great institution [New York City Ballet]," stated Philip Johnson, architect and first director of MoMA's Department of Architecture. Despite this sentiment, Kirstein and Johnson's decades-long relationship was a complex one, particularly in the mid-1930s, when Johnson cofounded an anti-semitic group called the Gray Shirts. Nonetheless, Kirstein, who was Jewish, later wrote to the government on Johnson's behalf, stating that Johnson had "sincerely repented of his former fascist beliefs, that he [understood] the nature of his great mistake, and that he [was] a loyal American" as well as "a distinguished architect.

Lincoln Kirstein Tower at The Glass House, New Canaan, Connecticut. Photo by Robin Hill, Courtesy The Glass House, a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

1461-Sterling Silver

These drawings by the artist Paul Cadmus—also Kirstein's brother-in-law—were executed as illustrations for Kirstein's 1939 volume *Ballet Alphabet: A Primer for Laymen.* (The book and copies of its prospectus are in the case below.) Cadmus's drawing style—which harnessed a clarity of line to render the human figure—was perfectly suited to Kirstein's goal of "present[ing] the academic elements of contemporary ballet style." In a democratic spirit, *Ballet Alphabet* was intended to function as "a pocket compendium of information for people who, though interested in dancing, have been often confused by the vocabulary of dance enthusiasts." Kirstein adopted the alphabetic format from the poet Ezra Pound's 1934 book *ABC of Reading*, which offered a similar introduction to appreciating literature.

Kirstein founded the magazine *Dance Index* in 1942 to "provide an historical and critical basis for judging the present and future of dancing," something "heretofore unavailable in this country." He illustrated its pages with the rare ephemera he donated to MoMA's Dance Archives, such as lithographs of nineteenth-century Romantic ballerinas and photographs of ballet phenom Vaslav Nijinsky. Kirstein's ambitions and eclectic vision were encompassed in issues devoted to visual art ("Nadelman: Sculptor of the Dance"), ethnography ("Dance in Bali"), and music ("Strawinsky in the Theatre"), as well as to historical and contemporary dance. Kirstein enlisted artist and fellow ballet enthusiast Joseph Cornell to design multiple covers and issues—including the first, dedicated to modern-dance pioneer Isadora Duncan.

As part of his commitment to drawing on American myths and tales, Kirstein had long envisioned a ballet based on Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Though intended as an abolitionist treatise in its own day, it was also criticized in later years for perpetuating stereotypes of African Americans. The poet E. E. Cummings wrote a libretto for Kirstein titled *Tom*, intending it to be "a simple ballet . . . with many silences filled only by the natural noise of feet." The composer Virgil Thomson was attached to do the score, but found Cummings's efforts to be less a ballet scenario than "a poem about one"; the choreographer George Balanchine also dismissed the project as too literary. Despite multiple campaigns, *Tom* was never produced, but Cummings's libretto was published with this frontispiece by the artist Ben Shahn, who Kirstein had commissioned to design the production.

2112-70
American White

CASE LABELS

These drawings were made by the celebrated Russian dancer and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky, who performed in the 1910s with the Ballets Russes, the Paris-based company whose productions featured lavish collaborations with visual artists. While Nijinsky's early drawings are more realistic, his later compositions—made as he succumbed to mental illness—break down figures into series of circles, giving them a puppet-like appearance. After Nijinsky was institutionalized, Kirstein worked with his wife, Romola, on the dancer's biography. Kirstein's donation of these drawings to MoMA's Dance Archives demonstrates his commitment to revealing intersections between ballet and the visual arts.

2112-70
American White

This strikingly lit curve is a stage design for *Serenade*, the first ballet the Russian-born George Balanchine choreographed after Kirstein invited him to America from Paris in 1933. Its designer, William B. Okie, Jr., was a celebrated window dresser, whose inventive jewelry store displays favored small, spot-lit openings that resembled miniature stages instead of the typically open street-facing view. For the ballet's December 1934 premiere in Hartford, Connecticut, Kirstein wrote, "I took off my tails, and worked till 2:30 AM, trying to put up Oakie's [sic] set for SERENADE. . . . The big spiral looked like hell but we finally got it into some kind of shape." However, the design proved "not very right," Kirstein reported, and it was soon abandoned.

In these designs for the ballet *Filling Station*, the artist Paul Cadmus gave vivid details to stock characters: grease-stained handprints on the character Ray's uniform, a "slapstick" cigarette dangling from the Rich Girl's lips, mismatched shoes and rouged knees on the Motorist's Daughter. The transparent coveralls he imagined for the protagonist, Mac, the Filling Station Attendant, introduce a homosexual subtext, also present through the use of the prominent arrow pointing to the gas station's "Rest Room," a site for cruising. Kirstein, who wrote the scenario, first had the idea for this ballet in 1933, envisioning "a deserted roadhouse at which various types gather, to perform a rite whether with a radio or gasoline pumps."

2112-70
American White

In the synopsis of *Pocahontas* that appeared in a Ballet Caravan souvenir program, Kirstein called the ballet "a simple, vivid statement of the earliest of our folk tales." Featuring squash headpieces and bird-feather briefs, Karl Free's designs rely on the problematic trope of representing Native Americans through their connection to nature. Even at the time, a review of the ballet criticized the cartoonish effect of the costumes as being "in the manner of the old-fashioned cigar box Indian." Later, the ballet's composer Elliott Carter reflected: "I myself had misgivings about the 'colonialist' aspect of the subject . . . but hoped to make it a parable of cooperation."

According to the *New York Times* dance critic John Martin, the Chicago-based dance writer Ann Barzel was "generally to be found wherever there [was] choreography afoot even if it [took] her halfway across the continent." Indeed, Barzel joined Kirstein's itinerant Ballet Caravan on the road, where she filmed performances of many of the company's American-themed ballets. These excerpts from *Billy the Kid*, *Filling Station*, and *A Thousand Times Neigh* bring to life set and costume designs on view in this gallery. Informal footage of *Harlequin for President* performed on the beach and shots of tour life reveal the scrappy, lighthearted energy of the enterprise.

2112-70
American White

"Pavlik has done divine décor for Balanchine at the Colón," Kirstein wrote to MoMA's director Alfred Barr in 1942, calling Tchelitchew by his nickname. "But really spectacular, and marvelously executed." He was referring to the designs represented in these three drawings for two ballets, *Mozart's Violin Concerto* and *Apollon Musagète*, which the choreographer George Balanchine would mount at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. For *Mozart's Violin Concerto*, Tchelitchew conjured a winter garden, rendering a latticework dome that is at once architecturally precise and evocatively romantic. For the final "Apotheosis" scene in *Apollon Musagète*, the artist depicted the horse-drawn chariot of the god Apollo, leader of the muses, soaring above Mount Olympus.

2112-70
American White

For Kirstein's 1932 mural exhibition at MoMA, Ben Shahn submitted a design depicting Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Italian-born American anarchists convicted of murder and executed in the 1920s. The trial was a political flashpoint, as their indictment was inflected by anti-Italian and anti-immigrant fervor. Shahn's mural design was among those that provoked a debate in the press. "The subject that I chose is an aspect of modern life that stirred my feelings deeply," Shahn wrote in his defense. "I painted it with all the sincerity and skill I possessed and, in my judgment, there is no reason in the world why a mural on this subject should not be exhibited." This double portrait, depicting the pair in handcuffs, is part of a series that was exhibited, also in 1932, at Kirstein's Harvard Society for Contemporary American Art.

2112-70
American White

These selections from an illustrated book by Hugo Gellert, a participant in Kirstein's 1932 mural exhibition, exemplify his belief that "being an artist and being a communist are one and the same." His 1933 lithographs "*Capital" in Pictures* represent "the translation into graphic form of the revolutionary concepts of *Das Kapital*," a foundational critique of capitalism by nineteenth-century philosopher Karl Marx. Nearby, Gellert's 1943 screenprints *Century of the Common Man* imagine in vivid colors the post–World War II period as an age of peace and prosperity for all people.

1460 - SILVER DOLLAR

These photographs by one of America's first female photojournalists document the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University) in Virginia, which was founded after the Civil War to provide education and practical training to African Americans and Native Americans. Johnston's series of images, carefully composed to showcase the students' hard work and virtue, was commissioned by the school and exhibited at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris. Kirstein discovered the "plump, anonymous, leatherbound album, old and scuffed," containing the photographs while browsing in a bookstore in Washington, D.C., near where he was stationed during World War II. He donated it to MoMA in 1965—the same year he went to march for civil rights in Selma, Alabama—suggesting that such "present events" lent the work new resonance.

A melancholy glow pervades a grand Victorian home fronted by train tracks. The first painting acquired by MoMA, *House by the Railroad* was included in the Museum's 1933 Hopper retrospective, which was on view at the same time as Walker Evans's photographs of Victorian houses—a project with which Kirstein was intimately involved (examples are on view nearby). A decade later, the canvas appeared in the MoMA exhibition *Americans 1943: Realists and Magic Realists*, for which Kirstein noted in the accompanying catalogue Hopper's "lonely capture of our monotonous urban nostalgia" and situated the painting as a precursor to the works of such artists as Paul Cadmus and O. Louis Guglielmi, both on view in the next gallery.

2112-70
American White

"I want to praise and caress the great majority, the American working people," the artist Honoré Sharrer declared. "Every curve of their lives I want to render with fanatical sensitivity and creative realism." This dual commitment to humanistic content and meticulous form was irresistible to Kirstein, who fell in love with *Workers and Paintings* when he spotted it above the fireplace in Sharrer's home; he purchased the painting, and soon donated it to MoMA. A sketch for a mural competition, this frieze-like canvas depicts ordinary families presenting and reacting to well-known paintings, including Grant Wood's iconic *American Gothic* (1930) and Pablo Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror* (1932; in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art).

"There was on Seventh Avenue and Christopher Street a large cafeteria named Stewart's . . . full of beatniks, delinquents, minor gangsters of its day," Paul Cadmus said of the setting for this painting. He conveys the resident action—what Kirstein called a "fierce, cold orgy, crammed with swollen forms"—in a tangle of colorfully clad limbs, twisting torsos, and exaggerated facial expressions. One figure—a suit-clad gentleman in the background at right—seems calmly removed from the tumult. Turning suggestively toward the viewer as he enters the men's restroom, he offers a reference to the gay life of the bohemian Village, and of the artist's (and Kirstein's) circle.

In this work, Kirstein saw “the whole experience of childhood, secret and happy, ferocious and vicious, anal and oral, compulsive and fanciful.” Tchelitchew fuses the human body with a tree surrounded by translucent children, their veins exposed. Painted in the seasonal colors of plants growing and dying, these hallucinogenic figures reflect the artist’s vision of a fragile world and its cycles of renewal and destruction. In the midst of a devastating world war, MoMA’s acquisitions committee appreciated the work’s relevance. In the July 1942 letter on view nearby, Alfred Barr reported to Kirstein, who had first proposed the painting’s purchase and an accompanying exhibition, that the Museum had bought the painting “together with half a dozen studies.”

2112-70
American White

“After we’d been working most of the day, we’d go out late afternoons and take photographs when the light was best. They were just playthings. We would hand out these little photographs when we went to dinner parties, like playing cards,” Paul Cadmus explained, describing the collaborative photographs he made with his lover Jared French and French’s wife, Margaret, under the moniker PaJaMa. This album was compiled as a gift for Monroe Wheeler, then MoMA’s Director of Exhibitions and Publishing, and his partner, the writer Glenway Wescott, whose inscriptions date the photographs. This scrapbook format echoes the personal tenor of the shots gathered within its pages, which were made among intimates during beach vacations.

case label

“Berni’s clear eye and honest hand creates a hard but true vision of urban life,” Kirstein wrote of this Argentine artist. The scale and classicism with which Berni treated this scene of a soccer team from the outskirts of Buenos Aires lend the painting a sense of grandeur. Depicting the mixed racial heritages of the young players, the work gestures toward the idea of Pan-Americanism prevalent at the time: the belief in shared cultural, economic, and historical bonds between North and South America. Berni wrote to Kirstein about the acquisition, “I hope that this first contact with the American public . . . is a truly spiritual communication, affirmation of a New Realism, that is the focus of so many American artists and the path towards a continental artistic unity.”

1459 - METRO GRAY

Kirstein characterized the work of Urruchúa as a “savage indictment of social, clerical and military corruption.” He went on to describe the figures in works such as these: “His monsters are not journalistic caricatures . . . but lolling monumental puppets of swollen or snakelike hideousness.” The shadowy tones the artist achieved through the medium of monotype—drawing in ink on a metal plate run through a press—capture the wartime climate: the Spanish Civil War had recently ended, and World War II was ongoing. Kirstein was so taken with Urruchúa’s work that he not only made these acquisitions for MoMA but also facilitated a 1943 New York gallery exhibition for the artist.

This painting depicts a Saint John's Day eve celebration in the Brazilian town of Ouro Preto, whose central plaza is illuminated with colored lanterns to mark the end of the winter solstice. Kirstein commissioned Guignard to make the painting after seeing a drawing of the same subject. His description of the artist's work—"tight and detailed"—characterizes much of the art Kirstein favored. Guignard's meticulous craftsmanship and attention to particulars are visible in this work's finely rendered architectural features, tiny revelers, and distinctive indigenous flora.

1459 - METRO GRAY

Gustavo Lazarini Terradas "is absolutely uninstructed as far as the world goes and has seen very few pictures," Kirstein wrote in his travel notebook in 1942. This detective, twenty-three years old at the time, was one of several self-taught artists whose work Kirstein acquired on his nearly five-month long acquisition trip through South America, during which he sought out evidence of local character. In the catalogue for the 1943 exhibition *The Latin-American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art*, Kirstein praised the artist's technique, writing that his "careful portraits . . . have the miniature integrity of another epoch."

“The local Rousseau, a naïve but not exactly a primitive painter,” Kirstein described Cardoso in a letter to Alfred Barr, comparing this Brazilian artist to the late-nineteenth-century self-taught French painter (whose work is on view on Floor 5). The precision of the artist’s technique enabled scientific accuracy: the caterpillar crawling across a twig is a species native to Brazil, and the butterflies, beetles, and flowers are rendered with similar specificity. The window opening onto the placid Guanabara Bay provides a visual respite from an interior densely packed with pattern—from the checkered floor and tablecloth to a bullseye on the wall.

1459 - METRO GRAY

Here, Paredes depicts Ecuadorian workers threshing grain in the Andes mountains, rendering their hands especially large to emphasize their manual labor. Such scenes were part of the broader movement of *Indigenismo*, a cultural and political ideology that swept through Latin America in the 1940s, which sought to counter European colonial influence through an assertion of native identity. Kirstein saw this painting as evidence of Paredes’s “personal sense of native tragedy.”

In his travel notes, Kirstein describes this painting as featuring “root forms and twisted tree trunks from the natural elements of the country of Nahuel Huapi around the lake country of Argentina.” For him, Forner’s inclusion of indigenous environmental features overshadowed her depiction of a landscape devastated by World War II. Small white parachutes drop from the upper left corner, while downed planes descend from the upper right. More than just local specimens, the gnarled branches morph into several pairs of twisted hands, an eyeball, and, at center, a lizard-like monster, creating an atmosphere of destruction.

1459 - METRO GRAY

Kirstein’s 1942 trip to South America to acquire works for MoMA was preceded by a 1941 tour of his traveling company American Ballet Caravan (his familiarity with the region was one reason Nelson Rockefeller chose him). It was during this first visit that he met Horacio Butler, who he considered the one Argentine painter “who has come to terms with the local material.” Kirstein commissioned Butler to design a ballet called *Estancia*—meaning “cattle ranch.” The company disbanded before George Balanchine could choreograph the ballet, but the idea and original score by Alberto Ginastera were revisited almost seventy years later in 2010 by New York City Ballet.

Kirstein praised the dance sequences in this unfinished film by Eisenstein, which intended to portray the epic sweep of Mexican cultural and political history. One shows a “danced allegory of the Spanish conquest of Mexico,” while another depicts “carnival dances and the whirl of carnival itself.” When the 1930–32 shoot went over-budget, production was halted, and the producers refashioned the footage against Eisenstein’s wishes and released it in several versions. Kirstein was among those who protested the unauthorized *Thunder Over Mexico!*, leafleting at a 1933 screening. Jay Leyda, a MoMA film curator who had studied with the Russian filmmaker celebrated for his achievements with montage, later assembled almost four hours of unused footage into a study film meant to convey Eisenstein’s intentions, from which these excerpts were drawn.

1459 - METRO GRAY

Kirstein considered Figari to be “one of the most important artists of all Latin America,” and “the author of delicious and intensely felt paintings.” Although he looked at some “four thousand odd pictures in the warehouse” by this artist when he traveled to Uruguay in 1942, he was unable to buy a painting for MoMA because of conflicts within the artist’s estate. Instead, he urged the Museum to acquire this work from a private collector in the United States. Kirstein later described Figari’s visual language as a “mosaic vibration of textures, close values, textile color [with] . . . a rich powdery surface.”

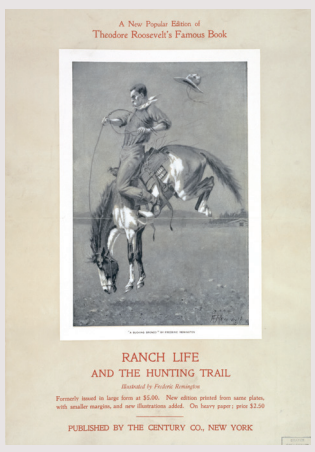
“Jack Wheelwright and Walker Evans and I started our photographic campaign to get all the good Victorian houses in the vicinity. . . . We often felt like thieves snapping the houses, for fear the owners might object,” Kirstein wrote in his diary in 1931, describing a book project to capture a disappearing form of American architecture. His friend, the poet and architect John Brooks “Jack” Wheelwright, had envisioned this endeavor, for which Kirstein enlisted a then-unknown Evans to make the photographs. Though the book was never realized, Kirstein organized MoMA’s *Walker Evans: Photographs of Nineteenth-Century Houses* (1933)—the Museum’s first monographic photography show. Because the works were classified by building style—Mansard, Metal Work, Gingerbread, Gothic, Greek, and Miscellaneous—they were received as architectural documentation. Kirstein donated the entire series to the Museum, calling it “the beginning of a photographic history of American domestic building during its most fantastic, imaginative, and impermanent period.”

SILVER DOLLAR

“The photographs are social documents,” Kirstein wrote of Walker Evans’s American Photographs. In the buildings and human faces, monuments and ruins, and found texts and images that populate Evans’s compositions, Kirstein saw “the continuous fact of an indigenous American expression.” Evans took the series of photographs to which this selection belongs between 1928 and 1937, crossing the country from a Pennsylvania main street to a South Carolina church. Some images were taken while he was employed as an “information specialist” by the New Deal’s Resettlement Administration, which intended to lift rural farmers out of the Great Depression; others he shot while roaming the streets of New York City. When one hundred of these prints were exhibited at MoMA in 1938, Kirstein and Frances Collins, the Museum’s Manager of Publications, worked with Evans to select a sequence of eighty-seven images for the accompanying publication, to which Kirstein also contributed what became one of the most influential essays on the medium of photography.

SILVER DOLLAR

Upon commissioning the artist Jared French to design Ballet Caravan's *Billy the Kid*, Kirstein gave him a copy of Theodore Roosevelt's memoirs of the American West. For these sketches—which show the title character in multiple costumes—French drew inspiration from the volume's illustrations of nineteenth-century cowboys by Frederic Remington. Three of these drawings are on stationary from Saltaire, the Fire Island village with a vibrant gay community, where French vacationed and collaborated with his wife, Margaret, and his lover Paul Cadmus, among other artists. The resulting images melded a mythology of the American past with a social reality of the present.



Poster with illustration by Frederic Remington for Theodore Roosevelt's *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*. c. 1893–1924. Art & Architecture Collection, The New York Public Library

2112-70
American White

Writing about his brother-in-law Paul Cadmus's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Kirstein described *Gluttony* as "all belly, and a tube as well, split before, sewn up, and bursting, with extra dugs and a horrible confusion of food and guts." This drawing is a study for one in the series of seven paintings, which Kirstein lived with in his 19th Street townhouse. Kirstein aligned the content, tone, and technique with art-historical precedents, likening its monstrous surreality to that of sixteenth-century Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch and its hatched highlighting to that of Italian Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci.

Paul Cadmus's *The Seven Deadly Sins* in Lincoln Kirstein's townhouse at 128 East 19th Street, New York. Photo by Jerry Thompson

2112-70
American White

With its entwined couple, deep blue sky, and field of flora in which every last blade of grass is meticulously rendered, this painting demonstrates Kirstein's assessment that Perlin was "interested in the close observation of nature and reporting his times in a poetic and personal way." The artist expressed that poeticism further in a letter to Kirstein, who owned *The Lovers*, explaining that "I never really thought of the picture as primarily a love picture but as sleep-dream, love-dream, love death, sleep death-life."

2112-70
American White

Cadmus's use of etching—which first flowered in the sixteenth century—reflects his interest in historical techniques. Both of these compositions were also realized as paintings. When the oil-on-canvas version of *The Fleet's In!* was slated to be exhibited at the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, D.C., in 1934, naval officials censored the image of carousing sailors on leave, calling it "an insult to the enlisted men of the American Navy" in its depiction of a "most disgraceful, sordid, disreputable, drunken brawl." *Youth with Kite* is based on an egg tempera painting (a medium then out of fashion) titled *Aviator*, which Kirstein owned and lent to MoMA's exhibition *Americans 1943: Realists and Magic Realists*.

Paul Cadmus (American, 1904–1999). *The Fleet's In!*, 1934. Oil on canvas, 30 x 60 in. Navy Art Collection, Naval History and Heritage Command. © 2019 Estate of Paul Cadmus

Paul Cadmus (American, 1904–1999). *Aviator*, 1941. Egg tempera on pressed wood panel, 12 x 6 in. Photograph courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York © 2019 Estate of Paul Cadmus

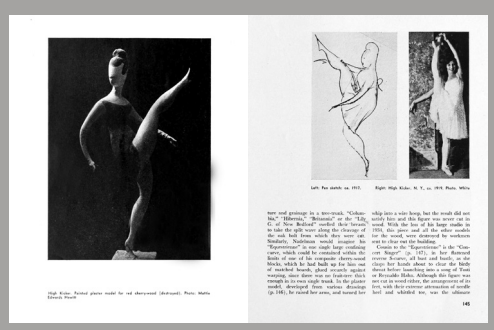
This portrait head depicts the artist's wife Isabel while also referencing ancient sculpture. Lachaise "admires the clarity, precision and anonymity of the Egyptian stone carvers," Kirstein wrote in the catalogue for the artist's 1935 exhibition at MoMA, "craftsmen who were capable of taking human models, priest or king, and elevating them into godhead." In the same way, the facial features resemble those of its real model, while the ample neck and abstracted hair express an ideal.

1461 - STERLING SILVER

"I employ no other line than the curve, which possesses freshness and force," Nadelman declared. *Man in the Open Air* is composed of a succession of curves—from the droop of the figure's bow to the arabesque tracing his body from armpit to toe. While the posture is indebted to classical Greek sculpture, the details of dress bear the influence of American folk art, of which Nadelman had an impressive collection. In the catalogue for the 1948 Nadelman retrospective Kirstein organized for MoMA, he called this sculpture "at once comic, supple and worldly." He pushed for the Museum to acquire it and lived with another cast of the work.

Lincoln Kirstein and Fidelma Cadmus Kirstein in their home at 128 East 19th Street, New York, with a cast of Nadelman's *Man in the Open Air*. Photo by Cecil Beaton. The Estate of Cecil Beaton, courtesy Jerry Thompson

“When Elie Nadelman died in 1946, there were found, carefully wrapped in cotton, some two dozen copper and zinc plates, upon which he had worked twenty-five years before,” Kirstein wrote, introducing this 1952 portfolio of previously unpublished drypoint prints. The figures in these plates catalogue aspects of Nadelman’s visual repertory: the proto-Cubist faceted planes of his drawings, the bows and coiffures of his folk-inspired sculpture, and the dance themes that would be elaborated throughout the Nadelman issue of Kirstein’s magazine *Dance Index* (below, and on view earlier in this exhibition).



Interior spread from “Elie Nadelman: Sculptor of the Dance,” *Dance Index* 7, no. 6, 1948

1461 - STERLING SILVER

Benson

These two photographs depict a memorial by the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens dedicated to the first African American Union Army regiment in the Civil War and their white commander Robert Gould Shaw, the son of Boston abolitionists. By focusing on the infantry drummer in the photograph at left and using the soft warm tones of palladium printing, Benson creates a moving portrait, accentuating the way Saint-Gaudens conjures flesh out of cold bronze. Benson's series of images was published in the book *Lay this Laurel* (1973), for which Kirstein wrote an accompanying essay. Kirstein dedicated his contribution to "contemporary black artists—writers, composers, painters, sculptors and choreographers." Linking the past to that moment's struggle for civil rights, he declared, "The crucial situation in which black Americans now find themselves proposes an element of urgency in this focal masterpiece."

Kirstein shared with Joseph Cornell a devotion to dance history. He was one of Kirstein's sources for the films that would join books, prints, and ephemera as the core of MoMA's Dance Archives. Cornell credited Kirstein and the hunt for rare dance footage for his turn to romantic ballet as a key subject for his box constructions, including this one dedicated to the famed nineteenth-century ballerina Marie Taglioni. A magical story of a wintry dance is embedded in the box's cover:

On a moonlight night in the winter of 1835 the carriage of Marie TAGLIONI was halted by a Russian highwayman, and that enchanting creature commanded to dance for this audience of one upon a panther's skin spread over the snow beneath the stars. From this actuality arose the legend that to keep alive the memory of this adventure so precious to her, TAGLIONI formed the habit of placing a piece of artificial ice in her jewel casket or dressing table where, melting among the sparkling stones, there was evoked a hint of the atmosphere of the starlit heavens over the ice-covered landscape.

Cornell