



Detail, Kingscote Dining Room (1881) with Tiffany glass bricks inset into marble walls.



The Preservation Society of Newport County
with U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management
and Christie's
presents
The Newport Symposium

Great Designers: A Colorful History of the Interior

Preliminary Program
Monday, April 26 through Wednesday, April 28, 2010

The Newport Symposium Committee

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The Newport Symposium

A visionary and talented designer can determine the style and spirit of an entire era. The 18th annual Newport Symposium will examine the great personalities and impresarios of taste who directed the course of design history. From grand interiors to masterpieces of furniture, the Symposium lectures will consider the artistic inspiration, technical virtuosity, and cultural forces that shape designers and their work through the ages.

Sunday, April 25

12:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Symposium Registration: The Hotel Viking

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Pre-Symposium Tour
Two Newport Cottages: Chepstow (1861) and
The Elms (1901)

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Opening Reception and Exhibit at Redwood Library and
Athenaeum

An exhibition of rare 17th and 18th century pattern books and design publications in honor of the late Ralph E. Carpenter, Jr. The works of Robert and James Adams, Thomas Chippendale, Jean Berain, and Edward Hoppus' 1736 edited version of Andrea Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture* are just some of the historically significant books that will be on exhibit.

Dinner on one's own

Monday, April 26

8:00 a.m. Registration: The Hotel Viking

9:00 a.m. Welcome
Pierre du Pont Irving, *Chairman*
The Preservation Society of Newport County

9:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lectures

Great Designs for a Great King

Emmanuel Ducamp, *Art Historian*

Paris

The reign of Louis XIV constituted a peak for the French monarchy in political power and artistic endeavors. The permanent establishment of the court at Versailles made it possible to concentrate there an unusual array of treasures in settings of unparalleled luxury. In this enterprise, Charles Le Brun, first painter to the king, played the role of a decorator. He functioned as a stage designer of sorts in the performance of royal “theatre” which would be played against the backdrop of the first thoroughly coordinated European interiors. The king’s minister, Colbert, created the Manufacture Royale des Gobelins in 1663 as a centralized institution where cabinet-makers, artists in hardstones, silversmiths, and weavers worked exclusively for the French Crown on pieces for rooms of absolute magnificence. With these designs, the pre-eminence of France – political, economic, and artistic – manifested itself in great interiors that were emulated in other European courts.

From Magnificence to Informality: The Invention of Comfort

Joan DeJean, *Trustee Professor of French*, Department of Romance Languages

School of Arts & Sciences, University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Versailles set the tone for interior decoration intended to dazzle, literally to stop visitors in their tracks. Behind the scenes at Versailles, however, beginning in the mid-1670s, a palace revolution took place. It was started by Louis XIV’s longest reigning mistress, the Marquise de Montespan, and his son and heir to the throne. During the following decades, clients such as these worked with great designers to create a look that was the polar opposite of the imposing *grandeur de rigueur* in Versailles’s grand spaces. As a result, for the first time ever, informality and comfort became the forces driving design. Nowhere was this more evident than in the realm of seat furniture. The new forms of seating ushered in the first great age of architect-designed furniture.

12:00 p.m. Lunch: The Hotel Viking. Optional. Fee.

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Concurrent afternoon lectures and tours in Newport's historic buildings.

Gilded Era Buenos Aires: Liberal Eclecticism and Pan-European Architecture

Fabio Grementieri, *Director of the Preservation Program*

University of Torcuato Di Tella

Buenos Aires

Around 1900, the fast growth of Buenos Aires and Argentina's expanding wealth resulted in a singular architectural experiment. Massive immigration, strong cultural transfers, and a liberal eclecticism resulted in an exceptional melting pot where many different design trends produced a unique heritage. From industrial buildings to domestic architecture there were sophisticated combinations of building types. Several European architectural cultures developed beyond their origins and evolved into a Pan-European style. The presentation will show an overview of the phenomenon and will focus on the French influence that went well beyond the "Beaux Arts" style and produced some of the best houses of the period on this side of the Atlantic.

Headfort House: A Forgotten Adam Gem Rediscovered

David Gundry, *Programs Manager*

World Monuments Fund, Britain

United Kingdom

Headfort House contains Ireland's last remaining suite of interiors designed by Robert Adam. After five years of conservation work and research, the World Monuments Fund, working with The Headfort Trust, has helped to save the building and revealed the original decoration of the Adam interiors which are both striking and unusual. The color treatment of these interiors may have a lot to say about assumptions typically made when researching 18th century interiors and questions remain as to the provenance of this particular decorative scheme.

Tour: *High Victorian Design: The Interiors of Chateau-sur-Mer (1852)*

Charles J. Burns, *Associate Curator*, The Preservation Society of Newport County
Newport, Rhode Island

Chateau-sur-Mer is a veritable encyclopedia of Victorian décor. The Wetmore family continually remodeled the house for over half a century, creating interiors including a Renaissance Revival-style library and dining room, an Eastlake-inspired hall and morning room, a Louis XV salon by Ogden Codman, and a rich collection of Aesthetic movement wallpapers and stenciling.

Great Designs and Great Books: Roubo and 18th Century French Joinery

Joan DeJean, *Trustee Professor of French*, Department of Romance Languages, School of Arts & Sciences, University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

John R. Tschirch, *Architectural Historian*, The Preservation Society of Newport County
Charles Jeffers Moore, *Chief Conservator*, The Preservation Society of Newport County
Lisa Long, *Ezra Stiles Special Collections Librarian*, Redwood Library and Athenaeum

A rare glimpse at the influential and beautifully designed series of books, *L'Art de Menuisier*, or *The Art of Joinery*, published in 1769 by M. Roubo. With over 300 plates depicting all aspects of design from floors and woodwork to chairs, toilets, and carriages, Roubo's books are infused with the spirit of an age that valued both utility and beauty. Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, a discerning patron of French architecture and a keen student of design history, acquired *L'Art de Menuisier* and prominently displayed them in her Rococo-style library at Marble House (1892). Join a discussion and a detailed showing of these great books with a cultural historian, architectural historian, conservator of wooden objects, and a librarian in the incomparable setting that houses them.

Tour: *Innovation & Opulence: Stanford White and the Kingscote Dining Room*

Caitlin Emery, *Research Assistant*, Winterthur Museum & Country Estate
Winterthur, Delaware

Departing from earlier stylistic traditions, the Kingscote dining room (1880-1881) characterizes the eclectic aesthetic that defined the early work of its designer, Stanford White. Trained as a painter, White's prowess is evident in the careful use of light, texture, and color. The Kingscote dining room exemplifies White as a designer and tastemaker, and also fully represents the notion of cultural fusion, drawing inspiration from Elizabethan, Japanese, Moorish, Aesthetic, and American Colonial sources.

Tour: *Designers of the Gilded Age: Allard and Sons at Marble House (1892)*

Paul F. Miller, *Curator*, The Preservation Society of Newport County
Newport, Rhode Island

Alva Vanderbilt referred to her Newport villa, Marble House, as her "temple to the arts." To realize this glistening marble temple, the Vanderbilts commissioned interiors from Jules Allard and Sons of Paris to create some of the most opulent settings of the Gilded Age. Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt sought inspiration in Baroque metalwork, Rococo boiseries, Gothic plasterwork, and luxurious cut velvet brocades, establishing a new standard for grand, historically-inspired design in America.

Tuesday, April 27

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lectures at The Hotel Viking Conference Center

Robert Adam – Promotion By Design

Dr. Steven Parissien, *Director*

Compton Varney

Warwickshire, England

Robert Adam is one of the world's most famous architect-designers. He expertly synthesized contemporary Neoclassical forms and expressions from all over Europe with more familiar antique idioms to fashion a distinctive decorative style that has remained hugely popular for 250 years. However, his unique approach to design was not merely the result of a good eye combined with an instinctive understanding of the market. Adam's buildings were also astonishingly progressive in the way they pioneered new, often untried materials and in the symbiotic relationship Adam established with the leading craftsmen of the day in order to plan every aspect of the interior. As such, Robert Adam can truly be called the first Modern Architect.

Duncan Phyfe: Master of NeoClassical Design

Peter Kenny, *Ruth Bigelow Wriston Curator of American Decorative Arts and Administrator of The American Wing, The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

New York

Few individuals with even a passing knowledge of the history of furniture design would fail to recognize the name Duncan Phyfe. Known in his own lifetime as the "United States Rage," Phyfe earned his reputation as the most renowned American cabinetmaker of his day by his unstinting attention to detail and the perfection of his workmanship. Phyfe's rigorous approach to furniture design, perfecting his forms and then carefully controlling their production, imbued his furniture with the spirit of the great cabinetmaking traditions of the 18th century, no matter when it was made on the continuum of neoclassical style.

12:00 p.m. Lunch: The Hotel Viking. Optional. Fee.

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. The series of Monday afternoon sessions will be repeated on Tuesday afternoon.

7:00 p.m. Dinner at The Breakers (1895)

Continued

Wednesday, April 28

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Lectures at The Hotel Viking Conference Center

Josef Hoffman: The Total Work of Art

Christian Witt-Dorring, *Curator of Decorative Arts*, Neue Galerie
New York

The Austrian architect Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956) is recognized as one of the leading figures in the modern movement. As founding member of the Vienna Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte, he was instrumental in introducing the idea of the total work of art to Austria. He considered it his responsibility to design every aspect of daily life. Therefore, beginning with the architectural shell of the house, his oeuvre includes designs for all facets of the decorative arts. During his career of more than 60 years, one witnesses a steady stylistic development from the curvilinear to the geometric and the art deco style.

American Glamour: Great Decorators of the 20th Century

Mitchell Owens, *Editor at Large, ELLE DÉCOR*
New York

Dorothy Draper, Billy Baldwin, George Stacey, and a handful of others codified the brisk, chic, and optimistic look of American high style in the mid 20th century. Mitchell Owens, an editor at large of *ELLE DÉCOR*, will explore the legacy of these designers and highlight the interiors that put them – and American glamour – on the international map.

12:00 p.m. Lunch: The Hotel Viking. Optional. Fee.

Schedule in process of formation and subject to change.

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