



BARD GRADUATE CENTER CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH LANDMARK EXHIBITIONS AND INITIATIVES

**Leading institution dedicated to study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture
to present range of anniversary programs, including
major exhibitions on French Fashion during WWI and on modernist designer Eileen Gray**

New York, NY (June 19, 2018) – As the only graduate research institute in the United States that advances the exploration of decorative arts, design history, and material culture, Bard Graduate Center and its Gallery have pioneered the study of objects as a means to better understand ourselves and human culture. Offering exceptionally rich experiences for scholars, students, and the general public alike, Bard Graduate Center is built on multidisciplinary study and the integration of research, graduate teaching, and public exhibitions.

In celebration of its 25th Anniversary, Bard Graduate Center will present a series of exhibitions and events that showcase the institution's groundbreaking research and approach to the study of tangible 'things.' Beginning in fall 2018 and continuing through 2020, the 25th-Anniversary celebration will include exhibitions on a diverse range of subjects, most of which fall outside of the established art historical canon, including: *Agents of Faith*, examining sacred objects and the practice of votive offering; *French Fashion, Women, and the First World War*; and *Eileen Gray*, a survey of the work and contributions of the iconic modernist designer and architect, presented in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou, Paris. Other initiatives during the anniversary years will also advance research and scholarship, recognize leaders in the field, present engaging programs for the public, and foster a new generation of students and scholars.

"My vision for Bard Graduate Center was to create a bold community of scholars to invigorate the study of objects as a distinct discipline unto itself—in dialogue with but not constrained by the traditions of art history, archaeology, and other social sciences," said Dr. Susan Weber, Founder and Director of Bard Graduate Center. "Twenty-five years ago, no such place existed in the United States and now, looking ahead to the graduation of our 25th class, I am deeply proud of how we continue to expand the scope of our scholarship and foster the success of our students. Our graduates are now working in major institutions across the country and around the world, advancing new ways of thinking about our material world."

"No one discipline 'owns' material culture," said Bard Graduate Center Dean Peter N. Miller. "Things, objects, and materials pose different questions and do different work depending on your approach. In all our efforts—research, teaching, publications, exhibitions—we ask questions and explore the ways in which the material world helps us illuminate the varieties of human experience. While our research interests are diverse—from the examination of Yuan Dynasty Chinese bronzes to new interpretations of 18th-century cookbooks—the Bard Graduate Center community is united in our shared pursuit of new meanings and our culture of passionate curiosity. The 25th Anniversary is a celebration of that quest and spirit."

Bard Graduate Center 25th-Anniversary Highlights

Exhibitions

Bard Graduate Center is unique in its global investigation of the material world across time periods, places, and disciplines. Gallery exhibitions reflect this expansive approach. In addition to large-scale annual exhibitions, Bard Graduate Center also presents “Focus Project” exhibitions, curated by faculty and postdoctoral fellows, that emerge from research and teaching. These exhibitions form part of an innovative program that promotes experimentation in display and interpretation. Focus Projects also provide graduate students with the opportunity to be involved in every aspect of exhibition development, from conception to execution. Beginning in spring 2019, the Gallery will institute a program of exhibitions dedicated to research conducted by Bard Graduate Center students. Student-curated exhibitions will be presented on an annual basis.

“Our exhibitions use different methods of inquiry, display, and interpretation to investigate design history, decorative arts, and material culture” said Nina Stritzler-Levine, Director of Bard Graduate Center Gallery. “The comparatively small scale of our gallery allows for close engagement with our exhibitions which have been carefully crafted to share the knowledge and expertise of our curators and convey ideas and issues previously overlooked and unexplored.”

Upcoming exhibitions include:

- ***Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place***
September 14, 2018 - January 6, 2019
Agents of Faith will provide a perspective on why humans across the globe create material offerings as acts of faith. Encompassing exquisite works of art as well as everyday items made sacred through the offertory act, more than 300 objects dating from 2000 BCE to the 21st century will be on display. The exhibition will reveal the global nature of votive practices and the profoundly personal aspects of their creation.
- ***Spring 2019 Exhibitions***
Opening February 2019

The Story Box: Franz Boas, George Hunt, and the Making of Anthropology

The exhibition will explore the hidden histories and complex legacies of one of the most influential books in the field of anthropology, Franz Boas' *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1897). Focusing on Boas' work with his Indigenous co-author George Hunt among the Kwakwaka'wakw people of British Columbia, the exhibition—guest designed by artist Corrine Hunt, Hunt's great-granddaughter—features ceremonial objects as well as rare archival photographs, manuscripts, and drawings that shed new light on the book while promoting understanding and cultural reactivation of the heritage it documents.

Jan Tschichold and The New Typography: Graphic Design Between the World Wars

Tracing the revolution in graphic design in the 1920s, this exhibition displays materials assembled by typographer and designer Jan Tschichold (1902-1974) in Weimar Germany. Objects displayed in the exhibition, including El Lissitzky's iconic 1920 publication 'Pro dva kvadrata' [The Story of Two Squares], were given by Philip Johnson to the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and have rarely been publicly exhibited.

A View from the Jeweler's Bench: Ancient Treasures, Contemporary Statements

Foregrounding the processes and materials employed in the craft of jewelry making past and present, this student-curated exhibition will highlight contemporary jewelers who are developing a practice that is methodically inspired by ancient and historical antecedents.

- ***French Fashion, Women, and the First World War***

Fall 2019

French Fashion, Women, and the First World War invites visitors to discover the fashion of wartime France, as well as the systems invented to publicize the industry. The exhibition will showcase historically significant clothing and accessories as well as period photographs, commercial catalogues, and fashion magazines. Maude Bass-Krueger, the co-curator of the exhibition with Sophie Kurkdjian, is an alumna of Bard Graduate Center's PhD program (PhD '16). The exhibition will include loans from institutions in France including the Bibliothèque Forney, Musée des Arts Décoratifs; Chanel Patrimoine Collection; Lanvin Archive; Musée de la Grande Guerre de Meaux; as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

- ***Eileen Gray: Avant-Garde Designer and Architect***

Spring 2020

Bard Graduate Center will present the first major American exhibition in 40 years to examine the entire oeuvre of Eileen Gray, a pioneer in modern design and architecture and one of the few women to practice in those fields professionally before World War II. It will feature never-before exhibited furniture as well as other aspects of Gray's design work, including archival materials from Gray's best-known buildings. Also on view will be newly discovered materials on Gray's architectural projects in France, reinforcing her standing as a gifted architect and shedding new light on her ideas about architecture, interiors, design, and landscape. In addition to exploring Gray as a modernist, it will elaborate on Gray's interest in a vernacular design vocabulary.

Publications

Since 1993, Bard Graduate Center has produced a series of books and catalogues that reflect the intellectual rigor underpinning the institute's programs. With contributions from faculty and a coterie of international luminaries, Bard Graduate Center Gallery Publications now has a book list of more than 40 titles, many of which have received critical acclaim. As part of the 25th Anniversary, Bard Graduate Center will release a number of new publications, including an anthology of Founder and Director Susan Weber's research and writings.

Commencement of 25th Class: Shaping the Next Generation of Field Leaders

The 25th Anniversary will culminate with the commencement of the institution's 25th class in 2020. They will join Bard Graduate Center's distinguished network of alumni who occupy leadership positions at universities, galleries, museums, auction houses, and other major institutions around the globe—from the Art Institute of Chicago to the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum to the National Trust in the UK.

Advancing Equity and Diversity

In partnership with Bard High School Early College and Bronx-based community arts organization DreamYard, Bard Graduate Center's "Lab for Teen Thinkers" invites students from diverse backgrounds to engage in a two-year program designed to secure the future of the field by laying the foundation for more diverse participation. Teen Thinkers contribute their research and scholarship with the larger academic community at Bard Graduate Center, while being mentored by members of faculty and staff. The program is part of Bard Graduate Center's commitment to building a diverse community able to bring new perspectives to the scholarly study of the material world.

Iris Awards: Celebrating Extraordinary Achievements

Bard Graduate Center honors scholars, patrons, and field professionals who have made major contributions to the study and appreciation of the decorative arts with the annual Iris Awards. Recent recipients have included Dr. Aileen Ribeiro, Sir Nicholas Goodison, Harold Koda, and John C. Waddell.

More information on additional 25th-Anniversary events and programs will be announced in the coming months.

ABOUT BARD GRADUATE CENTER

Director and Founder Dr. Susan Weber established Bard Graduate Center in New York City in 1993. Through a robust academic program that awards MA and PhD degrees in decorative arts, design history, and material culture, Bard Graduate Center has created a network of more than 400 alumni who now work in leading museums, colleges and universities, and institutions around the world. Additionally, the institution has produced over 200 path-breaking publications and an eclectic variety of more than 70 exhibitions presented at Bard Graduate Center Gallery.

Neighboring BGC's academic building in Manhattan's Upper West Side – Central Park West Historic District, Bard Graduate Center Gallery offers intimate and profound engagement with great works of art and design as well as everyday objects. Bard Graduate Center collaborates with major institutions around the world, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, to develop exhibitions that bring the world's treasures and expertise to New York City, and share Bard Graduate Center's research with audiences around the world.

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