

# WHITNEY

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# PRESS RELEASE



**The Whitney presents *Edward Steichen in the 1920s and 1930s: A Recent Acquisition*, highlighting a beneficent gift from Richard and Jackie Hollander**

New York, October 24, 2013—This December, the Whitney Museum of American Art will mount an exhibition of works by Edward Steichen, the pioneering American photographer best known for his striking portraits from the early-twentieth century. Organized by senior curatorial assistant Carrie Springer, the exhibition includes celebrity portraits and fashion photographs taken for *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*, images shot for advertising campaigns, and a selection of photographs that show the artist's interest in the natural world. The approximately forty-five works that comprise *Edward Steichen in the 1920s and 1930s: A Recent Acquisition* were a generous gift to the Whitney from Richard and Jackie Hollander in memory of Ellyn Hollander. The exhibition will be on view from December 6 through February 2014 in the Museum's Anne & Joel Ehrenkranz Gallery.

This exhibition covers a period when Steichen was the chief photographer for Condé Nast Publications, a position he held from 1923 to 1937. Considered one of the greatest portrait photographers at that time, Steichen was assigned to photograph famous actors, writers, artists, statesmen, and society figures for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* magazines. His portraits—including iconic images of Winston Churchill, Paul Robeson, Marlene Dietrich, Eugene O'Neill, and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, among others which will be on view—depict a rich slice of cultural history.

At the same time, Steichen began shooting photographs for advertising that are elegant and natural representations of objects and people. Using starkly contrasting light and shadow, he created a dramatic visual framework for his subjects. These qualities are apparent in Steichen's nude for *Cannon Towels* and in his *Ad for Coty Lipstick*, both of which will be on display.

Also included in this exhibition are several Steichen images of flowers, gardens, and fruit that he made for his own interest, and reflect the formal qualities apparent in Steichen's commercial work. Seen together the works in this exhibition demonstrate Steichen's vision of photography as both an aesthetic form and a vehicle for mass communication.

### **About the Artist**

Edward Steichen (1879–1973) began his career as a painter and a photographer, producing atmospheric and expressive photographs with a deliberate painterly appearance. After serving in World War I as an aerial photographer, he abandoned painting and developed a more modernist approach to photography, focusing on making images for the printed page. After serving as the chief photographer for Condé Nast publications from 1923 to 1937, Steichen resigned from his post and, at the age of fifty-nine, gave up his New York studio.

During World War II, Steichen volunteered for service, and became director of the U.S. Navy Photographic Institute, in charge of all Navy Combat photography. In 1947, he was appointed director of the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, where he worked for fifteen years and curated more than forty exhibitions. His most famous show was *The Family of Man* (1955), a wide-ranging exhibition of photographs by artists from around the world linked together a shared human experience. MoMA also mounted an exhibition of Steichen's own work in 1961, the year before he retired. In 1963 President John F. Kennedy presented Steichen with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor the government bestows to a civilian.

### **Support**

Major support for this exhibition is provided by the John R. Eckel Jr. Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the Artists Council of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

### **About the Richard and Jackie Hollander**

Richard and Jackie Hollander have one of the largest collections of Steichen photographs in private hands. Last winter they gave 142 vintage prints by Edward Steichen to three American museums—the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The photographs were purchased by the Hollanders directly from the estate of the artist, and represented a part of their overall collection. Mr. Hollander is the Chairman of Aristotle Capital Management, LLC ("Aristotle"), an investment management firm.

### **About the Whitney**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the world's leading museum of twentieth-century and contemporary art of the United States. Focusing particularly on works by living artists, the Whitney is celebrated for presenting important exhibitions and for its renowned collection, which comprises over 19,000 works by more than 2,900 artists. With a history of exhibiting the most promising and influential artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial, the Museum's signature exhibition, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. In addition to its landmark exhibitions, the Museum is known internationally for events and educational programs of exceptional significance and as a center for research, scholarship, and conservation.

Founded by sculptor and arts patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1930, the Whitney was first housed on West 8th Street in Greenwich Village. The Museum relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and, in 1966, inaugurated its present home, designed by Marcel Breuer, at 945 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. While its vibrant program of exhibitions and events continues uptown, the Whitney is moving forward with a new building project, designed by Renzo Piano, in downtown Manhattan. Located at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets in the Meatpacking District, at the southern entrance to the High Line, the new building, which has generated immense momentum and support, will enable the Whitney to vastly increase the size and scope of its exhibition and programming space. Ground was broken on the new building in May 2011, and it is projected to open to the public in 2015.

**Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art**

T.J. Wilcox: In the Air	Through February 9, 2014
Robert Indiana: Beyond Love	Through January 5, 2014
Rituals of Rented Island: Object Theater, Loft Performance, and the New Psychodrama—Manhattan, 1970–1982	Oct 31, 2013-Feb2, 2014
Edward Steichen in the 1920s and 1930s: A Recent Acquisition	Dec 6, 2013-Feb 2014
2014 Whitney Biennial	March 7-May 25, 2014
Jeff Koons	June 27-October 19, 2014

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$20. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$16. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 p.m. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit [whitney.org](http://whitney.org).

Image credit:

Edward Steichen ( 1879-1973). *Marlene Dietrich*, (1931). Gelatin silver print, Sheet: 10 x 8in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Richard and Jackie Hollander in memory of Ellyn Hollander 2012.234 Steichen/Vanity Fair; © Condé Nast.