

The Jewish Museum Presents First U.S. Exhibition Devoted to Visionary French Designer and Architect Pierre Chareau

Jewish Museum

New York, NY – The Jewish Museum will present the first U.S. exhibition focused on French designer and architect Pierre Chareau (1883–1950) from November 4, 2016 through March 26, 2017. Showcasing rare furniture, lighting fixtures, and interiors, as well as designs for the extraordinary *Maison de Verre*, the glass house completed in Paris in 1932, *Pierre Chareau: Modern Architecture and Design* will bring together over 180 rarely-seen works from major public and private collections in Europe and the United States. It will also address Chareau's life and work in the New York area, after he left Paris during the German occupation of the city, including the house he designed for Robert Motherwell in 1947 in East Hampton, Long Island. In his day Chareau was celebrated as a designer of exquisite furniture and stylish interiors, which he displayed at the annual salons of decorative art. Both facets of his creative life are part of a single vision explored in the exhibition.

Pierre Chareau rose from modest beginnings in Bordeaux to become one of the most sought after designers in France. Creating custom furniture and interiors for a distinguished clientele that included leading figures of the French-Jewish intelligentsia, Chareau balanced the opulence of traditional French decorative arts with interior designs that were elegant, functional, and in sync with the requirements of modern life. His innovative furniture, veneered in rare woods, with occasional touches of exotic materials, had clean profiles and movable parts that appealed to the progressive sensibilities of the haute bourgeoisie.

Architecture, however, was Chareau's great ambition. Although he produced only a handful of buildings, the *Maison de Verre*, designed with the Dutch architect Bernard Bijvoet, is justly acknowledged as one of the most original houses of the 20th century, owing to its daring structural clarity and ingenious technological novelties. It remains a major point of reference for architects today.

Through his highly distinctive artistic language, Chareau established himself at the intersection of tradition and innovation, becoming a major figure in 20th century design. The Jewish Museum's exhibition will place Chareau in the context of the interwar period in Paris, highlighting his circle of influential patrons, engagement with the period's foremost artists, and designs for the film industry. The architect and his wife's active patronage of the arts – and reuniting part of their collection of paintings, sculptures, and drawings by significant artists such as Mondrian, Modigliani, Motherwell, Lipchitz, and Orloff – will be another important aspect of *Pierre Chareau: Modern Architecture and Design* at the Jewish Museum.

Between the wars, Chareau designed primarily for a cultured urban elite, and many of his patrons were Jewish. With the German occupation of Paris in 1940, his many Jewish clients were forced to depart. Chareau, whose wife Dollie Dyte Chareau was Jewish and whose mother came from a Sephardic family, fled to the United States. The exhibition will also explore the enduring consequences of Chareau's flight from Nazi persecution, the dispersal of many of the works he designed during and after World War II, and his attempts to rebuild his

career while in exile in New York during the 1940s.

Pierre Chareau: Modern Architecture and Design, featuring furniture, lighting fixtures, tabletop objects, textiles, drawings, pochoir prints, ephemera, archival photography, and works of art from Chareau and his wife's personal collection, is organized into four main sections. The first section will be devoted to Chareau's furniture designs, showcasing six groupings of furniture created by the artist for a variety of living spaces. The second section will look at Pierre and Dollie Chareau as art collectors featuring works of art once owned by them and sometimes used in the interiors designed by Pierre Chareau. The third section will feature recreations of four interiors designed by Chareau, and the fourth and last section will be devoted to his masterpiece, the Maison de Verre in Paris. Drawings, ephemeral material, and archival photographs will provide contextual background to Chareau's activities in France and the United States.

Pierre Chareau: Modern Architecture and Design is one of several major design exhibitions at the Jewish Museum this year, following *Isaac Mizrahi: An Unruly History* and *Roberto Burle Marx: Brazilian Modernist*. "Design exhibitions are central to the Jewish Museum's program, reflecting the range of our collection as well as the diversity of art and Jewish culture," said Claudia Gould, Helen Goldsmith Menschel Director. "We are also incorporating a contemporary perspective by commissioning new work and collaborating with leading architects, designers, and artists to enliven these exhibitions, creating dynamic experiences for our visitors."

Pierre Chareau: Modern Architecture and Design is organized by the Jewish Museum in collaboration with The Centre Pompidou. The exhibition is organized by Guest Curator Esther da Costa Meyer, Professor of the history of modern architecture, Princeton University, assisted by Claudia Nahson, Morris & Eva Feld Curator, The Jewish Museum. Exhibition design by Diller Scofidio + Renfro.

About the Catalogue

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Jewish Museum and Yale University Press are publishing a 288-page catalogue by Esther da Costa Meyer. This beautifully illustrated publication provides a revealing look at the French furniture designer and architect who was a pivotal figure in Modernism. Essays by leading scholars embrace the full scope of his invention, offering detailed analysis of individual projects, the interdisciplinary nature of his work, his place in the avant-garde of Paris between the wars, his Jewish identity, and his more recent reception. The book also situates his beautiful pieces in a fuller cultural context, accounting for his work for film and theater, his relationships with Jewish patrons, and his efforts to survive professionally while he was in exile in the U.S. during the 1940s. Featuring 285 color illustrations, the hardcover book will be available worldwide and at the Jewish Museum's Cooper Shop for \$60.00.

Support

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About Diller Scofidio + Renfro

Diller Scofidio + Renfro integrates architecture, the visual arts, and the performing arts. Founding Partners Diller and Scofidio are recipients of the MacArthur Foundation "Genius" award. DS+R's architectural work includes The High Line, The Roy and Diana Vagelos Education Center at Columbia University, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts renovation and expansion in New York City; The Broad in Los Angeles; and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. The studio's independent works have been exhibited at leading cultural institutions around the globe, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Venice Biennale; the Swiss National Exposition; Palais De Tokyo in Paris; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum in New York.

About the Jewish Museum

Located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging, educational, and provocative exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions.

The Jewish Museum is located at 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City. Museum hours are Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Admission is Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm and free on Saturdays. For information on the Jewish Museum, the public may call 212.423.3200 or visit the website at TheJewishMuseum.org.

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