

La Côte d'Azur

Le Grand Style de la Riviera



The 2020 Symposium on the Arts of France
September 10, September 18, and September 25, 2020



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Our 2020 Symposium will take us down roads we have never traveled before! Let us explore the glorious Côte d'Azur with its magnificent villas, fascinating owners, and intriguing guests; there's even a ménage à trois. Follow in the footsteps of the adventurous Americans who chose to live the glamorous 1920s in this part of France where the sun stains the stucco and dances on the beautiful sea. Think of the beautiful art, extravagant homes, and the cast of characters who shaped the South of France where artists, royalty and socialites created the culture where living well is THE best revenge.

With best wishes for your health and safety as we look forward to seeing you once again à l'Alliance.

Myriam Bransfield Mary Blust
Symposium Co-Chairs

In the interest of health and safety for all, the decision to move from an in-person lecture to a virtual, online platform has been made with careful consideration in accordance with the COVID-19 guidelines directed by the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago.

Join live online on September 10, 18, and 25

With completed registration, you will be provided with a link for access to the lecture.

Each online lecture will begin at 11:30 a.m.
Individual Lecture Tickets – \$25

Henri Matisse (1869-1954) • Festival of Flowers, Nice (Fête des fleurs), 1923
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Mr. and Mrs. William F. Marlar Fund (1235)
Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art

Cover: Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) • Figures on the Beach, 1890. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Robert Lehman Collection, 1975



John Lavery (1856-1941) • On the Riviera, 1921

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(as of August 1, 2020)

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The Symposium on the Arts of France, a cultural program of the Alliance Française de Chicago, is also a fundraising event providing support for our cultural, educational and outreach programming each year. The Alliance Française is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

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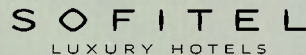
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Louis Delanois (1731-1792) • Armchair (fauteuil), carved and gilded walnut, silk brocade upholstery, 1765. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of Pierpont Morgan, 1906.

Louis XV's last mistress, the comtesse du Barry, was the original owner of a similar chaise à châssis (pictured), which was made for her by menuisier Louis Delanois in 1769. Later owned by Patricia Lopez-Willshaw, the chaise (along with a duplicate) was one of the pieces at the socialite's stunning St. Tropez auction. Estimate EUR 70,000–100,000. Price realised EUR 205,000.



August Macke (1887-1914) • Ballet Russes, 1912.

La Côte d'Azur Le Grand Style de la Riviera

The very name Côte d'Azur has perhaps defined the color azure, as being that of a clear blue sky, that now may suggest the Mediterranean. Although popular since the late 18th century as a winter health resort, primarily for the upper class English, the arrival of the railway in the mid-19th century, bringing monarchs Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander I with the nobility and aristocracy of northern Europe, helped secure its spot as a winter playground. The addition of fast train service, *Le Train Bleu*, and the roadster style of car both in the 1920s added a new coterie of chic and modern lives, some of whose creative activities spread around the world.

-Sarah Coffin

September 10, 2020, 11:30 a.m.

The Côte d'Azur as an Artistic and Social Swirl: the radiating worlds of the Ballets Russes, Picasso, the Gerald Murphys, the Cole Porters and friends. with Sarah Coffin

After the end of World War I, Americans rushed to return to France, and soon frequented the Côte d'Azur along with artists such as Matisse, Picasso and his Russian ballerina wife, Sergei Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, Somerset Maugham, Coco Chanel, and Isadora Duncan. Many bought, had built or renovated villas in a modern taste that went with the more relaxed lifestyle of the sunny climate. The commissions to designers of the 1920s for buildings and their furnishings, was one aspect of a new lifestyle. Jean Michel Frank's straw-covered furniture combined with his block forms and those of his American-born protégée Eyre de Lannux to give the reduced decoration of modern design new textures. Coco Chanel designed new body-revealing bathing suits, and made the tan fashionable after a winter stay in the Côte d'Azur.

Much of the artistic social life centered around Americans Gerald and Sara Murphy whose lavish and generous entertaining included figures from their American past and artists of all kinds. Their entertaining style and the artistic choices they made were influential. The Murphys, along with their close friends the Cole Porters, helped paint a backcloth for the Ballets Russes, another was based on a Picasso painting of 1922, showing the azure of the sea and sky – the destination of the Train Bleu. This multi-national artistic interaction was celebrated in almost all the arts during the 1920s on the Côte d'Azur.



Sarah D. Coffin is an independent Decorative Arts and Design Consultant, Curator and Lecturer who was appointed Curator and Head of the Product Design and Decorative Arts Department at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in 2004. With a primary expertise in the field of 17th and 18th century decorative arts, Coffin also has worked extensively on the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau movements, objects of vertu, portrait miniatures, jewelry and chess sets.

During her tenure, Coffin curated the blockbuster exhibition Set in Style: The Jewelry of Van Cleef & Arpels (2011), served as co-curator of Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730-2008 and Feeding Desire: Design and Tools of the Table, 1500-2005. Most recently, her award winning exhibition, The Jazz Age: American Style in the 1920s, was seen by over 250,000 people in New York and Cleveland. A frequent author, cataloguer and lecturer, Coffin has taught and/or lectured at NYU, George Washington University, as well as to numerous museum and private groups. Coffin holds a MA in Art and Architectural History from Columbia University and a BA with distinction in Art and Architectural History from Yale University.



Photo by Manuel Rouger.

September 18, 2020, 11:30 a.m.

Love, Jealousy and Death at the E-1027 House, Eileen Gray's 20th Century Masterpiece on the Côte d'Azur

with Linda Searl, FAIA, Architect and Joseph Valerio, FAIA, Architect

Eileen Gray's E-1027 house is an icon of 20th Century design. Le Corbusier was one of the most influential architects of the 20th Century. This is the story about a man's jealousy of a woman's achievements. Eileen was born in Ireland to a wealthy family, moving to Paris in her late twenties to study art and design. She became a celebrated designer of furniture and decorative arts. In 1926 she began work on a house on a site she found at Cap Martin for herself and her lover, Jean Badovici. Badovici was an architect and critic, who was also an acquaintance of Corbu. For the residence, Eileen Gray not only designed the furniture, built-ins and hardware, but she designed the building and the landscape. Our passion play begins when the house is completed in 1929. She leaves in 1931, never to return. Questions abound. Why was Badovici credited as the architect, with Corbu's assistance? For Corbu, Cap Martin is a passion that never dims. Ultimately Corbu drowns while swimming off the coast in 1965.



Linda Searl received both her Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Arts in Architecture from the University of Florida. Her professional achievements include being selected by Architectural Digest as an AD100 in 2004, a professional honor bestowed on the best Architects and Designers of the year.

Joseph Valerio was raised in Chicago in Rogers Park and then Wilmette. Mr. Valerio received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Michigan, and a Master of Architecture degree from UCLA. Early in his career he always balanced practice and teaching. He founded his first design firm as a student at UCLA.



September 25, 2020, 11:30 a.m.

The Millionaire, His Wife, and His Lover: The Ménage à Trois (and High Style) of Patricia and Arturo Lopez-Willshaw and Baron de Redé

with Mitchell Owens, Architectural Digest

A glamorous auction, an anonymous consignor, and the monogram that gave it all away. When Mitchell Owens, decorative arts editor of Architectural Digest, received a Christie's catalogue offering an eye-popping array of rare furniture and custom-made objets d'art assembled by an unidentified amateur collector in 2012, it took him about five minutes to unmask the lady behind the luxe. French society swan Patricia López-Willshaw (1912-2010) was an elegant Chilean heiress whose ménage-à-trois marriage – which Owens has described as “the most brazen triad since the permissive days of Louis XV” – riveted le tout Paris for decades. Add to that inventive jewels, cutting-edge haute couture, and treasure-trove residences, both earthly (a Neuilly mansion, a Saint-Tropez villa) and oceangoing (Gaviota IV, the most opulent yacht to sail the seven seas), and you have a recipe for une vie de débauche, de luxe et d'élégance.



Mitch Owens has been the decorative arts editor of AD since 2011. An alumnus of South Carolina's Coker University, he has written for AD, The New York Times, The World of Interiors, Travel + Leisure, and other publications and continues to work on a biography of the 1960s tastemaker Pauline de Rothschild. His books include Fabulous! The Dazzling Interiors of Tom Britt, a 2017 Rizzoli publication, and In House, a 2009 Rizzoli book about British photographer Derry Moore's images of iconic interiors. He lives in Cooperstown, New York, where he lives with his husband and two children.

Mitchell Owens. Photo by Gabrielle Langdon.



This porphyry vessel with bearded masks, Early Imperial, ca. late 1st century B.C. - early 2nd century A.D. was sold at the Lopez-Willshaw auction. Estimate EUR 20,000-30,000. Price realised EUR 1,140,200.

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Frédéric Alexianu, aka F. Hugo d'Alési (1849-1906)
English poster of the PLM railway company, Nice, France, 1900.
The Picture Art Collection/Alamy Stock Photo.

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