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***Images Available Upon Request**

Step into a bedroom from the Roaring Twenties at the Cincinnati Art Museum July 8–October 2, 2022



Cincinnati— The Cincinnati Art Museum presents a lavish bedroom designed by Austrian-born architect Joseph Urban for 17-year-old Elaine Wormser in the special exhibition [Unlocking an Art Deco Bedroom by Joseph Urban](#), on view from July 8–Oct. 2.

More than 90 years after its completion, the Wormser Bedroom’s furnishings have been fully conserved and displayed to reflect their state as originally installed in Chicago’s Drake Tower and photographed in 1930. When Elaine Wormser Reis moved to Cincinnati in 1936, she brought nearly all of her bedroom with her—including the custom wall-to-wall carpet. The room’s elements, donated to the Cincinnati Art Museum by Elaine Wormser Reis in 1973, form the largest collection of

Urban-designed furnishings held by a public institution.

Urban (1872–1933) was a prolific illustrator, scenic designer, and architect who trained in fin-de-siècle Vienna. During this period, many Viennese artists, including Urban, rejected historical precedents and embraced a new modern art. In 1911, he relocated to the United States to become the art director of the Boston Opera. He quickly became one of the most revered set designers of the early twentieth century and worked tirelessly across a range of media, from film to architecture, to create and promote a fresh style that reflected the times.

Some of Urban’s most notable projects include set designs for the Metropolitan Opera, the Ziegfeld Follies, and Hollywood films; the first American gallery to showcase work by artists of the famed Wiener Werkstatte (Vienna Workshop); the building and interiors for The New School in New York; the color direction for the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair; interiors for Marjorie Merriweather Post’s Palm Beach estate, Mar-a-Lago; and the roof garden of Cincinnati’s Hotel Gibson (demolished in 1977).

One of Urban’s final commissions, the Wormser Bedroom features a daring combination of colors and patterns, black glass walls and a reflective silvered ceiling. The interior embodies the distinct modern design vocabulary that Urban developed and employed throughout his career, highlighting his talent as a colorist, his flair for the dramatic, and his skillful blend of Viennese artistic influences with the prevailing modern style now known as Art Deco.

In addition to the bedroom, the exhibition features drawings, paintings, costumes, and related furnishings drawn from many American collections. A full-color illustrated book and an interactive website provide further context, including reflections on the experiences of the caretakers and unnamed craftspeople who are an integral part of the Wormser Bedroom story. Behind-the-scenes investigations and processes necessary to reintroduce the room to the public are also highlighted.

cincinnati art museum

“It is thrilling to present this bedroom for the first time in our galleries, with new scholarship and display approaches,” notes Amy Miller Dehan, the exhibition’s curator and Cincinnati Art Museum’s Curator of Decorative Arts and Design. “For decades, our understanding of the room was based on black-and-white photographs which fail to present Urban’s virtuosic combinations of color, pattern, and finish. The process of reconstructing the room has been a revelation. This exhibition reveals Urban’s boundless talent and contributions to the development of American Modernism as well as the bold messaging that women like Elaine Wormser projected when choosing the avant-garde style over backward-looking historical fashions.”

The exhibition will be on view in galleries 232 and 233. It is generously sponsored and made possible by Richard and Pamela Reis, The H.B., E.W. and F.R. Luther Charitable Foundation, the August A. Rendigs, Jr. Foundation, the Sunshine Fund in Memory of Donald J. Glaser, the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), The Decorative Arts Trust, Evolo Design, and Meghan Sullivan Nelson.

Tickets for the exhibition are \$12, with discounted rates for students, children, and seniors. Admission is free for members. Photography is allowed with no flash. On social media, share content from the exhibition using #CAMArtDeco.

Cincinnati Art Museum will present the lecture *From Affluent to Average: The Wormser Bedroom and Teen Bedroom Culture in the 1920s and 1930s* on Thursday, July 7 from 7–8 p.m. in the museum’s Fath Auditorium. Jason Reid, history instructor at Ryerson University in Toronto, will explore how both affluent and average teen bedrooms were shaped by the era’s prevailing views on psychology, consumerism, teen autonomy, and intellectual growth. Tickets are required and will soon be available to purchase on the [exhibition webpage](#).

The exhibition will be free every Thursday evening from 5–8 p.m. It will also be viewable, without a fee, during the Roaring Twenties-themed [Art After Dark](#) on Friday, July 29 from 5–9 p.m., as well as other themed Art After Dark celebrations on June 24, July 29 and Aug. 26, and Sept. 30.

The special party [“A Happening”](#) on August 12 from 6–10 p.m. (ticketed, 21+ only) will also celebrate the exhibition and feature entertainment, museum access and food and drink throughout the evening.

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Special exhibition pricing may vary. Parking at the Cincinnati Art Museum is free. Visit cincinnatiartmuseum.org for more information.

Image credit: Alvina Lenke Studios (American, active 1930s), *Elaine Wormser* (detail), 1930, photograph, Private Collection

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