

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM & LIBRARY

SCENES OF NEW YORK CITY: THE ELIE AND SARAH HIRSCHFELD COLLECTION

On View October 22, 2021 – February 27, 2022

Selected PR Images

This fall, the New-York Historical Society presents Scenes of New York City: The Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld Collection, an exhibition of 130 paintings, works on paper in various media, and sculpture from an extraordinary promised gift by philanthropists and art collectors Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld. The exhibition features many artists new to New-York Historical's collection, including Marc Chagall, David Hockney, Edward Hopper, Jacob Lawrence, Louise Nevelson, George O'Keeffe, Norman Rockwell, and Andy Warhol. The works are united by celebrations of New York City: its buildings, bridges, parks, landmarks, and people. Accompanying many of the works on display is commentary from a variety of New Yorkers sharing their memories and impressions of the places depicted.

Keith Haring (1958–1990)

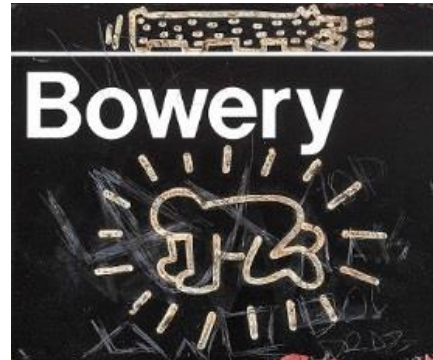
Radiant Baby with AIDS Alligator, ca. 1984

Acrylic marker on enameled steel subway sign

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

© Keith Haring Foundation

Haring's bold graffiti filled the 1980s New York City subways. Here, his Radiant Baby and AIDS alligator meet—perhaps in a primal chase between life and death. The artist used his work to advance awareness of many issues, including the AIDS epidemic and drug abuse.



Yvonne Jacquette (b. 1934)

Movie Marquee II (Afternoon), 1972

Oil on canvas

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

Courtesy of Yvonne Jacquette and DC Moore Gallery, New York

This startling perspective refreshes the standard cityscape. Jacquette's ascending sightline finds release from the density of Manhattan. The canopy of the East Village's now demolished Irving Place Theater overhangs the view. The Consolidated Edison Building rises beyond.



Marc Chagall (1887–1985)

View of Central Park from the Window (Vue de la fenêtre sur Central Park), 1958

Pastel, colored pencils, and black crayon over graphite on Japanese paper

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation / Art Resource, NY, © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York / ADAGP, Paris



These windows open onto a summer scene of Central Park and the Central Park West skyline. From the Stanhope Hotel on Fifth Avenue, Chagall pictured the double towers of the Beresford at left and those of the Eldorado to the right of center. The drawing is one of the most realistic from the otherwise visionary Russian-French artist.

Georgia O’Keeffe (1887–1986)

Study for “Brooklyn Bridge”, 1949

Charcoal and black and white chalk on paper

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

© 2021 Georgia O’Keeffe Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York



On Sundays, O’Keeffe often drove back and forth across the Brooklyn Bridge. This drawing may serve as her ode to the city, which she left the same year to settle out West.

Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000)

Harlem Diner, 1938

Water-pressed tempera on paper, laid on board

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

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This work captures the despair of African Americans during the Great Depression. Five figures with downcast eyes slump in their seats. Their weariness spreads into the diner itself, where coats hang limply from hooks and the jumbled perspective conveys a world in disarray.

Mark Rothko (1903–1970)

Untitled (The Subway), 1937

Oil on canvas

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Though realistic in subject, this early painting presages the abstract color fields of Rothko's mature career. The subway becomes ground for pictorial experimentation. The platform and wall read also as flat planes of color, and the standing commuter seems locked into a gridded surface.



Everett Shinn (1873–1953)

New York at Night, 1933

Pastel on paper

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

This pastel describes the skyscraper canyon of lower Broadway. Night descends upon the spire of Trinity Church at left, the Irving Trust (now BNY Mellon) Building, and the Singer Building beyond. Office lights and streetlamps barely flicker through Shinn's thick and atmospheric blues.



Theresa Bernstein (1890–2002)

The Lunch Counter at S. Klein's in Union Square in the 1930s, ca. 1930–39

Watercolor on paper

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

Bernstein depicts the racially integrated lunch counter at S. Klein, a popular department store in Union Square. The Polish-born artist explored the major issues of her day, from racial discrimination to unemployment and suffrage, often through the lens of women's daily lives. In a male-dominated art world, she frequently chose to sign her work—as here—with only her surname.



Reginald Marsh (1898–1954)

Construction, Steel Workers, 1924

Oil on canvas

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

© 2021 Estate of Reginald Marsh / Art Students League, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York

This painting hails the skyscraper as a feat of engineering. Passers-by marveled. As one newspaper reported: “Shoving a mountain of steel and stone bodily up into the blue sky is the modern miracle which makes even New York stop, look, and listen.”



Norman P. Rockwell (1894–1978)

Gramercy Park, ca. 1918

Oil on canvas

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

Rockwell, though best known for his illustrations of small-town America, grew up in New York City. This painting welcomes viewers inside the exclusive Gramercy Park, where a young resident meets the groundskeeper. Their interaction celebrates connection across the divides of youth and age, leisure and labor, wealth and working class.



Charles Burchfield (1882–1967)

Backyards in New York, 1916

Watercolor, white gouache, and graphite on paper

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

Reproduced with permission of the Charles E. Burchfield Foundation

This city yard forms a pocket of nature. Fences and rowhouses hem in a tree, bare save for two clinging leaves. Burchfield favored such local subjects—described, as here, in a fresh and almost visionary manner.



Preston Dickinson (1889–1930)

High Bridge and High Bridge Water Tower, ca. 1915

Charcoal and black ink on Japanese paper

Promised gift of Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld, Scenes of New York City

Dickinson extols the industrial structures of High Bridge and High Bridge Water Tower, which soar from a low vantage point to heroic heights. Connecting Manhattan and the Bronx across the Harlem River, High Bridge opened as part of an aqueduct that carried fresh water into the growing metropolis. It stands now as the oldest bridge in the city.



William James Glackens (1870–1938)

Early Spring, Washington Square, ca. 1910

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld Collection, Scenes of New York City, 2020.35.2

Known as the American Renoir, Glackens painted scenes of leisure in a bright and feathery Impressionist style. This painting shows quiet repose in his neighborhood park, ablaze in the slanting sun.



Oscar F. Bluemner (1867-1938)

Coney Island, 1904

Watercolor, black ink, and gouache on paper

New-York Historical Society, Promised Gift of the Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld Collection, Scenes of New York City

This unexpected view pushes Coney Island into the far distance, where it glows across an expanse of foreground wetlands. The composition calls attention to the original site of the amusement park as an actual island amid the salt marshes of New York Bay.



Robert Henri (1865–1929)

Snow in Central Park, 1902

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld Collection, Scenes of New York City, 2020.35. 3

Henri rebelled against the taste for polite subjects and pretty styles. Here, he dares to paint a banal Central Park slope. The roughly sketched scene forwards the stark urban realism of the Ashcan School, which he founded.



William Merritt Chase (1849–1916)

The Boat Harbor (Gowanus Pier), ca. 1888

Oil on paper mounted on Masonite

Gift of the Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld Collection, Scenes of New York City, 2020.35.1

Chase transforms one of the most polluted areas of 19th-century Brooklyn into a lyrical landscape. Typical of Tonalism, his painting uses softly brushed and subtle hues to evoke music and mood.



John Henry Twachtman (1853–1902)

Dredging in the River, ca. 1879

Oil on canvas

Gift of the Elie and Sarah Hirschfeld Collection, Scenes of New York City, 2020.35.4

This grab dredger heaves wreckage, likely from the East River after the blasting of hazardous rocks from the ship graveyard known as Hell Gate. As Twachtman's student noted: "There is no endeavor to make the subject poetically picturesque." The dark tones and slashing brushwork stress instead the violence of industry.

