A defining moment in American Modernism

American culture in the 1920s is associated with the idea of the 'Jazz Age' - dancing, music, parties and the Prohibition-busting drinking culture of the illegal speakeasies. In the Depression years of the 1930s and early 1940s images of poverty, hardship and dust-bowl America prevail. During these decades, however, America's pioneering visual artists were producing work in a different mood, and forging a new identity for American art, as the Ashmolean exhibition 'America's Cool Modernism: O'Keeffe to Hopper' aims to highlight.

Featuring works by major artists and photographers, including Berenice Abbott, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz and Paul Strand, alongside lesser-known names, the themes that these artists were experimenting with focused on a more ambivalent, abstract and emotionally restrained representation of the changing world around them. This world was typified by images of people-less industrial landscapes and abstracted views of machinery and the towering skyscrapers, still under construction in the modern new America. Experiments in colourful abstract painting, by EE Cummings (better known as a poet), Charles Demuth and Marsden Hartley, among others, also anticipated the Pop Art aesthetic that was to emerge after the Second World War.

The 20-plus paintings, photographs and prints (plus one avant-garde film) will include significant loans from two major collections - the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Terra Foundation for American Art. With almost half of the exhibits never having travelled to the UK before, this exhibition will be the first opportunity in this country to see a major show about a defining moment in American Modernism.

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Clockwise from left: George Azzimovich, Illinois Central, 1937; Edward Hopper, Manhattan Bridge Loop, 1928; Louis Lozowick, New York, 1935

Linder’s Chaucerian House of Principle

For more than 40 years, the artist Linder has created striking imagery and performances, first coming to prominence in the punk and post-punk scene of 1970s Manchester with iconic photomontages that bring together pornographic imagery with pictures cut from women's fashion and household publications. At the end of March, Linder will be shaking things up at Nottingham Contemporary with 'Houses of Fame', an exhibition she has curated marking the culmination of the third season of the 'Grand Tour' partnership linking cultural organisations across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The largest presentation of Linder's work in the UK to date, it will include pieces from various periods in her life, displayed as constellations in what she calls a 'pin-the-dot' approach, as well as historic and contemporary works by some 50 practitioners from the fields of art, photography, fashion, architecture and music.

Work by artists including Ruth Asawa, Ashey Beardsley, Moki Cherry, Max Ernst, Mike Kelley and Madame Nefonde will feature alongside loaned objects, such as an income burner, a collaged screen, costumes and mourning jewellery from Chatsworth House, where Linder was the inaugural artist-in-residence in the months leading up to the exhibition. During her residency, Linder developed new works including photomontages and sound pieces, interviewed staff and also came to recognise the synergy between the house and its landscapes. Of this enhanced atmosphere, she created it in the aromatic woods and estate, which captured the essence of the landscape.

The oldest work on show at Nottingham Contemporary, Inigo Jones's 'drawing of the House of Fame (c1610)', based on a 17th-century poem by Ben Jonson, meditates on the natural truth and trustworthiness of the project's title and template for the rest of the world.


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