

## Women & the Arts



Photo: AliceAustin.org

**Alice Austen** (1866-1952), a photography pioneer, lived on Staten Island for much of her life, occupying this picturesque frame house (c. 1700 and later) in the Rosebank section until 1945. She produced about 8,000 images, mostly processed in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-story closet that served as her darkroom. Overlooking the Narrows, the house became a public museum in 1975. To visit, view: <http://aliceausten.org/visit/>

## Women & the Arts



Photo: National Park Service, late 19<sup>th</sup> century

The celebrated Swedish opera singer **Jenny Lind** (1820-87) made her North American debut at Castle Garden (now Castle Clinton National Monument) in September 1850. An early example of adaptive reuse, this circular stone building in Battery Park was originally a naval fortification (1808-11) which was a theater from 1823 to 1854. Lind's tour was sponsored by P.T. Barnum. She gave 93 concerts, earning more than \$350,000, which she donated to Swedish charities. Interest in her performances was so strong that the press coined the term "Lindmania."

## Women & the Arts



Photo: Museum of the City of NY, c. 1910

Among various artworks in Central Park, the only piece commissioned as part of the original Greensward plan was the *Angel of the Waters* by **Emma Stebbins** (1815-82). Designed in Rome during the 1860s and cast in Munich, this bronze figurative fountain – a focal point of the Bethesda Terrace since 1873 – is the earliest public artwork by a woman in New York City.

## Women & the Arts



c. 1989

**Theodate Pope Riddle** (1867-1946), one of the first female architects in the United States, reconstructed the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace (1919-23), a Gothic Revival brownstone at 28 East 20<sup>th</sup> Street, to appear as it existed in 1865. Operated by the National Park Service, this designated Landmark is part of the Ladies' Mile Historic District and a public museum. To visit, see <http://www.nps.gov/thrb/index.htm>

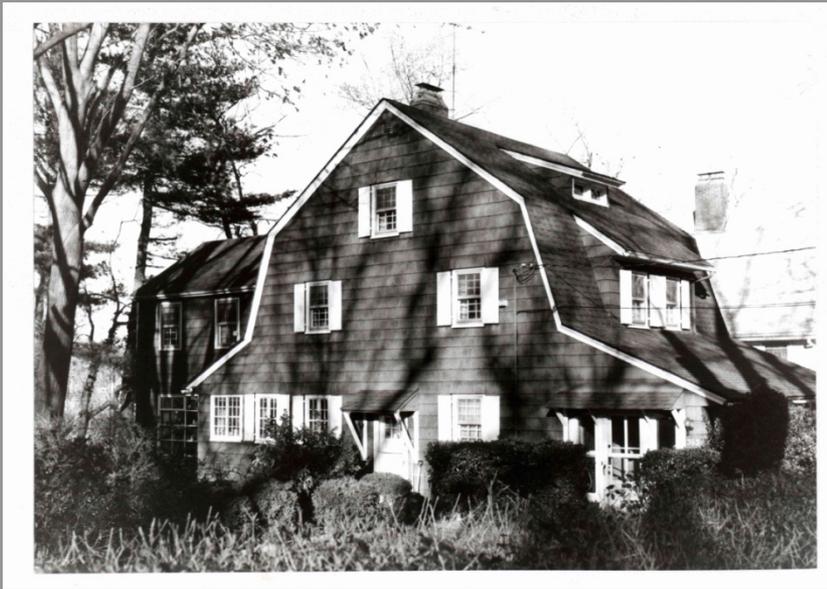
## Women & the Arts



c. 1989

**Edith Wharton** (1862-1937), the celebrated novelist, was born at 14 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, part of the Ladies' Mile Historic District (1857, altered 1892). Baptized at Grace Church, she married at Trinity Chapel, now the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sava (both designated Landmarks) in 1885. Her works include *Ethan Frome* (1911), *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and with architect Ogden Codman, the influential design handbook the *Decoration of Houses* (1897).

## Women & the Arts



363 Grosvenor Street, between East Drive and Douglas Road

At least eight houses in the Douglaston Historic District in Queens were designed by **Josephine Wright Chapman** (1867-1943), one of first women in the United States to have her own architectural firm. Originally based in Boston, she moved to Greenwich Village in 1907. Chapman was active in Douglaston from about 1909 to 1917, producing neo-Classical, -Colonial and -Tudor designs

## Women & the Arts



**Audre Lorde** (1934-92), the acclaimed African-American poet memoirist and essayist, resided at 207 St. Paul's Avenue in the St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District, Staten Island, from 1972 to 1986. She was named poet laureate of New York State in 1991.

## Women & the Arts



Andrew Carnegie Residence, c. 1905  
Photo: Museum of the City of New York

The Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, was founded by sisters **Sarah Hewitt** (1858-1930) and **Eleanor Hewitt** (1864-1924) on the fourth floor of the Cooper Union (1853-59), a designated Landmark, in 1897. Inspired by the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris, the museum became part of the Smithsonian, and moved to the former Andrew and Louise Carnegie House, a designated Landmark at 2 East 91<sup>st</sup> Street, in 1972. The museum is currently closed for renovations. For further information, see: <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/>

## Women & the Arts



East 49<sup>th</sup> Street, near Second Avenue, c. 1966

For more than five decades, starting in 1931, **Katherine Hepburn** (1907-2003) lived at 244 East 49<sup>th</sup> Street, an 1860s brownstone townhouse in the Turtle Bay Gardens Historic District. During her motion picture career, she received four Academy Awards – the most by any performer. Other actresses who dwelt in this unusual private enclave have included Mary Martin, Tallulah Bankhead, and Ruth Gordon.

## Women & the Arts



122 East 17<sup>th</sup> Street, at corner, c.1900  
Photo: Museum of the City of New York

The noted interior designer **Elsie de Wolfe** (1865-1950) lived at several Manhattan locations, including 122 East 17<sup>th</sup> Street (part of the East 17<sup>th</sup> Street /Irving Place Historic District), which she shared with theatrical agent **Elizabeth Marbury** from 1892 to 1911. During this period, she designed interiors for the Colony Club, a designated Landmark. She later remodeled 131 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street (located in the Upper East Side Historic District), which she owned until 1921.

## Women & the Arts



Rear facade, c. 1969

This exceptionally narrow brick residence at 75½ Bedford Street (1873) in the Greenwich Village Historic District was home to poet **Edna St. Vincent Millay** (1892-1950), during 1923-24. She was the third woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. **Margaret Mead**, the influential cultural anthropologist, lived here in the mid-1930s.

## Women & the Arts



19 MacDougal Alley, c. 1969

**Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney** (1875-1942), the eldest daughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, was a significant American sculptor and arts patron. In 1907 she converted a stable at 19 MacDougal Alley into her studio. Later, she acquired the seven adjoining buildings at 8 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street to serve as the Whitney Museum of American Art from 1931 to 1954 (part of the Greenwich Village Historic District). The museum's current home on Madison Avenue (1966), designed by Marcel Breuer, is part of the Upper East Side Historic District.

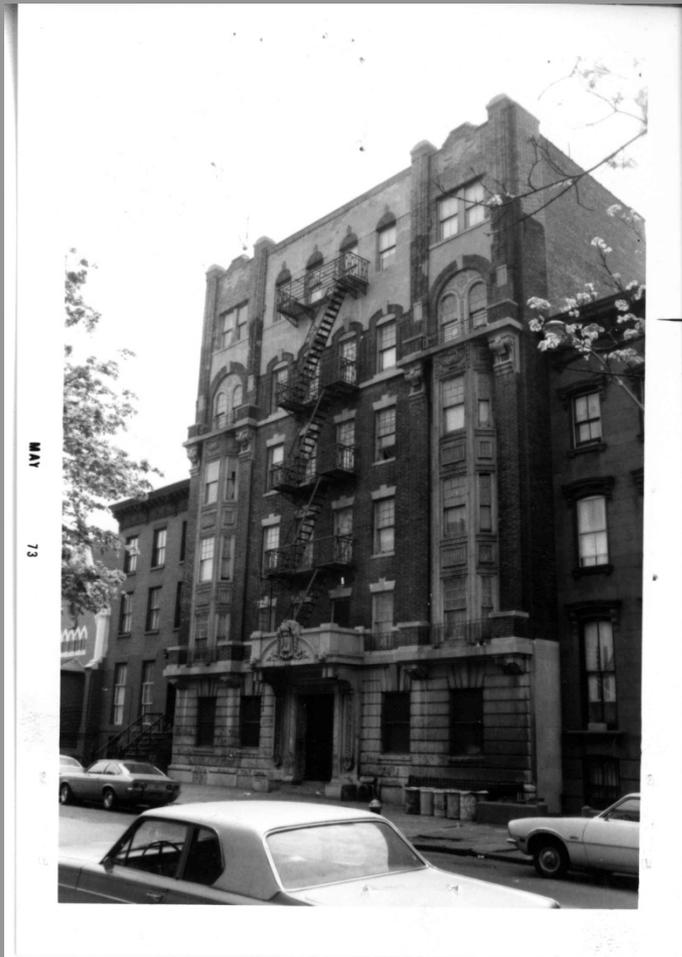
## Women & the Arts



Alwyn Court, original entrance, c. 1938  
Photo: New York Public Library

American painter **Florine Stettheimer** (1871-1944) was closely associated with two designated Landmarks: the Alwyn Court (1907-09), a memorably ornate apartment building where she resided with her mother and sisters from 1915 to 1936, and the Beaux Arts (now Bryant Park) Studios (1900-01), where she lived and worked during her final decade. Stettheimer's playful paintings have been collected by numerous American museums.

## Women & the Arts



260 Cumberland Street, c. 1978

The acclaimed modernist poet **Marianne Moore** lived in two historic districts – in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, at 260 Cumberland Street from 1929 to 1965; and in Greenwich Village at 25 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street from 1965 to 1972. Her poem, the “Camperdown Elm,” published in 1967, described “our crowning curio” in Prospect Park, a designated Scenic Landmark.

## Women & the Arts



26 West 87<sup>th</sup> Street, c. 1989



**Billie Holiday's** last residence, where she lived from 1957 to 1959, was on the ground floor of an 1891 row house at 26 West 87<sup>th</sup> Street, part the Upper West Side-Central Park West Historic District.

**Ella Fitzgerald** lived for almost three decades at 179-07 Murdock Avenue, Queens, part of the Addisleigh Park Historic District.

Both of these legendary jazz vocalists made frequent appearances at Carnegie Hall, a designated Landmark.

## Women & the Arts



Rising at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and 65<sup>th</sup> Street, the former Barbizon Hotel has provided accommodations for numerous single women, many who became prominent actresses or writers. In addition to **Sylvia Plath**, who described her residency in the semi-autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar* (1963), tenants have included Joan Didion, Grace Kelly, Liza Minnelli, Nancy Reagan (born Davis), and Eudora Welty.

## Women & the Arts



50 Commerce Street, c. 1969

In the classic black-and-white photographic series “Changing New York,” published 1939, **Berenice Abbott** (1898-1991) documented the city’s evolving character during the last years of the Great Depression. From 1935 to 1965, her home and studio was located at 50 Commerce Street, at Barrow Street, part of the Greenwich Village Historic District.

## Women & the Arts



NY Times Building, 229 West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street.  
Photo: New York Public Library

**Ada Louise Huxtable** (1921-2013) was the first full-time architecture critic at an American newspaper. A graduate of Hunter College, she grew up in the landmarked St. Urban apartments, and until 1981 worked for the New York Times. In addition, with industrial designer Garth Huxtable, her husband, she helped design flatware and serving pieces for the Four Seasons Restaurant, a designated Landmark Interior.

## Women & the Arts



The Rockefeller Guest House, at 242 East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, was commissioned by arts patron **Blanchette Ferry Rockefeller** (1909-92) in 1949. Built to display her collection of contemporary paintings and entertain guests, she donated this brick glass and steel pavilion to the Museum of Modern Art in 1955 and served as president of the museum from 1972 to 1985.

## Women & the Arts



San Remo, c. 1930  
Photo: Museum of City of  
New York



Westbeth, c. 2011

A life-long New Yorker, photographer **Diane Arbus** (1923-71) lived in a succession of designated Landmark properties, including: as a young girl, the San Remo Apartments; 131½ Charles Street (1959-68), a rear carriage house in the West Village; 120 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street (1968-70), part of the Renwick Triangle, and in Westbeth Artists Housing, formerly Bell Telephone Laboratories, where she died in 1971.



**Women & the Arts** was prepared for Women's History Month 2013

*All photographs are from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, except where noted.*

For further information on the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and to read the various reports on Historic Districts, please see:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/home/home.shtml>

[http://neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation\\_reports/index.php](http://neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation_reports/index.php)

This presentation was researched and written by  
Matthew A. Postal, Research Department