

Day of Special Interest

March 22 2018



New York, New York

with Mary Alexander

Mary led a 'virtual' tour cherry-picking the artistic highlights and icons of New York. We considered the influence of 'new money' on art patronage and tracked the move of fashionable society from Washington Square, so beloved by Henry James and Edith Wharton, in the relentless move uptown.

Digital photography was used to full effect with visual collages and exquisite details to re-create the atmosphere of the brownstones and high society clubs of Gramercy Park, the Rockefeller Center and Radio City Music Hall, the grand hotels and nightclubs, the 21 Club and the Speakeasy, the building of the great art collections including the Metropolitan Museum and the Guggenheim.

Mary introduced the personalities of the artists, designers, patrons and social climbers who shaped this extraordinary and ever-changing city, taking us for a walk along the High Line, creating the sense of 'being there' and capturing the vibrancy and energy of the city.

In all an excellent day - and to guide anyone thinking of a trip to New York, please find below the Artworks / Galleries Location List and the Select Bibliography

38 members attended with coffee, tea & shortbread at the morning break followed by a hot & cold buffet lunch with wine / juice.

Barbara Bates

Study Day Organiser

New York

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue @ E 81st Street
The Cloisters Museum and Gardens (part of Met but location uptown at 190th St, A subway or drive - see directions on Met website)

Frick Collection, Fifth Avenue, E70th Street

MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) W 53rd Street (between Fifth/Sixth Avenues)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Avenue, E 81st Street

Extra gem on 'Museum Mile' to check out! The Neue Gallery, Fifth Avenue E86th Street (housed in old Vanderbilt mansion) German and Vienna Secession, Klimt's Adele Bloch portrait

Rockefeller Center, Fifth Avenue (whole block between W48th-51st Streets with Radio City Music Hall at rear of block on Sixth Avenue)

Morgan Library & Museum (financier J P Morgan's collection) 225 Madison Avenue at 36th Street

Clubs/Hotels: Algonquin on W44th Street (between Fifth/Sixth Avenues)

'21' Club W52nd Street (between Fifth/Sixth Avenues)

Plaza Hotel, on Grand Central Plaza Fifth Avenue/W 58th Street

Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Park Avenue, E49th/50th Streets

Chrysler Building on E42nd Street (between 3rd/Lexington Avenues)

Empire State Building on Fifth Avenue (between 33rd and 34th Streets - previous site of old 1890s Waldorf Astoria hotel)

Washington Square - area in Greenwich Village (Fifth Avenue begins here, between W4th and W8th Streets) W10th and 11th Street worth a meander!

Flatiron Building at intersection of Fifth Avenue/Broadway/23rd Street

Gramercy Park: only private square. Players Club/National Arts Club on Irving Place/Lexington Avenue between 20th-21st Street

City of New York Museum, Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street, exciting range of exhibitions. Excellent website.

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum (previously Andrew Carnegie's mansion on Fifth Avenue). Superb example of magnate mansion with original interiors and garden, providing backdrop to stunning permanent collection of historic design and changing contemporary design exhibits.

Suggestion for day outside city -- take train from Grand Central station to Tarrytown (about 40 mins). Visit Rockefeller summer home KYKUIT - beautiful gardens, fountains and sculptures, with house containing Nelson Rockefeller's outstanding collection of modern art including Picasso tapestries. Great eateries and restaurants in Tarrytown nearby.

Views of cast iron buildings, shops and sidewalk details photographed in SoHo (south of Houston) between Broadway/W Broadway on the following cross streets - Prince/Spring/Broome/Greene/Mercer - interesting shops and private art galleries. Great for meandering on a weekend!

Walk The High Line (old elevated railway track) a landscaped walk starting in Chelsea/meatpacking district between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, starting at W11th Street/Gansevoort Street, can walk up to W30th St. Opened 2009 Great views out over city and old piers. Google website The High Line for map.

Films Mentioned:

Weekend at the Waldorf 1945; On the Town 1949; Funny Face 1957; Breakfast at Tiffany's 1961; North by Northwest 1959; Annie

Hall 1977; The Age of Innocence 1993; When Harry Met Sally 1989; Crocodile Dundee

Select Bibliography

Edwin G Burrows & Mike Wallace, Gotham: A History of New York city to 1898, Oxford University Press, 1999 (excellent encyclopaedic overview)

James Roman, Chronicles of Old New York: Exploring Manhattan's Landmark Neighborhoods, Museyon Guides, 2010

Jerry E Patterson, Fifth Avenue The Best Address; Rizzoli, 1998

Eric Homberger, Mrs Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age, Yale University Press, 2004

Justin Kaplan, When the Astors owned New York: Blue Bloods and Grand Hotels in a Gilded Age, Viking, 2006

Charles R Morris, The Tycoons: how Andrew Carnegie, John D Rockefeller, Jay Gould and J P Morgan invented the American Super-economy, Times Books/Henry Holt & Co, New York, 2005

Calvin Tomkins, Merchants and Masterpieces, The Story of the Metropolitan Museum, Dutton & Co, NY, 1970

Seeing Central Park (official guidebook) Sara Cedar Miller, Abrams NY

Stephen Birmingham, 'Our Crowd' 1967, Macdonald

Henry James, The American Scene, 1907 (Penguin Classic)

Paris/New York: Design/Fashion/Culture 1925-1940, Museum of the City of New York, 2008

Paul Goldberger, The Skyscraper, Knopf, 1982

David Garrard Lowe, Art Deco New York, Watson-Guption, NY, 2004

Daniel Ockrent, Great Fortune: the epic of Rockefeller Center, Penguin, 2003

Christine Roussel, The Art of the Rockefeller Center, Norton NY, 2006

Ethan Morden, The Guest List: how Manhattan defined American sophistication from the Algonquin Round Table to Truman Capote's Ball, St Martin's Press, NY, 2010

Thomas M Coffey, The Long Thirst: Prohibition in America 1920-1933; Hamish Hamilton, 1976

Jan Morris, Manhattan '45, Faber & Faber, 1987 (beautifully written and evocative description of Manhattan post WWII)

Arthur Pulos, The American Design Adventure, 1940-75

Novels / Memoirs mentioned:

Henry James - Washington Square

Edith Wharton - The Age of Innocence (also her short New York stories)

Truman Capote - Breakfast at Tiffanys

F Scott Fitzgerald - The Great Gatsby, This Side of Paradise, short biographical stories - My Lost City; Echoes of the Jazz Age

Henry Miller, Aller Retour New York (written 1935)

January 2018, MA