The Washington University Libraries are thrilled to present the first issue of *Masthead*, a publication in support of its D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library (DMGHL). Through the extraordinary generosity of Ken and Nancy Kranzberg, the DMGHL was recently named for its co-founder and faculty director, D.B. Dowd. The University Libraries recognize the immense academic and cultural value of the materials held by the DMGHL and are privileged to be the steward of its collections. Under the leadership of curator Skye Lacerte and the guidance of D.B. Dowd, the DMGHL has seen incredible growth since its founding and has become a highlight of our Special Collections. We eagerly await the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

NADIA GHASEDI
ASSOCIATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
The D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library (DMGHL) was dedicated on September 27, 2016, in an evening ceremony in Washington University’s Steinberg Hall. The library was named in honor of D.B. Dowd, professor of art and American culture studies at the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts. Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton delivered remarks at the ceremony. The dedication was made possible by an endowing gift from longtime WU Libraries supporters Ken and Nancy Kranzberg. The ceremony was part of a day-long symposium focusing on illustration, the collections in the DMGHL, and the contributions of Dowd, who joined WU’s faculty in 1992.

Originally from Massillon, Ohio, Dowd holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Kenyon College and a master of fine arts degree in printmaking from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dowd writes, lectures, and curates exhibitions on the history of illustration and cartooning. He has written the blog Graphic Tales since 2007 and publishes the journal Spartan Holiday, which features his own text and illustrations. Dowd’s book Stick Figures: Drawing as a Human Practice will be published by the Rockwell Center for American Visual Studies in 2018. He also serves as project leader at the Rockwell Center Society of Fellows for 2017-19.

In addition to teaching studio courses in drawing and illustration, Dowd has created and taught courses in art theory, popular visual culture, and the history of illustrated press. The day began with a tour of the DMGHL, led by curator Skye Lacerte. Located at WU’s West Campus Library, the DMGHL is a division of WU Libraries’ Special Collections unit that specializes in 20th-century illustration. The tour featured highlights from the library including the work of illustrator Al Parker and posters by designer Seymour Chwast. Other highlights included World War I posters from the Louis & Jodi Atkin Family Collection and works from the Walt Reed Illustration Archive, a collection of original works, periodicals, illustrated books, and more than 200,000 magazine tear sheets.

The tour was followed by an afternoon symposium in Brown Hall on WU’s Danforth Campus entitled “Illustration, Consumer Culture, and Social History.” Stephanie Haboush Plunkett, chief curator and deputy director at the Norman Rockwell Museum, delivered the keynote lecture, “Famous Artists and Unknown Soldiers: Illustration for the Masses.” Focusing on 20th-century magazines, Plunkett discussed the ability of the artists whose work appeared in their pages—illustrators such as Norman Rockwell and Al Parker—to shape the nation’s tastes.
Two panels followed Plunkett’s lecture. Heidi Kolk, associate director of WU’s American Culture Studies program, moderated the first session, “Reading Objects and Images.” Panelists Vernon C. Mitchell Jr., WU Libraries’ curator of popular American arts and culture; Jeff Pike, professor of design in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts; and Michelle Repice, assistant director of WU’s Teaching Center, discussed perceptions of advertising and the ways in which popular images influence cultural appetites. The second panel, “Institutional Engagement with Consumer Culture: Opportunities and Challenges,” was moderated by Dowd. Presenters Jody Sowell, director of collections and exhibitions at the Missouri History Museum; Nadia Ghasedi, associate university librarian for WU Libraries’ Special Collections, and Plunkett shared their approaches to collecting, curating, and engaging the public.

The dedication events concluded at Steinberg Hall, with an evening reception and a lecture from Dowd called “Invisible Pictures.” Carmon Colangelo, dean of the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, who introduced Dowd in Steinberg Auditorium, called him “a tireless advocate of the Modern Graphic History Library” who has made “amazing contributions to the university” and praised him as a leader, scholar, and mentor. In his lecture, Dowd said of periodical illustration: “I believe these sources, which capture American sins and dreams in equal measure, have much to offer students of our shared cultural history, and I am proud to be associated with our efforts to preserve, promote, and study them.”

“This archive is already playing a significant role in helping to create new scholarly interests in these materials that shape our thinking around modern history and culture.”

CARMON COLANGELO, DEAN OF THE SAM FOX SCHOOL OF DESIGN & VISUAL ARTS
New Collections

BY SKYE LACERTE

The D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library has recently acquired the work of several major twentieth-century illustrators.

JOHN HELD JR. COLLECTION

John Held Jr. (1889-1958) was one of the best-known magazine illustrators of the 1920s. He chronicled the spirit of the Roaring Twenties, also known as the Jazz Age, with cheerful cartoons of flappers, fast cars, parties, and dancing. Held’s humorous work appeared in many U.S. magazines, including Judge, Life, Collier’s, and The New Yorker.

The materials in this collection range in date from 1929 to 1938, when Held was involved with and married to Gladys Moore Held, Miss New Orleans 1925-1927. The collection covers a sizeable gap in biographical information about Held during the 1930s, when his illustration career was beginning to decline. These details are described in over 800 letters to Gladys and their daughter, as well as photographs, telegrams, and postcards, all signed with a cartoon sketch of a duck instead of his name.

The majority of Carlson’s works were created between the 1920s and the 1940s, but he worked until his death. Carlson also contributed to the Crypto of Civilization, a room-size capsule located under Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia (to be opened in 2013 C.E.).

Carlson created illustrations for comics, periodicals, crossword puzzles, riddles, and more. He was commissioned to work on several of John Martin’s children’s books, including The Wizardmaker’s Jollybook for Boys and Girls. His work was diverse and whimsical, and he was highly influential to many artists and illustrators.

The collection also holds several of his preliminary sketches, mockups, and original artwork, and materials pertaining to Carlson’s personal and professional development, including reference materials and items for the Crypto of Civilization project.

INK TANK ARCHIVE

The Ink Tank, an animation studio, was owned and operated by cartoonist and animator R.O. Blechman from 1977 to 2004. The projects that came out of the studio featured work by notable artists such as children’s book author-illustrator Maurice Sendak and Push Pin Studios’ Seymour Chwast. The Ink Tank’s diverse client list included IBM, General Motors, McDonald’s, and MTV.

Blechman, who has been publishing cartoons and illustrations since 1949, is renowned for creating the talking pink stomach that appeared in a 1967 TV commercial for Alka-Seltzer, numerous illustrations for The New York Times Book Review featuring his big-nosed Everyman, the CBS Christmas special Simple Gifts, and a 51-minute animated film visualizing composer Igor Stravinsky’s L’Histoire du soldat (The Soldier’s Tale). He is also known for integrating poignant social commentary into his works, from race relations and the Vietnam War, to intolerance and disenfranchisement.

The archives of The Ink Tank include the production materials for some 384 commercials and the films Simple Gifts and The Soldier’s Tale, as well as short animations for NBC, CBS, and others. There are also drawings, watercolors, animation cels, storyboards, DVDs, and related studio and business materials and documents. Ephemera related to The Ink Tank’s daily operations and to the cultural life of New York City include photographs, programs, invitations, and Christmas cards.

WALTER BAUMHOFER COLLECTION

Walter Baumhofer (1904-1987) began his career in 1925 by drawing pen-and-ink story illustrations for Adventure magazine. Following his painting teacher’s advice, he submitted and sold his first pulp cover to Clayton Publications for Danger Trail in 1926. He quickly became a leading pulp-cover artist. He created the first cover of Doc Savage and went on to paint 500 more in his stylized realism manner. In 1937, he began to sell freelance illustrations to popular magazines, such as Colliers, Cosmopolitan, and Esquire. Baumhofer was not only known as the King of Pulp, but he was also one of the few artists who successfully achieved the move from low-paying pulps to mainstream magazines. His illustrations played a significant role in influencing and reflecting contemporary life.

The collection includes original art, publications, reference materials, and supporting documents that add context to his work and the field of commercial illustration. The materials shed light on the cultural practices of illustration, art direction, and popular print in the twentieth century.
NEW COLLECTIONS

AUNT JEMIMA COMPANY COLLECTION

The Aunt Jemima Company Collection consists of original artwork, packaging, and business documents related to one of the most recognizable brands of the twentieth century. Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour. The image of Aunt Jemima was based on Nancy Green, a cook and storyteller who was born into slavery in 1834. In 1893, the Davis Milling Company began an all-out promotion of the product at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Green, as Aunt Jemima, demonstrated the pancake mix and served thousands of pancakes.

The archive includes three original trademark artworks from circa 1890, 1899, and 1904; a fourth composite artwork with both drawn and copied elements, circa 1919; and the original contract of sale of the Aunt Jemima Mills Company to the Quaker Oats Company in 1925. The artwork is by one of the most important American illustrators of the early 20th century, A.B. Frost (1851-1928), who was a prominent advertising artist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, known for his humorous and satiric style.

The archive also contains correspondence, including fan letters, as well as works by Mark Twain, and many other books and articles. Aunt Jemima remains among the most recognizable trademarks in the United States. Advertising characters like Aunt Jemima served to domesticate the memory of slavery for both Southern and Northern consumers, erasing its fundamental violence, and substituting a sentimental fantasy.

BEAUDOIN ADVERTISING ART COLLECTION

Before the days of the computer, artwork was produced in-house at advertising companies for presentation purposes, often to be thrown away after an ad was produced. Art directors were expected to draw and paint in any style that the ad design dictated. Storage rooms were filled with racks and shelves containing illustration boards, TV storyboards, paintings, and paste-up boards (called “mechanicals”). After a year or so in storage, the original art made its way to the trash in large garbage bins.

Retired advertising art director, instructor, and collector Rayne Beaudoin saw this happen many times over his 35-year career. After attending the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, Beaudoin worked in Los Angeles and New York City, and eventually settled in the Seattle area. Along the way, he became interested in American illustration and advertising art and saved many pieces from destruction.

Beaudoin donated the entire collection to the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library. The collection represents a fraction of the work that artists produced by hand until computers were introduced in the late ‘80s/early ‘90s. The collection contains a large number of slides of models and locations that were used in his work. The archive also contains correspondence, including fan letters, business-related handwritten and typed letters written by his wife and business manager, Anna Lee. (See the pages above for Bernie Fuchs illustration for Durkee’s Margarine, 1946.)

Skye Lacerte is curator of the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library.
Remembering Jack Unruh
BY JEFF PIKE
Illustrator’s legacy continues with annual award for art students.

I’ve heard several versions of this story, and at least two were from Jack Unruh. This is the one I remember. In 1955, during the semester break of his sophomore year at the University of Kansas, Jack went to St. Louis, his roommate’s hometown. While there, they visited Washington University and toured the School of Fine Arts (as it was known then). Jack saw an exhibit of Bernice Puchs’ work. After studying it closely, he said to himself, “If they can teach this guy how to make work this good, I’m studying here!” I suspect that there were also expletives.

I knew Jack for about 10 years. He was born in Kansas and seemed to want people to believe he was a simple country boy. But he was smart—really smart—and quite talented. Not just as a thoughtful and sophisticated illustrator but as a fisherman, bird hunter, chef, oenophile, skier, and problem solver. He had a wicked sense of humor. He clung proudly to his roots. And he really smart—and quite talented. Not just as a conceptual or formal problem. One favorite replies and guest visits to the hospital. Jack and I spoke briefly on the phone; he was having difficulty managing his saliva. He handed the phone to Judy. We spoke, and I cannot recall what about. Two days later, Jack was dead.

In 2006, I attended Jack’s induction into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame in New York City. I was the dean of the School of Art (as it was known then). I had only met Jack briefly, some years earlier. When I arrived, he kindly invited me to join his family’s table. I met his wife, Judy. We posed for photos. There’s one of Jack kissing my cheek in front of an N.C. Wyeth lithograph. Jack signing Al Parker’s bass drum head (a tradition at the Society). Afterward, Jack invited me to join his family for a nightcap. We arrived at the top of Rockefeller Plaza and settled into comfy seats that overlooked the city. The waitress asked Jack what he would like to drink. Looking out the window, he replied, “I’ll have a goddamn Manhattan.”

The D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library (DMGHL) was finding its sea legs at that time. We had acquired much of Al Parker’s work, Robert Andrew Parker’s commercial work, and a good deal of Robert Weaver’s work. During a visit to Dallas on university business, I invited Jack and Judy out for dinner. The invitation was reversed, and I went to their home, where Jack was cooking. I had come with the newly printed Modern Graphic History Library catalog. While Judy read it, I made my pitch for adding Jack’s materials to the collection. Finally, I asked, “So, Jack, will you give us some of your work?” He paused at the stove and replied, “You’ve got Al Parker’s work, you’ve got Robert Andrew Parker’s work, you’ve got Robert Weaver’s work—well, yeah, I will!”

Dinner was delicious. The DMGHL has thousands of Jack’s preliminary drawings. Most are on tracing paper, some in pencil and others in ink. They allow one to watch Jack think through a conceptual or formal problem. One favorite sequence is Jack figuring out how to draw Lyle Lovett’s hair through multiple iterations. There are also final, published illustrations.

Jack’s mature work is almost exclusively pen and ink, and watercolor. He knew how to imply complexity and suggest three-dimensional form; he knew how to exaggerate form for comic effect, he knew how to pun, he knew when negative space was more powerful than described space, he knew how to use color to create strong focal points (like moon), he knew how to control the splattering of his ink for texture and contrast. (He demonstrated how he did that for me once in his studio. I still can’t do it.)

Jack organized his work into two categories, “What’s real” and “What’s not real,” to market the scope of his talent. While many illustrators of his generation have seen their careers stumble in recent decades, Jack always seemed to have work. I attribute that to his work’s quality and breadth.

At some point, we discussed the idea of an award at WU to be presented to the senior student with the best sketchbook. Jack liked the idea and established an annual gift to support the award. Three have been presented. During a fall 2014 visit to Jack and Judy’s, I mentioned that I was teaching that spring semester in Florence, Italy, with the school’s study abroad program. I offered them accommodations. Together, we spent a week in Florence full of wonderful meals and conversations. Jack drew with my students on site. He dutifully recorded the visit in his oversized sketchbook and drew the view from my studio window (Black Mirror 005). Jack also allowed me to scan his sketchbook so that students could have access to it.

Just a year later, in the spring of 2016, I learned from Judy that Jack was very ill with esophageal cancer. She sent an email requesting support. There were hundreds of replies and guest visits to the hospital. Jack and I spoke briefly on the phone; he was having difficulty managing his saliva. He handed the phone to Judy. We spoke, and I cannot recall what about. Two days later, Jack was dead.

After Jack’s memorial service, I went up to his studio. On his drawing table were reference photos and sketches for a partially completed illustration for Texas Monthly magazine. Jack collaborated with David Courtney, aka “the Texanist,” on a back-page humor feature. Jack was working on his 106th Texanist drawing until he could no longer climb the steps to his studio above the garage.

Jack and his good friend and fellow alumnus Jack Summerford had been collaborating on FISH & Other Stories as My Pen Remembers Them, a limited-edition coffee-table book about Jack’s work and sketchbooks. That beautiful book came out posthumously. Judy and the publisher, Harrring Press, declared that all sales would benefit the Jack Unruh Award at WU. The book sold very well. Judy was able to endow funds for the award. Because of this new infusion of support, the award is being rededicated with Judy’s participation. The new award will be given for the first time at the spring 2018 recognition ceremony for the College of Art (as it is currently known).

Jeff Pike is an illustrator and professor of design at Washington University in St. Louis’ Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts.
Visiting Artist: Seymour Chwast Comes to Campus

By Skye Lacerte

In October 2016, the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library and the Sam Fox School of Design co-sponsored a visit from graphic designer and illustrator Seymour Chwast.

Known for his unique illustrative style, Seymour Chwast often combines social issues and comic illustrations in his work, which has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Vanity Fair*, as well as in posters, advertising, and children’s books. In the mid-1950s, Chwast partnered with Edward Sorel and Milton Glaser to found Push Pin Studios. Chwast and Glaser ran the studio for two decades, influencing both graphic design and illustration in the process.

During his visit to Washington University, Chwast delivered a lecture in Steinberg Auditorium titled *God/War/Sex* as part of the Sam Fox School Public Lecture Series. He also spent time with students and recorded an oral history that will be preserved in the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library archive and will soon be available to the public.

D.B. Dowd introduced Chwast before the lecture on October 24, 2016. Below is an excerpt from his introduction.

“...To look at the early Push Pin work from the mid-’50s is to gaze upon disruption in the making. Design and illustration studios in the postwar United States had settled into several archetypal modes. Swiss design sensibilities met up with American business clients to foster the modern graphic design firm, distiller and servant to the new corporation. It may seem difficult to imagine now, but there were busy illustration studios, like the Charles E. Cooper Studio in New York, pumping out attractive depictions of the postwar good life for the pages of American magazines. Design and illustration had sharply diverged. In fact, modernist publication design increasingly embraced photography, and illustration remained mostly locked in a sort of unspoken modernism of flat color and pattern that dare not, exactly, speak its name, undergirding as it did images crafted for romance stories in women’s magazines. In short, the world into which Seymour Chwast stepped offered a set of less-than-appealing pathways: make pictures of frolicking Protestants in Connecticut for magazine fiction; get good at pushing around sans serif type for The Man, or tumble into a vat of molten advertising. As it happened, Seymour and his fellows did none of those things. They forsook the Swiss and sidestepped Connecticut. They embraced the two-color and three-color conceits of 1890s French poster design and the great German illustrated magazine *Die Jugend*. They exploited Art Deco. And Chwast, in particular, integrated all of that with a love of newspaper comic strips and cartooned abbreviations of form. Seymour’s love of vernacular drawing and lettering is unmistakable. When combined—as they have been for six decades—with a literate mind, a gift for pun, a broad sense of humor, and a smoldering sense of justice, you get a body of work with tremendous staying power and reverberating influence.”

Skye Lacerte, curator of the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library, and Seymour Chwast. Photo from Washington University Libraries.

The D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library is home to the Seymour Chwast Collection, an archive of Chwast’s works that includes posters, professional development materials, and mechanical drawings. The collection spans nearly five decades, from 1961 to 2007.
In 2015, the Council on Library and Information Resources announced a new initiative for funding projects digitizing collections of rare and unique content in cultural memory institutions.

The D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library project, Revealing Visual Culture: Digitizing Modern Illustrated Periodical Tear Sheets in the Walt Reed Illustration Archive, was one of 38 projects selected out of 147 proposals. The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) pledged $250,000 to complete the project within a two-year period.

Curator Skye Lacerte is the principal investigator for the project, which will create digital images and supporting metadata for 50,000 modern periodical illustration tear sheets contained in the Walt Reed Illustration Archive. The archive reflects the New York-based Illustration House, a gallery specializing in the reuse of original works of illustration including pulp fiction covers, magazine illustrations, advertisements, comic strips, and more, founded by Walt Reed. In 2012, Washington University Libraries acquired the archive, which includes approximately 8,000 periodicals, 1,200 illustrated books, 250,000 magazine tear sheets, and 140 pieces of original art.

The tear sheets—from over 200 illustrated periodical publications dating from the 1890s to the 1950s—represent the largest known collection in the world. Featuring illustrations from magazine covers, fiction stories, advertisements, news and information articles, the tear sheets offer a rich resource for scholarly investigation in multiple fields.

During the two-year project, an outside vendor will create digital files. Library staff and student assistants will create and enhance the metadata and perform quality control. The resulting image database will be searchable by illustrator, publication title, subject matter, date, and context. WU Libraries will provide complete public access to high-resolution images and metadata online.

The process of sorting, folding, boxing, and packing items began in January 2016. Staff and student volunteers from Special Collections removed files from the cabinets. The contents were re-folded and labeled, and the folders were rehoused in boxes to be sent to the digitization vendor. Six pallets were filled and shipped to Heritage Werks, the digitization vendor. The digitization vendor in Atlanta, Georgia, has trained the student workers on metadata and cataloging tear sheets. The digital files were returned to the university during the first year of the grant. Andrea Degener, processing archivist for Washington University Libraries, has been leading the effort to catalog and add descriptive metadata to the high-resolution files, managing the work of student assistants and staff to complete all 150,000 records.

The images will be available in ArtStor’s Shared Shelf Commons. This management system combines image collections of unique holdings and will provide full public access to the images in the Walt Reed Illustration Archive. Users may browse image collections, search using relevant terms, view thumbnails and zoom into high-resolution images. Images published in Shared Shelf Commons can also be accessed via Google search.

Taylor Yocom, one of the MFA students working on the project, has updated over 12,000 records. Beginning in January 2017, three Master of Fine Arts (MFA) students have been cataloging metadata to the digitized material. Since last summer, the student workers have completed over 12,000 records. Beginning in January 2017, three master of fine arts (MFA) students began diligently updating metadata and have now completed over 6,000 records. The process of cataloging metadata for the tear sheets is both complex and time-intensive. I have trained the student workers on metadata standards and cataloging procedures within the Shared Shelf interface. The student workers are responsible for discerning subject and keyword tags, in addition to drafting a description of the tear sheet, for each individual record.

Capturing the History of the Twentieth-Century Periodical
BY ANDREA DEGENE

Over 150,000 digitized tear sheets from the Walt Reed Illustration Archive will be publicly available in January 2018 as part of a grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) awarded in 2016 to the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library (DMGHL).

In January 2016, the hard drives began arriving from Heritage Werks, the company selected to digitize the tear sheets. As I began the long process of converting the digital files to access copies, I realized the potential to inform art disciplines and topics related to gender roles, race, and cultural norms. Once complete, the project will be a valuable addition to the complex holdings of the DMGHL.

Andrea Degener is processing archivist for Washington University Libraries.
I began my postdoctoral appointment with the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library (DMGHL) on July 1, 2016. My first year here has been very productive in research, writing and editing, teaching, and public presentations. Some of my research work has been focused on enhancing our collections with more knowledge about practitioners themselves. I have developed templates for interviewing illustrators or their families, and a comprehensive online questionnaire based on those templates was launched in June 2017. Illustrators at any stage of their career are encouraged to answer questions on their career paths, artistic preferences, influences, and other topics, so that we may form a robust database of contemporary practice. The results will give us a snapshot of the industry’s evolution and allow us to correlate data points such as gender and career advancement, locale and genre, or the influence of a particular TV show among comics artists versus magazine illustrators. The potential combinations to query are virtually endless and will be an asset to any future researcher of popular culture.

Alongside my research, I have been editing History of Illustration in partnership with Susan Doyle of the Rhode Island School of Design, and Whitney Sherman of the Maryland Institute College of Art. This 600-plus-page book will be the very first textbook on the subject of illustration, and the first to bring illustration types from around the world into the same volume. It was written collaboratively by over 40 people and will feature about 850 images. The DMGHL provided many of these, and Professor D.B. Dowd authored one of the opening components, “Giving Illustrators a Voice.” I contributed the chapter “Avant-garde Illustration,” along with several smaller essays focused on enhancing our collections with more knowledge about practitioners themselves. I have developed templates for interviewing illustrators or their families, and a comprehensive online questionnaire based on those templates was launched in June 2017. Illustrators at any stage of their career are encouraged to answer questions on their career paths, artistic preferences, influences, and other topics, so that we may form a robust database of contemporary practice. The results will give us a snapshot of the industry’s evolution and allow us to correlate data points such as gender and career advancement, locale and genre, or the influence of a particular TV show among comics artists versus magazine illustrators. The potential combinations to query are virtually endless and will be an asset to any future researcher of popular culture.

I also led the development of a timeline and provided some design elements. The volume book will be issued in early 2018 by Fairchild Books, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing. During the past year, I also served as editor for the spring 2017 issue of the Journal of Illustration. The theme of the issue is the illustrator as public intellectual, a topic that I originated for the 2015 annual Illustration Research Symposium held at the Rhode Island School of Design. At this year’s symposium—this time on the theme of identity—I will be chairing a roundtable discussion on the way theory is taught and used in illustrators’ education. I will also deliver a paper on how collections reflecting the so-called “Golden Age of Illustration” (circa 1900) in general define our knowledge of illustrators’ and Americans’ identities, and how the DMGHL in particular is being used to critically re-evaluate historical
In the 2017 spring semester, a wide assortment of materials from the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library provided a group of Washington University students with a peek into the publishing world of the past.

“Being able to see 10 to 20 consecutive issues of a publication gives us a broad impression of an era,” says class member and communication design major Calvary Fisher. “We’re able to get a feel for what it was like to live in that time, week to week, month to month.”

Open to students at the sophomore level and above, the class met frequently at the DMGHL. Materials from the Al Parker Collection, the Walt Reed Illustration Archive, the DMGHL Periodical Collection, and the Center for the Humanities Comic’s Collection gave students an overview of American illustrated magazines beginning in the early twentieth century.

“The DMGHL is a playground of visual resources,” says sophomore Amy Wang. “These are materials that expand our visual experiences of the world.”

Spawning 150 years, the wide-ranging collections provided the class with rich perspectives on how consumer taste is cultivated and the ways in which audiences take in information. Over the course of the semester, the collections were featured in lectures, discussions, and presentations.

For some students, the class offered another practical advantage: learning the procedures for requesting items from the DMGHL archives. It’s know-how they can use in the semesters to come, when they conduct research.

“I knew about the collections but didn’t know how to get them until now,” Fisher says. “It was great to learn my way around.”

Communication design major Christina Wang didn’t realize the materials were available until she enrolled in the class.

“It’s helpful to have access,” she says. “The collections give us context and background. I will definitely use the library in the future.”

The materials in the DMGHL are tangible reminders of America’s pop-culture past. They’re also a testament to the enduring power of print. Having the ability to flip through the publications was a major point of appeal for the students.

“It’s great that these materials don’t have to befiltered through a computer screen,” says Fisher. “It’s very gratifying to actually hold them in my hand.”

Julie Hale is communications coordinator for Washington University Libraries.

Helen Dryden: Illustrator and Industrial Designer in the Age of Art Deco

BY CATHY O’MALLEY, BFA ’17

This story is part of a series published by students in D.B. Dowd’s spring 2017 course “Special Topics in Visual Culture: The Illustrated Periodical.”

In the early twentieth century, the covers of large publications were beautifully illustrated, and many artists who contributed became household names. The art created for fashion magazines in particular stood out. What began as representational drawings of clothing morphed into French Art Nouveau-inspired covers, thin, curvilinear lines and compositions filled with decorative elements. This style soon transitioned into Art Deco.

Artists such as Erte, Leon Bakst, Umberto Brunelleschi, Georges Barbier, Etienne Drian, and Edmund Dulac all made names for themselves as illustrators for Harper’s Bazaar. All were male and European. At the turn of the century in America, fashion illustration was still representative. American artist Helen Dryden was an important catalyst in introducing European and Deco styles of illustration to the United States. Dryden’s images for Vogue, The Delineator, and Studebaker show how her work exemplifies changes in Art Deco from 1910 to 1937.

Dryden was born in Baltimore in 1882. She showed artistic promise from a young age but never received much training. In 1909, she moved to New York to sell her drawings to fashion magazines. She faced rejection repeatedly but eventually received a deal with Vogue. This turned into a 13-year contract for which Dryden illustrated covers and articles.

November 1929

Helen Dryden: Illustrator and Industrial Designer in the Age of Art Deco

Students in D.B. Dowd’s course “Special Topics in Visual Culture: The Illustrated Periodical” study materials from the Al Parker Collection and the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library. The materials included tear sheets, magazines, and books from the Walt Reed Illustration Archive and the Al Parker Collection. The items were used for class assignments and discussions throughout the semester.
Dryden's first work for Vogue was published in 1910. Katherine McClinton states in her book Art Deco: A Guide for Collectors that Art Deco "thrived in the years between 1910 and 1935, reaching its high point between 1925 and 1935." This timeline closely parallels Dryden's most prolific working period. Dryden's key inspiration is also often associated with the start of Art Deco. Though Art Deco has its roots in Art Nouveau, the Ballets Russes in Paris and the costume designs and original drawings of Léon Bakst "had great impact on the decorative arts of the period," according to McClinton. Dryden often cited Bakst, the Russian Ballet, and all things French as the inspirations for her inventive and fanciful drawings. In the book Art Deco of the 20s and 30s, the English art critic Osbert Lancaster says, "[the] colors were the best and most lasting legacy of the Russian Ballet to Art Deco," referring to "jade green, purple, every variety of crimson and scarlet, and above all orange." Dryden wanted to bring Bakst's vision and color to the American magazines. She achieved this in her work for Vogue.

Dryden's Vogue covers often depict at least one full-figure woman in an imagined setting. She fabricated spaces around her models, filling the cover with swirling water or clouds, flora, and the occasional animal. Her work would in later years give way to streamlining and visions of industry. She became disassociated with Vogue in 1923 and, soon after, with her own fanciful images. She started making covers for The Delineator, a fashion magazine that touted modern sensibilities. One salient article from the magazine discusses the modern home and asserts the idea of the "machine for living," in which home becomes a sleek, minimalist, efficient space.

Similar trends are evident in the development of Art Deco in the late 1920s. According to McClinton, Deco was dominated by the ideas of cubism, and "new young designers favored the stark simplicity, austerity and innovations of modern life and industry." These changes are on full display in Dryden's Delineator covers; they are starkly different from her Vogue work. Many of the covers show women from the collarbone up, in a sense streamlining the image to its essential parts. The crop is tighter, the colors are more muted, and the lines are fuzzier. Above all, there is a lack of the decoration that the writers for The Delineator articles and other practitioners of Art Deco found redundant.

Dryden's Delineator women reflect Art Deco's modernity and industry by their actions. In the covers selected from the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library collection, one woman is driving her own car; another applies makeup with a compact while on the go. A third woman holds a scarf while a steamship chuffs along in the background. Lastly, a woman enjoys a cup of tea at a café during her modern free time, thanks to the efficiency of industry.

Dryden worked for Studebaker as an industrial designer from the mid-1930s until 1937. While at the company, she designed the interior of the Studebaker President and worked alongside Raymond Loewy, who designed the exterior. At the time, Dryden was retained for $100,000 a year, giving her the title of highest-earning female artist in America. As an industrial designer, Dryden was part of a phase that was particularly American to Art Deco. The appeal of mass production rose after the 1929 stock market crash, but products still needed to appeal to consumers. This is where industrial designers and Art Deco themes came in. Streamlining of products in America was a popular design choice. Streamlining in industrial products also served as a symbol of science and rationales, which had the effect of seducing customers.

Dryden's work follows the phases of Art Deco, ending with her output as an industrial designer. She was a product of the stylistic developments of Art Deco, and she evolved as an artist. Her contribution to and relative fame during the Art Deco movement (not to mention her success as a woman artist), should make her better known today. Dryden, and perhaps other such women artists now lost to time deserve to be mentioned in the same ranks as men.
The Modern Graphic History Library was founded in 2007, but its genesis occurred in 1999, thanks to Kit and Donna Parker. Kit is the youngest son and executor of the estate of magazine illustrator Alfred “Al” Charles Parker (1906-1985). In the late 1990s Kit’s dad was known mostly to the surviving initiates of his field. But in the mid-20th century, Al Parker was a famous and well-compensated creator. Kit and Donna explored the possibility of donating his works to art museums in the Southwest, where Al lived in the latter part of his career. Because Al, a St. Louisan by birth, had graduated from the Washington University School of Fine Arts in 1928, the Parkers also considered a donation to the university.

After a visit to the Parkers’ home in Monterey, California, where the archival materials related to Al’s career had come to rest, I, along with my Washington University colleagues Jeff Pike and Anne Posega, pitched the idea of the Al Parker Collection to Dean of Libraries Shirley Baker. The collection—original works, process materials, reference photographs, business correspondence—made its way to the university’s Department of Special Collections.

Since then, our holdings have grown into the most significant research collection in the culture of illustration among American universities. The curatorial and critical project of the D.B. Dowd Modern Graphic History Library has reshaped my research and inspired students and scholars since its founding. This first issue of Masthead, an annual publication, is evidence of our commitment to the field.

D.B. Dowd
Professor of Art and Faculty Director, D.B. Dowd

A note from D.B.