



**GoggleWorks celebrates luminary woodworker
Wharton Esherick alongside national artists he influenced**

Art center and historic Wharton Esherick Museum present
Following Esherick exhibition and public programs,

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READING, PA – April 20, 2021 – Seminal works from Wharton Esherick and other

world renowned woodworkers will transform both sides of the premier Irvin and Lois E. Cohen Gallery at GoggleWorks Center for the Arts (GoggleWorks) starting next month. In partnership with the historic Wharton Esherick Museum (WEM), [Following Esherick](#) details the eccentric life and groundbreaking works of the famed mid-century studio woodworker. This exhibition, sponsored by the John and Robyn Horn Foundation, will be on view at GoggleWorks from May 7th -June 27th, 2021. Parking and admission are free and leaders expect over 10,000 visitors despite the pandemic.

“Wharton Esherick was a luminary across many fields and spheres of influence. His work, which exquisitely marries form and function, continues to shape artists and their processes, said Levi Landis, GoggleWorks Executive Director. “Further, Esherick’s approach to art is symbolic of a broader system of educational values and life perspectives that offer meaning for audiences in our community.”

According to WEM, Wharton Esherick (1887–1970) was an artistic polymath whose significant contributions to American art, ranging from works on paper to sculpture, can be found in major museum collections across the country. Perhaps best known for his groundbreaking sculptural furniture, Esherick is widely regarded as the grandfather of the American Studio Furniture movement and one of the foundational figures of contemporary craft and design. His fiercely individual approach to art making, as well as his highly original fusion of form with function, has inspired important artists and designers.

The exhibition presents significant Esherick originals as the seeds of that inspiration, exhibiting them alongside a collection of works from internationally-recognized wood artists in his circle of influence, including:

- Jasper Brinton
- Michael Brolly
- Amy Forsyth
- Ray Kelso
- Jack Larimore
- Michael Puryear

Landis said, "The unmistakable marks of Esherick's influence are evident throughout this exhibition in organic lines and accentuated wood grains, the application of comedic concepts, and the use of appropriate materials. The exhibition is designed to highlight these connections between works as well as Esherick's ongoing influence in fields of art and design.

"Wharton Esherick's legacy is inextricably tied to the meaning that contemporary audiences find his aesthetic sensibility, material sensitivity, and unconventional approach to living an artistic life." Emily Zilber, Director of Curatorial Affairs and Strategic Partnerships at the Wharton Esherick Museum, said, "We hope that through sharing select works from WEM's important collection with the GoggleWorks community, visitors will have a chance to get to know this extraordinary artist -- and perhaps even plan their own visit to WEM for further inspiration."

Two online discussions will be presented highlighting experts and artists in the field sharing their insights about the influence and works of Wharton Esherick. Discussions will be presented through Facebook Live, and access and registration information can be found by calling or emailing GoggleWorks or visiting the art center's Facebook page.

- May 13th, 6:30pm: [Stories and concepts: The lifestyle and perspectives of Wharton Esherick](#)
- June 15th, 6:30pm: [Design, materials, and technique: The work and influence of Wharton Esherick](#)

"With this exhibition," Tim Compton, GoggleWorks Artistic Director, said, "we hope to advance access to both amazing artworks and the curious, clever, and comical minds behind these inspirational pieces. As I have continued to learn more about Esherick, I feel as if he was the kind of artist that tended to ask 'why not?' when others just asked 'why?', and that is a powerful distinction when making art."

Visitors to the exhibit must adhere to ongoing safety measures including

temperature checks, face coverings, and social distancing. GoggleWorks accommodates those looking to avoid social contact outside of their group through [Art Explorer Tours](#). These tours are free of cost with advanced booking, and highlight *Following Esherick* in addition to campus features and the history of the GoggleWorks campus. Tour visitors can add on various hands-on art activities for a fee, including ceramic raku, glassblowing, printmaking and woodworking.

About GoggleWorks Center for the Arts

GoggleWorks transforms lives through unique interactions with art. The nonprofit art center, which operates in the former Willson Goggle Factory, is composed of 145,000 square feet, making it one of the largest art centers in the country. GoggleWorks offers year round arts education, including workshops, classes, and visiting artists; community outreach programs; a summer residency and fellowship program; youth programs and camps; 35 on-site studio artists; The Albert and Eunice Boscov theatre; three galleries for exhibitions; the Penn State Berks Launchbox maker space; and eight communal studios—hot glass, wood, 2D print, warm glass, metals, ceramics, photography and virtual reality. www.GoggleWorks.org

About the Wharton Esherick Museum

The Wharton Esherick Museum is the home and studio of famed American artist Wharton Esherick, located atop Valley Forge Mountain in Chester County, Pennsylvania. It is their mission to preserve, maintain, and exhibit the artistic creations of the late Wharton Esherick so that the general public may gain enjoyment, education, and inspiration from Esherick's life work. We seek to act dynamically; connecting contemporary audiences to Esherick's legacy and brilliant creations through diverse public programs and community partnerships.

Set on 12 wooded acres, the Museum campus is composed of multiple buildings including Wharton Esherick's Studio, which is now the centerpiece of the Museum. Esherick's highly individual, hand-built Studio was constructed over a 40-year

period beginning in 1926, incorporating Arts and Crafts, Expressionist, and organic designs. Two years later Esherick began his 1928 Expressionist garage, now our Visitor Center. In 1973, just one year after its official opening as a museum, the Studio was added to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1993, the Museum was designated a National Historic Landmark for Architecture. whartonesherickmuseum.org

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