

The Hand & the Machine (SECAC, Sarasota, 8–11 Oct 14)

Sarasota, FL, Oct 8–11, 2014

Deadline: Apr 20, 2014

Rachael Barron-Duncan, New York

Southeastern College Art Conference 2014

Session:

The Hand and the Machine: Tensions in Interwar Design

The story is familiar: modernism's post-World War I fascination with machines and technology – in architecture, industrial design, the decorative arts, and fashion – dissipated in the 1930s, replaced by a valorization of handicraft and a reemergence of the human subject. Where the machine aesthetic dominated design in the early 1920s, artists grew disenchanted with the signs of industry in the 1930s, focusing instead on the human subject, and crafting work to show the "hand" of the maker. But is this tale of a "return to the hand" universally true? Are there certain mediums or national traditions that trouble the story? This session solicits papers that examine the precarious dynamics of industry and the hand-made in the applied arts between the wars. We encourage a variety of perspectives within or beyond the powerhouse industrial economies of the West, and we hope, through the breadth of papers, to reassess the standard narrative of interwar design.

Session Co-Chairs: Toby Norris, Assumption College and Rachael Barron-Duncan, Central Michigan University.

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Reference:

CFP: The Hand & the Machine (SECAC, Sarasota, 8-11 Oct 14). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 10, 2014 (accessed Jul 7, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/7163>>.