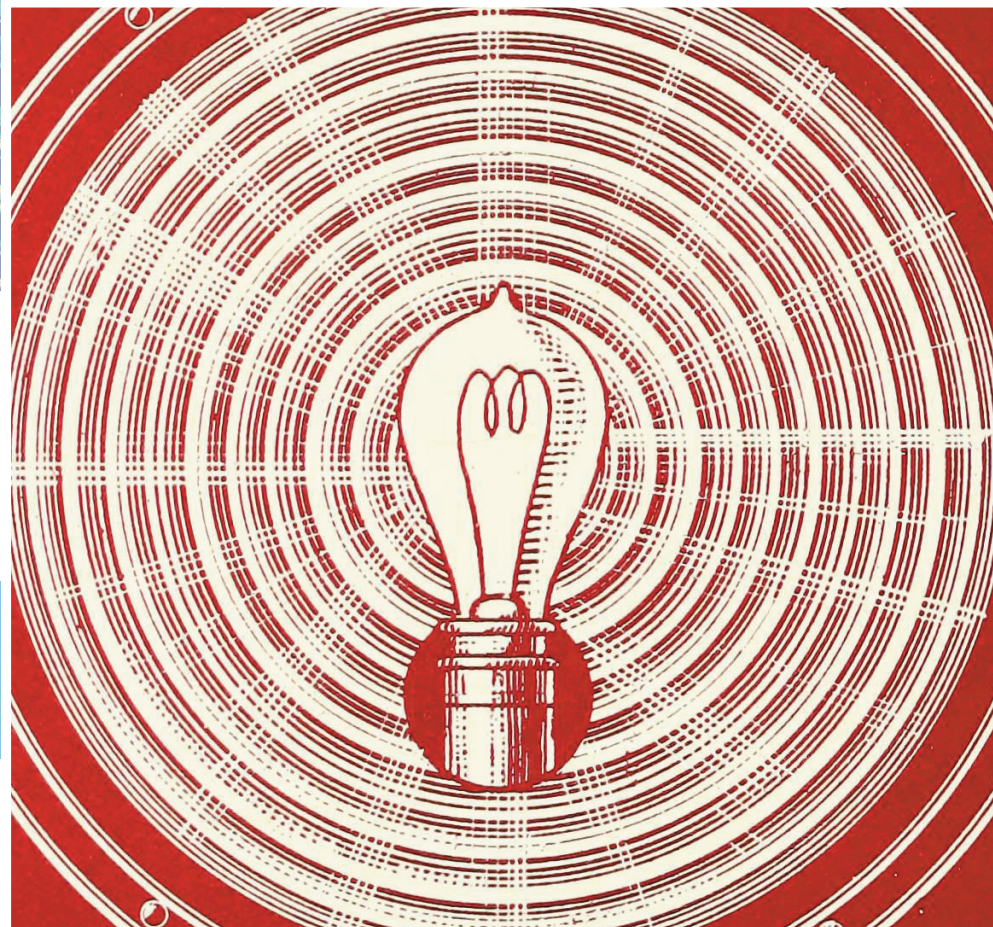


Smithsonian Libraries

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

The Smithsonian's National Collections are vast – 140 million artifacts, objects, natural history specimens, archives, and books. The 2 million plus items in the Libraries' collections include many specialties that document and provide context for the Smithsonian's museum collections and support the Institution's wide-ranging scientific programs. But our collections are dispersed throughout the 19 museums and 9 research centers that often have overlapping interests and programs. Sometimes, the dispersion masks exactly what we have available on any given topic!

This report describes two of our collections and the generous donors who are assisting us with them. There is no subject heading in our catalog that allows us to collocate everything we have relating to Art Deco, which can be found in several of our libraries in Washington and in New York. Now two donors are sponsoring two interns who will investigate this topic and help us understand the depth and richness of our combined Art Deco holdings. Another benefactor is sponsoring our *Cultivating America's Gardens* exhibition, which will open next year, and features our substantial collection

of seed catalogs. These tell the tale of American agriculture and seed production, so important in this era of searching for heirloom varieties. Once we highlight and publicize collections like these, both Smithsonian staff and scholars flock to the Libraries to use them for study and the advancement of knowledge.

To keep current, however, we must continue to acquire newly published volumes, journals and digital resources, many of which are quite expensive. An annual science journal subscription can cost \$15,000! A critical scientific database costs \$100,000! So far, 31 big-hearted donors are helping us with acquisitions endowments that provide steady income to make sure we can purchase new materials. We thank them every year for their understanding of this ongoing need.

Only \$25,000, which can be paid over 5 years, is required to start an endowment for book acquisitions that will continue to grow and provide a lasting legacy. Won't you join and help us serve the Smithsonian and the American public?

– Nancy E. Gwinn

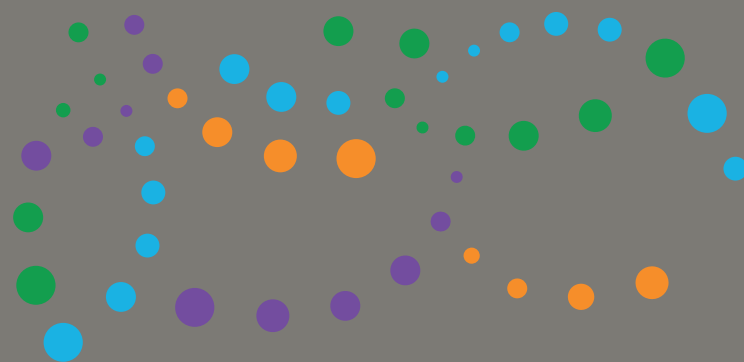
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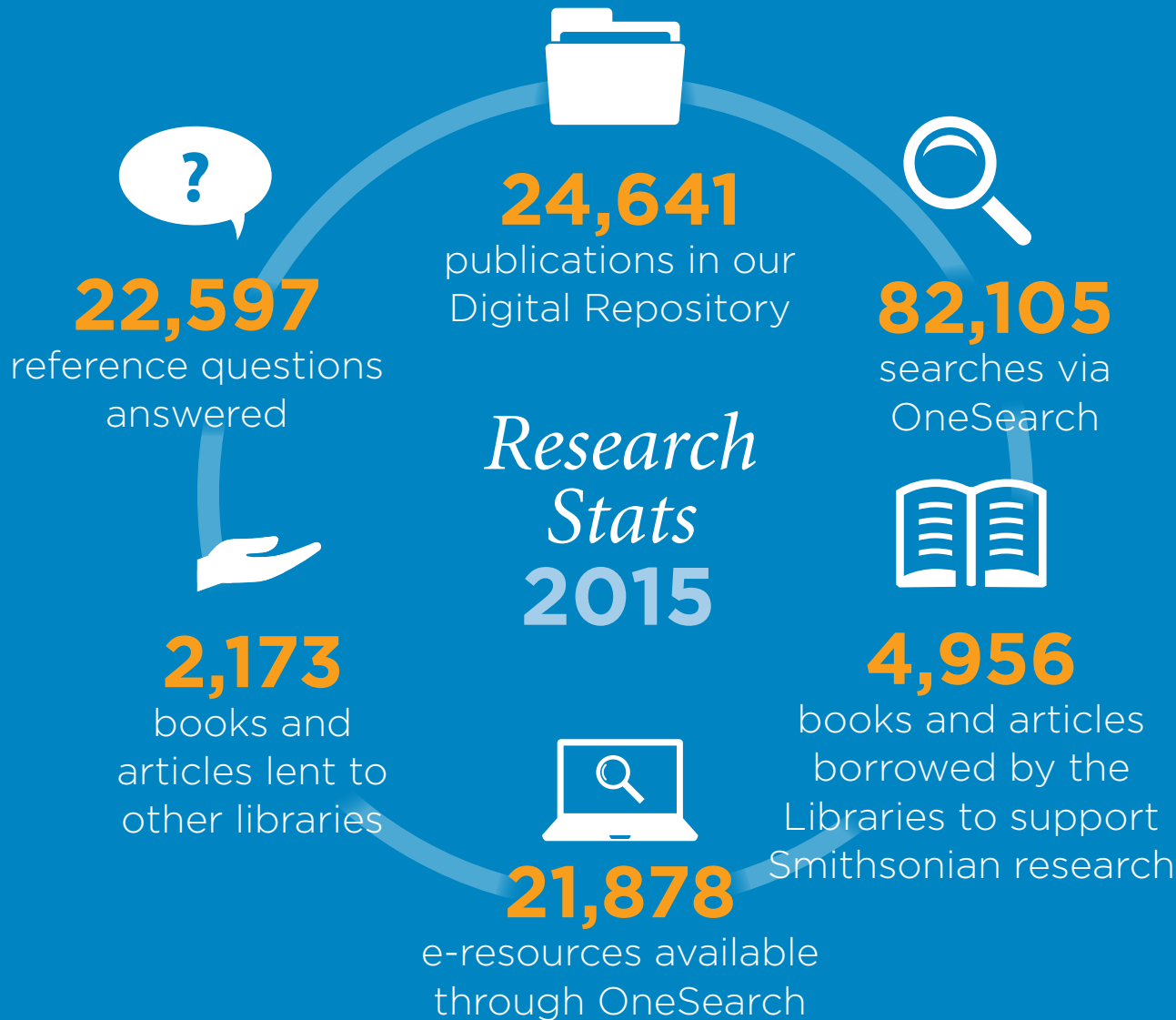
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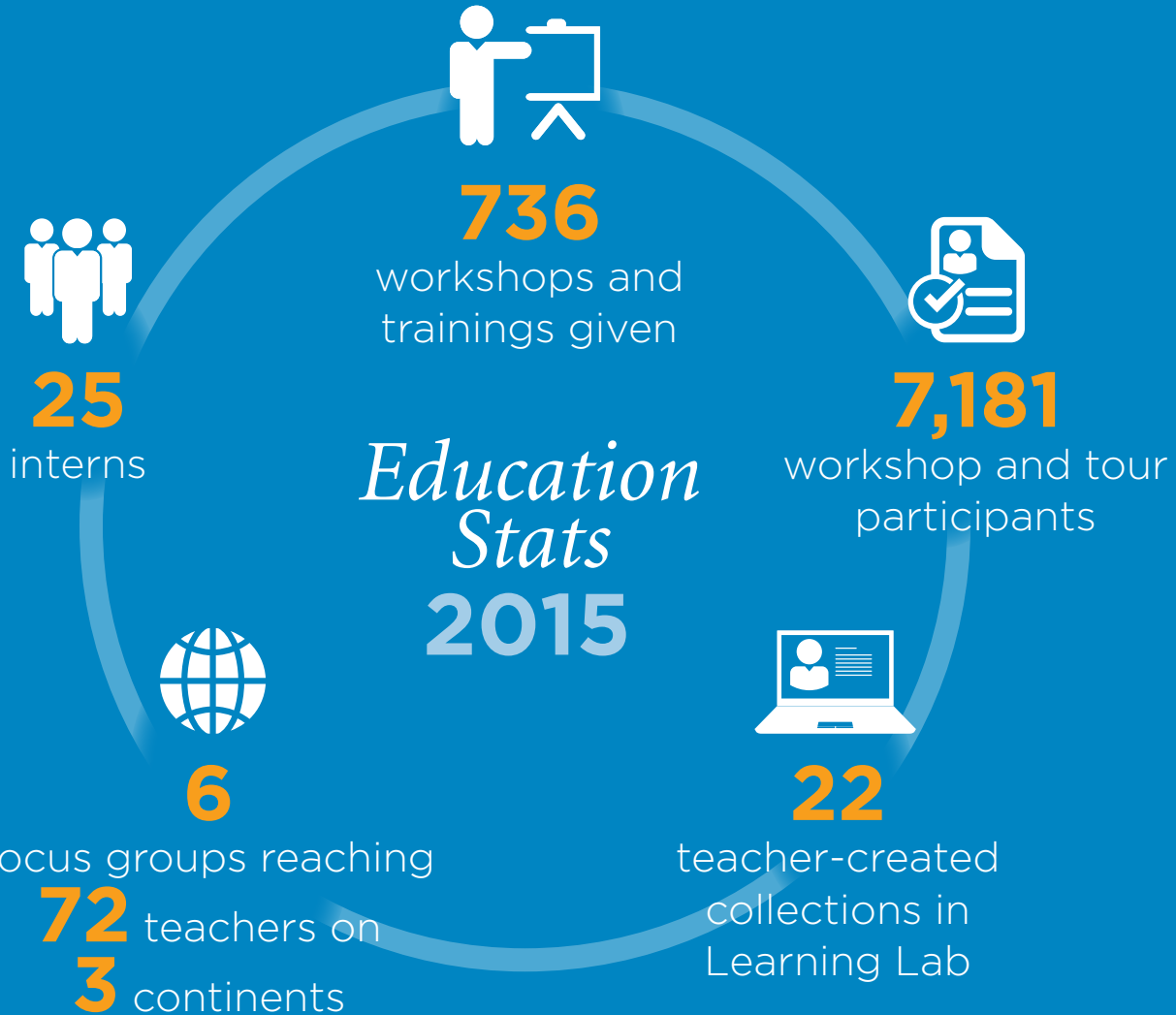
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ART DECO UNVEILED
AT THE SMITHSONIAN
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For Chicago and Art Deco enthusiasts

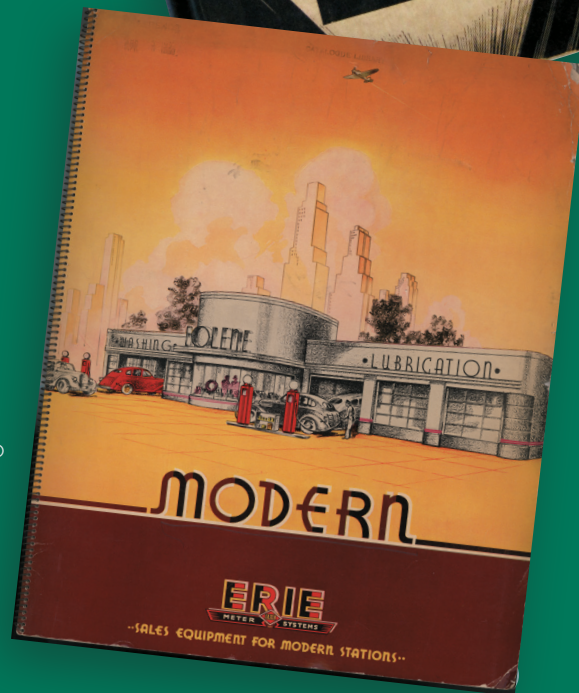
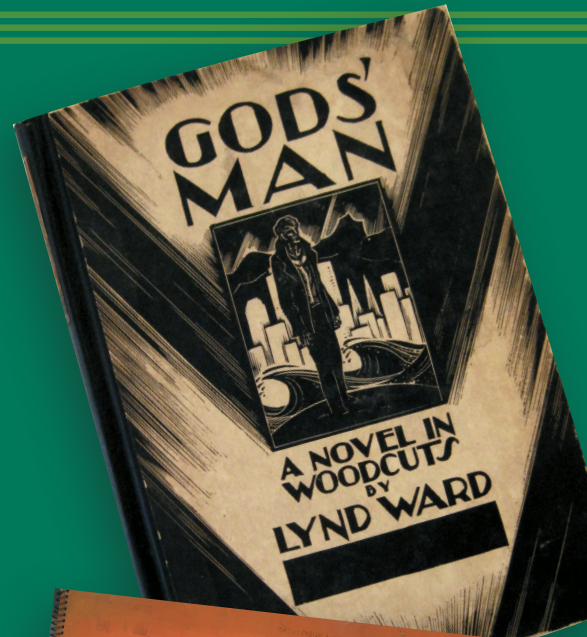
Jackie Vossler and Joe Loundy, supporting two new design internships at the Smithsonian Libraries was a no-brainer. Jackie, a self-described bibliophile and member of Chicago's Caxton Club, has been acquainted with the Libraries for three years. Along with Joe, she was intrigued by Art Deco treasures found in our trade literature collection, most notably the Edward F. Caldwell & Co. collection, a visually stunning repository of more than 50,000 photographs and original design drawings of lighting fixtures that the company produced from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries (supplied to notable clients such as the Rockefellers, the Carnegies, and the Roosevelts).

Thanks to Jackie and Joe's support, in the summer of 2016, the Libraries will host two interns to work on Art Deco lighting and trade literature. The first will uncover the diverse Art Deco patterns that Caldwell created for commercial, public, and residential uses with a focus on major commissions in Chicago. The second will assess the trade literature and world's fairs collections (buildings,

ornamentation, fashion, and other areas of American life) and identify materials in both collections that address the Art Deco period in Chicago. Jackie and Joe's ultimate goal for the internships is access: to create an organized catalog of materials that is searchable online by design motif.

Art Deco began its ascendance as a style in France before World War I. By the 1920s it had spread overseas and dominated the style world until going out of fashion at the outbreak of World War II. Art Deco became engrained in the social and commercial habits of Americans from the 1920s to the late 1930s. The style is expressed by bold colors, stylized geometric shapes, linear symmetry, sleek machinery, and opulent decoration.

Art Deco designs appeared everywhere, from flashy skyscrapers (The Empire State Building) to appliances, furniture to fashion, product designs to architecture, jewelry to automobiles. Art Deco even accomplished the impossible task of breaking into Hollywood: Ginger Rogers/Fred Astaire films were



“The Smithsonian Libraries is a library that connects all of us – a national collection.”

performed among a luxe display of Art Deco hotels and cruise liners. At the pinnacle of its popularity, Art Deco represented glamour, sophistication, nationalism, and confidence in technological advancement.

Says Joe, “The Art Deco movement was uplifting and optimistic in times of grave American despair, such as the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression.” Adds Jackie, “While the movement was exclusive and expensive in France, in the United States it infused areas of everyday life through text, colors, and graphic designs on packaging and products entering the home, and became part of the fabric of everyone’s lives. Americans connected to it, and thus it became part of the American story.”

Both Jackie and Joe are active members of the Chicago Art Deco Society, or

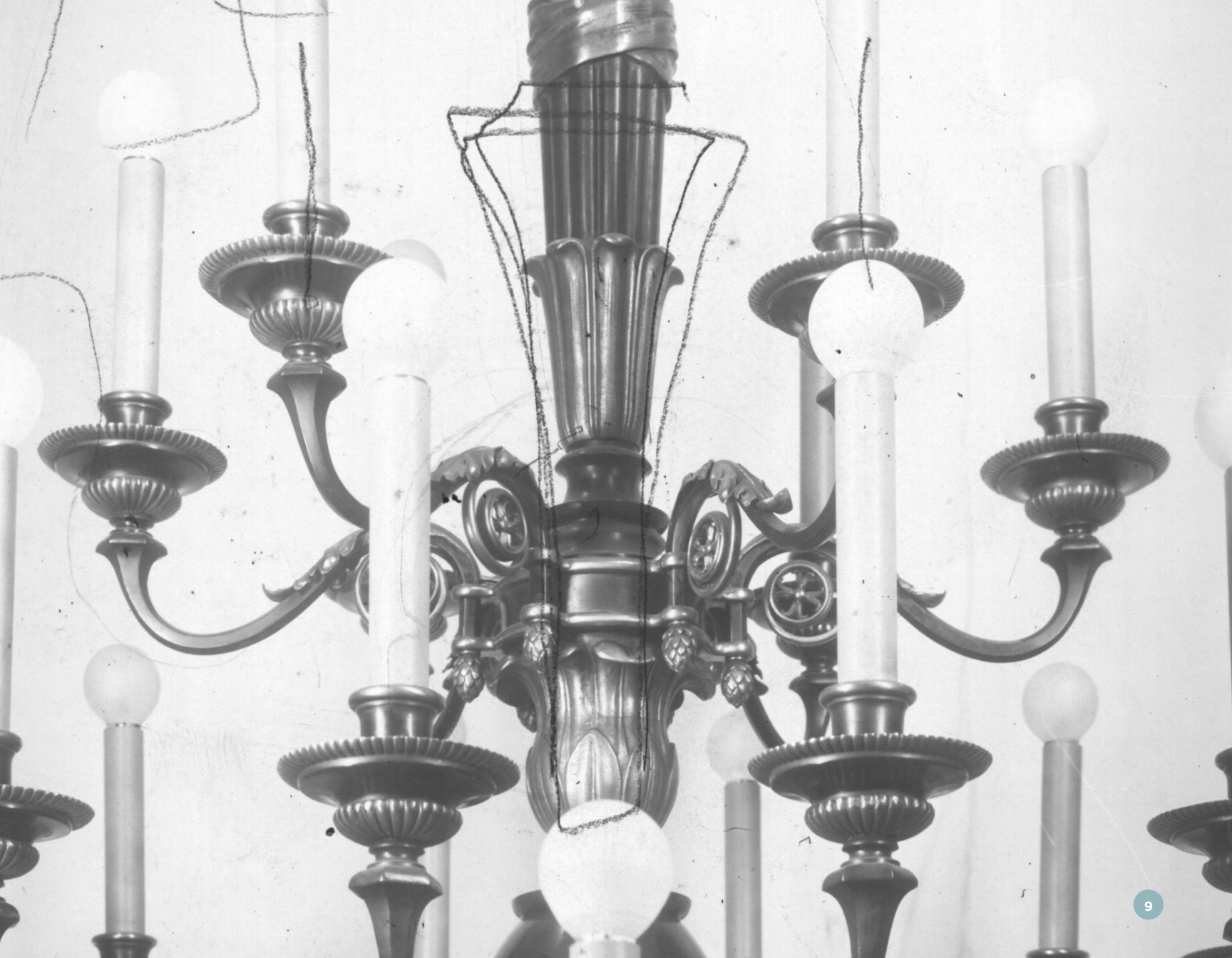
CADS; Joe is the President Emeritus of the Society and the President of the Board of Directors for the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies. CADS focuses on preservation and education, including the conservation of the historic Chicago Motor Club, which had fallen into disrepair and was shuttered. In 2012, CADS filed a Suggestion for Landmark Status, leading to the building’s recognition as a Chicago landmark, and in 2015, the newly-renovated building opened as a Hampton Inn, a great success for the building getting a new lease on life. CADS is also working on a book, *Art Deco Chicago: The Making of Modern American Culture*, which will include architecture, decorative arts, fine arts, and commercial/industrial uses of the style, exploring the role Chicago played in contributing to Art Deco in the United States.

It was through their combined interests of Art Deco and libraries that Jackie and

Joe proposed the idea for the internships. “We see these internships as a great opportunity and value,” says Jackie. “We are thrilled to invest in qualified, skilled students, and make authentic Art Deco material accessible to all.” Notes Joe, “We hope this project inspires Art Deco groups and groups of other disciplines as well. We’d love for people to replicate the projects by contacting their local libraries, museums, and archives and creating opportunities to make fascinating historical information more accessible within communities.”

For both Jackie and Joe, it is a dream come true to partner with the Smithsonian. “I am proud and honored to be associated with the Smithsonian,” says Joe. Adds Jackie, “The Smithsonian Libraries is a library that connects all of us – a national collection. People around the country don’t realize how much we all get from the Smithsonian and the Libraries.”







552,978
pages digitized



2,301
books and journals
digitized



24,116
items cataloged



875,788
website visitor
sessions

*Access
Stats
2015*



17,033,213
downloads of our
collections on
Internet Archive



115,437
followers on
Facebook, Twitter,
Tumblr, and Instagram



19,886

cubic feet “archival”
collections –
manuscripts, artist
files, and ephemera



2,039,844

general and special
collections



463,140

pieces of trade
literature

*Collection
Stats*
2015



7,544

gifts added to
the library



1,391

items treated at the
Book Conservation
Lab (rehousing and
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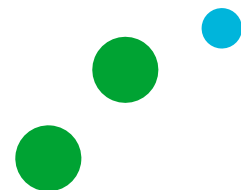


2,008

exchange titles
received

BURPEE FOUNDATION

CULTIVATING AMERICA'S GARDENS



Opening April 2017

For as long as he can remember, George Ball, Chairman and CEO of W. Atlee Burpee and Chairman of the Board of the Burpee Foundation, has been gardening. As a young boy, his grandmother would send him to the yard to weed, watching him from her rocking chair on the porch. As George recalls, at the beginning of one spring, tulips popped up and he was enraptured by their beauty – he'd never seen anything like them. Curious, he put his nose into a tulip; he was so small that the flower engulfed his entire face. George remembers feeling absorbed by the wonder of the tulip; it was like a little world, with the petals enveloping his cheeks and an ant crawling around inside. A fascination, love, and reverence for flowers was

born, as the tulip encounter tickled his senses of sight, smell, and touch. George was hooked, and gardening eventually became his lifelong work and passion.

When George heard of our need for funding for the upcoming exhibition, *Cultivating America's Gardens*, he and the members of the Burpee Foundation put the proposal on the top of their pile. "The Burpee Foundation is committed to educating the public about gardening and horticulture in the United States," says George. "We're thrilled to partner with the Smithsonian to tell the story of the American garden to visitors from all over the country and world, both in person and online."

Using books and objects from Smithsonian Libraries and Smithsonian Gardens, *Cultivating America's Gardens* will include topics such as early horticulture publications, prominent landscape designers, selling seeds, victory gardens, the romance of the American lawn, and gardens of today. The Burpee Foundation grant will fund exhibition design, fabrication, conservation of books and objects, installation, programming, website design, and marketing. The exhibition opens in the Smithsonian Libraries Gallery at the National Museum of American History in April 2017.

Cultivating America's Gardens will feature the Smithsonian Libraries' unique collection of 10,000 seed and nursery

“You don’t have a memory without these archival materials, and it’s vital to have caretakers committed to their preservation. These pieces are a history, a story of civilization.”



catalogs dating from 1830 to the present. The catalogs document the history of the seed and agricultural business in the U.S., as well as provide a history of botany and plant research such as the introduction of plant varieties into the U.S. Additionally, the seed trade catalogs are a window into a history of graphic arts in advertising, and a social history, through the text and illustrations, showing changing fashions in flowers and vegetables.

“The Smithsonian Libraries’ seed and nursery catalog collection is hugely important,” says George. “You don’t have a memory without these archival materials, and it’s vital to have caretakers committed to their preservation. These pieces are a history, a story of civilization.” While George stresses the scholarly element of the materials, he also emphasizes their exquisite delight. “While garden illustrators captured flowers and vegetables accurately, they had fun around the margins, through the text, and along the background. The colorful ads bring whimsy and cheer, a playfulness that is so important to visual arts.”

For George, time is the most interesting thing about gardening;

it is indirect, involving delayed and unintended gratification. “Timing is key,” says George.

“The secret of gardening is knowing when. You can give children a sense of time through gardening, gently introducing them to the ‘when’ of life.”

George’s fascination with gardening in America spans from historical to contemporary times. “America was overwhelmingly agricultural until the Industrial Revolution,” says George. “While there’s a growing movement today to ‘buy local,’ for most of history that’s all you could do.” He continues, “One particular feature of American gardens is space. When Europeans come to the U.S., the size of our gardens blows their minds. You really can’t conform the ‘American garden’ into a box - there is too much of a climate diversity between cities like Seattle, Boston, Phoenix, and Miami.

The only thing American gardens have in common is time.”

Asking George to choose his favorite plant is like asking a parent to choose his favorite child. However, he concedes that the onion is one of his most treasured plants due to the wonderful flavor it infuses in other vegetables and other foods. He encourages everyone to take up gardening, noting, “You can learn about your environment from a gardening perspective. When do winter, spring, summer, and fall come? How is the water running? Are you on a slope? Gardening is the ultimate local activity.”

(L-R) Nancy Gwinn, Director, Smithsonian Libraries; George Ball, CEO, W. Atlee Burpee; and Barbara Faust, Director, Smithsonian Gardens.







122

staff members



21

libraries



**\$1.42
million**

book and e-resource
budget

*Mission
Stats*
2015



\$1,379,877

raised

\$31,585

raised from book
adoptions



144

new donors

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Funds received from Oct. 1, 2014 to Sept. 30, 2015

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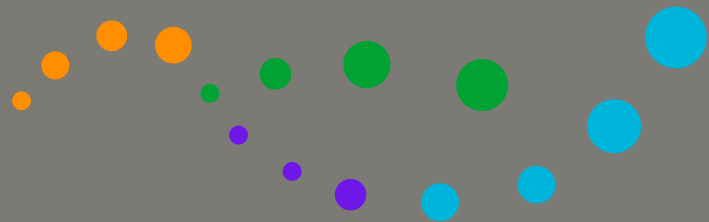
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