



## Anna Walinska to be Featured Artist in Nassau County Art Museum Jazz Age Exhibit Alongside Picasso, Leger, Beckmann, Stettheimer, Lachaise, and Other Influencers of the Roaring 20s in New Multimedia Show

Using the art, literature and music, Museum Director and Curator Charles Riley explores the masterpieces and experiments of Walinska and the groundbreaking artists in the generation that changed the history of Modernism

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Wild, hot, roaring, and free, the Jazz Age is immediately identified as the decadent heyday of such heroes as Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Josephine Baker, Gertrude Stein, e.e. cummings and other rebels who would “live it up to write it down” in New York, Paris and the Riviera. The giants among the painters were Picasso, Leger, Mondrian, Modigliani, Chagall, Lachaise, Maillol, Stuart Davis and Tamara de Lempicka. In the new exhibit, *Anything Goes: The Jazz Age in Art, Music and Literature*, opening at the Nassau County Museum of Art on March 24, 2018, there is one artist being featured whose name is less recognized, but whose art stands among the very best of the era: Anna Walinska.

Born in London and raised in New York City, Anna Walinska's life and art spans the century of American modernism, paralleling the history of the New York school and the American Jewish experience. A prolific painter, she created more than 2,000 works on canvas and paper over the course of her lifetime.

Walinska left New York at the age of 19 to study painting in Paris where she lived around the corner from Gertrude Stein, studied under André Lhote and spent time with Poulenc and Schoenberg at the literal center of the modernism movement. There, Walinska's talent took root and she began to develop into a formidable painter through contact with the major artists of the age, including Picasso, whom she once sketched in a café.

“The life and work of Anna Walinska are the most thrilling epitome of the entire Americans in Paris phenomenon, an irresistible combination of pluck and beauty, talent and the hunger to learn, and that enviable ability to be in the right place at the right time,” notes Nassau County Art Museum Curator Charles A. Riley II, Ph.D. Riley is also the author of two books on this era, including *Free as Gods: How the Jazz Age Reinvented Modernism*, featuring more on Walinska and her time in Paris. “I will never forget the revelation of seeing her Abstract Expressionist paintings for the first time, and that was my doorway to the even more fascinating Parisian years when she was right there, front row for the redefinition of Modernism in art.”

A full room of her work from this period – including the aforementioned Picasso, c.1928, a charcoal and watercolor artist portrait, *Paris Café*, 1929, a pastel on paper likely depicting *La Coupoule*, which Walinska was known to frequent, and several self-portraits – are at the center of this interactive show featuring the paintings, drawings, sculpture, fashion, first editions of monumental publications and musical that brings the Jazz Age vividly to life. *(continued)*



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"My grandfather didn't want his daughter sailing off to Paris. He wanted her to go to college, which was certainly forward-thinking in 1926," explains Rosina Rubin, Walinska's niece and the guardian of her impressive body of work. "But my aunt was determined to live her life as an artist, and knew that she had to go to Paris to study and experience the vitality and magic of that time and place."

The exhibit will also feature later works from the 1950's that showcase Walinska's turn to abstraction.

Always a woman ahead of her time, Walinska traveled around the world in the 1950s, alone, in the era of prop planes – something unheard of at that time. Her diary of this six-month journey now resides in the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution. Works by Walinska are included in numerous public collections, most notably the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Denver Art Museum, The Jewish Museum, the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, the Johnson Museum at Cornell, the Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers, and Yad Vashem.

This engaging exhibition will fill the opulent rooms of the former Frick mansion on Long Island's Gold Coast and be documented in a full-length catalogue published by the museum with essays by noted experts in the period and with each work illustrated and annotated. A full lecture and event series is under development to accompany the exhibit. A portion of proceeds from the March 2018 "Women in Art" Exhibition will benefit Edgewood Center for Children and Families.

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### **About Anna Walinska**

Anna Walinska's life and art spans the century of American modernism, paralleling the history of the New York school and the American Jewish experience. Known for her exhilarating joie de vivre, the irrepressible adventuress was born in London in 1906, moved to New York with her family in 1914, and by 1918 (at the young age of 12) had begun her education at the Art Students League.

Walinska created more than 2,000 works on canvas and works on paper over nine decades, with significant influences coming from her extended stays in Paris and Burma. Her body of work also includes several hundred works on the theme of the Holocaust and a series inspired by the 17th century Japanese erotic Shunga prints, which she began at the age of 76. Her work is found in numerous public and private collections in the U.S. and abroad. Since her death in 1997, her work has been showcased in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad.

Her work, Walinska wrote, "sought to convey the spirit of a search without boundaries."