

The image is a reproduction of the painting 'Nighthawks' by Edward Hopper. It depicts a diner at night, with a sign for 'RICHIE'S BARBER SHOP' visible in the window. The scene is characterized by strong contrasts of light and shadow, with the interior of the diner brightly lit against the dark exterior. The architecture is a two-story building with a row of windows on the upper floor. A fire hydrant is visible on the sidewalk in the foreground. The overall mood is one of quiet solitude and urban isolation.

AMERICAN MASTER

EDWARD HOPPER

# SELF-PORTRAIT

1925 - 1930

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Edward Hopper was born in Nyack, NY, in 1882. His father owned a dry-goods store.

The Hoppers were descendants of prosperous Dutch farmers whose roots in New York and northern New Jersey stretched back to the 1650s.

Taciturn and remote, the scourge of interviewers, Edward Hopper was the embodiment of a dour Yankee.



Whitney Museum of American Art

# NYACK, NEW YORK

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Twenty-five-miles north of Manhattan, perched on the western bank of the Hudson River, Nyack had a population of 4,000 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and was home to a variety of shipbuilders.

This 2020-era photograph of Nyack with its long horizon, Victorian architecture and river-view could have inspired a Hopper painting.



Nyack, NY  
Looking east over the Hudson River

## DEVELOPING A GIFT

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From an early age, Edward displayed an extraordinary talent for drawing, but his parents insisted he pursue a practical career path - commercial art.

During the winter of 1899, he studied illustration via a correspondence course.

The following year, he began a six-year program at the forward-leaning New York School of Art established in 1896 by widely-admired American impressionist, William Merritt Chase.



Looking at the Sea, 1891  
Private Collection



At the Seaside, 1892 by William Merritt Chase  
Metropolitan Museum of Art

## STUDENT DAYS 1900 - 1906

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Hopper studied painting with Chase and Robert Henri, influential leader of the Ashcan school of art which focused on producing realistic paintings of city life.

Both were gifted and generous teachers. Henri's student Jo Nivison Hopper said he "gave so generously to all of us like the bird that plucks the feathers out of his breast for the young."

The school Chase founded evolved into Parsons School of Design.

# ROBERT HENRI

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Henri urged his students to use their talents, “to make a stir in the world” and to “forget about art and paint pictures of what interests you in life.”

Hopper took that advice to heart.

Henri had studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts under a protege of Thomas Eakins who Hopper greatly admired.



Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney  
by Robert Henri, 1916  
Whitney Museum of American Art

# TRAVELS TO EUROPE

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After completing his studies in 1906, Hopper sailed for Europe. He visited England, Holland, Germany, and Belgium but stayed mostly in Paris. He admired the work of Degas, Manet and Rembrandt.

Hopper returned to Paris for six months in 1909 to paint. His last trip to France and Spain was in 1910.

Aside from a few visits to Mexico in the 1940s, this quintessentially American artist spent his time exploring the USA - from Maine to California.



Notre Dame #2, 1907  
Whitney Museum of American Art

# THE ARMORY SHOW

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In 1913, a group of artists banded together to organize the first large exhibit of modern art in America – the result was the 1913 Armory Show - 300 artists contributed 1300 works.

Among them was 30-year-old Edward Hopper who sold a 1911 oil called *Sailing* for \$250 to a private collector.

It was Hopper's first sale of his artwork. It was also the last sale of his art for ten years.



Carnegie Museum of Art



“Living Up To Your Employment System”  
*The Magazine of Business*, July 1913

## ILLUSTRATOR

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Hopper used his skills as a commercial illustrator to capture his frustrations about knocking on doors at ad agencies and magazines looking for free-lance work.



Google Maps, Screenshot

## GREENWICH VILLAGE

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Hopper commuted to New York during his school years and first moved into the city in 1908.

In 1913, he found a studio at 3 Washington Square North - his home for the rest of his life.

His studio was as spartan as the rooms in his paintings. Biographer Lloyd Goodrich described it as "looking somewhat like a carpenter's shop."

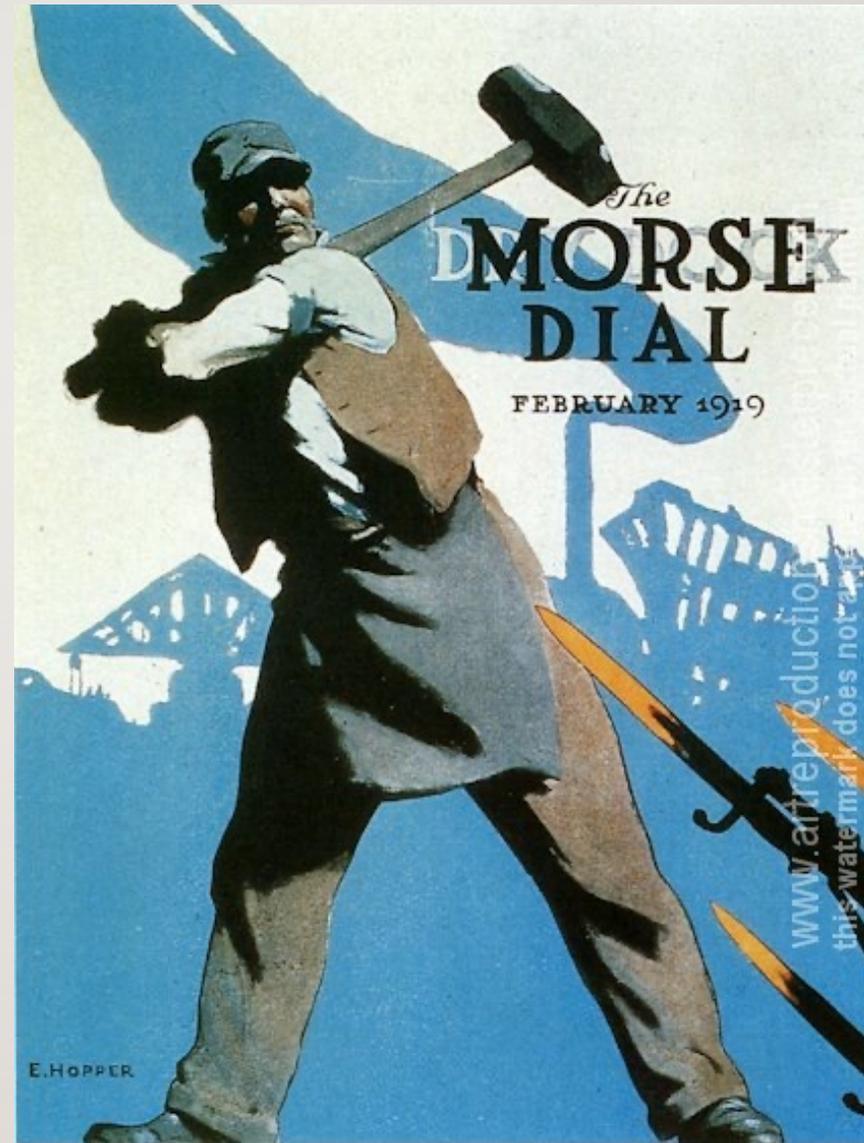


## 1<sup>ST</sup> PRIZE

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While World War I raged in Europe, *The Sun* newspaper sponsored a contest for the cover of Brooklyn-based Morse Dry Dock and Repair Company's in-house newsletter.

Hopper's cover, titled *Smash the Hun*, won first prize.





Portrait, 1918, *The Sun*

## PORTRAIT, 1918

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“Partly through choice, I was never willing to hire out more than three days a week [as an illustrator].

I kept some time to do my own work.

Illustrating was a depressing experience. And I didn't get very good prices because I didn't often do what they wanted.”

Edward Hopper  
*Art Digest*, April 1, 1955

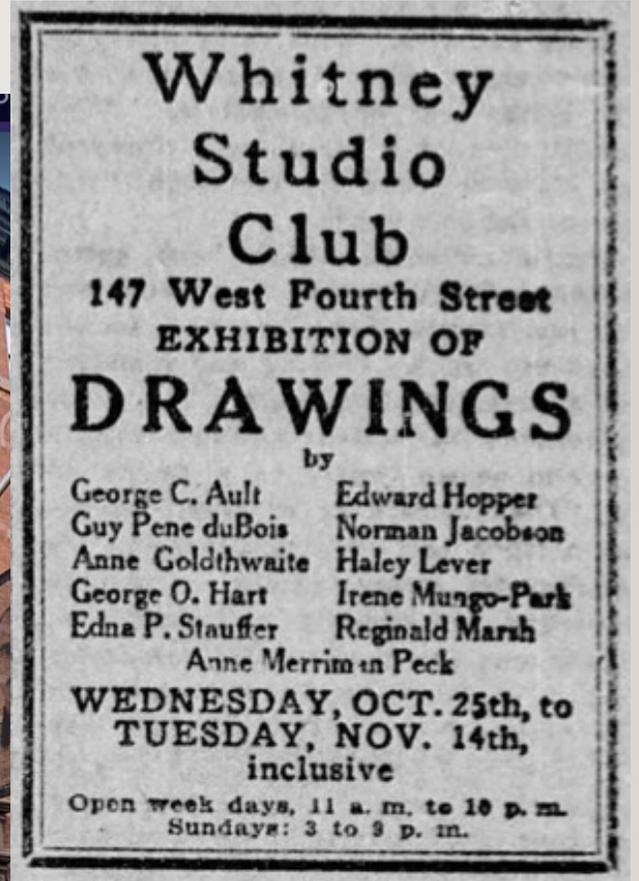
# WHITNEY STUDIO CLUB

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Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney opened a “cheerful” space for young artists to meet, chat and exhibit on the parlor and basement floors of an “old fashion house” on W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. a few steps off 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.

The Whitney Studio Club launched Hopper’s career as a fine artist.

Exhibits at the Club brought his “delightful” work favorable attention.



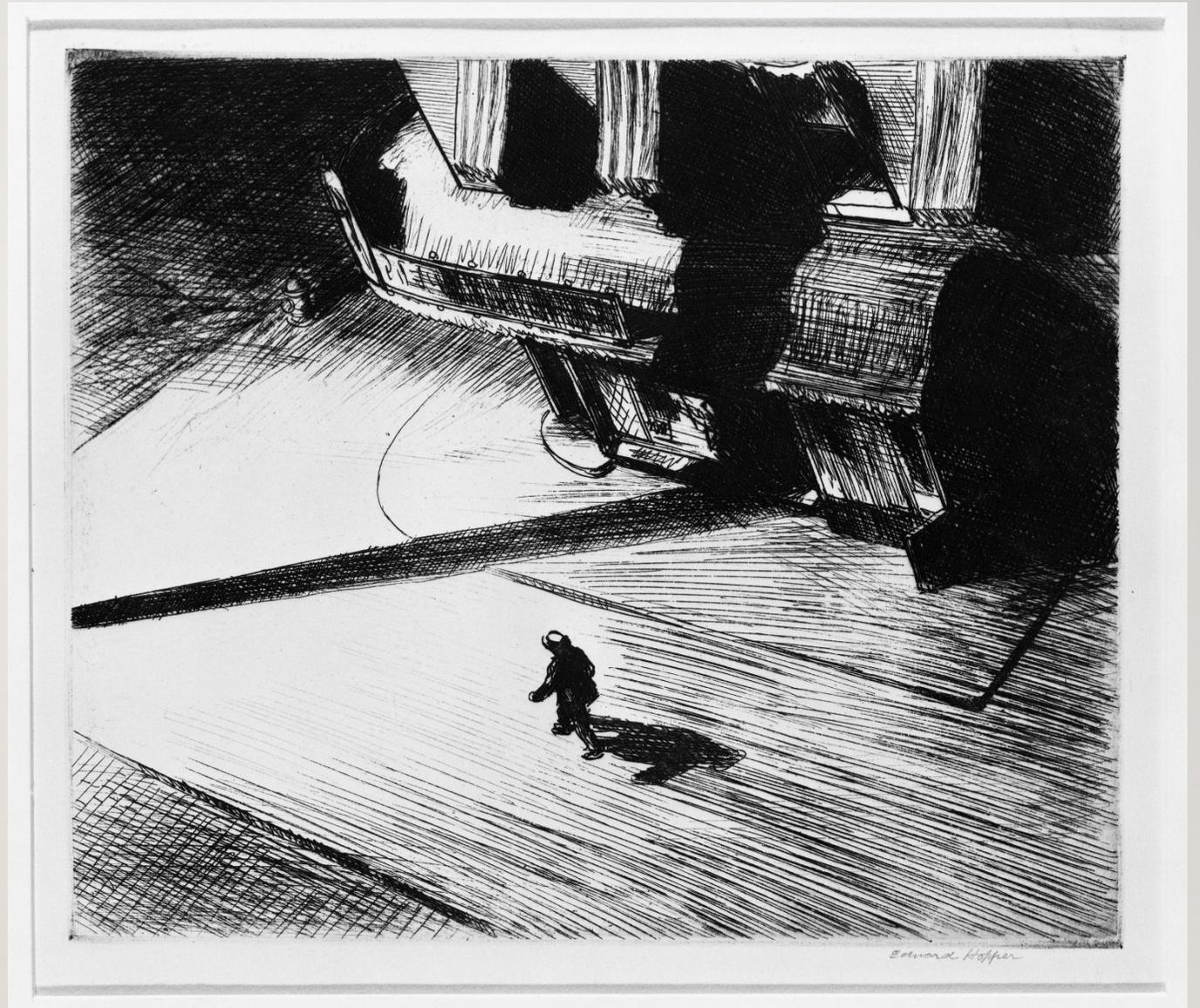
# ETCHINGS

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Hopper took up etching in 1915 and produced about 30 plates over the next few years.

His etchings of New York street scenes and interiors point to the path he would take going forward.

*Night Shadows*, 1921  
Brooklyn Museum





Edward Hopper

Whitney Museum of American Art

## EVENING WIND, 1921

The influential *New York Herald* reported on an early 1922 exhibit at the Brown-Robertson Galleries:

“A little known etcher who stands out in the present exhibition is Edward Hopper, whose “Evening Wind” and “Eastside Interior” show positive promise.

The “Evening Wind,” in particular, is full of spirit, composed with a sense of the dramatic possibilities of ordinary materials, and is well etched.”



## THE MANSARD ROOF

In 1923, Hopper was forty-one years old and had had limited success as an artist.

That was about to change thanks to his talent and three supporters – the always generous Robert Henri, visionary Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, and art critic Helen Appleton Read, daughter of a well-to-do Brooklyn banker.

At the end of the year, Hopper had his first sale in ten years when *The Mansard Roof*, painted in Gloucester, Mass. that summer, was purchased by a patron for the Brooklyn Museum.



Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Oral History, Archives of American Art  
Philadelphia, PA Recorded June 17, 1959

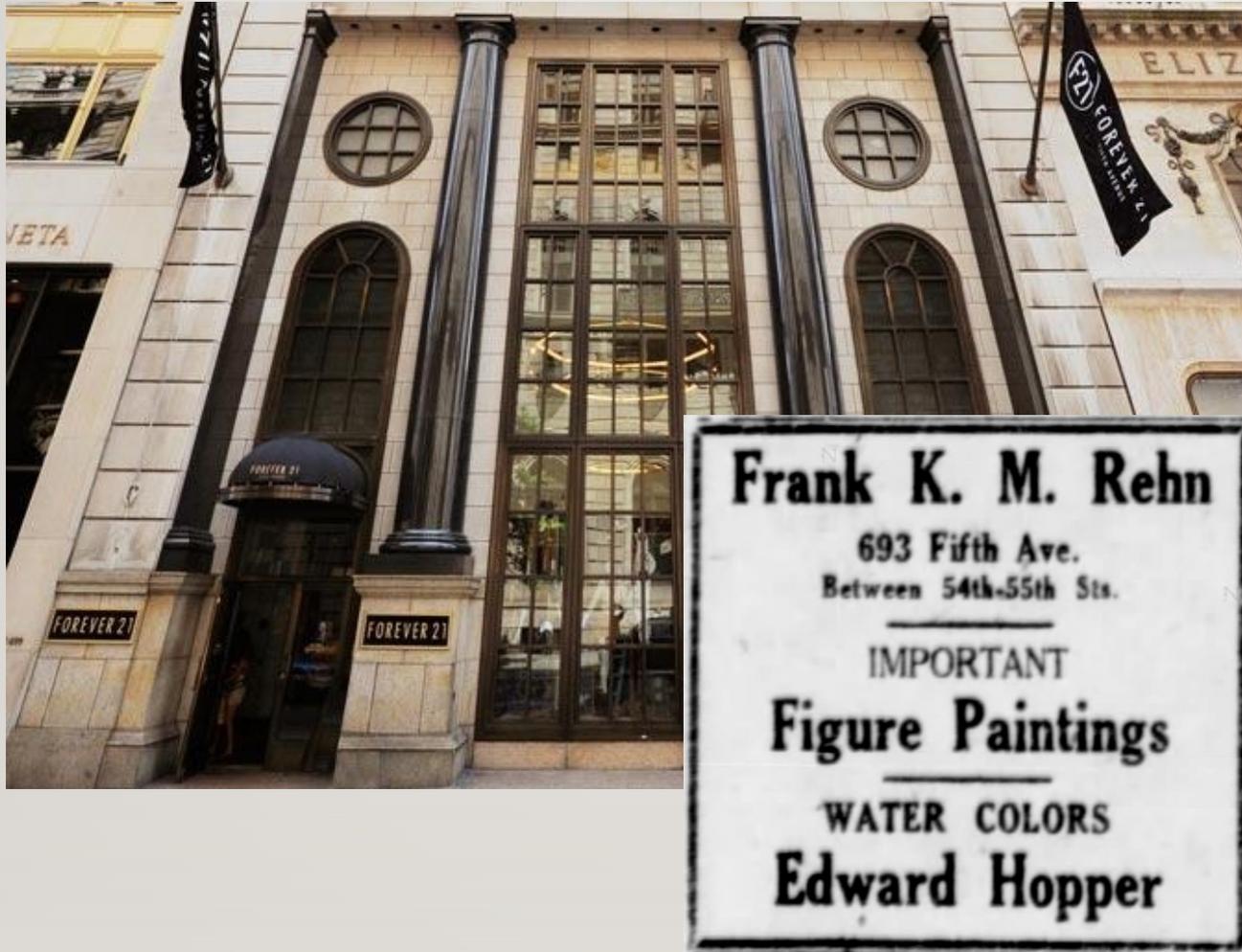
## APARTMENT HOUSES, 1923

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After years of struggle, in 1923 Edward Hopper produced the painting that “crystallized” his style “that one looks in and out.”

That same year, the painting was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the first and oldest art school in America.

The Academy purchased Apartment Houses, 1923 - the first sale of a Hopper oil painting to a museum.



## SUCCESS

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His flirtation with etching over, Hopper refocused on working in oil and watercolor.

In 1924 the well-established Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery hosted the first exhibit of Hopper's watercolors. All eleven paintings in the exhibit sold, plus five more.

Hopper's partnership with Rehn endured for the rest of their lives.

# JO NIVISON

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In 1924, finally established, 42-year-old Edward Hopper married Josephine Nivison, his fellow artist and long-standing model. Jo gave his paintings their terse but evocative names.

Born in New York City in 1883, charming, gracious, and chatty, Jo was the antithesis of Edward Hopper.

They first met at The New York School of Art and continued to bump into each other through various Robert Henri-cultivated connections - at a boarding house frequented by artists in Ogunquit, Maine and at art exhibits.



Self-Portrait

Edward Hopper House Museum and Study Center, Nyack, New York.



Currier Museum of Art  
Manchester, NH

## THE BOOTLEGGERS

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In late 1925, Helen Appleton Read wrote about a Hopper painting on exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum.

“The title ... serves only as an exclamation point to emphasize the originality of the composition...”

...evidence of Hopper’s ability to compose the commonplace into dramatic and powerful designs.”



## DRUG STORE, 1927

When Hopper delivered this painting to the Rehn Gallery, Peggy Rehn thought the reference to Ex-Lax was “indelicate” and had Hopper change the second X to a C.

Bostonian John T. Spaulding bought the painting for \$1,500, and had Hopper change it back.

“Now known as Drug Store, the painting is one of Hopper’s early masterpieces. Many of the themes and devices seen in his later work are evident in this striking picture.”

Elliot Bostwick Davis, *American Painting*  
MFA

# THE HOUSE BY THE RAILROAD, 1925

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For a “retrospective” of his work at the Museum of Modern Art in 1933, Hopper wrote, “...it is the art of all time of definite personalities that remain forever modern by the fundamental truth that is in them.

It makes Moliere at his greatest as new as Ibsen or Giotto as modern as Cezanne.”

Edward Hopper  
"Notes on Painting"  
Museum of Modern Art Catalogue, 1933



Museum of Modern Art

# AUTOMAT, 1927

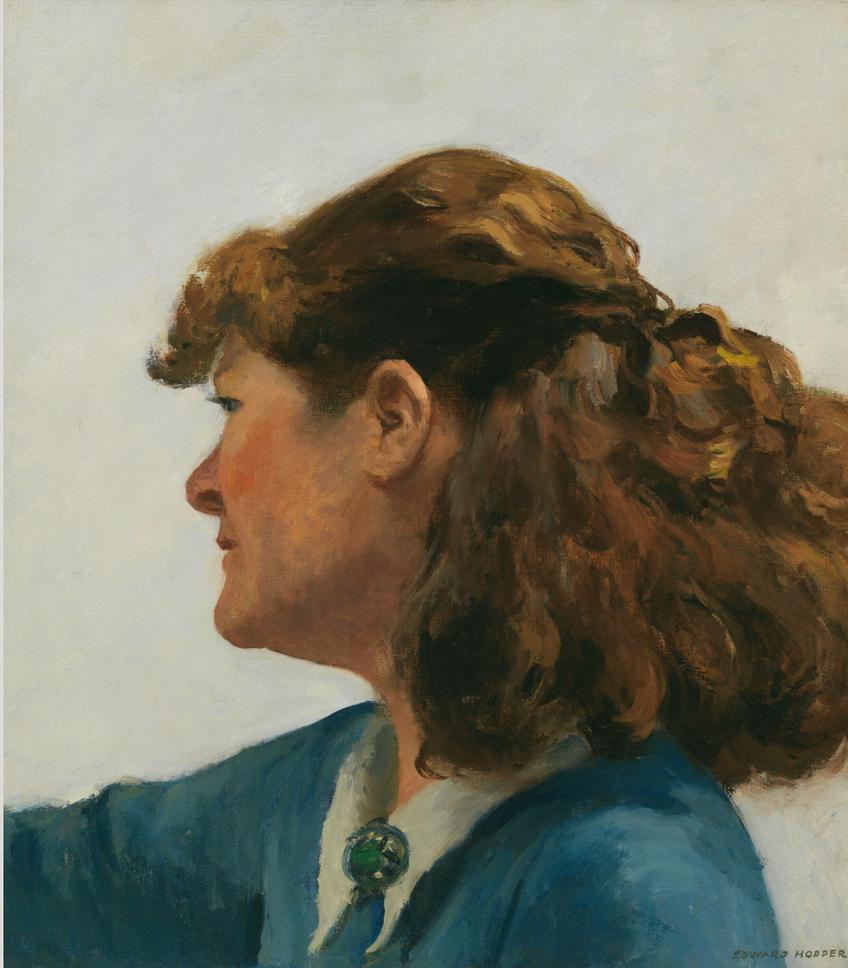
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“So much of every art is an expression of the subconscious that it seems to me most of all the important qualities are put there unconsciously, and little of importance by the conscious intellect. But these are things for the psychologist to untangle.”

Edward Hopper,  
Letter to Charles H. Sawyer,  
Curator of The Addison Gallery of American Art at  
Phillips Academy, Andover, MA  
October 29, 1939



Des Moines Art Center



Whitney Museum of American Art

## JO PAINTING, 1936

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Hopper described this portrait of his wife as “intense and affectionate.”

Asked how she coped living with an “American monument,” Jo said, “We manage to get on.” She added, “I have a studio of my own, so I’m out -- all my things are out from underfoot, which is very fortunate.”

1964 Interview at MFA

# EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, 1930

SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK  
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

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“All I ever wanted to do is to paint sunlight on the side of a wall.”

Edward Hopper, 1933



RICHIE'S  
BARBER SHOP

# ROOM IN NEW YORK, 1932

“The idea for “Room in New York” had been in my mind a long time before I painted it. It was suggested by glimpses of lighted interiors seen as I walked along city streets at night, probably near the district where I live ( Greenwich Village), although it’s no particular street or house, but is really a synthesis of many impressions.”

*Life Magazine*, August 1935



Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery  
Lincoln, Nebraska

# GROUND SWELL, 1939

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“My aim in painting has always been the most exact transcription possible of my most intimate impressions of nature.

If this end is unattainable, so, it can be said, is perfection in any other ideal of painting or in any other of man's activities.”

Edward Hopper  
“Notes on Painting,”  
Museum of Modern Art Catalogue, 1933



National Gallery of Art

# GAS, 1940

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“Great art is the outward expression of an inner life in the artist, and this inner life will result in his personal vision of the world.”

No amount of skillful invention can replace the essential element of imagination.”

Edward Hopper  
*Reality Magazine*, 1953



Museum of Modern Art

# NIGHTHAWKS, 1942

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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“In general, it can be said that a nation's art is greatest when it most reflects the character of its people.”

Edward Hopper, “Notes on Painting,”  
Museum of Modern Art, Catalogue, 1933

Jo and Hopper were the models for the customers at the diner.



Sketch for Nighthawks  
Whitney Museum of American Art



Nighthawks, 1942  
Art Institute of Chicago

EDWARD HOPPER



Phillips Collection

Oral History, Archives of American Art  
Recorded June 17, 1959

## APPROACHING A CITY, 1946

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“Well, I've always been interested in approaching a big city in a train, and I can't exactly describe the sensations, but they're entirely human and perhaps have nothing to do with aesthetics.

There is a certain fear and anxiety and a great visual interest in the things that one sees coming into a great city. I think that's about all I can say about it.”

Edward Hopper

## SEVEN A.M., 1948

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“Originality is neither a matter of inventiveness nor method, it is the essence of personality.”

“It is hard for me to know what to paint. It comes slowly.”

Edward Hopper



Whitney Museum of American Art



Smithsonian American Art Museum

Oral History, Archives of American Art  
Recorded June 17, 1959.

## CAPE COD MORNING, 1950

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JOHN MORSE: *Cape Cod Morning*. Do you recall painting it? Was it a pleasure to paint, as well as to look at today?

EDWARD HOPPER: Well, they're a pleasure in a sense, and yet they're all hard work to me. I can't say that it's pure pleasure. There's so much technical concerns involved.

JOHN MORSE: Well, why do you like it today, do you think?

EDWARD HOPPER: Well, as I say, it comes perhaps nearer to my thought about the things than many of the others. That's all I can say about it.

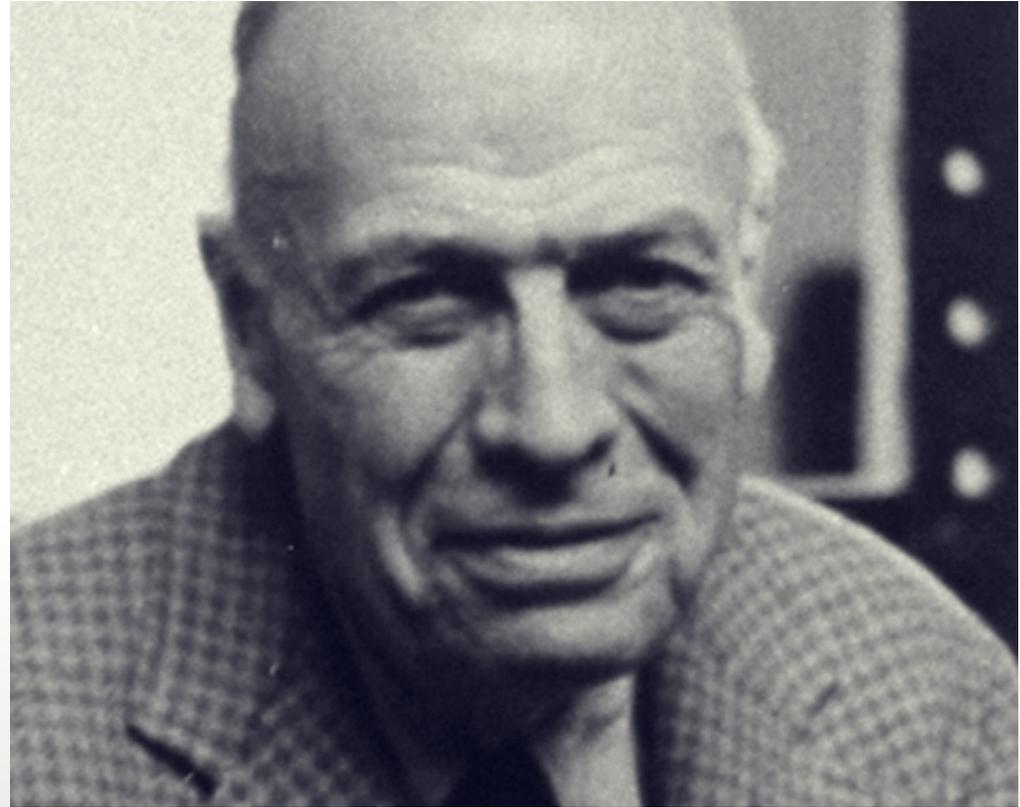
## TO EXPLAIN HIS WORK, HOPPER QUOTED GOETHE

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”The beginning and end of all literary activity is the reproduction of the world that surrounds me by a means of the world that is in me, all things being grasped, related, recreated, molded and reconstructed in a personal form and an original manner.”

“To me, that applies to painting, fundamentally...”

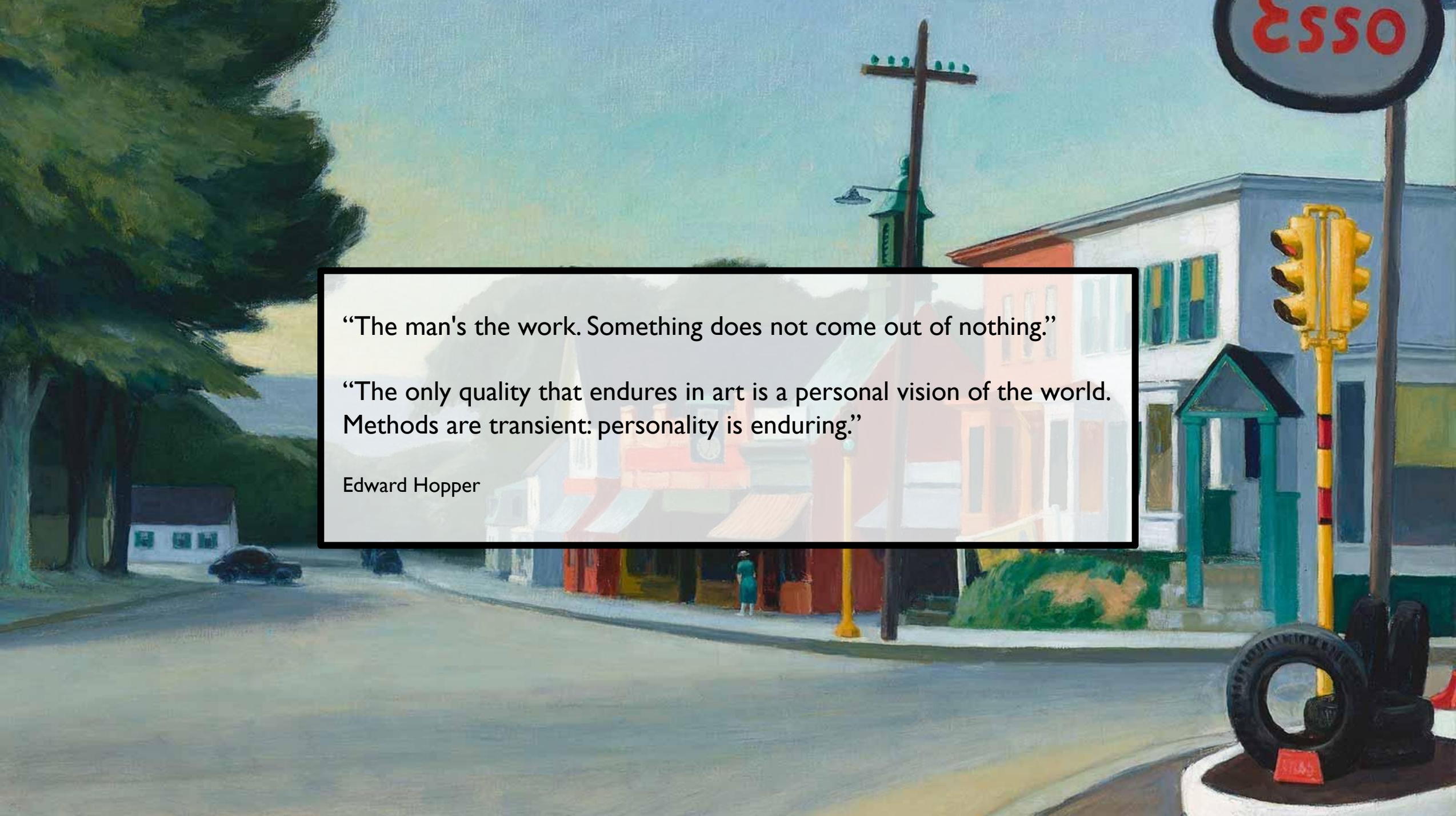
Edward Hopper  
Interview conducted by Brian O’Doherty  
1964, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA



## POINTS TO PONDER...

- Why do you think Hopper's career took off in the 1920s?
- Hopper's style never changed but it matured and became stronger. Why or how do you think that happened?
- How did Hopper benefit from having champions like Gertrude Whitney, Robert Henri and Helen Appleton Read, among others?
- If you could own a Hopper painting, would it be a seascape, a landscape, a cityscape, an interior?
- Which is your favorite – or your favorites – Hopper painting/s?
- Did marrying Jo allow Hopper to be more successful than he would have been on his own?

*The Long Leg, ca. 1935*  
The Huntington



“The man's the work. Something does not come out of nothing.”

“The only quality that endures in art is a personal vision of the world.  
Methods are transient: personality is enduring.”

Edward Hopper

# MANY THANKS TO...

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The Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover, MA

Art Institute of Chicago

Brooklyn Museum

Carnegie Museum of Art

Currier Museum of Art

Des Moines Art Center

Edward Hopper, Forbes Watson, editor., *The Arts Portfolio Series*, 1930

EdwardHopper.net

Edward Hopper House Museum and Study Center, Nyack, New York.

Goodrich, Lloyd, *Edward Hopper*. London: Penguin Books, 1949

Google Maps

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Museum of Modern Art

# CONTINUED...

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Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

newspapers.com

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Phillips Collection

Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Josephine N. Hopper Papers

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery

The Sun

Whitney Museum of American Art

Wikipedia entries for Edward Hopper and Nyack, NY.

Interview of Edward and Josephine Hopper by Brian O'Doherty, at the Boston Museum of Fine Art, 1964

Oral history interview with Edward Hopper, June 17, 1959, Smithsonian Archives of American Art



Chop Suey, 1929  
Private Collection