

# Presseinformation

## Museum am Rothenbaum

### Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg Germany | [markk-hamburg.de](http://markk-hamburg.de)

#### **Distinguished: Women Artists of the Inventory**

**Duration: May 15, 2019 until further notice**

The exhibition explores for the first time a fascinating body of detailed and sometimes colored drawings of objects created behind the scenes at the museum during the first half of the 20th century. This inventory art is the work of female museum employees who worked behind the scenes of the male-dominated institution at the time. For the first time, the female draftsmen who were employed to document the collections at the time are brought into the public eye. The exhibition pays tribute to the women's work, assigns them authorship of their works and distinguishes them as artists.

From 1907, the museum employed a large number of women draftsmen. They illustrated inventory cards, which were used to document the collection's holdings and are still used as an important working tool in the museum today.

Until now, the women artists of the inventory, who did important work, have never been appreciated and have been forgotten. Only a detailed research in annual reports, personnel and collection files, contemporary correspondence, and in scholarly works has so far been able to identify 21 of the women draftsmen.

For the exhibition, it was possible to reconstruct individual biographies in parts. They paint a picture of the social situation at that time, the educational and professional opportunities for women. A large number of historical photographs from the museum's archives complement the picture of the women drawn in the exhibition and also provide an insight into the working situation in the museum at that time.

For the first time, the exhibition makes an attempt to assign the unsigned drawings to their respective authors. The large selection of drawings of museum objects on display testifies to artistically high-quality work and also reveals a respective individual approach to the task as well as a distinct drawing and painting style. Selected objects are combined with the inventory drawings, allowing visitors to compare the image with the original.

The presentation is complemented by collections of objects created by individual draftswomen, which reveal further interests of the women. The exhibition title refers to their possible career aspirations and life goals, the fulfillment of which was made difficult or even impossible by social circumstances in the first half of the 20th century.

*Sponsored by the Hamburg Ministry for Culture and Media*

Quotations about the exhibition

Prof. Barbara Plankensteiner, Director MARKK: "The exhibition *Distinguished: Women Artists of the Inventory* not only sheds light on a forgotten chapter of our museum history and pays tribute to achievements behind the scenes. It also invites us to look more closely and attentively at the things in our collection and to understand them - and thus to value the cultural and artistic achievements embodied in them by the people who once created them."

Rahel Wille, Curator: "For more than a hundred years, the more than 100,000 inventory cards have been stored in the museum's archives, and they are still

**Weitere Medieninformationen und Bildmaterial:**

**Julia Daumann | Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit | Museum am Rothenbaum  
fon +49 40 428 879 – 548 | mail [presse@markk-hamburg.de](mailto:presse@markk-hamburg.de)**

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MUSEUM AM ROTHENBAUM  
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regularly brought out as working tools. Due to the high-quality drawings, the cards certainly deserve to be regarded as works of art and equal museum objects. Their examination also immediately raises questions about their creators and how they went about recording the objects in drawings."