

ANDREA MONFRIED EDITIONS

PRESS RELEASE

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Scholars Rediscover a Lost American Artist

*Book Celebrates 90th Anniversary of Her First Masterpiece
First Release from Andrea Monfried Editions*

NEW YORK, NY March, 2014 — Ninety years after the completion of her first commission at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., a lost artist's work is being recognized with a lavishly illustrated new book. Hildreth Meière (1892-1961) was a well-known American muralist surprisingly few have heard of today, though 100 of her masterpieces are hiding in plain sight in several American cities. On May 1, 2014, Andrea Monfried Editions will release the first monograph on her work, *The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière* by Catherine Coleman Brawer and Kathleen Murphy Skolnik, with photographs by the artist's granddaughter Hildreth Meière Dunn and a foreword by noted architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson. The volume explores the life and work of the trailblazer behind some of the most spectacular murals of the 20th century. Nearly forgotten now, Meière achieved renown in an era when female artists rarely gained acceptance. In May 2014, her *Pillars of Hercules* (1960) will be accessible for the first time in decades, newly conserved and installed at Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. Also in May 2014, New York audiences can learn more about Meière's monumental works when Open House New York organizes a "Meière Crawl" of the artist's dazzling sites across Manhattan.



Hildreth Meière, 1924

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Born and educated in New York City, Hildreth Meière left her mark on the nation including: installations at the 1939 New York World's Fair; Radio City Music Hall's facade (iconic figures of Dance, Drama and Song); Saint Patrick's Cathedral (altarpiece); the banking room at One Wall Street; St. Bartholomew's Church (stained glass and shimmering gold narthex domes telling the story of Creation); Temple Emanu-El (arch and ark in the main sanctuary); and the Nebraska State Capitol. Leading architect Bertram G. Goodhue gave her her first major commission, the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., launching her career.

Tens of thousands of tiny glass or marble "tesserae" often appear in a single work designed by Meière and executed by European-trained craftsmen. An early proponent of Art Deco, she combined exquisite design with innovative materials and techniques during a five-decade career. In 1948 she was the first woman appointed to the New York City Art Commission, and in 1956 she became the first woman to receive the Fine Arts Medal of the American Institute of Architects. Illustrating subjects ranging from astronomy to women's achievements, she drew upon such diverse sources as classical mythology, Byzantine mosaics, and Native American art. Dozens of her works in 16 states, from Nebraska to New York, engage hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The authors have written *The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière* to lift her name out of obscurity.



**Banking room, One Wall Street, 1931.
Photo by Hildreth Meière Dunn.**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Catherine Coleman Brawer is an art historian and curator. She is the author of *Chinese Export Porcelain: The Elvehjem Museum of Art* and *The Studio Building* and coauthor of *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970–1985*. She curated the exhibition *Walls Speak: The Narrative Art of Hildreth Meière*, which was shown in New York and Washington, D.C., and wrote the accompanying catalogue.

Kathleen Murphy Skolnik, an art and architectural historian, is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of History, Art History, and Philosophy at Roosevelt University in Chicago. She collaborated with Robert Brueggemann on *The Architecture of Harry Weese* and has contributed to the Chicago Architects Oral History Project of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is the editor of the *Chicago Art Deco Society Magazine* and has written and lectured extensively on Art Deco-related topics.

Since 2007, **Hildreth Meière Dunn** has photographed more than 40 sites and more than 150 artworks created by her grandmother, Hildreth Meière. Her photographs have appeared in newspapers and magazines, including in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Stamford Magazine*, *Chicago Art Deco Society Magazine*, and the *Blue Guide New York*, and in television news and documentary programs on Meière's work.

Richard Guy Wilson holds the Commonwealth Professor's Chair in Architectural History at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. He is the author or coauthor of sixteen books on American and modern architecture.

ABOUT ANDREA MONFRIED EDITIONS:

Andrea Monfried has directed over 200 illustrated books in her years at Rizzoli, Monacelli Press, as founding editor, and Random House. She founded Andrea Monfried Editions in 2012 to bring together her two-plus decades of editorial experience with her knowledge of production and marketing in the digital era. Her list includes works by exceptional artists, architects, photographers, and designers.



50th Street facade of Radio City Music Hall, 1932.
Photo by Hildreth Meière Dunn.