

Back to the Beginning

Initiatives in Art and Culture explores early expressions of the Arts and Crafts movement in and around Syracuse, New York

September 17-21, 2025

**Initiatives in Arts and Culture's
27th Annual Arts and Crafts
Conference**

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By Sarah Gianelli

For nearly 30 years, Initiatives in Art and Culture (IAC) has curated an immersive fall conference dedicated to the Arts and Crafts movement in America.

For the 27th annual event, IAC is venturing to Syracuse in Central New York, an area that, according to IAC president and founder Lisa Koenigsberg, has been relatively underexplored in terms of its significance in the arts and crafts movement.

"Ceramics, stained glass, book arts and, of course, furniture flourished here," says Koenigsberg. "In this conference, we'll explore touchstones of the movement, as it's helpful to understand its evolution and its expressions sequentially, thus the circa 1900 emphasis."

Two of the central figures of the movement who will receive significant attention are furniture designer and entrepreneur Gustav Stickley who published the seminal important *The Craftsman* and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, a ceramicist and publisher of the important journal *Keramic Studio*. The conference, which consists of scholar-led tours and talks, will focus on these key individuals and other equally impressive practitioners,



Adelaide Alsop Robineau (1865-1929), one of the top ceramicists of her era and a key figure in the arts and crafts movement in Syracuse, NY.



The Landmark Theatre (originally Loew's State Theater) was designed by architect Thomas W. Lamb and opened in 1928. Restoration, Holmes King Kallquist & Associates.



Ward Wellington Ward (1875-1932), Estabrook Mansion, Wellington House, 1922-1923, Fayetteville, NY. Image courtesy Preservation League of New York State.

including that of architect Ward Wellington Ward.

True to tradition, the conference consists of visits to premier cultural institutions and sites of major architectural, cultural and civic importance. Through these site visits, as well as lectures, studio tours and informal discussions, IAC's *Arts and Crafts Conference* explores the full scope of expressions of the movement, including how it has informed the art and architecture that followed it. Drawing participants from across the U.S., the conference is attended by collectors, preservationists, art and architectural historians, artisans, academics, enthusiasts and students.

Arts and Crafts Conference attendees will tour the Gustav Stickley House led by preservation architect Beth Crawford with a focus on its ongoing restoration. They will visit the Everson Museum of Art to view the significant collection of ceramic works by Robineau and sessions with curator Garth Johnson. Other highlights include a tour of Syracuse's May Memorial Unitarian Church to view its extensive furniture collection and the 1903 stained-glass window designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany; the historic Landmark Theater designed by architect Thomas Lamb; and a

trip to Dalton's American Decorative Arts. Architectural tours of Syracuse's downtown and residential areas are also on the agenda, as are trips to culturally significant sites in nearby Auburn and Fayetteville, among them the Estabrook Mansion/Ward Wellington Ward House constructed between 1922 and 1923.

"It's critical to explore the essence of the movement to understand its offshoots," says Koenigsberg. "One of the most impactful ways of doing that is to immerse yourself in what could be seen as a point of departure for the Arts and Crafts movement in America. It's also one key to understanding our current desire for authenticity,

faithfulness to material, craftsmanship, artisanry, community, and 'fewer better things.' Stickley's philosophical approach was very much in line with that. It's both understanding the movement in its early efflorescence, while at the same time shedding light on our own time by looking at the past."

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Visit www.artinitiatives.com to register and for additional details. ■



Gustav Stickley (1858-1942), attributed to Harvey Ellis, designer, settee with inlaid panels, 1903-1904, Eastwood, NY, Oak, copper, pewter, various woods. Image courtesy the Robert Kaplan Collection.