

**Frank Alvah Parsons lectures on art
and prints of period rooms, 1917-1922
KA.0037**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Kellen Design Archives

Aug 2, 2010

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Collection Overview

Repository	Kellen Design Archives
Creator	Parsons, Frank Alvah, 1868-1930
Title	Frank Alvah Parsons lectures on art and prints of period rooms
Date [inclusive]	1917-1922
Extent	1.8 linear ft: 3 boxes
Summary	Frank Alvah Parsons (1866-1930) began as an instructor at the New York School of Art in 1904. In 1911 he became director, renaming the school the New York School of Fine and Applied Art to reflect his reorientation of the institution's focus toward the practical design disciplines. The school was later renamed to honor Parsons' leadership. The collection

is comprised of published editions of 21 of Parsons' lectures on art, and includes prints of period rooms he used to illustrate his lectures.

Preferred Citation note

[Identification of item], [date (if known)], Frank Alvah Parsons lectures on art and prints of period rooms, KA.0037, box __, folder __, New School Archives, The New School, New York, New York.

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Biographical note

Frank Alvah Parsons was born April 1, 1866 in Chesterfield, Massachusetts. In 1901, after a period of European travel, Parsons moved to New York City where he pursued a degree in Art Education from Columbia University, graduating in 1905.

Parsons began teaching at the New York School of Art (later Parsons The New School for Design) during the 1904-1905 academic year. At that time, the New York School of Art was primarily an institution for the instruction of fine arts. Parsons became co-manager of the school in 1907, and in 1911, became the school's director. Innovations Parsons introduced include the addition of departments for costume design, interior decoration, and commercial illustration (these departments would eventually become known as Fashion Design, Interior Design, and Graphic Design, respectively). Parsons reincorporated the school as the New York School of Fine and Applied Art in 1911. In 1921, he established overseas facilities for the school in France. The Paris Ateliers evolved into what is now Parsons Paris.

In the public imagination, Parsons became inextricably linked to the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts. Through relentless speaking engagements and print publicity undertaken on school's behalf, Parsons raised the institution's profile on an international level. He also found the time to serve as a mentor and guide to many students, including William MacDougal Odom and Van Day Truex, both of whom would later serve as presidents of the school.

In addition to administering the New York School of Fine and Applied Art, Parsons continued teaching and often lectured at museums, universities, organizations, and private clubs throughout the United States and Europe. He wrote several design books, including *The Principles of Advertising Arrangement* (1912), *Interior Decoration, Its Principles and Practice* (1915), and *The Psychology of Dress* (1920).

Frank Alvah Parsons died On May 25, 1930. The New York School of Fine and Applied Art was formally re-named Parsons School of Design in 1941.

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Scope and Contents of Collection

The collection consists of the text of 21 lectures given by Frank Alvah Parsons and published individually by Ross Studios between 1917 and 1922. The collection also includes approximately 100 black and white prints depicting historic rooms and four prints of color charts. Some prints are numbered and were most likely used by Parsons as visual aids. The publications may also have been sold bundled with illustrations.

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Organization and Arrangement

Arranged in 2 series. Lectures are chronological according to numeration on publication title pages; lecture illustrations are by lecture number.

- I [Art: Its Principles and Practice as Applied to Modern Life](#)
- II [Lecture illustrations](#)

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Administrative Information

Publication Information

Kellen Design Archives Aug 2, 2010

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research use. Please contact archivist@newschool.edu for appointment.

Use Restrictions

To publish images of material from this collection, permission must be obtained in writing from the New School Archives. Please contact: archivist@newschool.edu.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Probably transferred to the archives from Parsons School of Design's Adam and Sophie Gimbel Art and Design Library circa 1994.

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Related Materials

The following collections in the New School Archives include notes on Frank Alvah Parsons' lectures: the Marion Reed student notebook (KA.0069), the Roy Fleming collection (KA.0065), and the Cleora Clark Wheeler student notebook and bookplates (KA.0061). The Harry B. Baker papers (KA.0090) include a letter from Parsons describing his dismissal of the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts' student government in 1927. The Constance P. Brown papers (KA.0057) include clippings about Parson's

lectures and his death, promotional materials for his books and lectures, and correspondence from Parsons to Brown. The Francis J. Geck papers (KA.0052) include correspondence from Frank Alvah Parsons regarding Geck's teaching and tour coordinator post at the Paris Ateliers in the 1920s. The Geck papers also contain booklets about Parsons. The Frank Alvah Parsons correspondence and tribute by James Wilfrid Kerr (KA.0106) consists of correspondence from Frank Alvah Parsons to former students James and Rose Kerr, along with Kerr's eulogy, "Mr. Parsons and Forty Ex-Servicemen."

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Keywords for Searching Related Subjects

Corporate Name(s)

- New York School of Fine and Applied Art.

Genre(s)

- Lectures.
- Publications.
- Visual aids (education tools).

Subject(s)

- Art -- Study and teaching -- New York (State) -- New York -- 20th century.
- Interior decoration -- Study and teaching -- New York (State) -- New York -- 20th century.

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Collection Inventory

Series I. <i>Art: Its Principles and Practice as Applied to Modern Life</i>		
	Box	Folder
Introduction to the Course, 1917	1	1
Lecture 1. Interior Decoration: What, When, How, and Why, 1917	1	2
Lecture 2. Art: Its Meaning and Place in Decoration, 1917	1	3
Lectures 3 and 4. Color Language: Its Relation to the Problem of Interior Decoration, 1922	1	4
Lectures 5 and 6. The Composition of a Room, 1922	1	5
Lecture 7. Art in Its Relation to Dress, 1922	1	6
Lecture 8. Pictures: Their Choice, Framing and Hanging, 1922	1	7

Lecture 9. Historic Art Periods: The Classic and Gothic Ideas Contrasted, 1920	1	8
Lecture 10. The Italian Renaissance, 1920	1	9
Lecture 11. Miscellaneous and the Personal Touch, 1920	1	10
Lecture 12. Rugs and Textiles, 1920	1	11
Lecture 13. The Renaissance in France and the French Styles, 1922	2	1
Lecture 14. The French Styles: The Period of Louis XIV, 1922	2	2
Lecture 15. The Eighteenth Century and the Period of the Regency and Louis XV, 1922	2	3
Lecture 16. The French Styles: Louis XVI, Directoire and Empire, 1922	2	4
Lecture 17. The Old English Styles, 1922	2	5
Lecture 18. The Middle English Styles, 1922	2	6
Lecture 19. Eighteenth Century English, 1922	2	7
Lecture 20. The American Styles, 1922	2	8
Series II. Lecture illustrations		
	Box	Folder
Color charts	3	
Period room illustrations	3	