

Camille Philippon. "Three American Women Printmakers at the Library of Art and Archaeology: Ethel Mars, Maud Hunt Squire, and Edna Boies Hopkins," [Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie Jacques Doucet](#), Un carnet de recherche de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, September 23, 2021. English translation by ChatGPT (OpenAI), 2025.

Among the twenty-one women artists represented in the graphic arts collections of the Library of Art and Archaeology assembled by Jacques Doucet are several Americans. Alongside Mary Cassatt and Katharine Kimball, the collection also includes Edna Boies Hopkins, Ethel Mars, and Maud Hunt Squire. The first, originally from Michigan, primarily worked in woodblock printing.¹ She trained in this technique at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, where the couple Ethel Mars and Maud Hunt Squire also studied².

The three Americans moved to Paris as early as 1905. Edna Boies Hopkins and her husband James Roy Hopkins, himself an artist, lived at 51 boulevard Saint-Jacques, not far from the two companions who resided at number 39³. Maud Hunt Squire, originally from Cincinnati, was a painter and illustrator. Ethel Mars, from Illinois, practiced painting in addition to printmaking. While Ethel Mars and Edna Boies Hopkins are better known for their woodcuts, Maud Hunt Squire primarily worked with etching. These different techniques are represented in the collection of the Library of Art and Archaeology, thanks to acquisitions evidenced by various invoices preserved in the institution's archives.

Through the presence of these three Americans, we see the concern of Jacques Doucet and his collaborators to bring together works by artists of diverse origins in order to constitute a sample of contemporary creation in which women are not excluded. A study of their intertwined paths and correspondence reveals the connections that existed among the women in the collection, many of whom knew one another. Mars, Hunt Squire, and Boies Hopkins were close to Gertrude Stein,⁴ the American lesbian writer and poet living in Paris, who also took an interest in Marie Laurencin.

When the three artists returned to the United States during World War I, they joined the Provincetown Printers,⁵ a collective of woodblock printmakers.⁶

Acquiring the Works of a Couple of Women Artists

The presence of these artists in the Library of Art and Archaeology's collection reflects an original enrichment policy, at times directly linked to the desires of the patron. It was Jacques Doucet himself who spotted the two women's works at the Salon d'Automne, where he purchased some of their prints.⁷ Following this initial purchase, the Library acquired additional works by the two artists between 1912 and 1913, thus showing sustained interest in their creations.

This interest was likely paired with a certain closeness to Doucet, which can be inferred when Ethel Mars wrote to the collector on April 1 [1912?]: "You told me to let you know when I had made new

woodblock prints. I currently have around twenty—landscapes, horses, birds. If you're interested, I'd be happy to show them to you at my studio, 72 rue Notre Dame des Champs, on the afternoon of your choosing." This is also apparent when she invited him on February 26, 1913, to see new prints at her home, which she described as "quite different from [her] others [...] larger, more original and much more interesting in color." The works acquired by the Library trace the artist's career during this short period when Ethel Mars herself informed the institution's leaders about the new works she could offer.

Likewise, her companion Maud Hunt Squire contacted the Library of Art and Archaeology to mention around twenty works she would like to present to Jacques Doucet. In this letter, she referenced the Parisian and international exhibitions where her prints had been displayed and noted her desire to complement the drypoints previously acquired with etchings "on Breton subjects." The invoices preserved in the archives of the Cabinet of Modern Prints at the Library of Art and Archaeology show that the two women accepted the price of 50 francs per print in 1913: two vouchers for 300 francs each were sent to them on November 11 of that year, referring to the acquisition of batches of prints. The records also show price differences based on the technique used, with Ethel Mars's woodcuts sold at a lower price than Maud Hunt Squire's etchings: 55 francs per piece for the former versus 100 francs for the latter. Additionally, the artists granted the Library a discount of ten percent or one-third off the final price.

The works by Edna Boies Hopkins in the collection are color woodblock prints, often with floral motifs. The Library is the only French institution to possess these prints, although other examples appear in foreign, particularly American, collections⁸. As with other artists, the prints were acquired in their various states, which helps document the stages of the creative process.

The Representation of Edna Boies Hopkins' Work in a French Public Collection

Edna Boies Hopkins was also discovered at an exhibition, at the Pavillon de Marsan in 1912. Her works caught the attention of Noël Clément-Janin, the curator in charge of the Cabinet of Modern Prints. Later, in 1914, she wrote to him to discuss new subjects and, in her own words, to ask him to "grant [her] the opportunity to submit more prints."

The artist clearly wished to be represented in the graphic arts collection of the Library of Art and Archaeology, which acquired some of her works between 1912 and 1915. She willingly offered discounted prices: "I've set the price as low as possible since the Library of Art is a public institution, and I would be particularly happy to be represented there."

The acquisitions of works by these three American women printmakers in the Library of Art and Archaeology's collections demonstrate Jacques Doucet's interest in emerging international artists. The relationships brought to light through the associations of Edna Boies Hopkins, Ethel Mars, and Maud Hunt Squire reveal the links between women artists represented in the graphic arts cabinets.

Moreover, these collections allow us to view the work of these three little-known printmakers and ensure them—even today—a significant presence in France.

Bibliographical References:

¹ “HOPKINS Edna Boies” in Emmanuel Benezit, *Dictionnaire des peintres, sculpteurs dessinateurs et graveurs*, Paris, Gründ, 1999, volume 7, p. 170.

² Catherine Ryan, “Très Complémentaires: The Art and Lives of Ethel Mars and Maud Hunt Squire”, cat. exp., New York, Mary Ryan Gallery, 2000, New York, Mary Ryan Gallery et Susan Sheehan Gallery, p. 2–3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3. The address also appears in the letters of the artists to the Library of Art and Archaeology.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵ Artist colony focused primarily on woodblock printmaking influenced by American and European avant-garde styles.

⁶ Dominique H. Vasseur, *Edna Boies Hopkins. Strong in Character, Colorful in Expression*, cat. exp., Columbus Museum of Art (Dec. 14, 2007 – Mar. 2, 2008), Springfield Museum of Art, Ohio (Mar. 15 – Jun. 1, 2008), and Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Massachusetts (June – Aug. 3, 2008), Athens, Ohio University Press, 2007, p. 2.

⁷ Daniel Morane, “Maud Hunt Squire,” in Bernard Comment and François Chapon, *Doucet de Fonds en comble, trésors d’une bibliothèque d’art*, Paris, Herscher, 2004, p. 108.

⁸ “Through regular exhibition of her work, she placed examples of her woodblock prints in a number of major European collections, including the Bibliothèque d’Art et d’Archéologie Jacques Doucet in Paris, the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Berlin, The Nationalmuseum in Stockholm and the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool.” Dominique H. Vasseur, *Edna Boies Hopkins. Strong in Character, Colorful in Expression*, op. cit., p. 14.