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February 11, 2025

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***Voyage of Renewal: Wharton Esherick in Germany and Scandinavia***  
**March 1, 2025 – June 1, 2025**

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*Two Complimentary Exhibitions Explore the Power of Renewal at the  
Wharton Esherick Museum This Spring*

*Voyage of Renewal: Wharton Esherick in Germany and Scandinavia* highlights a pivotal trip to Europe alongside an ongoing installation of Esherick's iconic Studio presented in reimagined ways.

**Malvern, PA** – The Wharton Esherick Museum (WEM) is pleased to announce the opening of *Voyage of Renewal: Wharton Esherick in Germany and Scandinavia*, on view in the museum's Visitor Center beginning March 1, 2025.

*Voyage of Renewal* pinpoints a trip to Europe in the summer of 1931 as a moment of creative rejuvenation in Wharton Esherick's career. Funded by friend and patron Helene Fischer, Esherick traveled through Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Along the way, he absorbed the sights and influences around him – from Norwegian woodworking and architecture to the Bavarian countryside. The exhibition draws from WEM's archives and collection, featuring one of Esherick's seven travel sketchbooks from the journey, historic photographs, a selection of souvenir postcards, and woodblock prints and printed textiles that he made from his sketches after returning home.



Wharton Esherick traveling in Europe, photograph, 1931.  
Collection of the Wharton Esherick Museum.

*"The opportunity to take this trip came at a time when Wharton Esherick was emotionally worn—in his own words, 'flat as a desert'," describes Holly Gore, WEM Director of Interpretation and Associate Curator of Special Collections. "By the end of the 1920s, Esherick and his wife, Letty, were separating. Amidst this split, a catastrophic illness left Letty disabled, prolonging the household's final dissolution for nine years. With Esherick's journey of 1931, we see his artistic and personal renewal—his prolific sketching, new*

*directions in woodcarving, and feelings of well-being that he experienced among friends and artistic collaborators."*

Esherick's traveling companion for much of his European voyage was Hannah Weil, a German sculptor best known for her ivory carving. The two artists met through Helene Fischer, their mutual patron who had funded Esherick's trip. Their friendship was intense to the extent that many people have speculated as to whether they were two sides of a love triangle—the third being York Fischer, Helene's son, whom Hannah Weil later married. While visiting Hannah in the tiny Bavarian town of Holzhausen, Esherick created a decoratively carved worktable for her with York's help. The table, on loan to the Wharton Esherick Museum from a private collection, is currently on view in the Studio as part of *Art, Work, and Everyday Life: A New Look at the Esherick Studio*, an installation of new displays throughout the building.

While over 70 Esherick works are away from the Studio, traveling in the exhibition *The Crafted World of Wharton Esherick*, WEM seized the opportunity to reimagine the configuration of Esherick's iconic space. *Art, Work, and Everyday Life* highlights both the artworks and the ephemera of Esherick's daily life — from work tables and easels to handmade ceramic dishes — and reintroduces the Studio as an ever-changing space of creative activity. These new displays draw primarily from WEM's collections and archives with the exception of the Hannah Weil worktable which anchors the center of the Studio's main gallery with its warped, two board pearwood top outfitted with butterfly joints, a carved hole for Hannah to fit her carving vise, and striking prismatic oak legs. Surrounding the worktable are other objects not usually on view -- an early carved chest, oil paintings, and the artist's own painting easel.



Hannah Weil's worktable on view in *Art, Work, and Everyday Life*, Wharton Esherick with York Fischer, 1931. Pearwood and oak. Private Collection. Image courtesy of the Wharton Esherick Museum.

*Art, Work, And Everyday Life* also features new configurations in the Esherick Studio bedroom and kitchen. The addition of Esherick's personal effects – clothes by the bedside, dishes set on the table – remind us that Esherick's daily life played out over decades in these rooms, and that they were constantly in flux. Guided by historic photographs, these new displays offer visitors both a fresh look at Esherick's Studio and a compelling take on what it means to preserve this one-of-a-kind space in ways that respect Wharton Esherick's creative vision.

Together, these two exhibitions kick off a year of programming at WEM that explores the concept of renewal in myriad ways, whether through personal restoration as with Esherick's European voyage, or through the experimental interpretation of his historic hand-built home and studio. Later this year, WEM's Annual Juried Woodworking Exhibition will feature contemporary artists and woodworkers interpreting renewal through a broad spectrum of material and conceptual approaches.

***Voyage of Renewal: Wharton Esherick in Germany and Scandinavia* is on display in the WEM Visitor Center from March 1, 2025 - June 1, 2025.**

***Art, Work, And Everyday Life: A New Look at the Esherick Studio* will remain on view in the Studio until late 2025, when collection objects currently travelling return home.**

**Please note, guests wishing to enter the Studio must make advance reservations for a tour. Details about visiting can be found at [whartonesherickmuseum.org](https://whartonesherickmuseum.org).**

**Explore upcoming programs and exhibitions at <https://whartonesherickmuseum.org/programs/>**

**About the Museum:** The Wharton Esherick Museum, located just outside of Valley Forge Park in Malvern, PA is the handcrafted home and studio of Wharton Esherick (1887-1970), an internationally significant artist and leader of the Studio Furniture Movement. Esherick worked primarily in wood and extended his unique forms to furniture, furnishings, interiors, buildings, and more. His motto, "If it isn't fun, it isn't worth doing," is evident in the joyful expression of his work. A National Historic Landmark for Architecture, his hilltop studio/residence has been preserved much as it was when the artist lived and worked there.

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