Oklahoma Moderne: The Art and Design of Olinka Hrdy

Prague, Oklahoma native Olinka Hrdy (1902-1987) led a prolific career and produced significant works of art and design that offer a new perspective on the growth of modernism in the United States. Oklahoma Moderne: The Art and Design of Olinka Hrdy not only demonstrates the intriguing diversity within Hrdy's oeuvre but offers an overdue exploration of a marginalized modernist who proved adept at absorbing and digesting such varied influences as Cubism, Bauhaus abstraction, Art Deco and even Czech embroidery.

During her studies at the University of Oklahoma, Hrdy produced painted wall murals that brought her to the attention of architect Bruce Goff, who commissioned a cycle of nine music-themed murals for his 1929 Riverside Drive project. Her designs completed Goff's vision by translating various musical genres into a visual abstract language and led to future commissions including the stage curtain and entryway mural for Tulsa's Convention Hall (now the Historic Brady Theater).

Furthering her studies in New York City, and following a brief time at Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's school in Spring Green, Wisconsin, Hrdy moved to Hollywood in 1934 and participated in the Public Works of Art Project while also establishing herself as an industrial designer following World War II. Despite the demands of her new career, Olinka Hrdy continued to paint and design products until 1965, when she returned to Prague, Oklahoma, remaining in her hometown until her death in 1987.

Guest Curator, Mark White, Associate Professor of Art History, Oklahoma State University, presents Oklahoma Moderne: The Art and Design of Olinka Hrdy, showcasing over eighty works, and authored its accompanying scholarly catalogue. Co-organized by Price Tower Arts Center and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, this exhibition was developed in honor of Oklahoma and has been designated an official Oklahoma Centennial event.