

LAS LITOGRAFÍAS DE LOUIS LOZOWICK Y SU INFLUENCIA EN LOUIS KAHN

LOUIS LOZOWICK'S LITHOGRAPHS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON LOUIS KAHN

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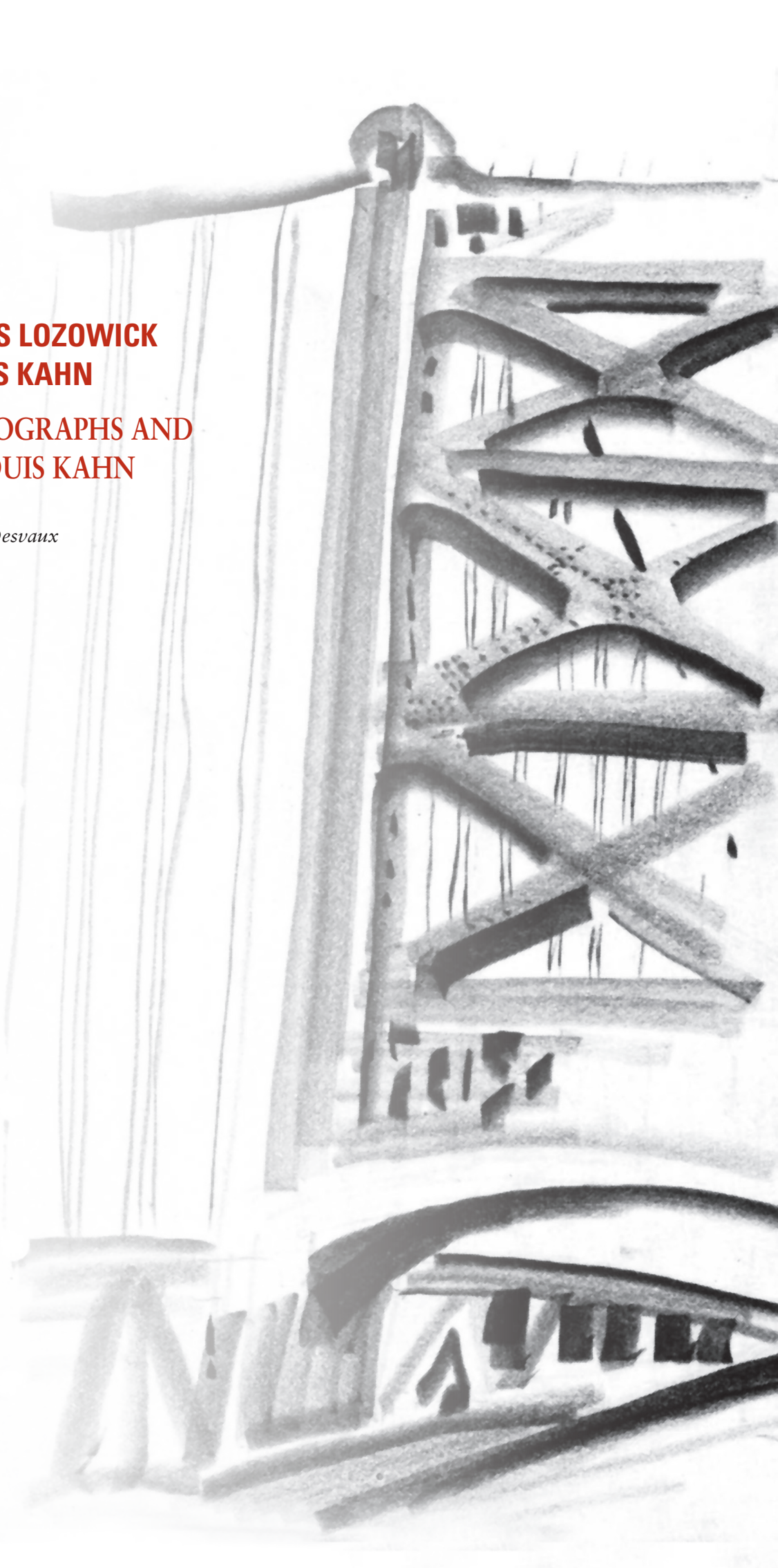
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Las pinturas y dibujos del arquitecto Louis Kahn fueron catalogados en el libro de Jan Hochstim (1991), permitiendo a los interesados por la obra gráfica de Kahn estudiarlos en mayor profundidad en posteriores publicaciones. En este ensayo pretendemos mostrar la posible influencia en algunos dibujos de Kahn de las litografías de Louis Lozowick, un artista muy celebrado a comienzos de los años treinta por sus dibujos de la *American Scene*.

**PALABRAS CLAVE: LOUIS LOZOWICK.
LOUIS KAHN. LITOGRAFÍAS. DIBUJOS**

The paintings and drawings of the architect Louis Kahn were catalogued in a book by Jan Hochstim (1991), which allowed those interested in his graphic work to study them in greater depth in later publications. This essay is intended to show possible influences upon certain drawings by Kahn from the lithographs of Louis Lozowick, an artist who was very well known in the early 1930s because of his drawings of the American Scene.

**KEYWORDS: LOUIS LOZOWICK.
LOUIS KAHN. LITHOGRAPHS. SKETCHES**





1. Libro de graduación de la Philadelphia Central High School, 1920

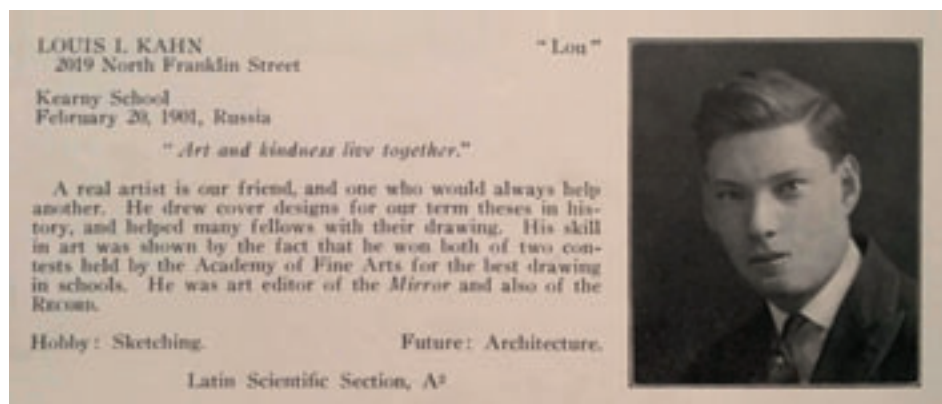
1. Yearbook of Philadelphia Central High School, 1920

El estilo gráfico de Louis Kahn

En el libro de la graduación de la 134 promoción de la Philadelphia Central High School se reproduce una foto de Louis Kahn junto con algunos datos sobre su persona: la dirección paterna, la escuela primaria en la que estudió, el Kearny Elementary School, la fecha y lugar de nacimiento, y el apelativo familiar con el que se le conoce: Lou. Se añade un lema que bien podría resumir su personalidad algo tímida y retraída: *Art and kindness live together*; máxima que encaja muy bien con la fotografía, en la que descubrimos a un estudiante apenas salido de la adolescencia, de mirada penetrante, ojos oblicuos que delatan su origen eslavo, y rostro delicado en el que el fotógrafo (como sucede en otras fotos suyas de juventud) ha borrado las cicatrices de la quemadura sufrida de niño que tanto le afeaban (Fig. 1).

Mayor interés tiene para los estudiosos de la obra de Kahn el pequeño texto con el que se describe al alumno recién graduado como persona atenta, inclinado hacia el arte y las letras—se destaca que haya sido editor de dos revistas escolares, el *Mirror* y el *Record*, y haber cursado la especialidad del latín—, siempre dispuesto a echar una mano a los demás con el dibujo, disciplina en la que era aventajado alumno, como lo demuestra el haber ganado dos concursos patrocinados por la prestigiosa *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts*. Finalmente informan de su *hobby*, el dibujo, y de su futuro: la arquitectura.

Esta escueta información parece confirmar que algunas de las dotes que Louis Kahn mostraría a lo largo de su ejercicio profesional se encontraban ya latentes en su juventud; nos referimos a su afición hacia el dibujo y su inclinación por los discursos teó-



1

ricos de matriz especulativa y humanística. Centrándonos en sus aficiones artísticas, interesa recordar que en su niñez Kahn pretendía dedicarse a la pintura, hasta que en el último año de la High School decidió ser arquitecto. En cualquier caso, y hasta finales de los años treinta, intentó compaginar el ejercicio de la arquitectura con el de la pintura explorando las más diversas técnicas y medios de representación (del dibujo a la acuarela, las ceras, el óleo o el grabado).

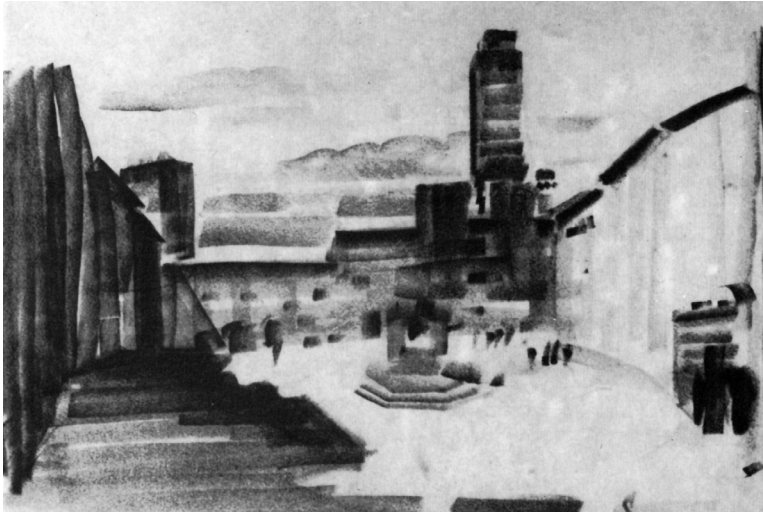
Las muchas influencias que recibió de pintores y dibujantes en su primera formación nos indican que Kahn era de espíritu inquieto e inconformista, y que lograba asimilar las más variadas fuentes de inspiración. Habiendo logrado una perfección en el dibujo académico al natural, y contando con un talante más propio de un pintor, es lógico que se rebelara contra aquellos que consideraban que la calidad de un dibujo arquitectónico residía en la mayor fidelidad a la realidad. De ahí el desdén con el que juzgaba como anodinos los apuntes de arquitectos que solían publicarse en la revista *Pencil Points* a finales de los años veinte por carecer de una intención creativa (Lewis, 7). De este modo Kahn se apartaba de otros arquitectos ilustradores de éxito en las primeras décadas del siglo en Estados Unidos, como Jules Guerin o Gerald K. Geerlings.

Es este intento por lograr un resultado de interés artístico con sus dibujos el que le llevó a explorar las técnicas

In Search of a Graphic Style

In the school album for the one hundred and thirty fourth cohort of pupils who completed their studies at the Philadelphia Central High School, a photo of Louis Kahn is included, together with some information about him. This includes his parents' address, the primary school he attended, which was the Kearny Elementary School, his date and place of birth, and the nickname he was known by: Lou. There is also a motto that seems a good reflection of his somewhat timid and reserved personality: *Art and Kindness Live Together*. This slogan matches the photograph well, as it shows a student who is barely through adolescence, with a penetrating look, slanting eyes that point to his Slavic origins, and a delicate face from which the photographer, like others of his profession on other occasions, has airbrushed out the scars from a burn he had suffered as a child, which had spoilt his looks (Fig. 1). Of greater interest for those studying Kahn's works is the short text describing the student who had just completed his secondary studies as a kindly person, more inclined towards Arts and Humanities. It points out that he had been the editor of two school newspapers, the *Mirror* and the *Record*, and had followed a specialist course in Latin. He is said to be always ready to lend a hand to others with drawing, a subject in which he was a talented pupil, as shown by the fact that he had won two competitions sponsored by the *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts*. Finally, it mentions his hobby, sketching, and his planned future in architecture.

This brief account would seem to confirm that some of the gifts which Louis Kahn was to demonstrate over the course of his career were already latent in his youth, particularly his liking for drawing and his tendency towards theoretical statements of a speculative and humanistic nature. Specifically in respect of his artistic inclinations, it is of interest to recall that as a youngster Kahn hoped to become a painter until his last year



2



3

of High School, when he decided to go into architecture. In any case, until the late 1930s he tried to make working in architecture compatible with painting, exploring very diverse techniques and means of representation (from sketching to watercolours, wax, oil painting or engravings). The many influences he came under from painters, draughtsmen and sketchers during his early training show that Kahn had a restless and non-conformist spirit, and that he managed to draw on extremely varied sources of inspiration. As he had achieved perfection in the academic life drawing, and had inclinations more suited to painting, it was natural for him to rebel against the views of those who held that the quality of an architectural drawing was to be measured by how faithful it was to reality. This was the source of the disdain with which he looked upon the sketches by architects that were often published in the journal *Pencil Points* at the end of the 1920s, which he saw as bland because they lacked any creative aims (Lewis, 7). Hence, Kahn put distance between himself and other successful architect-illustrators from the early decades of the century in the United States, like Gerald K. Geerlings. It was this intention of achieving results of artistic interest in his drawings that led him to explore graphic techniques using thick-lead pencils during his journey to Europe and in the early 1930s. Kahn was searching for a personal graphic style, and if his statements are to be believed he found it when he bought a broad-leaded carpentry pencil in Bologna. This allowed him to make broad or narrow strokes by merely tilting it in one direction or another, and the results may be observed in the sketches he produced in Italy during his stay in 1928 and 1929.

As he was more interested in techniques than in any exercises aimed at producing perfect copies, it is understandable that Kahn had no

gráficas del lápiz de mina gruesa en su viaje a Europa y primeros años treinta. Kahn buscaba un estilo gráfico personal y si nos atenemos a sus comentarios, lo logró cuando en Bolonia adquirió un lápiz de carpintero de mina ancha que le permitía, inclinándolo a un lado u otro, obtener trazos anchos o finos, cuyos resultados observamos en sus apuntes realizados en Italia durante su estancia en 1928 y 1929.

Más atento a la técnica que a un ejercicio de copia, entendemos que Kahn no tuviera ningún reparo en dibujar a partir de las postales que compraba en sus itinerarios por Italia, tal como demostró Eugene J. Johnson al identificar cuatro postales conservadas en su archivos como la fuente de los apuntes de San Ambrosio de Milán, el *Palazzo Comunale* de Piacenza, el Pórtico de Minerva en Asís y la *Marina di Conca* en Amalfi. Pero no son los únicos casos, un apunte hoy perdido de *San Gimignano* está basado en una antigua postal, y los del *Ponte Vecchio* de Florencia, la Iglesia de San Francisco y del *Duomo* de Asís es muy probable que hayan sido elaborados a partir de las postales típicas que entonces se vendían. La comparación entre la postal y el dibujo de *San Gimignano* nos permite hacernos cargo de esa libertad frente al modelo que Kahn reclamaba en su búsqueda de un resultado original (Figs. 2 y 3).

Los grabados de Louis Lozowick

En algunos de los dibujos de Kahn realizados con posterioridad a su viaje a Italia, los entendidos en su obra gráfica suelen mencionar la influencia del movimiento *Precisionist*, con su representación de los paisajes urbanos e industriales de la *American Scene*. Si bien es cierto que Kahn tuvo que conocer la obra de los pintores Charles Sheeler y Charles Demuth, habida cuenta que eran naturales de Filadelfia, es difícil encontrar similitudes entre los dibujos y acuarelas del arquitecto y las obras de los dos pintores. Es mucho más factible encontrar posibles influencias e intereses comunes entre los dibujos de Kahn y los de Louis Lozowick.

Hoy pocos arquitectos conocen la obra de Lozowick quien en su día fue considerado como uno de los grandes dibujantes de la ciudad de Nueva York. Aunque fue un gran dibujante, la técnica gráfica en la que destacó fue la litografía. En su origen, Lozowick recibió una gran influencia del constructivismo ruso, compartiendo además la ideología de la Rusia Soviética, participando desde 1926 en el comité editorial de la revista *New Masses*, órgano de difusión del partido comunista de los Estados Unidos, aportando dibujos y grabados. A través de ésta y otras revistas, en las que colabora-



2. L. Kahn, *San Gimignano*, h. 1928 [Hochstim, 93]

3. *San Gimignano*, Postal de época

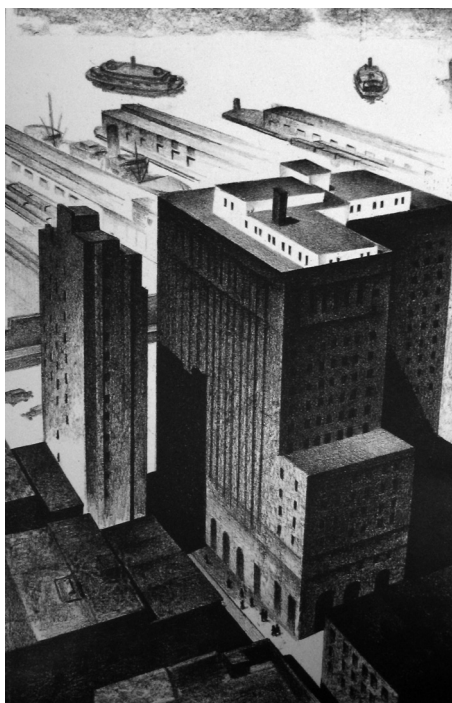
4. L. Lozowick, *Backyard of Broadway*, h. 1926 [Flint, 7]

ban muchos intelectuales, escritores y artistas de izquierdas, la obra de Lozowick alcanzó cierto prestigio y difusión, sin olvidar que por su extracción judía colaboró con algunas revistas sionistas como *Menorah Journal*.

Tras exponerse sus litografías en diversos locales de Nueva York en 1926, Lozowick participa en mayo del siguiente año en *The Machine Age Exposition*, aportando varios grabados de inspiración constructivista y un interesante texto para el catálogo titulado “The Americanization of Art”. A raíz de esta exposición Lozowick se percató de que las vanguardias europeas pecaban de una excesiva sofisticación y que tenían poco calado en el público americano, más interesado en la representación de la realidad cotidiana, por lo que su obra viró hacia el *Social Realism*, es decir, hacia la representación de las duras condiciones del trabajo en el sector de la construcción y de la industria, temática que se acentuaría a partir de la Gran Depresión de octubre de 1929.

Parece más que probable que Louis Kahn, ciertamente afín con Lozowick por sus orígenes judíos e ideología, llegara a conocer la obra de éste a su regreso a los Estados Unidos en 1929 tras su viaje a Europa, cuando el prestigio de Lozowick como dibujante y grabador alcanzaba las cotas más altas. Kahn pudo ver sus litografías en algunas exposiciones organizadas en *The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts*, o bien conocerlas a través de las revistas en las que Lozowick colaboraba, como la mencionada revista *Pencil Points*.

Como hemos dicho, Lozowick fue un dibujante especializado en temáticas neoyorkinas, poniendo especial énfasis en las grandes obras de la técnica, la ingeniería y la construcción, como puentes, viaductos, trenes elevados, factorías y edificios en altura, ya



4

que éstos simbolizarían la *American Scene*, un término acuñado por algunos artistas de la época. Uno de las primeras litografías dedicadas a evocar esta realidad de Nueva York fue el grabado titulado *Backyard of Broadway* de 1926. Lozowick dibuja desde un punto muy elevado un edificio en altura en Broadway mirando hacia los muelles del río Hudson (Fig. 4).

En una exposición celebrada en la Weyhe Gallery en 1928, se expuso otra litografía de un rascacielos, en este caso del *Whitehall Building*. Lozowick exagera el impresionante aspecto del edificio de treinta y dos plantas forzando la perspectiva, con lo que parece emerger entre las calles de la ciudad (Fig. 5). Tras él pueden verse el Battery Park, los trasatlánticos y transbordadores, y los muelles del río Hudson. Es de interés indicar que ambas litografías fueron realizadas en Europa, seguramente a partir de dibujos previos o de alguna fotografía, lo que explicaría la indefinición de algunos elementos.

A partir de la Depresión del año 1929 sus litografías adquieren una mayor dimensión social, enfocándose a temas relacionados con la industria

2. L. Kahn, *San Gimignano*, ca. 1928 [Hochstim, 93]

3. *San Gimignano*

4. L. Lozowick, *Backyard of Broadway*, ca. 1926 [Flint, 7]

compunctión about making drawings from the postcards that he bought as he travelled around Italy. This was demonstrated by Eugene J. Johnson, who identified four postcards found among the architect's papers as the source of his sketches of the Basilica of Saint Ambrose in Milan, the *Palazzo Comunale* in Piacenza, the Portico of Minerva in Assisi and the Marina di Conca beach in Amalfi. However, these are not the only instances, since a now-lost sketch of *San Gimignano* was based on an old postcard, and those of the *Ponte Vecchio* in Florence, and of the Church of Saint Francis and the Cathedral in Assisi are highly likely to have been produced on the basis of the typical picture postcards sold at that time. A comparison between the postcard and the drawing of *San Gimignano* makes it possible to appreciate the freedom relative to the model that Kahn advocated in his search for novel and original results (Figs. 2 and 3).

The Prints of Louis Lozowick

In some of the drawings Kahn did after his journey to Italy, experts on his graphic works normally mention the influence of the *Precisionist* movement, with its representations of the urban and industrial landscapes of the *American Scene*. Although Kahn must have known the work of the painters Charles Sheeler and Charles Demuth, since they were natives of Philadelphia, it is hard to find any similarities between the architect's drawings and watercolours and the two painters' works. It is much easier to trace possible influences and shared interests linking the drawings of Kahn and of Louis Lozowick. Nowadays not many architects are familiar with Lozowick's work, although in his day he was considered one of the great draughtsmen of the city of New York. Although he was a master at drawing, the graphic technique at which he was outstanding was lithography. In his origins, Lozowick was greatly influenced by Russian constructivism. Moreover, he shared the ideology of Soviet Russia, from 1926 onwards taking a hand in the editorial board of the magazine *New Masses*. This was an organ of the Communist Party of the United States, and he supplied drawings and engravings for it. Through this and other journals, for which many left-wing intellectual, writers and artists were contributors, Lozowick's work achieved a certain prestige and diffusion. Because of his Jewish extraction, he was also a contributor to various Zionist publications, such as the *Menorah Journal*. After exhibiting his lithographs in various locales

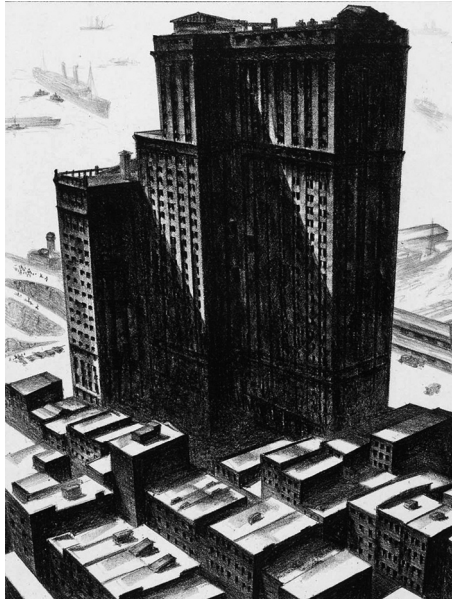


5. L. Lozowick, *Whitehall Building*, h. 1928 [Flint, 10]
6. L. Lozowick, *Corner of Steel Plant*, 1929 [Flint, 21]
7. L. Lozowick, *Edison Plant*, 1929 [Flint, 21]
8. L. Lozowick, *George Washington Bridge*, 1929 [Flint, 30]
9. L. Kahn, *Modern Skycraper*, 1930 [Hochstim, 314]

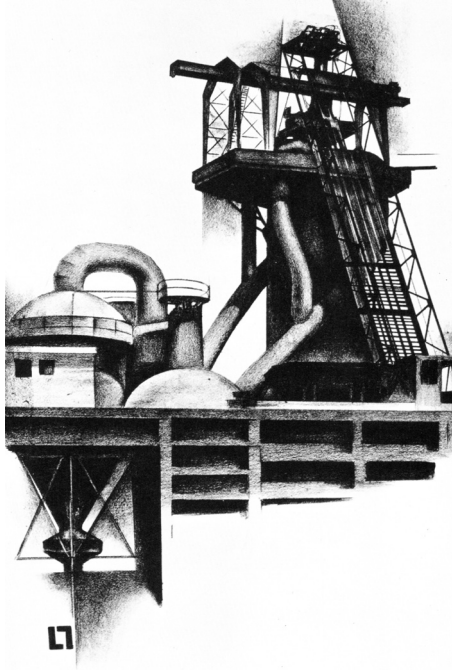
in New York during 1926, in May 1927 Lozowick participated in the artistic board of *The Machine Age Exposition*. He contributed various engravings inspired by constructivism and an interesting text entitled "The Americanization of Art" that was included in the catalogue. As a result of this exhibition, Lozowick realized that the European avant-garde had fallen into the error of excessive sophistication and had little impact upon the American public, who were more interested in representations of day-to-day reality. Hence, his work changed direction towards *Social Realism*, in other words, he moved towards representing the harsh working conditions in the construction and manufacturing sectors of the economy, a topic which would be accentuated after the Great Depression began in October 1929.

It seems more than likely that Louis Kahn, always interested in painting and drawing, and certainly very like Lozowick by reason of his Jewish background and social ideals, came to know Lozowick's work on his return to the United States. This was at the time when Lozowick's prestige as a draughtsman and engraver reached its highest point. Kahn may have seen his lithographs in one or another of the exhibitions organized in the *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts*, or could have got to know them through the journals to which Lozowick was a contributor.

As noted above, Louis Lozowick specialized in drawing New York themes, laying special stress on major works of technology, engineering and construction, such as bridges, viaducts, elevated railways, factories and tall buildings. These would symbolize the *American Scene*, a term coined by some of the artists of the period. One of the first lithographs aimed at evoking this reality of New York was the engraving entitled *Backyard of Broadway* from 1926. Lozowick made the drawing from a very high point, a tall building on Broadway, looking towards the Hudson River piers (Fig. 4). In an exhibition held in the Weyhe Gallery in 1928, he displayed another lithograph of a skyscraper, in this case the *Whitehall Building*. Lozowick exaggerated the striking appearance of the thirty-two-storey building, forcing the perspective so that it seemed to emerge between West Street and Washington Street (Fig. 5). Behind it can be seen Battery Park, ocean liners and ferries, and the Hudson River piers. It is noteworthy that both these lithographs were made in Europe, doubtless from drawings



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ya la construcción fabril. Lo podemos comprobar en *Corner of Steel Plant* (Fig. 6) o *Edison Plant* (Fig. 7).

Un apartado especial lo constituiría el conjunto de grabados que Lozowick realizó a partir de 1928 sobre los puentes de Nueva York: *Hell Gate Bridge*, *High Bridge*, *George Washington Bridge* (Fig. 8), *Williamsburg Bridge*, *Queensboro Bridge*, hasta culminar en 1930 con el espectacular *Brooklyn Bridge*, premiado en la Tercera Exposición de Litografías celebrada en el

5. L. Lozowick, *Whitehall Building*, ca. 1928 [Flint, 10]
6. L. Lozowick, *Corner of Steel Plant*, 1929 [Flint, 21]
7. L. Lozowick, *Edison Plant*, 1929 [Flint, 21]
8. L. Lozowick, *George Washington Bridge*, 1929 [Flint, 30]
9. L. Kahn, *Modern Skycraper*, 1930 [Hochstim, 314]

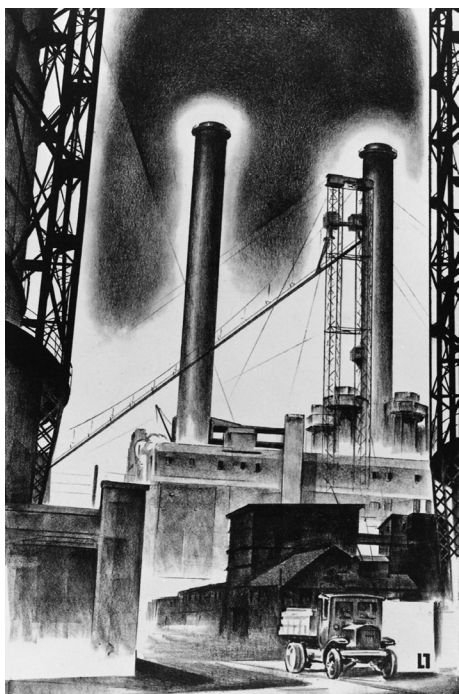
Philadelphia Print Club en enero de 1931, del que se conservan grabados en el MoMA y otros museos.

Algunos dibujos de Louis Kahn sobre la American Scene

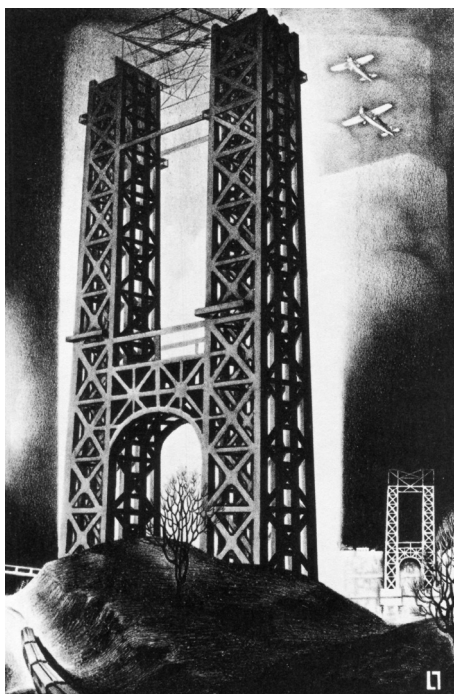
A partir de estas imágenes de Lozowick podemos analizar algunos de los dibujos de Kahn en mayor profundidad, comprobando que su interés se dirige en algunos casos en tratar algunos temas que estaban en el ambiente de la *American Scene*, como a continuación veremos.

En el catálogo de dibujos de Louis Kahn solamente se incluye un rascacielos, se trata del *New York Daily News*, obra de Raymond Hood, construido en Nueva York entre 1929 y 1930 (Fig. 9). El dibujo fue realizado por Louis Kahn a partir de alguna de las numerosas fotografías captadas desde su vecino *Chrysler Building* de William Van Alen, inaugurado también el año 1930. Aunque la modernidad del *Daily News Building* supera en mucho al *Whitehall Building*, hay ciertos rasgos comunes entre los dibujos de Lozowick y el de Kahn, como la utilización del claroscuro del lápiz blando, el efecto de perspectiva, el fondo del Hudson, la anodina trama urbana del que surge, etc. Merece la pena destacar que el dibujo de Kahn tiene un interés arquitectónico muy superior al de las litografías de Lozowick, además de mostrar a las claras la maestría alcanzada con el lápiz grafito de mina ancha y la capacidad de simular la realidad urbana con trazos de distinta intensidad.

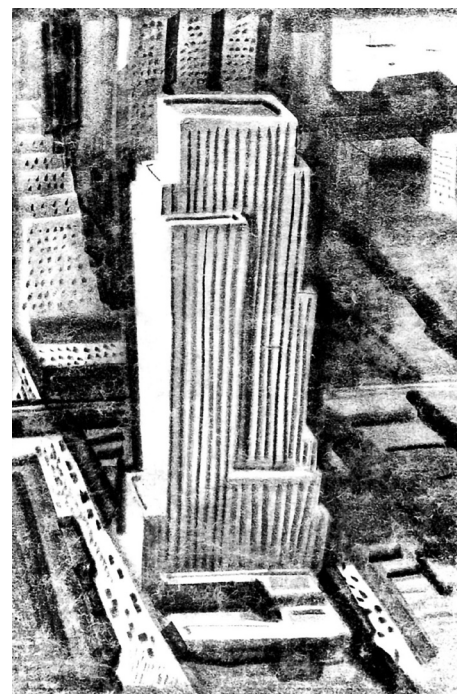
Hay otros dos dibujos de Kahn, realizados a comienzos de los años treinta que recuerdan las litografías de Lozowick y su interés por las construcciones industriales (Figs. 10, 11). Son sin duda un intento por captar las cualidades estéticas de la industria, muy



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celebradas por los artistas del momento a causa de las célebres fotografías de las fábricas Ford realizadas por Charles Sheeler en 1927. En un tercer dibujo Kahn intenta reflejar, en lo que parece un intento fallido, el *Benjamin Franklin Bridge* de Filadelfia, fijando su atención en la estructura metálica, coincidiendo de nuevo con los grabados de Lozowick (Fig. 12). En los tres dibujos Kahn emplea la misma técnica de la barra grafito que desarrolló durante el viaje a Europa y en años posteriores, con esa característica simplificación de las formas en volúmenes sencillos que resaltan sobre el papel por medio del claroscuro.

Algunos grabados de Louis Kahn

Abundando en estas coincidencias de temas e intereses, conviene recordar que Kahn también quiso ensayar algunas técnicas de grabado, aunque sin especial fortuna. Tras el viaje a Italia, y basándose en una postal de *Il Fiordo di Furore*, realizó dos litografías que tituló como *Mountain Village* (Fig. 13).

En esos mismos años vuelve a realizar otra que titula *Still Life* (Fig. 14)

en la que reúne una colección de objetos de uso cotidiano sobre una mesa con mantel, volviendo a coincidir con otras litografías de objetos sobre manteles realizadas por Lozowick en aquellos años, como *Still Life # 2* (Fig. 15), uno de los trabajos más celebrados por su virtuosismo, de los que se conservan grabados en el MoMA y en otros seis museos.

A Louis Kahn su litografía *Still Life* debió satisfacerle más que la de *Furore*, ya que la incluyó entre las ilustraciones de su artículo “The Value and Aim of Sketching”, en el número de mayo de 1931 de *T-Square Club Journal*. Hochstim recoge en su catálogo otros dos grabados realizados para felicitar las fiestas navideñas, se trata de *Christmas Card* (1930) y *Greetings Esther Kahn* (1931).

The Art of Sketching

Una última coincidencia entre Lozowick y Kahn la encontramos en los pocos escritos que publican en aquellos años, pues ambos afirman que no es necesario ni conveniente proponerse como finalidad alcanzar un meticuloso parecido con el tema dibujado,

previously completed by Lozowick or from a selection of photographs, which would explain the abstract or indefinite nature of some elements. After the beginning of the Depression in 1929 his lithographs take on a greater social dimension, focusing on themes related to industry. This can be seen in *Corner of Steel Plant* (Fig. 6) or *Edison Plant* (Fig. 7). One particular section would be constituted by the set of engravings that Lozowick made from 1928 onwards of the bridges of New York: *Hell Gate Bridge*, *High Bridge*, *George Washington Bridge* (Fig. 8), *Williamsburg Bridge*, *Queensboro Bridge*. This reached its high point in 1930 with the spectacular *Brooklyn Bridge*, which won a prize in the Third Lithograph Exhibition held in the *Philadelphia Print Club* in January 1931, prints of this being owned by the MoMA and other museums.

Louis Kahn and the American Scene

With these pictures by Lozowick as a starting point it is possible to analyse some of Kahn's drawings in greater depth. This shows that his interests on occasion shifted to working with some of the themes lying within the ambit of the *American Scene*, as will be shown below.

In the catalogue of Louis Kahn's drawings only one skyscraper is included. This is the *New York Daily News Building* designed by Raymond Hood and built in New York between 1929 and 1930 (Fig. 9). This drawing was made by Louis Kahn on the basis of one or another of the large number of photographs of it taken from the neighbouring

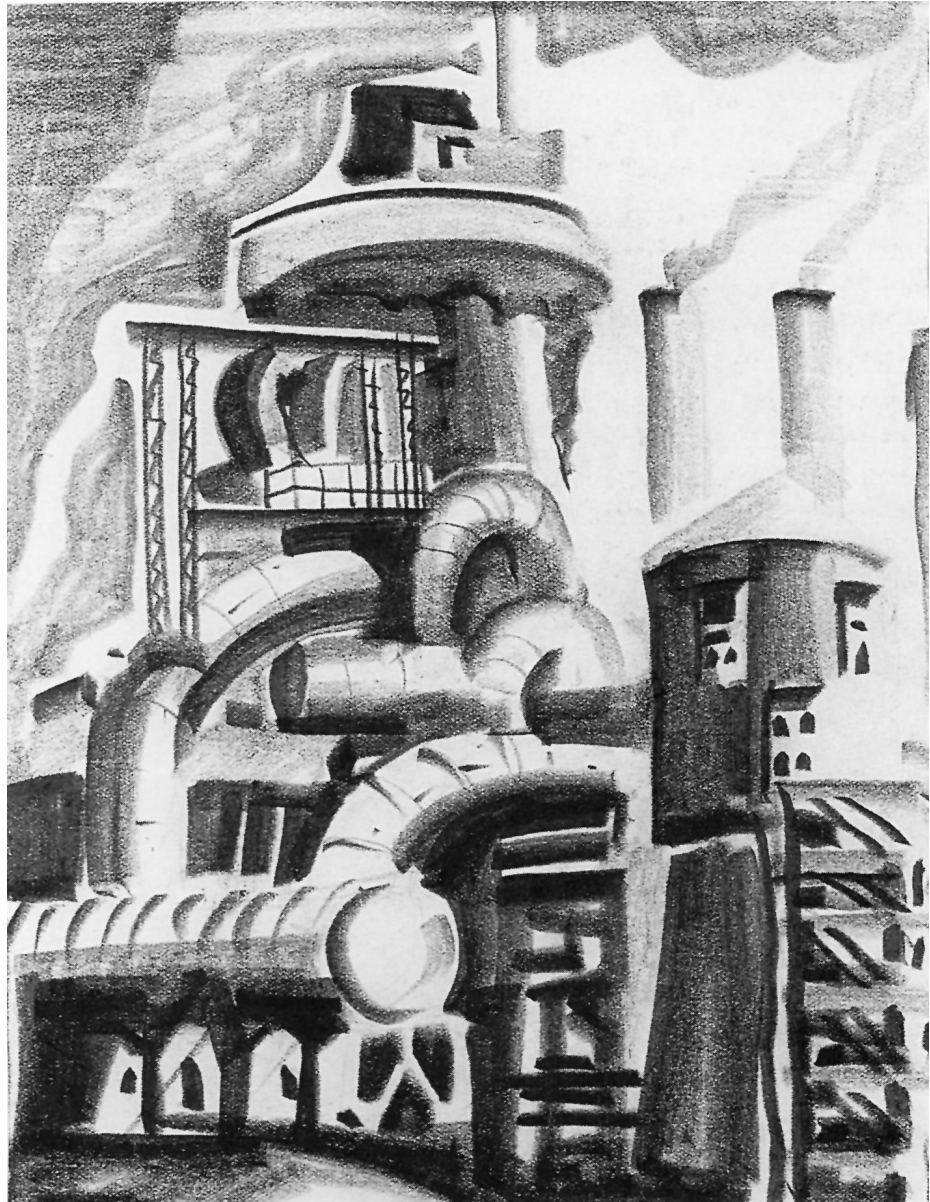
10. L. Kahn, *Factory, Philadelphia*, h. 1930-35 [Hochstim, 261]
 11. L. Kahn, *Factory, Philadelphia*, h. 1930-35 [Hochstim, 260]
 12. L. Kahn, *Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Philadelphia*, h. 1930-35
 13. L. Kahn, *Il Fiordo di Furore*, h. 1930 [Hochstim, 50]
 14. L. Kahn, *Still Life*, h. 1930-35 [Hochstim, 307]
 15. L. Lozowick, *Still Life # 2*, 1929 [Flint, 36]

10. L. Kahn, *Factory, Philadelphia*, ca. 1930-35 [Hochstim, 261]
 11. L. Kahn, *Factory, Philadelphia*, ca. 1930-35 [Hochstim, 260]
 12. L. Kahn, *Benjamin Franklin Bridge, Philadelphia*, ca. 1930-35
 13. L. Kahn, *Il Fiordo di Furore*, ca. 1930 [Hochstim, 50]
 14. L. Kahn, *Still Life*, ca. 1930-35 [Hochstim, 307]
 15. L. Lozowick, *Still Life # 2*, 1929 [Flint, 36].

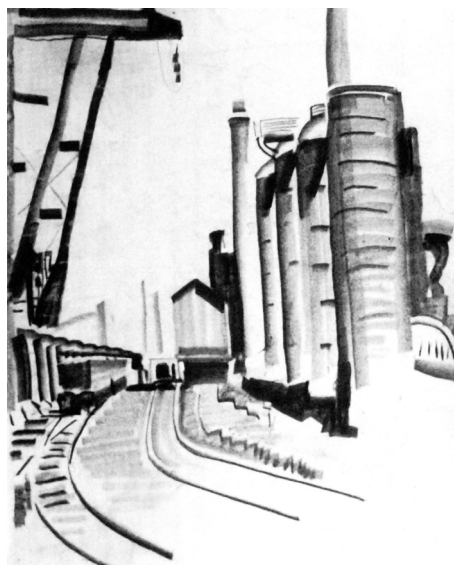
Chrysler Building by William Van Alen, also opened in 1930. Although the modernity of the *Daily News Building* is much greater than the *Whitehall*, they have some features in common, such as the use of *chiaroscuro* achieved with a soft pencil, the effect of perspective, the backcloth of the Hudson River, the bland urban surroundings from which it rises and the like. It should be stressed that Kahn's drawing is of considerably more artistic merit than Lozowick's lithographs, perhaps because these were the first he had made of New York skyscrapers. There are two further drawings by Kahn that recall Lozowick's lithographs and his interest in industrial buildings (Figs. 10 and 11). These are doubtless an attempt to capture the aesthetic features of industry, much in vogue among the artists of the day because of the celebrated photographs of the Ford factories taken by Charles Sheeler in 1927. In a third drawing Kahn tries to reflect, in what would seem to be something of a failed attempt, the *Benjamin Franklin Bridge* in Philadelphia, directing his attention to the metal structure, once again coinciding with Lozowick's engravings (Fig. 12). Kahn used the same graphite stick technique that he had developed during his journey to Europe and the years following it, with the characteristic simplification of shapes into simple volumes that stand out on the paper thanks to *chiaroscuro*.

Certain Engravings by Louis Kahn

It is worth noting that Kahn also made a trial of certain engraving techniques, even if without any special success. After his Italian journey, he produced two lithographs to which he gave the title *Mountain Village* (Fig. 13), these being based on a postcard of *Il Fiordo di Furore*. During these same years he once again executed a lithograph, entitled *Still Life* (Fig. 14), in which



10



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12



sino más bien lograr una interpretación libre y creativa del tema. Kahn expuso sus ideas en su artículo “The Value and Aim of Sketching” cuyo contenido es bien conocido. No así el de Lozowick, titulado “The Americanization of Art”, incluido en el catálogo de la exposición *Machine-Age* del año 1927, en el que podemos leer:

Environment, however, is not itself art but only raw material which becomes art when reconstructed by the artist according to the requirement of aesthetic form. The artist cannot and should not, therefore, attempt a literal soulless transcription of the American scene but rather give a penetrating creative interpretation of it, which, while including everything relevant to the subject depicted, would exclude everything irrelevant to the plastic possibilities of that subject.

Estos textos revelan la forma de trabajar de Lozowick y Kahn en sus litografías y dibujos. Aunque practicaron el dibujo *in situ*, sus obras son fruto de una elaboración posterior, a partir de sus bocetos y fotografías. De ahí que podamos seguir descubriendo viejas postales en las que Kahn se inspiró para realizar sus dibujos, que nunca son una copia literal, sino una interpretación creativa del tema. ■

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Procedencia de las imágenes: todas las imágenes están tomadas de los catálogos de Jan Hochstim y de Janet Flint. La figura 12 en M. J. Lewis (2012, p. 77).



13



14



15

he gathered a collection of day-today objects on a table covered with a cloth. This coincided with lithographs of objects lying on a tablecloth done by Lozowick at this period, like *Still Life # 2* (Fig. 15), one of his pieces most highly regarded for its virtuosity, prints of which are kept in the MoMA and in a further six museums.

Louis Kahn must have liked his lithograph *Still Life* more than the picture from *Furore*, since he included it among the illustrations for his article “The Value and Aim of Sketching”, in the *T-Square Club Journal* (May 1931). Hochstim incorporated into his catalogue two woodcuts celebrating Christmas; these are *Christmas Card* (1930) and *Greetings Esther Kahn* (1931).

The Art of Sketching

A final coincidence between Lozowick and Kahn is to be found in the small number of pieces of writing they published at this time. This is because both state that it is not necessary or even appropriate to call for meticulous or cautious fidelity to the objects drawn as a goal, but rather to achieve a free and creative interpretation of the topic. In an article entitled “The Americanization of Art”, included in the catalogue for the *Machine-Age* exhibition of 1927, Lozowick wrote:

Environment, however, is not itself art but only raw material which becomes art when reconstructed by the artist according to the requirement of aesthetic form. The artist cannot and should not, therefore, attempt a literal soulless transcription of the American scene but rather give a penetrating creative interpretation of it, which, while including everything relevant to the subject depicted, would exclude everything irrelevant to the plastic possibilities of that subject.

These texts show how Lozowick and Kahn worked on their lithographs and drawings. Although they did sometimes draw *in situ*, their works are usually the outcome of later elaboration, based on quick sketches and photographs. This is why we are still discovering old postcards which they used as inspiration for their marvellous drawings, which are never pedestrian literal copies, but rather a subjective and creative interpretation of the theme. ■

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