A defining moment in American Modernism

American culture in the 1920s is associated with the idea of the "Jazz Age" - dancing, music, parties and the Prohibition-busting drinking culture of the illegal speakeasies. In the Depression years of the 1930s and early 1940s images of poverty, hardship and dust-bowl America prevail. During these decades, however, America's pioneering visual artists were producing work in a different mood, and forging a new identity for American art, as the Ashmolean exhibition "America's Cool Modernism: O'Keeffe to Hopper" aims to highlight.

Featuring works by major artists and photographers, including Berenice Abbott, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz and Paul Strand, alongside lesser-known names, the themes that these artists were experimenting with focused on a more ambivalent, abstract and emotionally restrained representation of the changing world around them.

This world was typified by images of people-less industrial landscapes and abstracted views of machinery and the towering skyscrapers, still under construction in the modern new America. Experiments in colourful abstract painting, by EE Cummings (better known as a poet), Charles Demuth and Marsden Hartley, among others, also anticipated the Pop-Art aesthetic that was to emerge after the Second World War.

The 80 plus paintings, photographs and prints (plus one avant-garde film) will include significant loans from two major collections - the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Terra Foundation for American Art. With almost half of the exhibits never having travelled to the UK before, this exhibition will be the first opportunity in the country to see a major show about a defining moment in American Modernism.

- "America's Cool Modernism: O'Keeffe to Hopper"; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 23 March to 22 July. ashmolean.org

£6 with National Art Pass (£12.50 standard)

Clockwise from left: George Aultworth, Illinois Central, 1927; Edward Hopper, Manhattan Bridge Loop, 1938; Louis Loewy, New York, 1935

Linder's Chaucerian House of

For more than 40 years, the artist Linder has created striking imagery and performances, first coming to prominence in the punk and post-punk scene of 1970s Manchester with iconic photomontages that brought together pornographic imagery with pictures cut from women's fashion and household publications. At the end of March, Linder will be shaking things up at Nottingham Contemporary with 'House of Fame', an exhibition she has curated marking the culmination of the third season of the 'Grand Tour' partnership linking cultural organisations across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The largest presentation of Linder's work to date, it will include pieces from various periods in her life, displayed as constellations in what she calls a 'pin-the-dots' approach, as well as historic and contemporary works by some 50 practitioners from the fields of art, photography, fashion, architecture and music. Work by artists including Ruth Asawa, Ashley Beadle, Moki Cherry, Max Ernst, Mike Kelley and Madame Nervada will feature alongside loaned objects, such as an ice cream banner, a collage screen and mourning jewellery from Chatsworth House, where Linder was the inaugural artist in residence in the months leading up to the exhibition. During her residency, Linder developed new works including photomontages and sound pieces, interviewed staff and also came to recognise the synergy of the house and its landscape of this enhanced approach, she created it almost like a natural world, which combined the essence of the landscape.

The oldest work on show at Nottingham Contemporary is Inigo Jones's 'drawing of Fame' (1610), based on 14th-century poems that meditates on the natural world and the beauty of the landscape. The project's title is a play on the potential of the house and the landscape and the potential for the rest of it to make a political exhibition? Yes, she says to Carol Hinrichs's 1977 The Personal is Political: "It is at this point a pole to tell it like it is." Every show has told it like it is in their lives. Eileen Dix, The House of Fame, Contemporary, 24 April - 24 May 2010. nottinghamcontemporary.org