12 LGBTQ+ Artists Having Institutional Shows This Pride Month

By Howard Halle
June 23, 2023 10:37am

J. C. Leyendecker

J.C. Leyendecker, Men and Woman, Arrow Shirts with Golf Clubs and Collie (painting for Arrow Collar advertisement), 1910.

Even if you’ve never heard of J. C. Leyendecker (1874–1951), his work as a commercial artist may seem vaguely familiar to you as part of the popular culture of the early 20th century, especially the Roaring Twenties. Leyendecker’s distinctive designs, like his ads for Arrow Shirt collars, helped to define the image of men for his era (and the producers of the 1973 hit film The Sting certainly knew of him, borrowing his style in posters for the movie). Leyendecker lent his models an air of elegant sophistication and, since he was gay, a homoerotic undertone that went unnoticed by most people who saw his work in newspapers and in magazines like the Saturday Evening Post (for which he shared cover art duties with Norman Rockwell). With “Under Cover: J. C. Leyendecker and American Masculinity,” the New-York Historical Society resurfaces Leyendecker’s work and its stealthy influence on an unaware public. Through August 13.