

Lee Lawrie

Architectural sculptor (1877 - 1963)

Lawrie is known as the dean of American architectural sculptors and a key figure in the art scene preceding World War II. His work includes the details on the Nebraska State Capitol building in Lincoln, and his most prominent work, the free-standing bronze *Atlas* at New York's Rockefeller Center.

Lee Lawrie was born in Rixdorf, Germany, in 1877, and came to America with his family at the age of four, settling in Chicago. It was there, at the age of 14, that he began working for the sculptor RICHARD HENRY PARK, and later, after moving east, working with AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS.

It was Lawrie's collaborations with RALPH ADAMS CRAM and BERTRAM GOODHUE, beginning in 1895, that brought him to the forefront of architectural sculptors. The reredos (carved stone altar screen) in St. Thomas Church in New York is an important example of his collaboration with Goodhue, which culminated in the exterior sculpture of the Capitol in Lincoln. After the breakup of the Cram, Goodhue firm in 1914, Lawrie continued to work with Goodhue until Goodhue's premature death in 1924, then with his successors. Lawrie's collaborations with Goodhue are arguably the most highly developed example of architectural sculpture in American architectural history.

The Nebraska State Capitol and the Los Angeles Public Library both feature extensive sculptural programs integrated into (rather than applied onto) the surface, massing, spatial grammar and social function of the building.

