# Miss Gheen

The decorating firm of Miss Gheen was founded by Marian Gheen in Chicago, Illinois as a high-style planner and producer of custom interior arrangements. Gheen was born in Westchester, Pennsylvania and ventured to Chicago around 1915 to assist Elsie de Wolfe who was considered one of the finest professionals of her day. Marian was viewed as being intelligent and noble in her own right, often mistakenly for being British for possessing English sensibility and the ability to dress impeccably. Her philosophy stressed meticulous design but in a livable way. Gheen was fond of muslin, brocade velvet, and chintzy patterns for fabric to complement woods in fine hues. Though color does not transfer well in photographs from the era, Gheen was notable in her use of sulfurous yellow for an undeniable pop of color (her favorite color was apricot). She had an unmistakably feminine touch which was a draw for specialized women's social clubs to hire her. Some of the items chosen came from dealers like the Brummer Gallery in Manhattan.

Initially, Gheen worked principally on her own for stately homes throughout the Midwest for owners like Lawrence Armour, Joseph M. Patterson, Charles Pillsbury, and Edward Roberts. Gheen then branched out into institutional works for the Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago and the Twentieth Century Club in Pennsylvania. Towards the 1920's, Marian relocated to New York where a branch was opened on 46th Street. In Manhattan, she was responsible for furnishing the offices of the New York Life Insurance Co. and Lee, Higginson & Co., along with the Hotel Gotham and Ritz Tower apartment of Foxhall Keene. On Long Island, Gheen decorated the Brookville estates of Richard F. Howe and Joseph P. Grace, Sr. in Lakeville alongside W. & J. Sloane. Gheen also worked on the Ellen Crane Memorial Room at the Berkshire Museum in Massachusetts.

After Marian passed away in 1932, the banner was carried on by Gertrude G. Robinson as president and subsequently by Helen Billau. Miss Gheen shuttered for good by 1950.

*Compiled by Andrew Cronson*


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