Six Lectures: on art and architecture 25 February - 23 March 2013 - Liceo Artistico A. Modigliani, Padova, Italia Erica H. Adams, Professor of Art, School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston/Tufts University adams.erica@comcast.net

Overview: Art and architecture in context presented in historical sequence-late 19th -early 21st century –U.S. as connected to Europe.

- 1. **Museums: a brief history** (from caves to focus on 19th -21st century)
 - What is a museum? Is the museum a container for art or, itself, an art object? What funds museums?
 - How do architectural spaces of museums function to display art or create new spaces for new type of art?
 - <u>Collections:</u> who collects, what funds collections and whom do collections represent?
 - The idea of a museum as a construct or evolving concept is explored from caves to European churches to *Renaissance era "Cabinets of Curiosities"* to *Private collections and*, 19th century *House museums*. *And*, *then* late 19th century explosion of museum building -in New York, Boston and Philadelphia –of *encyclopedic museums* and their 21st century additions, some are "green" or LEED certified museums. Finally, "Green Museums" or land preserves that display sculpture or, transform urban land for new art, out of doors. Light in architecture from caves to churches and museums is used symbolically to convey our notions of art and spirituality.

2. The Motor City: early 20th modernism and alienation

- <u>American cities, early 20th century</u>, were engines of movement and change: the machine was deified, cities were *transformed* by the car that fostered the suburbs; a large influx of immigrants and new industrial wealth changed the landscape alongside the assembly line, the skyscraper and cinema. We begin with 19th century maps of newly <u>Modern</u> cities –Chicago and New York –and, pre-modern Boston.
- <u>European modernism was introduced to the New York art audience:</u> First by the "291 Gallery" (1907-1917) operated by photographers Stieglitz and Steichen. Then, the <u>Armory show</u> (1913) introduced modernism while controversy centered on Duchamp's Cubo-Futurist Nude Descending a Staircase. The "291" Gallery focus was: first, how artists European and American responded to the human form and to the city. And, during WWI, focused on American artists including abstract painter Georgia O'Keefe and Precisionist Charles Sheeler alongside photography by Paul Strand and others.
- In the 1920s alienation and loneliness was expressed by painter Edward Hopper and German Expressionist film set design translated into the architecture of the Chrysler skyscraper, in New York, in 1929. Paintings, photography and architecture and design are explored in context of innovations in technology, war and art that expressed a transitional era and changed how we engage, eg:—Film—the moving image and sound; Photography -Pictorialist, Modernist and documentary; Painting and sculpture- realist Ash Can School reacts to Impressionism; Speed and movement expressed in Cubo-Futurism of, Precisionist, Streamlined Design, skyscrapers, etc. from this came "isms": social realism, surrealism, collage, assemblage, abstraction.
- 3. The Great Depression: Art and architecture (1930-1945) includes movements and artists in context:
 - o The Harlem Renaissance Jacob Lawrence and Romare Beardon were African American artists in New York.
 - o The WPA/Work Progress Administration, U.S. government sponsored programs hired artists to:
 - a. Paint murals for public spaces with socially relevant themes: influence of <u>Italian frescos and Mexican muralists</u> on painters hired by WPA = <u>Jackson Pollock</u> and <u>Ben Shahn</u> also worked with <u>Mexican muralists</u> in New York-<u>Diego</u>
 Rivera + Jose Orozco. New materials + techniques. Large-scale murals preceded large scale <u>Abstract Expressionism</u>.
 - Photograph social realities of the Great Depression that produced the first documentary photography.

4 John Cage and Pop Art: (Post WWII -1945-70)

- o <u>DVD: John Cage</u>: <u>The Mountain Lake Workshop</u> (U.S) where he is seen making his *New River watercolors*
- 'Chance operations' a theory of composer <u>John Cage</u> used to make his art, here produces paintings by using a system of chance that eliminates individual's choices. What are results? What are aesthetic roots and social implications of his chance operations?
- Pop Art: from early sampled collages of first "Pop" artist, <u>Richard Hamilton</u> (U.K.) that preceded U.S. Pop Art to the early hand-painted pop of <u>Warhol</u> in the wake of Abstract Expressionism and the Pop movement that followed <u>Roy</u> <u>Litchenstein</u>, <u>Claes Oldenberg</u> -how do these works express an industrial consumer culture?

5. Photography: (1840-2013)

- Early photography –Mid-Late 19th century: imitated painting and freed painting from realism. The variety of cameras and printing techniques was vaster than contemporary photography –daguerreotypes, tintypes, cyanotypes, etc –allowed variety in how a photograph could "look". This coupled with unrefined cameras and lenses conspired to make photography subservient to painting. Used as a sketch by artists, photography increasingly informed how we see.
- Ocumentary and personal documentary photography: (1909 -1980) Pictorialism and Modernism of eg: Steiglitz—painterly photographs gave way to sharp focus of new lenses and, objectivity -documentary photography grew by necessity a partial result of two World Wars and Great Depression seen in the media and the WPA/Works Progress Administration. The Post War reaction was "Personal Documentary" eg: 1950w surrealism of Diane Arbus then personal documentary work by Nan Goldin, Mark Morrisroe and David Armstrong. An increasingly individualistic society created surrealist, subjective and painterly photographs of private worlds.
- o <u>Photoshop (digital image)</u>: (1980 -2013) <u>Postmodernism</u> and invention of the 1982 invention of the digital image transformed photography and art: artists now constructed a "reality" to photograph. Television and Hollywood informed <u>Cindy Sherman</u>'s work re-presented gender roles as a construction. <u>Photo-sculptures</u>, <u>Photo-installations and projections on buildings</u> became the common language of postmodernism. Photography was now "Art" a dream that "291" Gallery owner, photographer Stieglitz worked for from 1908 until his death in 1945.

6. Today: Working in the Arts and Architecture, an open forum for students of each class.

Each student in order to submit (2) questions most relevant to them as young artists and architects entering the
professional world of the arts, is asked to keep a journal of questions and comments on the 5 lectures. From these we will
all use our time more effectively. Additionally, in the next two weeks, students and faculty can request certain topic they
would like me to address.