



Unexpected Partners: Self-Taught Artists and Modernism in Interwar America

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023

11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. EDT

Updated Schedule (1/20/23)

11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Jason T. Busch

American Folk Art Museum

Richard Meyer

Stanford University

11:30 a.m.

SESSION 1: “MODERN PRIMITIVES”

Presented as a series of exhibition case studies, this session investigates the exhibition and reception of self-taught art in the interwar period, illuminating non teleological histories of modernism that were foreshadowed in MoMA’s pluralistic—yet often primitivizing—program. This session considers self-taught artists such as Morris Hirshfield as significant players in art history, not just inspirations for the avant-garde.

Introduced and moderated by **Esther Adler** (Museum of Modern Art), followed by a brief discussion with speakers.

Jennifer Marshall

University of Minnesota

William Edmondson at MOMA, 1937

Brooke Wyatt

American Folk Art Museum/University of Pittsburgh

Compensating for the Lacunae of Modern Art »: Séraphine Louis and French Self-Taught Painters in Modernist Discourse

Susan Davidson

Independent Curator

The Master of The Two Left Feet Steps Out in Manhattan

Break

1:15 p.m.

SESSION 2: THE INSIDE/OUTSIDE CONUNDRUM

This session illuminates how categories of self-taught, folk and Native arts have been defined in the negative, upholding dominant discourses and reenforcing the boundaries of elite White spaces. Speakers provide a historical overview of how the American art world assimilated and marketed the work of underrepresented practitioners at various moments, while centering their readings on the artists' perspective and creative agency.

Introduced and moderated by **Valérie Rousseau** (American Folk Art Museum), followed by a brief discussion with speakers.

Lynne Cooke

National Gallery of Art

Autodidact: "only a matter of degree"?

Bill Anthes

Pitzer College

Painting Against Primitivism: Oscar Howe's Modern Dakota Art

Break

2:45 p.m.

SESSION 3: REMAPPING MODERNISMS

Opening the discussion to a global context, the final session traces the multiple, intertwined histories of modernism which evolved and overlapped in mid-century North America and beyond. Speakers will highlight contributions by self-taught artists and other cultural producers who have been traditionally left out of mainstream institutions, but reflect an expansive vision of art that challenges traditional hierarchies and discourses about the interwar period.

Introduced and moderated by **Angela Miller** (Washington University in St. Louis), followed by a brief discussion with speakers.

Nicole Smythe-Johnson

Independent Curator

In search of a Subaltern Modernism: Rethinking John Dunkley

Rodrigo Moura

El Museo del Barrio

A Global Naïve? Notes on the Brazilian Case

Julia Bryan-Wilson

Columbia University/Museu de Arte de São Paulo

Embellishment as Method

4:15 p.m.

Jane Kallir

The Kallir Research Institute

Closing Remarks