



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

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023**

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

## **Schedule**

11:00 a.m.

**Jason T. Busch**

American Folk Art Museum

*Introduction*

**Richard Meyer**

Stanford University

*Keynote*

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**

1:00 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*

**Marci Kwon**

Stanford University/Cantor Art Center's Asian American Art Initiative

*Education and Incarceration in Midcentury America*

**Break**

3:00 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*

4:30 p.m.

**Jane Kallir**

The Kallir Research Institute

*Closing Remarks*