

Lecture 1: Introduction to theories of Modernism and Modernity

I. Modern/ Modernity/ Modernization/ Modernism

II. High and Low? Or images of Modernization? “Venus Envy” as an introductory test case

A. Venus / Aphrodite / Primavera: looking back on Modernity

1. Botticelli and the Renaissance – already high/low, already the “querelle” between the ancients and the modern (Modern without *Modernism*)
2. 19<sup>th</sup> century France (Bouguereau and Cabanel versus Courbet and Manet)
3. Woman as an anxious figure of modernity from Manet to ASCO

B. Mass Culture as a product of reproductive technologies (Berger, Benjamin), and *Modernism* as resistant

1. Picabia and Duchamp: mechanical women, 1912-1920s
2. Dubuffet and de Kooning: primordial woman or mass commodity?
3. Warhol’s Venus
4. Cindy Sherman’s postmodern complexities

C. Commodified desires

1. Wesselman – a thin line between Pop and porn
2. Madonna-Venuses in mass circulation today (Ciccone, Hilton, or Suleman?)
3. Duchamp (again) Rauschenberg, Mereiles, and the erotics of the commodity itself

D. Abstract purity: Modern Man

E. Modernism vs. Postmodernism — a major theme of the course

III. Review of Syllabus, writing and communication assignments

Image List (selected)

Botticelli, Birth of Venus, 1483-84

Cabanel, Birth of Venus, 1863

Bouguereau, Birth of Venus, 1879

Manet, Olympia, 1863; Street Singer 1862

ASCO, Instant Mural (Gronk with Patssi Valdez), 1974

Courbet, The painter’s studio, 1855

Picabia, Portrait of an American girl in a state of nudity, 1915

Duchamp, Nude Descending a Staircase, 1912 and The Bride Stripped Bare... 1915-23

Dubuffet, Childbirth, 1944 and Corps de Dame series, 1950

de Kooning, Study for Woman, 1950

Warhol, Gold Marilyn, 1962 and Marilyn Diptych, 1962

Sherman, Untitled film stills, 1978

Wesselman, Great American Nude series, ca. 1962-67

Rauschenberg, Coca-Cola Plan, 1958

Mereiles, Insertions Project, 1970

Boccioni, Unique Forms of Continuity in Space, 1913

Lissitzky, Modern Man, 1923

Roszak, MIT Chapel bell, 1955

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