



## ITALIAN ART IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Art 410, Spring Semester 2018

Prof. Marco Cianchi (mcianchi1@gmail.com)

Monday 9.30-12.15 Aula Magna Office Hours: Monday 12.30-14.30 (by appointment)

### Syllabus

#### **Course Goals:**

Throughout the past decade, my aim in the course *20th Century Italian Art* has been to successfully present the structure of 20th century Italian art to American students in the fields of humanities, architecture, and studio-art. Particularly, this course addresses the information-gap that exists in English/American modern and contemporary art publications where only Futurism, Metaphysical art, Arte Povera, and a few other Italian movements or makers receive attention. Through this course, students appreciate the powerful synthesis between our overwhelming tradition of historical art and the changes of the past century reflected in Italian modern and post-modern art and culture.

#### **Course Description:**

This course will examine the history of Italian painting and sculpture in Italy from the early 20th century to the present against the background of Italy's cultural-political heritage and in comparison with parallel art developments in Europe and America. It will begin around 1910 with Futurism and the Metaphysical School. The speed, dynamism and technological innovation in the work of Balla and Boccioni versus the silence, memory and tradition in Giorgio De Chirico's painting characterize these two different options offered by Italian art. Then it will consider the general climate of "ritorno all'ordine" (call to the order) that evolved into a Fascist art under the regime of Mussolini (1922-45). For this period, focus will be on artists Mario Sironi, Arturo Martini, and Giorgio Morandi.

After the war and the fall of Fascism, Italy became a Republic. It was a new beginning for the country and for the arts. Masters such as Alberto Burri (his "burlap sacks" were a scandal) and Lucio Fontana (known for his "slashes" and space-time concepts) contributed to the success of Arte Informale. This "formless art" movement became a worldwide phenomenon during the 1950s that had Abstract Expressionism (or Action Painting) as its American counterpart. These new artists will be compared with "figurative" masters active in Italy at the same time, especially leftist painter Renato Guttuso who developed a politically and socially motivated art. The "fabulous" sixties, Italy's time of the industrial boom, introduced a local version of English/American Pop Art but also generated examples of "anti-art" such as Piero Manzoni's "artist's breathe" inspired by Dadaist Marcel Duchamp. The attitudes that emerged out of the 1960's and the Italy modern art tradition, like Futurism, were seminal to the rise of Arte Povera (poor art) in 1968. Its principal artists (Kounellis, Merz, Pistoletto, Penone) will be thoroughly studied in the context of Process-art in order to grasp their individual contribution to the internationally recognized new-avant-garde.

Finally, in the 1980s, a new wave of Expressionist art named “Transvanguardia”, again brought a generation of Italy’s artists to the postmodern stage. Protagonists such as Clemente, Chia, Cucchi, Paladino will be discussed along with young contemporary artists like Cattelan and Beecroft that emerged in the last decade of the 20th century.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

**MON. FEB. 26 – CLASS CANCELLED TODAY - MANDATORY MAKE-UP CLASS ON FRIDAY, MARCH 23 FROM 9,30-12,15\* \* Time subject to change. TBA**

**Mon. March 5- Introduction to the course. 1<sup>st</sup> lecture on Futurism:** F. T. Marinetti and Futurist Manifestos. Development of Futurist painting and sculpture styles compared with French Cubism. Focus on the work of Boccioni, Balla, Severini.

**Mon. March 12 - 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture on Futurism-** “Futurist reconstruction of the Universe”: its expansion to all media and arts after 1915.

Required Reading: BG (=Bibliography/General) 1. : *The Founding Manifesto of Futurism*, pp. 19-24; *Manifesto of Futurist Painting*, pp. 24-27; *Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto*, pp. 27-31; *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture*, pp. 51-65; TB (=Text-book): E. Coen, *The Violent Urge Towards Modernity: Futurism and the International Avant-Garde*, pp. 49-56.

Further Reading: TB: J. De Sanna, *Conceptual Gesture and Enclosed Form: Italian Sculpture of the Early Twentieth Century*, pp. 43-47; BG 16., pp. 31-87; BG 38.; BG 35.

**Mon. March 19 - Lecture on Metaphysical Art:** Giorgio De Chirico’s life and work. Subjects, themes, interpretation of his paintings. The influence of Metaphysical art on Surrealism.

Required Reading: TB: P. Baldacci, *De Chirico and Savinio: Theory and Iconography of Metaphysical Painting*, pp. 61-70; TB: W. Schmied, *De Chirico, Metaphysical Painting and the International Avant-Garde: Twelve Theses*, pp.71-80.

Further Reading: BG 18.; BG 36.; BG 30.

**FRIDAY MARCH 23- MAKE-UP CLASS- 9,30-12,15 \* - Lecture on “Independent Artists”:**

a) Amedeo Modigliani: his bohemian life and early death in Paris. “Long neck” portraits and female nudes; b) Giorgio Morandi: his life in “provincial” Bologna. Still-life with bottles as his favorite painting subject. Comparison with Cézanne. \*Time subject to change. TBA

**Mon. March 26 - Lecture on “Ritorno all’ordine” (call to order):** Carlo Carrà from Futurism to “Valori Plastici” (plastic values). Novecento group and a Fascist art. Focus on painter Mario Sironi and sculptor Arturo Martini.

Required Reading: TB: P.V. Cannistraro, *Fascism and Culture in Italy, 1919-1945*, pp. 147-154; TB: E. Braun, *Mario Sironi and a Fascist Art*, pp. 173-180.

Further Reading: BG 22.; BG 13.: C. Pirovano, *Arturo Martini...*, p.112.

Required Reading: TB: C. Bertelli, *Modigliani, the Cosmopolitan Italian*, pp. 57-60; TB: J.M. Lukach, *Giorgio Morandi and Modernism in Italy between the Wars*, pp. 155-164.

Further Reading: BG 31.; BG 12.

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 30 - APRIL 8 - CSU CLOSED**

**Mon. April 9 - Lecture on postwar figurative art:** From the expressionism of the late thirties to Renato Guttuso's political issue. The influence of Picasso's Guernica. Giacomo Manzù and Marino Marini: two different ways to sculpture.

Required Reading: TB: P. Vivarelli, *Personalities and Styles In Figurative Art of the Thirties*, pp. 181-186; TB: M. De Micheli, *Realism and the Post-war Debate*, pp. 281-287.

Further Reading: BG 26. ; BG 11. : On Marini, Manzù, Greco, p. 206; BG 13.: L. Somaini, *Marino Marini...*, p. 162; BG 13.: M. De Micheli, *Giacomo Manzù...*, p. 192.

**Mon. April 16 – MID TERM EXAM (exam will include information/materials through the March 26 lesson - Ritorno all'ordine)**

**Mon. April 23 - Lecture on Arte Informale:** Alberto Burri's "burlap sacks". Lucio Fontana's "holes and slashes". Comparison with American Abstract Expressionism (Jackson Pollock's "drip painting", Bill de Kooning's "Women") and French *Informel* (Jean Fautrier, Jean Dubuffet).

Required Reading: TB: M. Calvesi, *Informel and Abstraction in Italian Art of the Fifties*, pp. 289-294; TB: G. Celant, *From the open Wound to the Resurrected Body: Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni*, pp. 295-299. Further Reading: BG 25.; BG 39.; BG 42.

**Mon. April 30 – CLASS CANCELLED - CSU CLOSED** – To make-up this class, students are to visit, **on their own**, the **Museo del Novecento**, Piazza Santa Maria Novella. This mandatory **LOOKING ASSIGNMENT** to make-up the class cancelled & must be completed before the final exam.

**Mon. May 7 – VISIT TO THE PALAZZO STROZZI SHOW "LA NASCITA DI UNA NAZIONE"** (Birth of a Nation. Italian Art from the Postwar to 1968). Meet at 10am in front of Palazzo Strozzi. Ticket price tba (approx. 12 euro + group reservation fees).

**Mon. May 14 – Lecture on "Art of the Sixties ":** The "richness" of Italian Pop Art. Piero Manzoni's anti-art. "Poor gestures and materials" in the work of Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Michelangelo Pistoletto and other masters of Arte Povera. Comparison with European and US art in the sixties and seventies.

Required Reading: TB: G. Briganti, *Cultural Provocation: Italian Art of the Early Sixties*, pp. 301-307; TB: C. Tisdall, *'Materia': The Context of Arte Povera*, pp. 363-368.

Further Reading: BG 29.; BG 33.; BG 37.

**Mon. May 21- introduction to Post-modern art and DVD on Today's Art:** Theory and practice of Postmodernism. German Neo-expressionism (Anselm Kiefer, Georg Baselitz, others). American "Bad painting" (David Salle, Julian Schnabel). The artists (Chia, Clemente, Cucchi, Paladino) and the "creative" critic (Achille Bonito Oliva) of the Italian Transavantgarde. Maurizio Cattelan and Vanessa Beecroft, two examples of internationally recognized young Italian artists.

Required Reading: TB: N. Rosenthal, *C.C.C.P.: Back to the Future*, pp. 369-375; BG 14.: *The Italian Transavantgarde and German Neoexpressionism*, pp. 281-318.

Further Reading: BG 23.; BG 7.: *1984b. Frederick Jameson publishes 'Postmodernism'...*, pp. 596-599; BG 10.: *Postmodernism: Theory and Practice in the 1980s*, pp. 197-231.

**MAY 28 – MAY 31: FINAL EXAM. Date and time tba**

### EXAMS

**Mid-term:** a) Identify 3 slides out of a set of 30-40 pictures that the teacher will provide. Artist's name, title and date of the work, a brief comment, are required; b) Answer 2 questions about artists and/or art movements.

**Final-exam:** like the mid-term, on the second half of the course.

## GRADES

**Midterm 50%** (of which part a.=40%; part b.=60%)

**Final-exam 50%** (same)

NOTE: Given the scarcity of English literature on some of the discussed topics attendance is of utmost importance for this class.

## ATTENDANCE

**“3 – Hour” Attendance Policy 2017-2018 (for classes that meet once a week for 3 hours)**

Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed during the semester but more than one unexcused absence will lower your grade as follows (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies): **TWO** unexcused absences, lowers by 1.5 letter grades (i.e., B to C-); **THREE** unexcused absences, lowers by 3 letter grades (i.e., A to D). More than **THREE unexcused absences could result in failure of the course.**

In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding **five** minutes will be considered an absence.

Dates of mid-term and final exams **can not** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about these exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates. **Missing the midterm or the final exam could result in failure of the course.**

During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

### **Other class policies:**

Use of computer in class is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by the professor.

**Eating** is **NOT** allowed in class.

Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on *silent mode* during class.

## COST PER STUDENT

Just the xerox and the binding of your required readings. Estimated cost approx. **9-10 Euros.**

No text-book to buy. To the above please add the ticket price to visit the Strozzi Palace Art Show, approx. 12-14euro.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Text book

E. Braun (ed), *Italian Art in the 20th Century. Painting and Sculpture 1900-1988* (Munich and London: Prestel Verlag, 1989).

NB: This book is out of print. There are several copies on reserve. It must be used in the library to study the pictures and for Italian history readings. Xerox of the required readings are available at the “copisteria” Piazza San Marco.

General  
Alphabetic Order

Repertories, Survey and Source Books

1. U. Apollonio, *Futurist Manifestos* (New York, 1970).
2. Z.G. Baranski, R.J. West, *Modern Italian Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).
3. M. Calvesi, *Storia dell'arte contemporanea* (Milano: Fabbri Editore, 1986).
4. H.B. Chipp (ed), *Theories of Modern Art. A Source Book by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1968).
5. M. Corgnati, F. Poli, *Dizionario dell'arte del Novecento* (Milano: B. Mondadori, 2001).
6. J. Fineberg, *Art Since 1940. Strategies of Being* (London: Laurence King, 2000).
7. H. Foster, et al, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004).
8. R.L. Goldberg, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988).
9. G.H. Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe: 1880-1940* (London: Penguin Books [1967], 1983).
10. D. Hopkins, *Art after Modern Art: 1945-2000* (London: Oxford History of Art, 2000).
11. E. Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art since 1945* (London: Thames & Hudson, New Edition 2001).
12. C. Pirovano (ed), *La pittura in Italia. Il Novecento*, 3 vols (Milano: Electa, 1991).
13. C. Pirovano (ed), *Scultura italiana del Novecento* (Milano: Electa, 1993).
14. I. Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era. From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996).
15. P. Selz, C. Stiles (eds), *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
16. C. Tisdall, A. Bozzolla, *Futurism* (London: Thames & Hudson [1977], 1996).
17. L. Vinca Masini, *Arte Contemporanea*, 4 vols (Firenze: Giunti, 1989-1993).

Monographs and Exhibition Catalogues

18. P. Baldacci, *De Chirico. The Metaphysical Period* (Bullfinch Press Books, 1997).
19. R. Barilli, et al, *Art in Arcadia. The Gori Collection at Celle* (Torino: U. Allemandi, 1994) [see section of Architecture books. The Italian edition of the same book (title: *Arte ambientale*) is in the Modern Art History Section].
20. J. Beck, N. Micieli, *Buscioni* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1994).
21. G. Belli, *Le stanze dell'arte. Figure e immagini del XX secolo* (Exh. Trento, MART; Milano: Skira, 2002).
22. F. Benzi, *Mario Sironi* (Milano and New York: P. Daverio, 1989).
23. A. Bonito Oliva, *The Italian Trans-Avantgarde. La Transavanguardia italiana* (Milano: G. Politi, 1981).
24. M. Calvesi, P. Ginsborg, *Novecento. Arte e storia in Italia* (Exh. Rome, Scuderie del Quirinale; Milano: Skira, 2000).
25. M. Calvesi, I. Tomassoni, *Burri, gli artisti e la materia 1945-2004* (Exh. Roma, Scuderie del Quirinale; Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2005).
26. F. Carapezza, *Guttuso. Capolavori dai musei* (Exh. Torino; Milano: Electa-Espresso, 2005).
27. G. Celant, *Architecture & Arts 1900-2004. A Century of Creative Projects in Building, Design, Cinema, Painting, Photography, Sculpture* (Exh. Genova; Milano: Skira, 2004).
28. G. Celant, *Identité italienne. L'art en Italie depuis 1959* (Exh. Paris, Centre Pompidou; Firenze: Centro Di, 1981) [French].

29. G. Celant, *The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-1968* (Exh. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1994).
30. E. Coen, *Metafisica* (Exh. Roma, Scuderie del Quirinale; Milano: Electa-Espresso, 2003).
31. G. Cortenuova, *Modigliani* (Firenze: Giunti, 1988).
32. E. Crispolti, F. Sborgi, *Futurismo. I grandi temi 1909-1944* (Exh. Genova; Milano: Mazzotta, 1998)
33. C. Christov-Bagargiev, *Arte Povera* (London: Phaidon Press, 1999).
34. C. Christov-Bakargiev, *Franz Kline 1910-1962* (Exh. Rivoli; Milano: Skira, 2004).
35. M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Balla. The Futurist* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1988).
36. M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *De Chirico. L'opera completa* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1984).
37. W. Guadagnini, *Pop Art Italia 1958-1968* (Exh. Modena; Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2005) [English Text].
38. L. Mattioli Rossi, *Boccioni's Materia: A Futurist Masterpiece and the Avant-Garde in Milan and Paris* (Exh. New York: The Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 2004).
39. C. Sarteanesi, *Fondazione Burri* (Milano: Skira, 1999) [English Edition].
40. G. Serafini, *Burri* (Firenze: Giunti, 1991).
41. N. Spector, F. Bonami, *Maurizio Cattelan* (London: Phaidon Press, 2003).
42. S. Whitfield, *Lucio Fontana* (Exh. London, Hayward Gallery; University of California Press, 1999).
43. *Vanessa Beecroft. Performances 1993-2003* (Exh. Rivoli; Torino, 2003).
44. *Venice Biennale delle Arti*, various catalogues.

#### TO RESEARCH

- See list of SELECTED WEBSITES in xeroxed text book.
- Best public library in our area is ABAC (Archivio Biblioteca Arte Contemporanea), "Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci", Prato. See [www.centropecci.it](http://www.centropecci.it) for general information and to consult on-line library.