AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE, PAINTING AND SCULPTURE:A COURSE PLAN DESIGNED FOR CHINESE STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This course proposal is designed particularly for those Chinese college students who wish to obtain some general knowledge of America's achievements in the fields of architecture, painting, and sculpture. So far as I know, many college-level courses in various aspects of American culture, such as American history, government, politics, foreign policy, economy, mass media, education, philosophy, and literature, are offered here in Taiwan. But no general survey course in American arts has yet been given for those students who are interested in learning something about American arts. In order to help such students, I have ventured to design the following course plan for their reference.

The significance of the artistic dimension in the curriculum related to American culture is self-evident. The special issue of *Newsweek* (Dec. 24, 1973) on "The Arts in America" will certainly make Chinese readers aware that American arts have been playing a very important role in American life.[1] To understand the situation of the arts in America, that issue of *Newsweek* is of much help because it gives a rather comprehensive survey of America's various artistic landscapes, including those of film, pop-music, jazz, symphony orchestras, dance, new forms of visual art, modern architecture, the literary scene, and even the world of the critics. To further understand the great role of art in American life, we may also consult Alvin Toffler's interesting book, *The Culture Consumers: A Study of Art and Affluence in America*. Toffler rightly observed, "The American attitude toward the arts has completed a 180-degree turn since the end of World War II. From one of apathy, indifference, and even hostility, it has become one of eager, if sometimes ignorant, enthusiasm."[2] Now that Americans are so enthusiastic about the arts, we must know something about their arts, among other things, if we expect to know America better. It

1. "The Arts in America," *Newsweek*, 24 Dec. 1973, pp. 34-98.
2. Alvin Toffler, *The Culture Consumers: A Study of Art and Affluence in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 13.

is exactly for this reason that I consider it worthwhile to propose that a general survey course in American architecture, painting, and sculpture be added to the curriculum about American culture. If this course proves to be satisfactory to the students, I am sure they will be interested in exploring by themselves the other aspects of American art, notably, music and film.

The proposed course is to be completed within one semester. Suppose there are fourteen weeks in a semester, with three hours allotted for this course each week, then I will budget my time this way: the first five weeks will deal with American architecture, the next six weeks with American painting, the 12th and the 13th weeks with American sculpture, and in the last week a sample comparative study of Chinese and American arts will be undertaken. The details of the whole plan are as follows.

GOALS, METHODS, MATERIALS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

In the first hour of the first week, I will explain the goals of this course, the methods and materials to be used, and the assignments to be given. As has been indicated earlier, the primary goal of this course is to help the students acquire a basic understanding of American architecture, painting, and sculpture, the most tangible aspects of American culture. My teaching method will be a combination of lecture and discussion, but since I assume my students do not yet have adequate background knowledge of the chosen fields, I think I will have to spend most of my time lecturing on the relevant topics. Generally, a "cross-cultural approach" will be employed. I will present American interpretations of the arts concerned, and then I will encourage the students to form their own judgments using Chinese points of view. Of course, if they expect to make meaningful judgments, they will have to utilize their knowledge of Chinese architecture, painting, and sculpture I will encourage them to make comparative studies of Chinese and American achievements in these fields. I think there are many possible subjects suitable for such comparative studies. For example, they may compare paintings by a modern Chinese artist and his American counterpart. They may study American influence on modern Chinese architecture. Or they may examine to what extent and in what ways American arts have ever been influenced by China. The usefulness of this cross-cultural approach is very well illustrated in Benjamin Rowland's *Art in East and West: An Introduction through Comparisons*. I will further illustrate this approach in the 14th week.

The materials to be used include many books and slides related to the subjects to be

covered. Most of the books are shown in the selected bibliography. My lectures will largely be based on these books, but the students are encouraged to read some additional materials. Besides, I will introduce some books written in Chinese,such as the Chinese translation of Sam Hunter's *Modern American Painting and Sculpture.* In addition to reading these books so marked, each student will be given at least two more assignments, that is, writing a short paper on any appropriate topic of his own choice, preferably a topic of cross-cultural nature, and translating a chapter of Richard McLanathan's *Art in America: A Brief History* into Chinese. After translating the assigned chapter, he is expected to read the other chapters translated by his classmates. I believe this brief history of American art written in simple and clear English can be completely translated within a semester by a team of some ten students. My long-term plan is to have a number of very good basic textbooks translated into Chinese jointly by my fellow teachers and students.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

Having made some introductory remarks, in the second hour of the first week I will be ready to get down to business. In this hour I plan to guide the class through a quick tour of American architecture by showing them the slides of the most representative buildings in each historical period. This slide show is intended to give the students a general impression of how American architecture has evolved or developed from the earliest days up to the present. Since the students have not had the chance to visit America, they need this kind of show to get mentally prepared for this course. As each building is shown, I will explain very briefly its main features characteristic of a particular era or school. To further help the students get ready for this course, I will also spend one hour introducing a number of special terms which they are most likely to come across in the assigned readings and my lectures. A good glossary of architectural terms such as prepared by William A. Coles and Henry Hope Reed, Jr. in *Architecture in America: A Battle of Styles* would be helpful to the students.

In the next three weeks I will explain in greater detail the major styles and architects of each period. The history of American architecture is naturally divided into several periods, but historians vary on how to make the divisions and on what terms to use in describing the divisions. For example, Alan Gowans had in mind four stages of the evolution of American architecture and furniture, namely, (1) the "medieval" stage of the 17th century, during which the diverse peoples who first settled in the new world transported

here their respective traditions; (2) the "classical" stage of the 18th century; (3) the "Victorian" stage of the 19th century; and (4) the "modern" stage of this century. He further subdivided each stage into several phases so as to give very detailed account of each. According to Wayne Andrews, there are six periods: (1) Colonial Period; (2) Federal Period (1789-1820); (3) Romantic Era (1820-1860); (4) The Age of Indecision (during and after the Civil War); (5) The Age of Elegance (1872-1913); and (6) Modern Times. The divisions made by Richard McLanathan more or less correspond to those described by Wayne Andrews: (1) from the beginning of settlement to 1700 – the native buildings such as the Indian wigwams and those reflecting numerous traditions from the Old World; (2) from 1700 to the Revolution – the Georgian style; (3) from the Revolution to the Age of Jackson – the Federalist style; (4) the Age of Jackson to the Civil War – from classic temples to Gothic fancies; (5) from the Civil War to the turn of the century – from palaces to skyscrapers; and (6) the 20th century. The different ways of describing the various periods seem complementary to each other, but I think the terms for the various periods as used by Wayne Andrews are easier for the students to follow. So I plan to devote the second week to the first two periods, the third week to the next three periods, and the fourth week to the 20th century.

When I go deeper into each period, I will be concerned not only with the features or qualities of that period's main style or trend, but with the various forces which helped shape the style. In this respect, I am adopting Alan Gowans' basic approach as a cultural historian. Just like Lewis Mumford and Thomas Jefferson Watenbaker, Gowans chose to study and interpret American architecture in terms of economic, political, religious, and technological forces. Gowans stated, "Affected by economic conditions, social structure, climate, technology, religious beliefs, and tides of fashionable taste to a degree rare in more individualistic arts like painting or sculpture, architecture and furniture are history in its most tangible form."[3] As a matter of fact, such scholars as Oliver Larkin, Richard McLanathan, Russell Lynes, John Burchard, and Albert Bush-Brown all stress these shaping forces of artistic styles. Both Andrews and Lynes are interested in the theme of taste as reflected in American arts. Changes of taste in various periods are closely related to other cultural forces, social, economic, political, and so on. For example, in his account of the so-called taste industry, Lynes associated "Public Taste" with Jacksonian democracy,

3. Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture as Cultural Expression* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1964), p. xiv.

"Private Taste" with the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor after the 1880's, and "Corporate Taste" with the rapid development of the automobile industry and the movies. As to John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, their attitude was made clear by the subtitle of their book on American architecture: "a social & cultural history." In short, I think it is important to emphasize this sort of cultural historian's approach by which we can better understand American arts in the context of American culture as a whole.

In the second week, I will talk about the Colonial Period and the Federal Period. The main points about the beginning of American architecture are the transported styles of the Old World and the early settlers' practical adjustment to the New World. Many early buildings manifested architectural heritage of Europe. For example, "Governor's Palace in Santa Fé, New Mexico" (1610-14) reveals the influence of the Spanish Baroque style; "Jackson Square, New Orleans" (c. 1795) shows French influence; "Van Cortlandt House, Croton-on-Hudson, New York" (1660s) shows Dutch influence, while the log cabin is an expression of the Scandinavian tradition of wood construction. However, Georgian architecture prevailed in the colonies up to the Revolution. Such buildings as "Mulberry, near Charleston, South Carolina" (1714) and "Carter's Grove, James City County, Va." (1750-53) are characteristic of Georgian formal symmetry, simplicity, and dignity. The main public buildings remaining from the colonial period include Boston's Old State House, Andrew Hamilton's Independence Hall, and Newport's Colony House in Rhode Island (1739-42). The restoration campaign initiated in 1927 in Williamsburg is also worthy of note. That campaign has made Williamsburg "an amazingly complete and consistent example of the style of architecture, planning, and decoration of the earlier years of the 18th century."[4]

During the Federalist Period, American standards of architecture were raised remarkably by many architects who migrated to America, including William Thornton, James Hoban, Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, and Benjamin Henry Latrobe, as well as by some eminent native figures such as Thomas Jefferson, Charles Bulfinch, Samuel McIntire, and Asher Benjamin. L'enfant contributed much to planning Washington. Latrobe was remembered for his part in building the U.S. Capitol. Bulfinch was famous for many buildings such as "State House, Boston" (1795-98) and "First Church of Christ, Lancaster, Mass." (1817). McIntire's Gardner-White-Pingree House in Salem (1805) was representative of his style.

4. Richard McLanathan, *Art in America: A Brief History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), pp. 51-52.

While the Federalist style was dominant, the Classical Revival had appeared with Jefferson's design for the Capitol at Richmond, Va., in 1786. His great fame as an architect was also associated with his designs for "Monticello" and the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. Asher Benjamin's American builders' guides, the first of their kind in America, were inclined toward classicism. As the Classical Revival was gaining momentum, we entered the Romantic Era. It is romanticism that I will focus on in the third week. In this era, the Greek, the Gothic, and many other revivals formed the mainstream. Latrobe introduced the Greek Revival with "Bank of Pennsylvania" (1799) and the Gothic Revival with "William Crammond's house in Philadelphia" (1799). The classical tradition was carried on by many other people, including Alexander Jackson Davis, James Renwick, Jr., whose "Grace Church in New York City" (1846) was one of the finest Gothic churches of this era, Richard Upjohn whose "Trinity Church, New York City" (1846) ranked the greatest of all the churches of this era, John Notman who designed an Italian-style villa – "Residence of Rt. Rev. George Washington Doane, Burlington, New Jersey" (1837), William Strickland who designed "Second Bank of the United States, Philadelphia" (1814-24), Samuel Sloan, and Henry Walters. While the picturesque exotic styles prevailed, the so-called balloon-frame, a revolutionary form of wood construction, was invented by Augustine Deodat Taylor, who in 1833 built St. Mary's Catholic Church in Chicago, the first balloon-frame building in America. According to John A. Kouwenhoven, the balloon frame can best illustrate the "vernacular tradition" in American architecture since it reflects the same characteristics as seen in the vernacular technological design–"simplicity, lightness, flexibility, and wide availability."[5] I think it is important to bear in mind Kouwenhoven's well-founded thesis that the vernacular tradition in architecture and other arts has well interacted with the "tradition of cultivated taste" emanating from Europe.

In the brief Age of Indecision many buildings looked "brutal and confused"[6] betraying American architects' uncertainty at that time. The mansardic style and the Venetian Gothic were popular then. Two examples: "Olana, Residence of F. E. Church, Greendale-on-Hudson, New York" (1872) designed by F. E. Church and Calvert Vaux, and "Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, Albany, New York" (1876) by Russell Sturgis. As to the Age of Elegance (1872-1913), it saw many picturesque and pretentious palaces which were built

5. John A. Kouwenhoven, *The Arts in Modern American Civilization* (New York: Norton, 1948), p. 52.
6. Wayne Andrews, *Architecture in America: A Photographic History from the Colonial Period to the Present* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1960), p. 74.

for millionaires. As pointed out by Russell Lynes, Richard Morris Hunt, among others, helped bring about the Age of Private Taste when he built grand palaces catering to the fancies of the millionaires, most notably, Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt. The other prominent architects in this era included Henry Hobson Richardson, whose "Trinity Church, Boston" (1872-77) brought about a short-lived Romanesque Revival, and McKim, Mead & White, who built many famous buildings such as "Boston Public Library" (1887) and "Residence of Isaac Bell, Jr., Newport, R.I." (1883). The influence of Richardson on later architects is to be stressed here. Richard Morris Hunt and McKim, Mead and White designed the "Great White City" for the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, which was an epitome of eclecticism and conservatism.

The topic for the fourth week is modern architecture. I would like to begin with the pioneering builders of skyscrapers, including William Le Baron Jenney, whose "Home Insurance Building" was completed in 1885; John Wellborn Root, who designed "Monadnock Building" (1889-91); and Louis Sullivan who, with his famous motto that "form follows function," designed such outstanding buildings as "Schlesinger and Mayer Building" (1899-1904) (now called Carson, Pirie, Scott & Co.) in Chicago and "Guaranty Building" (1895) in Buffalo, New York. After discussing Sullivan's impact on American architecture, I will go on to introduce a long list of modern architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, who is very famous for his "organic architecture" as most eminently demonstrated by "Falling Water, Residence of E. J. Kaufmann, Bear Run, Pa." (1936); Walter Gropius, who headed the Bauhaus; Richard Neutra and Marcel Breuer, who introduced the International Style; Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who headed the Bauhaus after the resignation of Gropius; Philip Johnson, who designed with Mies van der Rohe "Seagram Building, New York City"; Albert Kahn, who designed colossal buildings for General Motors, Chrysler and Ford; Wallace K. Harrison, who with others designed "Rockefeller Center" (1931-40) and "U. N. Secretariat" (1950); Owings & Merrill, whose most famous design was "Lever House" (1952); Minoru Yamasaki, who designed "Municipal Airport, St. Louis, Missouri" (1954); Eero Saarinen, who was famous for such buildings as "David S. Ingalls Hockey Rink, Yale University" (1959) and "Styling Building, General Motors Technical Center, Warren, Michigan" (1952); Le Corbusier, "whose definition of a house as a 'machine for living' rivaled the motto of Mies van der Rohe . . . that 'less is more,' which he illustrated with a cold and impeccable purism";[7] Bernard R. Maybeck, whose individualistic style was

7. Richard McLanathan, *The American Tradition in the Arts* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 389.

illustrated with "Palace of the Fine Arts, San Francisco" (1915); I. M. Pei, whose concern with environment was shown in his design for "The Christian Science Church Center in Boston"; and Fazlur Khan, who created the 1,454-foot Sears Tower in Chicago. In the course of introducing these major modern architects, I will call attention to the persistent tension between the two groups: the Veblenites, who are "cool, impersonal, anti-individualistic, dogmatic, absolutist, worshiping the machine, spellbound by modern materials such as steel and glass and willing to discard the site," and the Jacobites, who are "warm, personal, individualistic, casual, pragmatic, much more concerned with the texture of materials than with their modernity and emphasized the site."[8]

Then in the fifth week, I intend to further discuss the four great modern architects: Wright, Mies, Le Corbusier, and Gropius. "Each cast the world in his own image, one organic, one structural, one primitive, one mechanistic. Together they offered the generations to come both ideas and choice and this would have been enough," stated Burchard and Bush-Brown.[9] For a study of these men, I find very useful the book edited by Adolf K. Placzek, *Four Great Makers of Modern Architecture*, in which are found such good essays as "The Domestic Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright," "The Urban Space Concepts of Mies van der Rohe," "The Influence of Le Corbusier," and "The Influence of the Bauhaus." In addition, I will discuss the book, *Architecture in America: A Battle of Styles*, which deals with the theories, ideals, and criticisms of many architectural styles. Besides, I want to discuss Lewis Mumford as one of the most influential critics on modern architecture. His criticism of such modern buildings as the Secretariat Building of the U. N. is illuminating.

AMERICAN PAINTING

During the next six weeks, I will deal with American painting. In the first hour of the 6th week, I will give a slide show of the most representative paintings in America. This panoramic view is meant to help students grasp the general course of the development of American painting. Then in the second hour, I will introduce a bunch of special terms to the class, such as Luminism, romanticism, neo-classicism, social realism, Impressionism, post-Impressionism, expressionism, abstract expressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Naturalism,

8. Wayne Andrews, *Architecture, Ambition and Americans* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 256.
9. John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social & Cultural History* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 371.

Fauvism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. If the students can understand the meanings of these important terms at the very beginning, they will be able to avoid unnecessary confusions later on.

From the third hour on, I will proceed to introduce the major artists' representative works in each of the main periods or schools. In this hour, I will talk about some portrait-painters, artist-explorers, and artist-naturalists who painted primarily for the reporting purpose in the 16th and the 17th centuries. The early self-trained limners, such as John Freak and Captain Thomas Smith, were mainly concerned with human character rather than beauty or elegance. I will also discuss the Baroque artists of the 18th century, such as Gustavus Hesselius, John Smibert, and Robert Feke, as well as the Rococo artists in mid-18th century, including Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, Matthew Pratt, and Charles Willson Peale. In the 18th century, most American painters devoted themselves almost completely to the study of human personality and the portrait form; they paid very little attention to landscape and still life.

Next, in the 7th week, I will focus on Neoclassicism (1780-1820). Benjamin West, the first American artist who achieved an international fame, painted "William Penn's Treaty with the Indians" (1772). Another distinguished artist in the Neoclassic vein was John Vanderlyn, whose "Ariadne" (1812) was regarded as "the most successful ideal nude produced by American neoclassicism."[10] Other painters in this age were interested in heroism of the real world, such as John Trumbull, who was famous for "The Declaration of Independence" (1818) and "The Surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown" (1817-20); Charles Willson Peale, who painted the memorable portraits of Washington, Franklin, John Adams, and Jefferson; Gilbert Stuart, who painted "Washington at Dorchester Heights" (1806); Henry Sargent, who created such genre paintings as "The Dinner Party" (c. 1815-20) and "The Tea Party" (c. 1815-20); and Alexander Wilson, who was famous for *American Ornithology* (9 vols., 1808-1814). The neoclassic period was the first major period in the history of American painting. "Realistic, narrative, democratic in spirit, it gave this country its first imaginative image of itself, evolved its own style, and left behind a substantial and distinguished legacy of good painting."[11]

Romanticism is the topic for the 8th week. America was on the threshold of the

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10. Edgar P. Richardson, *Painting in America: The Story of 450 Years* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1965), p. 90.
11. Ibid., p. 137.

romantic age when it saw the picture, "The Sun Reflecting on the Dew, a Garden Scene, Echo, Pennsylvania, a Place Belonging to Mr. D. Bavarage" (1808), by William Russell Birch, one of America's first landscapists. In the first generation of American romanticism (1800-1830), the major artists included Washington Allston, who created such highly subjective paintings as "The Moonlit Landscape" (1819) and "Elijah in the Desert" (1818), Rubens Peale, who painted a number of still lifes and pictures, and John James Audubon, whose *The Birds of America* (4 vols,1827-1838) established his position as one of the most outstanding artist - naturalists in America. These artists viewed the world through many new perspectives – "passion, gloom, mystery, excitement, tragedy, religious faith, sentimentality, love of solitude."[12] But their techniques remained to be perfected.

In the second generation of romanticism (1825-1850), the wilderness was one of the exciting discoveries. Thomas Cole created many good paintings such as "In the Catskills" (1837), "The Course of Empire," "The Voyage of Life." and "An Evening in Arcady." Asher B. Durand, another major figure of this generation, painted "Kindred Spirits" (1849) and engraved many plates including Trumbull's "Declaration of Independence" and Vanderlyn's "Ariadne." George Caleb Bingham and George Catlin were especially interested in the frontier theme. William Page was well-known for his "Cupid and Psyche." Edward Hicks, the most popular naive painter, created "The Peaceable Kingdom." The rise of the panorama was also an important phenomenon of this era. Leon Pomarede and John Banvard, among others, used the Mississippi River as their favorite panorama subject.

From 1850 to 1875, romanticism began to fade away. In this generation, four major forces affected the artistic scene: (1) the newly risen science of chemistry brought about many new colors, (2) the rise of the new middle-class, (3) the growing influence of camera, and (4) the civil war. Luminism, naturalism, and sentimentalism prevailed. Among the landscape painters who were concerned with luminism were John Frederick Kensett, Worthington Whittredge, and Sanford Gifford. F. E. Church's "Niagara" (1857) and George Inness's "Harvest Time" (1864) were two examples of naturalism. Deeply concerned with the sentimental historical subject were Daniel Huntington, who painted "The Republican Court" (1861), and Emanuel Leutze, whose "Washington Crossing the Delaware" was well-known. Albert Bierstadt, a major painter of the West, created "Thunderstorm in the Rocky Mountains" (1859).

In the 9th week, I will deal with the last quarter of the 19th century when the move-

12. Ibid., p. 160.

ments oi American Impressionism and Objective Realism took place. The main features of this era were cosmopolitanism and a cult of art for art's sake. James A. McNeil Whistler, who embodied these features, was famous for his decorative Impressionism as demonstrated in "Nocturne in Black and Gold—The Falling Rocket" (c. 1874). Also belonging to the school of decorative Impressionism were George Inness with his "Grey Day, Goochland" (1884), John W. Twachtman, who painted "Sailing in the Mist," Alexander H. Wyant, who painted "The Mohawk Valley" (1866), and Homer Martin, who created "The Harp of the Winds" (1895). As attested by these men's work, Impressionism was a sort of reaction to the naturalism of the generation of 1850.

As to Objective Realism, it was best demonstrated by the work of Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins. Homer was famous for many paintings, such as "Prisoners from the Front" (1866) and "Country School" (1871). Eakins's deep interest in scientific facts was shown in such paintings as "The Gross Clinic" (1875), which skilfully portrayed the performance of an operation. In addition to these men of realism, this era also produced some figures of idealism including John LaFarge, who painted "Greek Love Token" (1866), Albert Pinkham Ryder, whose "The Dead Bird" and "The Tempest" reflected a deep sense of mystery about nature, and Elihu Vedder, who painted some storytelling pictures such as "The Lair of the Sea Serpent" (1864) and "The Lost Mind" (1865).

Contemporary American painting is to be discussed in the following two weeks. The 10th week will focus on the first generation of this century during which the most important event was the Armory Show, and the 11th week on the period from the 1930's up to the present. In addition to the books by Larkin and McLanathan, I have found Milton W. Brown's *American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression*, Sam Hunter's *American Art of the 20th Century,* and Dove Ashton's *American Art Since 1945* particularly helpful for obtaining a general idea about this important era.

At the turn of this century, while French Cubism and Fauvism, German Expressionsim, and Italian Futurism were exploding in Europe, there arose in America the so-called "Ash Can School," of which the foundations were laid mainly by Robert Henri, George Luks, William Glackens, John Sloan, and Everett Shinn. These five independent realists who were concerned with social problems, together with Arthur B. Davies, Ernest Lawson, and Maurice B. Prendergast, held an exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery, New York, in 1908. As a group, they were thereafter called "The Eight" and became a symbol of revolt against estheticism and academicism. The spirit of modernism was also introduced by Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession Gallery in New York, which was also called "291." By showing

the works of the radical artists of Europe, including Rodin, Matisse, Henri Rousseau, Cézanne, Picasso, and Toulouse-Lautrec, as well as the works of such Paris-trained American artists as Max Weber, Alfred H. Maurer, Samuel Halpert, and Abraham Walkowitz, Stieglitz made some unforgettable contributions to the development of modernism in America. However, it was the International Exhibition of Modern Art, also known as the Armory Show, that most successfully exposed the general public to the new movements. The big event took place at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York from February 17th to March 15th, 1913.

Milton W. Brown gave a very comprehensive summary of criticisms on the Armory Show. He pointed out that this controversy centered around the problem of revolution versus tradition. "In some cases modernism was demned by association with the political anathemas of anarchism, socialism and, after 1917, bolshevism; in other cases, by charges of degeneracy, insanity, immorality, incompetence, charlantanry, foreignism, ugliness, unintelligibility or individualism."[13] The impact of this show is clear. It effectively suppressed academicism and the general public began to get prepared for later development of modern American art. After the Armory Show, the struggle against academicism was carried on by a number of events including the Independents' Exhibition in 1917.

After explaining how modern trends got started off, I will introduce some major modern works. In the twenties, Cubism became the most influential style. The major Cubists and works included John Covert's "Brass Band," Konrad Cramer's "Improvisation No. 1," Charles Demuth's "Trees" and "Incense of a New Church," Charles Sheeler's "American Landscape" and "Upper Deck," May Ray's "The Rope Dancer Accompanies Herself with Her Shadows," Joseph Stella's "Battle of Light, Coney Island," Arthur G. Dove's "The Red One," and George O'Keeffe's "The American Radiator Building." Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia were closer to the Futurists than to the Cubists since they greatly stressed mechanical forms in their paintings.

John Marin, Max Weber, Marsden Hartley, and Walt Kuhn received some influence of Cubism, but they were closer to the Fauve tradition as their art betrayed Expressionist emotionalism and abstract distortion. See Marin's "Woolworth Building, No. 31" and "Tree and Sea, Maine," Weber's "New York at Night" and "The Two Musicians," Hartley's "Maine Landscape, Autumn" and "The Dark Mountain," and Kuhn's "Caucus" and

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13. Milton W. Brown, *American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), p. 54.

"Victoria."

While the experimentation of modernism was progressing steadily, realism reasserted itself in the twenties and the thirties. Among the artists of realism who were concerned about American scene were Edward Hopper—"Early Sunday Morning," Franklin Watkins—"Thomas Rawburn White," Charles Burchfield—"Black Iron," Ivan LeLorrain Albright—"That Which I Should. Have Done I Did Not Do," Mark Tobey—"San Francisco Street," and Grant Wood—"American Gothic." As to Expressionism of the forties, it was manifested in Hyman Bloom's "The Bride" and Jack Levine's "Gangster Funeral."

After World War II, Abstract Expressionism or "Action Painting" became the most vital genre. The leader of this school was Jackson Pollock, whose well-known works include "The She-Wolf" (1943), "Lavender Mist" (1949-50), "Sounds in the Grass: Shimmering Substance" (1946), and "Echo" (1951). Aside from Pollock, the major Abstract Expressionists in the forties were Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, and Ad Reinhardt. During the early fifties they were joined by Franz Kline, Philip Guston, James Brooks, Morris Louis, and other younger artists. In this connection, Sam Hunter said: "For the constellation of painters identified with de Kooning and Pollock, Action Painting presented itself as an art of passionate gesture, fluent or amorphous structure, and large individual liberties. The painting could be understood as the record of an act, for the vital signs of personal involvement and spontaneous invention were left conspicuously visible."[14]

Finally, in the last two hours of the 11th week, I will talk about what emerged in the late fifties and the sixties, such as pop art, op art, minimal art, neo-Dada, and New Realism. These new forms arose as a reaction against the extremely specialized styles of Abstract Expressionism. Pop art reveals a deep interest in the material environment and the values of mass society. The major figures of this trend include Allan Kaprow—"Penny Arcade" (1956), Robert Rauschenberg—"Coca-Cola Plan" (1958) and "Buffalo" (1964), Jasper Johns—"Field Painting" (1964) and "Flag" (1958), and Andy Warhol—"One Hundred Campbell's Soup Cans" (1962). It is interesting to note how Sam Hunter interpreted Pop Art with sympathy: "The junk materials which Rauschenberg, Kaprow, and others established in a new aesthetic context could be read as a symbol of alienation from the dominant folkways of an aggressive consumer's society which extravagently valued a gleaming, ersatz

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14. Sam Hunter, *American Art of the 20th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1972), p. 204.

newness in its possessions."[15]

In an article entitled "Art Without Limits," Douglas Davis says, "American art in the 1970s is rambunctious and perverse . . . ."[16] He adds, "These different kinds of art bear catch-phrase names of their own—earth art, conceptual art, performance art, body art, process art. But it seems to me they are all based on one esthetic premise: that the artist is no longer confined in his expression to objects. What follows from this principle is radical indeed. It means that art need no longer be something that can be collected or even shown in traditional ways. You don't exhibit a piece of earth art, you go to see it, often with some difficulty or even risk. American art of the '70s is post-object art."[17] Another good description of the unusual situation of contemporary art in America is derived from *The American Heritage History of the Artists' America*:

> From the mid-1940's until the present day the body of work produced by American artists has been dominated by no single style, ideology, or aesthetic. Rather, the creative output of the last several decades has been in such a state of flux as it has never been before, with artists continually seeking out new modes of expression and perception, and with numerous, rapid, and often violent shifts in direction. Developments and changes that were formerly wrought over several decades, at least, now take place in a matter of seasons, and what the mass media hail as the latest trend one week, may be obsolete the next.[18]

In the last part of my lecture on contemporary American painting, I will further illustrate the diverse "new modes of expression and perception," with special references to philosophical assumptions and experimental techniques of post-modernism.[19]

AMERICAN SCULPTURE

I plan to spend two weeks introducing American sculpture. There were very few real sculptors in a formal sense before mid-19th century. Before that time most sculptors were only artisans and craftsmen who produced such things as figureheads and inn- and trade- signs. For example, William Rush carved a figurehead of "Benjamin Franklin"

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15. Ibid., p. 265.
16. Douglas Davis, "Art Without Limits," *Newsweek*, 24 Dec. 1973, p. 68.
17. Ibid.
18. Marshall B. Davidson and others, eds. *The American Heritage History of the Artists' America* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Company, 1973), p. 371.
19. Dore Ashton, *American Art Since 1945* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 150-211.

(c. 1785); Samuel F. B. Morse created "Dying Hercules" (1812); and John Henri Isaac Browere made a series of plaster busts including one of "Thomas Jefferson." The following figures well represented neoclassicism: Thomas Crawford made "Washington Monument, Richmond, Va." (1850-57); Hiram Powers was well-known for his "Greek Slave" (1843) which, together with E. D. Palmer's "The White Captive" (1858), first made the nude acceptable to Americans; Horatio Greenough's "George Washington" (1832-39) was "the first attempt at genuinely monumental sculpture by an American."[20] The other minor figures included Clark Mills, who made a bronze statue of "Andrew Jackson" (1853), and William Rimmer, who was known for "Dying Centaur" (1871) and "Falling Gladiator" (1861). The last decades of the 19th century saw such famous sculptors as John Rogers, who made "Fugitive's Story" (1869), Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who was known for "The Sherman Monument" (1892-1903), Daniel Chester French, who was best known for "Abraham Lincoln" (1915), and George Grey Barnard, whose colossal "Struggle of the Two Natures of Man" (1893) was well received.

In the 20th century, many sorts of experiments have been undertaken in sculpture, just as in other arts. Gutzon Borglum who carved four Presidential portraits on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota (1930-41) and Jo Davidson who made a bronze portrait of "Gertrude Stein" participated in the Armory Show in 1913. Elie Nadelman, a Cubist, created "Woman at the Piano" (c. 1917) and "Man in the Open Air" (c. 1915). Among the post-war movements are Abstract Expressionism and Constructionism. Seymour Lipton who made "Sanctury" (1953) and "Pioneer" (1957), Jacques Lipchitz who made "Sacrifice II" (1948-52), David Smith with his "Hudson River Landscape" (1951), Theodore Roszak with his "Sea Sentinel" (1956) and "Spectre of Kitty Hawk" (1946-47), and Herbert Ferber who created "Flame" (1949) are all Abstract Expressionists.

The main sculptors of Constructionism include José de Rivera–"Construction #93" (1966), Richard Lippold–"Variation Number 7: Full Moon" (1949-50), Isamu Noguchi–"Humpty Dumpty" (1946), Alexander Calder–"Spider" (1939), and David Smith–"Cubi XVIII" (1964) and "Menand III" (1963). David Smith's favorite material is steel, a symbol of this age of technology. In his own words, "The metal possesses little art history. What associations it possesses are those of this century: power, structure, movement, progress, suspension, destruction, brutality."[21] The spirit of pop art is well expressed in Joseph

20. McLanathan, *Art in America*, p. 134.
21. Quoted by Sam Hunter, op. cit., pp. 242-43.

Cornell's box constructions, Claes Oldenburg's "Floor Cake" (1962) and "Giant Icebag" (1971), Edward Kienholz's "The Beanery" (1965), and Howard Kanovitz's "Mazola and Ronzoni" (1969). Finally, I will direct attention to some prominent sculptors' representative works in the 1970's, such as Duane Hanson's "Race Riot" (1969-71), William Tucker's "Arc" (1977-78), Rafael Ferrer's "Mr. Equis" (1978), Herbert George's "Visit and the Apparition" (1980), and Christopher Wilmarth's "Gnomon's Parade (Peace)" (1980).

COMPARATIVE ARTS

In the last (14th) week, I will give a talk on the subject of "A Comparative Study of Artistic Treatment of the Man-Nature Relationship in America and China." The theme of the man-nature relationship is of universal interest, so I think it is worthwhile to undertake this comparative study. In the study I will concern myself not only with aesthetic qualities of the works to be examined but also with their philosophical assumptions. For the main points to be covered, please see the outline of the lecture in Appendix. In addition to this lecture, I would also like to discuss such other topics as "Action Painting and Chinese Calligraphy" and "Lao Tzu vs. Frank Lloyd Wright." By so doing, I mean to arouse the students' interest in "comparative arts." A very good book for the beginners is *Art in East and West* by Benjamin Rowland, Jr. I fully agree that the comparative study of "works of art widely separated in time and place invariably opens new possibilities of interpretation."[22] Rowland explains his purpose and methods in writing this book:

> The comparisons presented here illustrate accidental parallels in the art of the East and West, stemming from a common background or affected by similar circumstances, social, artistic, and technical, in the process of their making. The subjects have been arranged in categories of figures, portraits, religious images, landscapes, birds, beasts, and flowers, and still life. These works of art have been analyzed in considerable detail both from the technical and aesthetic viewpoints in relation to their historical background. . . .[23]

It is the same scheme of analysis that I will follow in my study of the man-nature relationship as treated in Chinese and American arts. I believe it is important for us to approach the comparative study from technical, aesthetic, and historical perspectives.

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22. Benjamin Rowland, Jr., *Art in East and West: An Introduction Through Comparisons* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. vii.
23. Ibid.

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APPENDIX

A Comparative Study of Artistic Treatment of the Man-Nature Relationship in China and America
(An Outline)

I. Perspectives

A. Rationale behind the cross-cultural orientation

B. Emphasis on both the aesthetic qualities and philosophical basis of the works concerned

C. Definitions and limitations

II. Chinese and American writers on nature

A. Tocqueville's observations

B. Nathaniel Hawthorne–Puritan concept of wilderness

C. Herman Melville–*Moby Dick*

D. James Fenimore Cooper–*The Pioneers* and other Leatherstocking tales

E. Ralph Waldo Emerson–*Nature*

F. Henry David Thoreau–*Walden*, and "The Inward Morning"

G. Chuang Tzu– "The Bones of Chuang Tzu" ("k'u lou fu")

H. T'ao Ch'ien– "Written While Drunk"

I. Wang Wei–"Bamboo Grove" and "Rill of the House of the Luans"

J. Leo Marx–*The Machine in the Garden*

K. Taoism vs. Transcendentalism

III. Chinese landscape paintings

A. Philosophical foundation–Confucianism, Taoism, and Ch'an Buddhism

B. Lack of religious or allegorical associations

C. Emphasis on "ch'i" and on subtle rendering of an idea, an emotion, or a mood, rather than the form

D. Marriage of painting, poetry, and calligraphy

E. Some illustrations

1. Wen Cheng-ming–"Ancient Tree and a Cool Spring" (1531)
2. Wen Po-jen (1502-1576– "Landscape" (Ming Dynasty)
3. Wang Chien (1598-1677)–"White Clouds Over Hsian and Hsiang"

(1668)

4. Hsia Kuei–"Gazing at a Waterfall" (Southern Sung Dynasty)
5. Ts'ao Chih-po (1272-1355)–"Landscape" (Yuan Dynasty)
6. Yen Wen-kuei (960-1127)–"A Myriad Trees on Strange Peaks" (c. 1010)
7. Mu-Ch'i (Fa-Ch'ang) (Born early 13th century, active 1269)–"Six Persimmons"

IV. American landscape paintings

A. The earliest landscapes as perfunctory backdrops to portraits by John Smibert, Robert Feke, Gilbert Stuart, Ralph Earl, etc.

B. The first pure landscapes by William Russell Birch, John Trumbull, Washington Allston, John Vanderlyn, and Thomas Doughty

C. Thomas Cole

1. As a poet–"The Wild"
2. As a painter–founder of the Hudson River School
3. His philosophy on art and nature
4. A comparison of Cole with a Chinese landscapist

D. After Cole

1. Asher Brown Durand–"Kindred Spirits"
2. Frederic E. Church–"Oil Sketch: View of Catskills from Olana"
3. George Inness–"Hudson River Valley"
4. Worthington Whittredge–"The Trout Pool"
5. Martin Johnson Heade–"Storm over Narragansett Bay"
6. Jasper Francis Cropsey–"Upper Hudson"
7. Albert Bierstadt–"Eates Park, Colorado, 1869"
8. Thomas Moran–"Great Falls, Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, 1898"
9. John Frederick Kensett–"Lakes and Mountains"
10. Winslow Homer–"The Hudson River--Logging" and "Woodsman and Fallen Tree"

E. Primitive landscape paintings

1. Edward Hicks–"Peaceable Kingdom"
2. Anna Mary Robertson, or Grandma Moses–"McDonell Farm"

F. The panoramic landscapes

G. The artists - naturalists–such as John James Audubon

H. Impact of industrial and social developments on landscape paintings as seen in Charles Sheeler's "The Artist Looks at Nature" and "Classic Landscape"