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. 19th 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. Wessellman – 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