Modernism in New England

Saturday, March 5th, 2016
9:00 – 4:30
Collins Cinema, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts

A symposium funded by the Barra Foundation and co-sponsored by the Grace Slack McNeil Program for Studies in American Art at Wellesley College and Historic Deerfield, Inc.

The Wellesley-Deerfield Symposium will explore the impact of Modernism on New England's art and architecture. Though long stereotyped as a bastion of conservative culture and overshadowed by milestone events such as New York City's 1913 Armory Show, twentieth-century New England was home to a vibrant group of visual artists, architects, curators, collectors, and educators who embraced Modernism and looked for ways to develop its tenets and new media as a regional expression. Illustrated presentations by scholars from across the country will address the influence of Modernism on New England architecture, city planning, interior design, and the visual arts during the twentieth century.

9:00 Welcome and Introduction

9:15 – 10:30 Panel 1: Defining a Regional Modernism

Rebecca Migdal, Independent Museum and Collections Consultant
“Middlesex County Modern Then & Now”

Timothy Rohan, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
“The New England Episode of Modern Architecture’s 1940s Regionalism Debate”

Andrew Eschelbacher, Portland Museum of Art
“Intimate and Grand, Popular and Mythic: Maine Modernism and American Sculpture”

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10:45 – 12:00 Panel 2: Designing Modern Neighborhoods and Landscapes

Amy D. Finstein, Massachusetts College of Art
“Imitation, Collaboration and Architectural Consumerism: Gropius, Breuer and Midcentury Modernism in Metro-Boston”

Lucretia Giese, Rhode Island School of Design & Gary Wolf, Wolf Architects
“Speculations About the Origin of an Iconic Modernist Landscape: Design and Collaboration at the Blue Steps of Naumkeag (Fletcher Steele with Henry B. Hoover)”

Scott Fulford, Gregory Lombardi Design, Inc. and Scott Fulford Landscape Design
“Negotiating Postwar Landscape Architecture: The Practice of Sydney Nichols Shurcliff”

12:00 – 1:15 Lunch (on your own)

1:15 – 2:30 Panel 3: Modernism and the Problem of Representation

Daniel Abramson, Tufts University
“Problems of Representation: Rudolph’s State Service Center”

Timothy Parker, Norwich University
“A Modest Modernism: Abstraction, Ornament, and Art in Two Vermont Churches”

Milda Richardson, Northeastern University
“Chester F. Wright (1899-1969) and Modern Sacred Space”

2:30 – 2:45 Break
2:45 – 4:00  Panel 4: People and Places of Modernism

Martin Eidelberg, Rutgers University

Melissa Renn, Harvard Business School

Mary Anne Hunting, Independent Architectural Historian
“Adherents of Modernism: The Women Architects in New England between the Wars”

4:00  Closing Remarks – Kevin Murphy, Vanderbilt University

The symposium is free and open to the public but seating is limited. To register in advance please visit the Wellesley College Art Department website:  http://www.wellesley.edu/art/events