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The Big Show: A 100-Year Legacy: Lecture by Art Historian William C. Agee

Cos Cob, CT, October 15, 2013—On November 5, renowned art historian William C. Agee will lecture at the Greenwich Historical Society on the legacy of the 1913 *International Exhibition of Modern Art*—known as the Armory Show—with a special focus on the influence of Henri Matisse and Marcel Duchamp. It is well known that Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* was a source of outrage and bemusement at the groundbreaking event, but Matisse's *Red Studio* (1911) was a target of equal abuse. In fact, works by Matisse covered an entire wall of the exhibition, while Duchamp exhibited only one. Matisse's paintings generated so much controversy that he was actually hung in effigy.

Agee will compare Matisse's impact on American art vis-à-vis Duchamp's and discuss how *Red Studio* in particular galvanized such diverse artists as Stuart Davis, Charles Sheeler, Mark Rothko and Andy Warhol, inspiring them to explore dramatic new approaches to color and form. Agee will share examples of their work and talk about subsequent art exhibitions to shed new light on oft-forgotten aspects of the Armory Show's legacy.

William Agee received degrees from Princeton and Yale and has taught at Hunter College for 25 years, where he holds the Evelyn Kranes Kossak Endowed Chair as Professor of Art History. He specializes in modern art in America from 1900 to 1970 and has published numerous articles, catalogues and monographs on the subject. He is currently preparing a book for Phaidon Press, *Modern Art In America 1908-1968*. Prior to teaching at Hunter College, Agee held directorships in museums in Houston and California and was a curator at The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Agee's lecture is being held in conjunction with the Historical Society's current exhibition, *The New Spirt and the Cos Cob Art Colony: Before and After the Armory Show*. It includes over forty works by Cos Cob artists who exhibited in the Armory Show and illustrates the impact that the introduction of modern European art had on the subsequent work of American artists. Artist Elmer MacRae, who exhibited ten pastels at the Armory Show, lived at Bush-Holley House, current home of the Greenwich Historical Society and center of the Cos Cob art colony, and was the Armory Show's treasurer. The exhibition also reveals the important role that he and other Cos Cob artists had in conceiving and organizing the show in a display of Armory Show photographs, records and memorabilia drawn from the Greenwich Historical Society archives.

November 5, 2013

Storehouse Gallery open: 6:30 to 7:30 pm; Lecture: 7:30 to 8:45 pm

Greenwich Historical Society, Vanderbilt Education Center

39 Strickland Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807

\$10 for members; \$15 for nonmembers

For reservations visit www.greenwichhistory.org or call 203-869-6899, Ext. 10.



William Agee