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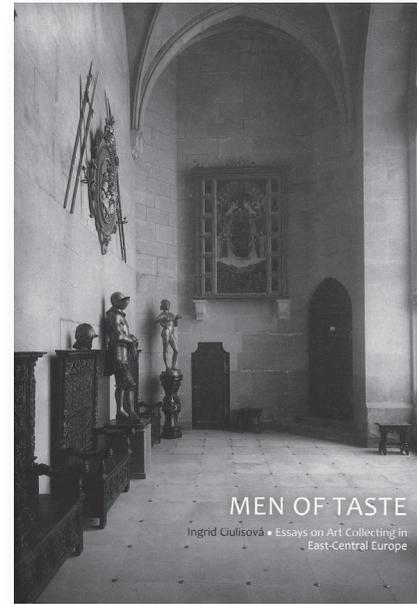
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NA OBÁLKE / ON THE COVER:

Niklāvs Strunke (1894 – 1966): Construction of Head (Portrait of Ivo Pannaggi), 1924



Ingrid Ciulisová

**MEN OF TASTE. ESSAYS ON  
ART COLLECTING IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE**

Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo VEDA, 2014, 174 pp.

ISBN 978-80-224-1338-1.

European Dimensions of the Artistic Culture in Slovakia  
(ITMS: 26240120035)

*Men of Taste. Essays on Art Collecting in East-Central Europe* is a collection of four case-studies devoted to Duke Albert Saxe-Teschen, Count János Pálffy, Baron Karl Kuffner, Enea Grazioso Lanfranconi and Count Antoine E. Seilern. The book fills a gap in the literature on the history of art collecting in general and, at the same time, enriches the reader's knowledge of the cultural milieu of East-Central Europe during the Enlightenment and beyond to the post-World War II era. It is a significant contribution to the still-sparse scholarly literature on art collecting in this part of the world.

Ivan Gerát

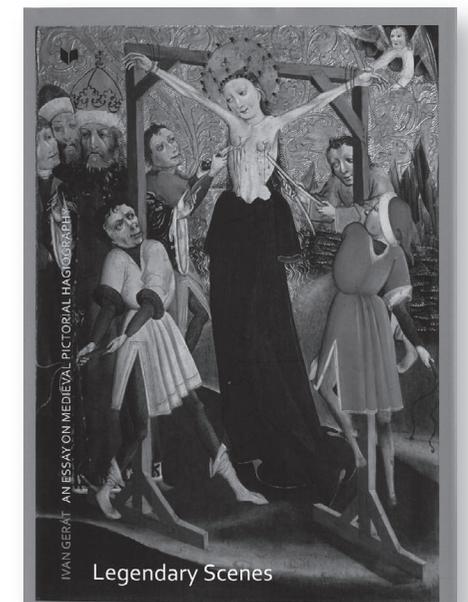
**LEGENDARY SCENES.  
AN ESSAY ON MEDIEVAL PICTORIAL  
HAGIOGRAPHY**

Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo VEDA, 2013, 344 pp.

ISBN 978-80-224-1349-7.

European Dimensions of the Artistic Culture in Slovakia  
(ITMS: 26240120035)

The book is devoted mainly to scenes from the lives of saints in panel paintings originally produced in the northern regions of the Kingdom of Hungary in present-day Slovakia. The individual scenes in the pictorial legends expressed human ideas about the world, human needs and the essential values of human existence. The effectiveness of images was usually based on the repetition of tried-and-tested pictorial models, presenting particular examples of actions and the organization of value relations.



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## Teritoria kubismu / Cubist Territories

Vojtěch LAHODA

Jakkoliv byl kubismus při svém zjevení se v Paříži v roce 1909 – 1910 ostře odsuzován a vysmíván, „vynález“ Picassa a Braqua se záhy stal základním kamenem moderního umění první poloviny dvacátého století.<sup>1</sup> V roce 1966 vydal americký historik umění Edward F. Fry antologii textů, napsaných od počátku hnutí až do raných dvacátých let. Dodnes je Fryova publikace základním pramenem pro ty, kteří se zabývají kubismem.<sup>2</sup> Fry ukázal, že hned po objevení první kubistické malby byla zahájena diskuze o povaze kubismu, která podnítila úsilí v oblasti výtvarné kritiky, a od dvacátých let také dějin umění, začlenit kubismus do kontextu dějin umění. Vybrané pojednání ve Fryově antologii odhalují jeden podstatný rys: řada autorů nepoužívala pojem „kubismus“ ve vztahu k dílu Picassa a Braqua, ale spíše malířů, jako byli Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes a další; jinými slovy pojem odkazoval k tvůrčímu úsilí, které bylo později označeno jako „epický kubismus“, o němž sám Fry v souvislosti s tvorbou Jeana Metzingerera psal jako o „sub-kubismu“.

Podle Frye francouzský kritik Roger Allard, který psal o principech kubismu v roce 1910, neměl tehdy ani tušení o tvorbě Picassa a Braqua. Jeho pochopení kubismu bylo závislé na obrazech Jeana Metzingerera. Tudíž od samého počátku byly dobové interpretace kubismu závislé na disparátním materiálu – zpočátku na díle Metzingerera a Gleize, a na řadě dalších „salóních“ kubistů, a jen později na tvorbě Picassa a Braqua. Yve-Alain Bois charakterizoval toto napětí

Although sharply condemned and derided at the time of its emergence in Paris in 1909 – 1910, Cubism – “the invention” of Picasso and Braque – was very soon to become the cornerstone of modern art of the first half of the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> In 1966, the American art historian Edward Fort Fry published an anthology of texts written during the period between Cubism’s inception and the early 1920s, which to this day is a seminal reference book specializing in Cubism.<sup>2</sup> Fry demonstrated that immediately upon the appearance of the first Cubist paintings, a discussion on the nature of Cubism began that initiated the endeavour in the fields of art criticism – and, from the 1920s onward, also art history – to incorporate Cubism within the art-historical context.

Selected treatises in Fry’s anthology revealed one important fact: a number of authors used the term “Cubism” not in relation to the works of Picasso and Braque, but rather to those of Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes and other artists; in other words, to the creative efforts which were later termed “Epic Cubism,” or which Fry himself referred to as sub-Cubist – in reference to Metzinger. According to Fry, Roger Allard, a French critic who wrote about the principles of Cubism in 1910, had not had the least inkling at the time about Picasso’s and Braque’s work. Allard’s understanding of Cubism was based on Jean Metzinger’s paintings. Therefore, from the very beginning, period interpretations of Cubism had drawn on disparate material – initially, on the

<sup>1</sup> Na tomto místě bych rád poděkoval prof. Jánovi Bakošovi, hlavnímu redaktorovi časopisu *ARS*, za pozvání k sestavení čísla věnovanému problematice kubismu.

<sup>2</sup> FRY, E. F.: *Cubism*. London 1966.

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Editor-in-Chief of *ARS*, Prof. Ján Bakoš, for inviting me to edit an issue of this journal on the topic of Cubism.

<sup>2</sup> FRY, E. F.: *Cubism*. London 1966.

termíny veřejné/soukromé: zatímco Metzinger a další často vystavovali, dílo Picassa a Braqua bylo během heroických let kubismu zveřejňované daleko méně.

Pokud výše uvedené naznačuje, že existovaly minimálně dvě verze kubismu již v době vzniku, pak nepřekvapuje, že dějiny umění postupně odkrývaly další prostory a teritoria kubismu. Stačilo se podívat na významné modernistické směry mimo Francii a bylo jasné, že různé variance kubismu je možné sledovat v Holandsku (Mondrian), Německu (Marc, Macke, Feininger, ad.), Itálii (futuristé), Rusku (kubo-futuristé) a dokonce v Anglii (vorticismus) a v USA (stejně jako v rámci americké umělecké komunity v Paříži). Cílem předkládaného čísla je sledovat, jak kubismus v dalších zemích je, nebo není zahrnut do kánonu západních dějin umění, a sledovat cesty k pochopení tohoto fenoménu, tj. kubismu na periférii. V některých případech existuje přímý podnět kubismu, i když vztah, kdo ovlivňuje a kdo je ovlivňován je často komplikovaný a rozhodně není jednosměrný. Michael Baxandall si to uvědomil na příkladu vztahu Cézanna k Picassovi. „*Vliv je prokletí výtvarné kritiky zejména díky špatně nastavenému předpokladu, kdo je agent a kdo je pacient: vypadá to na obrácení vztahu aktivní/pasivní, který zažívá historický aktér a který by rád obezřámený divák vzal do úvahy.*“ Baxandall píše, že pokud někdo říká, že X ovlivnil Y, tak to vypadá, jako kdyby říkal, že X něco udělalo Y, spíše než Y udělalo něco X. Ale pokud uvažujeme o dobrých obrazech a dobrých malířích, realita je právě opačná. „*Pokud se uvažuje o tom, že Y je spíše než X aktivním prvkem, pak slovník je mnohem bohatěji rozvrstvený: čerpat, uchýlit se k něčemu, využít vhodně něco, přivlastnit si, směřovat k něčemu, upravovat, nepochopit, odkazovat na něco, vyzdvihnout, přijmout, zapojit se, reagovat, citovat, odlišit se od něčeho, přizpůsobit se něčemu, asimilovat, ztotožnit se s něčím, kopírovat, oslovit, parafrázovat, absorbovat, vytvořit variaci na něco, oživit, pokračovat, přetvořit, opičit se, soupeřit, vysmívat se, parodovat, vyjmout něco z něčeho, narušit, starat se, bránit, zjednodušit, reorganizovat, rozvádět něco, rozvíjet něco, čelit, ovládnout, rozvrátit, udržovat, redukovat, podporovat, reagovat na něco, transformovat, řešit ... – každý by mohl vymyslet jiná slova. Většinu z těchto vztahů prostě nelze vyložit opačně, ve smyslu, že X působí na Y, ale spíše Y působí na X. Uvažovat o vlivu znamená otupit myšlení tím, že obzuzujeme jeho prostředky diferenciací.*“<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> BAXANDALL, M.: *The Patterns of Intention. On the Historical Explanations of Pictures.* New Haven – London 1992, s. 58-59.

work of Metzinger and Gleizes, and various other so-called “Salon” Cubists, and only later on the works of Picasso and Braque. Yve-Alain Bois characterizes this disparity with the terms “public/private”: while Metzinger et al. were amply exhibited, Picasso’s and Braque’s art was shown far less during the initial years of Cubism.

If this is to imply that no less than two types of Cubism already existed at the time of its emergence, then it comes as no surprise that art history gradually discovered other areas of Cubism, other Cubist territories. It sufficed to turn to certain significant modernist trends outside France and it became clear that diverse variations of Cubism could be perceived in Holland (Mondrian), Germany (Marc, Macke, Feininger, and others), Italy (the Futurists), Russia (Cubo-Futurism) and even England (Vorticism) and the United States (as well as in the American artistic community in Paris). However, the purpose of this issue is to examine how the Cubisms in other countries, are, or are not, included in the canon of Western art history, and ways to approach this phenomenon.

In some cases, there is an immediate impact of Cubism, although the relationship of what has influence to what is affected is often complicated and certainly not one-way. Michael Baxandall already realized this when he wrote of the relationship of Cézanne to Picasso. “*Influence is a curse of art criticism primarily because of its wrong-headed grammatical prejudice about who is agent and who the patient is: it seems to reverse the active/passive relation which the historical actor experiences and the inferential beholder will wish to take into account.*” Baxandall writes, that if one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying that X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X. But in the consideration of good pictures and painters the reality is completely the opposite. “*If we think of Y rather than X as agent, the vocabulary is much richer and more attractively diversified: draw on, resort to, avail oneself of, appropriate from, have recourse to, adapt, misunderstand, refer to, pick up, take on, engage with, react to, quote, differentiate oneself from, assimilate oneself to, assimilate, align oneself with, copy, address, paraphrase, absorb, make a variation on, revive, continue, remodel, ape, emulate, travesty, parody, extract from, distort, attend to, resist, simplify, reconstitute, elaborate on, develop, face up to, master, subvert, perpetuate, reduce, promote, respond to, transform, tackle... - everyone*

Partha Mitter vysvětluje tvorbu indického malíře Gaganendranatha Tagore spojením „Picasso manque syndrome“.<sup>4</sup> Podle dobové koloniální kritiky indického moderního umění byl umělec odbyt termínem „cubist un manque“, Anglický kritik považuje Tagoreho dílo, dle Mittera, jako „derivativní, založené na kulturních nedorozuměních“, a jako „špatnou imitaci Picassa“.<sup>5</sup> Vliv se stal klíčovým, epistemologickým nástrojem ke studiu recepcí západního umění, ať už se jednalo o Indii, Lotyšsko nebo Polsko: „...pokud je výsledek (umělecké dílo) příliš blízko originálnímu zdroji, odráží otrockou mentalitu; pokud je na druhé straně imitace nepřesná, představuje selhání.“<sup>6</sup>

Tam, kde byly možnosti, prostředky a schopnosti publikovat zásadnější texty o kubismu (překlady klíčových textů či místní interpretace kubismu), tam, byla silnější institucionální základna, vydavatelství a podpora, která může být spojena s konkrétními umělci a skupinami.

V našem čísle bychom rádi představili množství přístupů ke kubismu, v některých případech v odlehklých oblastech, vzdálených od hlavního proudu modernismu (Gruzie, Japonsko). Důležitost kubismu v Rusku je dobře dokumentovaná, ovšem málo bylo napsáno o podnětu kubismu v ukrajinském moderním umění. Tuto mezeru zaplňuje článek Myrosławy Mudrak. Jedno z nejdůležitějších center pozdní reformulace kubismu bylo lotyšské hlavní město Riga, kde se Romans Suta mohl spolehnout na podporu Řižské skupiny umělců. Skupina měla dobré kontakty s Berlínem, Paříží a Varšavou. Institucionalizace avantgardy znamenala větší možnosti k propagaci nového umění, než tomu bylo v případě izolovaných příkladů reakce na kubismus, jako byl

*will be able to think of others. Most of these relations just cannot be stated the other way around – in terms of X acting on Y rather than Y acting on X. To think in terms of influence blunts thought by impoverishing the means of differentiation.”<sup>3</sup>*

Partha Mitter writes on the example of the Indian painter Gaganendranath Tagore about the “Picasso manque syndrome”.<sup>4</sup> Based on contemporary colonial critique of Indian modern art, the artist is dismissed by the term “cubist un manque”. The English colonial critic sees Tagore’s work, according to Mitter, as “derivative, based on cultural misunderstandings”, and as “bad imitations of Picasso”.<sup>5</sup> Influence has been the key epistemic tool in studying reception of Western art, no matter whether it was in India, Latvia or Poland: “...if the product is too close to its original source, it reflects slavish mentality; if on the other hand, the imitation is imperfect, it represents a failure.”<sup>6</sup>

Where there was the possibility, means and ability to publish more fundamental texts on Cubism (translations of core texts or local explanations of Cubism), there was a stronger institutional base, publishing houses, support, etc., which could be linked directly with concrete artists and groups, but they might also emerge from more chance starting-points (an isolated benefactor, a chance report, etc.).

In our issue we would like to document the diversity of approaches to Cubism, in some cases in quite remote areas, like Georgia or Japan, which are different for the mainstream of modernism. The importance of Cubism in Russia is well documented, however there is much less written about the impact of Cubism in Ukrainian modern art. This gap is filled

<sup>4</sup> Partha Mitter je autor revizionistické interpretace indického modernismu, snažící se překonat agendu vlivu, tak typickou pro koloniální i západní modernistické myšlení. MITTER, P.: *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922-1947*. London 2007. Recenze DADI, I. v *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (Dec. 2008), s. 652-654.

<sup>5</sup> MITTER 2007 (ako pozn. 3), s. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> BAXANDALL, M.: *The Patterns of Intention. On the Historical Explanations of Pictures*. New Haven – London 1992, pp. 58-59.

<sup>4</sup> Partha Mitter is author of the revisionist interpretation of Indian Modernism, trying to avoid the traditional agenda of influence, so typical for colonialist as well as Western modernist thinking. MITTER, P.: *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-Garde, 1922-1947*. London 2007. Review by DADI, I. in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (Dec. 2008), pp. 652-654.

<sup>5</sup> MITTER 2007 (see in note 3), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

ve Finsku Ilmari Aalto. Nicméně, jak ukázal Timo Huusko, v této severní zemi existoval diskurz o kubismu a věnovaný kubismu. Výzkum avantgardních institucí, jejich skupin, spolků, časopisů, vydavatelství a také vzájemných kontaktů a komunikace nejen na ose Východ-Západ, ale také Východ-Východ či Sever-Jih, může lépe vyložit specifické místní podmínky implementace a „remake“ „*nejvlivnějšího stylu dvacátého století*“, tedy kubismu.<sup>7</sup> To neznamená, že „remake“ je identický s originální verzí. Získává nové významy, něco podstatného, co bylo důležité v Paříži, již nebylo důležité pro mladé umělce z Rigy, Tbilisi nebo Bukurešti.

Velká škála národností představená v tomto čísle vytvořila variabilní heterogenní umělecký jazyk a demonstrovala uměleckou kreativitu periferie. Byly to právě tyto kvality, které dle Partha Mittera si západní avantgarda nedokázala osvojit, jelikož přišly z oblastí mimo hlavní kánon a mimo dominantní diskurz. Podle Mittera se musíme zbavit „*patologie vlivu*“ a více se zaměřit na „*jednotlivé dějiny umění, kontext jejich ideologií, protiklady a trbliny v jejich spojení s modernitou. Podle mého názoru množství lokálních možností osvětluje globální procesy modernity efektivněji než velký globalizující příběh.*“<sup>8</sup>

by an article by Myroslava Mudrak. One of the most important centres of late Cubist reformulation was in Latvia's capital Riga, where Romans Suta could depend at least on the group support of the Riga Artist Group. This group had good contacts with Berlin, Paris and Warsaw. The institutionalization of the avant-garde meant a greater chance to promote new art than in the case of isolated instances as represented by Ilmari Aalto in Finland. However, as Timo Huusko shows, there was a discourse on Cubism in this Northern country. The study of avant-garde institutions, their groups, associations, periodicals, publishing houses and also the mutual contacts of flows of communication not only along the West-East axis, but also the East-East or North-South axis, might better explain the specific local conditions of the implementation and “remake” of the “*most influential style of the twentieth century*”, Cubism.<sup>7</sup> This does not mean that the “remake” of Cubism is identical to the original version. It gets new meanings, something that was essential for Paris was not important for young artists in Riga, Tbilisi or Bucharest.

The whole range of artists of different nationalities presented in this issue created a variable and heterogeneous artistic language, which demonstrated the artistic creativity of the periphery.

It was precisely these qualities that, according to Partha Mitter, the western avant-garde could not manage to take on board because they came from areas outside the main canon and the dominant discourse. According to Mitter we should avoid the “*pathology of influence*” and concentrate more on “*particular art histories, the context of their ideologies, contradictions, and fractures in their engagement with modernity. To my mind, multiple local possibilities illuminate the global processes of modernity more effectively than a grand globalizing narrative, which is more likely than not to perpetuate a relationship of power.*”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> O kubismu ve střední a východní Evropě srov. LAHODA, V.: C'era una volta l'Est: il cubismo perduto. In: *Cubisti Cubismo*. Ed. Ch. EYERMAN. Milano 2013, s. 85-101.

<sup>8</sup> MITTER, P.: Decentring Modernism: Art History and Avant-garde Art from the Periphery. In: *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 90, dec. 2008, č. 4, s. 541.

<sup>7</sup> See on Cubism in Central and Eastern Europe LAHODA, V.: C'era una volta l'Est: il cubismo perduto. In: *Cubisti Cubismo*. Ed. Ch. EYERMAN. Milano 2013, pp. 85-101.

<sup>8</sup> MITTER, P.: Decentring Modernism: Art History and Avant-garde Art from the Periphery. In: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 90, Dec. 2008, No. 4, p. 541.

## The Reception of Cubism in Finland

Timo HUUSKO

Cubism and its reception in Finland can be traced back to the developments and history of Cubism in France.<sup>1</sup> It was not, however, as closely connected to France as was the history of Cubism in Scandinavia, in the sense that there were only a few Finnish artists who had direct contacts with French Cubists or their advocates. In fact, there were only two of them, Uno Alanco (1878 – 1964) and Kalle Kuutola (1886 – 1974) and they studied under Henri Le Fauconnier in the free art academy La Palette in 1913.<sup>2</sup>

### Introducing *Du Cubisme*

Cubism was mentioned for the first time in Finnish art criticism in 1911, and the first Cubist exhibitions in Finland are considered to be Uno Alanco's exhibition in Helsinki in October 1913 and Kalle Kuutola's exhibition in Vyborg just a week before.<sup>3</sup> The Finnish author Joel Lehtonen reported on the Salon d'Automne and its Cubist section in autumn 1911. It was the second joint exhibition of Cubists, just after Le Salon des Independants exhibition the same spring. Another Finnish author L. Onerva wrote in spring 1912 of the Independants exhibition and emphasized Jean Metzinger's impact. She also referred to the forthcoming book *Du Cubisme*,

which was to be published soon by Albert Gleizes and Metzinger. Uno Alanco sent the book to Finnish artist Magnus Enckell (1870 – 1925) at the end of 1912. Enckell was able to understand the idea of the book and he saw the importance of a certain dependence on nature when creating art – this is how Gleizes and Metzinger wanted to have it – but he was also fascinated by the idea of liberating art from all imitation of nature. For Alanco the dependence on nature was important, and Cézanne was his idol, like he was for Metzinger and Gleizes, who admired his “profound realism” (le réalisme profond).<sup>4</sup>

In public *Du Cubisme* was presented for the first time by art critic Onni Okkonen in February 1913 in the small newspaper *Uusi Aura* in Turku. Okkonen was not actually able to explain the core idea of the book, but talked of Cubism as an art form which concentrates on geometric forms without intellectual content.<sup>5</sup> Whatever was the self-assessment of *Du Cubisme* or Le Fauconnier's teaching, it is evident that Cubism was presented in Finland in the form of so called salon Cubism or “academic” Cubism and not in the form of the so called gallery Cubism, which centred around Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and was developed in the artistic society of Bateau Lavoir with Picasso and Braque as its leading figures.<sup>6</sup> Le

<sup>1</sup> See COTTINGTON, D.: *Cubism and its Histories*. Manchester 2004.

<sup>2</sup> A third artist who had close contacts to French Avant-Garde, e.g. to Guillaume Apollinaire, was Valle Rosenberg, but he did not aim to be Cubist. Other Finns who lived in Paris and took influence from Cubism were Alvar Cawén and Marcus Collin. Collin studied at the Académie Ranson in 1912.

<sup>3</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE, S.: *Kubismi – radikalismia vai klassismia. Kubismin käsityksiä Suomessa 1910-luvulla. Ateneumin taidemuseon museojulkaisu*. Helsinki 1969; RÄTY, L.: *Kalle Kuutola. Unohdettu kubisti*. Lappeenranta 1990, pp. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), pp. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, pp. 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> COTTINGTON 2004 (see in note 1), pp. 16-17.

Fauconnier was also influential in Sweden, and many Swedish painters studied either at his La Palette or at Marie Vasilieff's Russian academy under another salon Cubist Fernard Léger.<sup>7</sup>

### Lecture of Jens Thiis in 1913

The newly appointed director of the National Gallery in Oslo (Nasjonalgalleriet) Jens Thiis came to Helsinki in October 1913 to give three lectures on modern art. The third of them, called "From Neoimpressionism to Cubism – Object and Art", was highly influential. University's big lecture hall was full of listeners following Thiis' presentation which lasted two and half hours. His lectures were based especially on the impressions he got from the huge international exhibition of modern art which was held in Cologne and organized by the Köln Sonderbund in summer 1912. Finns are not known to have visited this exhibition.<sup>8</sup> His lecture was not reported widely in the Finnish newspapers, but its content can be found in the series of articles which Thiis wrote for the Norwegian *Kunst og Kultur* (Art and Culture) periodical in 1912 – 1913.<sup>9</sup> The Finnish newspaper *Dagens Tidning* had already had prior notice of the lecture with illustrations of works by Andre Lhote and Picasso.<sup>10</sup> It is relevant to notice that the majority of those who followed art in Finland followed and were able to read especially Swedish but also Norwegian periodicals. 30% of the population of Helsinki had Swedish as their first language in the 1910s (Fig. 1).

In the lecture Thiis emphasized the bridge between Cézanne and Cubism. He said that in this process the depicted object is thrown aside and art itself becomes the object of depiction. According to Thiis Picasso was the forerunner in this development, but he confessed that he was not sure if total abandon-



1. Paul Cézanne, *The Road Bridge at L'Estaque*, 1879 – 1882. Ateneum Art Museum. This painting was purchased for Finnish art society in 1911, at the same year when one could see Edvard Munch's new expressionist works in Helsinki. Cézanne became the role model for young artists. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

ment of nature was wise, despite the fact that Picasso had already done that. Finnish art critics took up this point and it became a widely expressed opinion that Cubism and especially Picasso's Cubism was the logical end in a path towards abstraction, but also a dead end, which could not lead anywhere.<sup>11</sup> This was the judgement of Cubism in Finland in 1914, just before First World War, and it is interesting to compare this opinion with the discourses where the idea of Cubism's analytic and synthetic essence was developed, for example in Kahnweiler's pamphlet *Der Weg zum Cubismus* (written in 1914 – 1915) or to the opinions of Czech art historian and collector Vincenc Kramar who added a metaphysical dimension and spirituality to the new works of Picasso which he had purchased in 1910 – 1913.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See LALANDER, F.: Sweden and Modernism – The Art of the 1910s. In: *Scandinavian Modernism. Painting in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden 1910-1920*. Uddevalla 1989, pp. 61-71. An overview of Cubism in the Nordic Countries is available in English in this exhibition catalogue.

<sup>8</sup> VALKONEN, O.: Maalaustaiteen murros Suomessa 1908-14. Uudet suuntaukset maalaustaiteessa, taidearvostelussa ja taidekirjoittelussa. *Jyväskylän Studies in the Arts* 6. Jyväskylä 1973, pp. 125-128.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 164. The series of articles was called "Betragtninger og karakteristiker av moderne fransk maleri" in *Kunst og Kultur* 1912-1913, pp. 1-46.

<sup>10</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> See COTTINGTON 2004 (see in note 1), pp. 165-177.

The idea of Cubism's inability to express something new in itself was further emphasized by the Swede Pär Lagerkvist in his essay "Gammalt och nytt i det moderna måleriet" (Old and new in modern painting) in the Swedish *Ord och bild* ("Word and Image") journal. He admired the clarity and intensity of Picasso's recent works from 1913, but added that this was just the same clarity which shows in the old master's paintings where nothing needs to be put in or taken away.<sup>13</sup> Lagerkvist, who was a future Nobel laureate, was informed on Cubism by Swedish painter John Sten who studied in Paris in Marie Vasilieff's academy and in La Palette. Unlike Jens Thiis and another Swede, an influential art critic August Brunius, Lagerkvist had a positive attitude towards Cubism, and was not so passionate for expressionism as Thiis and Brunius. But Lagerkvist was just a young author and did not have so much authority in Finland as Thiis and Brunius. However, it is worth mentioning that Lagerkvist's statement contains the potential that Cubism can be compared with classical art because of its structural clarity. This was an argument which gave new impetus to Cubism in Finland at the end of the 1910s.

### Expressionist and Cubist Exhibition in Helsinki in 1914

Before Lagerkvist's essay was published, people in Helsinki were able to acquaint themselves with Der Blaue Reiter's "Expressionist and Cubist exhibition", which was organized by Herwarth Walden's Der Sturm gallery. The exhibition came to Finland from Kristiania (Oslo) and included works from die Brücke group. The exhibition leaflet included Kandinsky's essay "Über Kunstverstehen". The main attention was drawn towards Kandinsky's big compositions, but there were also some Cubists, that is to say the German H. Campendonk and the Russian Wladimir Burljuk. The modest presence of

<sup>13</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), p. 9. Also SCHÖNSTRÖM, R.: Pär Lagerkvist's Literary Art and Pictorial Art. In: *A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1900-1925*. Ed. H. VAN DEN BERG et al. Amsterdam – New York 2012, pp. 435-444.

<sup>14</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), pp. 10-11 and SARAJAS-KORTE, S.: Kandinsky ja Suomi I (1906-1914).



2. These illustrations were made in comic publication *Tuulispää* during Der Sturm's Expressionist and Cubist exhibition in 1914. It is said in the text that pictures are not caricatures but exact copies of the original art works. On left Wladimir Burljuk's cubist portrait sketch. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

Cubism strengthened the opinion that considered Cubism to be in danger of stumbling in its own theories and compositional schemes. This opinion was shared, for example, by the art critics Heikki and Signe Tandefelt<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 2).

It is worth mentioning that denial of intellectual or spiritual content in Cubism was strongly connected with the popularity of expressionism, which became evident in Finland in 1914. Critics were able to identify with the emotional power of deformation in art works, but they were not able to identify with geometric abstraction.<sup>15</sup> In addition to Jens

In: *Ateneumin taidemuseo. Museojulkaisu* 15, 1970, pp. 7-12. Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (1912, "On the Spiritual in Art") was known in Finland at least in 1913, but did not have strong influence.

<sup>15</sup> See HUUSKO, T.: *Maalauksellisuus ja tunne. Modernistiset tulkinnat kuvataidekritiikissä 1908-1924. Kirjoituksia taiteesta* 4. Helsinki 2007, pp. 64-73.

Thiis' writings and lectures it was Wilhelm Worringer's book *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* from 1908 which paved the way to the acceptance of expressionism. The Finnish art critic Ludwig Wennervirta also brought the ideas of Paul Fechter's book *Der Expressionismus* (1914) to the Finnish public in April 1915 and presented in this connection Guillaume Apollinaire's *Les peintres cubistes* (1913) seen through Fechter's negative eye and even more emphasizing formalism in Cubism than Fechter. Expressionism represented emotions and Cubism rationality, which was not an essential part of art.<sup>16</sup>

Art followers did confess, though, that the bright colours in paintings gave way to grey and brown earthly colours in Finnish modern art in 1914 and according to critics like Fredrik J. Lindström and Signe Tandefelt this was partly due to Cubism. Finnish art historian Salme Sarajas-Korte connects this development to the impact which was made on the Finnish art world, both on artists and critics, by Jens Thiis.<sup>17</sup>

### Voice of Finnish Modernism

It is reasonable to say that from 1914/15 on Finnish modern art was characterized by the use of structural modulation in order to support the expressivity in paintings. For example, this could be seen in the works of Tyko Sallinen (1878 – 1954), Marcus Collin and Magnus Enckell. More influential than Cubism for this kind of adoption in new art was the example of Cézanne. Admiration of Cézanne had actually started in 1911 with the exhibition of Norwegian art in Helsinki, where Edvard Munch's new Cézanne-like expressionism made a huge impact on young Finnish artists, and it was later accelerated by Thiis' lectures.

In publicity, and in art criticism the difference between Cézanne and Cubism was not clearly made, and in fact it was often about combining Cubist colour tones with Cézanne-like brushstrokes and modulation. This was especially the case with the future November group, which held its first exhibi-

<sup>16</sup> LEVANTO, Y.: *Kirjoitetut kuvat. Ludvig Wennervirtan taidekäsitys*. Helsinki 1991, pp. 162-163.

<sup>17</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), p. 9.



3. Tyko Sallinen, *Ruokokoski* paints, 1916. Ateneum Art Museum. This is a typical example of combining Cézanne's painting technique to cubist colours. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.



4. Marcus Collin, *Harvest*, 1915. Ateneum Art Museum. Finnish example of adaptation of cubism. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

tion at the end of 1916. Tyko Sallinen was the leading figure of the group (Fig. 3). One of the future members of November group was Marcus Collin (1882 – 1966), who had studied in France, and who wrote in 1914 that the good side of French Cubism was its ability to adopt modulation from Cézanne. He was also one of those who feared the assumption that Cubism was based too much on theory and was in danger of leading to academism<sup>18</sup> (Fig. 4).

This structural expressionism became a dominant modus for young artists, and in a way it was an example of the kind of “meta-style” or syncretic style, where no one single tendency dominates. This was also the case, as Vojtěch Lahoda has described, in the Baltic states and elsewhere, where Herwarth Walden’s “Cubo-Futo-Expressionism” had an influence and generated an original artistic narrative.<sup>19</sup> The influence of Cézanne was probably stronger in Finland than in the Baltic states – or in Sweden, where Matisse was influential – and it is interesting that this “Cezanne-fever” came not only from France but also from Norway.

One of the Finnish artists who belonged to the November group, but who did not take directly from Cézanne, was Alvar Cawén (1886 – 1935). He lived in France and was interested in Cubism there especially in 1914. He created compositional schemes, where structurality is often created by using motifs which are in themselves geometrical, like books or cylinder-shaped chimneys. To be a Finnish artist he used unconventional colour tones, like shades of purple and violet, which together with rhythmic modulation often created musical connotations. Familiarity with Jean Metzinger and Roger de La Fresnaye is obvious in certain works and it was also acknowledged by critics<sup>20</sup> (Fig. 5).

### Cubism from France and Russia

It was not until January 1915 that the audience in Helsinki had an opportunity to see French Cubism.

<sup>19</sup> LAHODA, V.: Extended Modernity. In: *Geomeetiline inimene. Eesti Kunstnikkude Riibim ja 1920–1930* (Geometrical man. The group of Estonian artists and art innovation in the 1920’s and 1930’s). Ed. P. LIIS. Tallinn 2012, pp. 85-93.

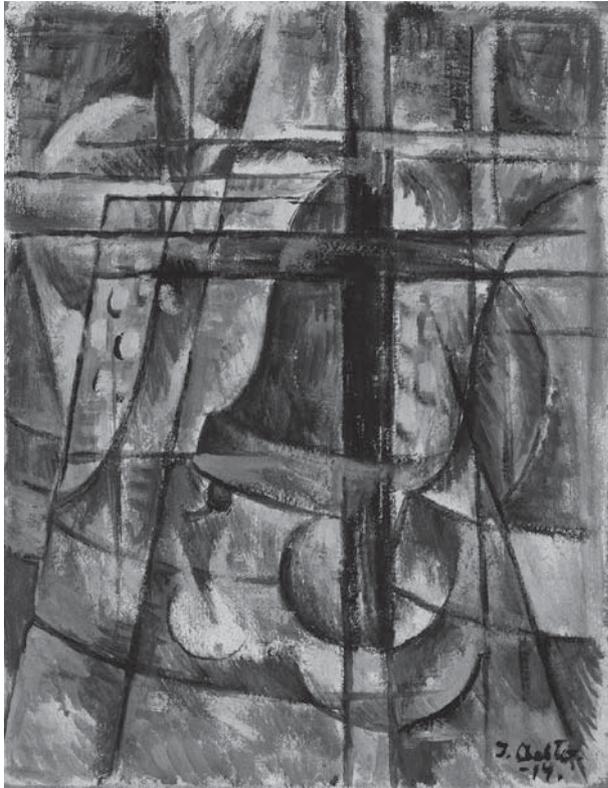


5. Alvar Cawén, *Head of a Woman*, ca 1914. Jean Metzinger comes to mind, Shades of purple and violet were distinctive feature of Cawén’s art in Finnish context. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

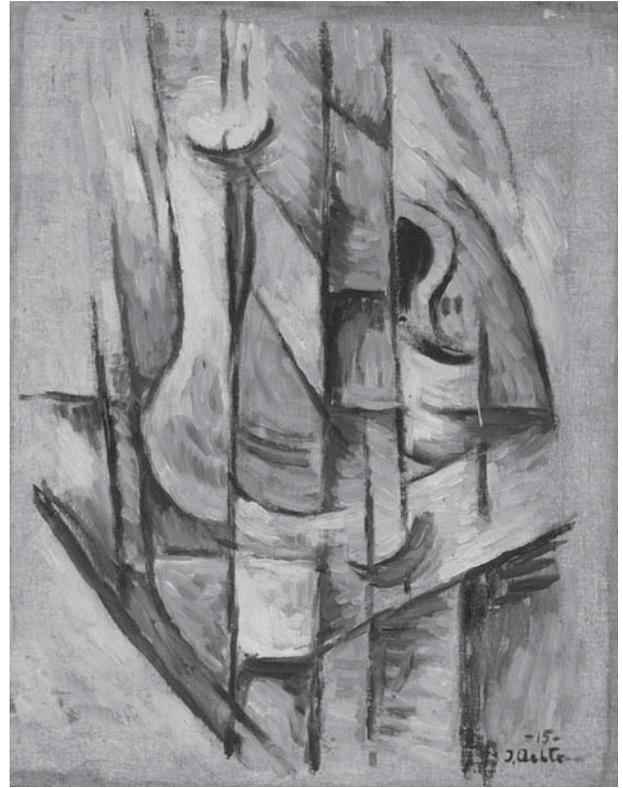
This happened in Gösta Stenman’s art gallery’s “Expressionist and Cubist Exhibition”. One work from Picasso, “Head of a Man”, and one from Juan Gris, “Bottle and a Cup” was displayed. Both were considered to represent “academic” Cubism.<sup>21</sup> In addition to foreign art there were three Cubist works by the Finnish artist Ilmari Aalto (1891 – 1934). One of them was called “The Bells” (1914, Ateneum, Helsinki). Aalto’s art was connected to French Cubism, but without any decent interpretation. Later on these

<sup>20</sup> VALKONEN, O.: *Alvar Cawén: Verket in exhibition catalogue Alvar Cawén*. Helsinki 1978, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), p. 11. Picasso’s work was a small gouache and it is now in a museum in Finland (Tikanojan taidekoti, Vaasa).



6. Ilmari Aalto, *The Bells*, 1914. Ateneum Art Museum. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.



7. Ilmari Aalto, *Cubist still-life*, 1915. Ateneum art Museum. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

works and some of his paintings from 1915 – 1916 are said to be best examples of French Cubism in Finnish art history and mostly influenced by Picasso's Cubism from the early 1910s.<sup>22</sup> However, “The Bells” probably owes more to Gleizes and Metzinger with its “moving perspective” whereas “Cubist Still-life” (1915, Ateneum, Helsinki) and “Nature morte” (1916, Helsinki Art Museum, Bäcksbacka collection) reminds us more of Picasso and Braque. Aalto visited Paris for the first time in 1920, and before that he learned Cubism from book illustrations. Illustrations of Cubism could be seen in Thiis’ lecture, in Lagerkvist’s article and in other art journals, which were available in the Finnish art society’s school or in Gösta Stenman’s art gallery.<sup>23</sup> Art history as an

academic subject with its libraries etc. was not established in Helsinki before 1920 (Fig. 6 and 7).

Gösta Stenman managed to organize this exhibition, even though Finland was involved in the First World War as part of Russia. Direct connections from France were now made impossible, but there were still some international exhibition exchanges in Helsinki. French Cubism, as it is understood in its narrow meaning, and where it is limited to the years before 1915, lost its immediate significance in Finland, but there were other movements and people, related closely to Cubism, which networked in the Finnish art world after 1915.<sup>24</sup>

In 1916 there was an exhibition of Russian art in Sven Strindberg’s art gallery, in the same place where

<sup>22</sup> HAHL, N-G.: *Samling Gösta Stenman. Finländsk konst*. Helsingfors 1932, p. 625.

<sup>23</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> On the historiography of Cubism, see COTTINGTON 2004 (see in note 1), p. 224, where he presents Christopher Green’s *Leger and the Avant-Garde* (1976) which opposes Alfred J. Barr’s view that the history of Cubism was made before 1915.

der Sturm gallery's Der Blaue Reiter exhibition had been two years earlier. The Russian exhibition was produced by Madame Nadezhda Dobychina's art salon in St. Petersburg. Marc Chagall's paintings took the majority of the show, but there were also works by Nathan Altman, Lev Bruni, K. L. Boguslavskaja, Ivan Puni, Olga Rozanova, Aleksandra Ekster and Nikolai Kulbin, who was considered to be the only programmatic Cubist in the group. Bruni, Puni, Ekster and Boguslavskaja presented collages, which were a totally new phenomenon in the Finnish art world. Works of this exhibition were not interpreted seriously in Finnish art criticism, but it is interesting that the critic Heikki Tandefelt divided different kind of Cubisms into three sections, where the best known according to him was "Jewish-Cubism", which had spread from France to Germany – Campendonk was the typical example for Tandefelt – and to Russia and Sweden, where Georg Pauli represented it. With the Jewish element Tandefelt probably refers also to iconoclasm derived from Moses, meaning the Cubist's abstraction, which for Tandefelt was worthless without beauty. Another section was orphism, which for Tandefelt was not represented by Delaunay, but instead by Gleizes and, for example, by the Finnish Alvar Cawen (!). The third section was called formal Cubism, which had Leonardo da Vinci and Cézanne as idols. This was the most important section for Tandefelt and for the Finnish artists Uno Alanco and Marcus Collin who belonged to it.<sup>25</sup> As far as I know, this was the only time that a synthesis of Cubism had been made like this in Finnish reception and where Finnish artists were connected to the history of Cubism.

### Cubism and Classicism in Finland

Finnish art historians have often stated that Cubism was interpreted as a constructive method, which at its best helps to give clarity to an artwork. This kind of interpretation was implied already in 1916 by Onni Okkonen, who was an art critic, but became the leading art authority and art history professor in



8. Wäinö Aaltonen, *Musica*, 1926. Ateneum Art Museum.  
Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

the 1920s.<sup>26</sup> It is also noteworthy that in the Finnish reception of Cubism in the 1910s Cubism was simplified to be just lines and structures, and by doing so and by reducing all the iconography from Cubism, it was natural to see similar harmonious elements in Cubism as in classicism, which was also stripped off from all iconography at least since Heinrich Wölflin's *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* was published in 1915.<sup>27</sup> Therefore it is understandable that when Finnish author Aaro Hellaakoski published a book *Kubismista klassismiin* ("From Cubism to Classicism") in 1925, he raised Andre Derain as an idol, because Derain had turned away from Cubism's complicated theorizing to classical Italy. Hellaakoski was supported not only by Onni Okkonen, who considered Finland, an inde-

<sup>25</sup> SARAJAS-KORTE 1969 (see in note 3), p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> See HUUSKO 2007 (see in note 15), p. 100.

<sup>27</sup> KUUSAMO, A.: Klassismi ja puhtaan muodon aikakausi. In: *Kivettyneet ihanteet. Klassismin nousu maailmansotien välisessä Euroopassa*. Ed. M. HÄRMÄNMAA – T. VIHAVAINEN. Jyväskylä 2000, pp. 51-52.

pendent country since 1917, to be the Hellas of the North,<sup>28</sup> but also by the future architect Alvar Aalto, who could find monumentality in Tyko Sallinen's Finnish landscape paintings, where the landscape was characterized by cutting lines. The art of the Finnish November group actually included progressively more structurality and Cubist elements as the decade of the 1910s proceeded, and this structurality could be read as a nationalist value.<sup>29</sup> According to Okkonen and Hellaakoski, the artist Wäinö Aaltonen (1894-1966) was able to combine classical ideals with Cubism, which melted into plastic constructiveness in his sculpture "Musica" (1926)<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 8).

### Edwin Lydén and Sturm

With Aaltonen one starts to talk of Post-Cubism, but it is good to point in another direction where Cubism left traces in Finnish art history. I mean Edwin Lydén's (1879 – 1956) art. He studied in Munich before the First World War and went back there at the end of 1919. He got interested in German expressionism and in 1920 got to know the Sturm gallery and Herwarth Walden's activities in Berlin. He is actually the only artist in Finland who took Sturm periodical articles seriously and based his artistic world view on them. Many of his works are emotionally loaded Cubo-Futo-Expressionism in the spirit of Walden's concept and partly Delaunay's orphism and Franz Marc's art (Fig. 9). He also created a few works which resemble Laszlo Moholo-Nagy's art. By doing this he was a loner in Finland, and the nearest examples of similar works can be found in Estonia, Russia and Latvia. In Latvia and Estonia



9. Edwin Lydén, *Night*, ca 1923. Ateneum Art Museum. Lydén is an exceptional example of *der Sturm's* avant-garde in Finnish art. Photo: Finnish National Gallery.

artists were also fascinated in the 1920s by the ideas of French purism and *L'Esprit Nouveau's* articles, but they left Finland untouched.

It is interesting that the Finnish reception of Lydén's art was connected to "Jewish Cubism", and *Der Sturm* gallery's exhibition in Helsinki year 1914, which was correct, but his art was totally neglected in Helsinki. Critics were unable to see the context of *Der Sturm* und thus understand the meaning of Lydén's spiritual avant-garde. After this kind of verdict it is no wonder that Lydén, who lived in the old Finnish capital Turku, started to detest Helsinki and all the reception that was based on the artistic ideas coming from Paris.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> VIHANTA, U.: Kivettyneitä ihanteita. Klassismi Suomen sotienvälisessä kuvataiteessa. In: HÄRMÄNMAA – VIHAINEN 2000 (see in note 27), pp. 346-349. Okkonen expressed this opinion only after the bloody civil war, in which revolutionary socialists were defeated in 1918.

<sup>29</sup> HUUSKO 2007 (see in note 15), pp. 146-150.

<sup>30</sup> VIHANTA 2000 (see in note 28), p. 365.

<sup>31</sup> AARRAS, R.: *Edwin Lydén. Taidehistoriallisia tutkimuksia* 5. Helsinki 1980, pp. 71-81.

## Recepcia kubizmu vo Fínsku

### Resumé

Kubizmus bol zaujímavou medzifázou fínskeho umenia desiatych a raných dvadsiatych rokov minulého storočia, aj keď tu nenájdeme veľa príkladov striktné kubistických diel. Kubizmus vo Fínsku sa vyvíjal súbežne s Francúzskom, vo fínskej umeleckej kritike sa prvýkrát spomína v roku 1911. Za prvé kubistické výstavy možno považovať výstavy žiakov Henriho Le Fauconniera Una Alancu (Helsinki) a Kalle Kuutolu (Vyborg) v októbri 1913. Kniha Alberta Gleizesa a Jeana Metzingeru *Du Cubisme* bola vo Fínsku známa už od svojho vydania v roku 1912.

Najvýznamnejším hlásateľom nového hnutia vo Fínsku bol nórsky kritik Jens Thiis, ktorého vzormi boli Cézanne a Picasso. V októbri 1913 mal na helsinskej univerzite tri prednášky, o ktoré bol obrovský záujem. V tretej, nazvanej „Od neo-impresionizmu po kubizmus – objekt a umenie“ zdôraznil spojenie medzi Cézannom a kubizmom. Podľa neho sa na ceste od postimpresionizmu k abstraktnému kubizmu postupne vytratil predmet a predmetom zobrazenia sa stalo samotné umenie. Thiis však pripustil, že si nie je celkom istý, či úplné vzdanie sa prírody bolo múdre, hoci Picasso to urobil. Vo Fínsku prevládal názor, že kubizmus, predovšetkým ten Picassov, je logickým vyústením na ceste k abstrakcii, ale zároveň aj slepou uličkou.

V roku 1914 sa v Helsinkách konala výstava skupiny *Der Blaue Reiter* nazvaná „Umenie expresionizmu a kubizmu“, ktorú zorganizovala Galéria *Der Sturm*. Kubizmus sa nestretol s pozitívnym ohlasom, podľa kritikov nešlo o nič iné, ako o kompozičné schémy bez ideového obsahu. Jediným umelcom vo Fínsku, ktorý bral kubizmus v kontexte *Der Sturm* vážne, bol Edwin Lydén, ale aj to až okolo roku 1920 a treba povedať, že jeho diela v Helsinkách nezbudili žiadny záujem. Napriek tomu, že v roku

1915 sa v Helsinkách konala výstava francúzskeho kubizmu a v roku 1916 výstava ruského umenia vrátane kubizmu, za vizionárske umenie začal byť od roku 1915 považovaný expresionizmus. Fínsky kritik Heikki Tandefelt v tejto súvislosti rozdelil kubizmus na židovský kubizmus, orfizmus a formálny kubizmus. Pre fínskych kritikov a širokú verejnosť bol vyjadrením racionality, ale nepovažovali ho za neodmysliteľnú súčasť umenia.

Odborníci však pripúšťali, že jasné farby v maľbe ustúpili sivým a hnedým zemitým tónom čiastočne aj v dôsledku kubizmu. Rozdiel medzi Cézannom a kubizmom nebol striktné vymedzený, v skutočnosti išlo často o kombináciu kubistickej farebnosti a cézanovského rukopisu a modelácie. Typickým príkladom je fínska skupina *November*, ktorá mala svoju prvú výstavu koncom roku 1916. Jej vedúcou osobnosťou bol Tyko Sallinen. Tento štruktúrally expresionizmus sa stal dominantným spôsobom vyjadrenia mnohých mladých umelcov a svojím spôsobom bol príkladom akéhosi „meta-štýlu“ alebo synkretického štýlu, kde nedominovala žiadna tendencia. Je zaujímavé, že táto cézanovská horúčka neprišla len z Francúzska, ale aj z Nórska.

Kubizmus sa dočkal uznania vlastne až koncom druhého decénia 20. stor. a to ako štruktúrally prvok dláždiaci cestu ideálom klasicistického umenia. Poukázal na to fínsky spisovateľ Aaro Hellakoski, ktorý dával fínskym umelcom za vzor André Deraina. Jeho názor podporil aj Onni Okkonen, historik umenia, ktorý bol v dvadsiatych rokoch minulého storočia uznávanou autoritou v oblasti dejín umenia. Vo Fínsku bolo prirodzené vidieť spojitosť medzi kubizmom a klasicizmom, pretože obidva štýly sa považovali za konštruktívne metódy s potenciálom vnieť do umeleckého diela jasnosť a harmóniu.

## The Japanese Cubist Body – mapping modern experience in the pre-WWII Japanese artistic network

Helena ČAPKOVÁ

### Introduction

The development of Japanese modern art and the issue of to what extent the local narrative was formed by external sources has been discussed in a number of publications by scholars such as Ōmuka Toshiharu, Alicia Volk and John Clark, whose conclusions I shall use in this article.<sup>1</sup> One of the crucial problems which Japanese artists tried to resolve over the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century was identified as: How to be modernist, avant-garde and Japanese at the same time. One of the early solutions was formulated by Takamura Kōtarō (1883 – 1956) in the “Midori no taiyō” essay (The Green Sun) of April 1910.<sup>2</sup>

*“I hope Japanese artists will try to use all möglich (possible) techniques without being put out by interpretation. I pray that when they do so, consequent on their interior psychological demands, they will not be afraid of what is un-Japanese. However un-Japanese this might be, if a Japanese person creates it, it must be Japanese.”*

The transnational flow of Cubist inspiration reached Japan in 1911 and continued to spread through numerous networks in the Japanese avant-garde art scene over some decades. This article will test the idea of Cubism transgressing the dualistic paradigm of the East and the West and as such creating “a cubist body” for local, and in this case Japanese, artists to experience modernity.<sup>3</sup>

The research for this study was shaped by transnational and network theories.<sup>4</sup> This methodology allows for analysis from a broad, interdisciplinary and transnational perspective, addressing the issue of parallel histories by stressing the extensive travel and exchange among different artists’ networks and institutions which ultimately formed hybrid outcomes poorly understood within a linear conception of art history. Thus the narrative will not be the standard story of a group of artists living in Paris between the wars, but rather it will be a narrative from the peripheries that were marginalized and remained to a great extent silent in the realm of parallel histories.

<sup>1</sup> To list some relevant works by these leading scholars in the field of Japanese modern art history I shall include: VOLK, A.: *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozu Tetsugoro and Japanese Modern Art* (The Phillips Book Prize). Oakland 2010; *Being modern in Japan: culture and society from the 1910s to the 1930s*. Eds. E. K. TIPTON – J. CLARK. Honolulu 2000; CLARK, J.: *Modernities of Japanese art*. Leiden – Boston 2013.

<sup>2</sup> In: CLARK 2013 (see in note 1), chapter 13: Dilemmas of Selfhood: Public and Private Discourses of Japanese Surrealism in the 1930s, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> This concept is developed by B. WINTHER-TAMAKI in: Asian Possessions of the Cubist Body: ‘Home from Home’. In: *Cubism in Asia; Unbounded Dialogues, International Symposium Report*. Ed. Y. FURUICHI. Tokyo 2006, pp. 304-311.

<sup>4</sup> Transnational theory and method is explained and used in *Arte & Ensaios*, Nr. 14: *Transnational correspondence* (Special Issue). Eds.: M. ASBURY – G. BUENO – G. FERREIRA – M. MACHADO. Rio de Janeiro 2007; *Minor Transnationalism*. Eds. F. LIONNET – S. SHIH. Durham – London 2005.

## Cubism in the Centre

The French art critic Louis Vauxcelles (1870 – 1943) coined the term Cubism after seeing the landscapes Georges Braque (1882 – 1963) had painted in 1908 at L’Estaque in emulation of Paul Cézanne (1838 – 1906). Vauxcelles called the geometric forms in the highly abstracted works “cubes”. It has been firmly established that some of the key inspirations of early Cubist works were linked to Primitivism and non-Euroamerican sources. The stylization and distortion of Pablo Picasso’s (1881 – 1973) masterpiece “Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J.)”, painted in 1907, came from African art. However, a number of scholars have pointed out the ironic fact that regions and art scenes producing these admired “exotic” inspirations such as Japan were excluded from the Modernist narrative. They produced rigorous pieces of scholarship about Japanese modernism and its interaction and impact on Euroamerica, yet the significance and fruits of these exchanges remained on the periphery of studies of Modernism and its prevailing Western art framework. Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (1902 – 1981), in his notorious diagram on a jacket of 1936 exhibition catalogue “Cubism and Abstract” art classified “Japanese prints” as belonging to an “archaic, primitive and exotic” area.<sup>5</sup>

The Cubist painters rejected the traditional artistic goal of mimesis that art should copy nature and they went on to emphasize the two-dimensionality of the canvas. They reduced and fractured objects into geometric forms, and composed them within a shallow, only mildly structured space. In early Cubist work up to 1910, the subject of a picture was usually discernible; during “high” Analytic Cubism (1910 – 12), also called “hermetic”, Picasso and Braque so abstracted their works that they were reduced to just a series of overlapping planes and facets, mostly in subdued tones of browns, greys, or blacks. During the winter of 1912 – 13, Picasso executed a great number of *papiers collés*, the new technique of pasting coloured or printed pieces of paper in their compositions. This move initiated the emergence of Synthetic Cubism, in which large pieces of neutral or coloured paper allude to a particular object. The two formulators of Cubist language inspired many followers who adopted it and developed it further, such as Fernand Léger (1881 – 1955), Robert (1885



1. Isbii Hakutei, “Metzinger” sketch from the Independent exhibition published in *Asahi newspaper* on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1911.

– 1941) and Sonia (1885 – 1979) Delaunay, Juan Gris (1887 – 1927), Roger de la Fresnaye (1885 – 1925), Marcel Duchamp (1887 – 1968), Albert Gleizes (1881 – 1953), Jean Metzinger (1883 – 1956) [Fig. 1], and a Mexican, Diego Rivera (1886 – 1957). Though primarily associated with painting, Cubism also exerted a profound impact on twentieth-century sculpture and architecture. The major Cubist sculptors were Alexander Archipenko (1887 – 1964), Raymond Duchamp-Villon (1876 – 1918), and Jacques Lipchitz (1891 – 1973). In sculpture we can find resonance of Cubist mode in the work of one of the Japanese students of the Bauhaus, Nakada Sadanosuke (1888 – 1976).

The liberating formal concepts initiated by Cubism also had far-reaching consequences for Dada and Surrealism, as well as for all artists pursuing abstraction in Germany, Holland, Italy, England,

<sup>5</sup> BARR, A. H., Jr.: *Cubism and Abstract Art* (intro and ed.). New York 1936, jacket illustration.

America, and Russia. It was a movement that crossed borders and shaped modernisms transnationally, already reaching Japan in the 1910s.

### Asian perception of the Cubist movement

At this point I wish to turn to Věra Linhartová's work and use it as a bridge to shift the focus eastwards and to see the specific landscape of avant-garde artistic activity in Japan. Linhartová identified quite clearly the conflicting ideas that were boiling together in the kettle of Japanese modern art, namely in her analysis of the Japanese surrealist movement.<sup>6</sup> These ideas were on one hand, ideas of an avant-garde nature, which were new and which were formed according to the contemporary local cultural climate, and on the other hand, we can find some ideas that served as a time capsule, that helped Japanese artists to recover some indigenous, traditional concepts that seemed to have disappeared from history for a while. We can link this conflict back to the 1910 statement of Takamura Kōtarō about the Japanese and the ideals of International modernity. Although some Japanese artists belonged to the international network and they replicated or even created Japanese extensions of individual avant-garde movements, they did not contribute to it directly, and rather they experienced it in isolation. Linhartová claims that this inertness of the centre, France, toward the Japanese lies in the overall attitude towards Japan of the time that was still severely Japonist and patronizingly Orientalist.<sup>7</sup> It was seen from afar through the set of clichés and stereotypes as some kind of golden realm, the Orient that inspires and that is the cradle of Buddhism that was so important to many progressive artistic concepts.

In terms of Asia, Japan was the only Asian country to assimilate Cubism in the 1910s, the decade in which it was being conceived in Paris. With signifi-

cant delay, Cubism appeared in China, and it was not received elsewhere in the region until the 1930s to 1950s – dates that, ironically, often corresponded to these countries gaining independence from colonial rule, periods in which they often actively suppressed local artistic activity that was contemporary and modern.<sup>8</sup> Cubism met with a mixed reception when it arrived in Asia, as it was considered as either a reminder of Western cultural superiority or a pan-cultural visual language of modernity for newly independent countries. There was also the concern that Cubism, being born of a particular cultural, philosophical and scientific background in Europe, was an imported phenomenon not suited to the Asian worldview. The Cubist or Picassoid body, according to Bert Winther-Tamaki, provided Asian artists such as Yorozu Tetsugorō with an opportunity to violate a figurative subject to deform it in a way to express their own experience of modernity. The inhabitation of the Cubist body was a re-possession of their modern experience.<sup>9</sup>

A particularly Asian take on the form was termed “Transparent Cubism” by one of its proponents, Vicente Manansala (1910 – 1981) from the Philippines.<sup>10</sup> Manansala, Fernand Léger's Filipino student in Paris, developed layered “veiled” or diaphanous structure to create spatial depth. Léger's network of students also included Sakata Kazuo (1889 – 1956) who was his long-term assistant. Sakata exhibited cubist and purist works while with Léger; he participated in “l'Art d'aujourd'hui” (The Art of Today) the international avant-garde art exhibition in Paris in 1925, and became an internationally recognized Japanese avant-garde artist. Sakata spent many years in France 1921 – 1933 where he entered Léger's atelier in 1923. He worked with figurative post-Cubist compositions associated with Picasso and also with analytical Cubism in a way that was considered extraordinary for a Japanese of his generation.

<sup>6</sup> In: LINHARTOVÁ, V.: *Soustředné kruhy. Články a studie z let 1962-2002*. Praha 2010, pp. 351-354.

<sup>7</sup> LINHARTOVÁ 2010 (see in note 6), p. 353.

<sup>8</sup> In 2005 Japan Foundation organized an international symposium on Cubism in Asia that outcomes were later published in: FURUICHI 2006 (see in note 3).

<sup>9</sup> WINTHER-TAMAKI 2006 (see in note 3), p. 310.

<sup>10</sup> See: FURUICHI 2006 (see in note 3).

## Korean reception of Cubism

Geometric mesh patterns were a “Transparent Cubist” feature of the work of Kim So (1919 - ?), a Korean studying at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts during 1910 – 1945. In the 1910s, earlier Korean alumni had brought *seoyanghwa* or “Western-style painting” back to Korea, developing this specific Japanese interpretation of non-Japanese painting called *yōga* in the style of Realism and Impressionism.<sup>11</sup> By the 1920s and 30s, Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism and Constructivism were flowing into Korea. Condemned then as not suitable to Korean sensibilities, Cubism was singled out as a “sales trick” that does not serve the contemporary artistic agenda of Joseon Korea (1390 – 1910). Cubism had its second coming and returned after the traumatic experience of the Korean War in 1950s when it was accepted as a new medium for strong anti-war sentiments. For example, Byon Yeong-Won’s (1921 – 1988) “Anti-Communist Spirit” (1952), a personal statement of the trauma of war, refers to the strong visual language from Picasso’s “Guernica” (1937). Also paying homage to “Guernica” is Yamamoto Keisuke’s (1911 – 63) “Hiroshima” (1948) which announced the second wave of Cubism which I shall mention later.

Although some women artists gained prominence, including printer and illustrator Okamura Masako (1858 – 1936) and a couple of artists producing in a traditional Japanese-style mode such as Uemura Shōen (1875 – 1949) and Kajiwara Hisako (1896 – 1988), it was still unusual for women to enter artistic training and the mainstream art scene made up of those male artists educated at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. In 1932, Tokyo-educated Na Hye-sōk’s (1896 – 1948), Korea’s first modern female artist, made this poignant observation on her return home after a two-year stay in Paris:

“This is Cubism’s point of invention: Art is not artificial but a thought, a consciousness. It is not traditional but liberating. Not conceptual but scientific.

<sup>11</sup> Detailed study of the *yōga* genre in WINTHER-TAMAKI, B.: *Maximum Embodiment: Yōga, the “Western Painting” of Japan, 1910 – 1955*. Honolulu 2012.

<sup>12</sup> In TAN, Y.: *Cubism: Other Echoes in Asia*. (<http://www.pfowderdesign.com/works/artist/article1.htm>, accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014).

It tries to paint movement with lines and colours. Cubist painting is thus filled with a convergence of colours, movements and compositions. Cubism seeks to construct art on the basis of all knowledge.”<sup>12</sup>

She was the first female Korean artist specializing in *yōga* and the second Korean artist who held an oil painting exhibition. She became well known as a feminist with her criticism of the marital institution in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Encouraged by her brother, Na entered Tokyo Women’s Art College in Japan and studied *yōga*. Na was not one of a few foreign Asian artists studying in Japan at the time. In 1927, Na Hye-sōk went on a three-year tour of Europe. Upon her return to Korea, she became an acclaimed painter and writer.

Again we are touching upon a parallel history issue, but there was a large group of artists who received governmental scholarships or private funds to pursue artistic training in Japan. There is no doubt that this transnational network was used as propaganda and to spread certain ideas about art and taste in Asia and mainly within the Japanese Empire. However, it is a subject requiring more detailed investigation to what extent this training served the system and how it helped to form the original modern view of these artists. Number of such cases can be represented by Na and Taiwanese female painter Chen Jin (1907 – 1998) who trained in Japanese-style modern painting and a contrasting modern style to contemporary *yōga* – *nibonga*.<sup>13</sup>

## Japan’s encounter with Cubism and other avant-garde movements

The new artistic tendencies, namely Futurism and German expressionism, arrived in Japan almost simultaneously running through the veins of networks of artists and writers energetically visiting Europe. Moreover, the movements were encountered without the background logic of the new concepts and their history. Thus Futurism seems to arrive in Japan prior

<sup>13</sup> Pioneering study of modern Taiwanese art and identity and its relationship with Japanese imperial rule in KIKUCHI, Y.: *Refracted Modernity: Visual Culture and Identity in Colonial Taiwan*. Honolulu 2007.

<sup>14</sup> VOLK 2010 (see in note 1), p. 34.

to Cubism. For example, Marinetti's manifesto was first published and translated by Mori Ōgai in the May 1909 issue of Subaru journal.<sup>14</sup>

Rooted in European capital cities, such as Paris and Berlin, Cubism embodied a new logic that shattered centuries of artistic traditions. The Asian encounter with Cubism has its specific narrative. In the Japanese case Euroamerican art gained particular importance during the transition from the Meiji (1868 – 1912) to the Taishō (1912 – 26) eras. The exchange had its pioneers in Kuroda Seiki (1886 – 1924) and Kume Keiichirō (1866 – 1934) who were active in 1890s Paris, and in the early 1900s, it was Saitō Yori (1885 – 1959) and Takamura Kotarō, introducing Henry Matisse (1869 – 1954) and Paul Gauguin (1858 – 1903). Saitō had a chance to visit the Steins collections prior to his return to Japan in 1908. Takamura described the experience of seeing the Fauvists in 1908 as “residues of a bitter pleasure, ...”, translating Matisse's “Notes of a painter” just months after its appearance.<sup>15</sup> Takamura was sceptical toward the response towards the new art by “pigeonlike” Japanese artists. Other artists reported on, for example, Futurist exhibitions in Paris and London in 1912. Regardless of the vivid connections, only a few European modern artworks appeared in Japan until the 1920s where exhibitions were often mounted from reproductions.

1910 was a moment of shift: it marked the more substantial arrival of modern art. This happened at a time when Meiji institutions and government were being questioned, shifting the state regime towards democracy. The new forms of expression coming from abroad offered a new territory for individual self-expression to the large group of avant-garde Japanese artists. Karatani Kōjin calls this the phenomenon of Taishō discursive space which combined cosmopolitan universalism with the seemingly contradictory “emphasis on Japanese uniqueness”.<sup>16</sup> Modernism in the Taishō period was effectively a result of the cultural boomerang (coined by Kirk Varnedoe for the quality of 19<sup>th</sup> century ukiyo-e, that



2. Ishii Hakutei, “Laurencin” sketch from the Independent exhibition published in *Asabi* newspaper on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1911.

adopted European approaches) of Euroamerican Japonisme returning to Japan. This phenomenon is also labelled “reverse Japonisme”— foreign ideas about Japanese art used in Japan for the creation of a new field of contemporary art.<sup>17</sup> These circumstances paradoxically led Japanese artists to re-discover their pre-modern arts, so much admired by the Europeans involved in the Japonisme vogue. An example could be Matisse in “Notes of a painter” where he talks about adapting Japanese art, which later inspired artists such as Kimura Shōhachi. Other modernist artists reflected the converging tendencies, or the meeting of Western and Eastern arts, or as the artist and art critic Nakada Katsunosuke put it in 1913 “Western and Eastern are drawing together”.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> KARATANI, K.: The Discursive Space of Modern Japan. In: *Japan in the World*. Ed. H. D. HAROOTUNIAN. Durham 1993, pp. 301, 304.

<sup>17</sup> VOLK 2010 (see in note 1), p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> NAKADA, K.: Koukiinshousha no seishin. In: *Waseda bungaku*, 88, 1913, p. 73.



3. Ishii Hakutei, “Rousseau” sketch from the Independent exhibition published in *Asabi* newspaper on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1911.

Yorozu Tetsugorō (1885 – 1927) was a Japanese painter, noted for his work in introducing avant-garde concepts, especially Cubism into *yōga* in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is claimed to be the first Japanese painter to grasp the significance of Fauvism and Cubism in his painting from 1912 – 1917.<sup>19</sup> Yorozu was born in the Tōhoku region of northern Japan and developed an interest in painting at an early age when he taught himself to paint watercolours. In 1903, he travelled to Tokyo with his cousin where he attended Waseda Junior High School. In 1905, he began to attend the meetings of the Hakubakai art circle established by a well-known painter and promoter of new *yōga* painting, Kuroda Seiki. In 1906, he travelled to the United States as part of a Rinzaï Zen mission, but with the intention of enrolling in an art school in San Francisco, but he returned to Japan the same year

due to the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. In 1907, he was admitted to the Western Art Department of the Tokyo Fine Arts School. His graduation work “Nude Beauty” was executed in a post-impressionist bordering on the Fauvism manner gained him considerable critical acclaim upon his graduation in 1911. In the next year 1912, Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger released the writing on a new Cubist style – “Du “Cubisme” and Yorozu’s avant-garde work “Nude beauty” provoked a new wave of critical modernism.<sup>20</sup> Coincidentally, this was the first year of Taishō era, the era that is sometimes called Taishō democracy. From 1914 – 1916 Yorozu returned to Iwate prefecture to apply himself to his painting, supported largely by the earnings of his wife. He painted a variety of self-portraits, landscapes and still-life paintings, and experimented with the beginnings

<sup>19</sup> IMAIZUMI Atsuo, Yorozu Tetsugoro, 1955, reprint in: Atsuo Imaizumi, *Yōgaron, Kindai nihon*. Vol. 2. In: *Imaizumi Atsuo chosakushu*. Tokyo 1979, pp. 94-98.

<sup>20</sup> VOLK 2010 (see in note 1), p. 1.

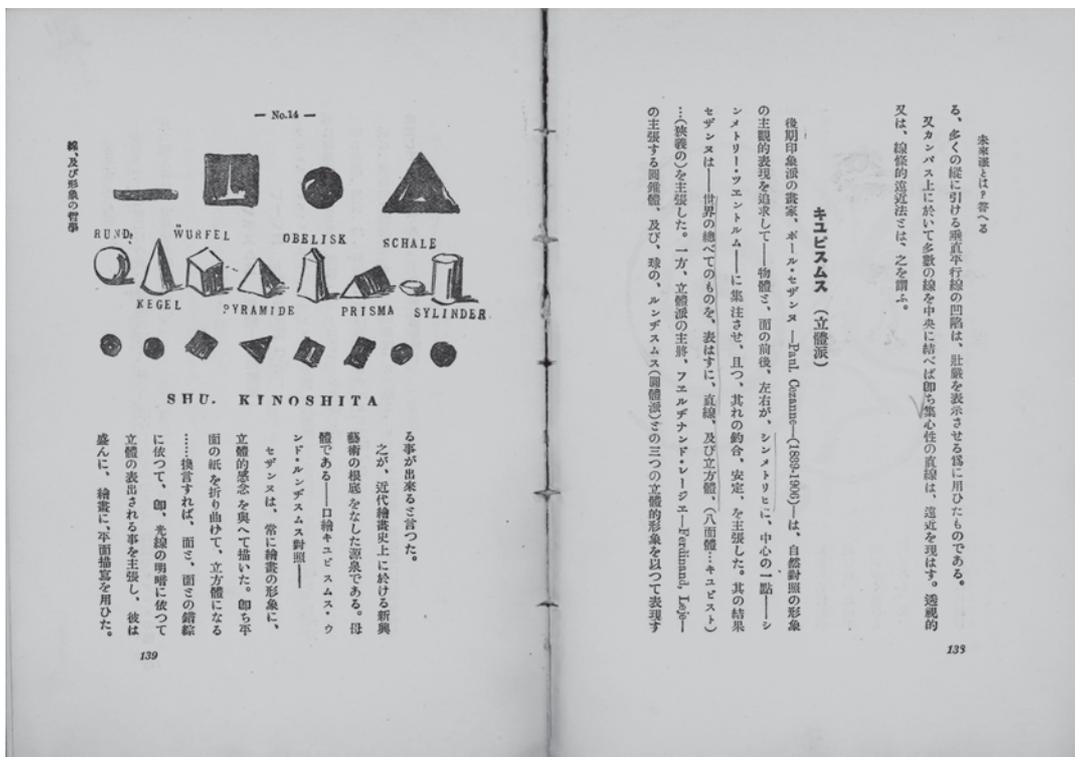


4. Kinoshita Shūzō, *History of art before Futurism (2)*, in David Burlinck and Shū Kinoshita, *What is Futurism?... an answer*, Tokyo: Chūōbijutsusha, 1923, 55.

of Cubism. In subsequent years Yorozu developed a successful career and was selected as a member of the prestigious Nika Society. Later he joined the Japan Watercolour Painting Association. He died prematurely at the age of 41, from tuberculosis.

Ishii Hakutei (1882 – 1958), painter and print artist, was one of the fathers of the *sōsaku banga* (creative print) movement. Born in Tokyo in 1882 with the given name Mankichi, he was the son of the traditional-style painter and lithographer Ishii Teiko (1848 – 97), with whom he studied early in his life. After his father's death, Hakutei became interested in Western-style art and soon became very competent in both oils and watercolour, specializing in Japanese landscape. He studied under Asai C, a leading *yōga* painter and in 1904 won entry to the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, where he studied with the already mentioned Kuroda Seiki and Fujishima Takeji (1867 – 1943) who were both prominent *yōga* painters. Ishii was an activist in groups of *yōga* artists and was the editor of the art and literary magazine Myōjō (Morn-

ing Star) and a co-founder of the magazine Heitan (1905 – 6). He went to Europe in 1910. On his return in 1912 he continued his prints series “Twelve Views of Tokyo”, begun in 1910. Ishii wrote extensively on the European art scene and his experiences, reporting on the Fauve, Futurist, and Cubist exhibits he viewed overseas, as well as on Kandinsky and the Blauer Reiter group. In his illustrated report “Independent exhibition and some works of Van Dongen” from the Independent salon he saw in 1911, he reported in “Tokyo Asahi” newspaper on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> July [Fig. 1 – 3]. He described Cubism, which he saw for the first time in his life, as follows “When it comes to Metzinger’s works, he expresses everything by using clusters of triangles, I hardly understand it. It is not that he expressed “dimensions” with straight lines, but they just look like crystals”. This statement was accompanied with Ishii’s sketch [see Fig. 1]. It is possible that it was Ishii’s introductions that inspired Yorozu and his work and his work “Girl with a balloon” (1912 – 1913) that bears com-



5. Kinoshita Shūzō, Illustration to a paragraph on Cubism, in David Burluk and Shū Kinoshita, *What is Futurism?...an answer*, Tokyo: Chūōhijutsusha, 1923, 139.

parison and similarity with Kees van Dongen's (1877 – 1968) work described by Ishii as: “He, with this vivid colour distribution, expresses a dark side under pleasure..”. In his commentary to Ishii’s pioneering encounter with Cubism in Paris, Ōtani Shōgō wrote that Cubism was introduced to Japan in the era of the change from Meiji to Taishō eras, at a time of many conflicts between individuals and the society. Cubism in Japan was born in that process and hence may be very different from the original movement, but this kind of difference. Ōtani argues, is what marks the specific cultural reception.<sup>21</sup>

### Fragmented avant-garde in 1920s Japan

The massive destruction of the Tokyo urban landscape caused by the Great Kantō Earthquake

in 1923 is considered a turning point in Japanese modernism and, in fact as its true beginning. The disaster provoked a concrete realization of a new vision that led to innovative building activity for a new lifestyle promoted by MAVO avant-garde artist collective and Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901 – 1977). Ueda Makoto wrote that ‘the period of the 1920s and 30s, its creativity, lifestyle and ideas are incomprehensible to us.’<sup>22</sup> [Fig. 4, 5] Tokyo’s rapid urbanization occasioned an underclass of labourers, who became the subject of art, along with the city itself and the Communist politics of the mid-1920s to early 1930s. Such works came under the banner of Proletarian art, which was spurred by Japan’s 1927 financial crisis and the world depression of 1929. An important early painting was Okamoto Toki’s “Attack on the Factory by the Strikers (Restored Painting)”

<sup>21</sup> ŌTANI, Sh.: Reception of Cubism in Japan. In: *Furansu: Cubism 100 years on* (special issue), vol. 7. Tokyo 2011, pp. 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> UEDA, M.: Moba, moga tachi no ie zukuri (Modern boys and girls build their houses) *Toshi jūtakei kuronikuru* II. (Chronicle of City Dwelling) Tokyo 2007, p. 394.

(1924/79). The original was apparently bought by a member of the Soviet Embassy who subsequently took it home to Russia. Against conservative Social Realism, however, 1930 witnessed what is called the first Surrealist painting proper to be painted by a Japanese. Fukuzawa Ichirō was living in Paris when he sent “Invincible Force” (1930) and around 30 other paintings to be shown at the First Independent Exhibition in Tokyo. Yabe Tomoe (1892 – 1981), a Japanese painter trained in Russia in the late 1920s, was strongly inspired by Soviet art, spent time in Paris, and helped to found the Proletarian Visual Arts Movement in Japan.

The break free – a “conscious” independence of the leading Euroamerican art scene was proclaimed by a number of artists who set the tone for decades, including postwar local developments. One of the strongest voices belonged to the transnationally experienced artist, political activist and articulator of “conscious constructivism” concept – Murayama Tomoyoshi who called upon artists to emancipate themselves, and leave the picture albums behind in 1924 at the event of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Akushon (Action) exhibition in Tokyo. Back in Japan from Berlin in early 1923, the arbiter of the European avant-garde movements, Murayama set about establishing his own aesthetic through collage/assemblage works such as “Construction” (1925), a coagulation of oil paint on wood, paper, cloth and metal, the technique of which he had learned abroad. Other works include “Work Utilizing Flowers and a Shoe” (1923) in which a woman’s shoe and a glass casing enclosing synthetic flowers were placed inside a box. Such pieces escaped the two-dimensionality of painting to become sculptural still lifes.

The Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 brought about a proletarian and socialist bent to MAVO activities, which included the design and construction of architectural facades for buildings. But it also in many ways influenced MAVO’s creative decline and Murayama’s growing penchant for the world of illustration, indicated by the number of magazine-cover designs he produced. Ambitious paintings and sculptures were for the most part behind Murayama

as he focused on his writing and theatre production. The rising militarism of the early 1930s ruled out a great deal of experimentation in the arts, and those with earlier Communist associations were regarded with suspicion by the state.<sup>23</sup>

### Japan and Cubism in the 1930s

This section will be focused on the 1930s and the reaction towards the cult exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1936. As Ōmuka Toshiharu observed – the reaction towards the MOMA show was immediate. Sanami Hajime published in a magazine *Bijutsu (Art)* a series of articles in reaction to the exhibition in which he introduced two parallel tendencies: a renewed interest in avant-garde painting and revived interest in classical western style Japanese painting – *yōga*. Cubism re-entered Japan with a storm and the catalogue of the New York was thought to have a “vital study reference”.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, it took a while for Alfred H. Barr, Jr.’s catalogue to achieve a lasting impact on Japanese artists. Even Sanami’s article was using Charles Edouard Jeanneret (1887 – 1965) and Amédée Ozenfant’s (1886 – 1966) older text on “Modern painting” (*Le Peinture moderne*, 1924) as a reference for content and illustrations rather than Barr’s new content. Three artists who “listened” to Barr’s words a year later were Fukuzawa Ichirō (1898 – 1992), Hasekawa Saburō (1906 – 1957) and Ihara Usaburō (1894 – 1976). They considered Cubism as a historic concept and used it for their search for order and method that they urgently sought for in the troubled Japan of the late 1930s. All three artists referred to the catalogue in articles on abstract or modern art they published in 1937. Especially Ihara’s discussion of Cubism in the publication of the same name shows the disruptive impact of Cubism on the Japanese art scene. In terms of ideas, Ihara uses texts published in the Cubist heyday of 1912 and 1913. In his own practice, however, Ihara referred heavily to Picasso’s Neo-classical painting which in his mind well bridged the expression of Synthetic Cubism and a desirable classical mode. In the same

<sup>23</sup> Detailed analysis of MAVO in WEISENFELD, G.: *Mavo: Japanese artists and the avant-garde, 1905 – 1931*. Berkeley 2002.

<sup>24</sup> OMUKA, T.: The Reputation of Cubism in 1930s Japan, Modernism, Academism and America. In: FURUICHI 2006 (see in note 3), p. 212.

year, the abridged translation of the catalogue into Japanese was published. A slightly different reaction towards the re-entry of Cubism to Japan was produced by a prolific advocate of Surrealism in Japanese, Takiguchi Shūzō (1903 – 1979), who interpreted the post-WWI Synthetic cubism negatively, in Apollinaire's manner as "fugue of Cubism", and this was all in 1938.

The significant impact of MOMA's catalogue could be, according to Ōmuka, rooted in the rising importance of the American art scene for Japanese artists who had chosen Paris as a place of training and inspiration in the years before. In the thirties, the situation changes and established artists become active in America, such as Fujita Tsuguji (or Tsuguharu) (1886 – 1968) who held his first solo show there in 1930.

### Conclusion

From the 1910s the artistic expression coming from abroad gained a new currency or image in Japanese artists' view. It began to be understood as capturing life experience and the task of an artist was to produce the individual visual interpretation of

this experience. Cubism appeared in Asia as part of a broad category of Western art or Western painting. Although Japan noticed and translated the key Cubist texts immediately and Yorozu Tetsugorō produced work with some Cubist elements already in the 1910s; the response of other Asian countries was much delayed.<sup>25</sup> Upon examining Japanese perceptions of avant-garde movements from abroad we can conclude that the Japanese avant-garde movements' network was as an extension of an international activity and not some kind of a derivative tendency. The lack of prominence of Japanese artists within the main art historical narrative may be interpreted as result of imposed cultural differences rather than a fruit of the mediocrity of the Japanese artists' production. According to Partha Mitter – the flexible language of Cubism, with its broken surfaces, released a new energy in artists in Asia that enable them to decontextualize and create a new modernist project.<sup>26</sup>

### Acknowledgements

Hepburn/ English transcription (shi, yo, etc.) is used to transcribe Japanese words. Japanese names are noted in Japanese fashion, surname and name.

<sup>25</sup> MASHADI, A.: Negotiating Modernities Encounters with Cubism in Asian Art. In: *Modern Art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*. Eds. E. O'BRIAN et al. Oxford 2012, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> MITTER, P.: The Formalist Prelude. In: E. O'BRIAN 2012 (see in note 25), p. 146.

## Japonská kubistická tvorba – mapovanie modernity na japonskej umeleckej scéne pred druhou svetovou vojnou

### Resumé

Kubizmus ako fenomén šíriaci sa po transnárodnej sieti umelcov sa do Japonska dostal v roku 1911 a prostredníctvom siete japonských avantgardných hnutí sa šíril a pretrvával po niekoľko desaťročí. Štúdia overuje myšlienku, že kubizmus prekračuje dualistickú paradigmu Východ – Západ a japonským umelcom poskytuje priestor k vytvoreniu vlastnej interpretácie modernosti.<sup>1</sup>

Štúdia vychádza z teórie transnárodných sietí a procesov. Táto metodológia umožňuje analyzovať predmet skúmania zo širšej, interdisciplinárnej a transnárodnej perspektívy a venovať sa otázke paralelných dejín, pričom dôraz sa kladie na cestovanie a výmeny medzi rôznymi umeleckými sieťami a inštitúciami. Hybridné výsledky by boli len ťažko pochopiteľné v rámci lineárnej koncepcie dejín umenia.

Věra Linhartová jasne pomenovala protikladné myšlienky, ktoré sa premieľali v kotle japonského moderného umenia, konkrétne v jej analýze japonského surrealistického hnutia.<sup>2</sup> Tieto myšlienky boli na jednej strane avantgardné, čiže nové a formované na základe súčasnej lokálnej kultúrnej klímy, na druhej strane sa medzi nimi našli aj také, ktoré slúžili ako časová kapsula – japonským umelcom pomohli obnoviť viaceré domáce tradičné koncepcie, ktoré sa načas úplne vytratili.

Japonsko bolo jedinou ázijskou krajinou, ktorá si osvojila kubizmus už v čase jeho formovania v Paríži. So značným oneskorením sa objavil ešte v Číne, ale v iných krajinách tohto regiónu až v tridsiatych až päťdesiatych rokoch, čiže v čase, keď sa oslobodili

spod koloniálnej nadvlády, ktorá často potláčala umelecké aktivity považované za moderné a súčasné.<sup>3</sup> Kubizmus v Ázii nebol prijatý jednoznačne pozitívne – považovali ho buď za pripomienku kultúrnej nadradenosti Západu, alebo za pankultúrny vizuálny jazyk modernity pre novovznikajúce štáty. Existovala tu však aj obava, že kubizmus, ktorý sa zrodil v Európe z konkrétneho kultúrneho, filozofického a vedeckého pozadia, bol importovaný jav nevhodný pre ázijský svetonázor. Podľa Berta Winthera-Tamakiho poskytla kubistická či piccassovská dimenzia ázijským umelcom ako Yorozu Tetsugorō, možnosť narušiť figurálny predmet a deformovať ho v mene vyjadrenia vlastného moderného pocitu.<sup>4</sup> Takže zaujatie tejto kubistickej dimenzie alebo priestoru bolo akýmsi znovunadobudnutím ich modernej skúsenosti.

Kubizmus zakorenený v európskych veľkometách ako Paríž a Berlín stelesňoval novú logiku, ktorá rozbila stáročia trvajúce umelecké tradície. V Japonsku euro-americké umenie nadobudlo význam počas prechodu z éry Meiji (1868 – 1912) do éry Taishō (1912 – 1926). Rok 1910 bol rokom zmeny: znamenal masový príchod moderného umenia, a to v čase, keď vláda a inštitúcie obdobia Meiji čelili kritike a ohlasoval sa prechod k demokracii. Nové formy vyjadrenia prichádzajúce spoza hraníc ponúkali početnej skupine avantgardných japonských umelcov nový priestor pre umelecké sebvýjadrenie. Karatani Kōjin tento jav nazýva diskurzívnym priestorom obdobia Taishō, ktorý spája kozmopolitný univerzalizmus a zdanlivo nezlučiteľný „dôraz na japonskú

<sup>1</sup> WINTHER-TAMAKI, B.: Asian Possessions of the Cubist Body: 'Home from Home'. In: *Cubism in Asia; Unbounded Dialogues, International Symposium Report*. Ed. Y. FURUICHI. Tokyo 2006, s. 304-311.

<sup>2</sup> LINHARTOVÁ, V.: *Soustředné kruhy: články a studie z let 1962-2002*. Praha 2010, s. 351-354.

<sup>3</sup> Japan Foundation v roku 2005 zorganizovala medzinárodné sympóziu o kubizme v Ázii, z ktorého vyšiel následne aj zborník. Pozri FURUICHI 2006 (ako v pozn. 1).

<sup>4</sup> WINTHER-TAMAKI 2006 (ako v pozn. 1), s. 310.

jedinečnosť“.<sup>5</sup> Modernizmus v období Taishō bol vlastne dôsledkom kultúrneho bumerangu (tento pojem ako prvý použil Kirk Varnedoe v súvislosti s ukiyo-e, obrazmi prchavého sveta z 19. storočia, ktoré prevzali európske výtvarné postupy), keď sa do Japonska vrátil euro-americký japonizmus. Tento jav sa nazýva aj „obráteneý japonizmus“ – myšlienky o japonskom umení prichádzajúce spoza hraníc, ktoré sa v Japonsku použijú pri tvorbe nového odvetvia súčasného umenia.<sup>6</sup> Paradoxne, tieto okolnosti viedli japonských umelcov k znovuobjaveniu ich predmoderného umenia, ktoré tak veľmi obdivovali Európania.

Kubizmus sa vrátil do Japonska ako búrka a katalóg kultovej výstavy *Kubizmus a abstraktné umenie*, ktorá sa konala v Múzeu moderného umenia v New Yorku v roku 1936, bol pre štúdiu považovaný za nevyhnutnosť.<sup>7</sup> Ako si všimol Ōmuka Toshiharu, reakcia na výstavu v MOMA na seba nedala čakať. Sanami Hajime reagoval uverejnením série článkov v časopise *Bijutsu* (Umenie), kde predstavil dve paralelné tendencie: obnovený záujem o avantgardnú

maľbu a o klasický japonský maliarsky žáner západného typu – *yōga*. Preds len však chvíľu trvalo, kým si úvodný text katalógu newyorskej výstavy z pera Alfreda H. Barra ml. našiel cestu k japonským umelcom. Dokonca ešte aj Sanamiho článok čerpá zo staršieho textu Charlesa Edouarda Jeannereta (1887 – 1965) a Amédea Ozenfanta (1886 – 1966) s názvom „Moderná maľba“ (*Le Peinture moderne*, 1924), a nie z aktuálneho Barrovho príspevku.

Na základe skúmania prijatia avantgardných hnutí v Japonsku môžeme usudzovať, že japonská sieť avantgardných hnutí bola súčasťou medzinárodných aktivít, nešlo o nejaký druh odvodených umeleckých tendencií. Absenciu japonských umelcov v hlavnom prúde umenovedného diskurzu možno interpretovať ako dôsledok zámerne zveličovaných kultúrnych rozdielov a nie priemernosti japonskej umeleckej tvorby. Podľa Parthu Mittera – flexibilný jazyk kubizmu s jeho rozbitou obrazovou plochou uvoľnil v ázijských umelcoch novú energiu, ktorá im umožnila oslobodiť sa z existujúcich lokálnych kontextov a vytvárať nové modernistické projekty.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> KARATANI, K.: The Discursive Space of Modern Japan. In: *Japan in the World*. Ed. H. D. HAROOTUNIAN. Durham 1993, s. 301, 304.

<sup>6</sup> VOLK, A.: *In Pursuit of Universalism: Yorozy Tetsugoro and Japanese Modern Art*. Oakland 2010, s. 10.

<sup>7</sup> OMUKA, T.: The Reputation of Cubism in 1930s Japan, Modernism, Academism and America. In: FURUICHI 2006 (ako v pozn. 1), s. 212.

<sup>8</sup> MITTER, P.: The Formalist Prelude. In: *Modern Art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*. Eds. E. O'BRIAN et al.: Oxford 2012, s. 146.

## M. H. Maxy: Cubo-Constructivist Integralism

Erwin KESSLER

The first issue of the avant-garde magazine *Integral* appeared in Bucharest on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1925. It was edited by a group of artists and writers inscribed on the frontispiece, comprising Brunea Fox, Ion Calugaru, B. Fondane, M. H. Maxy, Hans Mattis-Teutsch, and Ilarie Voronca. A few months before, they were involved in mounting the first, groundbreaking event of the Romanian avant-garde, the First International Exhibition of the avant-garde magazine *Contimporanul* (Bucharest, November-December 1924). Multiplying through rapid splitting of small groups into warring factions was a specific avant-garde phenomenon, as typical as the production of manifestos. The reason for issuing *Integral* was presented almost half a century later, by M. H. Maxy, who was the actual agency behind the foundation of the new magazine: “*Integral* wanted to be a movement, wanted to have a standpoint. One more constructive and modern.”<sup>1</sup> Maxy, together with ex-Dada pillar Marcel Iancu, was in fact the curator of the First International Exhibition of *Contimporanul*, and a regular contributor to the *Contimporanul* magazine too. Yet, to him “those from *Contimporanul* were too bourgeois... they were not a movement or a tendency, but a kind of forum where all the movements cohabitate.”<sup>2</sup> The splitting of the local avant-garde meant the separation from an originally ecumenical gathering (around *Contimporanul*) of a more “progressive” (or aggressive) element, intending to promote a coherent ideology and artistic practice. Such a phenomenon

is characteristic of the late avant-garde expansion, after WW1. It is the reverse of the original, early avant-garde development. Then the founders were either individuals or very small, and extremely coherent groups, either like the first Cubists, Picasso and Braque, working at the beginning almost secluded, isolated by the visionary protectionism of Daniel-Henri Kahnweiler, or like Der Blaue Reiter Expressionist team, so cohesive in its output. The Futurist junta works like a paragon too, as it was made up almost exclusively of Italian artists rallying around one single figure, F. T. Marinetti. The deeds of those small factions were afterwards endlessly replicated and developed across the world through exhibitions, publications and events. Contrariwise, numberless ecumenical avant-garde events proliferated after the Great War. The avant-garde, activist ecumenism had the Communist internationalism as a model. The *Novembergruppe* in Berlin, for example, had among its leading figures Expressionists such as Max Pechstein, Dadaists such as Viking Eggeling, Constructivists such as El Lissitzky, and Abstract artists such as Wassily Kandinsky. Their Expressionist cubo-constructive-futurism was a paragon of the avant-garde melting pot after WW1, when the major priority seemed to be less the artistic coherence but the activist and democratic, missionary impetus (the subsequent Juryfrei exhibitions will peak this trend). The same is valid for the First International Exhibition of *Contimporanul*, in late 1924, when,

<sup>1</sup> DRISCU, M.: Retrospective: M. H. Maxy (interview). In: *Arta*, 1971, No. 4-5, Bucharest, p. 53. It was the last interview given by Maxy.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53

alongside the local figures, the Cubo-constructivist M. H. Maxy, the ex-Dadaist Marcel Iancu (Janco), and the Abstract artist Hans Mattis-Teutsch, different international avant-garde figures such as Paul Klee, Hans Richter, Lajos Kassak, Viking Eggeling, Hans Arp, Constantin Brancusi, Kurt Schwitters or Karel Teige exhibited. It is against the background of this enthusiastic ecumenism that Maxy and his *Integral* acolytes constituted and reacted.

Such a reaction was already prefigured in the model-event of the First International Exhibition of Contimporanul, which was most probably the (almost forgotten now) First International Exhibition (1. Internationale Kunstausstellung) in the Kaufhaus Tietz in Düsseldorf, organized by Adolf Uzarski in 1922. A wide-ranging promotional event for the benefit of all possible avant-gardes, the first (and only) exhibition taking place in the huge department store was as ecumenical as one could imagine, like a smaller, European Armory Show, putting together progressive figures of every kind, showing, among many others, works by Picasso, Archipenko, Barlach, Kirchner, Chagall, de Chirico or Feininger. Although envisaged as an expression of avant-garde activism, directed against the resurgent, traditional, salon-like art of the time, the all-avant-garde International Exhibition was itself confronted with a schism, as the Constructivists like Theo van Doesburg, El Lissitzky or Hans Richter separated into a more radical Fraktion der Konstruktivisten, held a congress (the first of its kind), and exhibited apart, concomitantly.

Two years later, the emergent Romanian avant-garde circles thoroughly replicated that model. And that was not by chance: the two organizers of the Bucharest show, the ex-Dada Marcel Iancu, just back from Zurich, and the *Novembergruppe*-member M. H. Maxy, just back from Berlin, met for the first time in a show together precisely at the First International Exhibition in the Kaufhaus Tietz in Düsseldorf, in 1922, where Arthur Segal, the leading figure in the *Novembergruppe* and also a participant in the First International Exhibition of Contimporanul, also took part. Similar to its Düsseldorf model of 1922, the groundbreaking exhibition in Bucharest, in 1924, was also directed against the re-emergence of the traditional, salon-like art, after WW1. Indeed, similar to the opening of the official, traditional and regional Grosse Kunstausstellung in Düsseldorf,

in 1922, against which was mounted the 1. Internationale Kunstausstellung in the Kaufhaus Tietz, the Bucharest Official Salon was re-opened in May 1924. It was the first in seven years, after Romania's participation in WW1. Similar traditionalist events triggered similar avant-garde responses.

Although it grouped all the avant-garde energies of the place, the First International Exhibition of Contimporanul witnessed its major split immediately before its opening: the emergence, out of the larger, ecumenical pool, of a more radical fraction, with the publication by the young Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca of the single-issue (now acclaimed, but then criticized), 100%manifesto-magazine, 75HP. The replication, in Bucharest, of earlier avant-garde processes like the one in Düsseldorf, does not pertain to a centre-periphery dialectics. In terms of centrality in cultural geo-politics, both Bucharest and Düsseldorf were peripheral. But in terms of centrality in typological processes, both cities play a central role in defining characteristic strategies of avant-garde expansionism.

Behind the schismatic ritualism of the events in the Bucharest avant-garde milieu, stands a historical drive from promotional ecumenism toward ideological radicalism that transcended the centre-periphery dichotomy. That process, in its turn, mirrored (in an upside-down manner), the earlier process of the burgeoning avant-garde, which started from a trenchant, frequently incomprehensible and abhorred radicalism (Fauvism and Cubism were decidedly pejorative designations) only to conclude in general acceptance, adoption and replication. Notwithstanding the typological similarities between the two avant-garde, "First" International Exhibitions in Düsseldorf and Bucharest, a major, significant trait links them. It lies in the nature of their respective schismatic acts. In both cases, separated by a two-year time-span, it is Constructivism, or, better said Cubo-constructivism, that makes the difference. If in Düsseldorf in 1922 it was the congress and the separate exhibition of the Fraktion der Konstruktivisten that "stole the show", in Bucharest in 1924 it was the Cubo-constructivist, Dadaist output of 75HP that marched forward in the battlefield (literally in the avant-garde), typically engaged in a skirmish with its own army beside attacking the enemy's rear ranks.

This hints at the deeper phenomenon of the avant-garde at that time, that is the tension between the expanding, multifaceted, worldwide stylistic modernization, and the profile of the re-trenching, radical avant-garde. The Cubo-constructivist countenance of that profile was deeper carved by two concomitant occurrences. The widely-known first one is *Die Kunstismen 1914 – 1924*, the book issued in Switzerland<sup>3</sup>, only a few months later, in 1925, by El Lissitzky and Hans Arp. *Kunstismen* is arguably the major piece of evidence of the avant-garde's closure. Both ironic and analytic, it is like a (fictitious) exhibition catalogue or tourist guide, a brochure (Lissitzky was already versed in producing similar promotional materials for Soviet propaganda use) introducing an exotic, but closed, finished (artistic) territory to the eager beholder of the time. *Die Kunstismen 1914 – 1924* is the most prominent and self-conscious expression of the emerging avant-garde canon, it puts an end to the historical avant-garde precisely by tracing its territory in visual arts, film and architecture. More than a critical glossary, *Kunstismen* is a joyous end-piece, registering, in concomitant, separate columns in German, French and English, 16 specific "isms" of the avant-garde with 60 artists from 13 countries, ranging from Cubism to Simultaneism, Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Verism, Purism etc. Significantly, for the first time, and in a self-conscious, assumed fashion, the progressive artistic establishment appropriated in a theoretical (though ironic) way the designation and classification method which originally served to disparage the modernization endeavours in art: be it Impressionism, Fauvism or Cubism, the "ism"-ization of art has always been a means of making it alien to the commonsense, traditional art establishment. Now, the "ism"-ization was appropriated by its protagonists themselves, not only to caricature the prior caricature whose subject they were, but also, from a completely new, and opposite angle, to consecrate themselves, as the "ism"-ization was basically a scientific-like procedure of classification, a potentially rigorous means of ordering the art system. It is not by chance that *Kunstismen* looked like a repertory in engineer-

ing-, economy- or medicine-books. This imbued art with system-marks, made it a plausible part of the knowledge field of society, and turned avant-garde artists into respectable technocrats (Lissitzky was a true technocrat in the Soviet system, while many others would become highly regarded figures of the educational, administrative and cultural bureaucracy in the inter-war and post-war periods).

The most significant trait marked by *Die Kunstismen 1914 – 1924* is the way avant-garde art ("the isms 1914 – 1924" stands for avant-garde in a metonymic way) is "curated" or framed by the graphic design of the book and its rhetorical conception. Like dramatic personae, in a fair-like show, each "ism" introduces itself through the voice (text) and image (illustration) of relevant masters. However, the proper theatre where the play is unfolding, the book, is exclusively designed in a strong, uncompromising, manifestly Constructivist manner. El Lissitzky made one of his finest graphic design proposals ever, with the cover of the book turned into a real, purely visual manifesto, as the huge, constructive-typographic "K" of *Kunstismen* literally embraced all the tiny "isms" ranged in a shrewd line in its belly. The "K" of "Kunstismen", enforced by the powerful design and the striking use of only black, white and red on the cover, turned into the emblematic (and, why not, imperialist) "K" of the all-encompassing "Konstruktivismus". The "ismatic" and climactic end of the avant-garde, in both its senses, was implied to be "Konstruktivismus", both through the means of the graphic design and through the symbolism behind the aggrandized "K". The way this emblematic mechanism worked was suggested by the employment of a relevant, universalist and visionary quotation from Malevich serving as an introduction to the book: "Today is the time of analyses, the outcome of all systems ever produced."<sup>4</sup> The various "isms" of the avant-garde were united under both the visual, artistic pattern, and the ideological, political aegis of Constructivism.

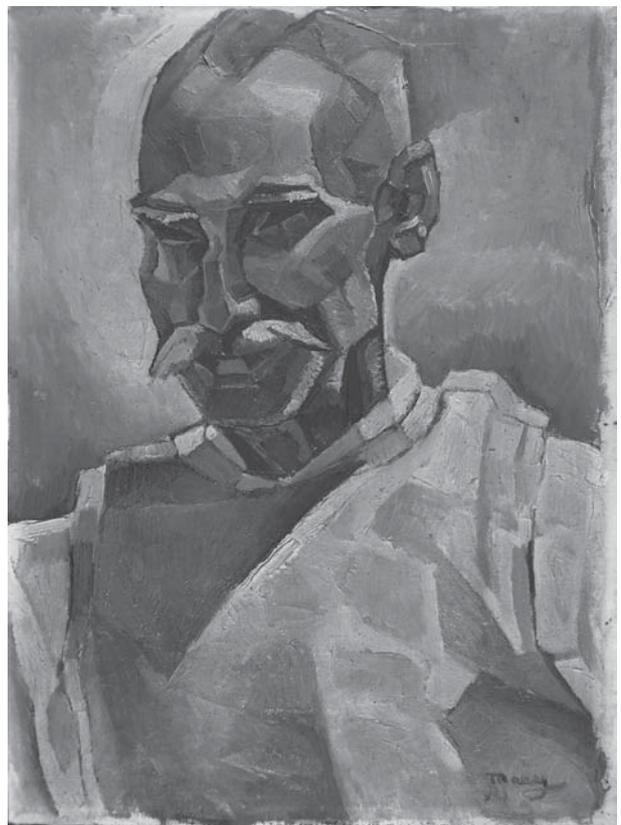
The expansion of radicalism in the avant-garde towards Constructivism was acutely sensed by the Bucharest avant-garde circles. Moreover, the

<sup>3</sup> LISSITZKY, E. – ARP, H.: *Die Kunstismen 1914 – 1924*. Erlenbach – Zurich 1925.

<sup>4</sup> In German in original: "Die Gegenwart ist die Zeit der Analysen, das Resultat aller Systeme, die jemals entstanden sind." Ibidem.

ritual overture towards it made by the publication of 75HP in November 1924 was correctly perceived as insufficient, because it merged together Dada and Constructivism in a pastiche-like fashion. Already in *Integral* 1, in March 1925, 75HP (already attacked in *Contimporanul*, as being merely a simulacrum of the earlier avant-garde magazines), is presented as “the effect of a formula, locally infallible because it was verified elsewhere”, “unmasked as a pastiche and sacrilege.”<sup>5</sup> Fifty years later, Maxy kept unchanged the same critical perspective and was quite plain on this point: “75HP, with its picto-poetry by Voronca and Brauner, threw some fireworks in the air... I considered that the direction given to that magazine was not the right one.”<sup>6</sup> This is a very sensitive issue, as nowadays most of the art-historical endeavours take for granted the view that 75HP was the most remarkable production of the historical Romanian avant-garde, whereas the protagonists of the avant-garde of the time denied precisely (and correctly) its membership of the historical avant-garde, seeing it as a symptom and echo of prior models. The issue of the historical Romanian avant-garde as actually post-historical is further stressed by its erupting in late 1924, precisely after the finish line drawn by Lissitzky and Arp in their *Kunstismen*.

Lucid and intrepid as he was, Maxy seized the momentum, and realized, precisely from the wrecked example of 75HP, that a more radical avant-garde, and not an ecumenical one, is the proper way to keep modernization alive. This is how and why *Integral* appeared. Both from the point of view of Maxy’s own artistic development and the international background, *Integral* could not have been other than a Cubo-constructivist enterprise. Firstly, through his Romanian education, Maxy was early on accustomed to the post-Cezannism of Iosif Iser (of a rather Expressionist facture) and Camil Ressu (with a more structured, massive view on pictorial subjects). Already after the war, his works of the early 1920s, like “Portrait of a Peasant” from 1921 (Fig. 1) shows how the (mis)understanding of Cubism by Maxy was informing his artistic research. The critics of the time pointed out this superficial attempt at cubization,



1. M. H. Maxy: *Portrait of a Peasant*, 1921 (The Romanian National Museum of Art, Bucharest)

stressing that he intently “exaggerated the planes, as if in Cubist works, without identifying himself with the Cubist doctrine...”<sup>7</sup>

During the time he spent in Berlin (1922 – 1923), Maxy was under the spell of his mentor Arthur Segal, whose “*Optische Gleichwertigkeit*” theory and art practice, emulated by Maxy, was derived from French Cubist experiences, especially from Delaunay’s “*orphic cubism*”, as it was named by Guillaume Apollinaire, largely known through Delaunay’s own label of “*Simultaneism*”, which combined Cubism and Futurism with a thrust on colour contrasts or “*synchromicity*”. Delaunay’s works of the early 1910s, such as “*Simultaneous Window on the City*” of 1912 (now in the Hamburger Kunsthalle), prefigured

<sup>5</sup> *Integral* 1, 1st March 1925, *Notite* (Notices), p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> M. H. Maxy, in DRISCU 1971 (see in note 1), p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> OPREA, P.: *M. H. Maxy*. Bucharest 1974, p. 11.



2. M. H. Maxy: *Madonna*, 1923 (The Romanian National Museum of Art, Bucharest)

much of Segal's own optically balanced works of the 1920s, when he brought the simultaneous contrasts of colours into the shaping of the forms inside the paintings, turned into crystal-like reverberations of prismatic, painterly pieces with balanced patterns and balanced colours, stuck together in works that looked very much like medieval stained glass.

Contemporaneous works by Maxy espoused an almost identical drive, visible in most of his canvases exhibited at Der Sturm gallery, in his solo show from 1923, like *Old Meissen*, 1922 or *Madonna*, 1923 (Fig. 2). A thorough visual mechanics, both decorative and philosophical, emerged from the homogeneous distribution of painterly interest (shapes and colours) to the whole canvas, eschewing the tempta-

tion of paying attention to a dominant, central figure. Contrariwise, in order to "democratically" treat every corner of the painting, the eye feasts on a carpet-like visual experience of uniform attraction, very much looking like the early, "analytic" Cubism of Picasso and Braque, except for the fact that the "subjects" of the canvases are relegated out of the centre.

Back in Bucharest in 1923, rich in artistic and ideological-political experiences, Maxy exhibited in the same year at *Maison d'Art*, a solo show with 57 works, painted in Berlin and in Bucharest, under the spell of Cubist experiences, hoping to strike the local art scene hard, in a specific, avant-garde elitist move of provocation stressed by his statement in the exhibition catalogue: "For us (the Cubists), every painting is a problem, always a different one, facing which the common understanding is normally alien... No wonder that the naturalist element is fading out in Cubist research, as it is focused on problems. ... The Cubist work of art lives not only through its manner, but through its spiritual power (the Cubist spiritualization is a fundamental property of the matter, of the form, of the colour, of the sensibility etc., and not a spiritualization of the naturalist subject...)"<sup>8</sup> Next to the spiritual values, somehow inadvertently pasted onto Cubism by Maxy (rather as a cross-reference to Kandinsky's *On the spiritual in art* from 1911, whose influence over Maxy's development is doubtful), stands a final, powerful statement about "the left extreme of Cubism, the Constructivism ... which tries to represent in an artistic way some abstract laws... taking its elements from the manifestations of our mechanical-industrial life. The artistic problem in this case has a fundamental organization, a massive constructivity, a geometrical accord and a mathematical clarity. Addressing the advanced spirits, Constructivism only rarely finds spectators. As it is rare, the importance of the movement is even higher..."<sup>9</sup>

This text of 1923, rooted in the fresh and diverse (and not always cohesive or properly digested) Berlin intellectual and artistic experiences of Maxy, contains the grounding standpoints of his future activities as artist, curator, educator, publisher, and

<sup>8</sup> MAXY, M. H.: Prefata la expozitia mea (Foreword to my Exhibition). *Maison d'Art* (exhibition booklet). Bucharest 1923.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

art entrepreneur, which will peak in the founding of *Integral* in 1925. The elitist, apodictic tone, the missionary vocation and the utopian, progressive, but also technocrat perspective will resurface in most of his future theoretical and practical endeavours. The start was precisely the organization of the First International Exhibition of *Contimporanul*<sup>10</sup>, together with Marcel Iancu (the two artists were the driving force behind *Contimporanul*, next to its editor-in-chief, Ion Vinea). The exhibition was prompted not only by the bad reception of his Cubist works shown at the Official Salon in May 1924, but also by the impetus given through his exhibitions to other Romanian artists, especially to Marcel Iancu and Corneliu Michailescu, who also exhibited Cubist works at the Official Salon, although their reception was not as negative as the one reserved to Maxy.<sup>11</sup> The situation seems rather paradoxical, as Cubism succeeded in unsettling the Romanian art scene only in 1924, although front-figures of the avant-garde emerged from that milieu too, from Tristan Tzara to Marcel Ianco (Janco), Arthur Segal or Hans Mattis-Teutsch. However, their avant-garde output developed mainly outside Romania, while the local art world, after WW1, entered under the spell of a powerful traditionalist trend (“the nationally specific art”, a kind of *Heimatkunst* with wider audience, propelled, among many others, by Maxy’s professor, Camil Ressu).

Thus, Maxy’s belated rallying under the emblem of “we, the Cubists” was indeed a provocative gesture, a readable and still understandable one, as Cubism was universally known as a progressive, international (thus not “nationally specific”) trend, whereas the direct, public and univocal affiliation to “Constructivism” would have no real impact, as Constructivism was practically not known at all on the local art scene. The insistence of Maxy to define Constructivism as “the extreme left of Cubism” was

on purpose – its political overtones were made to appall the detractors, like adhering to the worse side of the bad choice (the Communist Party, the “extreme left” of the time, was founded in Romania in 1921 and declared illegal the same year, the communists being chased as Soviet agents).

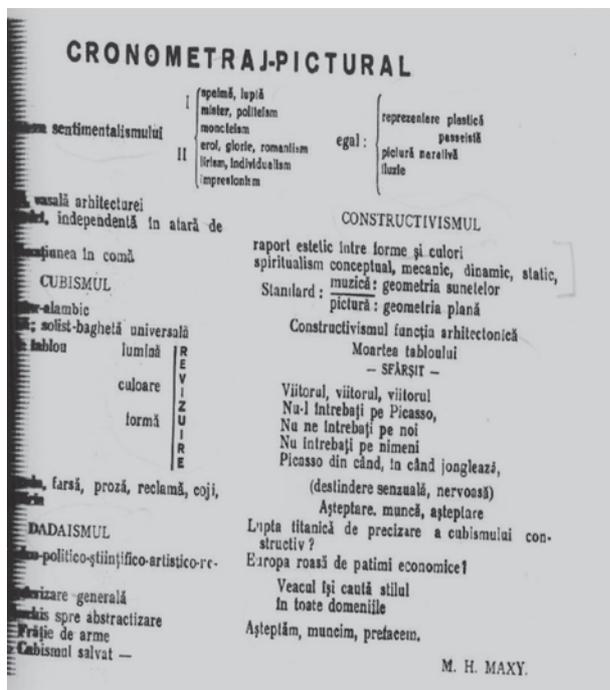
A real campaign of scorn and provocation was started by Maxy in connection with the opening of the First International Exhibition of *Contimporanul*, to attract public attention onto the issue of avant-garde art. In texts like *The International Artistic Demonstration of Contimporanul* (the accent put on “demonstration”, in both its political and rhetorical sense is obvious), Maxy stirred the public taste with statements like “The revolt is produced by a sensibility *en quete de creation*: Cubism is a reformist movement, a lab. Its follow-up: Dadaism is a strong purgative, absolute negation, without creative tendencies. The Cubist resistance, convalescence, landmarks for a direction”.<sup>12</sup> Later on, in 1925, Maxy continued to refer to Cubism as a preface (or interface) of Constructivism, intentionally linking them together in titles and statements, suggesting that Cubism’s international recognition was an introduction to the universal acceptance of Constructivism, the ultimate movement which was inscribed into every avant-garde tendency. Thus, in programmatic texts like *Cubism and Constructivism*, he aptly interconnected all big names of the Romanian recent art as a genealogy of his own standpoint: “the new art here has Master Constantin Brancusi as its leader... as he works together with us, contributing to our exhibition (the major international one, in November 1924, note E. K.) or in the magazine *Contimporanul*... Together with Marcel Iancu, one of the protagonists of the Dadaist movement, with the universal Tristan Tzara, Mattis-Teutsch... our movement grows in spite of the contradictory opinions of those unaffiliated”.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> “The exhibition – whose commissar was M. H. Maxy – also presented various objects of decorative arts, furniture, vases etc., exhibited only by the Romanian artists. Most of them pertained to Marcel Iancu and M. H. Maxy.” See BOGDAN, R.: *Pagini de arta moderna romaneasca* (Pages of Romanian Modern Art). Bucharest, 1974, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> OPREA 1974 (see in note 7), p. 14

<sup>12</sup> MAXY, M. H.: *Demonstratia plastica internationala a Contimporanului* (The International Artistic Demonstration of *Contimporanul*). In: *Contimporanul*, November 1924, No. 49.

<sup>13</sup> MAXY, M. H.: *Cubismul si Constructivismul* (Cubism and Constructivism). In: *Foaia tinerimii* (The Youth Newspaper), 1925, No. 6.



3. M. H. Maxy: *Cronometraj pictural (Painterly Chronometer)*, *Contimporanul*, 50-51/1924

One of Maxy's most significant productions was his *Cronometraj-Pictural* (Painterly-Chronometer, Fig. 3)<sup>14</sup>, a typical Futurist scheme, like the famous 1915 diagram "Sintesi futurista della guerra", by Boccioni, Carrà, Marinetti, Russolo and Piatti, schematically and dynamically representing Italy and its allies as triumphant wording crushing their enemies, portrayed by lowering and deprecating formulas.<sup>15</sup> In Maxy's diagram, the two protagonists are once again the pair Cubism and Constructivism, accompanied by their half-brother Dadaism, fighting against "sentimental romanticism", against its "polytheism, monotheism, lyricism, individualism, impressionism", entrenched in "past-oriented artistic representation, narrative painting, illusion". All these appeared to be contested by Cubism, which propelled a thorough, vertical "REVISION – light, colour, form", adapted to the present full of "farces, prose, advertising".

<sup>14</sup> Published in *Contimporanul*, November 1924, No. 50-51.

<sup>15</sup> BOCCIONI, U. – CARRÀ, C. – MARINETTI, F. T. – RUSSOLO, L. – PIATTI, U.: *Sintesi futurista della guerra* (Futurist

Dadaism was characterized as "political-scientific-artistic", and "open to abstraction", while it was a "brother in arms" for the "Salvaged Cubism". Finally, Constructivism cuts the lion's share of the diagram, almost half of it, developing in a more coherent and engaged way than the other movements described next to it. It was portrayed as an "aesthetic rapport between forms and colours", defined through "conceptual spiritualism, mechanical, dynamic, static, music, sound geometry, painting". As "Constructivism functions architecturally", its outcome is "The death of the painting", dramatically followed by the big word "-THE END-", immediately surpassed by a cavalcade of "Future, Future, Future. Don't ask Picasso. Don't ask us. Don't ask anybody", going into an interrogation about "The titanic battle of delineating the constructive Cubism?" only to finish over "The century looking for its style in every field. We wait, work, change".

One might suppose that substantial, even political radicalism linked Maxy's perception of Cubism and Constructivism, but it is more appropriate to conceive of this "natural alliance" in both theoretical and practical terms as resembling the one bolstered by the famous Paris international exhibition in April – October 1925, the "International exhibition of modern decorative and industrial arts", or, for short, the instrumental event in propelling *Art Deco*, the proper international style of the 1920s – 1930s. The fusion of Cubism and Constructivism, of machinism and Bauhaus aesthetics, of Futurism and Abstraction with exotism, luxury, research, progress, urbanism, mass-production and burgeoning consumerism was complete in *Art Deco*, not only in the event itself, but especially in its major, permanent outcome, the blending of art into industrial production as a criterion of modernity. *Art Deco* laminated Cubism into decorativism and Constructivism into functionalism, and made them universally available. But the influential Paris exhibition only consecrated a wider, international trend, with so many different, concomitant symptoms, some of them ranging from the fair-like ecumenical shows of the type of those

Synthesis of the War). In: *Guerrapittura: Futurismo politico, dinamismo plastico, 12 disegni guerreschi, parole in libertà*. Ed. C. CARRÀ. Milan 1915.

in Düsseldorf (1922) and Bucharest (1924), or the neat and chic, ironic and analytic *Kunstismen* or *Integral* (both issued in 1925, almost concomitant with the big Art Deco show in Paris)<sup>16</sup>.

The capitalization of the avant-garde, classified, massified, commodified, was encapsulated in most of these events, as they employed aestheticized radicalism to stir on consumption. Maxy's *Integral* odyssey is a dazzling case in study. His ritual employment of Cubism as a progressive "international style" introducing (or wrapping) Constructivism<sup>17</sup> understood as triumphant, technocratic functionalism, pre-dated the launch of *Integral*. The "Integral Man", the manifesto appearing in the first issue of the magazine, signed by the editorial board, *Integral*, but ostensibly written by Maxy (with the help of his collaborator Ion Calugaru), despite the visionary-obscure style so typical of the avant-garde, was clear on the major, defining points. Thus, the manifesto claims that "We definitely live under the urban aegis.", characterized by "Simultaneous balls." and "Forms imposed by the proletariat." *Integral* condemns the "Romanticist" "inflation of geniality" and the "intellectualist stray". Instead, "Integral offers certitudes", as it "preaches the essence of the primary expression", through "synthesizing the eternal will to live".<sup>18</sup> The Messianic tone of the manifesto, its indelible marks of progress (the ode to urbanism, proletariat, expression etc.) could not dissipate the pregnant impression of organicist, authoritarian, even totalitarian penchants so deep inscribed in the extolling of "certitudes", of the "primary essence" and the "eternal will to live", and in the ritual condemnation of "intellectualism", "romanticism" and "geniality".

With his Integralism, Maxy produced the only local avant-garde "original" trend (though a post-historical one, if one takes into account the 1924 limit traced by *Kunstismen*). The previous magazine he was working with, *Contimporanul*, did not aspire to propel a "Contimporaneism", and its ecumenism was not fit for that. One may assume that Maxy was

not deriving his Integralism from the ideas expressed in the magazine *Integral*, but, on the contrary, he purposely grounded *Integral* only as a means to propagate his pre-conceived Integralism. Contrary to the beginning of the century, when critics such as Louis Vauxcelles coined terms like Fauves and Cubists in a derisive attempt to discredit the artists classified in this way, Maxy, following Marinetti's proud and bombastic use of Futurism, and Tzara's jealous pretensions of ownership over Dada, imagined Integralism as a brand-like name of a trend made to endure and bring success just before the trend developed naturally, historically.

But what is Integralism, beside the apparent and claimed fusion of Cubism and Constructivism? More significant as theory and social-cultural insertion than as artistic practice, Integralism was defined by Mihail Cosma, one of the regular contributors to *Integral*, as "the scientific and objective synthesis of all aesthetic efforts made until the present time (Futurism, Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism etc.), everything done on Constructivist foundations, and aiming to reflect the intense grandeur of our century, reformed by mechanical speed, by the cold intelligence of the engineers and by the healthy triumph of the sportsman."<sup>19</sup> Indeed, *Integral* aimed to be an epitome of progress in every cultural field, and on an international level. It is not by chance that the complete title of the magazine was "Integral. Organ of the Local and International Modern Movement".

The aptly expressed ambition was twofold: on one hand it was the cosmopolitan aspiration to be an international forum, and on the other hand it was the focus on "modernity" (and modernization), a much larger scope than the mere avant-garde. "Modernity", the process of modernization was seen as a wider phenomenon of reforming and progressing in (social, cultural) fields that exceeded the confined realm of the visual arts. The magazine devoted generous pages to cinema, theatre, architecture, literature, fashion, sport. It regularly published avant-garde

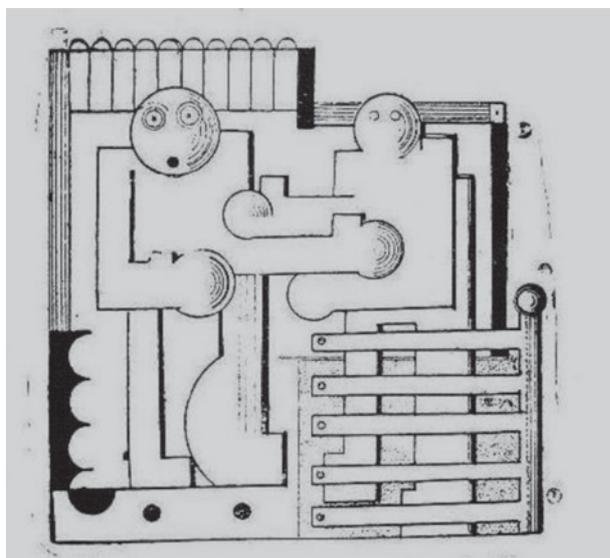
<sup>16</sup> Significantly, the use of clean-cut, aggrandized typography letters as central means of graphic design, and of the key-colours black, red and white for the cover composition could be seen both in the case of *Integral* and *Kunstismen*.

<sup>17</sup> "in Germany... he developed from Cubism to Constructivism, with some strays into geometrical abstraction, with the

outcome in canvases of a high compositional and constructive rigour." BOGDAN 1974 (see in note 10), p. 109.

<sup>18</sup> "The Integral Man", manifesto, in *Integral*, 1925, No. 1.

<sup>19</sup> COSMA, Mihail (future Claude Sernet): Interview with Pirandello. In: *Integral*, 1925, No. 8.



4. Victor Brauner: *Boxers* (*Integral* 5, 1925)

advertising of industrial products (Tungsram electric bulbs etc.) or to other, European and non-European avant-garde publications aiming to weave an avant-garde, international network (it even presented the Japanese avant-garde magazine MAVO), in the form of a list of avant-garde publications published in each issue, with the mention (directed to the readers) that *Integral* “facilitates subscriptions to foreign magazines”. It also advertised its own “art-industrial” facilities, the “Integral Atelier”, where props, interior design, furniture, ceramics, costumes and posters were on offer.

*Integral* literally integrated everything, but not in an ecumenical manner, as if a collage. Victor Brauner and Ilarie Voronca (the artists behind the successful, but rapidly shot-down 75HP), and Corneliu Michailescu, rallied to *Integral*, becoming permanent contributors to both the magazine and to “Atelier Integral”. Although today he is known as a Surrealist, some of the best, early Cubist-constructivist works by Victor Brauner (especially engravings)

were made for *Integral*, and were reproduced by the magazine (Fig. 4). The commonly shared opinion of art historians about Integralism is that Maxy was, in fact, Integralism itself. To Andrei Pintilie, in a purely stylistic approach to Integralism as a painterly entity “the Integralism is Maxy’s work itself, oscillating between analytic Cubism, Futurism and abstract painting, that is on expressive forms based on a *constructive* system.”<sup>20</sup> In his turn, Petre Oprea considers that “the few explanations appearing in the magazine about the term Integral are very general and apply in painting only to Maxy...”<sup>21</sup> Contrary to Andrei Pintilie and his purely stylistic understanding of Integralism, Petre Oprea employs an iconography-based definition of Integralism, claiming that Maxy’s “Integralism consists in treating subjects taken from the life of the lower, exploited classes, subjects technically treated in a Cubist way, without renouncing colour.”<sup>22</sup> His observation is only partly right, as Maxy treated these subjects indeed, but only next to numberless “Cubisticized” portraits of high-life, bourgeois figures (Fig. 5), of sportsmen (Boxers, Swimmers, Billiard players etc.), and a large variety of nudes, still-lives and other genre subjects that dramatically diminish the relevance of the purely “social” subjects (Fig. 6) as defining Integralism. Rather, it was relevant for the very substance of Integralism to treat all these subjects, as claimed by Maxy, in a “dispassionate” way, integrating all possible subjects in neutral, impersonal rendering, as he claimed at that time that “The whole value of the surrounding subjects has for me a meaning deprived of any emotion.”<sup>23</sup>

Cubism appeared in this context as the most appropriate manner of rendering the technocratic, cool-handed, progressive approach to reality. Much later, in 1947, Maxy still maintained, coherently, that his Cubism “reflected the scientific style in art, as opposed to the far-fetched, sentimental romanticism.”<sup>24</sup> Assimilating (abusively) Cubism to a scientific style, into Integralism, Maxy turned actually art into tech-

<sup>20</sup> PINTILIE, A.: *Ochiul in ureche* (Eye in the Ear). *Studiu de arta romana*. Bucharest 2002, p. 135.

<sup>21</sup> OPREA 1974 (see in note 7), p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> DINU, Gheorghe (Stephan Roll): *Initiale pentru o expozitie* (Capital letters for an exhibition). Interview with M. H. Maxy. In: *Integral*, 1927, No. 11.

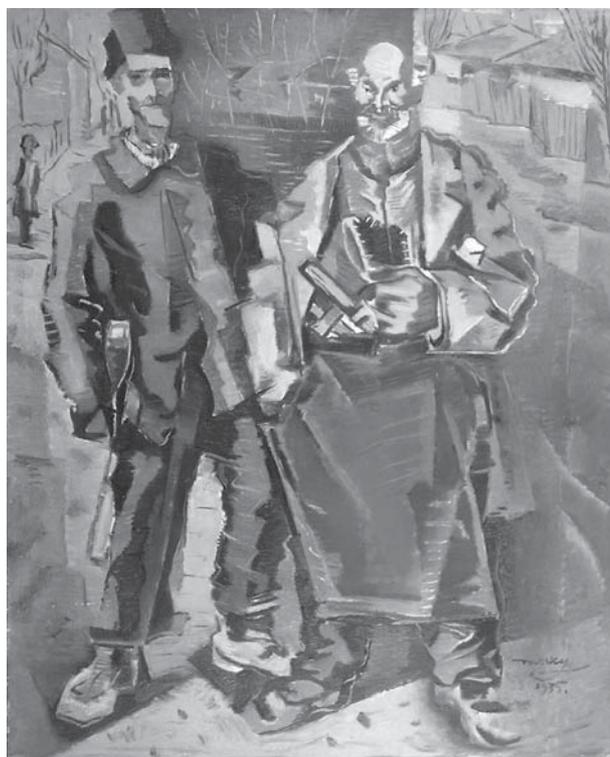
<sup>24</sup> POPOVICI, L.: *Cu pictorul Maxy, despre el si despre arta* (Talking to painter Maxy about himself and about art). Interview with M.H. Maxy. Rampa, Bucharest, 27 July 1947.



5. M. H. Maxy: *Madame Ghitas*, 1924 (ICEM Tulcea)

nocracy, in order to better fit the (pre-supposed) expectations and requirements of the (early) corporate society, fascinated by mechanical production, luxury, hygiene, sport, comfort, and entertainment. Already in the first issue of *Integral*, in a programmatic text directed against Surrealism, entitled “Surrealism and Integralism” signed by Corneliu Michailescu, a convenient disparaging of Surrealism (“Compared to the richness of newness brought by preceding trends, Surrealism brings in no proper contribution... Surrealism is... inferior to Dadaism... Surrealism does not correspond to the spirit of the time.”)<sup>25</sup>, continues into the permanent subject of reflection: “Cubism, through Constructivism, opens a new and lively way into space. The reconstruction era of Europe started.”<sup>26</sup> The patent connection

<sup>25</sup> MICAHILESCU, C.: Suprarealism si Integralism (Surrealism and Integralism). In: *Integral*, 1925, No. 1.



6. M. H. Maxy: *Workers*, 1935 (The Romanian National Museum of Art, Bucharest)

made between Cubism and historical, technical progress in every field shows that, possibly under the influence of Maxy, but in a personal, assumed fashion, most of his *Integral* collaborators framed the Cubo-constructivist conceptual/practical pair into a larger, philosophical and sociological perspective, exceeding by far the merely stylistic impact. The Cubo-constructivist forma mentis was extrapolated to the whole civilization, at least that of the 1920s, already captivated by the (regressive) “retour à l’ordre” (which opened further to the authoritarian politics of the mid-1930s), unconsciously evoked by Corneliu Michailescu’s definition: “Constructivism: abstract order with harmony of laws and balanced lines.”<sup>27</sup> The integration of all arts, in *Integral*’s view, appeared as a certain, unavoidable process: “Poetry, music,

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

architecture, painting, dance, all of them go integrally enchainned toward a higher, definitive station.”<sup>28</sup> The name of the station where integration of all arts, of all styles and of all subjects occurs was Integralism itself, which, unsurprisingly, was again assimilated to progressive ordering – “order synthesis, order constructive essence, classic, integral... Integralism is in the rhythm of the epoch, Integralism is the style of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>29</sup>

In the views of the Integralists themselves, at least during the lifetime of *Integral* (after the 15th issue, it ceased to appear in 1928) Integralism was, for short, precisely that: the compact extract of modernism characterizing progress in every field at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. More (or less) than avant-garde, in its historical sense, Integralism was a manifestation of the widespread move to attune each element of daily, artistic, and spiritual life to that modern “rhythm” evoked by *Integral*’s contributors (not only in the many references to Jazz, but frequently in a larger sense, of the *Zeitgeist* as collective rhythm). In an *Integral*-like enumeration of the ritualistically employed words that characterize the integral modern rhythm as it surfaced in the text published by *Integral*, one should firstly enlist: cubist, constructivist, synthetic, simulta-

neous, energy, actual, urban, international, dynamic, virile, realization, purism, mechanic, proletarian, sport, pragmatism, spirit, civilization, geometry, research, engineer, industry, instinct, primary. This non-exclusive list delineates a profile of what Integralism was supposed to be. However, behind the words on the list, extracted from the published articles in *Integral*, there lies another list of hidden words, never appearing in those texts, but able to portray Integralism from the opposite side, like the negative of a (non-digital, analogue) photograph which contains the photograph too, emerging after developing the negative into the positive. A short enumeration of the hidden words appearing through the text published in *Integral* must enlist utopian, elitism, exclusivism, dandyism, machismo, technocracy, instrumentalism, eugenism, authoritarianism, corporate, extremism. Such words would later on transpire through the gestures, deeds and works of the *Integral* protagonists, as they next enrolled into fascist Futurism during the mid-1930s and into clandestine<sup>30</sup> (and later on official) Communism starting in the early 1940s. In those cases the issue of “modernity” and modernization was also present, but in a very peculiar, indeed regressive manner.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> “At the end of the 1930s M. H. Maxy became a member of the Communist underground...” TANASE, S.: *Avangarda romaneasca in arbivele Sigurantei* (The Romanian Avant-garde in the Archives of the Secret Police). Iasi 2009, p. 12.

## M. H. Maxy: Kubo-konstruktivistický integralizmus

### Resumé

Avantgardný časopis *Integral* bol založený v Bukurešti v marci 1925 a do apríla 1928 vyšlo celkom 15 čísel. Hlavnou postavou, ktorá stála za jeho vydávaním, bol M. H. Maxy, avantgardný umelec, profesor, teoretik umenia a organizátor umeleckých podujatí. Ďalšími členmi redakčnej rady boli ľudia, ktorí sa spolu s Maxym podieľali na organizovaní Prvej medzinárodnej výstavy časopisu *Contemporanul* (Súčasník). Výstava sa uskutočnila v novembri – decembri 1924 a možno ju označiť za prelomovú udalosť rumunskej avantgardy, ktorá mala pre ďalší vývoj zásadný význam.

Štúdia analyzuje podmienky vzniku časopisu *Integral* na pozadí miestneho, ale aj medzinárodného vývoja. Časopis začal vychádzať v čase, keď sa objavili prvé prejavy avantgardného umenia, napríklad na Prvej medzinárodnej výstave (1. Internationale Kunstausstellung) v Kaufhaus Tietz v Düsseldorfe (1922), vo Švajčiarsku vyšla kniha El Lissického a Hansa Arpa *Die Kunstismen 1914 – 1924* (1925) a v Paríži sa uskutočnila medzinárodná výstava umeleckého priemyslu (apríl – október 1925). Štúdia tiež ukazuje, prečo sa musel *Integral* posunúť od jednotiacich snáh časopisu *Contemporanul* k radikalizmu. Tvrdí tiež, že v politickom a umeleckom prostredí danej

doby nemal časopis inú možnosť než proflovať sa ako kubo-konstruktivistický.

Štúdia vychádza z predpokladu, že integralizmus nie je produktom časopisu *Integral*, ale naopak, že časopis *Integral* je výsledkom Maxyho integralizmu (jasne viditeľného v jeho dielach aj teoretických stanoviskách), ktorého tribúnou sa stal. V rozpore so súčasným umeleckohistorickým chápaním však štúdia tvrdí, že Maxy nebol jediným integralistom v okruhu časopisu. Integralizmus bol (aspoň krátkodobou) výrazne obsiahnutý aj v dielach niektorých jeho prívržencov, predovšetkým v kubo-konstruktivistickej tvorbe Victora Braunera a Corneliu Michalesca a v teoretických textoch Iona Calugara a Mihaila Cosmu.

Štúdia predstavuje integralizmus v celej jeho rozmanitosti, počínajúc ikonografickými námetmi a končiac štýlom krúžiacim okolo (oneskoreného) analytického kubizmu s ideovou podporou konstruktivismu a niekedy dokonca aj dadaizmu.

A nakoniec, triumfálna moderna, ktorú tak hájil *Integral*, je tu zachytená aj z jej (historicky) tienistej stránky, keďže otvorila cestu autoritárskemu diskurzu a umeniu socialistického realizmu.

## Latvian Cubism

Dace LAMBERGA

During World War I, a new generation born around 1890, entered the Latvian art scene, and they focused their creative work on the exploration of contemporary trends. The artists generally came from farming or low-income urban families, hence they could only dream about studying in Western Europe. Magazines and reproductions in books were their sources of new trends, as well as the rare opportunity to visit Saint Petersburg exhibitions. One of the most powerful stimuli in the development of Latvian Modernism was Jāzeps Grosvalds, a modern thinker with several years of studies spent in private Paris academies, with his vivid personality and his balanced, harmonious and contemporary means of expression. In 1914, he met the young artists Valdemārs Tone, Konrāds Ubāns, and Aleksandrs Drēviņš in Riga, and Grosvalds' experience as well as the reproductions from the journal *Soirées de Paris* kindled their passion for the "new art". World War I was ravaging Europe, and thus Rigans enthusiastically supported Grosvalds' vision: "Now the priority for all of us is one single idea – to erect the great "castle of light" for Latvian art and to show what only we can create. [...] the war forces us to start our cultural life anew, and it matters not to our people that we should learn something more – now each work of art, which forcefully expresses something unique, has more value than the works executed with maximum technical skill and abstract subject matter."<sup>1</sup>

In 1919 Jēkabs Kazaks, Ģederts Eliass, Oto Skulme, Romans Suta, Niklāvs Strunke, Valdemārs

Tone, and Konrāds Ubāns founded the Expressionist Group. Since they lacked any clear understanding of Expressionism as such, and since in its essence this movement was not in accord with their stylistic direction, at the very beginning of 1920 the "Expressionists" renamed their union the Riga Artists Group. The emerging artists used to meet at the "Sukubs" vegetarian restaurant, run by the mother of Romans Suta, the walls of which were decorated in the summer of 1919 with Cubist murals. The name "Sukubs" consists of the first syllables of two words "Suprematism" and "Cubism" in the Latvian language.

In March 1920, the Riga Group of Artists held its first exhibition, and the opening was attended by virtually the entire art world of the capital. In the introduction to the catalogue, the Riga Group of Artists declared its platform: "The last years have been a real tragedy for our art, and it seems that also here we have been moving toward total destruction. Art has no longer had a place in our society. Great endurance and self sacrifice has been required by the artists as they have fought poverty and an indifferent environment. We are no longer satisfied with a simple depiction of realistic nature. All our strivings are at present directed towards revealing the personality. It is not nature, objective external nature, that we wish to show in our works now, but our own, individual nature, our spiritual essence".<sup>2</sup> Realism, Pointillism, influences from Cézanne, Fauvism, Cubism and individual approaches to formal synthesis – all this

<sup>1</sup> *Laikmets vēstulēs. Latviešu jauno mākslinieku sarakste: 1914–1920* (An Era through Letters. The Correspondence of Young Latvian Artists: 1914–1920). Ed. A. NODIEVA. Riga 2004, pp. 104-105.

<sup>2</sup> Rīgas mākslinieku grupas izstāde (*The exhibition of the Riga Artists Group*). Riga 1920.



1. *Jēkabs Kazaks (1895 – 1920)*  
*Portrait of Jūlijs Sprūģis. 1920. Oil on canvas. 61,3x52. LNMA*  
*(Latvian National Museum of Art)*

was seen in the works of the young artists. The first exhibition by the Riga Group of Artists was a radical turning point in the search for means of expression in Latvian painting, the historic testimony to the beginning of a process of changing values.

Of the Classical Modernism movements, it was Cubism that had the most evident and wide-ranging influence on Latvian early 20th century painting. In 1921, painter Uga Skulme promoted the idea that "...if we wish to experience a school of painting, if we wish to establish an independent school, if we cherish tradition, then we should join those vital developments led by Picasso, since in Western Europe his genius is generally recognized, and, thinking logically, we too should bow our heads to him."<sup>3</sup> Romans Suta, an active modern art advocate declared, that: "We, the young think that it's about time for us to

<sup>3</sup> SKULME, U.: *Nacionālā māksla un glezniecības ceļš (National Art and The Way of Painting)*. In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, March 5, 1921.



2. *Ludolfs Liberts (1895 – 1959)*  
*Walls. 1922. Oil on canvas. 53x58,5. LNMA*

show that we can if we wish to solve our cultural problems, with awakened and increased activity, we have to demonstrate what our attitudes are towards the era and that here we stop naturally at the French, because their forms are strongly grounded in the evolution of art principles and these principles have crystallized so far, that they have been noticed and taken over today by every nation."<sup>4</sup>

Classical Cubism is considered to last from 1907 up to 1921, but in Latvia the earliest examples of Cubism appear much later than in Western Europe – only around 1918, when the first attempts at shape geometrization appeared in the works of Romans Suta, Valdemārs Tone and Oto Skulme. In other European countries, familiarity with Cubism was more readily obtainable, by living in Paris and studying under the direct tuition of French artists. But Cubism reached the minds of Latvians only during the time of the First World War. Unfortunately, the war also brought long isolation from developments in Western Europe, so young artists gained their initial acquaintance with modern painting only from reproductions in journals. They were more closely informed about the essence of Cubism by Jāzeps

<sup>4</sup> SUTA, R.: *Ap neatkarīgo mākslu (On the Subject of Independent Art)*. In: *Latvijas Kareivis*, April 21, 1921.



3. Oto Skulme (1889 – 1967)  
*Portrait of Kārlis Straubergs*. 1920. Oil on canvas and cardboard. 64x53.  
 Collection of Guntis Belēvišs



4. Uga Skulme (1895 – 1963)  
*Small Village Jēkabmiests*. 1921. Oil on canvas. 92x74. Private  
 collection.

Grosvalds, since for about a month in 1913 he had attended the Cubist academy *La Palette* in Paris. The Latvians saw their first real examples of this current movement – Pablo Picasso, Andre Derain - only in the war years in the private galleries of two truly wide-ranging Moscow collectors, Sergej Shchukin and Ivan Morozov. The young artists had quite varying attitudes towards Cubist phenomena. For example, one of the leading Latvian modernists Jēkabs Kazaks found its exact principles not acceptable in full, concluding that “The days of Cubism and some of the other currents that have followed are numbered, and only the ideas that they have brought, the route they have showed everyone, have remained and will take us to the new art”.<sup>5</sup> From 1918 onwards, however, the majority of the remaining members of the Riga Artists Group attempted to express their

creative ideas through the geometricized shapes of Cubism. However, this movement existed in Latvian painting for only a short period, due to its late advent. Nevertheless, the characteristic Cubist geometrization of forms and this movement’s means of expression played a vivid role in the history of Latvian art. This meant not only a break with the traditional stereotypes of thinking, but at the same time intensified the study and re-evaluation specifically of painting, of its means of expression: formal synthesis, rhythms, and the value of line, colour relations and contrasts.

The time until the end of 1922 is considered the initial period of Cubism in Latvian painting. This was a period of theoretical orientation and the development of germinal approaches to form, the young artists mainly utilizing an irregular stock of creative impressions obtained from reproductions in journals and from visits to Moscow exhibitions and galleries. After several members of the Riga Group of Art-

<sup>5</sup> SKULME, U.: Jēkaba Kazaka piemiņai (Remembering Jēkabs Kazaks). In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, December 1, 1921.

ists travelled to Paris in late 1922 and 1923, many of them showed a heightened interest in examples of the final, synthetic, phase of Cubism. Thus, stylistic approaches changed, and because of these fresh impressions, painting as a whole acquired the monolithic forms, laconism and greater colourfulness characteristic of this phase. In the initial stage, the most consistent exponents of Latvian Cubism were Oto Skulme, Valdemārs Tone, Romans Suta, Jānis Liepiņš, Aleksandra Beļcova and Ludolfs Liberts. Uga Skulme has mentioned that the first Cubist work shown in Latvian art exhibitions in Riga was painted by his brother Oto Skulme. Altogether, his compositions reveal balanced arrangements of ornamentally geometrized elements, where virtually abstract fields alternate with somewhat more representational objects. Certainly, Valdemārs Tone, Romans Suta and Oto Skulme turned to geometrization of form at approximately the same time – it is only that Skulme was the first to display his approach publicly.

When in 1921 the Republic of Latvia was recognized *de iure*, the artists' dream to travel to Western Europe was realized. From 1922 onward many of the Riga Artists Group members headed for Paris on Culture Foundation of Latvia grants, there to study the collections at the Louvre and to attend exhibitions. The Rosenberg Galleries, owned by baron brothers, with the choicest works of the best-known representatives of Cubism were particularly esteemed. At Paul Rosenberg's the Latvians were passionately enthusiastic about Picasso's newest innovations, but at Léonce Rosenberg's gallery, about Georges Braque, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) and Amédée Ozenfant. After the death of Jāzeps Grosvalds, Romans Suta continued the contact with French artists. In 1921 and 1924 Suta's articles were published in the Purist journal *L'Esprit Nouveau* about the latest in Latvian art as represented by the Riga Artists Group.<sup>6</sup>

The creative and impression-rich visit to Paris influenced the second Riga Artists Group exhibition in 1923, which turned out to be decidedly Cubist, and for its time, innovative avant-garde. But it did not get a positive reaction from critics, and unpro-



5. Niklāvs Strunke (1894 – 1966)  
*At the Table*. 1923. Oil on canvas. 86x71. LNMM

fessional accusations appeared in the press, stating that the exhibition was modelled conspicuously on a “Paris pattern” and the art was reminiscent of a bad copy of the “Rosenberg salon”. It is doubtful that the critics had even seen a “Rosenberg salon” exhibition, because they had not even noted that there were two galleries. Some of Suta's paintings testify to the fact that he is one of the Latvians who tried to master the laconic expression style of the Purists and therefore the critics reproached him for flatly and purely copying Le Corbusier. The French painter disclaimed it the answer to Suta's letter: “You and I, we both painted bottles and glasses but completely differently”.<sup>7</sup>

Romans Suta was criticized for having announced that the Riga Artists Group wanted to create a new

<sup>6</sup> SUTA, R.: L'Art en Lettonie: La Jeune Ecole de Peinture. In: *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1921, No. 10, pp. 1165-1171; Lettonie. *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1924, No. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Le CORBUSIER, letter of February 12, 1924. Document nos. R3 04450001 and 002, Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.



6. Niklāvs Strunke

*Construction of Head (Portrait of Ivo Pannaggi)*. 1924. Oil on canvas. 34x32. LNMM

national Latvian art and that this had been “truly a brave step taken by our seekers of recognition for a free and creative art, having discontinued the Russian academic art traditions. But if the group’s members continue to slavishly mimic French examples, then there won’t be any talk of a national art” The question arose: “Would it not be better to look more deeply into the ancient spiritual and daily life of Latvians?”<sup>8</sup> Suta responded that even if artists wanted to slavishly copy the French, they could not do it. Besides he considered that “there isn’t a nation on this earth that has created a national style from ornament. We ourselves, firstly as persons, secondly as artists, are a part of the nation’s psyche. An artificially created style is a stylization, while a style develops from personality”.<sup>9</sup> The powerful influence of French Cubism cannot be denied, but

Latvians managed to create a local version, which stylistically was a unification of the synthetic stage of basic principles, but each artist found an adequately individual interpretation.

In any case, even if an artist could only stay for a few months in Paris, it fundamentally changed his or her creative work explorations. “It seems that the apathy ascribed by foreigners to Latvians has died, and we can surely bank on the hope that our exploring artists will not stop mid-stream on the way to developing an absolute form and that they will be able to get directly at the heart and finally at the end at what is real in their work, which we can then feel with all the senses of our organism. The path by which all of this is to be achieved, has already been set by triply commensurate Picasso’s immeasurable genius, and, in order to flee from misfortune in the field of art of our era – individualism, thus the individual’s separate self must be curbed, in order to create traditions, a school, without which it is impossible right now either to forge ahead along all fronts in the art field, or to develop a unique art for any nation. It is the only way, because Picasso’s influence in every country, and now in every artist, has appeared to a greater or lesser degree and his authority has not yet been overshadowed by any one else,”<sup>10</sup> wrote Uga Skulme. According to Skulme: “Picasso is so changeable, so versatile, that it is hard to follow his witty imagination. No one today is able to construct a painting like Picasso. The colour contrasts in his work are reserved, the forms divinely balanced. The artist convinces with his painting to such a degree that we are ready to believe in him more than in objective nature”.<sup>11</sup>

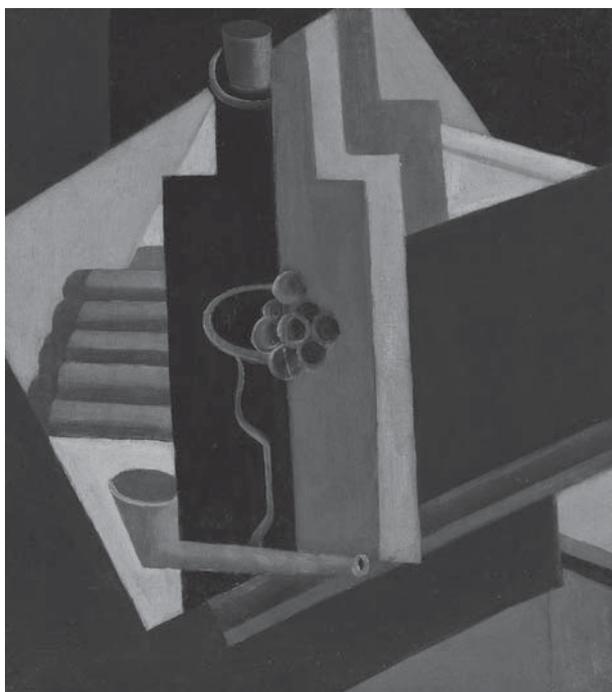
In contrast to the milieu of its native France, in its Latvian variant Cubism lacked several important preconditions. In the first place, there was an absence of outstanding creative leaders such as Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, and the movement entered Latvian painting as a mature, internationally popular and modern phenomenon, as a conscious

<sup>8</sup> DOMBROVSKIS, J.: Rīgas mākslinieku grupas izstāde (Riga Artists Group Exhibition). In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 1923, December 6.

<sup>9</sup> SUTA, R.: Par kādu kritiku (Regarding a Critique). In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 1921, January 22.

<sup>10</sup> SKULME, U.: Divas mākslas izstādes (Two Art Exhibitions). In: *ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> SKULME, U.: Vēstules no Parīzes. Picasso (Letters from Paris. Picasso). In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis Supplement*, 1923, No. 2, p. 7.



7. *Romans Suta (1896 – 1944)*  
*Still life with Pipe. 1923. Oil on canvas. 60x51. LNMM*



8. *Romans Suta*  
*Still life with Triangle. 1924. Oil on canvas. 68x 62,5. LNMM*

opposition to the ruling conservative Academism. Secondly, the Latvians, without considering the three basic phases of the movement's development, perceived Cubism as a finished and united whole. The spectrum from insignificant simplification of forms up to compositions constructed almost abstractly cannot be deemed simply a diversity of forms, but rather is connected with each particular artist's understanding of the style, or lack of understanding. Thirdly, in contrast to the French, there was an absence of developed figural works, and the movement was mainly expressed through the genres of still life, landscape and portrait. Fourthly, the more extensive spread of Cubism in Latvia was hindered not only by society's unpreparedness for it, but also by the lack of patronage of the arts.

A significant feature of Latvian Cubism is that many young artists reached this movement not as the result of a prolonged search for form and means of expression, but rather actually began their creative work with geometrization. But their work is on a professionally high level, and at the present day it has come to represent one of the most vivid episodes in

Latvian art history. As in French Cubism, the works by Latvian artists – and not only the still lifes – made use mainly of bottles and musical instruments, which the Latvians had a greater respect for and have not particularly attempted to distort their traditional form. The letters favoured by the Cubists also appear, placed in a manner similar to ornamental signs, as well as textures imitating wood and other materials. The favoured palette of the French Cubists consisted of black, grey, green and earth tones, while Latvian painters did not avoid a diversity of colour.

In 1923 Niklāvs Strunke was living in Berlin, and wrote to the newspaper *Latvijas Vēstnesis* (Latvia's Herald), reporting on trends in art, artists and new exhibitions: for example, Hungarian Constructivism, Louis Marcoussis painting under glass, and in particular raving about Georges Braque and other French artists at the Flechtheim Gallery, mentioning that they were especially fascinating as a contrast to the reigning German Expressionism. Proof that the art of the era was being taken particularly seriously is found in Niklāvs Strunke's very enthusiastic announcement in 1923 from Berlin, that a Latvian art



9. Erasts Šveics (1895 – 1992)  
*Woman with Jug*, 1923. Oil on wood. 71x50. LNMM



10. Valdemārs Tone (1892 – 1958)  
*Two Women*, 1920. Oil on canvas. 147x106. LNMM

magazine would be issued there: “I have the courage to say that *Laikmets* (The Era) will have immense significance in Latvia and that, with it, Latvian artists will achieve closer collaboration with their colleagues in Europe”.<sup>12</sup> The sculptor Kārlis Zāle was motivated to publish *Laikmets* by the magazine *Вещь* (The Object) published by the Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg and the representative of Constructivism El Lissitzky. Articles by Western European critics and reproductions of artists’ work were included in *Laikmets*. But only four issues were published

because broad interest did not materialize in Latvia. Supposedly the drawback in the articles was their ponderous language difficult to understand for a broader reader base.

In the end of 1990s when I started to write my book *Classical Modernism: Early 20th Century Latvian Painting*<sup>13</sup> the bibliography of Cubism painting was rather incomplete and fragmented. *60 Jahre lettischer Kunst*<sup>14</sup>, a book by Romans Suta published in 1923, provides a synoptic description of the artists’ work but contains no analysis of the stylistic influences and

<sup>12</sup> PALMĒNU, Klāvs [pen name for Niklāvs Strunke]: *Laikmets* (The Era). In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis Supplement*, 1923, No. 6, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> LAMBERGA, D.: *Klasiskais modernisms. Latviešu glezniecība 20.gadsimta sākumā*. Rīga 2004; *Le modernisme classique: La*

*peinture lettone au début du XXème siècle*. Rīga 2005; *Klassikāline modernisms. Lāti maalikunst 20. sajandi alguses*. Tallinn 2010.

<sup>14</sup> SUTA, R.: *60 Jahre Lettischer Kunst*. Leipzig 1923.

analogies. *Latvju māksla* by Jānis Dombrovskis<sup>15</sup> also lacks any wider analysis and more generalized conclusions. Various information on Latvian art events and exhibitions as well as on artists and their works has been taken from press publications from the 1920s; the most notable of these periodicals are *Taurētājs*, *Latvijas Kareivis*, *Latvijas Vēstnesis* and newspapers, as well as *Laikmets*, *Ilustrēts Žurnāls* and others magazines. In the period following the Second World War, the most extensive review of the Classical Modernist tendencies of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is provided by USA-based Jānis Siliņš in his book *Latvijas māksla: 1915 – 1940* (Latvian Art: 1915 – 1940).<sup>16</sup> He both analyses the work of some artists in particular and provides more general introductory articles. In the art history of Soviet Latvia, in turn, until the early 1980s the importance of the phenomenon of Modernism was played down due to ideological restrictions, and almost no research was carried out on this subject. The only exception was the book by Tatjana Suta “Romans Suta”<sup>17</sup> about her father.

The first modern-day publication to take a closer look at the history of Latvian Classical Modernism was the catalogue of the 1990 *Unerwartete Begegnung. Lettische Avantgarde: 1910 – 1935*<sup>18</sup> exhibition in West Berlin. The materials comprised in the catalogue were

later referenced in American art historian Stephen Mansbach’s monograph *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890 – 1939*,<sup>19</sup> published by Cambridge University Press in 1998. Mansbach’s research is the first significant work published abroad and in English to offer a more detailed analysis of our modernist trends and the main characteristics of the work of leading artists. After West Berlin the next step was the catalogue of the exhibition of Estonian and Latvian Modernism curated by Swedish art historian Folke Lalander in 1993 in Stockholm.<sup>20</sup> In 1998 the Latvian National Art Museum at last published the catalogue *Cubism in Latvian Art*<sup>21</sup>. The research of the art historians Aija Brasliņa<sup>22</sup> and Natalja Jevsejeva<sup>23</sup> has also enlarged the history of Latvian Cubism.

Serge Fauchereau has written about Romans Suta’s connections with Purism in his book „*Le cubisme. Une révolution esthétique sa naissance et son rayonnement*”.<sup>24</sup> French art historian Gladys Fabre in the research “*Baltic and Scandinavian Art – Searching for Modern Synthesis and Identity*” (catalogue “*Modern Art in Northern Europe 1918 – 1931: Electromagnetic*”) published new information about Latvian art discovered in the Foundation Le Corbusier in Paris<sup>25</sup> and about the exhibition “*L’Art d’Aujourd’hui*” in 1925 in Paris.<sup>26</sup> Gladys Fabre concluded that „During the

<sup>15</sup> DOMBROVSKIS, J.: *Latvju māksla* (Latvian Art). Rīga 1925.

<sup>16</sup> SILIŅŠ, J.: *Latvijas māksla: 1915–1940* (Latvian Art). Stockholm 1988.

<sup>17</sup> SUTA, T.: *Romans Suta*. Rīga 1975.

<sup>18</sup> *Unerwartete Begegnung: Lettische Avantgarde 1914–1935*. Köln 1990.

<sup>19</sup> MANSBACH, S. A.: *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890–1939*. Cambridge 1999.

<sup>20</sup> *Oväntat möte: Estnisk och lettisk modernism från mellankrigstiden*. Ed. L. FOGELSTRÖM – E. HAITTO – F. LALANDER. Stockholm 1993.

<sup>21</sup> *Kubisms Latvijas mākslā* (Cubism in Latvian Art). Catalogue. Ed. D. LAMBERGA. Rīga 2002.

<sup>22</sup> BRASLIŅA, A.: Latvian Modernists in Berlin in the Early 1920s: Impulses and Resonance. In: *Centropa: A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts*, 2012, Vol.

12, No. 3, pp. 286-303; Latvian Modernists in Berlin and Rome in the 1920s: Encounters with secondo futurismo. In: *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies*. Vol. 1: *Special Issue: Futurism in Eastern and Central Europe*. Ed. G. BERGHAUS. Berlin – Boston 2011, pp. 231-261.

<sup>23</sup> ЕВСЕЕВА, Н.: Иван Пуни и латвийские художники в начале 20-х годов XX века. In: *Бюллетень музея Марка Шагала*. Вып. 21. Витебск 2013, pp. 107-111; Искусство и судьбы. Роман Сута и Александра Бельцова. In: *Третьяковская галерея 2011*, No. 4, pp. 78-89; Творчество Романа Суты и Александры Бельцовой. In: *Бюллетень музея Марка Шагала*. Вып. 16-17. Витебск 2009, pp. 46-50.

<sup>24</sup> FAUCHEREAU, S.: *Le cubisme. Une révolution esthétique sa naissance et son rayonnement*. Paris 2012.

<sup>25</sup> FABRE, G.: Baltic and Scandinavian Art – Searching for Modern Synthesis and Identity. In: *Modern Art in Northern Europe 1918-1931: Electromagnetic*. Ed. G. C. FABRE – T. HANSEN – G. E. MØRLAND et al. Høvikodden 2013, pp. 42-43.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 45. The eccentric Polish artist Viktor Poznanski organized the international exhibition “*L’Art d’Aujourd’hui*”

twenties, the profusion of foreign aesthetics incited the artists of Northern Europe to take some critical distance just as they were simultaneously attracted by rich new aesthetic possibilities. [...] The true originality

of the Northern spirit resides, to my mind, in these syntheses, in the specific routes each artist took to surpass „isms“.<sup>27</sup>

## Lotyšský kubizmus

### Resumé

Počas prvej svetovej vojny vstúpila na lotyšskú umeleckú scénu nová generácia umelcov narodených okolo roku 1890. Ich tvorba bola ovplyvnená skúmaním aktuálnych umeleckých trendov. V marci 1920 sa konala prvá výstava Rižskej skupiny umelcov, na ktorej otvorení sa zúčastnili všetci, čo v umeleckom svete hlavného mesta niečo znamenali. Skupina deklarovala svoje stanovisko v úvode katalógu výstavy: „Jednoduché zobrazenie reality nás už viac neuspokojuje. Všetko naše úsilie dnes smeruje k odhaleniu osobnosti. Už to nie je príroda, objektívna vonkajšia realita, čo chceme ukázať v našich dielach, ale naša vlastná povaha, naša duchovná podstata.“ Výstava Rižskej skupiny umelcov bola zásadným medzníkom v hľadaní výrazových prostriedkov v lotyšskej maľbe, historickým svedectvom začínajúcej sa zmeny hodnôt.

Z umeleckých hnutí klasickej moderny to bol práve kubizmus, ktorý mal najzreteľnejší a najširší vplyv na lotyšskú maľbu raného 20. storočia. Klasický kubizmus je ohraničený rokmi 1907 až 1921, ale najranejšie príklady kubizmu v Lotyšsku sa objavili oveľa neskôr ako v západnej Európe, až okolo roku 1918. Pre umelcov z iných európskych krajín bolo oveľa jednoduchšie oboznámiť sa s kubizmom, napríklad počas pobytov v Paríži, kde mali možnosť študovať priamo u francúzskych maliarov. Do povedomia Lotyšov kubizmus prenikol až počas prvej

svetovej vojny. Bohužiaľ, vojna so sebou priniesla aj dlhodobú izoláciu od vývoja v západnej Európe, takže mladí umelci sa s výdobytkami moderného umenia zoznamovali len prostredníctvom reprodukcii v časopisoch. Lotyši mali možnosť na vlastné oči vidieť príklady tohto aktuálneho umeleckého hnutia v súkromných galériách dvoch moskovských zberateľov so skutočne širokým záberom, Sergeja Ščukina a Ivana Morozova.

Obdobie do roku 1922 sa považuje za počiatočné obdobie kubizmu v lotyšskej maľbe. V tomto počiatočnom štádiu boli najdôslednejšími predstaviteľmi lotyšského kubizmu Oto Skulme, Valdemārs Tone, Romans Suta, Jānis Liepiņš, Aleksandra Beļcova a Ludolfs Liberts. Keď bola v roku 1921 *de iure* uznaná Lotyšská republika, umelcom sa splnil dávny sen a mohli vycestovať do západnej Európy. Po roku 1922 sa vďaka grantom Lotyšskej kultúrnej nadácie vydali do Paríža viacerí členovia Rižskej skupiny umelcov, aby si tam prezreli zbierky v Louvri a navštívili aktuálne výstavy. Obrovskému záujmu sa tešili galérie bratov Rosenbergovcov, ktoré ponúkali široký výber kubistického umenia. V galérii Paula Rosenberga sa Lotyši nadchýnali najnovšími dielami Pabla Picassa, kým v galérii Léonceho Rosenberga obdivovali diela umelcov ako Georges Braque, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) a Amédée Ozenfant. V rokoch 1921 a 1924 časopis

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in Paris and invited the Latvian artists Aleksandra Beļcova, Romans Suta, and Erasts Šveics to participate.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 52.

*L'Esprit Nouveau* uverejnil Sutove články o aktuálnom lotyšskom umení, ktorého predstaviteľom je Rižská skupina umelcov.<sup>1</sup>

Tvorivé pobyty v Paríži nabité dojmami mali výrazný vplyv na druhú výstavu Rižskej skupiny umelcov v roku 1923, z ktorej sa vykľula zreteľne kubistická a avantgardná výstava. Nestretla sa však s pozitívnym ohlasom kritiky a v tlači sa objavili ničím nepodložené obvinenia, že bola zorganizovaná podľa „parížskeho vzoru“ a jednotlivé diela sú len zlou a nevydarenou kópiou „Rosenbergovho salónu“. Je otázne, či títo kritici niekedy vôbec videli výstavu „Rosenbergovho salónu“, keďže si ani nevšimli, že existujú dve galérie tohto mena. Viaceré Sutove maľby nasvedčujú, že sa snažil o dosiahnutie lakonického výrazu puristov, ale kritici mu vyčítali, že kopíruje Le Corbusiera. Francúzsky maliar toto tvrdenie vo svojom liste kategoricky odmietol, keď Sutovi napísal: „Obidvaja maľujeme fľaše a poháre, ale úplne inak.“<sup>2</sup>

Silný vplyv francúzskeho kubizmu je nepopierateľný, ale Lotyšom sa podarilo vytvoriť si vlastnú lokálnu verziu. Z hľadiska štýlu išlo o zlúčenie základných princípov syntetického kubizmu, ktoré však každý umelec interpretoval po svojom. Každopádne, aj keď umelci mohli zostať v Paríži len niekoľko mesiacov, tento pobyt zásadne zmenil ich tvorivé bádanie. „Zdá sa, že apatia, ktorú cudzinci pripisujú Lotyšom, zmizla, a my môžeme dúfať, že naši umelci nezastanú v hľadaní absolútnej formy na polceste a že budú schopní preniknúť priamo k podstate a nakoniec k tomu, čo je v ich dielach skutočné, čo ucítíme všetkými našimi zmyslami. Cestu, ktorou sa toto všetko dá dosiahnuť, už vytýčil Picassov nezmerný génius a aby sme unikli pred nešťastím umenia našej doby – individualizmom, umelci musia potlačiť svoje ja s cieľom vytvoriť tradíciu, školu, bez ktorej je momentálne nemožné nielen postupovať dopredu na všetkých frontoch, ale

tiež vytvoriť jedinečné umenie. Je to jediný spôsob, pretože Picasso ovplyvnil, či už viac, alebo menej, každého a doteraz sa nenašiel nikto, kto by ho zatieňil,“<sup>3</sup> napísal Uga Skulme.

Na rozdiel od Francúzska, lotyšskej verzii kubizmu chýbalo niekoľko dôležitých predpokladov. Predovšetkým mu chýbali významné vedúce osobnosti, akými boli Georges Braque a Pablo Picasso, a hnutie preniklo na lotyšskú umeleckú scénu ako vyzretý, medzinárodne obľúbený a moderný jav, ako úmyselná opozícia proti prevládajúcemu konzervatívne akademizmu. Po druhé, Lotyši bez ohľadu na tri základné vývojové etapy hnutia vnímali kubizmus ako dokončený a jednotný celok. Škálu od zanedbateľného zjednodušenia tvarov až po takmer abstraktné kompozície nemožno jednoducho považovať za rozmanitosť foriem, ale skôr ide o individuálne chápanie nového umeleckého smeru, resp. o jeho nepochopenie. Po tretie, na rozdiel od Francúzska tu chýbali vyzreté figurálne diela, umelci sa sústreďovali na zátišia, krajinomaľby a portréty. A po štvrté, výraznejšiemu rozšíreniu kubizmu v Lotyšsku bránila nielen nepripravenosť spoločnosti, ale aj nedostatok mecenášov umenia.

Charakteristickým znakom lotyšského kubizmu je skutočnosť, že pre mnohých mladých umelcov nebol výsledkom dlhodobého hľadania formy a výrazových prostriedkov, ale geometrizácia pre nich bola skôr východiskom. Ich tvorba je však na vysokej profesionálnej úrovni a v súčasnosti predstavuje jednu z najživších epizód v dejinách lotyšského umenia. Diela lotyšských umelcov – a nielen zátišia ako v prípade francúzskeho kubizmu, využívali najmä fľaše a hudobné nástroje, ktorých tvar však neskresľovali. Objavujú sa tiež písmená v podobe ornamentov, ako aj textúry imitujúce drevo a iné materiály. Obľúbená paleta francúzskych kubistov pozostávala z čiernej, sivej, zelenej a zemitých tónov, kým lotyšskí maliari sa nevyhýbali rozmanitej farebnej škále.

<sup>1</sup> SUTA, R.: *L'Art en Lettonie: La Jeune Ecole de Peinture*. In: *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1921, č. 10, s. 1165-1171; SUTA, R.: *Lettonie*. In: *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 1924, č. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Le CORBUSIER*, list z 12. februára 1924. Dokumenty č. R3 04450001 a 002, Fondation Le Corbusier, Paríž.

<sup>3</sup> SKULME, U.: *Divas mākslas izstādes (Dve výstavy umenia)*. In: *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 22. 1. 1921.

## In the Shadow of the Official Discourse: Towards a Revision of the History and Theory of the Polish Idiom of Cubism

Lidia GŁUCHOWSKA

### Cubism “away from the centre” and the case of Poland

In the last twenty years or more attempts to decentre the geography of the avant-garde<sup>1</sup> have gradually changed the perception of art history, recovering or demonstrating several “peripheral” aesthetic phenomena “outside the canon” of Western cultural historiography. This process dates back to the monumental exhibition *Europa Europa* in Bonn in 1992 and its related monumental publication,<sup>2</sup> which found its further culminations in the context of important conferences and anthologies such as: *Borders in Art. Revisiting Kunstgeographie* and *Europa! Europa?* (2008/2009).<sup>3</sup> The latter publication

launched the concept of a “horizontal art history” developed by Piotr Piotrowski, who identified the interconnections between the “peripheries” and not only between the “centres” or the “peripheries” via the “centres”,<sup>4</sup> as well as contributing to a new vision of the dispersion and development of certain stylistic or ideological movements, like Cubism. Of particular relevance for the latter are the ideas of Vojtěch Lahoda concerning, first of all, the concept of the “emulation” of “Western” languages of art in their “peripheral” idioms in the ‘other Europe’<sup>5</sup>, and secondly enhancing the role of private collections in the popularization of Cubism in Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> These methodological impulses have resulted in further publications and exhibitions, rediscovering

<sup>1</sup> Comp. *Decentring the Avant-Garde*. Eds. P. BÄCKSTRÖM – B. HJARTARSON. Amsterdam – New York 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Europa, Europa. Das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa*. Eds. R. STANISŁAWSKI – Ch. BROCKHAUS. Bonn 1992.

<sup>3</sup> MURAWSKA-MUTHEIUS, K.: *Borders in Art. Revisiting Kunstgeographie*. Warsaw 2000; *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent*. Eds. S. BRU – J. BAETENS – B. HJARTARSON et al. Berlin – New York 2009.

<sup>4</sup> PIOTROWSKI, P.: Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde. In: BRU – BAETENS – HJARTARSON 2009 (see in note 3), pp. 49-58.

<sup>5</sup> LAHODA, V.: The Canon of Cubism and the Case of Vincenc Kramár. On the Place of Czech Cubism in the History of

Modern Art. In: *Transnationality, Internationalism and Nationhood. European Avant-Garde in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*. Eds. H. VAN DEN BERG – L. GŁUCHOWSKA. Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA 2013, pp. 131-145, esp. 132-135. The term “emulation” itself was used by Lahoda in his keynote lecture “Affinity, Emulation or Adaption? ‘Cubism Remake’ on the Eastern Orbit” at the conference *Historizing the Avant-Garde* at the University of Copenhagen, Nov. 18-22, 2009. Commented in: GŁUCHOWSKA, L.: The „New World” of the Avant-Garde and the „New States” in Central Europe. Perspectives of a Postnational and Postcolonial New Art History. Postface. In: VAN DEN BERG – GŁUCHOWSKA 2013 (see in note 5), pp. 183-212, esp. 197-199.

<sup>6</sup> LAHODA, V.: Migration of Images. Private Collections of Modernism and Avant-Garde and the Search for Cubism in Eastern Europe. In: BÄCKSTRÖM – HJARTARSON 2014 (see in note 1), pp. 187-196.

among other things the Northern European and Scandinavian abbreviations of Cubism as well as its later purist or decorative versions.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile at the Stockholm Conference *The European artistic avant-garde c. 1910 – 30: formations, networks and trans-national strategies* (2012)<sup>8</sup> the research project “Cubizations” – *Re-Visions of Cubism “out of the Centre”. Aesthetics, Functions and Political Connotations* has started and continues at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague. It is going to be summarized in an anthology, also presenting, for example, the Portuguese, Spanish and Croatian reception of Cubism.<sup>9</sup> All these scholarly initiatives have created a context for research into the revision of the history and theory of the Polish idiom of Cubism, whose initial phase is presented in this study.

### “Untouched by Cubism”. The hidden history of Polish Cubism and the search for its reconstruction

In one of the newest of his aforementioned studies in the volume on the Decentring of the Avant-Garde, Vojtěch Lahoda states:

“At first glance, Polish modernist art seems practically untouched by Cubism. However, some of the members of the Formiści (Formists) group were greatly indebted to Cubism, namely Zbigniew and Andrzej Pronaszko, Kazimierz Tomorowicz and Romuald K. Witkowski. His *Landscape* from 1917 shows [...] good knowledge of Picasso’s famous painting *Cottages and Trees* (1908) from Shchukin’s Collection.

Vytautas Kairiūkštis is a complex case, a Lithuanian, who studied painting in Moscow and therefore was familiar with the Russian avant-garde and Cubo-

Futurism, and who was a member of the Polish avant-garde groups *Blok* and *Praesens*. In the early 1920s, he painted a series of Cubist compositions in Vilnius, which were ‘more avant-garde than anything then being painted in Lithuania [...]’. His Oeuvre is discussed in connection with both the Russian avant-garde and Polish and Lithuanian Art.”<sup>10</sup>

To Polish scholars familiar with this period of art, Lahoda’s vision as indicated in the following sentence: “Polish modernist art seems practically untouched by Cubism” must seem astonishing, as the image of “Polish Cubism” is in fact quite rich and complex. However, there are two reasons that justify opinions such as the one quoted above. The first of them is that a systematic overview of the development of this movement in Poland is, paradoxically, still lacking. And the second is the lack of a grounded, up-to-date study on the Polish art of the interwar period in English or any other international language. This has created a situation, in which, several and various local traces of the existence of Cubism in the artistic praxis and theoretical discourse of that time still remain too little known in transnational research. It is also reflected in the statement by Serge Faucherau: “As Russia and the Czech Lands were already interested in Cubism, Poland was quite distanced from this, even if – because of its proximity to Germany, it was well-connected to Paris”.<sup>11</sup> Faucherau mentions on the one hand, that the Pole August Zamoyski, like, for example, the Swede Gan or the Brazilian Anita Malfatti discovered Cubism in Berlin and in the Munich circle of *Der Blaue Reiter*. On the other hand, he registers, that in one of the Cracowian reports on Cubism, in the magazine “Czas” (Time), it was described as an

<sup>7</sup> E.g. BRASLINA, A.: Latvian Modernism in Berlin in the Early 1920s: Impulses and Resonance. In: *Centropa. A journal of central European Architecture and Related Arts*, 12, 2012, No. 3, pp. 286-303; *Geometriline Inimene. Eesti Kunstnikkude Rühm ja 1920.-1930. Aastate Kunstiuuendus/ Geometrical Man. The Group of Estonian Artists and Art Innovation in the 1920s and 1930s*. Ed. L. PÄHLAPUU. Tallin 2012; *Electromagnetic. Modern Art in Northern Europe 1918-1939*. Eds. G. C. FABRE – T. HANSEN – G. E.MØRLAND. Ostfildern 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Conference at the Södertörn University, Sept., 11-13, 2013, organized by Annika Öhrner, David Cottington and Lidia Gluchowska.

<sup>9</sup> Project initiated and led by Lidia Gluchowska and Vojtěch Lahoda, to be continued e.g. during the conference *Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Avant-Garde and Modernism: The Impact of WWI*, Nov. 27-29, 2014, Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague.

<sup>10</sup> LAHODA 2014 (see in note 6), pp. 192-193; MANSBACH, S. A.: *Modern Art in Eastern Europe. From the Baltic to the Balkans*. Cambridge 1999, p. 199.

<sup>11</sup> FAUCHERAU, S.: Die Formen des Kubismus. In: STANISŁAWSKI – BROCKHAUS 1992 (see in note 2), vol. 1, pp. 104-107, esp. 106.



1. Louis Marcoussis alias Ludwik Markus: Still life, three color lithography, study for a painting on glass. Earlier Collection Waléry, Paris. *Der Sturm*, 12, 1921/1922, no. 3, p. 53.

“enemy of the state”. Among the representatives of a “successful combination of Cubist, futurist and expressionist elements” he mentions only the most well-known of them, the Cracowian artists Tytus Czyżewski, Leon Chwistek, Zbigniew Pronaszko and others *Formists*,<sup>12</sup> and claims, that apart from Louis Marcoussis (Ludwik Markus – remark LG)<sup>13</sup>, who lived in France for a long time (comp. fig. 1), the forgotten Xawery Dunikowski was the only real Polish Cubist. He especially describes as Cubist such works by Dunikowski as *The Tombstone of Boleslaw II the Brave* (1917, fig. 2) and his *Selfportrait* (1916/17), which has polychromy similar to that of Archipenko, whose work he surely saw in Paris.

In fact, Dunikowski was only one of the followers of Cubist (often called Expressionist) sculpture in Poland. At least the same attention should be given to the aforementioned August Zamoyski (comp. fig. 3).<sup>14</sup> Other fields of the visual arts, like graphic



2. Xawery Dunikowski: *The Tombstone of Boleslaw II the Brave*, 1917, gypsum, National Museum of Warsaw, Królikarnia Pallais, repr. in: Bogdan Suchodolski, *Geschichte der polnischen Kultur*, Warsaw, 1986, fig. 318.

design, painting, architecture and the applied arts also produced much more interesting examples of Cubist and Cubist-like work. Many of them belong to the international movement of *École de Paris* and were already widely discussed in Polish art history,<sup>15</sup> but less specifically and not with a special pronouncement of this stylistic aspect – in the generally accessible overviews in English.

<sup>12</sup> POLLAKÓWNA, J.: *Formiści*. Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow – Gdańsk 1972; POLLAKÓWNA, J.: W przedpolu formizmu. Polska krytyka artystyczna o współczesnych prądach europejskich. In: *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 28, 1966, No. 1, pp. 62-67.

<sup>13</sup> Comp. GŁUCHOWSKA, L.: Polish and Polish-Jewish Modern and Avant-Garde artists in the „Capital of the United States of Europe”, c. 1910-1930. In: *Centropa. A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts*, 12, 2012, No. 3, pp. 216-233, esp. 218-220.

<sup>14</sup> BIELAWSKI, B.: Rzeźba formistyczna. In: *Ze studiów nad genezą polskiej plastyki współczesnej*. Ed. J. STARZYŃSKI. Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow 1966, pp. 129-152.

<sup>15</sup> Comp. e.g. *École de Paris. Artysta żydowski z Polski w Kolekcji Wojciecha Fibaka*. Leszno 2000; WIERZBICKA, A.: *École de Paris. Pojęcie, środowisko, twórczość*. Warsaw 2004; BRUS-MALINOWSKA, B.: *Eugeniusz Zak 1884-1926*. Warsaw 2004; LIPA, A.: *Gustaw Gwoźdecki 1880-1935. Wystawa monograficzna*. Poznań 2003; *W kręgu École de Paris. Malarze żydowski z Polski*. Eds. J. MALINOWSKI – B. BRUS-MALINOWSKA. Warsaw 2007.



3. August Zamojski: *Head of the poet Jan Kasprówic*, ca. 1918, wood. *Zdrój*, 11, 1920, no. 1-2, p. 107.

Facing up to “Polish Cubism’s” under representation in international research, the following remarks tend to uncover some more aspects of its long life outside France.

### The hybrid image of Cubism in Polish art history

According to one of the most prominent art historical studies of the inter-war period, *Constructors of the World. A History of Radical Modernism in Polish Art* by Andrzej Turowski,<sup>16</sup> the problem of Cubism in Polish art cannot be reduced to its relationship with the Parisian centre.

<sup>16</sup> TUROWSKI, A.: *Budowniczości świata. Z dziejów radykalnego modernizmu w sztuce polskiej*. Cracow 2000, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

Both Cubist and Futurist discourses were involved in modernist ideologies, which in Polish art were situated between two opposite poles: the universalism of a linear historical utopia at one end, and the particularity of the programs and artistic solutions determined by the history of the ‘new’ independent Polish state, restored after World War I – at the other. Turowski states, that when the Constructivists of the group *Blok* created their history in the twenties in close connection with the “international avant-garde”, they tended to see *Formism*, the local version of Cubism as growing out of ‘Polish soil’ on the basis of the romantic-expressionist tradition. The “universalist” Constructivists did not see the contradiction in the fact, that they perceived the Formist experience of “French” Cubism as the beginning of Polish Modernity, but denied their roots in “German” Expressionism. Turowski stresses the fact, that the second generation of Modernists, the Constructivists, needed Cubism to build an image of the evolution of form, while their “ancestors”, the *Formists*, who looked for a ‘permanence of the national style’ delivered to them the argument of the new beginning. In fact the *Formists* were not able to combine the new form with the emotionally experienced (which means not only formal, but also “Expressionist”) national history.<sup>17</sup>

While Faucherau claims that Poland was quite distanced from Cubism, it is worth mentioning, that some Polish artists could have seen Cubist paintings in Paris from about 1910 or even earlier. Canonical Polish art history mostly mentions here the future members of the Cracowian group, the *Formists*: Tytus Czyżewski, Witkacy, Jacek Mierzejewski, Leon Chwistek, Leon Dołżycki and Tymon Niesiołowski, who visited Paris between 1908 and 1914,<sup>18</sup> but mostly omits the artists of two other early modernist groups – *Bunt* (Revolt) and *Young Yiddish*, who were also witnesses to the development of Cubism and became familiar with it in 1909 (Jerzy Hulewicz), 1911 (Stanisław Kubicki, who translated one of the theoretical texts by Georges Braque), 1911/12 (Henryk Berlewski) or no later than in 1913 (Marek Szwarck).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> MALINOWSKI, J.: *Sztuka i nowa wspólnota. Zrzeszenie artystów Bunt 1917-1922*. Wrocław 1991, p. 18; GŁUCHOWSKA, L.: *Avantgarde und Liebe. Margarete und Stanislaw Kubicki 1910-1945*.



4. Tytus Czyżewski: *Composition of forms, multiplanar painting, 1918, original lost, repr. in: Leon Chwistek, Tytus Czyżewski a kryzys formizmu, Cracow 1922, p. 15.*



5. Stanisław Kubicki: *The Rower, linocut, ca. 1918, private Collection, Berlin, repr. in: Die Aktion, 8, 1918, no. 25/26,*

The Polish historiography of art generally emphasizes the fact that among the first Cubist works created in the milieu of Cracow was a project for a church altar for Missionaries in 1912 and the Cubist studies of Tadeusz Makowski, presented at the *Salon des Independants* in Paris in 1911. Perceived to be among the most innovative works of this circle are the multiplanar pictures by Tytus Czyżewski (c.1917, fig. 4), reminiscent of Alexander Archipenko's work now known only from photographs. The main oeuvre by *Formists*, however, was created some years later,

between 1917 and 1921. Since the inter-war period their works have been generally acknowledged<sup>20</sup> and perceived as the roots of the representative style of the newly restored Polish state, the “national style” referred to folk art, the representatives of which, at the International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts (*Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels*), in 1925, in Paris, won as many as 172 prizes, including 36 *Grand Prix*.<sup>21</sup>

What is missing in the narrative of the national historiography of art is the fact, that other circles

Berlin 2007, p. 28; OLSZEWSKI, A. K.: *Henryk Berlewi*. Warsaw 1966, n.p. (3, 9); SZWARC, M.: Posthumous Homage to Jankel Adler. In: *Jankel Adler*. Eds. U. KREMPEL – K. THOMAS. Köln 1985, pp. 59-65, here p. 60.

<sup>20</sup> POLLAKÓWNA 1972, 1966 (see in note 12).

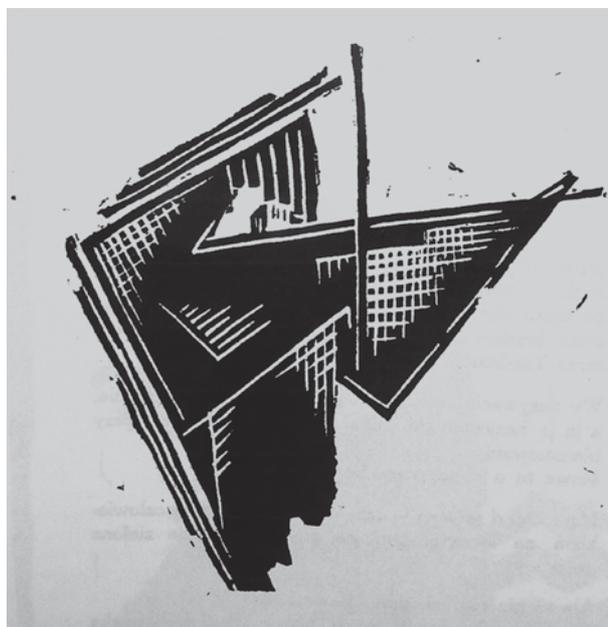
<sup>21</sup> PIOTROWSKI, P.: *Modernity and Nationalism: Avant-Garde*

Art and Polish Independence 1912-1922. In: *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910-1930*. Ed. T. O. BENSON. Cambridge 2002, pp. 312-326, here: 324-325, p. 6; GLUCHOWSKA, L.: “In Poland that means nowhere”. The “foreign war” and the “new country” 1914-1918. Polish art between tradition and the avant-garde. In: *1914. War and modernism*. Eds. G. GERHADE – G. CEBERE. Riga 2015, pp. [1-15], here: 15 (in print).

of early Polish Modernism, although generally associated with an activist and political “German” Expressionism, also generated spectacular examples of the reception of Cubism, not only of the Parisian type but also its idioms created away from the French capital.

In Poznań, as early as 1915, after the first documented exhibition of Stanisław Kubicki, one of its reviews contained ironic comments on his paintings, described as “three cubes by Kubicki”.<sup>22</sup> One spoke often about his links to Cubism *per analogiam* to his name (*Nomen est omen*). However, soon after this exhibition, his *Maria with a Child*, also characterized as Cubist, was highly appreciated in the Poznań press.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, there is no iconographic documentation of these paintings. It is interesting, that although in Polish art history he is mostly described as an Expressionist, in fact his *oeuvre* is much closer to the French *esprit* then to Expressionism. Cubist tendencies combined with the constructivist in Kubicki’s *oeuvre* and are documented even in his last paintings, such as *The Saint and the Animals* (1932) or *Moses in Front of the Burning Bush* (1933/34). And below the caricature related to his exhibition in the Berlin Salon of Independents, the *Juryfreien* in 1931, there was an ironic comment, reflecting his stylistic orientation: “The internal connection between Cubism and nature has been denied – wrongly. The painter Wladimir Kubitzki [!] has succeeded in stamping his spirit onto nature so to speak. A chicken that was forced to look at his works for an entire year in a narrow, cubic cage, has recently laid an octagonal egg, although admittedly with some trouble.”<sup>24</sup> As is already recognizable from the titles of his works, there were several Cubist works by the Poznań artist, which similarly to those of his Prague peers, depict metaphysical or religious content.

Kubicki inspired the style of some of his Poznań peers from the *Bunt* group, among them Jerzy Hulewicz and Władysław Skotarek (comp. fig. 5, 6). Some



6. Władysław Skotarek: *Fiddler*, ca. 1920, private collection Berlin, repr. in: *Zdrój*, 9, 1919, no. 2, p. 29

of their linocuts remain similar to works by Josef Čapek, preserved in the Prague Museum of Cubism and reproduced in several issues of the Berlin magazine *Die Aktion*. Little is known concerning the nature of their artistic contacts, which could explain these similarities. One of the documents related to this is a letter by Stanisław Kubicki written to his wife, Margarete, also a member of the *Bunt* group, from Poznań in June 1918, where he mentions enthusiastically: “The Czech (artists) want to publish a special issue in Prague devoted to *Bunt*. Cracow comes into the movement. Maybe we will organize an exhibition with the Czech, Cracowian and Berlin artists as well as the drawings by children!!!!!!”<sup>25</sup> Not only the German magazine *Die Aktion* but also the Poznań *Zdrój* reproduced one work by Čapek in graphics in July and November 1918 (comp. fig. 7),<sup>26</sup> and Kubicki had at least two linocuts in his collection, today they belong to his family’s private collec-

<sup>22</sup> GŁUCHOWSKA 2007 (see in note 19), p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in ibidem, p. 41, trans. L. G.

<sup>26</sup> ČAPEK, J.: Female head. In: *Zdrój*, 4, 1918, No. 1, p. 21; ČAPEK, J.: Torso. In: *Zdrój*, 5, No. 4, p. 91.



7. Josef Čapek: *Female head*, linocut, ca. 1918, *Zdrój*, 4, 1918, no. 1, p. 21.

tion.<sup>27</sup> Both artists certainly knew each other from the editorial house of *Die Aktion* in Berlin.

Other Berlin magazines, such as the Yiddish-Hebrew *Albatros* reproduced graphic design work by the Łódź group *Young Yiddish* artists, such as Marek Szwarc and, above all, Henryk Berlewi,<sup>28</sup> depicting not, as it was to be already observed in his oeuvre around 1913 (*Pont Neuf*), the Cubist deformation of the landscape, or nearly 10 years later, the Cubo-Constructivist deformation of the human figure (fig. 8), but also geometrical arrangements of Hebrew let-

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> BERLEWI, H.: Cover of the almanac. In: *Albatros*, 2, 1923, No. 3-4., n.p., comp. GŁUCHOWSKA, L.: From Transfer to Transgression. Yiddish Avant-Garde – a Network within the Universal Network of the International Movement or a Complementary One?. In: *Transferts, appropriations et fonctions de l'avant-garde dans l'Europe intermédiaire et du Nord*.



8. Henryk Berlewi: *Thee masks*, 1922, linocut, from: *Albatros* 2, 1923, no. 3-4., n.p., *Maison de la culture yiddish, Bibliothèque Médiem, Paris*.

ters, resembling dynamic, abstract compositions. However, hardly anything can be read about these Polish-German-Czech and Polish-German Cubist episodes in the national canon of art history.

### The theoretical consciousness of Cubism in inter-war Poland

The theoretical consciousness of Cubism, still in a limited circle of artists, was documented only at the turn of 1912/1913. The first press reports of French Cubism reached Poland with a slight delay. The first person to devote more interest to this new tendency in art was Alfred Basler, an art critic living in Paris, who kept in close contact with such theoreticians and critics as Mieczysław Goldberg, Andre Salmon or Guillaume Apollinaire.<sup>29</sup> Already in 1908 Alfred Basler in his relations on the artistic life of

Ed. H. VEIVO. Paris 2012, pp. 143-168, here pp. 159-160; GŁUCHOWSKA 2013 (see in note 5), p. 201, fig. 5.

<sup>29</sup> TUROWSKI 2000 (see in note 16), pp. 11-12; WIERZBICKA, A.: "Nowa Sztuka" w tekstach krytyka sztuki i marszanda Adolfa Baslera. Lata 1907-1913. In: *Dzieje krytyki artystycznej i myśli o sztuce*. Eds. M. GERON – J. MALINOWSKI. Warsaw 2009, pp. 215-229, here p. 216; comp.: WIERZBICKA, A.: *We Francji i w Polsce 1900-1939*. Warsaw 2009, pp. 115-139.

Paris sent to the Polish press, pronounced the role of Cézanne as “the *magnus parens* of the Neoclassicists in painting”.<sup>30</sup> As he stayed in Cracow at the end of 1912, he gave a lecture on Cubism for the students of the Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>31</sup> He introduced the Polish reader to not only little known art movements and names such as Picasso, Derain, Gleizes, but also explained terms such as Cubism, Fauvism, Orphism and Abstraction. In his articles published in Poland, but also in the German *Die Aktion* and in France, he enthusiastically announced the birth of a new style “as important and as spiritual as Gothic” and “like Gothic, born in France”.<sup>32</sup> He claimed, in this style “The mechanism of the perspective, oriented only to achieve the naturalist illusion was replaced by the architectonical rhythm of the composition”.<sup>33</sup>

In 1992 Serge Faucherau wrote that, apart from Russia and in a certain sense, the Czech lands, where people were well-informed about Cubism, the East and North of Europe had first seen the works by Picasso and Braque only at the end of 1912, which means at the moment that Marinetti was organizing a travelling exhibition to several cities. Among the first non-French observers, on whom Cubism made an impression, which they took back home, he mentioned only some Americans (such as Bruce, Weber, Frost, Carles, Benton, Macdonald-Wright, Russel) and Scandinavians (Krogh, Rude, Grünwald, Hjertèn, Scharff, Dardel, Nielsen).<sup>34</sup> In opposition to Faucherau, Basler already 80 years earlier, in 1913, enthusiastically announced in the Polish magazine *Museion* the birth of a “new style”, which after appearing in every country, had differentiated and adjusted itself to the quality, which is given by the genius of each race.<sup>35</sup> And in the Berlin

magazine of the international political and artistic avant-garde *Die Aktion* he honed his statement: “We can see how in Europe and in Germany art schools of identical characteristics have spontaneously appeared. Their general name is Expressionism. It has spread in Germany to such groups as ‘Die neue Sezession’..., ‘Sonderbund’..., ‘Die Brücke’..., in Austria (painters Kokoschka, [Georges] Kars, Feistaer and others), in the Czech Lands (Otakar Kubin, [Emil] Fil[il]la, [Vincent] Benes), in Russia (brothers Burliuk, Vladimir Kandinsky, Jawlensky, Bechtejev, Werefkin) and in Poland (students of [Józef] Pankiewicz – among them the sculptor [of *École de Paris* – LG] Eli Nadelman).<sup>36</sup>

Basler did not yet see the opposition between Cubism and Expressionism. Like many of his contemporaries, he perceived Cubism as a general idea of modernity. He propagated the concept of the existence of a new, universal style, as spiritual as Gothic, – for Basler considered the initiator of modernity to be Paul Cézanne.<sup>37</sup>

Basler presented similar opinions in his reviews of the *Futurists, Cubists and Expressionists* exhibition organized in Lvov/ Lviv by the owner of the Berlin gallery and magazine *Der Sturm*, Herwarth Walden between June and August 1913, where among the twelve artists presented, there were only two declared Cubists, Bohumil Kubišta, whose painting *Murder* was reproduced on the poster, and the future Berlin constructivist film maker, Hans Richter.<sup>38</sup>

In the Polish manifesto language of early Modernism, Cubism was mostly associated with a spiritual orientation in art. In 1917, in the exhibition catalogue of the first show of the Cracowian *Polish Expressionists* (who called themselves *Formists*

<sup>30</sup> BASLER, A.: Salony paryskie (continuation). In: *Literatura i sztuka*, Suppelement, No. 316 to *Nowa Gazeta* 1908, No. 20, p. 2; WIERZBICKA 2009 (see in note 29), p. 218.

<sup>31</sup> *Rydwan*, 1-2, 1912, No. 11, p. 170; TUROWSKI 2000 (see in note 16), p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> WIERZBICKA 2009 (see in note 29), p. 227; Comp.: Formiści. Wystawa III. Katalog. In: CHWISTEK, L.: *Wielość rzeczywistości w sztuce i inne szkice literackie*. Warszaw 1969, p. 98.

<sup>33</sup> BASLER, A.: Stare i nowe konwencje w malarstwie (od Cézanne’a do kubizmu). In: *Krytyka*, 38, 1913, No. 4, pp.

210-220 and No. 5, pp. 260-271; BASLER, A.: Nowa sztuka. In: *Museion*, 3, 1913, No. 12, p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> FAUCHERAU (see in note 11), p. 105.

<sup>35</sup> WIERZBICKA 2009 (see in note 29), p. 227.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 228.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem; TUROWSKI 2000 (see in note 16), p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> WIERZBICKA 2009 (see in note 29), p. 223; WIERZBICKA 2009 (see in note 29, *We Franji*), pp. 129-136.

after 1919), Pronaszko quoted both texts by Adam Mickiewicz and fragments of Jean Metzinger's writings about Cubism. Zbigniew Pronaszko, who had already closely cooperated with Tytus Czyżewski and in 1914 quoted in his article titled *Before the great [national LG] tomorrow* the words by the Polish romantic poet Juliusz Słowacki: "Everything is created by the Spirit and for the Spirit, and nothing exists for a corporal aim".<sup>39</sup>

Similar associations of a return to the Polish romantic tradition and the establishment of a new form were declared by the artists of the *Bunt* group concentrated around the Poznań magazine *Zdrój* (Source). Although they are mostly referred to as the Poznań Expressionists, their first exhibitions were referred to by the press as Cubist and as such, recognized their artistic style in Słowacki's claims against formal radicalism. The first theoretician of the magazine and the "nestor" of the movement, Stanisław Przybyszewski, as he claimed against contacts of the Poznań magazine *Zdrój* and the Berlin *Die Aktion*, he quoted "muttering" [...] about Cubism bossing itself around".<sup>40</sup> An interesting split of meanings is to be observed among the young artists of this milieu. While Kubicki was perceived as the first consistent representative of abstraction in Polish art,<sup>41</sup> he wrote about Cubism as "the most radical step of mankind into metaphysics [...] the desperate liberation of man from optical illusions, [...] the preparation of a pure abstraction"<sup>42</sup>, his friend, Jan Paniński pronounced the rational aspects of the movement, just as earlier Basler had associating it with the particular qualities of the "race". In his article Expressionism and the natural sciences (from the perspective of a visual artist), he claimed, that the new form in the arts similar to the new sciences, tends towards the abandonment of matter. He sees the genesis of this process in Cubism. In his opinion,

it is perceived with great respect in Poland, as it does not appeal to the local emotional states in a direct way. As a product of the intellectual "Western mind" and rationality typical of French art, it is related to mathematics, which for the Eastern Europeans is not as understandable as the emotion of Expressionism. The latter, according to Paniński, directly expresses metaphysical feelings and tends to abstraction and the reduction of figurative objects in the arts.<sup>43</sup>

The ambiguity of the rational-mystical connotations of Cubism in Polish theoretical reflections corresponded to the national connotations of this style. Generally appreciated as "classicist" it was appreciated in the Francophile public opinion of the intelligentsia, while "chaotic" and politically radical "German" Expressionism, had been, in opposition to it, neglected as a "foreign" set of aesthetics of the occupant of a large part of the Polish territories.

#### Cubism as the Mystified Genealogy of the Polish Avant-Garde

Andrzej Turowski claims that in the early phase of Modernism, the concept of Cubism as a continuation of Polish or European modern art, at first the romantic-symbolic and then romantic-expressionist art, was deeply rooted in national ideology. In these contexts the coexistence and relations between Expressionism and Cubism were still non-antagonist. Characteristic of this is the early cooperation of the Poznań (expressionist) group *Bunt*, artists of the Jewish movement *Young Yiddish* in Łódź and finally the Cracowian group *Formists* (who, as already mentioned, called themselves *Polish Expressionists* until 1919). A clear documentation of the links between the Poznań and Cracowian artists was, for example, the prospect of the magazine *Zdrój* of 1917 in which the representatives of both milieus (Adam Bederski,

<sup>39</sup> PRONASZKO, Z.: Przed wielkim jutrem. In: *Rydwani*, 3, 1914, No. 1, pp. 125-129.

<sup>40</sup> PRZYBYSZEWSKI, S.: Letter to Jerzy Hulewicz, Munich, before 10.02.1918 (No. 1175). In: PRZYBYSZEWSKI, S.: *Listy III*. Ed. S. HELSZTYŃSKI. Wrocław 1954, pp. 33-34, cited and transl. into German in: GŁUCHOWSKA, L: *Polnische Künstler und Der Sturm: Enthusiasten und Polemiker. Nationale und transnationale Narrative des postkolonialen Avantgarde- und Modernediskurses*. In: *Der Sturm – Zentrum*

*der Avantgarde*. Vol. 2. Eds. A. von HÜLSEN-ESCH – G. FINCKH. Wuppertal 2012, pp. 455-482, here p. 461.

<sup>41</sup> GŁUCHOWSKA 2007 (see in note 19), p. 205.

<sup>42</sup> KUBICKI, S.: Miscellanea. In: *Zdrój*, 6, 1919, No. 1, p. 52.

<sup>43</sup> PANIENSKI, J.: Ekspresjonizm i nauki przyrodnicze (ze stanowiska plastyka). In: *Zdrój*, 12, 1920, No. 2, pp. 47-48.

Margarete and Stanislaw Kubicki, Władysław Skotarek, Stefan Stasiak, Stefan Szmaj, Jan J. Wroniecki as well as August Zamoyski [associated with both groups], Leon Chwistek and Tymon Niesiołowski) were mentioned as its founders. It is significant that all of them were excluded from the *Foreword* published in the first issue in October 1917 to the advantage of the older generation of writers and visual artists.<sup>44</sup> It was only during the third exhibition and with its new name that the Cracowian group distanced itself from the ‘peculiarities’ and ‘nihilism’ of German Expressionism.<sup>45</sup>

Andrzej Turowski claims, that at the turn of 1919 and 1920 Cubism in Polish art started to function in opposition to Expressionism. After Poland regained its national independence, ideologies of construction and organization formulated in terms of stylistic-decorative categories, became popular, especially because their roots were sought in the “authenticity” of the local folk “primitivism” in art. In this sense since 1920, paradoxically, preferring Cubism as opposed to Expressionism “Polish Cubists” lost their legitimacy. “Modernity” was guaranteed by including it in the Polish literary tradition – the romantic, symbolic and even Expressionist. It was the consequence of the universalization of the movement. As a consequence “Polish Cubists”, who wanted to keep the tradition, even in the folklorist version and at the same time stay modern, had to take another name – *Formists*, which took them away from the opposition between Apollonian Cubism and Dionysian, literary expressionism. In this way they found the synthesis of Polish Modernity in the “rhythmically-primitive style”.<sup>46</sup>

The opposition between Cubism and Expressionism became the main category of avant-garde history.

In 1924 *Blok* mentioned Cubists and Suprematists as its collaborators, while Expressionists were omitted. In 1926 he wrote in *Zwrotnica* (Switch): “The formal analysis leads us to the conclusion that Cubism is an enrichment, a flourishing of the pictorial form, while expressionism is a fall or decay”.<sup>47</sup>

Since then the avant-garde has created its own progressive history with a clearly defined starting point, in which it has distanced itself from Expressionism and presented its story as free of all ambiguities. Its final aim was supposed to be the social and aesthetic unity of art and life.

*Formism*, which at the beginning was criticized and then forgotten, should later confirm the modernity of Polish art and its Universalist roots. “The beginning of modern art in Poland was Formism” – wrote Władysław Strzemiński in his history of art written in 1934. “The main idea of Formism was pure form. It was the difference between *Formism* and other contemporary movements. And this allowed its followers in the future such a relatively easy transition from figurative to abstract art.”<sup>48</sup>

As Andrzej Turowski summarizes in his fundamental study on Polish radical Modernism, the constructivists needed this very evident mystification to justify their own, “logical” evolution. In fact, *Formists* looking for expression and style, and constructivists, who needed Formism because of its pro-Cubist orientation, did not have much in common. However, the avant-garde bipolarized model of the development of art in the 20th century was born at the moment of the twilight of the Cubo-Expressionist unity.<sup>49</sup>

This mystification has had its consequences for the deformation of the national, and in consequence, also international, historiography of art, which advantaged Cracow and *Formists*, as the initiators of

<sup>44</sup> *Zdrój. Prospekt*. Poznań 1917, p. 2; PRZYBYSZEWSKI, S.: Słowo wstępne. In: *Zdrój*, 1, 1917, No. 1, pp. 1-6.

<sup>45</sup> TUROWSKI 2000 (see in note 16), p. 14.

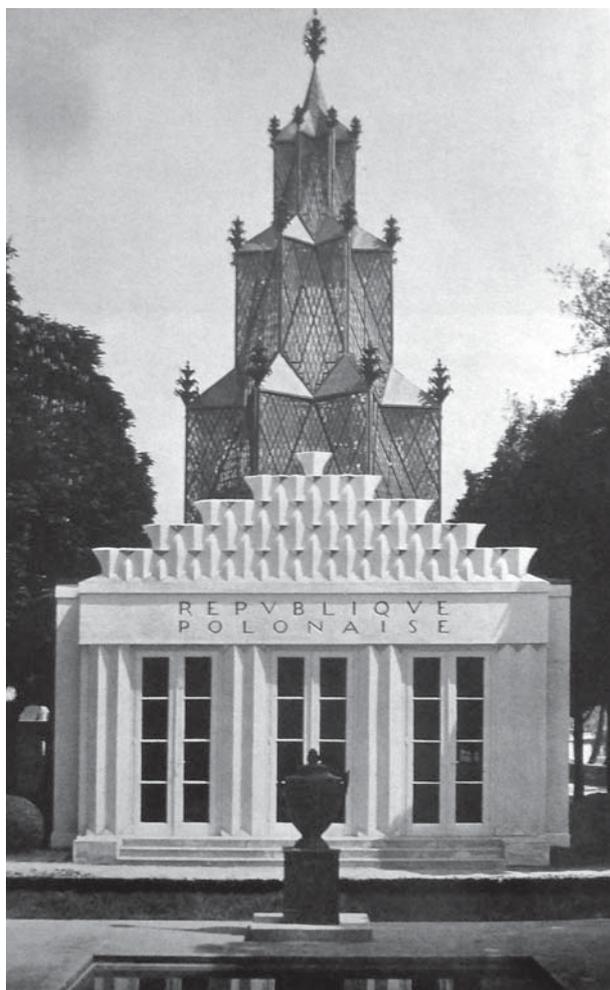
<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> STRZEMIŃSKI, W.: Michał Sobecki – malarstwo doby ostatniej. In: *Zwrotnica*, 5, 1926, No. 8, p. 214; comp. STRZEMIŃSKI, W.: O sztuce rosyjskiej – notatki. In: *Zwrotnica*, 1, 1922, No. 3, pp. 79-82, trans. as: STRZEMIŃSKI, W.: Notes

on Russian Art (trans. Kemp-Welch). In: *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*. Eds. T. O. BENSON – E. FORGÁCS. Cambridge – Mass. London 2002, pp. 272-280.

<sup>48</sup> STRZEMIŃSKI, W.: Sztuka nowoczesna w Polsce. In: *O sztuce nowoczesnej*. Eds. J. BRZEKOWSKI – L. CHWISTEK – P. SMOLIK. Łódź 1934, p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> TUROWSKI 2000 (see in note 16), p. 15.



9. Józef Czajkowski: Polish Pavillion at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1925, foto from: Wojciech Włodarczyk, *Kunst in Polen in den Jahren 1918 – 2000, Warsaw 2000*, p. 26.

“Polish” Modernity – as the initiators of Modernity in Poland.

In fact, however, first of all – as documented above – the artistic production of all Polish early avant-garde groups was not purely Cubist, but actually rather hybrid – Cubo-Expressionist or Futuro-Dadaist. Secondly – in fact – there were also plenty of modern, Cubist works in the oeuvre of the groups *Bunt* and *Young Yiddish* generally perceived as “expressionist” and therefore philo-Germanic,

which due to the Polish German antagonism and the leftist radicalism of the November revolution in Germany were seen as a threat to Polish independence, marginalized in both contemporary art reviews and (in consequence) also in Polish art history of the First World War and inter-war periods. The oeuvre of these artistic groups is still waiting for revision in the international art-historical overviews of the interwar period.

### “Decorative Cubism” in Polish Architecture and Applied Arts. The Triangle of Vienna, Prague and Cracow

Not only is the context of canonical art history full of gaps and misinterpretations, which give an advantage to the French orientation of art and art history. In opposition to the mainstream scholarly publications devoted to the Polish Architecture of the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the monographer of the expressive-decorative style in Polish architecture, the School of Cracow, Andrzej Olszewski, seeks the origin of the crystalline structures of the Polish national style in architecture (rooted in the local folklore) especially the ‘Zakopane style’ in the spiritual projects and realizations of the German architects such as Bruno Taut, the Luckhardt brothers and Hans Scharoun. Analysing the main architectural works of this period, such as the Warsaw School of Economics designed by Jan Koszyc-Witkiewicz (1925 – 28), he denies: “The conscious usage of the Formist programs, even less of Cubist rules, as it was perceived by the French critics” in Polish praxis.<sup>50</sup> His conception however seems to be quite one-sided. Upon closer inspection of the form of the buildings he comments on, one has to come to the conclusion, that the German influence could not have been the only inspiration of their architects. And even if Olszewski is right, claiming, that it was not Parisian Cubism and its theory that were the deciding sources for the Polish expressive-decorative style, was the source of that style, however, not rooted in other non-Parisian idioms of Cubism? Doubts appear, while comparing the examples of the Polish national style, derived mainly

<sup>50</sup> OLSZEWSKI, A. K.: Nurt dekoracyjno-ekspresyjny w architekturze polskiej w latach 1908-1925 (tzw. „Szkoła

Krakowska”). In: STARZYŃSKI 1966 (see in note 14), pp. 71-111, here pp. 82-87.

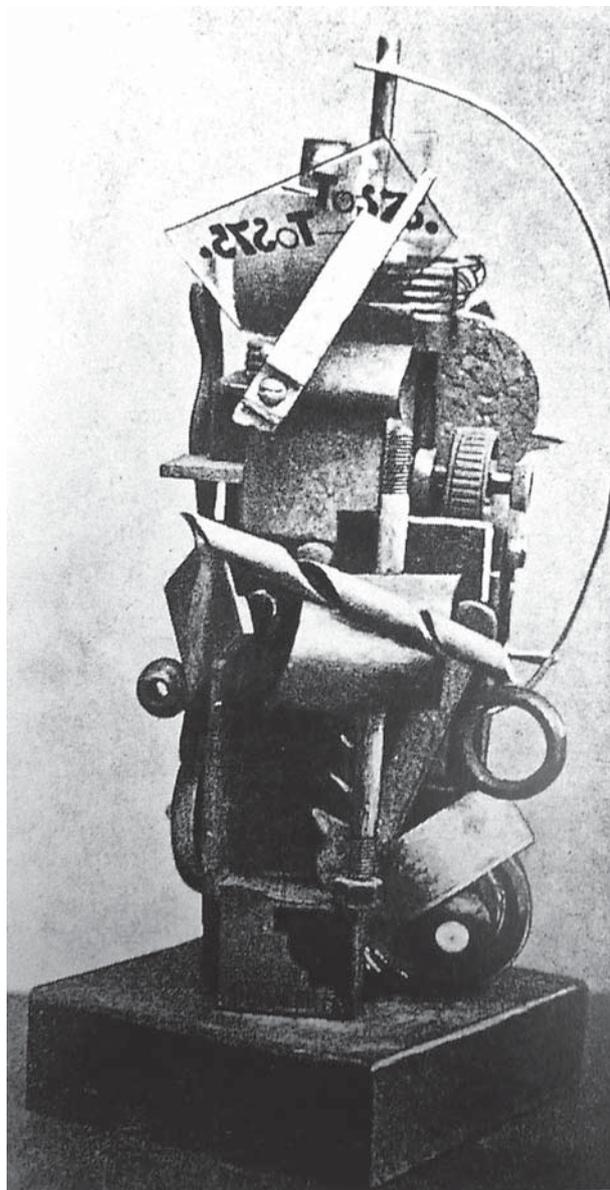
from the Polish folklore of the Zakopane region and presented first with great success at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris in 1925 (fig. 9), which included examples of architecture, sculpture and applied arts – with the artistic production from Prague, containing above all Cubism in architecture as well as in the ceramics of the members of *Artel* or the former *Prague Workshops* (e.g. by Pavel Janák, Vlastislav Hofman or Josef Gočár).<sup>51</sup> Their formal comparison is, let us suppose, that one cannot at least exclude here genetic interrelations between them, especially when one bears in mind a map of the region, where Polish, Czech and Austrian territories were for decades part of the same political organism. Studies on the common ‘Corporate Identity’ of the Cracow society *Sztuka* (Art), the *Wiener Sezession*, and the Prague *Manes* as the Central European Artistic Triangle, which was active within the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the Great War of 1914 – 1918, as well as the dualistic formal language of the applied arts in the circle of the *Wiener Werkstätte*, *Artel* and the Prague Workshops had started several years prior, but still the desire to go on continued. The research into this field was undertaken from the point of view that three different national art histories were able to effectively contribute to the development of knowledge of the Cubist-like forms in the architecture and applied arts of the Western part of the post-Austro-Hungarian region.

#### Belated, “rational” Cubism?

In this artificial overview of the history of Cubism in Poland, only some crucial aspects of the gaps in its historiography can be mentioned. One of them is the question of the “belated rational Cubism” in the oeuvre of the artists later known as Constructivists, among them Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński. Among several unknown works of this kind some were preserved through photographic documentation, as in *The Structure* by Kobro (1920, fig. 10).

On the other hand another phenomenon related to Cubism is to be observed in this milieu.

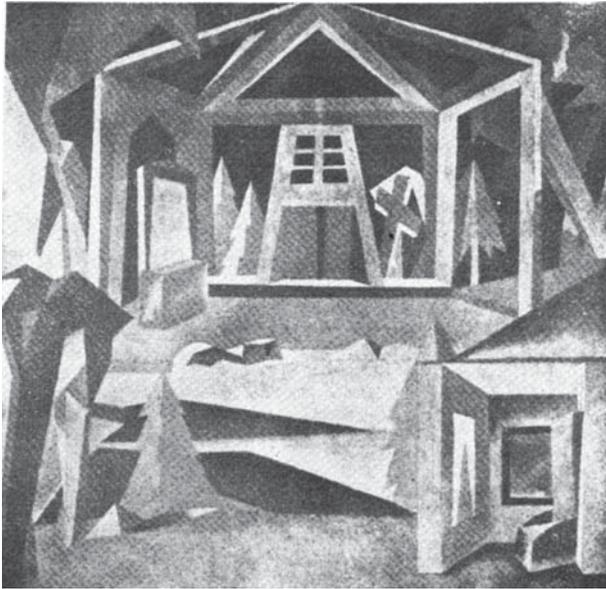
Serge Faucherau writes about it in terms of the popularization of purism in the first part of the 20s, which he observes above all among Polish artists such as Andrzej Rafałowski, Wanda Chodasiewicz-



10. Katarzyna Kobro: *The Structure*, assemblage, original lost, repr. From K. Katarzyna Kobro/ Władysław Strzemiński, *Kompozycja przestrzeni. Obliczenia rytmu czasoprzestrzennego*. Warsaw 1931, n.p.

Grabowska, for a short time also Strzemiński and Henryk Stażewski as well as the Lithuanian Vytautas Kairiūkštis and Romans Suta from Lettland.<sup>52</sup> And, although in the book *Kunst-Ismen* published by El'

<sup>51</sup> Comp. e.g. *1909-1925 Kubismus in Prag*. Eds. J. SVESTKA – T. VLČEK. Stuttgart 1991, pp. 99, 31, 202-209.



11a. Feliks Krassowski: Design for the theatre set for the performance of a drama *Dziady* (*Ancestors*), written by Adam Mickiewicz.



11b. Feliks Krassowski: "Wachsende Szene" (*Increasing scene*). *Der Sturm*, 17, 1926, no. 3, p. 44, 45.

Lissitzky and Hans Arp in 1925 Cubism was already presented as a new art history, until the mid 1930s there were still numerous examples of that style in use, not only in the painting, but also in the field of theatre set design, for example by Feliks Krassowski. The latter were reproduced in 1926 in the Cracow magazine *Zwrotnica* and slightly later in the Berlin *Der Sturm* by Herwarth Walden (fig. 11).<sup>53</sup>

This late appearance of Cubism coexists in the Polish context with the ambiguous and late debate on that style on the occasion of the Exhibition of Kasimir Malevich (Kazimierz Malewicz, the heir of a Polish family of nobles) in Warsaw in 1927, organized by the Warsaw representatives of Constructivism and Functionalism. The debate, however, was in fact theoretically already prepared some years earlier.

In his aforementioned article in the Poznań magazine *Zdrój* Jan Panieński described the new art as non-figurative. That term was used in Russia by Malevich in his brochure *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Painterly Realism* (1915) as well as in his circle. The text by Panieński is thus probably the first document of the early reception of Suprematism in Poland.<sup>54</sup>

Other early presentations of a post-Cubist art theory and art criticism appeared in Warsaw in the international milieu of the Yiddish avant-garde.<sup>55</sup> Already in 1921 El Lissitzky, visiting the Polish capital on his way to Berlin, wrote in the Yiddish magazine *Ringen*: "Cubism began to destroy the basis, the object. [...] A world had been destroyed. Its elements were gathered together in a new painterly structure

<sup>52</sup> KRZYSZTOFOROWICZ-KOZAKOWSKA, S.: Sztuka – Wiener Sezession – Manes. The Central European Art Triangle. In: *Artibus et Historiae*, 27, 2006, No. 53, pp. 217-259; SELDEN, B.: *Das dualistische Prinzip : zur Typologie abstrakter Formensprache in der angewandten Kunst, dargestellt am Beispiel der Wiener Werkstätte, des Artel und der Prager Kunstwerkstätten*. Munich 1991.

<sup>53</sup> FAUCHERAU 1992 (see in note 11), p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> WALDEN, H.: Das Theater. In: *Der Sturm*, 17, 1926, No. 3, pp. 22-44, here pp. 44-45; Comp. GLUCHOWSKA, L.: Polish and Polish-Jewish Modern and Avant-Garde artists in the „Capital of the United States of Europe”, c. 1910-1930. In: *Centropa. A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts*, 12, 2012, No. 3, pp. 216-233, here pp. 227-228.

<sup>55</sup> MALEVICH, K.: *Écris*. Ed. A. B. NAKOV. Paris 1975, pp. 198, 200, 201.

of straight lines, curves, surfaces, extension, colour, and texture.”<sup>56</sup>

Shortly later, 1922 – 23, his follower, Henryk Berlewi, in fact in his review of the International Exhibition of Art in Düsseldorf announced the end of Cubism and the beginning of the triumphal parade of Constructivism in Eastern and Western Europe, however in his later report on the Russian Exhibition in Berlin, he still demonstrated his interest in the late-Cubist and post-Cubist tendencies in art.<sup>57</sup>

In the context of Malevich’s exhibition in Warsaw, the artist published an article on the “Deformation in Cubism” in the Polish magazine *Forma* (Form), and one of the reviewers of his exhibition saw in his Suprematist works, the top, the highest level of Cubism (supreme), and perceived the juxtapositions of surfaces and blocks as similar to musical juxtapositions of tones. “That way they evoke somewhat objectless and therefore pure artistic emotions”.<sup>58</sup> That particular emotionalism of Malevich’s as well as Strzemiński’s works (the latter created in the 1930s) could be seen as clear proof of the false and inconsequence in the mystified genealogy of Polish Constructivism as rooted in Cubism.

### The “universe of Cubism” in the Perspective of the Post-National Art History?

While considering some aspects of the history of the Polish idiom of Cubism, which has not been written yet, its non-existence for over a hundred years appears paradoxical. At the same time the question

comes up, whether now the challenge of art history is to write a new history of the long running Cubism of Poland or rather the international history of the ‘universe of Cubism’. In any case, one first of all needs clear criteria to select and analyse the material. It seems important to particularly respect new insights documenting the traces of the horizontal art history.

On the one hand the theoretical framework is necessary to include or exclude certain artistic phenomena from the canonical period of the existence of the style and the later forms “out of the canon”. The other precondition would be to answer if it is possible, in the world of the hybrid, artistic forms outside of the art ‘centres’ to distinguish between the form and content of the “national”/ “local” forms of Cubism. On the margins of this survey there still appears the question of how far the self-identification of artists and the terminological debates of the pre World War II period are relevant for historical analysis.

Later, we come to the question of the traces of cultural transfer, as well as the question of an evaluation of the artistic production away from Paris. Should it be seen as an imitation – as it was given in the ‘old’ art history or as emulation? The last fundamental question in this context would be: To what extent is re-construction of the new history of Cubism possible at all?

Perhaps instead of the synthesis for which some art historians would probably wish, only fragments or an anthology can be written.

<sup>56</sup> GŁUCHOWSKA, L.: Station Warsaw. Malevich, Lissitzky and the two traces of cultural transfer between „East” and „West”. In: *Centropa. A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts*, 13, 2013, No. 3 pp. 241-257, here 248f.

<sup>57</sup> LISSITZKY, E.: Das goywer zayn di kunst. In: *Ringen*, 1, 1921/22, No. 10, pp. 32-34; trans. In: BENSON - FORGÁCS 2002 (see in note 47), pp. 184-186, here pp. 184-185.

<sup>58</sup> BERLEWI, H.: Międzynarodowa Wystawa w Düsseldorfie. In: *Nasz Kurier* 1922, No. 209 (Aug. 7), p. 2, trans. as: International Exhibition in Düsseldorf. In: BENSON – FORGÁCS 2002 (see in note 47), pp. 397-399; BERLEWI, H.: Jidische kunstler in der hayntiger rusischer kunst. In: *Milgroim*, 2, 1923, No. 3, p. 13; Comp. GŁUCHOWSKA 2012 (see in note 28), pp. 166-167.

<sup>59</sup> MALEWICZ, K.: Deformacja w kubizmie. In: *Forma*, 1, 1929, No. 12, pp. 254-255.

## V tieni oficiálneho diskurzu: smerom k revízií dejín a teórie poľskej verzie kubizmu

### Resumé

Keďže prehľad kubistických tendencií v poľskom umení nebol doposiaľ spracovaný, vo svetovej umeleckej historiografii neoprávnenne prevláda názor, že Poľsko ostalo „kubizmom prakticky nedotknuté“. Na druhej strane, väčšina publikácií priame vplyvy francúzskeho kubizmu na vývoj tohto umeleckého smeru v ostatných krajinách zväčša preceňuje, za čo môže najmä reputácia Paríža a tradičný obdiv ku všetkému francúzskemu vo viacerých umeleckých kruhoch „mimo centra“.

K vytvoreniu lokálnej podoby tohto nového medzinárodného vizuálneho jazyka v skutočnosti prispeli aj ostatné tradície. Kubizmus prenikol na „periférie“ čiastočne aj cez iné kanály ako len prostredníctvom osobných kontaktov alebo skúseností umelcov zo strednej, východnej, južnej alebo severnej Európy, ktorí navštívili Paríž okolo roku 1909. Okrem priamych impulzov sa kubizmus šírila aj prostredníctvom súkromných zbierok, napr. v Prahe alebo Moskve, alebo prostredníctvom reprodukcí a recenzií v odborných periodikách (napríklad nemecké časopisy *Die Aktion* a *Der Sturm*).

Pokiaľ ide o kubizmus, poľská (a následne aj svetová) kunsthistoria pripisuje hlavnú úlohu krakovskej skupine *Formiści* (Formisti). Domáca umelecká historiografia vytvorila dojem, že kubistické tendencie v tvorbe jej členov sa datujú už do čias osobnej inšpirácie francúzskym a talianskym umením a umeleckou teóriou, zatiaľ čo skupiny ako *Bunt* (Revolta) a *Young-yiddish* podľa zjednodušených opisov ovplyvnil najmä nemecký expresionizmus, ktorý bol politicky radikálny a umelecky „chaotický“. Vplyv iných medzinárodných trendov „nového umenia“ na ich umeleckú tvorbu sa stále prehliada.

Podobne aj vo všeobecných prehľadoch umeleckého života prvých troch desaťročí 20. storočia nie je dostatočne zrejmé, že kubizmus sa len zriedka šírila vertikálne – z Paríža na perifériu (v prípade Poľska to tiež znamená do ruských, rakúsko-uhorských a pruských provincií, keďže až do roku 1918 ako

samostatný štát neexistovalo), ale oveľa častejšie prostredníctvom horizontálnych kontaktov: viaceré informácie o kubizme sa dostali na územie Poľska napríklad cez Moskvu, Prahu, Berlín alebo Mníchov.

Dôsledkom takýchto zjednodušení je, že domáca aj svetová umelecká historiografia zväčša opomína kubistické tendencie nielen v tvorbe poľských umeleckých skupín mimo Krakova, ale aj v umeleckej praxi predstaviteľov umeleckých zoskupení, ktoré sa neskôr preslávili ako konštruktivistické, napríklad Katarzyna Kobro, Władysław Strzemiński alebo Henryk Berlewi. Na druhej strane sa často zabúda, že v domácom kontexte sa kubizmus v dôsledku pomerne neskorého prijatia nenachádza v čistej podobe. Namiesto toho možno hovoriť predovšetkým o neantagonistickej koexistencii dvoch hybridov „nového umenia“ – kuboexpresionizmu a futuro-dadaizmu.

Prijatie kubizmu a ostatných moderných tendencií po druhej svetovej vojne ovplyvnili dve veľké mystifikácie radikálneho aj tradičného krídla poľskej umeleckej historiografie medzivojnového obdobia. Konštruktivisti hľadajúci lokálne korene moderny uprednostňovali *Formistov* ako prívržencov racionálnej „novej formy“ a ich formálne experimenty odvodzovali od emocionálneho chápania národnej ideológie a umenia. Paradoxne, tí mali spočiatku pomerne blízko k neoromantickým a metafyzickým tendenciám, čo sa odrazilo v pôvodnom názve skupiny *Poľskí expresionisti*, ktorý používali v rokoch 1917 – 1919. Vypustenie expresionistických asociácií z názvu skupiny malo formálne aj národné dôvody. Parížsky „klasicizmus“ bol obdivovaný viac ako „nemecký“ výraz. Umenie expresionizmu bolo opomínané tak z dôvodu niekdajšej rakúsko-uhorskej a pruskej okupácie Poľska, ako aj kvôli revolučnej orientácii umeleckého prostredia v susedných krajinách v čase vzniku nezávislého „nového poľského štátu“.

Druhá mystifikácia poľskej umenovedy bola produktom oficiálnej kultúrnej politiky. *Formistov*

označila za predchodcov poľského národného štýlu v duchu folkloristickej secesie, kým úlohu ostatných, multikultúrne, multietnicky a univerzálne zameraných skupín ako *Bunt* alebo *Young-yiddish* marginalizovala, čím ich pripravila o uznanie ako predchodcov moderny v Poľsku.

Z rovnakých dôvodov sa odborná umenovedná literatúra posledných 20. rokov zoširoka vyjadrovala k vplyvu predstaviteľov Parížskej školy (*École de Paris*) na umelecký život v Poľsku, zatiaľ čo prehľady alebo prípadové štúdie vplyvov pochádzajúcich z ostatných umeleckých centier prakticky chýbajú. K zabudnutým aspektom dejín poľského a svetového umenia, ktoré vyžadujú podrobnejší výskum, patria napríklad poľsko-české kubisticko-expresionistické vzťahy, ktoré nadviazali členovia skupiny *Bunt* (predovšetkým Kubicki a Zamoyski) cez Berlín a Mníchov, alebo vzájomné vplyvy v rámci stredoeurópskeho kultúrneho trojuholníka Viedeň – Praha – Krakov. Tie sú síce vo vizuálnom jazyku

architektúry a umeleckého priemyslu ľahko rozpoznateľný, najmä ak porovnáme napríklad poľský národný štýl (art deco), český kubizmus a tvorbu *Wiener Werkstätte*, ale stále sa podceňujú, zatiaľ čo jednotlivé analýzy uprednostňujú horizontálne vzťahy s parížskym „centrom“. V dôsledku toho potom stále chýbajú aj podrobnejšie štúdie, ktoré by sa venovali úlohe, akú pri zavádzaní a šírení prekubistických a prekonštruktivistických tendencií v Európe zohrali umelecké kontakty v rámci rakúsko-uhorskej monarchie.

Štúdia predstavuje menej známe aspekty kubizmu v Poľsku v oblasti umeleckej teórie a praxe, ktoré zostávajú v tieni hlavného prúdu tendenčne zdokumentovaného v kanonizovaných dejinách umenia. Týmto spôsobom prispieva k revízii obmedzeného pohľadu na umelecké postupy a k opätovnému zmapovaniu stôp kultúrnej výmeny a transformácie umeleckých a ideologických vzorov medzi „európskymi perifériami“.

## Cubist Influence in Georgia: Cubo-Futurism, Kirill Zdanevich, David Kakabadze

Nana KIPIANI – Bela TSIPURIA

How close to, or how far from Cubism could Georgia and its capital Tbilisi be in the 1910s?

This country in the Caucasus is considered to be on the boundary between Europe and Asia, and its membership of any wider cultural integrity has always been an issue of internal cultural choice on the one hand, and external political pressure on the other.<sup>1</sup> Georgian culture has been formed under the strong influence of the Orthodox Christian tradition, and the heritage from the medieval centuries is very tangible here. The uniqueness of Georgian culture has been developed based on the nation's strong sense of self-identification. Throughout history various politically and culturally powerful super-states surrounded the country, and the nation has developed a deep attachment to its own religion, language, and literature in order to preserve its national identity. While global cultural styles, dominating at certain historic periods, were adopted by the Georgians, they were modified or, in some cases, just certain principles were selected and adapted to the local representational tradition.

The end of the 1910s was a period full of political, as well as cultural changes, and full of action in

Georgia. While the country was being established as a free state after a century under the Russian Empire, cultural and political processes were clearly oriented toward Europe. The free Georgian Democratic Republic was proclaimed in May 1918, but existed only for a few years, till February 1921; however, these few years of the Georgian Democratic Republic became a strong demonstration of Georgia's will to build a European-style democracy and European-style Modernist/Avant-garde culture, and become a part of European cultural and political integrity. The intense process of cultural modernization, started few years earlier, was related to the adoption of European Modernism. In these years, from the periphery of the Russian Empire, Tbilisi indeed developed into a new Modernist/Avant-garde topos, a new multicultural centre, which united poets and artist from Georgia and Transcaucasia, as well as from Russian capitals, as they were escaping from Revolution and civil war and coming to a safe heaven, where they could continue their artistic activities. This period of intense multicultural activities is known as the Tbilisi avant-garde.<sup>2</sup>

From 1915 Georgian poetry was dominated by Symbolists: the group of *Blue Horns*, as well as Galak-

<sup>1</sup> The relations with the Ancient Greek and Roman cultures, as well as the Eastern world are visible in Georgian history before Christ. With the adoption of Orthodox Christianity in the early fourth century Georgia came close to Byzantine cultural integrity; in the late medieval centuries the dominance of Iran and Ottoman Turkey brought some Eastern influence; with the aspirations of preserving statehood and Christianity the Georgian nation sought some support from the West, but ended up becoming a part of the Russian Empire in 1801. Georgia restored its sovereignty with the fall of the Empire,

but kept it only for a few years, from 1918 to 1921, till the annexation by Bolshevik Russia.

<sup>2</sup> The avant-garde period of Tbilisi is studied, with a special focus on the Russian cultural activities between 1918 and 1921, in *L'avanguardia a Tiflis: Studi, ricerche, cronache, testimonianze, documenti*. Eds. MAGAROTTO, L. – MARZADURI, M. – PAGANI-CESA, G. Venezia 1982; NIKOLSKAIA, T.: "Fantasticheskiĭ gorod": *Russkaia kul'turnaia zhizn' v Tbilisi (1917–1921)* ["Fantastic City": Russian Cultural Life in Tbi-

tion Tabidze (1892 – 1959) – ‘the king of poets’, as pronounced by his fellow poets – were announcing the rebirth of Georgian poetry and the Georgian nation, praising French Symbolism, and applying the principles of Symbolist aestheticism and philosophy. The *Blue Horns* members believed that the renewal of Georgian culture should be started with Symbolism, explaining their choice by the fact that Symbolism was the ground for all other Modernist/avant-garde movements, and even Futurism “could not reject the aesthetic achievements of Symbolism”.<sup>3</sup> Although declaring their loyalty to Symbolism, the *Blue Horns* group was eagerly hosting Russian avant-gardists in exile, and cooperating with them in joint artistic projects: various publications, artistic soirees, café gatherings. As Harsha Ram observes: “One is thus tempted to view the *Blue Horn* poets less as exclusively Symbolist or even Futurist but as writers attempting to provide Georgian literary culture with an abbreviated history of modernism as a whole”.<sup>4</sup>

Alongside with Georgian Symbolists, the poets and artists with different ethnic backgrounds, coming from Russia, many of them having some roots in Georgia, were bringing to Tbilisi their interests in various styles. From the avant-garde movements, interest in Futurism was most strongly represented, along with Dadaism. Through combining the poetic principles of these two, and developing the poetry of Zaum the Futurist group 41° was launched in Tbilisi. One of the major figures, of Russian Futurism and Zaum poetry, Aleksey Kruchenykh (1886 – 1968), formed the group together with Russian poet Igor Terentiev (1892 – 1937), the Polish-Georgian brothers, poet and artist Ilya Zdanevich (aka Iliazd, 1874 – 1975) and artist Kirill Zdanevich (1894 – 1969), Georgian artist Lado Gudriashvili (1896 – 1980), Armenian poet Kara-Darvish (1872

– 1930), and Polish artist Zigmund Valishevsky (1897 – 1936). Due to the presence of Kruchenykh, who had been a member in the 1910s of Russian group *Gilea*, which identified itself as Cubo-Futurist, the group 41° would also have links with this aestheticism. Although the main poetic principle practiced by the group was now Zaum, shared by poets of the group, Kirill Zdanevich was the figure most clearly associated with Cubo-Futurism,<sup>5</sup> or even pure Cubism. Kirill Zdanevich (1892 – 1969) was a Georgian-Polish avant-garde artist, stage designer, one of the founders of the Georgian and Russian so called Cubo-Futurism, creator of “orchestral painting” that is the variety in visual art of Ilya Zdanevich’s “Vsyiochestvo” (Everythingness) concept. The brothers Kirill and Ilya were born in Georgia into the family of a Polish father, French teacher, and a Georgian mother, music teacher, from the Georgian noble family of Gamkrelidze. In 1900 Kirill graduated from the Tbilisi gymnasium and studied at Fogel’s and Sklifosovsky’s classes of drawing and painting. In 1911 – 1918 he continued his studies at the St. Petersburg Art Academy. In 1912 he joined the Russian Artists group “ОСЛИННИЙ ХВОСТ” [Donkey’s Tail] and participated in its so called Neo-primitivism exhibitions together with the artists Mikhail Larionov, Natalya Goncharova, Vladimir Tatlin, Kazimir Malevich and others. In 1912 while spending his holidays in his homeland, in Tbilisi together with his brother, Ilya Zdanevich, and Mikhail Le Dantue he discovered the paintings of the great Georgian artist Niko Pirosmanishvili and started collecting them. Later he presented these paintings to the Tbilisi State Museum of Art and wrote a monograph on them. In 1913 Kirill Zdanevich left for Paris and arranged an exhibition at Alexander Arkhipenko’s studio. In 1914 he was

lisi, 1917–21]. Moscow 2000; NIKOLSKAIA, T.: *Avangard i okrestnosti* [The Avant-Garde and Its Environs]. St. Petersburg 2002; MARKOV, V.: *Russian Futurism: A History*. Berkeley and Los Angeles 1968. pp. 336-337; JANACEK, G.: *Zaum: The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism*. San Diego 1996, chapter: “Zaum in Tiflis, 1917 – 1921”, pp. 223-289.

<sup>3</sup> Titsian Tabidze, the leader of the Blue Horns emphasized this in his programme essay “With the Blue Horns”. TABIDZE, T.: Tsisperi Qantsebit. In: *Tsisperi Qantsebi* [The Blue Horns], 1916, No. 1, pp. 21-26; 2 (1916), No. 1, pp. 20-26, here p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> RAM, H.: Modernism on the Periphery: Literary Life in Postrevolutionary Tbilisi. In: *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 367-382. here p. 380.

<sup>5</sup> In June-July 1987 Rachel Adler Galley, New York, introduced the exhibition *Kirill Zdanevich and cubo-futurism, Tiflis 1918-1920* and represented K. Zdanevich’s works from the Tbilisi avant-garde period from the angle of Cubo-Futurism. See: LE GRIS-BERGMANN, F.: *Kirill Zdanevich and Cubo-Futurism Tiflis 1918-1920*. New York 1987.

summoned to serve in World War I as an officer at the German front. In 1917 he was demobilized and returned to Tbilisi which was becoming the centre of the avant-garde experiments.

Together with his brother, Ilya Zdanevich, he became one of the leaders of the so called leftist futurism. The “Futuristic Syndicate” was founded by the brothers Zdanevich, poets Yuri Degen, Kolau Chernyavsky, Kara-Darvish, artists Lado Gudiashvili, Ziga Valishevsky, Igor Terentiev and Aleksei Kruchenykh who then fled from revolutionary Russia and World War I to independent Georgia. Their interest in folklore and the primitive is obvious and it brought them close to the Moscow “Oslini Khvost”(Donkey’s Tail) . In 1919 the syndicate broke up and a new group – 41° was established. The leaders of the group 41° were the author and ideologist of the “Vsyochestvo” theory Ilya Zdanevich together with Terentiev and the creator of “Zaum” – Kruchenykh. The founder of “Orchestral Painting”, Kirill Zdanevich, also joined the group. The group founded its own newspaper 41°. Zdanevich participated in the artistic evenings of the artistic cafés “Argonauts’ Boat” and “Fantastic Tavern” where the founders of “Futurvseuchbishche” (futureeverythingstudies) gave lectures. Together with Lado Gudiashvili, Aleksey Petrokovsky, Iuri Degen and Ilya Zdanevich he participated in painting the “Fantastic Tavern”. It was also in this period that he worked on murals for the “Argonauts’ Boat” café together with Bazbeuk-Malikov, Gudiashvili, Kakabadze. He started his radical, so called Cubo-Futurist (Korney Chukovsky’s term overtly revealed in 1913), experiments in book design and typography in 1917. Collaborating with the Zaum poets, he created the entire outlook, format and text drawings for their books and often works on text calligraphy as well. His graphic and lithographic experiments are the visual parallels to the Zaum experimental poetry – maximum transformation of an object, significance of surface and texture, maximum plasticity of the image shape as not of a “denoter” but as “denoted” in itself, making free use of any means and devices,

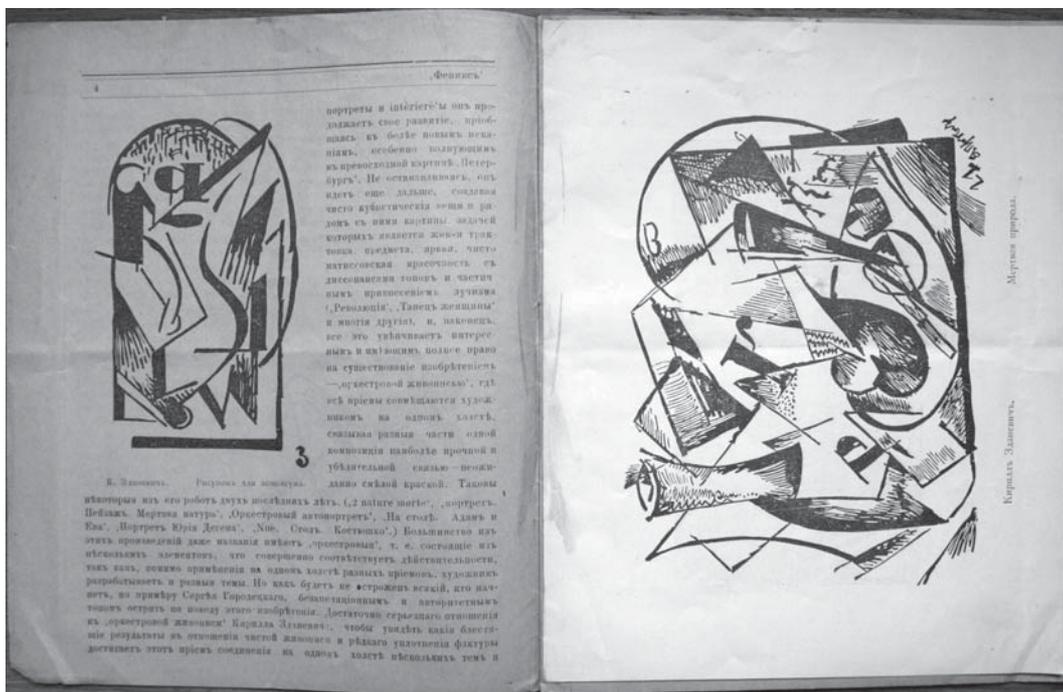
artistic methods or directions for this purpose (see the text by Aleksei Kruchenykh and Eli Eganbiuri (Ilya Zdanevich) in the catalogue of Kirill Zdanevich’s exhibition in Tbilisi in 1917). That is why he freely contributed to the graphic expression of a figural verse and created calligraphic compositions.

The weekly newspaper 41° was established on behalf of the group in 1919, but only the first issue was actually published: 41°, 14 – 20 July, 1919, Tiflis. The most interesting heritage of the group is the number of books published by poet-artist duos, members of the group. Collaboration of Kruchenykh and Kirill Zdanevich resulted in the book projects: A. Kruchenykh, K. Zdanevich: *Uchites’ Khudogi*, Tiflis, 1917; A. Kruchenykh, K. Zdanevich: *Malakholia v Kapote*, Tiflis, 1918; V. Kamensky, A. Kruchenykh, K. Zdanevich: *1918*, Tiflis, 1918. While Zaum poems belonged to Kruchenykh, Cubo-Futurist graphic works were developed by Kirill Zdanevich. He also contributed with his graphic works to the book *Sofii Georgiennye Melnikovoi*, [To Sophia Giorgevena Melnikova]. Tiflis: 41°, 1919<sup>6</sup>, which was a joint project fulfilled by the multiethnic community of the Tbilisi avant-garde, gathering in the artistic café Fantasticheskyy Kabachek [Fantastic Tavern]. The book brought together 20 poets and artists of four nationalities, and established aesthetic dialogue between various styles, including Futurism and Zaum, Cubism/Cubo-Futurism and Symbolism.

Within the Tbilisi avant-garde environment, Modernist/avant-garde styles were co-practiced and carried out through various artistic projects. Although the reports from soirees and café gatherings mention some vivid discussions among the different groups, they were still sharing the same venues, and pages of the same publications, since they shared the spirit of artistic self-expression and experimentation. Some kind of synthetic approach to Modernist/avant-garde was not only practiced, but also conceptualized within the Tbilisi avant-garde community. While *Blue Horns* was, as emphasized by Ram, providing an abbreviated history of modernism, Ilya Zdanevich was suggesting the concept of

<sup>6</sup> Digitalized versions of these books are available at: [http://modernism.ge/?action=page&p\\_id=428&lang=eng](http://modernism.ge/?action=page&p_id=428&lang=eng). This electronic resource contains mostly the digitalized collection of the Ioseb Grishashvili Library-Museum, Tbilisi. The reso-

urce was developed by: Nana Kipiani, Tea Tabatadze, Mzia Chikhradze, Tsisia Kiladze, Nana Mirtskhulava, Ketevan Sulukhia.



1. Kirill Zdanevich: *Drawing for Linoleum* (left), *Still Life* (right). *Magazine Phoenix* 1919, No. 2-3, pp. 4-5. Ioseb Grishashvili Library Museum, Tbilisi.

Vsiachestvo ('Everythingness', derived from Russian word *все* – everything), and 41°, led by Kruchenykh, was insisting on the coalescing 'orchestral' approach to the arts, which was transformed into the idea of "orchestral painting" by Kirill Zdanevich.

Kirill Zdanevich's artistic style and his individual character was analysed by the fellow poet and active member of Tbilisi avant-garde community, Yuri Degen.<sup>7</sup> In his essay published in the literary journal *Fenix* [Phoenix], Degen analysed K. Zdanevich's artistic biography. He believed that the three years (1914 – 1917) during the WWI, which Kirill Zdanevich spent as a Russian army officer in the trenches, drawing and making sketches, had a significant impact on his perfection in the area of graphic arts. Degen also emphasized the importance of Kirill Zdanevich's time spent in Paris, the capital of the European arts. Although he was already a

master of the arts, Paris still enabled Zdanevich to orient himself in the jumble of all kinds of artistic schools and styles, which were spread everywhere, and especially in Paris.<sup>8</sup> Degen insists that the process of artistic search unavoidably led the artist to the concept of Orchestral Painting, which gave an artist the opportunity of combining all techniques within one canvas, he still sees pure Cubism in some works by Kirill Zdanevich.<sup>9</sup> Alongside Degen's essay, seven different illustrations of graphic works and paintings by Kirill Zdanevich were published in the same journal (Fig. 1).

Another Georgian artist, some of whose works are believed by art historians to represent the style of Cubism, is David Kakabadze (1889 – 1952). He was one of the most significant figures of Georgian modernism. After finishing gymnasium in Kutaisi, Georgia, he studied at the faculty of Natural Sciences at St.

<sup>7</sup> Yuri Degen (1896, Warsaw - 1923, Baku) – poet and essayist, editor of the literary journals *Kuranti* and *Fenix* during Tbilisi avant-garde.

<sup>8</sup> See DEGEN, Y: Kirill Zdanevich. In: *Fenix* [Phoenix], 1919, No. 2-3, pp. 1-6, here pp. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, pp. 3-4.

Petersburg University. At the same time, he worked in the studio of the painter L. Dimitryev-Kavkazsky. “Maybe it sounds paradoxical, but science – mathematics, physics, chemistry, had a great influence on his artistic work,” wrote his contemporary and fellow artist, Kirill Zdanevich. In 1910, he began to work in photography. In 1914, four artists – Kakabadze, Philonov, Kirillov and Lason-Spirova established a society: *Интимная мастерская живописцев и рисовальщиков* [Intimate Studio of Painters and Illustrators]. They published the manifesto, “Made Pictures” (*Сделанные картины*). The manifesto expressed the philosophy behind Kakabadze’s work: the picture has to be created, completed and released from everything unintentional. His famous “Self-portrait in front of the Mirror” and Cubist “Self-portrait” were created in this period. In 1916, after graduating from the university, Kakabadze returned to Georgia to become an active member of the Tbilisi avant-garde. In 1917 he started working on a series of Imereti landscapes, focusing on one of Georgia’s most picturesque regions. By 1918 he had already created “Still Life of Imereti” and “Imereti – My Mother”. This last is the “synthesis of his artistic work of the 1910s, done according to his statement of ‘made pictures’” (K. Zdanevich). In 1919, together with Lado Gudiashvili and Sergei Sudeykin, he painted the most popular artistic cafe of that period – “Kimerioni” (in the basement of what is now Rustaveli National Theatre). He also participated in painting the murals in artistic cafés, “Fantastic Tavern” and “Peacock’s Tail”. In 1919, together with his brother Sargis Kakabadze, he published “Shvidi Mnatobi” (“Seven Stars”) – an interdisciplinary journal with the following sub-departments: Belles-lettres literature, Art, Science, Political reflections, Cooperation. It printed his articles on art. In the same year, Kakabadze left for France, where he stayed until 1927. His famous series belong to the Parisian period: “Bretagne” (1921), the graphic and oil Cubist series “Paris” (1920), “Sailing Boats” (1921), “Abstract Forms of Blooming Gardens” (1921), and collages with lenses (1924). From 1921 to 1927, he participated in each annual exhibition of the “Salon of the Independents” (*Salon des indépendants*). He published books “On the Constructionist Picture” in French (1921), “Paris 1920 – 1923” (1924) and “Art and Space” (1925) in

Georgian. In 1924 – 26 he collaborated with Leon Rosenberg’s *Bulletin de L’effort Moderne* where he published letters on modern art: “L’art-L’Espace”, “Du Tableau Constructif”, “Deux Conceptions Spatiales (Orient et Occident)”. In 1922 he concluded an agreement with M. Muller and K. Kobakhidze on the invention of the “Glassless Stereo Cinematography.” For this accomplishment a joint-stock company was established with the capital of 900 thousand French francs. After the presentation of the invention to the Optics Institute in Paris, the patent on it was purchased by the USA, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Hungary. In 1926, the founders of the ‘*Société Anonyme*’ – Catherin Drier, Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, with the collaboration of Wassily Kandinsky, Kurt and Helen Schwitters, Fernand Leger, Heinrich Kampendonk and Anton Giulio Bragaglia – arranged a big international exhibition of modern art at the Brooklyn Museum. For this reason, the *Société Anonyme* which was also known as an “Experimental Museum,” purchased David Kakabadze’s works. Among the works was the sculpture “Z,” which today is kept at Yale University Art Gallery together with his other works. See the list of participants in the catalogue of the exhibition dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Kandinsky at <http://artgallery.yale.edu/socanon/> as well as some pages of the catalogue on our website. The Brooklyn Museum exhibition opened on 19 November, 1926 and closed on 1 January, 1927. This was the fatal year when Kakabadze returned to the annexed and Soviet-dominated Georgia after travelling to Germany, Italy and Greece. At that time Joan Miró and Piet Mondrian – already famous in Europe – made their American debut through this exhibition. This was the period of their internationalization as artists. As for the 37-year-old David Kakabadze, this exhibition turned out to be, tragically, his final one.

Kirill Zdanevich met David Kakabadze as a young student in Saint Petersburg, and later recalled this while analysing Kakabadze’s art in his essay. Zdanevich saw just one of Kakabadze’s works, Cubist “Self-portrait”, as an experience of applying Cubism in his paintings.<sup>10</sup>

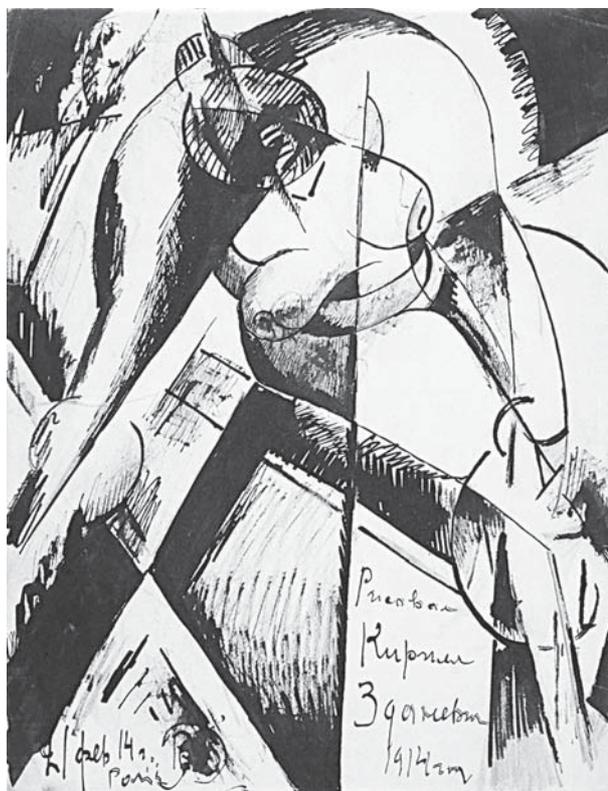
<sup>10</sup> Kirill Zdanevich, David Kakabadze. *Archive of Georgian National Museum*. p. 11. Online: [http://modernism.ge/?action=photogallery&p\\_id=208&b\\_id=26&lang=eng](http://modernism.ge/?action=photogallery&p_id=208&b_id=26&lang=eng)



2. Kirill Zdanevich: *Sing*, 1921. Indian ink on paper, 45x30. Private collection, Tbilisi.

Apparent signs of Cubism can often be identified in the works by Kirill Zdanevich and David Kakabadze. Although their works pertain to a somewhat later period and do not exactly concur with the time when Cubism as such was being shaped, sharing of the language is obvious as is its peculiar interpretation. Georgian Cubism predominantly conveys the traits of Synthetic Cubism, which is also understandable. However, as far as their causes and outcomes are concerned, these traits differ from the Cubist movement, reflecting the inherent distinction in Georgian Modernistic consciousness that, overall, had already been outlined by that time.

<sup>11</sup> KUSPIT, D.: The critical History of Twenty Century Art. In: *artnet magazine*, 2006. Online: <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/kuspit/kuspit1-24-06.asp>



3. Kirill Zdanevich: *Untitled*. Indian ink on paper, 40x25. Private collection, Tbilisi.

By the time the concept of Cubism reached Georgia, it had been represented, and analysed in Europe in many ways. Quoting Picasso in his *A Critical History of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art*, Donald Kuspit wrote: “In general, the picture was a sum of different additions. In my case, a picture is a sum of destructions. I make a picture, then destroy it.”<sup>11</sup> This quote has an important bearing, and here is how Kuspit himself describes the Cubist space of *Houses at L’Estaque* and *Cottage and Trees*, two artworks by Braque and Picasso: What adds to the sense that the image is a deliberate fabrication – indeed, pure fiction – is the self-contradictory space.<sup>12</sup> Braque called the cubist space “a manual (physical) space” that opposed and rejected the “eye-fooling illusionism” of “scientific perspective”. At the same time, Kuspit noted that the illusion of the

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

image being in relief was nonetheless created (The spatial coordinates remain intact, and the scene is seen from an everyday point of view). Juan Gris, Picasso's Spanish follower, developed a method described by Guillaume Apollinaire as 'Integral Cubism', the term signifying compactness and control – a new way of integration and calculation in Cubism.<sup>13</sup>

And yet, Picasso's description of Cubism as a unity of destructive parts is applicable to both periods. I would describe it, in fact, as a profound unity of destructive parts within the framework of three-dimensions – a continuous creation of depths by alternating planes as well as light and shade. In other words, space represents objects and volumes, as if being tactile, tangible, creating an environment, albeit optional. This is why Cubism is unwilling to distance itself from the physical space, even if that space is perceived as a sign. It is exactly in three dimensions, the three-dimensional space-sign that a Cubist image turns into a sign, a reference, a self-designation, if you like; it is precisely in that space that the image acquires the property of being a sign. Reiterating again, the shift of perspective, the constant change of the viewing angle occurs within three dimensions.

What do we really witness in Georgian Cubism, or especially in the works of David Kakabadze and Kirill Zdanevich, two artists who were intrinsically different from each other? Signs of Cubo-Futurism prevail in Kirill Zdanevich's artworks. David Kakabadze, on the other hand, transforms the Cubist method in his own way and brings it clearly under his constructivist logic, using some Neoplasticism signs. Both artists, however, are united by a certain internal logic: an actual denial of the three dimensional nature of space, which means denial of the reflection of the shape into planes that are spatially relief-like and, therefore, descend into depth, the maximum extension onto the surface, attaching the utmost priority to flatness, and the simplicity of perception (Fig. 2, Fig. 3).

In his collection of essays, *Art and Space*, developed in Paris in 1924 – 1925, David Kakabadze wrote: "All the achievements in Art are preconditioned by diverse concepts of line and colour construction".<sup>14</sup> He goes on to say: "It is possible to express or animate any type of surface. But a picture (animated plane) can only be made on a flat surface. A picture, as an object, takes a particular place among all the other man-made objects. We should give a picture its corresponding place in our imagination just as we do with the objects around us, and not more".<sup>15</sup> Here is another, more important abstract from David Kakabadze's essay: "'Relief is the soul of painting'. This opinion belongs to the person who was the first to formulate the idea of the Italian Renaissance. It explains the great significance of space perception in art but shows only one way of expressing this perception. Relief defines the real existence of an object in space. Such connection of plastic art with nature is an essential part of the distinction between Eastern and Western arts."<sup>16</sup>

In Kakabadze's Cubist works, urban structures, still lifes, and shapes are placed against a neutral dark background and spread on the surface as wide as possible. However, he never uses chiaroscuro, which was completely alien for him. The outlines of geometric planes and their colours create a general contour while also suggesting the general outlines of the shapes. Images really turn into single signs that reject the character of reliefs, and form absolute perceptual models deprived of mutual overlapping, intersection, and the spreading into space of volumetric planes descending into the depth. It is flat surfaces, outlines, and chromaticity that interact with each other rather than the planes descending into the depth, or perspective inter-crossing of flat surfaces, denoting depth. Movement and space, in this case, are created through the contours of geometric planes oriented parallel to the flat surface, their angle and direction as well as the distribution of local colour, which creates the movement on the flat surface. In

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>14</sup> Some of the essays were first published in Paris, *Bulletin de L'Effort Moderne*, 1925, No. 17-19. See online: [http://modernism.ge/?action=page&p\\_id=184&lang=eng](http://modernism.ge/?action=page&p_id=184&lang=eng). Georgian

edition: KAKABADZE, D.: *Khelovneba da Sivrc'e* [Art and Space]. Tbilisi 1983. p. 93

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem. p. 78.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 130.

Kakabadze's own words: "The art of painting is a means of revitalizing the surface through lines and colours".<sup>17</sup>

Hence, one more feature gains importance – non-existence of the specific intimate environment in the picture. Kakabadze's art seems to lack the niche of depth within which the viewers start their trip to search for deep internal interconnections in the objects' shapes. We do not really witness an intimate and familiar contact established between the image and the beholder. The image seeks to generalize and offer viewers a generic constructive icon rather than lure them into deeper labyrinths. Subsequently, there is no specific environment, and so almost no time; meaning the time that moves forward in a linear pattern in the three-dimensional space. The Western Cubism yielding existential-subjective icons is confronted by the general and abstracted, eternal/essential icons of Georgian Cubism in which time shrinks at the expense of opening up the space and covering its large area.

Representing rational and constructive thought, Kakabadze described the process of creating and perceiving a picture in the following way: "The dynamism of each object is preconditioned by its construction";<sup>18</sup> "The need dictates rejection of the romantic method in artworks and its replacement by the classical method"; "When you look at a picture, it is lines and colours that impress you in the first place, it is exactly lines and colours that form your perception of shape accordingly. But we should not forget that lines and colours must transport the inherent and perpetual features of objects disregarding random properties."<sup>19</sup> "A picture must provide the complete and final icon of a form and this depends solely on the image construction."<sup>20</sup> And again: "If a human being's range of vision is not restricted by artificial boundaries, he can see objects with their determinant total shape." He compares restriction by boundaries to photography, a field he was engaged in, and says that photography depends on the lens size and the film, and, therefore, when

portraying reality, it always depicts its fragment. That is why, he goes on explaining, photography always invites us to dream and takes us outside the shot, while our perception depends on how unrestricted the flow of our imagination is.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, in Kakabadze's paintings (as opposed to photography) all flat surfaces – lines and colours – turn into a single fused icon against a dark, ostensibly enframing background; this icon binds different fragments into one "total" unity, it completes within itself without taking us anywhere.

Incidentally, it is interesting that Kirill Zdanevich, who created Cubo-Futuristic works, displays a similar attitude toward shape. A few of his works, drawing on markedly different principles, including *A Futuristic Syndicate* (1919), *Woman* (the 1920s), and *Gubpolitprosvet* (the 1920s) show no vibrating chiaroscuro (provisional, of course) modelling of surface and forms. Yet, all three works reveal the apparent influence of Synthetic Cubism, albeit to varying degrees. However, if we compare them with, for instance, the works of Fernand Leger, who had considerable influence on Cubo-Futurism, we will discover a very interesting feature: in Kirill Zdanevich's art, the creative flatness is parallel to the surface (e. g. *Gubpolitprosvet*, in which he uses musical notes, so favoured by Cubism, and even fragments of instruments - obvious irony for the title), and whenever he resorts to the relief form, he does it the other way round. Notionally, this could be described as follows: the artist somewhat ejects a shape from the surface towards the beholder with reverse movement from the depth to the surface. A relief-like, somewhat sculptural, shape, virtually propping against the flat surface, seems to transcend the boundary of the picture's flatness and come outwards with its convex, slightly whitened and provisionally illuminated parts. What helps to intensify such an impression – coming outside rather than directing inside towards the depth – is, in fact, the inverse perspective arrangement of colourful planes, bringing together the entire background, and their certain centripetal orientation. Flat

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 124.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 75.



4. Lado Gudiasvili: *Self-portrait*, 1919. Oil on canvas, 87x70. Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi.

surfaces concentrated towards the centre merge in the lower part of the picture, at the woman's knee. A movement is formed, quintessential to Cubo-Futurism. However, this movement created by colourful flatnesses and dynamism seems to be circulating, moving in a circle and neither shifting towards the corners of borders nor descending into the depth but rather turning outwards in perception.

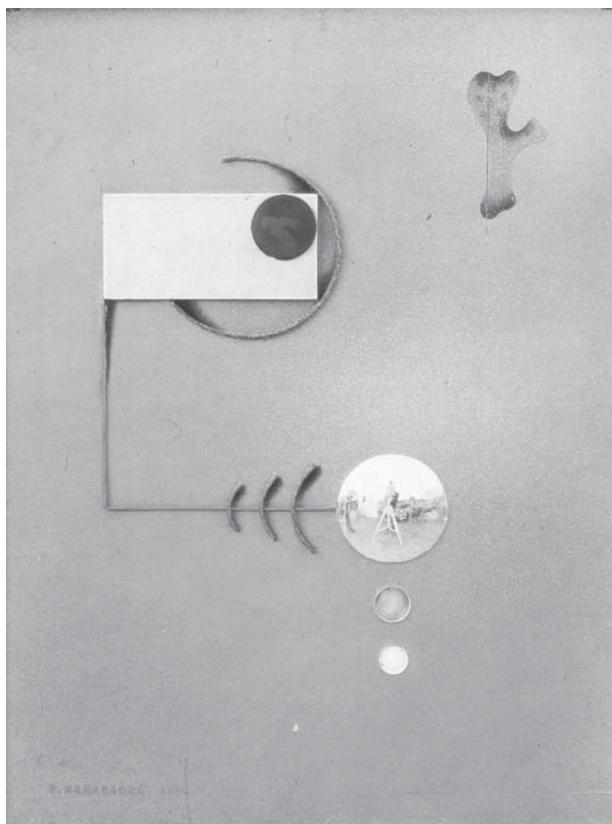
Thus, both David Kakabadze and Kirill Zdanevich reject the traditional method of picture-like representation. As mentioned above, these works lack the specific environment or niche; they do not have the indentation, the depth, which a Cubist work typically preserves, there is no chiaroscuro or light, not even provisional, that would drive the image towards the depth by modelling shapes or creating relief. The depth in Cubism is totally conditional but it exists through the relationship of the light and dark, or provisionally lit/shaded segments of each of the surfaces that actually cast or eject the depth. So, what we have is the concavity and a relocation

of the viewer from the surface to the depth, something we do not encounter in the Georgian version of Cubism.

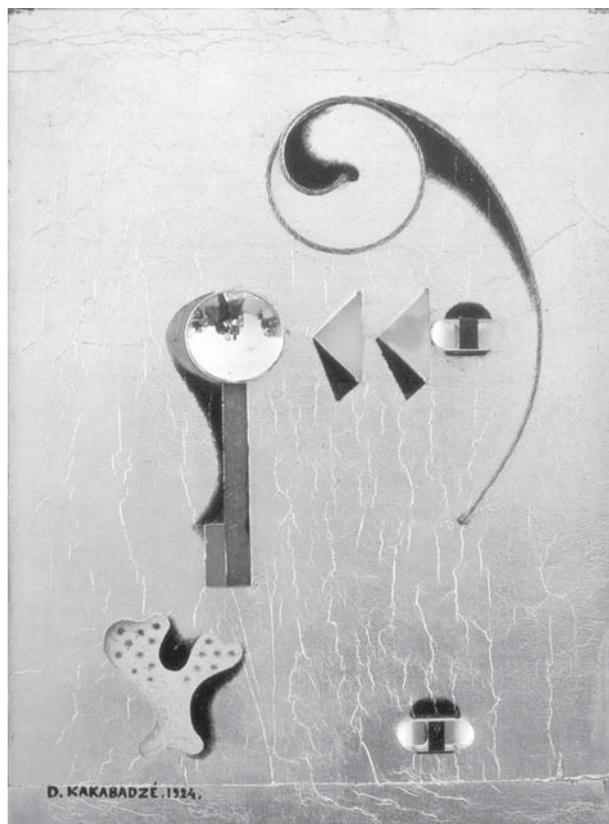
All this is likely to mean a new round, but still: any classical Cubist work, whether analytical or synthetic, is an assault of a “free and moving perspective”<sup>22</sup> on an object, and most importantly, on one object, an individual object, meaning that it is characteristic of Cubism to concentrate on an individual object existing in reality and penetrate its depths. In such work, the distance between the artist and the object is erased; the artist begins to destroy it as a whole, breaking it into tiny pieces, space-planes, and then rearrange them in the same arbitrary fashion. Resorting to Jose Ortega y Gasset's metaphor, the artist represents the object's micro world as if examining it through a magnifying lens, defragments it, makes dramatic analysis of its peripheral regions, and then re-assembles these fragments from mutually antithetical, oppositional perspective points. This constitutes a familiar attitude towards reality, or towards the object, when the artist reaches into any depth of the object/shape and overturns it. This is a somewhat atomistic attitude: breaking up an object into pieces to assemble a new model from those pieces. This new model – an artistic whole – represents, in fact, reflection of time by space/spaces through images. Hence, as far as Cubism does not observe an object from a distance, but begins to penetrate its depth from various sides, it actually represents a journey in time, a time that might have been transformed from linear into complex time, but nevertheless, has been granted a priority.

Georgian Cubist works depict a more holistic approach to the form/space. They almost never concentrate on an individual, single object to break it up into particles and fragments and thus split its internal space, turning its interior out; they do not offer a journey in time within one form that, in fact, deprives us of the ability to comprehend it as a whole. Georgian Cubism creates a new spatial whole, it assembles space in a Cubist manner not through the destruction of a single object, but through putting together essentially different objects, forms or their parts, in other words different spaces or

<sup>22</sup> KUSPIT 2006 (see in note 11).



5. David Kakabadze: from the Series *Object with Mirror and Lenses*, 1924. Wood, glass, metal, tempera, 75x59. David Kakabadze Museum, Tbilisi.



6. David Kakabadze: from the series *Object with Mirror and Lenses*. Wood, foil, glass, metal, 65x50, 1924. David Kakabadze Museum, Tbilisi.

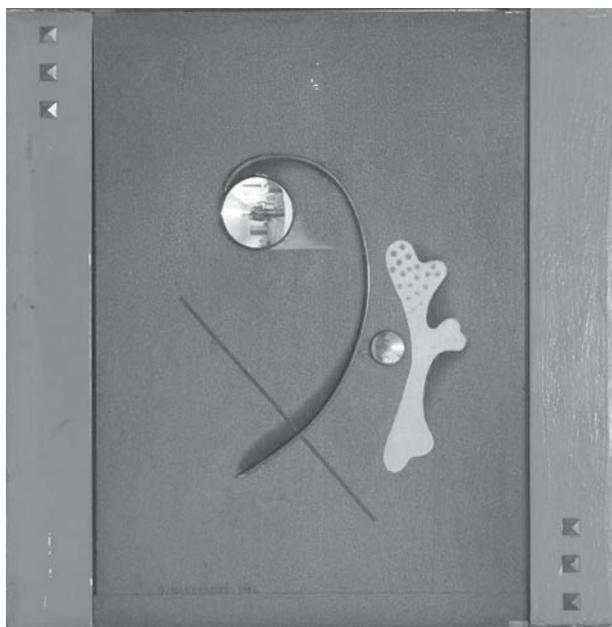
spatial zones, and then through representing them on a flat surface as a single constructed whole, or we could say epic (conventionally, of course) space. Accordingly, what we see is a fusion of multiple spaces and forms and objects existing in space into one whole. Western Cubism dismantles one whole, while Georgian Cubism constructs many and transforms them into one whole.

Similar spatial interpretation can be seen in Lado Gudiashvili's paintings that bear apparent signs of symbolism and expressionism. In a number of genre paintings, it is a dynamic space, moving in a circle, which also unfolds the image in a reverse perspective, from the depths to the surface. This rather surface-ward intense movement gives an impression of a whirlpool that has come to a halt at the surface – this is Gudiashvili's peculiar method to give the picture the utmost finitude. Stacking the shot with images

and often (but not always) its vertical orientation is all the more conducive to this impression. Such space, on the one hand, is a space of objects and, on the other hand, it is fairly symbolic (Fig. 4).

The Motion, brought into art by Futurism, is essential for Synthetic Cubism. "Force took priority over form, which became its expression."<sup>23</sup> Logically it, as the relationship between art and life, is essential for Georgian Modernism as well, clearly expressed in Ilya Zdanevich's concept of 'Vsiochestvo'. David Kakabadze also writes about the importance of motion in modern art: "Machinism is a major factor in our life; it defines our existence. At the same time, speed and rapid pace have changed and deepened the sensual perception of space. The past era demonstrated

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.



7. David Kakabadze: *Object with Mirror and Lenses*. Glass, oil, metal, 50x35, 1924, Georgian National Museum.

a static contemplation of space, while our time gave preference to a dynamic one. Expression of a dynamic space requires other means and forms.” And a little further on he adds: “Motion is the main factor for extending space. Permanent contemplation of space can be achieved only through binocular vision”.<sup>24</sup>

Here already, the difference between the ‘binocular vision’ and Ortega y Gasset’s figurative ‘Magnifying Glass’ comes to the surface. Describing the method of movement creation, David Kakabadze writes: “The expression of dynamic space (under binocular vision – N. K.) is today rendered on a flat surface in two ways: through adding lustre to the surface and through colours. A lustred surface, which reflects a wide variety of planes and images like a mirror, is the best way to express dynamic space. [...] In the chromatic chart, only some colours possess the power of expressing depth...”<sup>25</sup>

The series of Kakabadze’s *Objects with Lenses and Mirrors* (1924) can well illustrate his theory (Fig. 5

– 7). In these works, Kakabadze introduces lenses and mirrors into the constructions that create a solid and simultaneously inherently dynamic surface. Mirrors, reflecting the physical space, produce depth, sudden depth, bringing the viewer and surrounding physical space inside the art-object. Thus the space is constantly changing yielding different contexts, different meanings, depending on where the art objects are displayed and where the viewer is. Thus, Kakabadze brings the very life into the object. It is quite possible that space in his works might turn upside down. In other words, we can see the variability and the three-dimensional physical space penetrate the solid construction, we can witness what happens to the space, and hence to the form itself. Although the construction is dynamic, it is solid, completed, and not ephemeral. Consequently, Kakabadze creates a dynamic surface, but he does not create the unstable image. His images are full-fledged rather than being in the process of balancing, like those of the Western Cubists that Kuspit writes about.

Subsequently, if Cubism views motion not only as a formal and expressive issue, but rather turns it into a property of the image, for Kakabadze the essential thing is the dynamism of the artistic surface created through formal means which yields a completed, done image instead of ephemeral, unstable, and changeable ones. The same can be said about Kirill Zdanevich’s Cubo-Futuristic works, Ilya Zdanevich’s book design method, the Georgian Dadaist and Futurist books in general, and, strange as it may sound, even the set design.

As Georges Braque said, Cubists were not facing the question to start from the object; they went in its direction and moved along the path that led directly to the object.<sup>26</sup> This meant, in fact, a certain assault of the “free and mobile perspective” on the reality and on a specific object. As Hans Sedlmeier remarked, “Today everything is imbued with an opposite of its own.”<sup>27</sup>

According to Kakabadze’s concept, on the other hand, which can be considered as the *Weltanschauung* of Georgian Modernism, an event is seen not from

<sup>24</sup> KAKABADZE 1983 (see in note 14), p. 128.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 127.

<sup>26</sup> KUSPIT 2006 (see in note 11).

<sup>27</sup> SEDLMAYR, H.: *Art in Crisis: The Lost Centre*, London 1957, p. 261.

“one particular side” towards the depth, but “with the whole substance in the space..”<sup>28</sup> It is based on certain peculiarities of world perception, which we call *panoramic vision* of binocular sight, and this is what shapes a relevant spatial and plastic language.

This language derives more from the spatial and synchronic reflection of reality and less from temporal and diachronic thought. Due to the nature of Georgian culture, Georgian art still has *epic* perception of time and therefore considers space not as small illusory spaces temporally divided into fragments, segments, and processes, in an illusionist way, when images are, in fact, temporal images or time-specific images, but rather as a large simultaneous space in which these spaces and consequently times unite.

This distinction can be defined in the following way: For a Westerner reality is perceived in *duration*, while a Georgian views it in a simultaneous (one-time) space, to a greater or lesser degree, of course. In other words, the Western Modernity differs from the Georgian one just as the *dramatic* differs from the *epic*.

Here we have arrived at the key characteristic of Georgian Modernism – simultaneity that works in two directions: (1) historical and (2) artistic. Without this perception of simultaneity, the Georgian reality might not have been able to develop the Graphic Modernism at all (due to Sovietization).

Benjamin cites Joseph Joubert in one place: time is found even in eternity; but it is not earthly, worldly time; that time does not destroy; it merely completes.<sup>29</sup> He also notes with regard to Marcel Proust that we find rudiments of an enduring idealism, but, the eternity which Proust opens to view is convoluted time, not boundless time. His true interest is in the passage of time in its most real - that is, space-bound-form...<sup>30</sup>

Georgian Modernism might partially stem from this context: although it is not space – bound; it strives to achieve a simultaneous fusion of time into a spatial whole, into its finite artistic form; it strives to embed time into a uniformly perceptible space, something Zdanovich refers to in his Everythingness

and about which Kakabadze says “we should accept all achievements in art from the prehistoric period to our days,” adding further, “including the complete rejection of retrospectivism and ethnography”.<sup>31</sup> Georgian Modernism is unwilling to weave/knit time, to create it from its intricate loops, convolute it, and succumb to it.

The above sufficiently illustrates that Georgian Modernism is oriented towards modelling the present and moving towards the future through it; it focuses on innovation, on creating new faces of visionaries. Titsian Tabidze writes: “Modernism is the song of the visionaries.” If, for the Futurists, the present is the beginning of the future, and the future is determinant, meaning that the centre rests in the future, for Georgian Modernism, the present is both the outcome of the past and simultaneously the beginning of the future, meaning that the centre rests in the present.

The Georgian West-oriented and thus Westernized complicated consciousness, entirely shares Western artistic goals, experiences itself as part of this culture rather than receiving or absorbing modern culture and Modernism from the outside, and subsequently perceives the need to return to the bosom of European culture. Therefore it cannot neglect its quest to fuse time into space. It is simultaneity that matters for it rather than linearity, it is characteristic of the perception of the given stage in Georgian history, the period from 1910 to 1920. On the other hand, it represents the traditional artistic thought, which, due to the changed historic context, became dominant in Georgian culture from the end of the 1920s.

Within the Soviet-totalitarian cultural reality, within the cultural policy established by Stalin, modernists all over the USSR were forced to reject their own aesthetic position and “switch to Soviet rails”. The new cultural style, enforced by the Soviet state, namely Socialist Realism, was actually altered by Georgian modernist by classic principles of realism, which seemed more acceptable to the Soviet regime. They were not able to produce modernist works any more, and by the end of the 1920s all traces of the avant-

<sup>28</sup> KAKABADZE 1983 (see in note 14), p. 124

<sup>29</sup> BENJAMIN, W.: *Illuminations*. New York 2007, chapter: On Some Motifs of Baudelaire, p. 185.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, The Image of Proust, pp. 201-205.

<sup>31</sup> KAKABADZE 1983 (see in note 14), p. 78.

garde, including Cubism, were erased from the cultural reality, and, soon, also from the cultural memory.

After the annexation of Georgia by the Soviets Ilya Zdanevich emigrated to France and continued his avant-garde artistic activities. Kirill hopelessly awaited the chance of reunion with his brother, but had to spend rest of his life in the USSR. In 1922 – 36 he begins to work as a stage designer and especially as a costume designer at the major theatres in Tbilisi: the Opera House, Marjanishvili and Rustaveli theatres. Costume design had been an independent and one of the most significant branches in his graphic art since 1914, but the works of 1922 turned into real “Costume Theatre”. In 1926 – 30 he left for Moscow and worked at the “Modern Slapstick”, “Publishing House” and “Music Hall” theatres. Until 1933 he worked at the Agricultural National Commissariat and as he himself ironically wrote to his brother, took an active part in building the USSR by painting agricultural pavilions and creating huge panels with the method of photomontage. All this lasted until the repressive period began in the Soviet Union and almost the entire Agricultural Commissariat was arrested. Some of its members were executed as “enemies of the people” and counter-revolutionaries. By this time Igor Terentiev had already been arrested and exiled to Karelia. At the end of the 1930s he returned to Tbilisi, and in 1941 – 43 worked as a circus stage designer. In 1943 he was in Moscow working over the murals for café “National”. From the 1930s the creative activities of Zdanevich changed according to the political situation but in spite of this he was arrested in 1948 and sent to Mordovia where he served his sentence at Dubrava camp for 10 years. He returned to Tbilisi only in 1957. In 1964 he finally received a French visa and left for Paris for a few months to meet his brother Ilya after 34 years. Kirill Zdanevich died in Tbilisi in 1969.

David Kakabadze’s life seems less dramatic, but still, it was spent under the Soviet pressure. In 1927, after returning to Sovietized Georgia from Paris, he became separated and isolated from the Western artistic world and gradually fell into oblivion. In 1950

in the catalogue of a collection published by Yale University’s Catherine Drier discussed him as a post-humous phenomenon, though Kakabadze outlived this remark by two years. Simply no one knew him by that time. Kakabadze’s biography on the website of Yale University (Société Anonyme) states that his statue Z: “became the icon for the Société Anonyme collection appearing on the cover of numerous publications. In 1928 Kakabadze returned to Georgia, where the government had outlawed abstract art, and he was allowed to create only realistic works. Today Z is his only surviving sculpture.” Indeed, after returning to Georgia and mounting a one-man exhibition at the “Orient Hotel” in 1928, he produced no art until 1933. The artist himself called these years his “silent period.” During this period he worked at the Tbilisi Art Academy, Kote Marjanishvili theatre and became an art director for the important new work emerging in Georgian cinema: Michael Chiaureli’s film “Saba” (1929), Michael Kalatozishvili’s films “Salt of Svaneti” (1931) and “Blind Woman” (1931), and Chiaureli’s film “Khabarda,” the last in collaboration with Lado Gudiashvili. All these films were later banned. He worked as an artist for Davit Rondeli’s film “Paradise Lost” (1937). In 1929 – 1931 he made his own film, “Monuments of Material Culture in Georgia,” which was at once labelled as ideologically anti-Soviet. It was suppressed, as a result, and to this day is considered lost. In the 1930s his works, especially of the Parisian period are considered formalistic. He was forced to compromise and in 1933 created the graphic series “Rioni Power Station” while in the 1940s and 1950s he created pictures on industrial themes. In the 1940s, he completed the work he had begun in Paris on Georgian ornaments. From 1943, he served as professor of the Academy of Art, and in 1933 – 1942 he became the head of the studies of the same institution. On July 12, 1948 the order was issued to the Tbilisi Academy of Art that he “could not instruct students according to the socialist realist method and he was dismissed from his position from the 1948 – 49 academic year.” David Kakabadze died on 10 May, 1952.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Georgian National Museum Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery, Tbilisi, presented David Kakabadze’s retrospective exhibition on May 18-July 10, 2013. This was a most complete exhibition of David Kakabadze’s works. [http://museum.](http://museum.ge/)

[ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=105&info\\_id=12305](http://www.museemaillol.com/expositions/kakabadze/) Paris MUSÉE MAILLOL, France, held David Kakabadze’s retrospective exhibition on September 17, 2014 – February 15, 2015. <http://www.museemaillol.com/expositions/kakabadze/>

## Vplyv kubizmu v Gruzínsku: Kubofuturizmus, Kirill Zdanevič a David Kakabadze

### Resumé

V Gruzínsku sa vplyv kubizmu najvýraznejšie prejavil v tvorbe Kirilla Zdaneviča a Davida Kakabadzeho. Na prelome prvého a druhého decénia 20. storočia začal aj v tejto malej krajine južného Kaukazu narastať záujem o moderné/avantgardné umelecké hnutia, takže je logické, že sem prenikli aj informácie o kubizme. Po páde Ruského impéria bola vyhlásená nezávislá Gruzínska demokratická republika (1918 – 1921) s hlavným mestom Tbilisi, ktoré sa stalo novým kultúrnym centrom a centrom moderného/avantgardného umenia.

Básnici a výtvarníci vyvíjali čulé aktivity, či už Gruzínci, alebo umelci, ktorí v Tbilisi našli dočasné útočisko. Rozvíjal sa tu symbolizmus, futurizmus, dadaizmus, Zaum, kubofuturizmus, nadviazal sa dialóg medzi rôznymi kultúrami a umeleckými smermi. V avantgardnom prostredí Tbilisi sa jednotlivé smery a hnutia presadzovali v rámci rôznych umeleckých projektov. Umelci sa stretávali na večierkoch a v kaviarňach, vášnivo diskutovali a vymieňali si názory. Hoci sa spomínajú viaceré vyostrené debaty medzi rozličnými skupinami, vystavovali na tých istých miestach, svoje diela a teoretické štúdie uverejňovali na stránkach tých istých časopisov. Spájala ich snaha o umelecké sebavyjadrenie a experimenty. Syntetický prístup k moderne/avantgarde sa neuplatňoval len v praxi, ale v tbiliskej avantgardnej komunite našiel aj svoje teoretické zázemie. Kým gruzínska symbolistická skupina *Modré rohy* poskytovala stručné dejiny moderny, ako zdôraznil H. Ram, Ilja Zdanevič prišiel s koncepciou všetkosti a medzinárodná futuristická/Zaum skupina 41° pod vedením A. Kručenycha trvala na zjednocujúcom „orchestrálnom“ prístupe k umeniu, ktorý sa u Kirilla Zdaneviča pretransformoval na myšlienku „orchestrálnej maľby“.

V dielach Kirilla Zdaneviča a Davida Kakabadzeho nájdeme zreteľné znaky kubizmu. Aj keď tieto diela nevznikli priamo v čase formovania kubizmu,

majú s ním spoločný jazyk. Gruzínsky kubizmus vykazuje predovšetkým črty syntetického kubizmu, čo je tiež pochopiteľné. Pokiaľ však ide o príčiny a výsledky, tie odrážajú vnútorné odlišnosti v gruzínskom modernom vedomí, ktoré sa v tom čase už začali črtat'. Čoho sme v skutočnosti svedkami v gruzínskom kubizme, t. j. v dielach takých odlišných umelcov ako David Kakabadze a Kirill Zdanevič? V dielach Kirilla Zdaneviča prevažujú znaky kubofuturizmu. Na druhej strane David Kakabadze pretvára kubistickú metódu svojím vlastným spôsobom a podriaďuje ju konštruktivistickej logike, pričom používa viaceré znaky neoplasticizmu. Obaja však majú spoločnú istú vnútornú logiku: odmietanie trojrozmerného priestoru, vyzdvihovanie plošnosti a jednoduchosť vnímania.

V dôsledku sovietyzácie Gruzínska boli všetky aktivity v oblasti moderného a avantgardného umenia v Tbilisi po roku 1921 prerušené. Umelci, ktorí tu našli dočasné útočisko, opustili krajinu. Niektorí gruzínski umelci ešte istý čas pokračovali v začatej tvorbe, ale v totalitnom kultúrnom prostredí boli v rámci Stalinom nastolenej kultúrnej politiky moderní umelci v celom ZSSR nútení zavrhnúť svoje umelecké stanovisko a prejsť na nový umelecký štýl presadzovaný sovietskym štátom – socialistický realizmus. Gruzínski modernisti svoju tvorbu upravili podľa pravidiel klasického realizmu, ktorý sa zdal sovietskemu režimu prijateľnejší. Modernému umeniu však odzvonilo a do konca dvadsiatych rokov minulého storočia boli všetky stopy avantgardy vrátane kubizmu vymazané z kultúrnej reality a čoskoro aj z kultúrnej pamäti. Kirill Zdanevič a David Kakabadze pokračovali v tvorbe aj pod tvrdým ideologickým tlakom, ale ich avantgardné diela boli celé desaťročia ignorované a vylúčené z oficiálneho kultúrneho priestoru. Záujem o ich tvorbu opäť vzrástol až po rozpade Sovietskeho zväzu.

## Cubism, the Icon and the Ukrainian Legacy of Alexis Gritchenko

Myroslava M. MUDRAK

*“Le jeune coloriste ukrainien a conquis Paris.”* (Louis Vauxcelles)

*“Picasso is not the new creativity. He is the end of the old.”* (Nikolai Berdyaev)

“Cold, gloomy, frightful!”<sup>1</sup> That was how the Kyiv-born philosopher, Nikolai Berdyaev (1874 – 1948) described the work of Pablo Picasso after seeing the artist’s Cubist paintings hanging in the Moscow mansion of collector Sergei I. Shchukin.<sup>2</sup> Berdyaev’s reaction prompted an expulsive essay on Picasso that incriminated the artist in “decimating the foundations of the objective corporeal world” and causing a crisis of “dematerialization” and “disembodiment” in painting – a transgression at the very core of the plastic arts. Despite the fact that Berdyaev was not a neophyte in relation to modern art and was willing to take a stance on his experience of current developments, nonetheless, as an ascerbic independent thinker concerned with existentialist issues and spirituality, Picasso’s Cubism would, unsurprisingly, come across as rather stark and aggressive. Berdyaev, for instance, was

particularly fond of Gauguin and Cézanne whose works he delighted in seeing in Shchukin’s home gallery. He could appreciate, and, without hesitation, even acknowledge the wayward anti-academism of modern painting, which, taking the example of Impressionism, he felt had gone “soft.” Berdyaev could even understand how Cubism – “a searching out of the geometric aspects of the objective world, of the skeleton of things” – was a reaction against this softening effect. Yet, notwithstanding his astute awareness of contemporary painting, Berdyaev insisted that Picasso, though a “genius,” (Berdyaev) made a wrong turn by “stripping” everything down to its core and creating a merciless illusion of an “embodied, yet materially synthetic beauty.” Berdyaev ardently opposed Picasso’s Cubist work as *détraqué*,<sup>3</sup> an art gone haywire, lacking any relation to the “substance of the material world where the stability of

<sup>1</sup> These are some of the words used by Nikolai Berdyaev in his essay on Pablo Picasso. See BERDYAEV, N.: “Pikaso”. In: *Sophiya*, 1914, No. 3, pp. 57-62. The article was thereafter republished in Berdyaev’s 1918 collections of essays on art entitled “Crisis of Art.” See BERDYAEV, N.: “*Krizis Iskusstva, Sbornik statei*” [“*The Crisis of Art. A Collection of Articles*”], Eds. G. A. LEMAN – S. I. SAKHAROV. Moscow 1918, 47 pp. All quotations from Berdyaev are derived from this 1918 publication.

<sup>2</sup> The Picasso works owned by Sergei Shchukin at that time included *La fermière* (Peasant Woman, 1908), *Maisonnette dans un jardin* (Little House in the Garden, 1908), *Dame à l’éventail* (Woman with a Fan, 1909), *Briqueterie à Tortosa* (Brick Factory in Tortosa, 1909), *Portrait d’Ambroise Vollard* (Portrait of Vollard, 1910) and *Violon* (Violin, 1912) – the latter two probably being the source of Berdyaev’s dismayed response.

<sup>3</sup> BERDYAEV 1918 (see in note 1), p. 33.

form and matter exist.” The influential philosopher bemoaned the prospect that modern art, and most especially Cubist work, could no longer attain beauty because Picasso “is all transitional, all – crisis.”<sup>4</sup> In a nutshell, Berdyaev, rather apocalyptically, blamed the “profoundly agitating” Picasso for destroying “the crystals of the old beauty” and “shattering the cosmos.” In describing his own “subtle terror” upon viewing the decomposition of the objective world of things in Cubist painting, Berdyaev judged Cubism harshly for having failed “to transform itself into a culture of creative energy.”<sup>5</sup>

That was 1914, by which time Shchukin had amassed a rich collection of contemporary French painting unprecedented outside France. Among the Nabis and Impressionists, as well as the Symbolists and Post-Impressionists, Cubism was an unexpected novelty for Muscovites to witness at Shchukin’s home. At the very least, the fractured image was shockingly different from the well-known and appreciated entrepreneurial tastes of the merchant collector. Yet, for a young generation of aspiring artists, hungry to learn of the latest and newest in painting, Cubism was a welcome revelation.

In 1917 Berdyaev’s position was made widely known at a public lecture in Moscow. Titled “Crisis of Art” the lecture was subsequently published as the lead article in a publication of Berdyaev’s writ-

ings (including his earlier derogatory comments on Picasso), which circulated in a city all abuzz with artists working through a new aesthetic for the new revolutionary era. Notwithstanding Berdyaev’s vehement stance against Cubism, Shchukin’s collection was the single most important venue (along with Ivan Morozov’s equally superb collection of Gauguins and Cézannes) for modern art lovers and their young practitioners in Moscow to get exposure to the leading front of Western artistic accomplishments *face-en-face*. From their visits to the Shchukin and Morozov collections, the upcoming generation of artists came into direct contact with the recent work of important French painters and developed a fairly sound grounding in modern French art, which they then modified according to their own experiences and circumstances. The views of the otherwise widely respected philosopher were disconcerting to those who found artistic purpose in Cubism. This inspiration was backed up by a close encounter with Cubist painting and not only from Shchukin’s collection but by their travels to the West. Kyiv artists Alexis Gritchenko (1883 – 1977),<sup>6</sup> and Alexandra Exter (1882 – 1949) were in Paris to witness Cubism in the making firsthand.<sup>7</sup> Their experience would provide a sound grounding for defending the movement against Berdyaev’s recriminations. Moreover, their understanding of Cubism would grow in direc-

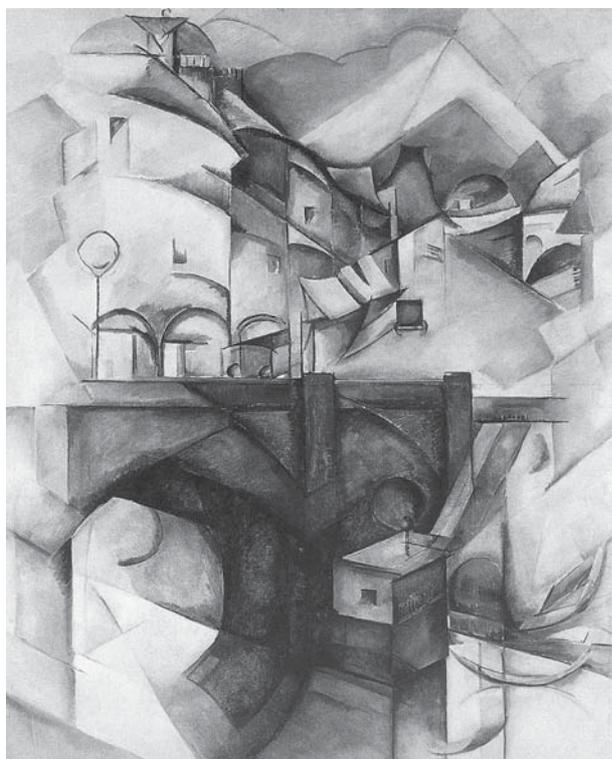
<sup>4</sup> Berdyaev reveals his contradictory stance *vis-à-vis* Picasso when, at the end of his essay, he claims: “[Standing] in front of the pictures by Picasso revealed that something inharmonious was taking place in the world. I felt sorrow and grief that the old beauty of the world was perishing, but I also felt joy that something new was about to be born. This is great praise for the power of Picasso.”

<sup>5</sup> In Berdyaev’s words: “A wintry cosmic wind has torn away one veil [of nature] after another; all the blossoms have faded, all the leaves, the skin of things has been stripped away, all the coverings, all the flesh, manifest in forms of imperishable beauty, has fallen away.”

<sup>6</sup> Alexis Gritchenko is the French identity of Ukrainian painter Oleksa Hryshchenko (also Grishchenko in a Russian transliteration). A student of biology, first at Kyiv University and then in Moscow, Hryshchenko gravitated toward painting after attending S. Svitoslavsky’s art studio in Kyiv and soon was involved in the modernist movements of both Kyiv and Moscow. His extensive travels, beginning with a prolonged trip to Paris in 1911, shaped his approach to modernity. As

an educator in Moscow during the tumultuous revolutionary years and as a self-trained art historian of a sort, his reputation as a discriminating promoter of modernist painting led to an offer of the directorship of the Tretyakov Gallery, which he declined. Hryshchenko escaped from Russia via Crimea and on to Turkey during the revolutionary civil war, and spent a productive two years (1919 – 1921) in Istanbul, where he had a considerable influence on Turkey’s famous modernist, Ibrahim Calli. In 1921 he moved to France, participated in the artistic circles of Paris, and continued to make trips to Greece (1921) and Crete (1923). He settled in Cagnes in southern France in 1927 and exhibited his paintings in leading art galleries. In the 1930s, Hryshchenko affiliated himself with the Lviv art scene of Western Ukraine through the Association of Independent Ukrainian Artists (ANUM). Some of his paintings that belonged to the collection of the Lviv Art Museum were willfully destroyed by the Soviet authorities in the 1960s, along with the formalist works of other Ukrainian avant-garde artists.

<sup>7</sup> See: EXTER, A.: “Novoe vo frantsuskoi zhivopisi.” In: *Iskusstvo*, 1912, No. 1-2, p. 43.



1. Alexandra Exter. *The Bridge*. Sèvres, 1911. Oil on canvas, 145 × 115 cm. National Art Museum of Ukraine.

tions that would hardly appear “Cubist” at all – yet were innately linked to the Paris phenomenon, which Berdyaev apparently could not readily decipher.

Exter, for instance, who arrived in Paris in 1908 and exhibited two works at the influential *La Section d'Or*<sup>8</sup> in October 1912 explored spatial proximity and distance in the way that Cézanne would view Mont St. Victoire, yet the hard-edged, planimetric shapes brought to the surface of the canvas and butted up against the deep spatial chasms are delivered through the controlled palette of transparent blues and greys of Analytical Cubism as seen in the painting, *The*



2. Oleksa Hryshchenko (seated) and Oleksandr Bohomazov (second right). Kyiv, 1906 – 1908. Private archive of T. M. Popova, Kyiv.

*Bridge*. Sèvres (#180 in the catalogue) [Fig. 1]. Exter’s experience of Cubism (and her subsequent close association with the Italian Futurists) had a direct impact on her Kyiv protégé Oleksandr Bohomazov (1880 – 1930), [Fig. 2] who, together with Exter in 1914, sponsored an avant-garde artistic exhibition called “Kil’tse” (Ring) in Kyiv,<sup>9</sup> where Bohomazov’s

<sup>8</sup> For a survey of Ukrainian artists who participated in *La Section d'Or*, see SUSAk, V.: *Ukrainian Artists in Paris, 1900 – 1939*. Kyiv 2010, pp. 62-63.

<sup>9</sup> The exhibition was sponsored by the newly-formed artistic group called “Mystetstvo” (Art) and was held at the Kyiv Polytechnical Institute. The affiliation with the Polytechnical Institute was probably through Mykhailo Denisov, who taught a course on colour at the Institute. As a preface to the

catalogue, Bohomazov had penned a credo on “The Essence of the Four Elements,” which set the tone for the exhibition and summarized the current aspirations of Kyiv’s avant-garde. With an emphasis on the elements of Line, Form, Space and the Picture Surface, Bohomazov established a painterly system in the singular way that Gritchenko did. Over the period 1913-1914 Bohomazov wrote an important theoretical treatise “Painting and Elements,” which later served as a guide for teaching. It was never published in its totality and remains



3. *The Kyiv Studio of Serhij Svitoslavsky, March 1906. Bohomazov is seen standing in back next to Gritchenko, on his right, leaning inward.*



4. *Oleksandr Bohomazov. Toys. 1913 – 14. Oil on canvas. 72 x 72 cm. Collection of K.I. Grigorishin, Moscow.*

eighty-eight oils, pastels, drawings and graphics that dominated the exhibition<sup>10</sup> exposed the “materiality” and “structurality” of Cubism<sup>11</sup> while also operating handily within Cézanne’s system. As a result, renowned theatre director, Nikolai Foregger and painter-theorist Nikolai Kulbin described their art as “paradoxically contemporary painting.”<sup>12</sup>

Gritchenko would address this “contradiction” by referring directly to Berdyaev’s lecture. In the preface to his book *“Crisis of Art” and Contemporary Painting*,<sup>13</sup> published in the summer of 1917, Gritchenko stated: “I don’t want today’s painting not to have a voice,” particularly since Berdyaev “exploits” the lack of

response to contemporary painting on the part of thousands. Perhaps it was the lessons that he and Bohomazov learned as students at Serhij Svitoslavsky’s informal art school in Kyiv [Fig. 3], namely to be open to the possibilities already engendered within painting’s elements, which sealed their friendship and laid the foundation for a lifelong study of colour.<sup>14</sup> Unlike Gritchenko, Bohomazov had never travelled to Paris, so his self-styled understanding of Cubist concepts such as “simultaneity of viewing” would be expressed in a most unusual way, as in the painting *Toys* (1913) [Fig. 4]. The restive environment and the precarious position of the animal figures imbues the

in manuscript form at the Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of Ukraine (Kyiv). A French translation of extensive excerpts of Bohomazov’s text, however, appeared in the catalogue to the first major exhibition of Bohomazov’s art in the West. See *Alexandre Bogomazov (Jampol 1880 – Kiev 1930)*. Musée d’Art Moderne, Réfectoire des Jacobins, Toulouse. Exposition du 21 juin au 28 août 1991. There have been subsequent translations in Ukrainian.

<sup>10</sup> Exter submitted only two works – a still life and a city scene (##304-305).

<sup>11</sup> KUL’BIN, N., FOREGGER, N.: “Vystavka ‘Kol’tsa.’” In: *Muzy (Kiev)*, 1914, No. 5, pp. 5-8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Грищенко, А.: “Кризис искусства” и современная живопись. По поводу лекции Н. Бердяева. Вопросы Живописи. Москва 1917.

<sup>14</sup> Both artists and close friends had met in their early years of artistic training at the Kyiv studio and informal school of Serhij Svitoslavsky (where Malevich was also first introduced to art studies). Gritchenko biographer, Pavlo Kovzhun states that Svitoslavsky gave Gritchenko his first professional art lessons and his first artistic palette. A focus on the purity of a hue captured by observation *en plein air* rather than studio-painting became a dominant objective of the artists discovering painting under Svitoslavsky’s influence. In his memoirs, Gritchenko remembers how Svitoslavsky recommended eliminating “half of the dubious colours of his palette,” which set Bohomazov and Gritchenko on a path of mutual discovery of the colourist aspects of Cubist painting.

work with a “surreal” aura<sup>15</sup> anticipating Carl Einstein’s observations about memory and psychology in his “Notes sur le Cubisme (1929).”<sup>16</sup> Bohomazov shows three carved animal figures – a lamb, a rabbit, and a cow – abandoned in the folds of an overstuffed settee pushed against a curtain-festooned corner of the room. Though the environment is energized by boldly pliated stretches of saturated colour, the toys remain intact. The human expressions on the faces of the inanimate playthings project bewilderment, a bit of fear (a sensation reinforced by their huddled position) and a hint of sad abandon, so much so, that they temporarily divert our attention from the painterly energy that surrounds them.<sup>17</sup> One figure (the rabbit) is in profile; the lamb, in a three-quarter pose. The cow, positioned on its side, establishes a strong lateral orientation that is contrasted by the vertical faceting of background shapes immediately above him. The axes of their differently-positioned heads and opposing directional views initiate the effect of swirling motion around them; yet like the “eye” of a painterly storm, they remain quiet and calm amidst a veritable vortex of colour.

Although no single item is spliced or fragmented here, one senses an unexpected psychological disjunction between the innocent, albeit inanimate figurines, and the colourful maelstrom that upsets the serenity of the forms – a condition of simultaneity that “resembles the synthetic and rapid force of dreams.”<sup>18</sup> Bohomazov’s unique factoring of Cubist “simultaneity” into his composition appears to entail a context outside the painting, the memory of which is introduced into the physical work. On the one hand, the work reminds us of the intimacy of decorative Nabi interiors and zooms in on the particular details of a bourgeois setting. Unlike the

stillness of a Vuillard, however, the image is not “frozen” in time; instead, it sustains a Bergsonian temporal continuity through the rotation of forms and the swirl of the space. The repetition of arcs recalls Georges Braque, though unlike Exter or Gritchenko, Bohomazov would not be privy to seeing Braque’s work in person.

In contrast, since 1911 Gritchenko had the good fortune of living in the midst of the furor and excitement brought about by Picasso and Braque’s unanticipated artistic project in Paris. Here, he encountered the arguments that helped to clarify the new phenomenon and its contradictions. Roger Allard, one of the earliest supporters of Cubism, found the movement refreshingly liberating from the current insidiousness of painting’s “theatricality” and “decorativism” and “all other surrogates that pass under the name of impressionism.”<sup>19</sup> In defending the Cubists, Jean Metzinger wrote that, “because they labour to elicit new plastic signs,” (i.e., “the simplest, most complete and most logical forms”), the Cubists have been accused of “betraying tradition.”<sup>20</sup> Along with Metzinger, Gritchenko stood firm in his own position that “in order to purge the ghost of retrospectivism, aestheticism and decorative pollution” from painting, artists must “review the entire arsenal of painting and disclose the sum of their experience upon a single plane positioned between the artist and the viewer.”<sup>21</sup> Gritchenko underscores this important aspect of the Cubist viewing process, which invites the beholder to become involved with the work and render himself a self-conscious and cognizant spectator.

Gritchenko’s own work hardly appears to follow any of the features of a recognizable Cubist canon: there is no attempt at a “simultaneity” of viewing as

<sup>15</sup> On the reverse side of this work is a painting entitled *Girl with a Hoop* (1913), which reminds one somewhat of the menacing urban threat to innocence taken up by painters such as Max Ernst and Giorgio de Chirico.

<sup>16</sup> EINSTEIN, C.: “Notes sur le Cubisme”. In : *Documents*, Vol. 1, 1929, No. 3, pp. 146-159.

<sup>17</sup> This following passage by Carl Einstein seems appropriate to the discussion: “Nous constatons une sorte d’animisme formel, à cela près que maintenant la force vivifiante ne vient pas des esprits, mais de l’homme même,” (p. 155).

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Gritchenko is paraphrasing Roger Allard from “Sur quelques peintres,” *Les marches du Sud-Ouest* (Paris), June 1911, pp. 57-64, in FRY, E. F.: *Cubism*. New York – Toronto 1966, p. 64.

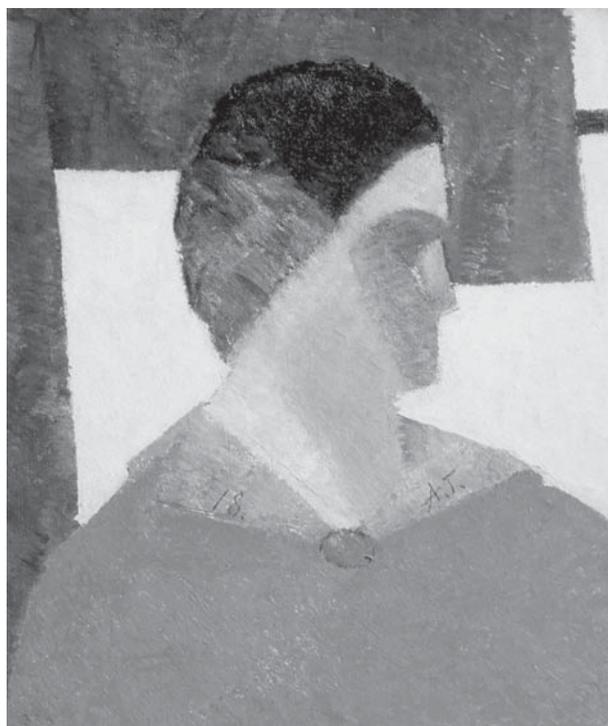
<sup>20</sup> METZINGER, J.: “Cubisme et Tradition”. In : *Paris-Journal*, 16 August 1911, in FRY 1966 (see in note 19), p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> GRITCHENKO, A.: *On the Relationship of Russian Painting with Byzantium and the West 13-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Thoughts of a Painter.* Moscow 1913, pp. 83ff.



5. Alexis Gritchenko (Oleksa Hryshchenko). *Landscape with Building*. 1917. Formerly in the avant-garde collection of the Museum of Artistic Culture.

such, although a plan and elevation is suggested by the “division” of the picture surface along asymmetrical coordinates. This is evident in a painting such as *Landscape with Building* (1917) [Fig. 5]. As in Analytical Cubism, the work is constructed along a vertical orientation and the fragmentation of forms occurs along split lines of heavy colour masses. Yet, instead of flat planes, dense value gradations are employed to imbue the forms with a volumetric thickness. “Facture” – the corporeal surface of the canvas – is affirmed by tactile, impastoed painting. Along with *Portrait of a Woman* (1918) [Fig. 6], these works are the culmination of Gritchenko’s long sojourn in Paris and his subsequent travels (1913 – 1914) through the Renaissance centres of Italy, where Gritchenko came to know the masters of the Italo-Byzantine style and affirm his experience of the ancient icon – the primer of the painted image. Gritchenko’s concentrated study of ancient icons, particularly



6. Alexis Gritchenko (Oleksa Hryshchenko). *Portrait of a Woman*. 1918. Formerly in the avant-garde collection of the Museum of Artistic Culture.

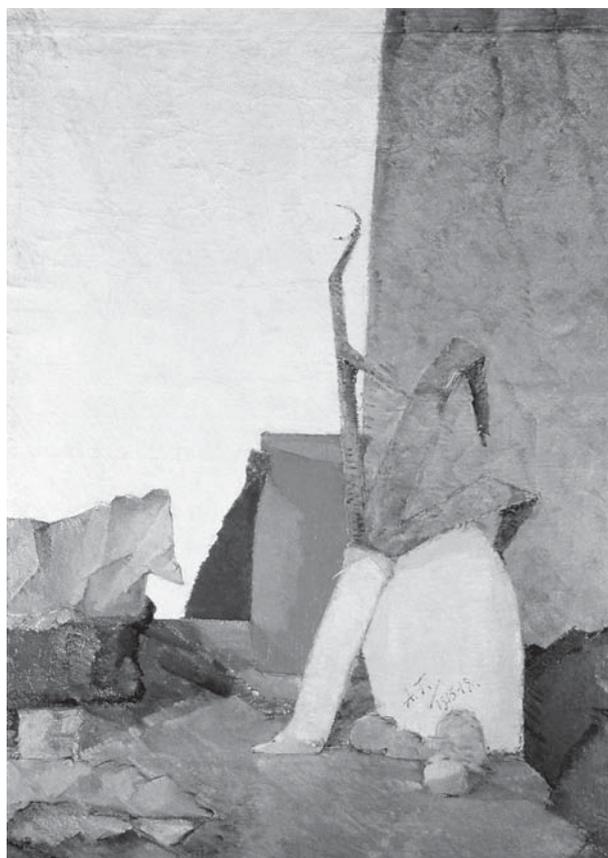
the collections of Ostroukhov and Morozov, as well as the unique qualities of Galician Ukrainian icons strengthened his appreciation for what Cubism had accomplished. By scrutinizing the representational qualities of icons such as *Presentation in the Temple* [Fig. 7] – an icon that stylistically bridges the old with a newer iconographic system. As is typical for Galician icons of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the traditional Byzantine-Rus’ model with its formulaic linear depiction of inherent movement through rhythmic outlines, its fine proportions and restrained colour is made more “contemporary” by an attempt at greater plasticity. The iconographer models the form through a subtle alternation of lights and darks. Gritchenko meshes this iconographic shift with the formalism of Cubism in the subdued colours and architectonics of *Landscape with Building*. Here, as in a *Portrait of a Woman*, ochres and umbers, typical for iconography, bring a neutrality and balance to the image, while also tempering the vivid primaries. The red tends more toward the cinnabar of Novgorodian



7. Ukrainian Icon. *Presentation in the Temple*. First half of the 16th century. Tempera, silvering on gesso ground on limewood. 79,7 × 68 × 2,5 cm. National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv.

icons, the lapis blues to that of the Italo-Byzantine school, specifically Giotto.

Gritchenko's paintings brought ancient iconography under the purview of modernism – a position that differed considerably from the “primitivizing” formulas of the icon-inspired art of Natalia Goncharova or Kazimir Malevich of ca. 1909 – 1913. Rather, as demonstrated by Gritchenko's *Still Life with Agave* (1915 – 1918) [Fig. 8], it entailed a nuanced understanding of the idea of “segmentation” (разпыление) by focusing mostly on the analysis of colour. It was the “encounter, synthesis, and concentration of colour,” that “creates and deepens colour form,” which Gritchenko found liberating within Cubism. And it is on this count that Gritchenko censures Berdyaev for not fully understanding the importance of colour as an element of pure painting: “. . . the first steps toward the fracturing of form had begun with Eugène Delacroix, for whom, just as for the Impressionists, there was no consideration whatsoever for the “astral” or, as Berdyaev put it: the “cosmic.” Berdyaev, alas, viewed painting either as a



8. Alexis Gritchenko (Oleksa Hryshchenko). *Still Life with Agave*. 1915 – 1918. Oil on canvas. 118 × 87 cm. National Art Museum of Ukraine.

description of nature or as a narrative about material form, but could not recognize it as an autonomous ontological process. In response to such unfortunate literalness, Gritchenko could only say that, “We have lost our understanding of easel painting. (. . .) From its once great and significant status as the purveyor of truth and beauty, it has devolved to a handmaiden to the applied arts, slavishly copying form rather than creating it.”<sup>22</sup>

In restoring the values of pure painting by supplanting mimetic realism, and by engaging in a pictorial discourse about subduing illusionism, Cubism reinstated the “reality” of a self-referential pictorial world rendered on a flat surface in the way

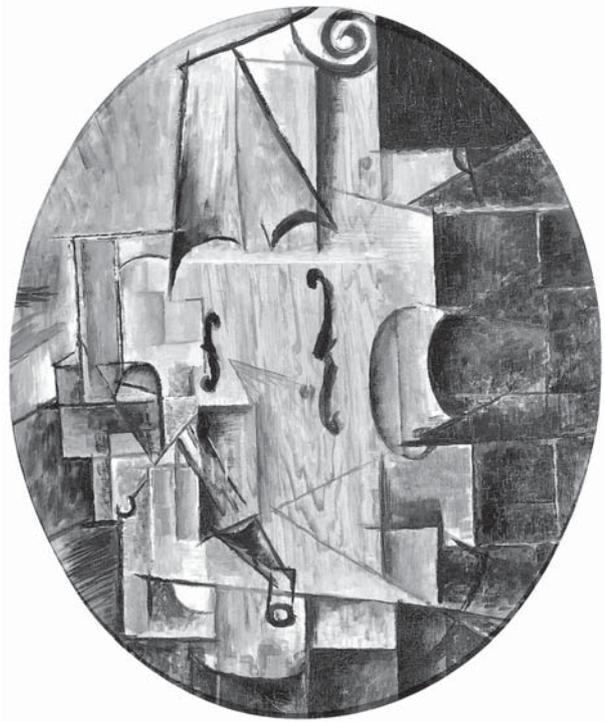
<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 65.

that an icon is a representation of a defined visual context offered to the viewer on a simple panel of wood. Gritchenko's examination of this shared phenomenon between ancient icons and Cubist painting was summarized earlier in his art historical treatise entitled *On the Relationship of Russian Painting with Byzantium and the West 13 – 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (1913)<sup>23</sup> which he dedicated (in Russian and in French) with "hommage respectueux de profond estime" to Sergei Shchukin. Gritchenko begins his study with the Novgorodian and Muscovite period of icon painting (including Rublev and Ushakov) and ends with a discussion of Cézanne's and Picasso's works (mostly all taken from Shchukin's collection) to define the "Principles of Modern Painting." Picasso's mask-like *Head* (1908) graces the cover of Gritchenko's publication (marking a clear link with icons of the Theotokos). His study ends with a didactic analysis of Picasso's *Le Violon* (1912) [Fig. 9].<sup>24</sup>

To counter Berdyaev's position, Gritchenko points out how Picasso, by fracturing the violin into many parts as if to look inside of it . . . builds a [new] whole" from the separate sections of the instrument. By distributing those sections throughout the canvas – not helter-skelter, but in a systematic way – "he suggests a deeper mutual relationship of the plastic masses in relation to the subject."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, through a new arrangement of the deck, the neck and strings and the scroll head of the violin, Picasso reveals, from all sides, the "plastic 'inner' life" of the violin, its rhythm and dynamics (*force dynamique*). Movement plays a role in this new understanding. Not only is it implicit in the "simultaneity" of viewing, but also in the relational combination of the forms and masses: "Until now," writes Gritchenko, "movement was depicted as a static event – all seen from one point of view and as a series of repeated gestures." Picasso, by contrast, gives the picture a real sense of movement (*sensation dynamique*).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Грищенко, А.: О связях русской живописи с Византией и Западом XIII–XX в. С 23 воспроизведениями. Мысли живописца. Москва 1913.

<sup>24</sup> Pablo Picasso *Violon* (1912). Oil on oval canvas. 55 x 46 cm. Pushkin Museum, Moscow, formerly the S. I. Shchukin Collection. Unfortunately, says Gritchenko, Shchukin's gallery did not have the finest examples of these mostly monochromatic works of Picasso, so for his publication of *Krizis iskusstva*,



9. Pablo Picasso. *Violon*. 1912. Oil on canvas. 55 x 46 cm. Pushkin Museum, Moscow. Formerly in the collection of Sergei Shchukin, Moscow.

"Dynamic sensation" lies at the root of iconography, where figures are never really static, but imbued with an inner living spirit. It is for this reason that the word "sensation" was co-opted so widely by modernist painters in search of the "spiritual" in art, as Wassily Kandinsky did, while the Futurists adopted the Bergsonian *élan vital* to defend their interest in dynamism. Using Picasso's *Violon* as an example, Gritchenko points out how Cubism seeks to capture this very same "dynamic sensation" in mundane, secular subjects. Hence, by breaking apart form, by insisting on the "temporal" element inherent in

he chose Picasso's *Man with a Clarinet* (1911 – 1912), Oil on canvas. 106 x 69 cm. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid INV. No. 710 (1982.35) [Fig. 10], as his frontispiece, which he found in the Wilhelm Uhde collection in Paris. GRITCHENKO 1913 (see in note 21), p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 83.

rendering an object from various viewpoints and by taking into account the durational element implicit in the simultaneity of viewing, the Cubist work is never static, its parts always working in an animated relation to other parts. The almost clinical dissection of the object to expose all of its sides – both the inside and out – allows the viewer to understand the object in its full complement (*avec complément*).<sup>27</sup> As Gritchenko explains it: Picasso’s rendering of the violin, therefore, establishes a new link in relation to realism. Through an “irrepressibly increasing chain of its forms” realism thus reaches a new level of rejection, analogous to, and no less profound than Cézanne’s, El Greco’s, or Giotto’s.<sup>28</sup>

There are few works executed by Gritchenko that would allow us a glimpse into the way that his observations of Cubism align with his study of icons, yet one work, painted over a three-year span (as openly indicated by Gritchenko in the signature of *Still Life with Agave* (1915 – 1918) brings us closer to an understanding of Gritchenko’s acknowledgement of the most important feature for both – the flatness of the surface and the use of colour. Here, the artist uses compositional “props” – a sliver of an agave reed, inscrutable fruit-like and bottle-like objects, and chiselled, flint-like mineral stone – to explore a wide range of compositional issues, including tectonics. Overall, the painting demonstrates the influence of Cézanne’s preoccupation with volumetric shapes and with the slippage of the back and middle grounds of the picture space onto the foreground. As all these spatial distances register themselves simultaneously on the frontal plane of the picture surface, Gritchenko simultaneously engages in an illusionistic display of depth by toying with the conventions of scaling and dark-light values while also capitalizing on the recessive properties of colour (here the primaries are prominently displayed). Gritchenko’s “staging” of objects invites the viewer’s eye to move gradually from an open area in the foreground to a narrow gap between large shapes in the distance. A subtle arched passageway created by the edges of the

clustered forms on the right leads the eye to a hard horizontal edge. Beyond it one senses a spatial abyss, wrest open by a narrow separation between the objects on either side. A palpable tension is introduced in the work between the materiality of the paint on top of the canvas and the illusion of an implied abyss beyond. Gritchenko reasserts the surface of the canvas by foiling perspective and stunting it with imposing monochromatic planes that prohibit any kind of controlled view into the distance. Instead, the quickened brushwork scumbled throughout affirms the tactile literalness of the picture surface. Yet another “surface” tension is created by the “frontal” shadows surrounding the forms on the left, challenging identification of a natural light source. Somehow the shapes appear backlit, illuminated from within the environment of the painting proper and emerging forward from behind. Indeed, for Gritchenko, “the problem of values, namely the distribution of darkness and light, (only) establishes a skeleton for variously-coloured edges to address the density of form.”<sup>29</sup> This lesson, along with the importance of the “solidity” of the composition (i.e., the balance of painterly masses), is picked up by Cubism via Cézanne and the architectonics of an icon, which Gritchenko describes in the third of his theoretical essays, *The Russian Icon as the Art of Painting* (1917).

As to texture, Gritchenko’s understanding of “facture” goes beyond the Cubists’ assertion of the surface’s value, which propelled them to incorporate *papier collé* and other external affixed materials onto the flat plane of the canvas. Gritchenko’s working of the surface is related to “icon writing” (*ikonopyis*), which brings about the “action of the painting” – by using a process not dissimilar to the “silver hammering, matte-golden light, the ‘assist’ (the reflective gold on the vestments, altars and seat cushions), the bone ground, and the *levkas* (top coat of varnish) of icons.”<sup>30</sup> Gritchenko’s layering of colours in varied structures and textures, both tactile and smooth, sometimes matte, sometimes transparent, also finds resonance in ancient icons.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 83.

<sup>28</sup> GRISHCHENKO, A.: “Krizis’ iskusstva” *Sovremennaia zhivopis: po povodu lektsii N. Berdiayeva*. In: *Voprosy Zhivopisi*. Vyp. 4. Moscow 1917, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> GRITCHENKO 1913 (see in note 21), p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 20.

<sup>31</sup> GRISHCHENKO 1917 (see in note 28), p. 20.

Above all, Gritchenko's study, analysis, and understanding of Cubist form in conjunction with iconography led to a profound discovery of colour, which had been completely stunted in its development by the browns and greys of nineteenth century Realists – the *Peredvizhniky*. The renewal of colour as an artistic element, and the union of colour and form that Cubism emphasized was a welcome discovery for the artist, whose approach to “building forms based on the rules of colour instead of “colouring” as part a previously drafted graphic system”<sup>32</sup> reached its apogee in 1918. At that time, Gritchenko's masterful knowledge of Cubist principles was delivered in his own paintings according to the body (*korpurnost*) and layout (*verstatnost*) of ancient iconography of colour.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Gritchenko called this his period of “Colour dynamos” (*tsvetodynamos*).<sup>34</sup> By employing the system of “Colour dynamos,” Gritchenko underscored how Cubist colour is determined by new relationships among hues, analogous to the way that light blue, lilac, rose, lemon-yellow, blue, emerald-green tones of atmospheric plenairism were replaced by the Cubists by neutral blues, grey-greens, yellows, including corporeal ruddy reds and steely black – the very colours of ancient iconography.

To appreciate Cubism's fundamental claim as being a “true art” one must be willing to recognize, as Gritchenko did, the central role played out by Cézanne in the revolutionary rise of Cubism. This becomes the point of contention between Berdyaev and Gritchenko. Without a doubt, Berdyaev regarded Cézanne as a formidable force in shaping modernity, and even acknowledged him as a great innovator and discoverer, yet Berdyaev could not accept any link between Cézanne's art and the artist's singular role in the historic evolution toward Cubism. Gritchenko exposes this contradiction in Berdyaev's thinking, expressing his own fondness for Cézanne who

“spent half a century working stubbornly to cleanse the sticky dirt off of pure, beautiful and self-fulfilling painting” and for “once again speaking with the divine language of pure forms of painting.”<sup>35</sup> Gritchenko places Cézanne's genius on a par with that of Giotto, Mantegna, Masaccio, Giorgione and El Greco. Gritchenko's long view of modern art as being an extension, rather than a rupture in the historical evolution of modernist painting positions Cézanne as a “bridge-builder” between the genius of the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th centuries to modern times in the Western tradition, to which he adds the iconography of the East.

This viewpoint counters Berdyaev's claim that contemporary art has severed itself from antiquity, from old painting. Gritchenko's intimate familiarity with contemporary French art as well as his own personal quest to understand the “modern form” through his native Ukrainian tradition gave him the confidence to challenge Berdyaev's assertions and to shed light on a way of thinking among the young vanguard of artists that had a difficult time breaking through the ingrained traditional orientations of late nineteenth century Russian art. “Don't we realize that the perception of painting instantiates recognizable processes, which are in no way like those in the reception of poetry, music, or any other arts?” he asks.<sup>36</sup> One must recognize that the perception of painting is a process that entails thoughts, decisive actions, and something outside the sphere of describing material reality. In the end, one does not enter into the work of art through literature, but through painting itself.<sup>37</sup> Gritchenko's erudite view on modernist painting could only expose the narrowness of Berdyaev's passionate condemnation of Cubism. “There is no crisis of art *per se*,” Gritchenko wrote; “the crisis lies in the approach to a contemporary work of art.”

<sup>32</sup> LOBANOV, V. M.: *Kbudozbestvennyie gruppировki*. Moskva 1930.

<sup>33</sup> GOLLERBAKH, S.: *Istoriia iskusstv vsekh vremen i narodov*. Leningrad 1929.

<sup>34</sup> KOWZUN, P.: *Gritchenko*. L'viv 1934, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> GRITCHENKO 1913 (see in note 21), p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> GRISHCHENKO 1917 (see in note 28), p. 6.

## Kubizmus, ikona a ukrajinský odkaz Alexisa Gritchenka

### Resumé

Myroslava M. Mudrak, emeritná profesorka dejín umenia na Ohio State University, sa zameriava na chápanie, analýzu a interpretáciu parížskeho kubizmu na Ukrajine prostredníctvom textov a diel ukrajinského moderného maliara Oleksa Hryščenka (1883 – 1977), známejšieho pod francúzskou verzou svojho mena Alexis Gritchenko. Umelec strávil rozhodujúce obdobie svojho umeleckého formovania v Paríži v čase vrcholiaceho nástupu kubizmu. Diela moderného umenia, ktoré mal po návrate do Moskvy možnosť vidieť v zbierke obchodníka Sergeja Ščukina, ho utvrdili v názore, že kubizmus nie je len výraznou a bezprecedentnou štylistickou inováciou, ale že hnutie predstavuje kľúčový moment pre obnovenie základných vlastností tvorby obrazov, tak ako to robili starovekí Byzantínci a ako to môžeme vidieť v byzantských a ruských ikonách. Vo svojej kľúčovej štúdii *O vzťahu ruskej maľby s Byzanciou a Západom v 13. – 20. storočí (O sviaziakh russkoi žhivopisi s Vizantiei i Zapadom XIII-XX vv)*, ktorá vyšla v Moskve v roku 1913, Gritchenko skúma vývoj tvorby ikon a ich dedičstvo od čias Kyjevskej Rusi. Vzhľadom na formálne vlastnosti ako rozkladanie predmetov na jednoduché geometrické tvary, plošnosť obrazovej plochy a členenie predmetov Gritchenko poukazuje na zreteľné paralely medzi ikonami a kubizmom. Jeho analýza Picassovho kubizmu vrhá svetlo na obrazovú energiu kubistickej maľby, ktorá je obdobou pocitu dynamiky vlastného ikone.

Keď Nikolaj Berďajev v roku 1914 kritizoval Picassa a neskôr, vo verejnej prednáške nazvanej „Kríza umenia“ (1917), znevažoval aj samotný ku-

bizmus, Gritchenko reagoval obhajobou princípov čistej maľby, ktorú, ako bol presvedčený, kubizmus vrátil do moderného umenia. Berďajevovým názorom oponoval v eseji nazvanej „Kríza umenia“. *Súčasná maľba: Pri príležitosti prednášky N. Berďajeva* („Krizis iskusstva“. *Sovremennaja žhivopis: po povodu leksii N. Berdiageva*), ktorá vyšla v roku 1917 v Moskve, kde maliarsky štýl Paula Cézanna (ktorého si Berďajev nesporne cenil) označil za príklad prechodu od konvenčného iluzionizmu k synkretickým hodnotám obsiahnutým v kubistickej absolútnej maľbe.

Gritchenkove diela a diela jeho kyjevských kolegov Alexandry Exterovej a najmä Alexandra Bogomazova sú dôkazom osvojenia si kubizmu, cézanovského uzatvorenia priestoru do obrazu a rozloženia predmetov – vyjadrenia istej „simultánnosti“, ktorú divákovi ponúka ikona. Pokiaľ ide o jeho vlastnú tvorbu, štúdium kompozičných hodnôt a „pravidiel“ organizácie farby v starobylej ikonografii spolu s modernými výdobytkami kubizmu ho priviedli k novým objavom a ku koncepcii „farebného dynamizmu“ (*tsvetodynamos*) – obnove farby ako maliarskeho prvku. Gritchenkova publikácia z roku 1917 nazvaná *Ruská ikona ako umenie maľby (Russkaia ikona kak iskusstvo žhivopisi)* presadzuje transsubstanciáciu predmetu maľby na absolútne, ktoré – rovnako ako ikona, vyžaduje priamy kontakt diváka s umeleckým dielom. Divák si musí v hlave roztriediť a usporiadať jednotlivé zložky a až na základe bezprostredného zážitku si odvodí význam umeleckého diela. Gritchenkove teoretické texty tvoria dôležitý, ale často opomínaný príspevok k teórii a dejinám kubizmu.

## Antonín Dufek: Jaromír Funke. Mezi konstrukcí a emocí

DUFEK, Antonín: *Jaromír Funke. Mezi konstrukcí a emocí*. Kat. výst. Brno a Praha : Moravská galerie v Brně a nakladatelství KANT, 2013, 276 s. ISBN: 978-80-7437-106-6

Významný český fotograf Eugen Wiškovský si v jednom zo svojich dobových článkov o fotografickom motíve zaspomínal na svojho priateľa Jaromíra Funkeho. Dával mu za pravdu, keď hovorieval, že sa „človek nikdy nemá vracat' k svojim starým motívom, ono Vás to niekedy láka“, podotýkal, „ale je to zbytočné, už to nikdy neurobíte lepšie“.<sup>1</sup> A mal zrejme pravdu, pretože išlo o autentickú skúsenosť autora, ku ktorej možno nedospel ihneď, ale dala pritom voľný priechod jeho vášni pre objavovanie nových ciest vo fotografii. Rozsiahla monografia, z pera historika umenia a kurátora Antonína Dufeka, v určitom slova zmysle reprezentuje jeho slová. Funkeho tvorba je tu totiž predstavená v širokom rozsahu námetov, fotografických techník a teoretických postojov.

V roku 2013 usporiadala Moravská galéria v Brne retrospektívnu výstavu významného českého fotografa prvej polovice 20. storočia Jaromíra Funkeho (1896 – 1945) a pri tejto príležitosti bola vydaná aj rozsiahla monografia o jeho živote a tvorbe. Aktívne sa na nej podieľala aj dcéra Jaromíra Funkeho Miloslava Rupešová. Hádám nebudeme ďaleko od pravdy ak skonštatujeme, že v rámci rozsiahleho zoznamu minulých textov a publikácií o Funkem, je práve táto monografia najrozsiahlejšou a najkomplexnejšou svojho druhu vôbec. Pre Antonína Dufeka, kurátora výstavy a autora publikácie, je tvorba Jaromíra Funkeho jednou z podstatných, priam celoživotných bádateľských línií. Kniha je napísaná s mimoriadnou erudíciou postavenou na dokonalom ovládaní biografických faktov, poznaní fotografických súborov, kontaktov, negatívov, celých albumov,

ale aj na širokých znalostiach umelecko-historických kontextov a chápaní celkovej kultúrno-spoločenskej klímy danej doby. Lahkosť, s akou je text napísaný, je dokladom hlbokých znalostí Antonína Dufeka o Jaromírovi Funkem.

Jaromír Funke, podobne ako mnoho iných významných fotografov európskeho významu, v jednotlivých etapách svojej tvorby rozvíjal podnety viacerých avantgardných smerovaní. Takýmto spôsobom posúval poznanie o fotografickom myslení a jeho podobách a to ako jeden z mála fotografov v československom prostredí. Možno aj preto autor monografie zvolil názov svojej štruktúrovanej štúdie *Profesor avantgardy*. Nemyslel pritom na Funkeho pedagogické výkony, ako skôr na dosah Funkeho tvorby, intelektuálneho potenciálu a organizačného zariadenia na celkové smerovanie československej fotografie. Oplyvnil tak podľa Dufeka „snáď všetky odbory, v ktorých fotografia práve v jeho dobe zásadne rozširovala svoje kultúrne poslanie a úžitkové funkcie“. Je presvedčený o tom, že bez Funkeho by česká a slovenská fotografia vyzerala inak. A má pravdu, v dejinách československej fotografie nenájdeme veľa takých príkladov.

Ústredná štúdia Antonína Dufeka chronologicky mapuje život a dielo Jaromíra Funkeho a jednotlivé podkapitoly sú postavené na konkrétnych problémoch, ktoré reprezentujú určité vývojové etapy fotografa. Pre rané obdobia sú ťažiskové najmä analýzy rodinných, kultúrnych, umeleckých a spoločenských východísk autora. Prirodzene vo svojej tvorbe začína tam, kde sa česká fotografia raných 20. rokov nachádzala a to v prostredí piktorialistických tendencií a celkových snáh vyrovnat' sa svojou malebnosťou maliarskym predlohám. V tomto období boli pre začínajúceho fotografa dôležité aj kontakty

<sup>1</sup> WIŠKOVSKÝ, E.: Cesty k motívu. In: *Fotografie*, roč. 4, 1948, č. 5, s. 1.

s Josefom Sudkom, maliarmi Rudolfom Mazuchom a Zdeňkom Rykrom a ďalšími, ktorí tvorili súčasť umeleckého prostredia Kolína, odkiaľ Funke pochádzal. Zlomom vo fotografickom uvažovaní, ktorý Dufek v texte pripomína, bola výstava fotografa Drahomíra Růžičky usporiadaná v Prahe v roku 1923 a zároveň bola doplnená o práce amerických fotografov. Išlo o akési „precitnutie“ Funkeho a zároveň počiatok postupnej emancipácie fotografie, ktorá sa opierala o svoju špecifickosť a nie maliarske efekty. Podľa Dufeka sa prostredníctvom Funkeho rodí tzv. „moderná fotografia“ v našom prostredí. A zrejme Funkeho nebolo viac treba, od tohto obdobia sme svedkami jeho neustálych inovácií obsahov a fotografických postupov. Antonín Dufek kapitoly o *Funkeho zátiší, Abstraktnej fotografii, či Fotografickom poetizme* dopĺňa o citácie z jeho pomerne rozsiahlej teoretickej práce, v rámci ktorej manifestoval niečo, čo by sme mohli nazvať „programom modernej fotografie“. Obsahový súlad medzi interpretáciou fotografií a úryvkami Funkeho textov je mimoriadne dôležitým aspektom štúdie. Autor monografie si veľmi správne uvedomil, že prípadnou absenciou jedného by obmedzil celistvosť poznania fotografickej tvorby a myslenia Funkeho.

Hádám jednou z najpôsobivejších kapitol je Dufekova interpretácia abstraktnej fotografie, ktorá vznikala prostredníctvom hry svetla a tieňa. Tieň totiž vníma ako odvrátenú stranu reality. Rezignácia Funkeho na zobrazovanie predmetného sveta je jedným z jeho vrcholov tvorby. Podľa Dufeka dochádza v súbore *Abstraktné foto* (1927 – 1929) k „obnaženiu média“ samotného. Fotografiu tu možno vnímať ako „kresbu svetlom bez obsahovej zaťažnosti“ a do istej miery ním autor odkazuje k samotnej podstate fotografického média, k jeho ontologickému základu. Dufek v tomto prípade pripomenul aj širšie možné kontexty Funkeho tvorby s dielom Man Raya alebo Lászlo Moholy-Nagya. Z pomerne racionálnej konštruktivistической etapy vývoja sa Funke postupne prepracoval k fotografickému poetizmu, respektíve k surrealistickým tendenciám reprezentovaným slávnym fotografickým cyklom *Čas trvá* (1930 – 1934). V tomto období sa Funke intenzívne zaoberal aj formulovaním definície tzv. emočnej fotografie, ktorá je svojim spôsobom akýmsi eklektickým spojením

predchádzajúcich fotografických skúseností. Možno aj preto Antonín Dufek v tomto zmysle interpretuje Funkeho cyklus *Čas trvá* cez „ustrnutie, ohliadnutie do minulosti, nelineárny čas, ´mentálny čas´ surrealizmu“. K emočnej fotografii sa Funke prihlásil aj v závere svojej tvorby a to cyklom fotografií *Země nenasyčená* (1940 – 1944), ktorá je „istou reakciou na vojnu a zároveň surrealistickou víziou konečného víťazstva prírody nad civilizáciou“.

Antonín Dufek v časti svojej štúdie venoval priestor aj pedagogickému pôsobeniu Jaromíra Funkeho na Škole umeleckých remesiel v Bratislave a neskôr na Štátnej grafickej škole v Prahe. Svoje vlastné vízie o fotografickom médiu tak priamo integroval do vyučovacích osnov a stal sa tak mienkotvorným pedagógom 30. rokov 20. storočia.

Rozsiahla obrazová príloha monografie je autorom knihy starostlivo zoradená, a to od raných Funkeho fotografií (neraz takmer neznámych) až po jeho posledný súbor *Země nenasyčená*. Publikácia je hodnotná aj pre začlenenie antológie textov Jaromíra Funkeho do jej štruktúry. Čitateľ má v podstate prvýkrát možnosť zoznámiť sa s jeho uceleným teoretickým dielom, ktoré bolo roztratené v dobových časopisoch o fotografii, obrázkových magazínoch, alebo sa texty nachádzali v pozostalosti autora. Podrobné bibliografické údaje, súpis výstavných aktivít Jaromíra Funkeho uzatvárajú komplexný pohľad na jeho prácu.

Nestáva sa tak často, v dnešnej uponáhľanej dobe, aby človek pri čítaní Funkeho monografie pocítil prítomnosť času. Akoby Funkeho cyklus *Čas trvá* sa premietol i do obsahu publikácie. Nejde ani tak o rytmus či dĺžku čítania, táto časová os, ktorú máme na mysli, reprezentuje najmä mnohé roky bádateľského úsilia Antonína Dufeka. Čas vymedzený štúdiu Funkeho tvorby nie je nám tu okázalo prezentovaný v siahodlých traktátoch, či efektných formuláciách. Vôbec nie. Prítomnosť tohto „proustovského“ času stojí totiž na drobnostiach, na pohľad nenápadných detailoch, drobných posunoch a spresneniach. Ten čas je veľmi vážny, pretože sa za ním skrýva jednak hlboké poznanie Funkeho diela autorom monografie, ale súčasne sa nevieme akosi zbaviť pocitu, že ide o dialóg, v ktorom i Funke má čo povedať svojmu priateľovi.

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*Bobunka Koklesová*

## Za Ivou Mojžišovou (4. apríl 1939, Bratislava – 26. január 2014, Bratislava)

Zuzana BARTOŠOVÁ



Smrťou Ivy Mojžišovej stratila slovenská umeleckohistorická obec jednu z najvýraznejších osobností posledného polstoročia. Odborníčka na umenie 20. storočia mala niekoľko okruhov tém, ktorým sa hlbšie a zaoberanejšie venovala. Predovšetkým to bolo aktuálne výtvarné dianie šesťdesiatych rokov, jeho

tendencie i osobnosti, a to rovnako slovenské, ako svetové. Obdobie liberálnej politickej atmosféry, kedy aj ona vstúpila svojimi aktivitami do verejného priestoru, ju formovalo nielen k otvorenosti voči novým myšlienkam a novým umeleckým postupom i koncepciám, ale aj otvorenosti voči svetu, pričom sloboda a demokracia bola predpokladom túto otvorenosť žiť. Po invázii vojsk Varšavského paktu do Československa (august 1968) sa zmenila politická atmosféra a o čosi neskôr, po 2. zjazde slovenských výtvarných umelcov (november 1972), sa radikálne obmedzila sloboda prejavu vo výtvarnom umení. Iva Mojžišová reagovala tým, že dlhodobo zamerala svoju pozornosť na oblasti, kam nezasahovala ideológia: intenzívnejšie sa venovala scénografii, ktorá jej aj predtým bola blízka a medzivojnovému umeniu, neskôr aj fotografii. Po Nežnej revolúcii zúročila svoju prácu v týchto sférach vydaním zásadných publikácií i kolektívnych monografií. Uvažovanie o výtvarnej kritike, jej dejinách i aktuálnosti, dominovalo u Ivy Mojžišovej najmä v prechodnom období „kultúrnej zotrvačnosti“<sup>1</sup> rokov 1968 až 1972.

Iva Mojžišová mala všetky predpoklady stať sa mienkotvornou historičkou umenia.<sup>2</sup> Pochádzala z rodiny vzdelancov. Jej otec bol významný lekár-ortopéd, Ján Červeňanský<sup>3</sup>, matka Ľuda bola

<sup>1</sup> Termín „kultúrna zotrvačnosť“ používam vo svojich textoch, ktoré sa vzťahujú k slovenskému výtvarnému umeniu rokov 1968 až 1972: napriek niektorým zásadným negatívnym ideologickým zásahom do kultúry a umenia, ešte stále bolo možné zverejňovať diela, ktoré neakceptovali oficiálnymi štruktúrami deklarovaný príklon k socialistickému realizmu.

<sup>2</sup> O predpokladoch osobnosti vedca/vedkyne, historika/his-

toričky umenia bližšie: MOXEY, K.: Dejiny umenia po smrti „smrti autora“. In: *Minulosť v prítomnosti. Súčasný umenie a umeleckohistorické myšlienky*. Ed. J. BAKOŠ. Bratislava 2002, s. 9-27, cit. s. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Ján Červeňanský (1905 – 1977). Podľa: *Ján Červeňanský. Osobný fond. 1925 – 1977 (2006). Inventár*. Sprac. L. KAMENCOVÁ. Ústredný archív Slovenskej akadémie vied. Bratislava 2008. [www.archiv.sav.sk](http://www.archiv.sav.sk).

priekopníčkou v odbore histórie medicíny.<sup>4</sup> Obaja boli milovníkmi výtvarného umenia a zberateľmi.<sup>5</sup> Iva Mojžišová študovala na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave dejiny umenia a históriu (1956 – 1961). Diplomovú prácu, pri ktorej ju viedla docentka Alžbeta Güntherová-Mayerová, venovala scénografii.

Ešte počas štúdia krátko pôsobila v Galérii mesta Bratislavy, po jeho ukončení vo vydavateľstve Slovenského fondu výtvarných umení – vtedy spolupracovala s časopisom *Acta scaenografica* v Prahe. Roku 1963 získala miesto odbornej asistentky v Kabinete teórie a dejín umenia Slovenskej akadémie vied.<sup>6</sup> Na rovnakom pracovisku, ktoré v priebehu rokov viackrát zmenilo svoj názov i zaradenie v štruktúre Slovenskej akadémie vied, bola Iva Mojžišová zamestnaná až do svojho odchodu do dôchodku (1997). Popri tom, na začiatku deväťdesiatych rokov, krátko externe prednášala na Katedre dejín umenia Filozofickej fakulty Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave. Po roku 2000 pôsobila niekoľko rokov aj v Slovenskej národnej galérii.

Prvé publikované texty zo začiatku šesťdesiatych rokov venovala Iva Mojžišová scénografii a tvorbe scénografov.<sup>7</sup> V polovici desaťročia začala pravidelne prispievať do literárnych časopisov *Slovenské pohľady* a následne aj do *Revue svetovej literatúry* monograficky koncipovanými esejami o tvorbe súčasných umelcov euroamerickej výtvarnej scény. O aktuálnych prehladkach tvorby mladých progresívne orientovaných

domácich autorov písala do odborných časopisov, *Výtvarného života* a pražskej *Výtvarnej práce*, i do kultúrnych rubriek denníkov a pripravila aj niekoľko samostatných výstav s katalógmi. Bola členkou organizačného komitétu i sekretariátu *Danuvius '68*, výstavy, ktorá upozornila medzinárodnú kultúrnu verejnosť na mladé slovenské výtvarné umenie: obstálo v konfrontácii s tvorbou umelcov nielen socialistických krajín, ale i krajín tzv. západnej Európy.<sup>8</sup>

Bola spoluautorkou *Slovníka súčasného slovenského výtvarného umenia*, do ktorého pripravila medailóny o tvorbe dvoch desiatok umelcov, najmä scénických výtvarníkov – spomedzi nich najzávažnejší o Ladislavovi Vychodilovi<sup>9</sup> – a o tvorbe autorov svojej, nastupujúcej generácie (Míry Haberernovej, Vladimíra Popoviča, Michala Studeného, Milana Mravca, Štefana Pruknera) i o čosi staršieho Rudolfa Filu. Cielený záujem prejavila o tvorbu autorov Skupiny Mikuláša Galandu, Vladimíra Kompánka, Milana Lалуhu, Andreja Barčíka<sup>10</sup>, spomedzi nich však predovšetkým o tvorbu Milana Paštéku, a to v období, kedy sa už rozišiel so skupinovou poetikou.

Štúdia *Milan Paštéka* uverejnená v revue *Arx* bola svojím hlbokým porozumením pre tvorivý proces interpretovaného autora nevšedným činom v kontexte dobového písania o súčasnom umení.<sup>11</sup> Ešte pred ňou však Iva Mojžišová publikovala v tom istom periodiku rovnako závažnú štúdiu o umelcovi svetovej výtvarnej scény, Albertovi Giacomettim<sup>12</sup>. Obidva texty zásadným spôsobom determinovali

<sup>4</sup> Ľúta Červeňanská, rod. Stuchlíková (1913 – 2006) absolvovala Filozofickú fakultu odbor história – dejiny umenia – anglistika. Podľa: *Ľúta Červeňanská – Osobný fond. 1918 – 2006. Inventár*. Sprac. L. KAMENCOVÁ. Ústredný archív Slovenskej akadémie vied. Bratislava 2008. www.archiv.sav.sk.

<sup>5</sup> Podľa osobného rozhovoru so zosnulou, na Fullovom obraze *Deti v lese* (1945) dve postavy stojacich dievčatiek predstavujú Ivu a jej sestru Daňu. *Deti v lese*, 1945, olej na plátne, 45 x 56,5 cm. In: MATUŠTÍK, R.: *Ludovít Fulla*. Bratislava 1966, č. k. 75.

<sup>6</sup> Údaje vzťahujúce sa k pracovným pozíciám Ivy Mojžišovej čerpám z interných materiálov Ústredného archívu Slovenskej akadémie vied a z Výročných správ archivovaných v Ústave dejín umenia Slovenskej akadémie vied v Bratislave.

<sup>7</sup> Zatiaľ najúplnejšiu bibliografiu Ivy Mojžišovej priniesol zborník *V hľadani prameňov. Zborník z konferencie konanej v dňoch 24. a 25. septembra 2009 pri príležitosti životného jubilea historičky*,

*teoretický a kritický umenia Ivy Mojžišovej*. Ed. B. KOKLESOVÁ. Bratislava 2010, s. 169-174.

<sup>8</sup> *Danuvius 1968. Medzinárodné nienále mladých výtvarníkov / Biennale internationale des jeunes artistes*. Red. katalógu: I. MOJŽIŠOVÁ – E. KÁRA. Bratislava 1968.

<sup>9</sup> MO (Mojžišová, Iva): Ladislav Vychodil. In: *Slovník súčasného slovenského výtvarného umenia*. Ed. M. VÁROSS a kol. Bratislava 1967, nepag.

<sup>10</sup> Eseje o tvorbe uvedených autorov sú súčasťou knižného výberu textov Ivy Mojžišovej. Pozri MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: *Giacomettiho oko a iné texty zo šesťdesiatych rokov*. Bratislava 1994.

<sup>11</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Milan Paštéka. In: *Arx*, 4, 1970, č. 1-2, s. 159-258.

<sup>12</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Giacomettiho oko (Alberto Giacometti \*1901 † 1966). In: *Arx*, 5, 1971, č. 1-2, s. 191-204.

spôsob nazerania na umelecké snahy konkrétneho umelca. Mali spoločného menovateľa vo filozofii povojnového existencializmu, ktorú vyznával od jeho zrodu Giacometti a s ktorou začala rezonovať tesne pred polovicou šesťdesiatych rokov tvorba Milana Paštéku. V uvedených štúdiách Iva Mojžišová uplatnila svoju vzdelanosť, literárnu i vizuálnu sčítanosť a kultúrny rozhl'ad. Danosti, ktoré bez zbytočného psychologizovania, ale empaticky, ponúkla čitateľovi a otvorila mu tak cestu k porozumeniu výtvarnej tvorbe interpretovaného autora inšpirovaná myšlienkovým svetom Merleau-Pontyho.<sup>13</sup>

Zároveň Iva Mojžišová prehĺbila svoj vedecký výskum v dvoch oblastiach. Bola to scénografia<sup>14</sup> a zabúdané dejiny Školy umeleckých remesiel v Bratislave, ktoré však spolu vnútorne súviseli: avantgardy vnímali disciplíny tzv. úžitkového umenia ako integrálnu súčasť výtvarnej tvorby, čoho si bola Iva Mojžišová vedomá od začiatku svojej publicistickej dráhy.<sup>15</sup> Roku 1968 sa zúčastnila medzinárodnej konferencie *Výtvarné avantgardy a dnešok*, usporiadanej k výročiam vzniku a zániku Školy umeleckých remesiel v Bratislave (1928 – 1938), následne svoj príspevok publikovala.<sup>16</sup> O výsledkoch svojho výskumu sporadicky prednášala a publikovala<sup>17</sup>, aby ho napokon na sklonku svojho života zavŕšila relevantnou a viac než potrebnou monografiou *Škola moderného videnia. Bratislavská ŠUR 1928 – 1939*.<sup>18</sup> Rovnako sa jej podarilo zavŕšiť celoživotný záujem o scénografiu. Ako spoluautorka publikácie *Slovenská divadelná scénografia 1920 – 2000* napísala jej úvod a dejiny zvo-

lenej disciplíny prvej polovice dvadsiateho storočia.<sup>19</sup> Bádanie o Škole umeleckých remesiel prebudilo v Ive Mojžišovej aj záujem o fotografiu.<sup>20</sup>

Umelecko-historické dielo Ivy Mojžišovej je pomerne rozptýlené a donedávna sa vnímalo, napriek jej bohatej publicistickej činnosti v šesťdesiatych rokoch a zásadných štúdiách, ktoré vyšli začiatkom ďalšieho desaťročia v revue *Arts*, ako nie veľmi rozsiahle. Príčin bolo viacero, medzi nimi vystupuje do popredia skutočnosť, že Iva Mojžišová odmietala spolupracovať s ideologizovaným umelecko-historickým bádáním a písaním, radšej sa v ústraní venovala scénografii a výskumu dejín Školy umeleckých remesiel v Bratislave a jej dobovému kontextu.

Situácia v nazeraní na publikačnú činnosť Ivy Mojžišovej sa zmenila po Nežnej revolúcii: vyšli dve jej významné, už spomenuté monografie, jedna z nich v spoluautorstve s mladšou kolegyňou. Rozptýlenosť jej aktivít sa pokúsili prekonať tri sumarizujúce publikácie výberom z relevantných, zverejnených i nezverejnených kritík, esejí a štúdií.<sup>21</sup> Na ich základe a s odstupom času vchádza Iva Mojžišová do povedomia odbornej obce a čitateľskej verejnosti, ktorá ju vnímala predovšetkým ako špecialistku na bratislavskú Školu umeleckých remesiel a slovenskú scénografiu dvadsiateho storočia, aj ako osobnosť, ktorá počas šesťdesiatych rokov intenzívne žila problematikou súčasného svetového a domáceho výtvarného diania, pričom sa nevyhýbala diskusiám a polemikám. V nich bránila umelecké hodnoty, etické i svetonázorové postoje a činy, ktorým verila.

<sup>13</sup> Iva Mojžišová sa v štúdiu *Giacomettiho oko* odvoláva na Mauricea Merleau-Pontyho, v štúdiu *Milan Paštéka* upresňuje zdroj, jeho text *Filozofia vnímania*.

<sup>14</sup> Časom sa Iva Mojžišová venovala aj historickým formám scénografie. Viď KNIESOVÁ, M. – MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I. – ZÁVADOVÁ, K.: *Čaplovičova knižnica. Návrhy divadelných dekorácií a grafika*. Martin 1989.

<sup>15</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Scénická tvorba Bauhausu. In: *Acta scenografica*, 4, 1964, č. 10, s. 185-192.

<sup>16</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Škola umeleckých remesiel v Bratislave. In: *Arts*, 3, 1969, č. 2, s. 7-23.

<sup>17</sup> Napríklad MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Avant-garde Repercussions and the School of Applied Arts in Bratislava, 1928 -1939. In: *Journal of Design History*, 5, 1992, č. 4, s. 273-279; MOJ-

ŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Zakladateľ ŠUR. In: *Artschool ŠUR + ŠUP + ŠÚV = 75. História najstaršej výtvarnej školy na Slovensku*. Ed. I. P. MELUZIN. Bratislava 2007, s. 28-31; tiež Vydrova nová škola, ibidem, s. 32-81.

<sup>18</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: *Škola moderného videnia. Bratislavská ŠUR 1928 – 1939*. Bratislava 2013.

<sup>19</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I. – POLÁČKOVÁ, D.: *Slovenská divadelná scénografia / Slovak Stage Design 1920 – 2000*. Bratislava 2004.

<sup>20</sup> MACEK, V. – MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I. – ŠKVARNA, D.: *Irena Blübová*. Martin 1991; MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: *Fotografické etudy Ladislava Foltyna*. Bratislava 2003.

<sup>21</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ 1994, c. d. (v pozn. 10); Táže: *Giacomettiho smiech?* Bratislava 2009; Táže: *Kritika porozumením*. Zost. M. MOJŽIŠ. Praha 2011.

Osobnostné zameranie na stráženie hodnôt ako takých, Iva Mojžišová prejavila už v závere šesťdesiatych rokov, kedy upriamila svoju pozornosť na výtvarnú kritiku. V novinovom článku *Čoho sa nám nedostáva*<sup>22</sup> poukazuje na priemernosť ako takú, ktorá u nás „rozhoduje o celkovej atmosfére.. a udáva tón“.<sup>23</sup> Kritizuje aktuálnosť za každú cenu, ktorej výsledkom sú „práce zmätené... alebo vypočítavé, bravúrne, no prázdne.. bez vitality.“ Kritizuje aranžovanie namiesto „nepomenovateľného, tajomného, dobrodružného, (toho), čo robí umenie umením“ a volá po poctivosti (umenia i kritiky), po mravnosti ako takej. V tvorbe oceňuje autenticitu a v kritike „vrúcny a láskavý pomer k umeniu, osobne prežitý vzťah“<sup>24</sup> k interpretovanému umeleckému dielu či téme. Tieto nároky možno vnímať v rovine vyznania osobnostného kréda svojho povolania ako poslania.

Etický rozmer umelecko-historického písania hľadala a nachádzala Iva Mojžišová prostredníctvom svojich ďalších textov, v ktorých sa venovala dejinám výtvarnej kritiky<sup>25</sup> a úlohám dejepisu umenia 20. storočia, u nás – podľa nej, začiatkom sedemdesiatych rokov – zanedbávaných<sup>26</sup>, keď už predtým poukázala na negatívny prienik ideológie socializmu do života, životného prostredia i umenia. V eseji *Politika je moderný osud*<sup>27</sup> prekročila hranice umenovedy. Kritizovala etatizmus spoločenského zriadenia, ktoré zrušilo súkromné vlastníctvo, je príčinou zničenia tradičnej krajiny, namiesto ktorej vnútilo ľuďom život v provizóriu panelákov, umenie zotročilo propagandou, pričom o ňom i o ďalších rozhodujú politici, ktorí mu nerozumejú, čoho výsledkom je „socialistická maniera“<sup>28</sup>, ktorá prenikla do všetkých sfér života.

<sup>22</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Čoho sa nám nedostáva. In: *Smena*, 25. 6. 1967.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem. Citované z knižnej reedície článku, in: MOJŽIŠOVÁ 1994, c. d. (v pozn. 10), s. 178-182, cit. s. 179.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, s. 181.

<sup>25</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: O počiatkoch umeleckej kritiky. In: *Arx*, 9-10, 1975-1976, č. 1-4, s. 239-258.

<sup>26</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Trampoty s dejepisom moderného umenia. In: MOJŽIŠOVÁ 1994, c. d. (v pozn. 10), s. 211-218.

V súznení s obrodným procesom liberalizácie spoločnosti druhej polovice šesťdesiatych rokov volá po slobode a spravodlivosti.

Napokon, celú aktivitu Ivy Mojžišovej možno vnímať ako snahu o etickú umenovedu. Písala o vcítení sa do umeleckého činu, o jeho pochopení, ktorému – keď ju presvedčil – pritakala a svoje poznanie odovzdávala prostredníctvom svojich štúdií, esejí a glos čitateľom-divákovi. Z jej kultivovaných textov necítiť úpornú snahu presvedčiť, ani túžbu po neomylnosti. Avšak práve ľahkosť, s akou im rozumieme, dáva odborníkovi možnosť oceniť, koľko poctivej námahy sa za ich napísaním skrýva. Vyznačujú sa rozvážnosťou, čistými myšlienkami, súdnosťou, kultivovaným jazykom, jasným videním. Iva Mojžišová mala zároveň vnímavé oko, neomylný vkus a srdce otvorené k súzneniu, plné empatie k umeniu. Odmietala kalkul a svoju vzdelanosť, rozhladenosť a profesionalitu dávala do služby porozumeniu umeleckým snahám, čo stálo u nej vždy v popredí. Uznávala historickú pamäť a vedela jasne definovať súvislosti vzniku umeleckého diela i jeho pozadia, ukotviť ich v konkrétnom čase a na konkrétnom mieste. Tvorbu, dielo, udalosť, osobnosť autora, dokázala interpretovať s pozitívnou zaujatnosťou v tom najlepšom zmysle slova a s využitím všetkých potrebných reálií i faktov, ktoré ich rámovali v dobovom kontexte i širších horizontoch.

Iva Mojžišová získala za umelecko-historickú činnosť na mimoriadnej úrovni viacero ocenení, okrem iných hodnôt Doctor honoris causa od Vysoké školy výtvarných umení v Bratislave (2011) a prestížnu Cena Nadácie Václava a Dagmar Havlovcov VIZE '97 (2011).<sup>29</sup>

Variant pôvodného textu: MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Niečo o historickom prístupe k modernému umeniu. In: *Únaba o genéze. Zborník BRD MRKP*. Zost. H. RULÍŠEK. Hluboká 1972. Samizdat.

<sup>27</sup> MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Politika je moderný osud. In: *Súkromné listy Skupiny Mikuláša Galandu*. Red. J. MOJŽIŠ. 1968, č. 1, s. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem. Citované podľa reedície MOJŽIŠOVÁ, I.: Politika je moderný osud. In: MOJŽIŠOVÁ 2011, c. d. (v pozn. 22), s. 152.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, s. 157.



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