

## CHAPTER 15 A NEW LANGUAGE OF FORM

### Movements and Names and Important Information

#### • SUPREMATISM

—Artwork consisted of basic forms, pure colors

- **Kasimer Malevich**—(1878–1935)
  - **Red Square** (Painterly Realism: Peasant Woman in Two Dimensions)
  - **Black Square** (1913, p289 #15-5). “The feeling evoked by this contrast is the essence of art.”
  - **White on White** (1918) Malevich’s painting represented an “absolute” of consciousness— not purity or heaven, but...consciousness totally within the painting)
  - Malevich sought the supreme “expression of feeling” in artwork that consisted of basic forms, pure colors and expressed his belief that the essence of the art experience is the perceptual effect of color. His Suprematist paintings were radically pure: basic geometric shapes with a narrow color range.

#### • CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivists challenged Malevich’s Suprematist ideals, **devoted selves to industrial design, visual communications and the applied arts**—ideals which were attuned to the new communist society. Forged a unity between art and technology. **Combined words and visual images.**

- **Aleksei Gan** (1893–1942). Stated that tectonics, texture and construction—the three principles of Constructivism (tectonics: “pertaining to building or construction” [from Webster’s Dictionary]).
- **El Lissitzky** (1890–1941). An instrumental force in working w/Constructivist ideals; — exchanged ideas and worked with artists and designers of De Stijl and the Bauhaus. — Experimented with visual relationships, contrasts, positive/negative space and grids. Had a clear understanding of the printing process and worked with pasteup methods and drafting instruments. — Interesting to note: p291, Lissitzky presages use of photomechanical method for setting type. — His work had strong influence upon Swiss Typographer Jan Tschichold. Read pp289–299, especially:
  - **\*\*Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge** (1919) p290 #15-9
  - Book Cover for the **Isms of Art** (with Hans Arp [1924] p293 #15-18–15-21
  - Exhibition Poster (1929) p268, 267 #17)
  - **“A Tale of Two Squares”** (1922) p303, #15-53 Dutch version for De Stijl magazine)

Additional work in which El Lissitzky strongly participated:

- Veshch/Gegenstand/Objet (1919) p291 #15-10, 11, 12). Russian-published Trilingual journal
- **Broom** (1922) Radical American magazine. p291, #15-12
- **Merz (with Kurt Schwitters)**
- **Alexander Rodchenko** (1891–1956). Experimented with typography, photography and montage. Felt a sense of responsibility to society through his work . P295, 296 #15-25–15-29
- The **Stenberg Brothers**: Georgy (1900–1933) and Vladimer (1899–1982). P270 #15-32, 15-33
- **INFLUENCED BY CONSTRUCTIVISM**
  - **Henryk Berlewi** (1894–1967). Used mathematical placement of geometric forms to promote commercial advertising as a vehicle to abolish the division between the artist and society. p306 #15-62, 63.
  - **Ladislav Sutnar** (1897–1976). A supporter of functional design.
  - **Laslow Moholy-Nagy**. pp308, 309 #15-69, 15-70. Note the caption to 15-70 denoting the impression of the radical design with words runing vertically, with bold sans serif type and bullets and bars!!! Moholy-Nagy is a PROMINENT figure in the Bauhaus (Chapter 16).

#### • DE STIJL

— (1917–1932). Sought universal laws of equilibrium and harmony for art, and the expression of the mathematical structure of the universe and the universal harmony of nature.

- **Piet Mondrian** (1872–1944). A painter.
- **Theo van Doesburg** (1883–1931). **As Dada artist used pseudonym I.K. Bonset.** Promoted theory of Elementarism, declaring *the diagonal to be a more dynamic compositional principle than the horizontal or vertical.* pp301 and 303 #15-43–15-52 (note: 15-51 is collaboration w/Kurt Schwitters).
- **Gerrit Rietveld** (1888–1964). **Schroeder House** (1924) p303 #15-54) —the principles of De Stijl in architecture.