

## **'Berlin Sees Bizarre Russian Art Show': The Press Coverage of the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (1922) and the Perception of Russia's Modernist Art**

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# 'Berlin Sees Bizarre Russian Art Show': The Press Coverage of the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (1922) and the Perception of Russia's Modernist Art

Miriam Leimer

The *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (First Russian Art Exhibition) that took place in Berlin in 1922 was an important event for the development of modernism. International artists and patrons visited the show at the Galerie van Diemen that combined paintings from late Tsardom and the pre-revolutionary avant-garde with the recent artistic production of Russia's non-objective art movements. While the role of the Van Diemen show for the progressive international art scene in the early 1920s has long been acknowledged,

little is known about the perception of this 'Russian' labeled modernism among the general public that encountered now-iconic art works by Vladimir Tatlin, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and Kazimir Malevich. By analyzing the coverage of the exhibition in newspapers and art journals, mostly from the Weimar Republic, this article highlights the Western interpretation of the newly discovered suprematism and constructivism as well as their radical new aesthetics.

**Keywords:** Constructivism, Erste Russische Kunstausstellung, First Russian Art Exhibition, historical exhibitions, international modernism, non-objective art, press coverage, suprematism

The *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (First Russian Art Exhibition) that was held at Berlin's Galerie van Diemen & Co. in 1922 was in many ways an exceptional event. For the first time since the beginning of World War I, a broad international audience had the chance to experience the latest achievements of art from Russia as well as other parts of the decaying tsarist empire. The show, which was installed by the Ukrainian-born artist David Shterenberg with the assistance of Natan Altman and Naum Gabo, consisted of roughly 1,000 artworks (Figures 1, 2).<sup>1</sup> Paintings and sculptures from the last decade, graphic works and political posters, architectural and stage designs as well as examples of applied arts were on display at Berlin's grand boulevard Unter den Linden.

The idea to hold an exhibition of art from post-revolutionary Russia in Germany went back to 1918. In the following years, several protagonists with different intentions tried to realize the show, but due to financial difficulties and political conflicts, both in Germany and Russia, the efforts came to nothing. Things changed in 1922, when the Treaty of Rapallo eased



Figure 1. The Organizers of the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* surrounded by sculptures from Naum Gabo and Alexander Archipenko, and paintings by David Shterenberg, Berlin, 1922. From left: David Shterenberg, head of IZO Narkompros; David Maryanov, representative of the Russian secret services; Natan Altman; Naum Gabo; Diemen (photograph by Willy Römer). © bpk/Kai-Annett Becker/ Berlinische Galerie, all rights reserved, used with permission.

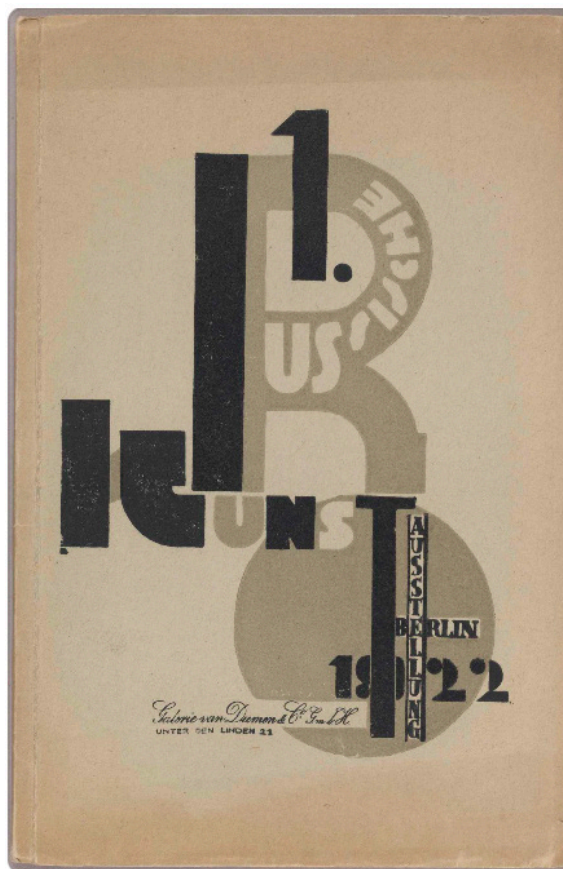


Figure 2. Cover by El Lissitzky for the catalog accompanying the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung*, Berlin 1922 (public domain).

the political tensions between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Weimar Republic and paved the way for an official exhibition that was organized by the Soviet People's Commissariat for Enlightenment, headed by Anatoly Lunacharsky.

On October 15, 1922, the *First Russian Art Exhibition* was finally opened with a festive ceremony. The ground floor of the gallery featured rather traditional figurative art that clicked with the viewing habits of a Western audience (Figure 3). Among the exhibits were paintings by the *Peredvizhniki* that followed in the realistic style of the nineteenth century. While the *Mir iskusstva* movement, whose aesthetics and aims corresponded with Western turn-of-the-century art movements such as Art Nouveau, was not reflected adequately, the show gave many examples of Russia's impressionism. Also on the ground floor were works by pre-revolutionary avant-garde movements such as *Knave of Diamonds* that had adapted Western post-impressionist styles. The rooms on the first floor, however, were dedicated to Russian modernism. As the critic Ernst Collin (1922) put it for the newspaper *Berliner Familien-Zeitung*, 'Modernism is on the rampage in the upper halls, where—to no one's surprise—it has already coined some new "isms": suprematism, constructivism.'<sup>2</sup> This yet unknown non-objective art caused a great furor. Suprematist paintings by Kazimir Malevich, originally from Kyiv, and his disciples, spatial constructions made of non-traditional art materials, and works from the laboratories of constructivism provoked surprise, anger, and, last but not least, acknowledgement among the visitors of the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (Figure 4).



Figure 3. Boris Kustodiev, *Merchant's Wife at Tea* (1918), reproduced in *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* (1922) to illustrate the novel *Das Geheimnis der Pauline Farland* by Hans von Kahlenberg (public domain).



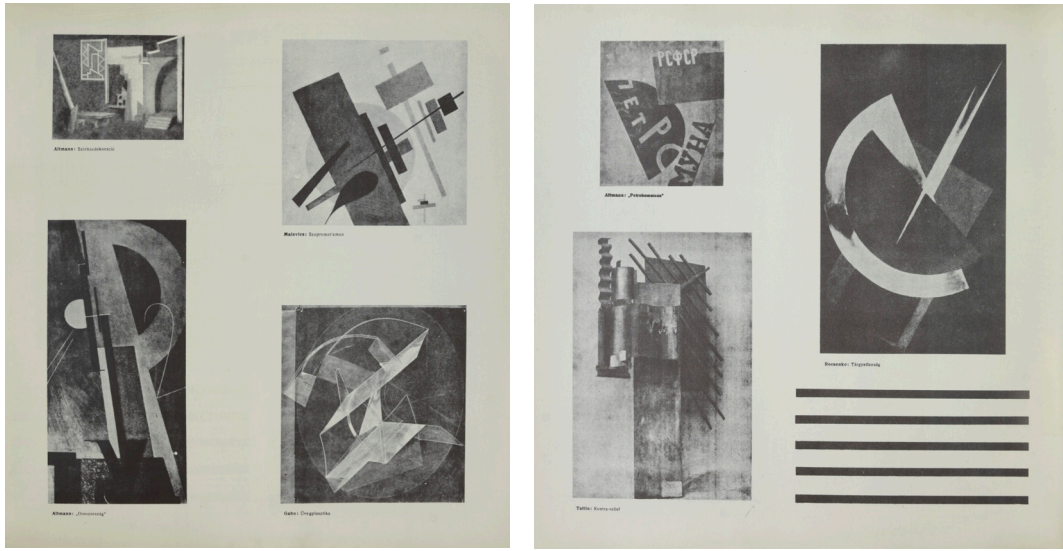


Figure 4. Reproductions of non-objective works from the Van Diemen show by Natan Altman, Naum Gabo, Kazimir Malevich, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and Vladimir Tatlin accompanying Lajos Kassák's article 'A berlini orosz kiállításához' ('The Russian Exhibit in Berlin') in the magazine *MA: Aktivista-Folyóirat* (1922, public domain).

Many key figures of the progressive international art scene crossed paths at the 1922 exhibition. Patron Katherine Sophie Dreier, who had founded the Société Anonyme Inc. in New York together with artists Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, bought eight works at the exhibition (Wünsche 2021).<sup>3</sup> Modern artists such as Kurt Schwitters and Hans Richter visited the Van Diemen show and were deeply impressed by the 'Russian'-labeled non-objectivity (Häbpler 2017)—a term also used in the catalog accompanying the exhibition ('*Erste Russische Kunstausstellung...*' 1922: 12).<sup>4</sup> But as an ambiguous event caught between artistic demands and political claims, the exhibition was not solely meant to serve as an encounter of the Russian and the Western art world.<sup>5</sup> As an instrument for cultural diplomacy involving elements of political propaganda, the exhibition's aim was to address a much broader public. The acceptance and appreciation of the exhibition among the audience were therefore a decisive factor for the organizers.

While the significance of the Van Diemen show within the international art scene has already been highlighted,<sup>6</sup> this article sheds light on the public's perception of the exhibition as reflected in the press coverage that accompanied the show in Berlin as well as its second stop in Amsterdam.<sup>7</sup>

An innumerable number of articles in Russia, Germany, the Netherlands, and other European countries were written on the occasion of the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung*. Even American art journals published reviews of the 'bizarre Russian art show,' as the critic Flora Turkel (1922) entitled her report for *American Art News*. Presenting contemporary coverage of the Van Diemen show that ranged from small announcements in high-circulating newspapers to detailed reviews in short-lived art magazines, this article focuses on the perception of Russian non-objective art by different sub-publics. Using a microhistorical approach, this analysis goes beyond the event itself and indicates that the coverage of the modernist art at the Van

Diemen show challenged the hitherto untouched narrative of the West as the sanctuary of modernism.

### Awaited with Curiosity: Unknown Art from the Land of the Soviets

The Van Diemen show was widely covered in the blooming press landscape of the Weimar Republic. Daily newspapers, weekly magazines, and renowned art journals, reflecting various sub-publics from revolutionary leftists to right-wing conservatives, reported about the exhibition. Well-known art critics such as Paul Landau (1922) for *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* or Paul Fechter (1922) for *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote longer reviews. Party organs like *Vorwärts*, the official newspaper of Germany's socialist party, reported about the exhibition; so did established culture magazines, such as *Deutsche Rundschau*, which was founded back in 1831 (Schikowski 1922; Dresdner 1923). The architect Adolf Behne (1922) reviewed the exhibition for the weekly magazine *Die Weltbühne*, one of the most important voices of the left-wing intellectual milieu in the Weimar Republic, and Paul Westheim wrote a critical article for his art magazine *Das Kunstblatt*, which was among Germany's leading journals on contemporary art of that period.

Even in the run-up to the opening, the Van Diemen show was already highly anticipated among Berlin's art critics. In the bi-monthly art and culture journal *Der Cicerone*, Curt Bauer (1922a) noted, 'A greater thrill is not to be expected in Berlin's exhibition scene until October, [when the Galerie Van Diemen's new exhibition of Russian art] provides a complete overview of the art aspirations of this so far rather closed area.' And Landau (1922) stated that the exhibition will 'now at least satisfy some of our curiosity [and will show] what all these tendencies like dynamism, suprematism, tatlinism, etc. are all about.' Other critics regarded organizing the exhibition to be a considerable achievement in its own right. The art critic Siegfried Lilienthal, who published his article under the pseudonym Fritz Stahl in *Berliner Tageblatt*, explained, 'If the People's Commissariat of Soviet Russia wanted to prove with the exhibition that this Russia has a sense of and means for art, then it has succeeded.' He further doubted 'whether any other state [...] would make such an effort today' (Stahl 1922). Behne (1922) felt the same way. 'It is utterly inconceivable,' he argued, 'that even in a hundred years an official German exhibition would so frankly embrace art, the times, and all that is of current vitality' (p. 545). The mere fact that the exhibition materialized was considered proof of the Bolsheviks' progressiveness. Inevitably the show became promotion—if not propaganda—for the Bolshevik government.

The exhibition was almost unanimously welcomed as an event itself, but the overall impression that the show made on the critics differed widely and was influenced by their respective political leanings. Gertrud Alexander, one of the earliest members of the German communist party and head of the feuilleton of the party's central organ, *Die Rote Fahne*, praised the exhibition as 'overwhelmingly rich.' 'These first recent works of art to reach

Germany from the blockaded Russia,' she continued euphorically, 'prove, in their emphatically life-affirming character, in their colorful and eagerly innovative elements [that] out of Socialist soil new, great art, and a new, creative [...] culture can be created' (Alexander 1922a). And John Schikowski (1922) for *Vorwärts* declared with similar enthusiasm, 'The Russian exhibition offers an inexhaustible wealth of inspiration not only for our artists, but also for the art-loving public.' Their praise for the exhibition was obviously not only determined by the artistic dimension, but by their pro-Soviet attitude. Others were less excited. Alfred Kuhn (1922) made a roundabout statement in *Kunstchronik und Kunstmarkt*, presuming that this exhibition 'was supposed to serve as a kind of propaganda for the high valuation of the intellectual powers on the part of the young Russian rulers' (p. 111) and Collin (1922) stated in his article entitled 'Bolschewistische Kunst' ('Bolshevik Art') that the exhibition 'wants to give something like a communist art manifesto.'

### **A Task for Apprentice House Painters? The Perception of Non-Objective Painting**

The first floor of the Van Diemen gallery was dedicated to the 'association of left-wing groups,' as Shterenberg (1922) had called Russia's cubism, suprematism, and constructivism in the preface of the accompanying catalog (p. 4). The cubist and cubo-futurist paintings hardly caused any sensation among the public—maybe because they were rather similar to the Western examples of this already outdated style. Also, the works by Wassily Kandinsky, Marc Chagall, and Alexander Archipenko, all well-known to the Western audience, provoked little appreciation. On the contrary, art critics like Adolph Donath (1922) for the magazine *Kunstwanderer* became aware that these three artists were 'not the representatives of new Russian art.' 'They too certainly represent Russian art,' he continued, 'but what they brought and bring to us disappears in the mass of Russian art production' (p. 95).

Suprematism, on the other hand, was hardly known outside Russia until 1922. The Berlin exhibition was foreigners' first opportunity to encounter suprematist paintings by Malevich and other representatives of the movement, as well as examples from the Art School of Vitebsk, where Malevich taught his theory of a non-objective art of pure feelings. Even though Malevich had launched his suprematism back in 1915, many critics linked the show's artistic radicalism to the political dynamics of the post-revolutionary era. Collin (1922) claimed that 'the young Russian artists in the land of revolution seem to think it is necessary to also throw out all artistic tradition.' And Turkel (1922) stated: 'Like the Bolsheviks in politics, the "suprematists" make their own rules. They express their revolutionary feelings in painting a great black circle or a red geometrical form on the canvas [...] lacking any reasonable semblance to art.' 'These experiments,' she further argued, 'are interesting documents of a nation striving and struggling for its existence, but have nothing to do with art' (Tukel 1922).

Although the show included suprematist paintings by Ivan Kliun, Aleksandr Drevin, and Olga Rosanova, the art critics clearly identified Malevich as the leading exponent of this yet unknown art movement. He was entitled as 'inventor of this enterprise' (Fechter 1922) as 'father of all newer art theories,' or as 'leader of the Inpremarists [sic!]' (Landau 1922). Among the four suprematist paintings that Malevich presented was one of his *White on White* compositions from the 1918 series.<sup>8</sup> Westheim (1922) gave an accurate description when he said, 'On a white ground there is nothing but white. Simplification has been taken to such an extreme that nothing remains within the white frame but an empty expanse of white' (p. 494). He called this painting, which marked a—temporary—end to Malevich's easel painting, an 'intellectual experimentation' (p. 494). While Westheim understood or at least acknowledged Malevich's intentions, he gave a clear rebuff to Aleksandr Rodchenko, who exhibited the monochrome red canvas from his series of *Pure Colors* from 1921.<sup>9</sup> 'Rodchenko paints a small quadrilateral [...] in glowing crimson,' Westheim (1922) drily stated, 'a task of the kind that is set in our craft schools as part of the final examination for apprentice house painters' (p. 498).

In general, the new terms suprematism and constructivism and their aesthetic concepts—not to mention the declared distinctions between them—challenged the art critics. Landau (1922) hence freely admitted, 'Unfortunately, I must confess that the finer differences in the individual abstract directions have not become quite clear to me.' And the critic Huntley Carter (1923), whose impressions were included in the article 'Queer Bolshevik Art in Berlin' for the American magazine *Arts and Decoration*, declared: 'Some of these [works] make no pretense at representing nature, and the Russian artists [...] insist on drawing a distinction between "construction" and "composition" that Mr. Carter was unable to follow.'

Others did not even try to understand the intentions of Russia's modernist styles, but harshly criticized them. For *De Maasbode* from Rotterdam, an anonymous critic wrote a bitter statement on the occasion of his visit to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, where the second stop of the *First Russian Art Exhibition* opened on April 28, 1923. His judgment on the non-objective art that he called an 'assembly of rags and cut wooden clogs' was devastating. To him, these works of Russian modernism were 'negation! Negation of everything that is good and clean, negation of line and color and image, negation of all human, warm, vivid' ('De Russische tentoonstelling' 1923). Albert Dresdner (1923) in *Deutsche Rundschau* came to a similar conclusion when he claimed that suprematism and constructivism were a representation of the 'terrible abyss of alienation from life on which contemporary art stands, indeed into which it is already threatening to sink' (p. 317). These critics were expressing a general cultural pessimist attitude, turning against any non-objective art that refused to represent visible reality.



## A Groping Attempt?

### Spatial Constructions and their Reflections in the Press

While the non-objective paintings were hardly understood, this is especially true for the spatial constructions, which formed the majority of the small sections of sculptures. Among the exhibits were recent works by the Latvian artist Karl Ioganson, the brothers Vladimir and Georgy Stenberg, Konstantin Medunetsky, and Rodchenko; they all experimented with volume, materials, and motion. The German public was the most curious about Vladimir Tatlin, about whose 'New Machine Art' and *Monument for the Third International* (1920) rumors already circulated.<sup>10</sup> His representation at the First Russian Art Show, however, did not meet the expectations. Only three works were on display: the small watercolor *Sailor and Chinese* (1910/12),<sup>11</sup> a stage design for Mikhail Glinka's opera *A Life for the Tsar* (1836) from 1913,<sup>12</sup> and one counter-relief.<sup>13</sup> Landau (1922) hence noted disappointedly, 'Tatlin, the creator of "Tatlinism," appears in the exhibition as a shadowy figure.' And in regards to Tatlin's counter-relief, Max Osborn (1922) admitted, 'You can see by him a "Counter-Relief" [...] with which I do not know what to do.' Schikowski (1922) came to a more positive evaluation of the counter-relief and the other spatial constructions made of non-traditional art materials. He perceived them as a 'completely new territory [where] one feels holy seriousness and hot, honest struggle everywhere.' Still, he also acknowledged that much 'remains a doubtful experiment, a groping attempt.' Other critics had problems grasping the spatial constructions in their familiar categories of image and sculpture. Collin (1922) summed up these difficulties in the following way: 'Whether the constructivists are—or were—painters, to whom the smooth surface of the picture no longer gave room to let off steam, or whether they are sculptors to whom the common sculptural material no longer said anything, is difficult to determine, and it also rather does not matter.'

### A Successful Press Coup: The Organizers and Their Appreciation in the Press

The spatial works at the Van Diemen show thus caused few positive reactions. Overall, they were perceived more as a group than as individual, stand-alone works. Exceptions were the sculptural works by Gabo. Like his colleagues Shterenberg and Altman, Gabo cleverly used the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* to present a wide range of his own artistic production. His extensive presentation at Van Diemen's became the starting point of his career in the West (Lodder 2010)—and the press' reactions testify to the success of this strategy. Indeed, his partially figurative, partially non-objective constructions of interlaced planes became a small sensation (Figure 5). 'Gabo should be emphasized in the sculpture,' explained Kuhn (1922), while Osborn (1922) addressed his sculptures as 'strangely fantasy-stimulating.' And even the critical Collin (1922) mentioned Gabo's 'constructed heads from cardboard,' which were 'not at all clumsily made.'



Figure 5. Naum Gabo, *Constructed Head No. 2* (ca. 1916), reproduced in the catalog of the Berlin exhibition 1922. © Graham and Nina Williams, all rights reserved.

Shterenberg's paintings and graphic works received even more of a response. Landau (1922) noted that 'Shterenberg is a real artist' and the 'finest and most mature painter' who treated his painting with 'extreme delicacy.' 'The most valuable new acquaintance is Shterenberg,' explained Osborn (1922), 'not a stirrer, but a painter of unusual sensitivity.' Bauer (1922b) paid tribute to his 'very fine art form.' Kuhn (1922) raved about Shterenberg's 'fine colorism,' his 'extraordinary skill' and his 'rare sense of proportion.' Fechter (1922) called his works 'very tasteful,' and Behne (1922) found his paintings were 'among the most interesting works.' Furthermore, his paintings and graphic works were reproduced in various magazines and newspapers (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Clockwise: Works by David Shterenberg, Abram Arkhipov, Aleksandr Gerasimov and Natan Altman reproduced in *Zeitbilder* (1922), a supplement to the Berlin newspaper *Vossische Zeitung* (public domain).

Altman, the third organizer of the show (Figure 7), was also widely acclaimed in the press for his diversity of style and technique, ranging from realistic sketches of Lenin to non-objective theater decorations. Landau (1922) regarded him as a 'very personal and powerful artist' and Bauer (1922b) called him a 'spirited painter.' According to Alexander (1922b), Altman's art was seeking to 'influence the consciousness of society in the direction of greater sociality.' And Collin (1922) considered him to be 'one of the most talented among these young Russian artists.'

Altman, as well as his fellow organizers, was also perceived through another lens. Like Shterenberg and Gabo, he was of Jewish origin. Several works of his, including his self-portrait *Head of a Young Jew* (1916),<sup>14</sup> dealt with his Jewish heritage (Figure 8). In the Yiddish art and literary émigré magazine *Milgroym*, the Polish artist Henryk Berlewi (1923/2018) commented on the 'Jewish Artists in Contemporary Russian Art' at the Van Diemen show, praising Altman as 'an "encyclopedist" in that sense of the word. His work exhibits the sum of all the forms that have been achieved in recent years.'

However, the appreciation for Gabo, Shterenberg, and Altman was not solely caused by the quality of their works, the diversity of motifs, or their complex artistic identities. As organizers of the show, they made sure to trump the other participants. Their works were displayed at the most prominent spot in the central gallery hall, a separate paragraph in the



Figure 7. Nathan Altman in front of his paintings at the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (курсив). © Boris Arvatov, *Natan Altman* (Berlin 1924), all rights reserved.

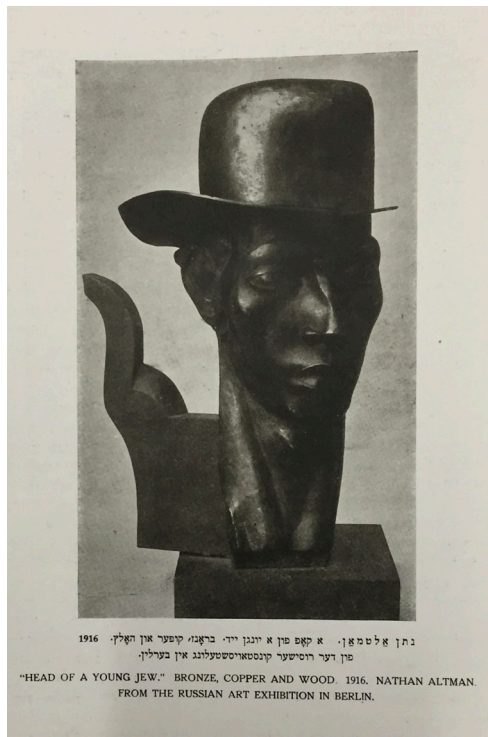


Figure 8. Nathan Altman, *Head of a Young Jew* (Self-Portrait), 1916, reproduced in the Yiddish art and literature magazine *Milgroim* (1923) (public domain).



catalog's introduction was devoted to each of them, and several of their works were reproduced in the catalog. Hence the public perception of these three non-canonical approaches to Russian modernism was undoubtedly influenced by their strategic showcasing. It is furthermore likely that their moderate approach to non-objectivism, still including hints of visible reality, was more appealing to the mainstream taste of the time.

## A Whole Heap of German Newspapers in Russia

The press coverage of the Van Diemen show is as vivid and diverse as the event itself. If the exhibition served the goal of being an act of cultural diplomacy by the then internationally isolated RSFSR, it can be considered a success for the Soviet organizers. After the news about the Civil War and the Great Famine that had been dominating the press coverage about Russia, the exhibition at Van Diemen's was among the first major events that framed the Bolshevik government in a positive manner. It was intended to convince the Western public that art, culture, and thus life, were flourishing in Soviet Russia after the Revolution of 1917. The environment in which the exhibition took place further served this strategy. Located at a precious urban palace from the eighteenth century, the gallery space of the Galerie van Diemen provided an atmosphere that insulated this official presentation from the RSFSR's ongoing problems.

Critics acknowledged the 'the splendor' and the 'incomparable location' of this 'outstanding new foundation' (Kuhn 1923: 289), but also criticized it saying that the 'luxurious bourgeois environment of Unter den Linden' gave no indication that this exhibition had come from a country going 'through the painful struggle of attaining Communism' (Kállai 1923/2002: 410–411).

How important the public reactions expressed in the press were to the Russian officials is proven by the fact that Anatoly Lunacharsky's own article about the Berlin exhibition dealt extensively with the German press coverage. In fact, Lunacharsky (1924) gave a detailed meta—press review in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*, paraphrasing articles by Landau, Stahl, and many others (pp. 176–183). The Russian art critic Jacob Tugendhold also referred to the press coverage for the magazine *Russkoe Iskustvo*. He evaluated the broad public effects of the exhibition in even more detail and stated that

'It aroused great interest among the public [...], and a whole heap of newspaper clippings lying in front of me testifies to the great seriousness with which the foreign press reacted to the exhibition [...]. These impressions, of course, [...] are varied. But there is something in common in them. Above all, the foreign press welcomes the exhibition as the first "bridge" between the culture of Russia and the West.'

Public opinions on Russia's non-objective art were polyphonic. While some connected the radical new art forms to the political changes in post-revolutionary Russia, others mourned their 'alienation from life.' But



in either case, the coverage in the press served to establish new terms like suprematism, spatial construction, and production art, or constructivism, in a broader public discourse. This was also true for the artists, who suddenly appeared on the international stage of modernism. Some, like Shterenberg and Altman, soon disappeared again, while others, like Gabo, used the presentation at the Van Diemen show and the positive press response to launch their careers in the West from fall 1922 onwards.

However, even if many critics did not entirely understand the metaphysical motives of suprematism and the life-designing ambition of constructivism, they acknowledged the fact that the non-objective art from Soviet-Russia presented something new. While Russia's more traditional art and even the pre-revolutionary avant-garde were predominantly dismissed as a 'Paris greenhouse product' (Schikowski 1922) or 'a tragic caricature of Western Europe' (Scheffler 1922), the non-objective art was perceived as independent from the West. Thus, at least parts of the general public acknowledged through press coverage that the artistic production from Soviet Russia provided an impetus, if not a threat, to the Western sanctuary of modernism. From this point of view, the words of the critic from the *Deutsche Wochenzeitung für die Niederlande und Belgien* seem prophetic: 'What is shown here in abstract and constructive objects is likely to shake, if not overturn, Western creative practices' (H 1923).

1. For the newest research on the *First Russian Art Exhibition*, see Wünsche and Leimer 2022.
2. All translations of newspaper reviews are the author's own unless otherwise noted.
3. Dreier bought six works for the Société Anonyme Inc.; she further purchased two gouaches by Popova for her private collection.
4. The Russian word *bespredmetnost'* denotes a lack of physical subject matter, i.e. abstraction, not a lack of objectivity.
5. The limitation of terms like 'Russia' and 'the West' must be taken in consideration given that the First Russian Art Exhibition was frequently visited by artists from different regions, e.g., Central and Eastern Europe, and even more so because many key figures of 'Russian' art, such as Kazimir Malevich and Oleksandra Ekster, were from Ukraine. See Passuth 1983; Forgács 2002; Mudrak 2022.
6. The Berlinische Galerie's exhibition project *Stationen der Moderne (Stations of Modernism)* canonized the Van Diemen show in 1988 as an important step in the development of artistic modernism in the 20th century. See Adkins 1988; Richter 1988.
7. For recent research on the second stop of the First Russian Art Exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1923, see Ostrovskaja 2019.
8. In the catalog of the Van Diemen show, the painting is listed as no. 126 'Weiß auf weiß' (*Erste Russische Kunstausstellung 1922*: 19). It remains

- uncertain if it was the same painting that nowadays belongs to the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York (object no. 817.1935).
9. Aleksandr Rodchenko, *Pure Color Red*, 1921, now on permanent loan to the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art in Moscow. Van Diemen catalog no. 166, 'Rote Farbe.'
  10. See for example the poster *Die Kunst ist tot—Es lebe die neue Maschinenkunst Tatlins* [Art is Dead—Long live Tatlin's New Machine Art] at the First International Dada Fair, Otto Burchard Gallery, Berlin, 1920.
  11. Vladimir Tatlin, *Sailor and Chinese*, 1910–12, now in the collection of the A. N. Radishchev State Art Museum in Saratov. Van Diemen catalog no. 506 'Matrose, A.'
  12. Vladimir Tatlin, *Stage design for Mikhail Glinka's opera A Life for the Tsar (1836)*, 1913, now at the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, inventory no. 9299. Van Diemen catalog no. 507 'Wald, Theaterdekoration, Tem.'
  13. Vladimir Tatlin, *Counter-relief*, c. 1915–16, Van Diemen catalog no. 569 'Contre-Relief.' According to Nakov (1983b: 30), Tatlin's counter-relief was probably destroyed.
  14. Natan Altman, *Head of a Young Jew (Self-Portrait)*, 1916, now at the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, inventory no. sk-1195. Van Diemen catalog no. 537 'Kopf eines jungen Juden.'

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