



**INVENTING
ABSTRACTION
1910–1925**

**HOW A RADICAL IDEA
CHANGED
MODERN ART**

MoMA



INVENTING ABSTRACTION 1910–1925

HOW A RADICAL IDEA
CHANGED
MODERN ART

LEAH DICKERMAN

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

MATTHEW AFFRON
YVE-ALAIN BOIS
MASHA CHLENOVA
ESTER COEN
CHRISTOPH COX
HUBERT DAMISCH
RACHAEL Z. DELUE
HAL FOSTER
MARK FRANKO
MATTHEW GALE
PETER GALISON
MARIA GOUGH
JODI HAUPTMAN
GORDON HUGHES
DAVID JOSELIT
ANTON KAES
DAVID LANG
SUSAN LAXTON
GLENN D. LOWRY
PHILIPPE-ALAIN MICHAUD
JAROSLAW SUCHAN
LANKA TATTERSALL
MICHAEL R. TAYLOR

CONTENTS



**PABLO PICASSO:
THE CADAQUÉS
EXPERIMENT**

YVE-ALAIN BOIS



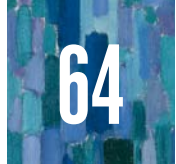
**COLORS AND GAMES:
MUSIC AND ABSTRACTION,
1909 TO 1912**

DAVID LANG



**VASILY KANDINSKY,
WITHOUT WORDS**

LEAH DICKERMAN



**MR. KUPKA AMONG
VERTICALS**

LANKA TATTERSALL



ON THE MOVE

HUBERT DAMISCH



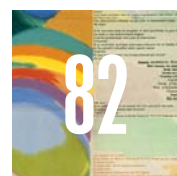
**ABSTRACTION
CHEZ DELAUNAY**

GORDON HUGHES

7

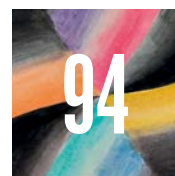
FOREWORD

GLENN D. LOWRY



**CONTRASTS OF COLORS,
CONTRASTS OF WORDS**

MATTHEW AFFRON



**LÉOPOLD SURVAGE'S
PAPER CINEMA**

JODI HAUPTMAN



WITH COLOR

RACHAEL Z. DELUE



**FRANCIS PICABIA:
ABSTRACTION
AND SINCERITY**

MICHAEL R. TAYLOR



**FERNAND LÉGER:
METALLIC SENSATIONS**

MATTHEW AFFRON



**GIACOMO BALLA:
THE MOST LUMINOUS
ABSTRACTION**

ESTER COEN

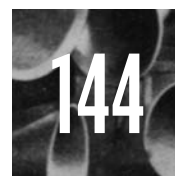
9

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



PAROLE IN LIBERTÀ

JODI HAUPTMAN



**MUSIC, NOISE,
AND ABSTRACTION**

CHRISTOPH COX



**VORTICISM: PLANETARY
ABSTRACTION**

MATTHEW GALE



PAINTING STRIPPED BARE

DAVID JOSELIT



**DECORATION AND
ABSTRACTION
IN BLOOMSBURY**

MATTHEW AFFRON



**AGAINST
THE CIRCLE**

RACHAEL Z. DELUE

12

INVENTING ABSTRACTION

LEAH DICKERMAN



**EARLY RUSSIAN
ABSTRACTION,
AS SUCH**

MASHA CHLENOVA



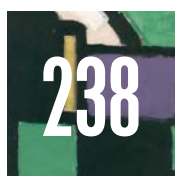
0.10

MASHA CHLENOVA



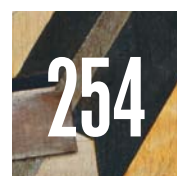
**PIET MONDRIAN:
TOWARD THE
ABOLITION OF FORM**

YVE-ALAIN BOIS



3 DE STIJL MODELS

YVE-ALAIN BOIS



THE SPATIAL OBJECT

MARIA GOUGH

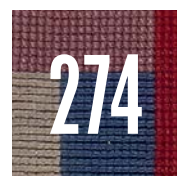


**THE LANGUAGE OF
REVOLUTION**

MARIA GOUGH

370

INDEX



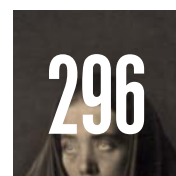
SENSE AND NON-SENSE

HAL FOSTER



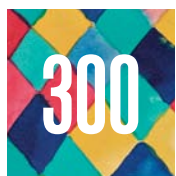
**DANCED ABSTRACTION:
RUDOLF VON LABAN**

MARK FRANKO



**DANCED ABSTRACTION:
MARY WIGMAN**

MARK FRANKO



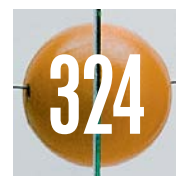
THE COLOR GRID

LANKA TATTERSALL



THE ABSTRACT ENVIRONMENT

MARIA GOUGH

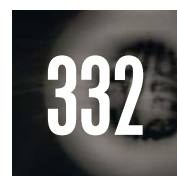


**EARLY ABSTRACTION
IN POLAND**

JAROSLAW SUCHAN

373

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION



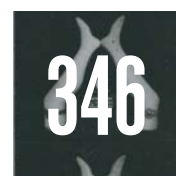
**WHITE SHADOWS:
PHOTOGRAMS AROUND 1922**

SUSAN LAXTON



**RHYTHMUS 21
AND THE GENESIS
OF FILMIC
ABSTRACTION**

PHILIPPE-ALAIN MICHAUD



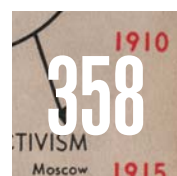
THE ABSOLUTE FILM

ANTON KAES



CONCRETE ABSTRACTION

PETER GALISON



**ABSTRACTION IN 1936
BARR'S DIAGRAMS**

GLENN D. LOWRY



**ABSTRACTION IN 1936
CUBISM AND ABSTRACT
ART AT THE MUSEUM
OF MODERN ART**

LEAH DICKERMAN

376

TRUSTEES OF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



HANJIN SHIPPING is delighted to sponsor *Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925* and to be part of sharing this important exhibition with the global audience of The Museum of Modern Art. Hanjin has been a dedicated supporter of the Museum, sponsoring a variety of exhibitions and programs including *Monet's Water Lilies* in 2009, *Picasso: Guitars 1912-1914* in 2011, and *Ecstatic Alphabets/Heaps of Language* in 2012.

Hanjin Shipping is Korea's largest shipping company, and ranks among the top ten major shipping carriers in the world. A proud supporter of the arts, it makes a priority of partnering with museums worldwide. Our Chairwoman, Eunyong Choi, is passionate about this goal and believes strongly that as the scope of our business extends to every corner of the world, art helps us to communicate with the global community. We are delighted to work with MoMA once again as a sponsor of this extraordinary exhibition about abstraction, its birth and growth, and its international role in modern art.

FOREWORD

ABSTRACTION may be modernism's greatest innovation. It is now so central to our conception of artistic practice that the time before the idea of an abstract artwork made sense has become hard to imagine, yet when those works first appeared—quite suddenly, around 100 years ago—they took many observers by surprise. Beginning in late 1911 and across the course of the next year, a series of artists including Vasily Kandinsky, Fernand Léger, Robert Delaunay, František Kupka, and Francis Picabia exhibited works that marked the beginning of something radically new: they dispensed with recognizable subject matter. The implications of these opening moves were registered with astonishing rapidity. Within five years, abstraction's practitioners included Hans Arp, Vanessa Bell, Sonia Delaunay-Terk, Arthur Dove, Natalia Goncharova, Marsden Hartley, Paul Klee, Mikhail Larionov, Kazimir Malevich, Franz Marc, Piet Mondrian, Hans Richter, Wyndham Lewis, and more.

Inventing Abstraction explores abstraction as both a historical idea and an emergent artistic practice. The story of its sudden flourishing may have something to tell us about the nature of innovation itself: abstraction was not the inspiration of a solitary genius but the product of network thinking—of ideas moving through a nexus of artists and intellectuals working in different media and in far-flung places. Its pioneers were more closely linked than is generally understood. From the start, abstraction was an international phenomenon, as artists and images moved quickly across borders, sharing in a new exhibition and media culture.

Inventing Abstraction accordingly takes a transnational perspective: surveying key episodes in abstraction's early history, it includes work made across Eastern and Western Europe and the United States.

The coming of these first abstract pictures was matched by extraordinary developments in other spheres. Sound poetry, non-narrative dance, and atonal music developed in parallel with pictures that no longer pictured; each jettisoned the weight of convention. These new forms of practice suggest how abstraction at its inception may be seen as a cross-media imperative. *Inventing Abstraction* explores the productive relationships among artists and composers, dancers and poets, in establishing a new modern language for the arts. It brings together a wide range of art forms—paintings, drawings, printed matter, books, sculpture, film, photography, sound recordings, music and dance footage—to draw a rich portrait of this watershed moment in which art was wholly reinvented.

Abstraction is a vital subject in The Museum of Modern Art's own history. An important touchstone for this project has been *Cubism and Abstract Art*, a landmark exhibition organized by the Museum's founding director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., in 1936. The show surveyed the early history of abstraction at a moment when modernist artists were under real threat from totalitarianism in Europe. It had a lasting impact on MoMA's collection: many works were acquired directly from it, and others within the historical framework it shaped. As the Museum's first major exhibition on the early

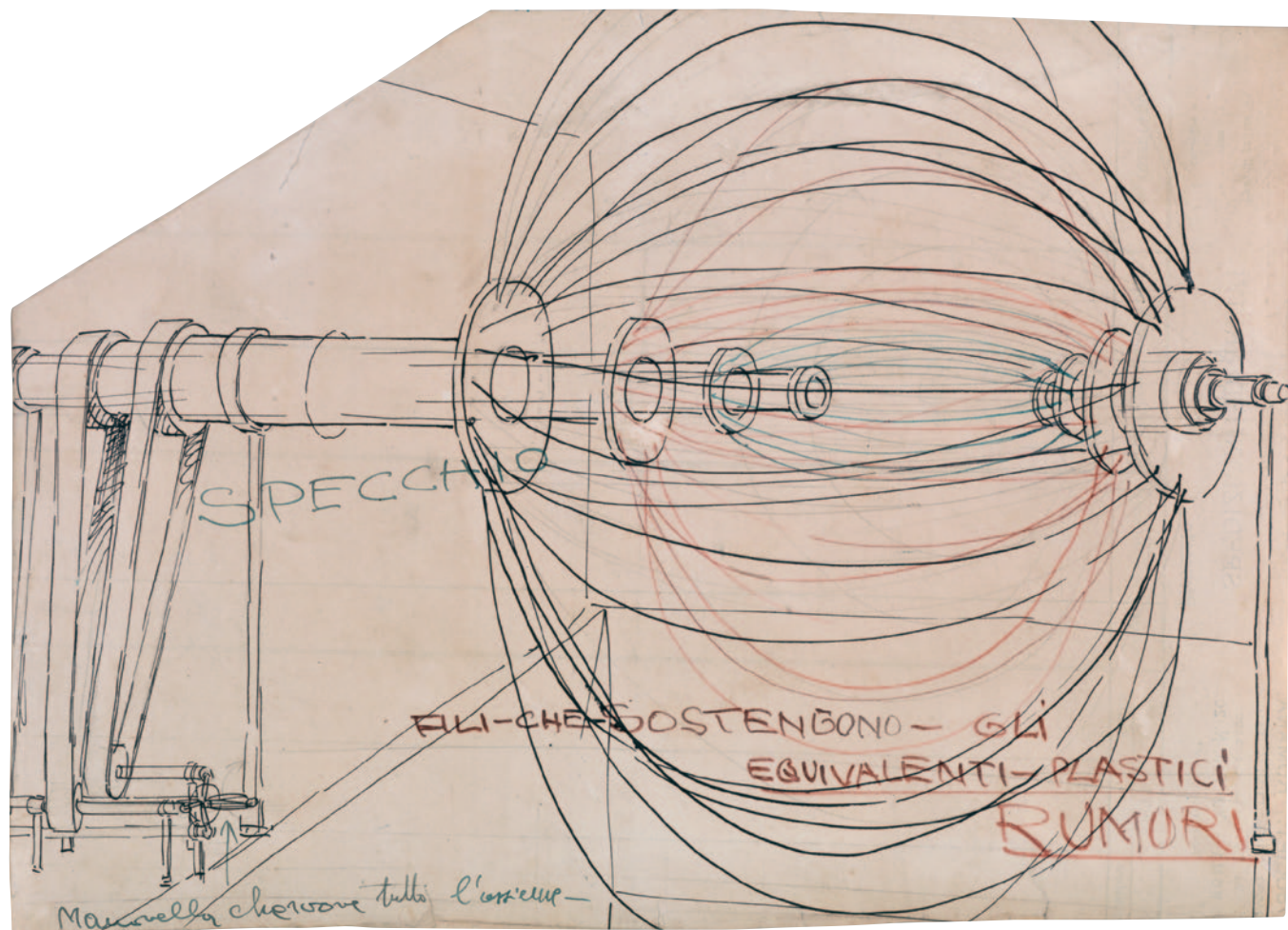
development of abstraction in seventy-five years, *Inventing Abstraction* offers a chance to reflect on the legacy of MoMA's own practice.

We are grateful to Leah Dickerman, Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, for the conception and organization of this exhibition and book. Masha Chlenova, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, was her essential partner.

We are especially grateful to the generous supporters of this project and of the Museum's programming in general. *Inventing Abstraction* is made possible by Hanjin Shipping. Major support is provided by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, the Blavatnik Family Foundation, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, and Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, and the exhibition is also supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. The seminars bringing together scholars in a variety of disciplines in the exhibition's planning stages were made possible by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

On behalf of the Trustees and staff of the Museum, I wish to acknowledge the lenders—private individuals and museum colleagues—who have entrusted us with the care of their works. Their generosity has in many cases allowed us to exhibit works that have not yet been seen in this country, and in others to provide a new perspective on familiar ones. They have our profound gratitude.

—GLENN D. LOWRY
Director, *The Museum of Modern Art*



FORTUNATO DEPERO. *Complesso di fili giranti* (Complex of turning wires). 1915. Ink on paper, 8 1/4 x 11 1/2" (21 x 29.2 cm). Mart — Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INVENTING ABSTRACTION traces the sweep of a radical new idea as it moved among artists and intellectuals, sweeping across nations and across media. The development of abstract art is a prime example of the power of network thinking. This catalogue and the exhibition it accompanies were also made possible by the efforts of a far-flung network of individuals, and in working on them both, I was moved by and very grateful for the extraordinary gestures of generosity that make such a collaborative undertaking possible. The makers of those gestures include the many dedicated teams of people at The Museum of Modern Art who use their great skills to realize ambitious exhibition projects such as this one. There were also the eighty-four lenders who parted with their great treasures to allow us to show them in our galleries; the twenty-three authors who contributed their ideas and expertise to this volume; and scores of others who helped make this project happen in other ways: generously giving us their advice and support in shaping the checklist, securing loans, figuring out the right recordings, providing financial support. All of us at The Museum of Modern Art are profoundly grateful.

We are deeply thankful for our many generous lenders, listed on p. 375. Many of them have acted as true collaborators on this project, facilitating loans, enlightening us about the works in their care, and making suggestions about other works and collections to be considered. We warmly thank our colleagues in lending institutions: Madeline Schuppli and Brigitta Vogler-Zimmerli, private collection courtesy of the Aargauer Kunsthaus Aarau; Ann Goldstein, Nicole Delissen, and Geurt Imanse, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Bernhard Mendes Bürgi, Christian Müller, and Charlotte Gutzwiller, Kunstmuseum Basel; Catherine Amé, Renate Rätz, and Stephan Dörschel, Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Udo Kittelman and Dieter Scholz, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Nicholas Fox Weber and Oliver Barker, The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany, Conn.; Stephan Berg and Volker Adolphs, Kunstmuseum Bonn; Heide-Marie Härtel, Deutsches Tanzfilminstitut Bremen; Louis Grachos, Douglas Dreishpoon, and Laura Fleischmann, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Douglas Druick and Stephanie D'Alessandro, The Art Institute of Chicago; Anthony G. Hirschel and Richard Born, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago; David Franklin and William Robinson, The Cleveland Museum of Art; Philipp Kaiser, Kasper König, and Stephan Diederich, Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Nannette V. Maciejunes and Melissa Wolfe, Curator of American Art, Columbus Museum of Art; Charles Esche and Marcia Vissers, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Hartwig Fischer, Ute Eskildsen, and Sandra Gianfreda, Museum Folkwang, Essen; Andrew J. Walker and Rebecca Lawton, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Tex.; Carl-Heinz Heuer and Nicolai von Cube, Collection Viktor and Marianne Langen; Claudia Dillmann and Beate Dannhorn, Sammlung Hans Richter/Deutsches Filminstitut-DIF, Frankfurt am Main; Jean Bonna, Jean Bonna Library, Geneva; Jean-Yves Marin and Christian

Rumelin, Musées d'art et d'histoire, Geneva; Benno Tempel, Hans Janssen, Christian Rumelin, Doede Hardeman, and Frans Peterse, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague; John Neumeier, Hamburg; Hans-Michael Schäfer, Stiftung John Neumeier, Hamburg; Susan L. Talbott and Eric Zafran, Curator, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford; Gary Tinterow, Gwendolyn H. Goff, and Emily Neff, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Patrick Primavesi, Gabriele Ruiz, and Steffen Hoffmann, Tanzarchiv Leipzig e.V.; Rainer Hüben, Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno; Jaroslaw Suchan, Malgorzata Ludwisiak, and Jaroslaw Lubiak, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź; Nicholas Serota, Matthew Gale, Nicholas Cullinan, and Adrian Glew, Tate, London; Miguel Ángel Recio Crespo, Paloma Alarcó, and Guillermo Solana, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid; Olga Viso and Darsie Alexander, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Lora Urbanelli and Gail Stavitsky, Montclair Art Museum, N.J.; Maja Oeri and Charlotte Gutzwiller, Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Schaulager, Münchenstein, Switzerland; Helmut Friedel and Karola Rattner, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau München, Munich; Klaus Busman, LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster; Amy Meyers, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; Jock Reynolds and Jennifer Gross, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; Richard Armstrong, Vivien Green, Tracey Bashkoff, and Susan Davidson, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, New York; Thomas P. Campbell, Jennifer Russell, Malcolm Daniel, Sabine Rewald, Rebecca Rabinow, and Cynthia Iavarone, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Adam Weinberg, Barbara Haskell, Dana Miller, and Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Lisette Pelsers, Evert J. van Straaten, Liz Kreijn, Toos van Kooten, and André Strattman, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; Monique Barbaroux and Laurent Sebillotte, Centre national de la danse, Pantin, France; Bruno Racine and Antoine Coron, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Alfred Pacquement, Brigitte Leal, Jonas Storsve, Christine Macel, and Philippe-Alain Michaud, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle, Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fabrice Hergott and Jacqueline Munck, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris; Timothy Rubb, Michael R. Taylor, and Anna Vallye, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Lynn Zelevansky, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Oliver Kornhoff and Astrid von-Asten, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen; Walburga Krupp, Stiftung Hans Arp und Sophie Taeuber-Arp e.V., Remagen; Māra Lāce and Iveta Derkusova, The Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga; Ole Bouman, Mariet Willinge, and Pascale Pere, Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam; Robert A. Kret, Barbara Buhler Lynes, Carolyn Kastner, and Judy Chiba Smith, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe; Joëlle Pijaudier-Cabot and Héloïse Conesa, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg; Sean Rainbird and Ina Cozen, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart; Maria Tsantsanoglou, Angelica Charistou, and Olga Fota, State Museum of Contemporary Art—

Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki; Gabriella Belli, Clarenza Catullo, and Beatrice Avanzi, Mart–Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto; Eliane Cordia von Reesema, Triton Foundation; Danilo Eccher and Arianna Bona, GAM–Galleria d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin; Philip Rylands, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; Christian Meyer and Therese Muxeneder, Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna; Karola Kraus and Susanne Neuburger, mumok, museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien, Vienna; Fred Bollerer and Philip Brookman, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Richard Koshalek and Kerry Brougher, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Earl A. Powell III, Sarah Greenough, and Harry Cooper, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Lisa Fischman and Bo K. Mempho, Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, Mass.; Alexander Klar and Hanne Danneberger, Museum Wiesbaden; Christoph Becker and Karin Marti, Kunsthaus Zürich; and Johanna Schultheiss, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collections, Zurich.

We are also extremely grateful to private lenders: Rachel Adler, Barney A. Ebsworth, Maria Graciela and Luis Alfonso Oberto, Jeffrey Sherwin, and eleven anonymous donors.

Many individuals have provided essential information and assistance with loans. We warmly thank: Emily Braun, Charlotte Douglas, Bernd Eichhorn, Ginevra Elkann, Jason Herrick, Ursula Graeff-Hirsch, Juan Hamilton, Diana Howard, Elizabeth Kujawski, Barbara Lesak, Sylvia Liska, Francis Naumann, Maria Carlota Perez, Kerry Rose, Thomas Rosemann, Pablo Schugurensky, Aleksandra Shatskikh, Alexander Shedrinsky, Chris Stephens, Natalie Strasser, and Allison Whiting. We also acknowledge our museum colleagues for their support of this project: Annemarie Jaeggi and Klaus Weber, Bauhaus-Archiv Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin; Irina Lebedeva and Tatiana Gubonova, The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; Spencer Tsai and Osvaldo Da Silva, Barry Friedman Ltd., New York; Natalie Seroussi and Anne-Sarah Bénichou, Galerie Natalie Seroussi, Paris; Mikhail Piotrovsky and Maria Haltunen, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Evgeniia Petrova and Marina Panteleymon, The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg; Thomas Trabitsch and Ursula Klein, Österreichisches Theatermuseum, Vienna; Natalia Metelitsa and Evgenia Suzdaleva, St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music; Patrick Werkner and Sylvia Herkt, Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien, Vienna; and Wolfgang Kos and Ursula Storch, Wien Museum, Vienna.

With the support of MoMA’s Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation, we were able to host a series of seminars on abstraction as a historical idea and an emergent artistic practice, and on its relation to contemporary shifts in music, poetry, dance, philosophy, and science. Participants in these three sessions included Charles Bernstein, Yve-Alain Bois, Christophe Cherix, Masha Chlenova,

Christoph Cox, Hal Foster, Mark Franko, Peter Galison, Jodi Hauptman, David Joselit, Anton Kaes, Seth Kim-Cohen, Philippe-Alain Michaud, RH Quaytman, Josh Siegel, Lanka Tattersall, and Michael R. Taylor. These conversational events helped to motivate and refine the conceptual premises of the exhibition. Yve-Alain Bois, Christoph Cox, Mark Franko, Anton Kaes, and David Lang made specific suggestions that found their way onto our checklist. John Elderfield provided key advice on specific loans. The gerundive title “Inventing Abstraction” is the product of a long and lovely conversation with Hubert Damisch. Teaching alongside Hal Foster in the Department of Art History at Princeton University in the spring of 2010 provided another important forum for working out ideas, as did teaching with Pamela Lee at Stanford University many years ago. Our curatorial and design team worked with Paul Ingram and Mitali Banerjee at the Columbia Business School in creating the diagram on this book’s front endpapers tracing the connections among artists represented in the exhibition.

The project has drawn on virtually every department at the Museum. Our foremost thanks go to Glenn D. Lowry, Director, who has offered enthusiasm, strategic insight, and a contribution to the catalogue. The project benefited from the leadership and counsel of Peter Reed, Senior Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs, and Ramona Bannayan, Senior Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Collections. Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, served as a sounding board for ideas at several key points, and helped us to craft innovative solutions to bring a variety of voices from different fields into the discussion of this project. Our in-house diplomat Jay Levenson, Director of the Museum’s International Program, deftly facilitated key international relationships.

The multimedia nature of the exhibition has made us more dependent than usual on the expertise of our fellow curators in other curatorial departments, and on their generosity with interdepartmental loans. We particularly wish to acknowledge the generous help, both practical and conceptual, of Christophe Cherix, Katherine Alcauskas, and Kim Conaty in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books; Connie Butler, Jodi Hauptman, Samantha Friedman, Kathy Curry, and David Moreno in the Department of Drawings; Roxana Marcoci, Sarah Hermanson Meister, and Mitra Abbaspour in the Department of Photography; Sabine Breitweiser, Ana Janevski, and Leora Morinis in the Department of Media and Performance; and Josh Siegel, Anne Morra, Katie Trainor, and Kitty Cleary in the Department of Film. In the Department of Conservation, Jim Coddington, Michael Duffy, Scott Gerson, Lee Ann Daffner, and Lynda Zycherman all put their great expertise at the service of this project.

For financial support of this exhibition we are extraordinarily grateful to Hanjin Shipping, the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, the Blavatnik Family Foundation, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, and Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III.

We extend warm thanks to our colleagues in the Department of Development for enabling us to realize this project—to Todd Bishop, our new Senior Deputy Director of External Affairs, and to Lauren Stakias and Heidi Speckthart. Our colleagues in Marketing and Communications have helped us get the word out: Kim Mitchell, Margaret Doyle, Brien McDaniel. Nancy Adelson, Dina Sorokina, and Henry Lanman in the Office of the General Counsel office have provided invaluable advice, both legal and strategic. In the Department of Exhibitions, Maria DeMarco Beardsley and Randolph Black have adroitly facilitated the exhibition’s logistics. Our colleagues in the Department of Collection Management and Exhibition Registration managed the complexities of moving so many works of art with graciousness and efficiency: Susan Palamara, Sacha Eaton, Jeri Moxley, Kat Ryan, and Ian Eckert. The in-house transportation and installation of artworks was smoothly coordinated by Rob Jung, Steve West, Sarah Wood, and their team. The assistance of our colleagues in Special Events, Facilities, Security, and Visitor Services has been, as always, crucial.

It was a great pleasure and privilege to collaborate again with Jerry Neuner, Director of the Department of Exhibition Design and Production, on the exhibition’s design; its elegance and intelligence reflect his great skills. Peter Perez, Julia Hoffman, Ingrid Chou, Sabine Dowek, and Claire Corey all played a key role in realizing this design. The Edward John Noble Foundation Deputy Director for Education Wendy Woon and Pablo Helguera, Sara Bodinson, Stephanie Pau, Sheetal Prajapati, and Desiree Gonzalez in the Department of Education, as well as Allegra Burnette and Maggie Lederer D’Errico in the Department of Digital Media, have worked as true collaborators in creating rich interpretative materials and programs that enhance the exhibition’s content.

In the Museum Library and Archives, Milan Hughston, Michelle Elligott, Jennifer Tobias, David Senior, and Michelle Harvey assisted and advised our research efforts on many fronts. Robert Kastler and Roberto Rivera in the Department of Imaging and Visual Resources, led by Erik Landsberg, worked to provide superior new photography of the collection works for this project.

Colleagues in the Department of Publications, led by Christopher Hudson, have been our valued partners in the realization of this book. David Frankel, Editorial Director and this book’s editor, has improved this catalogue in countless ways; his broad-reaching erudition, keen eye, and fine-tuned sense of good prose is reflected on every page. Mark Nelson of McCall Associates has produced an elegant and intelligent design that admirably suits the subject; our many conversations during this process have honed its content. Associate Publisher Chul Kim sagely guided the book to its finished form, and Matthew Pimm oversaw its complex production. Hannah Kim, Genevieve Allison, Makiko Wholey, Maria Marchenkova, Frances Vigna, and Lauren Robbins all provided critical support.

Our great thanks go to the many esteemed writers who contributed to this volume, and who are listed in the Contents. Sara Dickerman, Henry Finder, Hal Foster, and Cara Manes, my sister and trusted friends, were the first to read my texts and offered comments and suggestions that have improved them in both form and content.

In our own Department of Painting of Sculpture, Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator, has been an effective advocate of and sage advisor to this project, and I am very grateful for her counsel in key moments. Anne Umland, Laura Hoptman, and Doryun Chong provided camaraderie and generous aid of many kinds. Cora Rosevear and Lily Goldberg worked attentively to the arrangement of loan issues. Although this project lay outside their many responsibilities, Cara Manes, Jodi Roberts, David Sadighian, Iris Schmeisser, and Lanka Tattersall have all contributed in key ways, giving special meaning to the idea of teamwork. Departmental interns Nicole Benson, Emily Delheim, Kathryn Holihan, Jasmine Helm, Alexandra Lawrence, Nina Léger, Caroline Luce, Isabel Palandjoglou, and Victoria Sung have lent their talents and enthusiasm to realizing the project.

I am most indebted and most grateful to those who were most intimately involved in this exhibition. They deserve praise for both their skills and their tremendous dedication. Catherine Wheeler has handled the organization of both things and people, myself among them, and I am very grateful for her warm and adroit corraling. Masha Chlenova has been a true partner. She has handled complex administrative and diplomatic responsibilities, along with those of the highest scholarship. Neither exhibition nor catalogue would be possible without her vital support.

— LEAH DICKERMAN
Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture

ПРОУН

Мы назвали станцию по пути сооружения новой формы что растет из земли. Уверенной труппой картины и ее художника. Картина ринула вместе с церковью и богом кому она была прокламацией вместе с дворцом и королем кому она была троном вместе с уютным диваном и механиком кому она была иконой настроений души. С ней же и ее художник, никакие искажения производимые над ясным миром вещей сегодняшним «воспроизводительным» искусством не слышат ни картины ни художника — это занятие юнорисов, и истая эживопись не слышат картины своей беспрепятственно но здесь художник начинает сам превлаждаться, художник из воспроизводителя превлаждается в соорудителя нового мира форм нового мира предметов. Этот мир будет сооружен художником не конкурирующим с инженером-конструктором — еще не перебралась линия искусства владения формой вне пространства = Ф форма вне материала = Ф пространство через экономическую конструкцию превлажденного материала. Форма вне пространства = Ф форма вне материала = Ф отношение формы к материалу есть отношение массы к силе. Смысл проуна — движение по станциям творческих конструкций но не объяснение жизни не популяризация ее. Мера органичности роста формы — экологичность. Мера органичности роста формы — экологичность.

Мы исследовали первые станции нашего сооружения в адуверной поверхности и увидели что пространство заключенное в ней так же плотно и упорно как земля и строится в нем как на земле. и здесь нам необходимо разрешить тяжесть основы всего строящегося в мире. составные равнодействующие тяжести начали складываться в проуна в новый порядок. мы увидели что поверхность проуна перестала быть картиной, она стала сооружением и как дом его нужно обойти кругом посмотреть сверху и исследовать снизу. оказалось уничтожилась перпендикулярная горизонту ось картины, вращая проун мы ввинчиваем себя в пространство до сих пор пространство процировалось на плоскость условностью планов — через проун мы движемся из плоскости плана к безжесткости протяженности, привдя проун во вращение мы стали между уноженными осями проекции и раздвинули их. теперь став в пространстве на этих осях мы должны начать его вту, пустота хаоса противоположности становится пространством т.е. порядком соотношения. строй и масштаб отсчетного множества дает пространству определенную напряженность, меняя отсчетное множество мы меняем напряженность пространства образованного из материи и той же пустоты, формы которыми проун идет на приступ пространства образованного из материи а не из эстетики. этот материал в проунах первых станций пространства построен из более чистой вида материи в энергичного и мажорного инстинкта. в богатейшем ритмике цвета мы оживили визуализацию желтых оранжевых голубых и фиолетовых, супрематизм в своем завершении очистил себя от индустриальной силы. сила контраста или согласия двух черных или двух белых или двух междучернобелых дает нам ключ к соответствию двух технических материалов как напр. — алюминий и гранит или бетон и железо. эти соответствия простираются дальше во все области искусства и знаний. цвет становится барометром материала и движет нас к его дальнейшим превращениям. цвет новой формы проун создает новый материал — если она не может быть воплощена в железе то нужно железо превратить в бесцветную сталь или иридиевую сталь или в нечто что сегодня еще не требуется. творец инженер сооружает форму пропеллера знает что его товарищ инженер-технолог приготовит в своей лаборатории материал из дерева, металла или хоста то что соответствует статическим и динамическим требованиям данной ему формы.

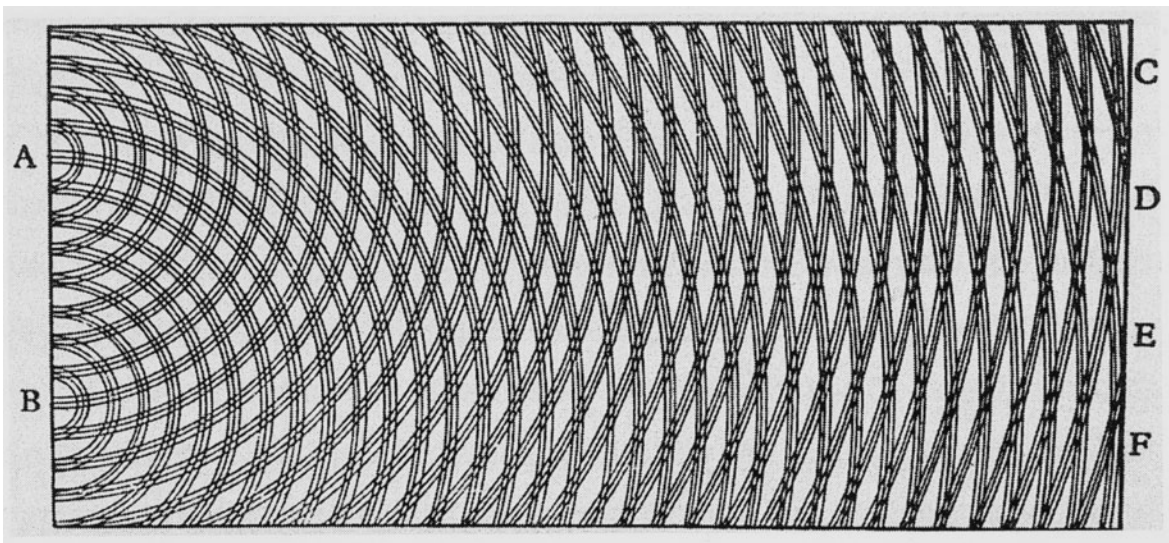
Материальная форма движется в пространстве по определенным осям по лестнице по каналу лифта по рельсам по дорным и кривым аэроплана — это конструкция. не конструктивная форма не движется, не стоит, плаает, конструкция хуизма движется по рельсам земли конструкция супрематизма движется по прямым и кривым аду она вращает в новом пространстве — мы строим в ней проун вводит нас к сооружению нового тела. здесь ставит вопрос о целесообразности, цель это то что остается за нами, творчество создает факт и он становится целью, когда изобретает мастер тогда отойдет от цели тепла, в этом мощь творчества и сила проуна рождающего цель. в этом свобода художника первая ученый. из цели следует утилитарность — развратка глубины качества в широту количества. она оправдана когда умоляет утилитарность — развратка глубины качества в широту количества. цель рождающая утилитарности они концентрическими кругами охватывают центр — цель. проун движется по пути открытой цели, оставляет за собой целесообразности высокой напряженности и несет семена широчайшей утилитарности.

ПРОУН мужествен — картина женственна. он активен — она пассивна. он динамичен — она статична. проун звено в цепи станция бегущая вдаль путей — картина конец и завершённость в себе проун движется со станцией к станции по цели совершенств. проун изменяет саму производственную форму искусства. он оставляет инварианта кустаря строящего в кабинете на трех ножках мебелью свои картины им катуны и только им оконченную. проун вводит в творческий процесс множество захватывая каждым новым поворотом радиуса новый творческий коллектив. проун находит свои установки на поверхности приводит к пространственным молеальным сооружениям и идет дальше к широте всей жизни. а она сейчас строит новую железобетонную плиту коммунистического фундамента под народом всей земли и через проун мы выйдем к сооружению над этим всеобщим фундаментом единого мирового города жизни людей коммуны земного шара.

Так проун оставив картину и художника с одной стороны и машину и инженера с другой выходит к созданию нового пространства и уклад его элементами первого второго и третьего измерений сооружает новый многогранный но единоликий образ нашей природы.

ЭЛ ЛИСИЦКИЙ.

„НЕ МИРОВОЗНАНИЕ — НЕ МИРОВОЕАНОСТЬ“



Must we not then renounce the object altogether, throw it to the winds and instead lay bare the purely abstract? —Vasily Kandinsky, 1911

ROUGHLY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, a series of precipitous shifts took place in the cultural sphere that in the end amounted to as great a rewriting of the rules of artistic production as had been seen since the Renaissance. That transformation would fundamentally shape artistic practice in the century that followed. Beginning in late 1911 and across the course of 1912, in several European and American cities, a handful of artists — Vasily Kandinsky, František Kupka, Francis Picabia, Robert Delaunay, Arthur Dove — presented paintings that differed from almost all of those that had preceded them in the long history of the medium in the Western tradition: shunning the depiction of objects in the world, they displayed works with no discernible subject matter. Indeed they abandoned the premise of making a picture of something. “Young painters of the extreme schools,” the poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire wrote in February 1912, “want to make pure painting, an entirely new art form. It is only at its beginning, and not yet as abstract as it wants to be.”¹

In the period immediately following, abstraction was proposed many times over, by different artists working in different places and with different philosophical foundations. Its pioneers included Hans Arp, Vanessa Bell, Sonia Delaunay-Terk, Natalia Goncharova, Marsden Hartley, Paul Klee, Mikhail Larionov, Fernand Léger, Kazimir Malevich, Franz Marc, Piet Mondrian, Hans Richter, and Wyndham Lewis. By the eve of World War I, artists producing abstract works could be counted in the dozens. This shift in the frontier of possibility moved so suddenly as to shake the foundations of art as it had been practiced. Observers spoke of the exhilaration and terror of leaping into unknown territory, where comparison with the past was impossible. This evacuation of the object world was, to be sure, hardly a silent disappearance, but rather was accompanied by a shower of celebratory manifestos, lectures, and criticism, a flood of words flung forth perhaps in compensation for their makers’ worry about how the meaning of these pictures might be established.

Scores of earlier images from other Western disciplines — chromatic studies, theological and mediumistic images, cosmogonic images, scientific images (fig. 1) — may resemble abstract art. But these are not art at all, for despite any formal similarity they

Opposite: EL LISSITZKY. Handwritten explanatory text to accompany a copy of the *Proun Portfolio*. 1920. Gouache and ink on paper, sheet: 17 3/4 x 13 3/4" (45 x 35 cm). Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne

1. THOMAS YOUNG. Diagram of the pattern of wave interaction obtained by throwing two stones of equal size into a pond at the same instant. From *A Course of Lectures on Natural Philosophy and the Mechanical Arts* (London: J. Johnson, 1807)



2. **J. M. W. TURNER.** *Sun Setting over a Lake.*
c. 1840. Oil on canvas, 35⁷/₈ × 48¹/₄"
(91.1 × 122.6 cm). Tate. Turner Bequest

3. **J. A. M. WHISTLER.** *Nocturne in Black and Gold:
The Falling Rocket.* 1875. Oil on panel, 23³/₄ × 18³/₈"
(60.2 × 46.7 cm). Detroit Institute of Arts.
Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr.

were intended to produce meaning in other discursive frameworks. Within the sphere of modern art, J. M. W. Turner's seascapes (fig. 2), James McNeill Whistler's Nocturnes (fig. 3), Edgar Degas's landscape monoprints, Gustave Moreau's ink drawings and water-color sketches, and Hermann Obrist's theater sets, among other images, have been held up as important forms of proto-abstraction. But these works do not declare a break with subject matter, even though, in so rigorously defining it in terms of atmospheric and experiential qualities that it is all but obscured, they provide an important foundation for the emergence of abstraction in the twentieth century. (Landscape above all, wrote the art historian Henri Zerner, was "a laboratory for abstract art.")² This exhibition and book, however, do not, as several previous studies of abstraction have done, attempt to inventory such precedents for abstraction *avant la lettre*, though of course they have bearing on the story being told.³

Before December 1911, when Kandinsky exhibited *Komposition V* (Composition V; plate 18) in Munich, in the first exhibition of the *Blaue Reiter*, the artists' group he had co-founded, it seems to have been impossible for artists to step away from a long-held tenet of artistic practice: that paintings describe things in a real or imaginary world. In the years preceding, there was some sense of building consternation around this issue, of possibilities tested and rejected and of ideas yet unrealized, but it was only in the annus mirabilis that followed Kandinsky's showing of *Komposition V* that abstract pictures began to be exhibited publicly as art, and their philosophical justification developed in treatises and criticism. It was only then, one could say, that the idea of an abstract artwork began to make sense. And for some artists and intellectuals, abstraction not only began to seem plausible but took on the character of an imperative.

TWO STORIES from the years immediately preceding 1912 convey some sense of how difficult it was to arrive at the novel idea of an abstract picture.

In 1910, while Pablo Picasso was summering at Cadaqués, Spain, he made a small group of strange pictures that looked unlike any that had preceded them. Leaving behind the hillsides of reversible cubes that he had made the previous year in Horta, he now worked

in an idiom that seemed closer to a diagram (plates 3, 4). His new paintings featured angled planes defined by linear scaffolding that shifted across the work's surface. Only the faintest traces of the structure of the female figure or still life named in the pictures' titles were discernible within. "The Cadaqués images are so difficult to decipher," wrote Picasso's biographer John Richardson, "that even the artist sometimes forgot what a particular image represented."⁴ These works seem abstract in all but name.

Picasso's dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler could not reconcile himself, it seems, to the terrifying novelty of these new works: he declared them "unfinished."⁵ The Picasso scholar Pierre Daix has noted that while Kahnweiler had the right of first refusal of Picasso's paintings, these particular works went to a rival dealer, Ambroise Vollard—suggesting that Kahnweiler had rejected them.⁶ And it seems that Picasso himself—the most nimble-minded, radically innovative artist of the first decade of the twentieth century—also struggled with the implications of these works. In a later conversation reported by his wife Françoise Gilot, Picasso asserted that these "pure" pictures required supplements to function as painting. Referring to the fragmented forms of bodies, musical instruments, and words that began to appear in the Cubist pictures he made immediately after his sojourn in Cadaqués (plates 1, 5), he explained, "I painted them in afterwards. I call them 'attributes.' At that period I was doing painting for its own sake. It was really pure painting, and the composition was done as composition. It was only towards the end... that I brought in the attributes."⁷ In the works that followed those almost abstract images made in Cadaqués, Picasso incorporated the shattered forms of representation as if to tether his paintings securely to the world of things. Failure to do so, it seems, threatened painting itself. He would later declare that abstraction was impossible: "There is no abstract art. You always have to begin with something. Afterwards you can remove all appearances of reality, but there is no danger then, anyway, because the idea of the object will have left an indelible mark."⁸

Writing to Marc in October 1911, Kandinsky described Picasso's pictures, which he had seen in photographs sent to him by Kahnweiler, as "split[ting] the subject up and scatter[ing] bits of it all over the picture," an effect that was "frankly false" but nonetheless an auspicious "sign of the enormous struggle toward the immaterial."⁹ While Picasso in 1910 could paint a picture approaching abstraction but could not embrace it philosophically, Kandinsky conversely could develop a theoretical rationale for abstraction but could not make the final break. The sheer difficulty of thinking such a radically new idea—thinking within a new paradigm—is evident in the publication history of Kandinsky's hugely influential tract *On the Spiritual in Art* (plate 10).¹⁰ The manuscript existed in draft form as early as 1909. In the first two published editions, which appeared in December 1911 and May 1912 respectively, Kandinsky sets abstraction as a goal, clearly and effectively advocating a practice that would advance "deeper... into this territory."¹¹ He nonetheless balks in embracing in the present day an art that breaks "the tie that binds us to nature."¹² "Today," he writes, "the artist cannot manage exclusively with purely abstract forms."¹³ Indeed, in his paintings of that date, referential form is almost but not quite effaced. But his opinion changed in the next two years (as did his painting), and by 1914, in a manuscript for a planned fourth edition of *On the Spiritual in Art* that was forestalled by World War I, he edited this paragraph to allow for the possibility of a fully abstract art. "Today," the new phrasing read, "only a few artists can manage with purely abstract forms."¹⁴ In a lecture written (but never delivered) some years later, the artist commented on the difficulty of this intellectual passage: "As yet, objects did not want to—and were not to—disappear altogether from my pictures. First, it is impossible to conjure up maturity artificially at any particular time... I myself was not yet sufficiently mature to be able to experience purely abstract form without bridging the gap by means of objects."¹⁵



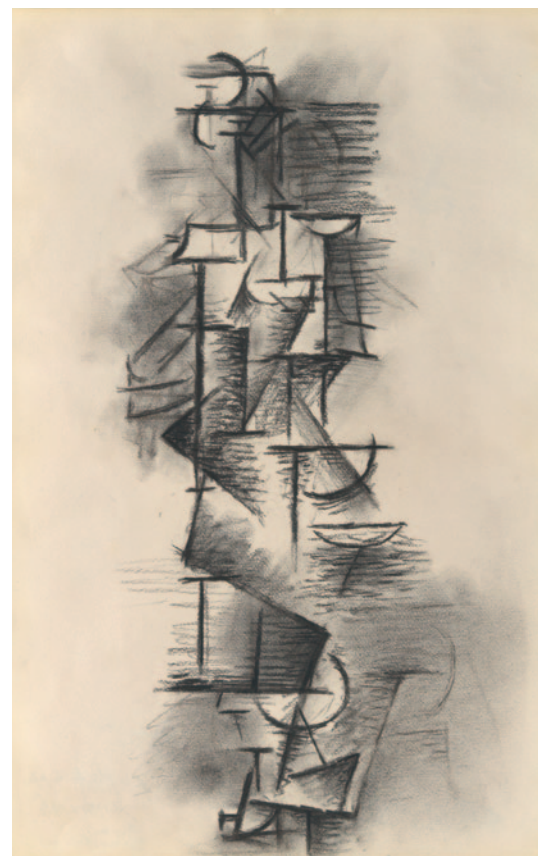
IN 1911, HOWEVER, THE ASSAULT WAS LAUNCHED.

That December in Munich, Kandinsky exhibited *Komposition V*, a monumental manifesto for abstraction that maintained only the most inscrutable traces of figural references. That same month, he published *On the Spiritual in Art*, his loquacious paean to the ineffable. Three Kandinsky works—none quite so ambitious or so determined in their evacuation of referential content as *Komposition V*—were shown a few months later in Paris, at the Salon des Indépendants, in March-May of 1912.¹⁶ Delaunay, who had been corresponding with Kandinsky since late 1911,¹⁷ and had studied French translations of *On the Spiritual of Art* made by Sonia Delaunay-Terk and Elisabeth Epstein,¹⁸ understood these works to herald the birth of abstraction.¹⁹ “This inquiry into pure painting is the current problem,” wrote Delaunay to Kandinsky. “I do not know any painters in Paris who are truly seeking this ideal world.”²⁰ Soon afterward the French artist made his own near-abstract works, his *Fenêtres* (Windows) series (plates 31–33), and showed them in July 1912 in the *Ausstellung des Modernen Bundes*, in the *Kunsthaus Zurich*, at the invitation of Bund co-founder Arp (who had in turn obtained his address from Kandinsky).²¹ These works similarly announced a new form of picture-making to key viewers in German-speaking realms. The Swiss artist Klee, who saw the Zurich show, proclaimed in a review that Delaunay “has created the type of autonomous picture, which leads, without motifs from nature, to a completely abstract life form. A structure of plastic life, *nota bene*, almost as far removed as a Bach fugue is from a carpet.”²²

And then in October of that year, at the Salon d’Automne in Paris, a traditional forum for scandalous artistic gestures, the Czech painter Kupka dispensed with all lingering hesitations, displaying two paintings, *Amorpha, chromatique chaude* (Amorpha, warm chromatic) and a second, more monumental one called *Amorpha, fugue à deux couleurs* (Amorpha, fugue in two colors; plate 24), that declared independence from traditional subject matter. The paintings were filmed for Gaumont newsreels and shown across Europe and the United States.²³ For some critics these works only offered proof of the dangers of such a departure: Gustave Kahn called them “games which are not within everyone’s reach,” and Louis Arnould Grémilly asked, “With their clear musical titles, don’t they demonstrate the difficulty with titles and the worry of escaping from painting for painting?”²⁴

In considering Kupka’s role as the one who took this particularly public step in breaching convention, it may be relevant that he was something of an outsider in the sphere in which he worked: he was trained in Prague and Vienna in a heady Symbolist milieu. Yet in Paris, far from being the isolated émigré figure he is frequently portrayed as in the literature, he was a member of artistic circles in which some of the most experimental ideas about avant-garde practice were discussed (giving him an insider/outsider status that seems particularly fertile for paradigm-shifting thought): he lived next door to Raymond Duchamp-Villon, and during 1911 and 1912 was a sometime guest in the Sunday salons held at Jacques Villon’s house in Puteaux, frequented by a changing cast of characters including Marcel Duchamp (Duchamp-Villon’s and Villon’s brother), the Delaunays, Picabia, Léger, Apollinaire, Gino Severini, Albert Gleizes, Emile Le Fauconnier, and Jean Metzinger.²⁵ Although those who gathered there have often been labeled the “Puteaux group,” and identified with the rigid second-generation Cubism of Gleizes and Metzinger, something else was clearly also in the conversational mix: a core group of participants in these Sunday salons were to play important roles in abstraction’s early history.²⁶

4. PABLO PICASSO. *Femme nue debout* (Standing female nude). 1910. Charcoal on paper, 19 × 12³/₈” (48.3 × 31.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Alfred Stieglitz Collection



5. PABLO PICASSO. *Self-portrait of the artist in his studio on the Boulevard de Clichy, Paris, with the drawing Femme nue debout mounted on the wall behind him.* December 1910. Gelatin silver print, 5¹³/₁₆ × 4⁹/₁₆” (14.7 × 11.6 cm). Musée Picasso, Paris



Then, should there have been any doubt that something was happening, Paris newcomer Picabia thrust his own stake in the ground of this terrain at the same Salon d’Automne in which Kupka’s *Amorpha* works appeared. He, too, showed a gargantuan tableau, *La Source* (The spring, 1912; plate 86), which invoked a figurative reference through its title but was nonetheless an audacious declaration of abstraction. He simultaneously placed a closely related canvas of the same scale—*Dances à la source II* (Dances at the spring II, 1912; plate 87)—at the Salon de la Section d’Or, which also opened that October.²⁷ Picabia had made both works the summer before, which he had spent almost continuously in the company of Apollinaire. At the time, the poet was working on his booklet *Les Peintres cubistes*, on Cubism and its aftermath;²⁸ the impact of the 1912 exhibitions led him to make major late-stage changes in the proof of the book.²⁹ Divided between venues, Picabia’s irreverent pair of pictures invoked Picasso’s work through their faceted planes and rose-period palette, then seemed to travesty its refinement in their billboard scale, crude paint handling, and pulsing eroticism, as well as through their defiant breach of the figurative tradition, which Picasso had maintained. One critic wrote that Picabia had “set the year’s record for fantasy” with “ugly” works that “evoke incrustated linoleum.”³⁰ At the same Salon d’Automne, Léger showed his *Femme en bleu* (Woman in blue, 1912; plate 89), a work that, rather than describing a woman dressed in blue, seems to efface the figure with large arcing planes of that color, so that the only remaining trace of human reference is the painting’s vertical orientation. The work’s indecipherability was played out in the press, the subject of jest, but savored nonetheless: the work was reproduced on the front page of the newspaper *Éclair*, the public was invited to decipher it, responses were published through October, until the mystery was “solved” in a letter from Léger himself on November 3.³¹

On a different shore, in February 1912, Dove, who had been living and working in Westport, Connecticut, showed works so distilled from natural motifs as to approach abstraction in a one-man show in the gallery at 291 Broadway, New York, established by the photographer and aesthetic impresario Alfred Stieglitz (plate 81).³² Dove was no stranger to European modernism: he had spent fifteen months in France in 1908–9, and on his return had been struck by the first American exhibition of work by Picasso, which Stieglitz had hung at 291 in 1911. The show included a drawing Picasso had made the winter before (fig. 4), which appears like a talisman of things to come in a number of photographs showing him or his friends seated proudly below it (fig. 5). The photographer Edward Steichen, who had participated in the selection of the works for this show, described it as “certainly ‘abstract’ nothing but angles and lines that has got [to be] the wildest thing you ever saw laid out for fair.”³³

And then the flow of events thickened: toward the end of 1912, Léger began his defiantly abstract *Contrastes de formes* series (Contrasts of forms; plates 92–95). *La Femme en bleu* was probably one of two works he sent to the Armory Show, which opened in New York in February 1913.³⁴ The Americans Morgan Russell and Stanton MacDonald-Wright showed abstract works at the Munich *Neue Kunstsalon* in June 1913 and at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery, Paris, in October of that year, preludes to Russell’s grand contribution to the Salon des Indépendants the following spring, a canvas bounded by a border of painted stripes more than eleven feet high (plate 77); and in March 1913, Apollinaire described a series of pictures, distilled from images of trees (plate 252), by a Dutch artist working in Paris, Mondrian, as “a very abstract Cubism.”³⁵ Each of these early efforts stood as a manifesto, a proclamation of the viability of abstraction.



THE INVENTION OF ABSTRACTION is usually told through stories about individual actors, stories contained in discrete narrative silos, each with some claim to priority. One example is Kandinsky's famous reminiscence, often repeated in the literature: he tells of seeing one of his own paintings leaning on its side, at dusk, sometime after his arrival in Munich in 1896. Incapable of discerning its content, he was nonetheless captivated by the forms and colors of this mysterious work—an event prompting the realization “that objects harmed my pictures.”³⁶ Yet despite the epiphanic quality of this story, it took Kandinsky years more to produce an abstract picture himself. And it is perhaps more significant that he recounted the tale in 1913, just as abstraction had become a public fact.

It was this drive to speak of individual priority in invention that led the makers of so many of the early works in this exhibition and catalogue to backdate them, sometimes to several years earlier than they were actually made (plates 22, 30, 35, 129, 135, 136, 310).³⁷ Indeed, there is something else misleading about speaking of the invention of abstraction through stories of solitary protagonists: what we have already heard here suggests that abstraction was incubated, with a momentum that builds up and accelerates, through a relay of ideas and acts among a nexus of players, those who make these artistic gestures and those who recognize and proclaim their significance to a broader audience. It was an invention with multiple first steps, multiple creators, multiple heralds, and multiple rationales.

In its emergence within a rich social network, abstraction resembles many other intellectual developments studied by sociologists. In his book *The Sociology of Philosophies*, Randall Collins looks at the social dimension of innovation, countering the Romantic ideal of the genius as an inspired loner. Instead, he argues, innovation is found in groups: it arises out of social interaction—conversation, sharing ideas, validation and competition. Moreover, the right sort of group, Collins suggests, can radicalize intellectual innovation, prompting individuals to take positions far more extreme, far more convention defying, than they would alone.³⁸ This sort of productive sociability may also lead to multiple, almost simultaneous inventions of the same or related things: many investigators converging on the same finding is a common pattern of scientific discovery, as the sociologist of science Robert K. Merton has suggested.³⁹ Abstraction, with almost simultaneous “first” pictures appearing in a scattering of places, would seem to follow this model. The answer to the question “How do you think a truly radical thought?” seems to be: you think it through a network.

Abstraction's pioneers, despite being far flung, are far more interconnected than is generally acknowledged. Certain recognized points of contact suggest this: the revelatory exhibition of Italian Futurism organized by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery, Paris, in 1912, whose visitors included Duchamp, Picabia, the Russian artist Aleksandra Ekster, and the American artist Joseph Stella, even before the show traveled to London and then around Europe; the huge *International Exhibition of Modern Art* held at the New York Armory on Lexington Avenue in 1913, which mixed European and American artists and pulled in the crowds; Vladimir Tatlin's visit to Picasso's Paris studio in March 1914, where he saw the Spanish artist's constructed sculptures and then returned home to display “assemblages of materials” of his own in his studio in May, more than a year before exhibiting his famous *Uglovye kontr-reliefy* (Corner counter-reliefs; fig. 16, plate 219) at the *0.10* exhibition in Petrograd in December 1915; the arrival of Marinetti in Russia in 1914, to simultaneous acclaim and disparagement so divisive as to precipitate the dissolution of Russian Cubo-Futurism and the formation of its radically innovative successor movements;⁴⁰ and later,

6. VASILY KANDINSKY. Cover of *Der Blaue Reiter* (The blue rider). 1914. Illustrated book, ed. Kandinsky and Franz Marc. Line block reproduction after woodcut, 11 7/16 × 8 3/4 × 13/16" (29 × 22.2 × 2 cm). Second ed. (Munich: R. Piper). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



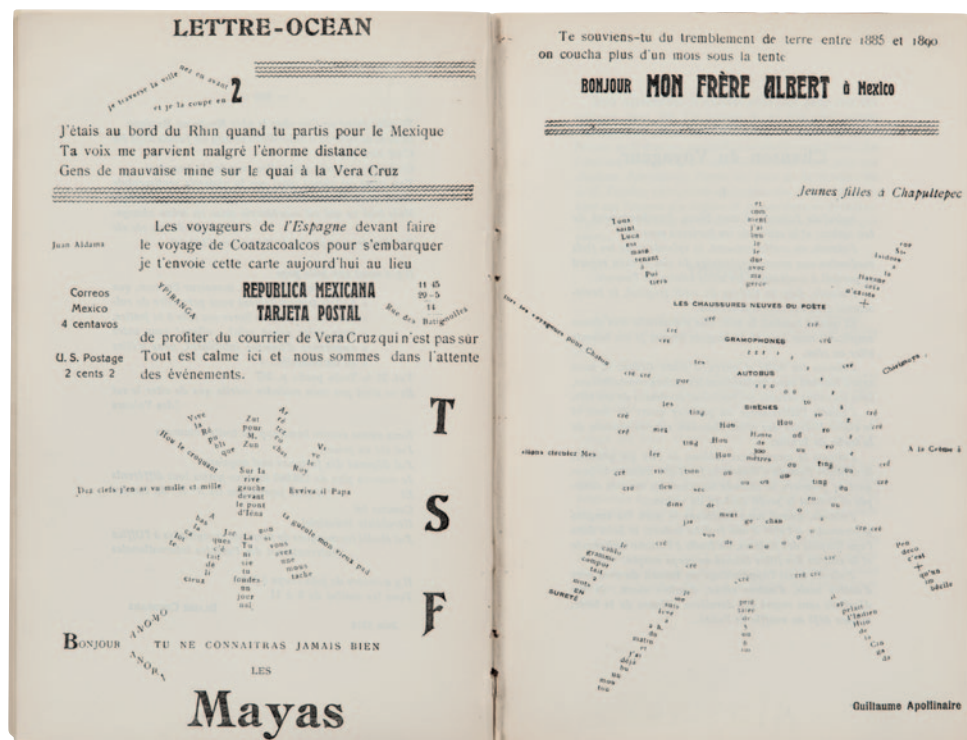
in 1922, the *Erste Russische Kunstausstellung* (First Russian art exhibition) at the Van Diemen gallery in Berlin, organized by David Shterenberg and El Lissitzky, which introduced a Western audience to the Soviet avant-garde after the borders had been closed to the cultural products of the new Bolshevik state in the years since the Russian Revolution of 1917.

There are also many less-well-rehearsed examples of the dissemination of ideas in the history of early abstraction. The Russian literary scholar Aleksandr Smirnov, for example, an old friend and distant cousin of Delaunay-Terk's from her native St. Petersburg, visited the Delaunays in France during the summers of 1912 and 1913, spending time at their country house in Louveciennes. Returning to St. Petersburg, Smirnov spread the word of the new art he had seen in France, lecturing in July 1913 at the Brodiachaia Sobaka (Stray dog), an avant-garde gathering place in the years before the Revolution, on Robert and Sonia Delaunay's work and the theory of simultaneous contrasts. “Poster-poems” by Delaunay-Terk, which combined bright arcs of color with an array of verbal fragments, hung on the walls,⁴¹ and Smirnov showed a copy of *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (Prose of the Trans-Siberian and of little Joan of France, 1913; plate 41) that he had brought with him.⁴² Some nonmeetings had a charged significance too: Mondrian, it seems, was so eager to avoid Picasso's charismatic influence—and insistence that painting represent things—that he would recall taking pains to avoid meeting the Spanish artist in the years 1912–14, when he lived in Paris. “Let them call it too abstract,” he wrote of his work in a letter to Theo van Doesburg, his defiance belying the strength of his feelings on the subject.⁴³ It is a distinctly modern interconnectedness that emerges here—one that is decidedly international, facilitating intellectual dialogue between established cultural capitals like Paris, host to an international community of intellectuals, and centers in Central and Eastern Europe and the United States.

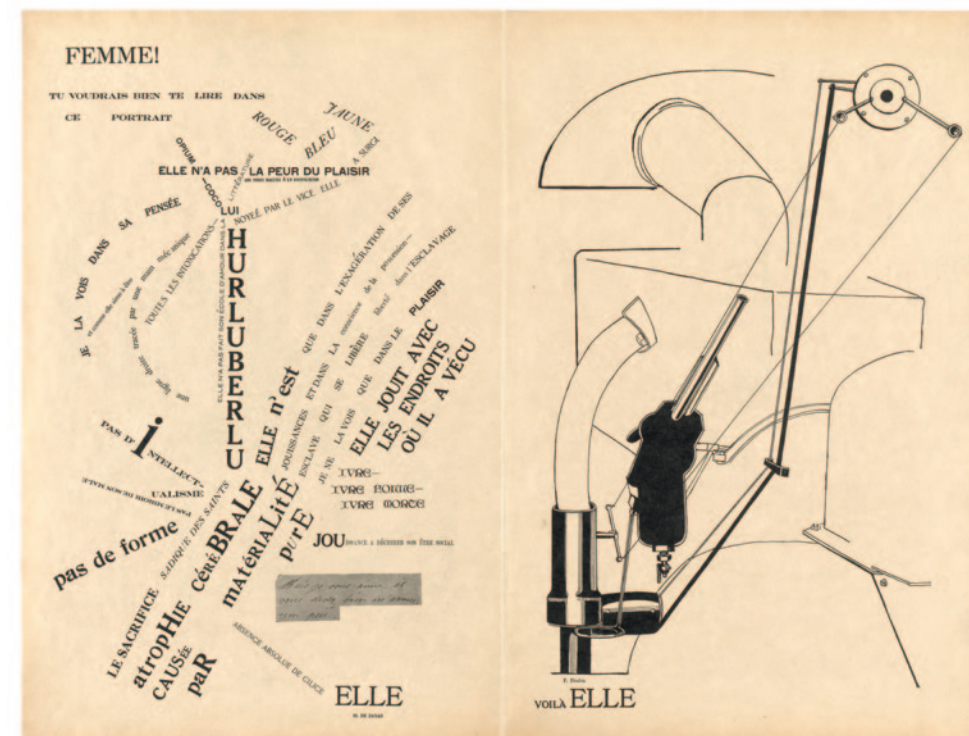
Abstraction's network was fostered in the years immediately before World War I by a new modern culture of connectivity. In trains, automobiles, and steamships, people were travelling internationally in numbers far greater than ever before. National boundaries became porous as people crossed them with new ease—and until the outbreak of World War I, most European countries had minimal passport requirements.⁴⁴ Telegraphs, telephones, and radio relayed news of events quickly across the globe. The sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, thanks to wireless telegraphy, was not only followed achingly by those on ships just out of reach of the ocean liner but was also one of the first news stories to be reported virtually simultaneously with the event. These same communication technologies allowed for the synchronization of times and clocks across distance, which facilitated the establishment of coordinated international markets and set the stage for the vertiginous growth of a modern speculative economy and commodity culture.⁴⁵ In Paris in 1912, Henri Poincaré hosted an international conference that established a method for transmitting accurate radio time signals around the world, and on July 1, 1913, the first time signal to be broadcast globally was sent from the Eiffel Tower, a key step in adopting a universal standard time.⁴⁶ All of this fed a more international, global sense of one's world. The network of sociability built by transit pathways, the proliferation of print media, and new forms of communication allowed for the movement of ideas and images across a broad terrain, a development crucial in abstraction's incubation.

Within the art world specifically, the idea of a transnational avant-garde was fostered by the rampant proliferation of journals. Art historian David Cottington estimates that there were approximately 200 “little reviews” of art and culture in Paris alone in the decade preceding World War I.⁴⁷ Certain forums were particularly significant, one such being the *Blaue Reiter* almanac (fig. 6), founded by Kandinsky and Marc and first published in Munich in May 1912, then again in a widely distributed second edition in 1914. Marc wrote in the prospectus for the publication that it would “show the latest movements in French, German and Russian painting. Subtle connections are revealed between modern and Gothic and

7. GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE. “Lettre-Océan” (Ship-to-ship letter). *Les Soirées de Paris* no. 25 (June 15, 1914). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



8. MARIUS DE ZAYAS. “Femme! (Elle)” Poem and typographic layout with illustration “Voilà Elle” by Francis Picabia. Repr. in 291 no. 9 (November 1915). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York



primitive art, connections with Africa and the vast Orient, with the highly expressive, spontaneous folk and children’s art, and especially with the most recent musical developments in Europe and the new ideas for theater of our time.”⁴⁸ In its very conception, then, the almanac aimed at a dissolution of boundaries—between national schools, temporal realms, and media. Kandinsky declared it his goal to “show that something was happening *everywhere*.”⁴⁹ An emergent modern exhibition culture—for this was the dawn of international loan shows—played a parallel function: pictures moved across borders to new audiences; images were distributed through print media; people took off in trains and cars. Kandinsky and Marc conceived the *Blaue Reiter* this way, with almanac and exhibiting society as complements to each other. By September 1911, Kandinsky was corresponding with artists in cities throughout Europe, soliciting both pictures for exhibitions and essays and images for publication.

In bringing people into contact, some figures play a disproportionate role. The author Malcolm Gladwell uses the term “connectors” to describe charismatic, socially adept people with contacts dispersed among many different social pools, and he stresses their importance in understanding how certain ideas may become suddenly, precipitously popular.⁵⁰ Connectors do the social work of many, facilitating relays of ideas among their broad acquaintance. One key actor in the development of abstraction was Kandinsky himself; another was certainly Apollinaire. The poet began to publish art criticism in 1910, following a long line of French writers who had done so, including Stendhal, Honoré de Balzac, Stéphane Mallarmé, and the brothers Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. Apollinaire quickly established himself as a formidable master of the new print-media world. In the period from 1910 to 1914, he wrote a column that appeared most days in *L’Intransigeant*, a paper with a daily print run of about 50,000 copies; and another for *Paris-Journal*, with a daily run of 40,000 copies.⁵¹ In 1912, with friends, he launched a review of his own, *Les Soirées de Paris*,⁵² which published poetry and cultural commentary of all sorts—reviews, feuilletons, and Apollinaire’s polemical pieces on the direction of painting.

With these combined forums, Apollinaire played a key role in publicizing the incremental developments in the new modes of artistic abstraction. And in some respects he may have precipitated them: in the Francophone context, even before Kupka’s and Picabia’s audacious showings in the fall of 1912, it was Apollinaire who threw down the gauntlet, declaring in the first, February 1912 issue of *Les Soirées de Paris* that “the new painters paint

pictures which no longer have any real subject matter” (*sujet véritable*).⁵³ On the subject of Apollinaire, Delaunay wrote coyly to Kandinsky in a letter of April 3, 1912, “I will speak to you sometime about the subject in painting, about an exciting conversation at the home of Apollinaire, who has begun to believe in us.”⁵⁴

For all Apollinaire’s media savvy, his personal social reach was perhaps more remarkable. Picabia’s wife, Gabrielle Buffet, considered Apollinaire “the most social, the most well-known, the most far-reaching man of his time.”⁵⁵ He was a close friend of Picasso’s, the one who introduced him to Georges Braque in 1907.⁵⁶ He recommended that Kupka read the color theory of Paul Signac.⁵⁷ He often accompanied Picabia on road trips in one of the latter’s magnificent fleet of cars, and Buffet recalls the pair’s endless discussions of abstraction.⁵⁸ He lived for a while with the Delaunays in late 1912, a key moment for our topic, and it was he, too, who introduced Sonia Delaunay-Terk to the poet Blaise Cendrars, an encounter that would result in their collaboration on *La Prose du Transsibérien* (plate 41).⁵⁹ In January 1913, he traveled with Robert Delaunay to Germany for the painter’s show there at the Sturm gallery in Berlin, where he held court with the German Expressionists and gave an influential lecture on modern painting;⁶⁰ for the occasion, the duo published a catalogue of Delaunay’s paintings, prefaced with a dedication (reproduced in the present volume on the half title page) and a poem, “*Les Fenêtres*” (The windows), by Apollinaire. When a delegation of Italian Futurists made an extended visit to Paris, he put up the poet-painter Carlo Carrà in his offices at *Les Soirées de Paris*, and the two saw each other almost daily,⁶¹ then produced graphically innovative free verse in quick succession—Apollinaire the first *calligramme* (fig. 7), Carrà *parole in libertà* (plate 112).⁶² (He even managed to broker a gallery contract between the Italian and Kahnweiler.)⁶³ Through Picabia, Apollinaire met the Mexican artist Marius de Zayas, who was scouting for Stieglitz in Paris in 1914, and whose rapturous report of the meeting prompted Stieglitz to begin an exchange of journals with Apollinaire through the mail. Not surprisingly, Stieglitz’s journal 291 (fig. 8), appearing in 1915, was modeled in part on *Les Soirées de Paris* (fig. 7).⁶⁴

The network through which the idea of abstraction spread is suggested in this book in a diagram (front endpapers), made with a tip of the hat to the famous chart that graced the cover of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.’s catalogue for his *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition, at The Museum of Modern Art in 1936 (plate 452). Vectors link individuals who knew each other, suggesting the unexpected density of contacts among abstraction’s pioneers. Key

connectors can be discerned: they appear at the center of a burst of rays and include Kandinsky, Apollinaire, Stieglitz, Marinetti, and Tristan Tzara. Perhaps not surprisingly, at least on reflection, what many of these individuals have in common is the fact that they served, among their other roles, as editors of little reviews, building a network in their cross-border correspondence, commissioning manuscripts, requesting reproductions, and soliciting support.

IV

APOLLINAIRE WAS PERHAPS THE FIRST to give a name to this new phenomenon, distinguishing it from a generalized Cubism just weeks after Kupka displayed his *Amorpha* paintings at the Salon d'Automne, though he did not mention Kupka by name. The term he bestowed—Orphism—was both awkward and decidedly anachronistic: it paid homage to the mythical Greek poet/musician Orpheus, who had appeared in one of Apollinaire's poems of 1911 as an avatar of "pure poetry."⁶⁵ Evoking too the Orphic cults and the Alexandrians, the writers of the classical period who fascinated Apollinaire, it suggested a fusing of ancient mystery and modern image.⁶⁶ A spate of appellations for this new form of picture-making soon followed: pure painting (Apollinaire, Delaunay, Kandinsky, and the critic Maurice Raynal), new pictorial realism and variations thereof (Delaunay, Léger, Malevich, and Mondrian), objectless painting (Klee and Malevich in German and Russian respectively)—each indicative of subtle shifts in philosophical orientation.⁶⁷ The artists pursuing nonrepresentational painting splintered into an array of grouplets with neologistic self-nominations like "Rayism," "Synchronism," "Suprematism," "Unism," and so forth. Even so, as abstract pictures began to appear, the difficulty that observers and participants apparently had in finding a suitable name for them suggests how they continued to defy easy categorization.

The word that we have come to use as shorthand for painting that jettisons the depiction of things, the one that I use here—abstraction—had been in existence long before this moment. Georges Roque and Jean-Claude Lebensztejn have recently traced its evolution from early senses as a verbal act meaning "to remove," "to isolate."⁶⁸ By the sixteenth century, the word had the sense of "considering in isolation," of "separating accident from substance" (Lebensztejn), so that one might, for example, begin to define the "abstract sciences" as those removed from practical application or empirical study—that is, from real-world concerns. Here abstraction functions as an operation, the act of abstracting one thing from another, and this understanding is still present in early abstract works in which traces of descriptive subject matter abound. At times the figure seems to be aggressively effaced, layered under paint applied in a different mode (Kupka's *Mme Kupka dans les verticales* [Mme. Kupka among verticals, 1910–11; plate 25] or Léger's *Femme en bleu*); at others, shattered fragments of recognizable elements emerge as if to maintain ties between the artwork and things in the world (Delaunay's *Fenêtres* or Kandinsky's *Komposition V*), or vestiges of a natural or figurative motif seem to provide an armature for a new type of painting (Picabia's *Source*, Morton Schamberg's *Figure (Geometric Patterns)* [1913; plate 80], Mondrian's *The Trees* [1912; plate 252]). These elements are common enough to suggest that evacuating all ties to the natural world was not key to the models of abstraction first proposed around 1912.

When the term "abstraction" does appear in the sphere of art, in the nineteenth century, it was often deployed pejoratively to mean overly intellectual or theoretical. Charles Clément, for example, writing in 1868, described the work of the followers of Jacques-Louis David as characterized by "a tense style, an overspecialized search for shape which can only lead

to a kind of abstraction—to a coldness inevitable in conceptions which are determined by completely false and rigid pictorial ideas."⁶⁹ Yet in an essay of the same year, Charles Baudelaire broached a new sense of abstraction as a language separate from nature, humanly created and therefore essentially artificial: "In nature there is neither line nor color. Line and color have been created by man. They are abstractions. . . . The pleasures we derive in them are of a different sort, yet they are perfectly equal to and absolutely independent of the subject of the picture."⁷⁰ Wilhelm Worringer's book *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (Abstraction and empathy), of 1908—actually written in 1906, as a doctoral thesis—reintroduced the term at a moment in which it resonated with conversations within the international avant-garde. Although Worringer did not speak of contemporary art, he described a "will to abstraction" in both primitive and modern societies, a common expression of anxiety and vulnerability in relation to an external world not confidently mastered. The "aim of abstraction"—here Worringer picked up on the meaning of the word as an isolating operation—was "to wrest the object of the external world out of its natural context, out of the unending flux of being, to purify it of all its dependence upon life, i.e. of everything about it that was arbitrary, to render it necessary and irrefragable, to approximate it to its absolute value."⁷¹ The text had great impact, especially in German avant-garde circles around Berlin's Sturm gallery; its importance for Kandinsky is signaled in his declaration of "our sympathy, our understanding, our inner feeling for the primitives" on the opening page of *On the Spiritual in Art*,⁷² and his use of the term "abstraction" in that essay probably also shows its influence. Some of the connotations Worringer found in the "will to abstraction"—separation from the world, purity, arbitrariness, ideas of the absolute—have likewise lingered.

V

THE PUBLIC APPEARANCE OF THE FIRST ABSTRACT PAINTINGS was matched by equally momentous developments in other spheres. New types of music celebrated sound, independent of compositional or harmonic development; Futurist *parole in libertà* (words in liberty), Russian *zaum* (transrational poetry), and Dadaist sound poetry privileged the graphic and aural quality of language over communicative comprehensibility; and dance abandoned its traditional grounding in costumed narrative to stress the kinesthetic movement of the body. Scholars have long noted the historical coincidence of these phenomena but not often the fact that they were deeply linked, not only through their similar challenges to the conventions of their respective genres but also through important relationships among key figures in these different disciplines, relationships that facilitated the movement of ideas across media.

Marc tells a famous story about Kandinsky's embrace of abstraction.⁷³ He first met the Russian artist in Munich, at a New Year's Eve party celebrating the incoming year of 1911. That night they began an intense and productive friendship that would include the cofounding of the *Blaue Reiter* group and the publication of the *Blaue Reiter* almanac. Two days later, on January 2, 1911, these new friends, along with Aleksei Jawlensky, Marianne Werefkin, and Kandinsky's companion, Gabriele Münter, attended a concert of music by the Viennese composer Arnold Schoenberg. The crowd was dumbfounded but the artists were dazzled; over drinks after the concert, they excitedly discussed the congruence they recognized between Schoenberg's music, his theories (his writing had been published in the program), and Kandinsky's painting. On January 14, in a letter to the artist August Macke, Marc wrote of the evening, "Can you imagine a music in which tonality (that is, the adherence

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Individual images appearing in this publication may be protected by copyright in the United States of America, or elsewhere, and may not be reproduced in any form without the permission of the rights holders. In reproducing the images contained in this publication, the Museum obtained the permission of the rights holders whenever possible. Should the Museum have been unable to locate the rights holder, notwithstanding good faith efforts, it requests that any contact information concerning such rights be forwarded so that they may be contacted for future editions.

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas: pls. 79, 80, 188.

© 2012 Art Acquest: pls. 405, 440. Courtesy Sammlung Hans Richter/ Deutsches Filminstitut–DIF, Frankfurt am Main: pls. 406, 408.

Courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago: pls. 184, 187, 206.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York: pl. 176. Albers Foundation/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 368.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Collection Barney A. Eisnerworth: pl. 380.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga, photo Normunds Braslins: pls. 296, 297.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, N.Y.: p. 182.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.: pls. 179, 185, 186.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe/Art Resource, N.Y.: pls. 177, 178.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, photo Sheldon C. Collins: pl. 181.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris: p. 19, fig. 6; pls. 10, 14–17, 21, 25, 56–73, 86, 87, 95, 131–36, 157–62, 164, 165, 167, 168, 170, 402, 403, 443. Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna: p. 24, figs. 9, 10.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy Centre Pompidou–Mnam–Bibliothèque Kandinsky–E. Henschel and C. J. von Dühre: pl. 372.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy CNAC/MNAM/Dist. RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, N.Y.: p. 25, fig. 11; pls. 11, 12, 18, 22, 27, 137, 371, 373–76.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy Kunstmuseum Basel, photo Martin P. Bühler: pl. 89.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Photo Erich Lessing/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 24.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. © mumok, museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien, Vienna: pl. 26.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. © Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid: pls. 28, 155.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy Museum Folkwang, Essen: pl. 23.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.: pl. 29.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. © The Philadelphia Museum of Art: pl. 93.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. © The Philadelphia Museum of Art/Art Resource, N.Y.: pls. 85, 163.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy a private collector: pls. 90, 92.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy a private collector: pl. 91.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy a private collector, photo Becket Logan: pl. 166.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. © RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 154.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: pls. 88, 94, 129, 130.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy Staatsgalerie Stuttgart: pl. 169.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich: pls. 9, 13, 266, 367.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, photo Vladimir Terebenin, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Molodkovots: pl. 19.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow: pl. 20.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Zentrum Paul Klee: pl. 369.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/PICTORIGHT, The Netherlands. Photo Marcin Muchalski, © Diamond Shot Studio: pls. 265, 266. Courtesy Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, photo Peter Cox: pl. 267.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Rachel Adler: pl. 121.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Fondazione Torino Musei/Studio Gonella: pls. 96–99.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Mart – Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto: p. 8, pls. 120, 122, 123.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome: pls. 113, 114. © and courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y., image Art Resource, N.Y.: title page, pls. 109, 110.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Courtesy Mondadori Portfolio/Electa/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 104.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Courtesy a private collection: pl. 111.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Courtesy a private collection: pls. 115–19.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Courtesy Scala/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 112.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Courtesy The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: pl. 105.

© 2012/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome. Courtesy Tate, London/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 103.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn: pls. 190, 305, 307, 313–22, 330, 341–43, 346, 347, 379, 385–88, 399, 401, 404, 442.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Stiftung Hans Arp und Sophie Taeuber-Arp e.V., Remagen-Rolandswerth, photo Wolfgang Morell: pls. 333, 337, 338, 345.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno: pl. 332.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy bpk, Berlin/Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin/Art Resource, N.Y., photo Joerg P. Anders: pls. 334, 339.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. © The Cleveland Museum of Art: pl. 340.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne: p. 12; p. 31, fig. 15; p. 35, fig. 18.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Photo Michael Herling and Aline Gwose: pl. 381.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Kunstmuseum Basel, photo Martin P. Bühler: pls. 323, 329, 331, 335.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Kunsthaus Zürich, © ARS, New York/ProLiteris, Zürich: pl. 324.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Landes-Stiftung Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen, photo Nic. Tieweggenborn: pls. 327, 328.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Viktor and Marianne Langen Foundation: pl. 389.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Musée d’art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg, photo M. Bertola: pl. 325.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. © Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid: pl. 303.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art: pl. 304.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy private collection courtesy the Aargauer Kunsthaus Aarau, photo Jörg Müller: pl. 326.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy a private collector: pl. 336.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy a private collector: pl. 344.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy a private collector: pl. 365.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Sprengel Museum Hannover: pls. 382, 467.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy State Museum of Contemporary Art–Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki: pl. 306.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow: pl. 370.

© 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Tate, London/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 383.

© Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Courtesy Mary-Wigman-Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin: pl. 357.

© Estate of Vanessa Bell, courtesy Henrietta Garnett: pl. 173.

Courtesy: Tate, London/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 172.

Courtesy bpk, Berlin/Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 223.

© 2012 Miriam Cendrars. © 2012 L&M Services B.V. The Hague, 20120503, courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris: pls. 37, 41. Courtesy Musée d’art et d’histoire, Geneva, © 2012 André Longchamps Photographie: pl. 40.

Courtesy CNAC/MNAM/Dist. RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, N.Y.: pls. 208, 294, 309, 441.

© Conde Nast. Covarrubias/Vanity Fair: pl. 458.

Courtesy Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.: pl. 153.

Courtesy Deutsche Kinemathek–Museum für Film und Fernsehen/ Schriftgutarchiv: pl. 439.

Courtesy Charlotte Douglas, N.Y.: pl. 219.

© 2012 The Estate of Arthur G. Dove, courtesy Terry Dintenfass, Inc. Courtesy Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio: pl. 81. Courtesy and © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y., image Art Resource, N.Y.: pls. 82, 83.

© Werner Graef’s Estate. Courtesy the Museum Wiesbaden, photo Ed Restle: pl. 407.

© 2012 Duncan Grant/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/DACS, London. Courtesy and © Tate, London, 2012: pl. 171. Courtesy: a private collection: pl. 174. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven: pl. 175.

© HIP/Art Resource, N.Y./National Archives, London: pl. 138.

© 2012 Vilmos Huszar/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ Beeldrecht, Amsterdam: pl. 264. Courtesy Gemeentemuseum Den Haag: pl. 268. Photo Marcin Muchalski, © Diamond Shot Studio: pl. 377.

© 2012 Johannes Itten/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ PROLITTERIS, Switzerland: pl. 361. Courtesy Kunsthaus Zürich: pl. 364.

© 2011 Kunsthaus Zürich, all rights reserved: pl. 126.

Courtesy Kunstmuseum Basel, photo Martin P. Bühler: pls. 409–38.

Courtesy © L. & M. Services B.V. The Hague: pl. 30.

© 2012 L. & M. Services B.V. The Hague, 20120503. Courtesy: CNAC/ MNAM/Dist. RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, N.Y.: pls. 339, 437–49, 51. Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, Mass.: pl. 50.

© 2012 L. & M. Services B.V. The Hague, 20120809: pls. 38, 42.

© 2012 Estate of Rudolf von Laban. Courtesy: Centre national de la danse: pls. 354, 355. Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Bereich Sondersammlungen: pls. 353, 356.

Courtesy I llustration: pl. 84.

Photo Erich Lessing/Art Resource, N.Y.: p. 15, fig. 3.

© Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust: pl. 139. Photo Marcin Muchalski, © Diamond Shot Studio: 140. Courtesy: Tate, London/ Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 148. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art/ Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 147.

© 2012 André Longchamps Photographie: pls. 52–55.

Courtesy LWL–Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster (Westfälisches Landesmuseum), photo Sabine Ahlbrand-Dornseif: pl. 362.

© 2012 Mondrian/Holtzman Trust, c/o HCR International: pls. 249, 251, 255. © 2012 Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: pl. 252. © Stichting Kröller-Müller Museum: pls. 250, 256. Courtesy: The Art Institute of Chicago: pl. 262. bpk, Berlin/ Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden: pl. 378. Gemeentemuseum Den Haag: pls. 253, 259, 261, 263. Philadelphia Museum of Art: pl. 258. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: pls. 254, 257. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam: pl. 260.

Photo Marcin Muchalski, © Diamond Shot Studio: half title page; p. 13, fig. 1; p. 20, fig. 7; pl. 286.

Courtesy Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme, Paris: pl. 391.

Courtesy The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: pl. 151.

Photos The Museum of Modern Art, Imaging and Visual Resources Department: p. 19, fig. 6; p. 34, fig. 17; pls. 108, 113, 114, 125, 131–34, 139, 142, 149, 156, 165, 168, 170, 190, 248, 264, 284, 291, 298, 300, 305, 307, 379, 386, 400–403, 440, 442, 443, 466. David Allison: pl. 280. Peter Butler: pls. 220, 221, 225–39, 292, 361. Robert Gerhardt: pls. 10, 15–17, 21, 341, 342. Thomas Griesel: pls. 167, 183, 274, 290, 343, 380, 449, 450. Kate Keller: pls. 5, 157, 192, 193, 217, 249, 446–48. Paige Knight: pls. 269, 405. Jonathan Muzikar: p. 21, fig. 8; pls. 14, 25, 86, 87, 95, 145, 159, 160, 255, 285, 388. Mali Olatunji: pls. 31, 32. John Wronn: pls. 35, 56–73, 107, 135, 136, 158, 161, 162, 164, 173, 176, 214, 224, 247, 251, 276–79, 281–83, 287, 312–22, 330, 346, 347, 384, 387, 388, 399.

Courtesy Muzeum Plakatu w Wilanowie, Warsaw: pl. 390.

Courtesy Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: pls. 395, 397, 398.

Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.: pl. 143.

Courtesy Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam: pls. 288, 289.

Courtesy New York Academy of Medicine: pls. 444, 445, 451.

© 2012 Fundación Petrorutti: 107. Courtesy Maria Graciela and Luis Alfonso Oberto Collection: pl. 106.

Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art: pl. 33.

© 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artist’s Rights Society (ARS), New York: pl. 5. Courtesy: The Art Institute of Chicago: pl. 1. Scala/ Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 2. © RMN–Grand Palais/Art Resource, N.Y.: p. 17, fig. 5; pl. 3. © Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln: pl. 4. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y., image Art Resource, N.Y.: p. 17, fig. 4.

Courtesy a private collector: p. 215.

Courtesy a private collector, photo Pieter Boersma: pls. 270, 271.

© 2012 Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln: pl. 219.

© 2012 A. Rodchenko and V. Stepanova Archive, Moscow: pls. 248, 298. Courtesy A. Rodchenko and V. Stepanova Archive, Moscow: pl. 299.

© 2012 Luigi Russolo Estate: 125. Photo Marcin Muchalski, © Diamond Shot Studio: pl. 124.

© 2012 Ewa Sapka-Pawliczak. Courtesy the Museum Sztuki w Łodzi: pls. 392–94.

© 2012 The Estate of Helen Saunders. © 2011 courtesy The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago: pl. 144.

Courtesy Scala/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 75.

© 2012 Estate of Oskar Schlemmer: pl. 466.

Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna: pl. 6.

Courtesy Galerie Natalie Seroussi, Paris: pl. 396.

© 2012 Gino Severini/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy and © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, image Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 100. Courtesy: Triton Foundation: pl. 101. A private collector: pl. 102.

Courtesy the Sherwin Collection, Leeds/Bridgeman Art Library: pl. 146.

© 2012 Estate of Wacław Szpakowski. Courtesy Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi: pls. 397, 398.

Courtesy St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music: p. 26, fig. 12; pls. 194–199, 201, 203, 204.

Courtesy St. Petersburg State Archive of Cinema, Photo and Sound Documents: p. 33, fig. 16; pl. 205.

Courtesy Staatsgalerie Stuttgart: pl. 363.

Courtesy State Museum of Contemporary Art–Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki: pls. 127, 240–46, 295.

Courtesy State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg: p. 27, fig. 17; pls. 200, 202, 207, 213, 218, 310, 311.

Courtesy State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow: pl. 212.

Courtesy Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam: p. 27, fig. 13; pls. 36, 209, 210, 216.

© 2012 Stichting Kröller-Müller Museum: pls. 272, 308.

© 2012 Stiftung John Neumeier: pls. 348–52.

© Tate, London, 2012, courtesy Tate, London/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 141. Courtesy Tate, London/Art Resource, N.Y.: p. 15, fig. 2.

Courtesy Thyssen-Bornemisza Collections, photo Giuseppe Penisi (Foto Brunel): pl. 128.

© 2012 Peyton Wright Gallery. Courtesy Montclair Art Museum, N.J.: pl. 74. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; photo Lee Stalsworth: pl. 76.

Albright-Knox Art Gallery/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 77.

© 1910, 1938 Universal Edition A.G., Vienna/UE 2291. Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna: pl. 8.

© 1912, 1940 Universal Edition A.G., Vienna/PH 229. Courtesy Arnold Schönberg Center, Vienna: pl. 7.

Courtesy Adrien Sina: pl. 360.

Courtesy Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Bereich Sondersammlungen: pl. 353.

© 2012 Georges Vantongerloo/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ ProLiteris, Switzerland: pl. 274. Courtesy: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation: pl. 275. Tate, London/Art Resource, N.Y.: pl. 276.

Courtesy the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis: pl. 189.

Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, photo Sheldon C. Collins: pl. 152.

© 2012 Mary Wigman Foundation, Cologne. Courtesy Mary-Wigman-Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin: pls. 358, 359.

Courtesy Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen am Rhein: pl. 34.


Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven: pls. 78, 150.

Published in conjunction with the exhibition

INVENTING ABSTRACTION, 1910–1925

at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 23, 2012–April 15, 2013.

Organized by Leah Dickerman, Curator, with Masha Chlenova, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture

The exhibition is made possible by  **HANJIN SHIPPING**

Major support is provided by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, Blavatnik Family Foundation, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, and Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III.

This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

The accompanying seminars are made possible by MoMA’s Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation.

Produced by the Department of Publications, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Edited by David Frankel

Designed by McCall Associates, New York

Production by Matthew Pimm

Printed and bound by Brizzolis, S.A., Madrid

This book is typeset in Placard Condensed, Hoefler Text, and Freight Sans.

The endpapers are set in Futura. The paper is 150gsm Luxosam.

Ester Coen’s essay was translated from the Italian by Marguerite Shore. Hubert Damisch’s and Philippe-Alain Michaud’s essays were translated from the French by Jeanine Herman. Jaroslaw Suchan’s essay was translated from the Polish by Klara Kemp-Welch.

Published by The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 Street, New York, New York 10019

© 2012 The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Copyright credits for certain illustrations are cited opposite. All rights reserved

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012950682

ISBN: 978-0-87070-828-2

Distributed in the United States and Canada by ARTBOOK | D.A.P., New York 155 Sixth Avenue, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10013 www.artbook.com

Distributed outside the United States and Canada by Thames & Hudson Ltd 181A High Holborn, London WC1V 7QX www.thamesandhudson.com

Cover: Liubov’ Popova. *Zhivopisnaya arkhitektonika* (Painterly architectonic; large detail). 1917. Oil on canvas, 31 1/2" x 38 5/8" (80 x 98 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Philip Johnson Fund. See plate 224

Endpapers: the diagram on the front endpapers maps the nexus of relationships among the artists represented in the exhibition and book *Inventing Abstraction 1910–1925*. Vectors connect artists whose acquaintance with one another during these years could be documented; the names in red are those with the most connections within this group. The chart was a collaboration among the exhibition’s curatorial and design team and Paul Ingram, Kravis Professor of Business, and Mitali Banerjee, doctoral candidate, Columbia Business School. Contributors at MoMA were: Allegra Burnette, Masha Chlenova, Ingrid Chou, Leah Dickerman, Sabine Dowek, Jasmine Helm, Nina Léger, Jodi Roberts, and Catherine Wheeler. The back endpapers list the artists, and their birthplaces, birth and death dates, and the countries where they worked during the period covered by the exhibition.

Halftitle: Guillaume Apollinaire. Dedication preceding Apollinaire’s poem *Les Fenêtres* (Windows) in *R. Delaunay*, the catalogue for a Delaunay exhibition at Der Sturm gallery, Berlin, January–February 1913. 13 3/8 x 10 5/8" (34 x 27 cm). Paris: André Marty, 1913. The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. The text reads in translation, “I Love the Art of today because I Love/Light above all and all people/Love Light above all/they invented Fire/G A”

Title: Anton Giulio Bragaglia. *Cambio di posizione* (Change of position). 1911. Gelatin silver print, 5 1/16" (12.8 x 17.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gilman Collection, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel

Printed in Spain

Thank you for downloading this preview of *Inventing Abstraction*.
To continue reading, purchase the book by clicking [here](#).

MoMA publications are available to individual customers in several ways.

MoMA Online

www.MoMAStore.org

MoMA Mail Order

Tel. (toll-free): 800 447 6662

Fax: 212 333 1127

MoMA Stores

The MoMA Design and Book Store
11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019
Tel.: 212 708 9400

The MoMA Design Store, SoHo
81 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012
Tel.: 646 613 1367

MoMA Books
The Museum of Modern Art, 2nd Floor

Independent, chain, and online bookstores offer MoMA titles worldwide. Contact your favorite bookstore to inquire about new and recent MoMA titles. If the title you are seeking is unavailable, please inform your bookstore that MoMA titles can be ordered from our trade distributors.

Trade Orders

Most MoMA publications are distributed to the trade in the United States and Canada by ARTBOOK | D.A.P. and outside the United States and Canada by Thames & Hudson, Ltd.

Bookstores, book distributors, and libraries should direct all orders, invoice questions, and title, price, and availability inquiries to:

ARTBOOK | D.A.P.
155 Sixth Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10013-1507
Tel.: 800 338 2665
www.artbook.com

Thames & Hudson Distributors, Ltd.
Littlehampton Book Services
Faraday Close, Durnington, Worthing
West Sussex, BN13 2RB
Tel.: +44 (0) 1903 828501
www.thamesandhudson.co.uk