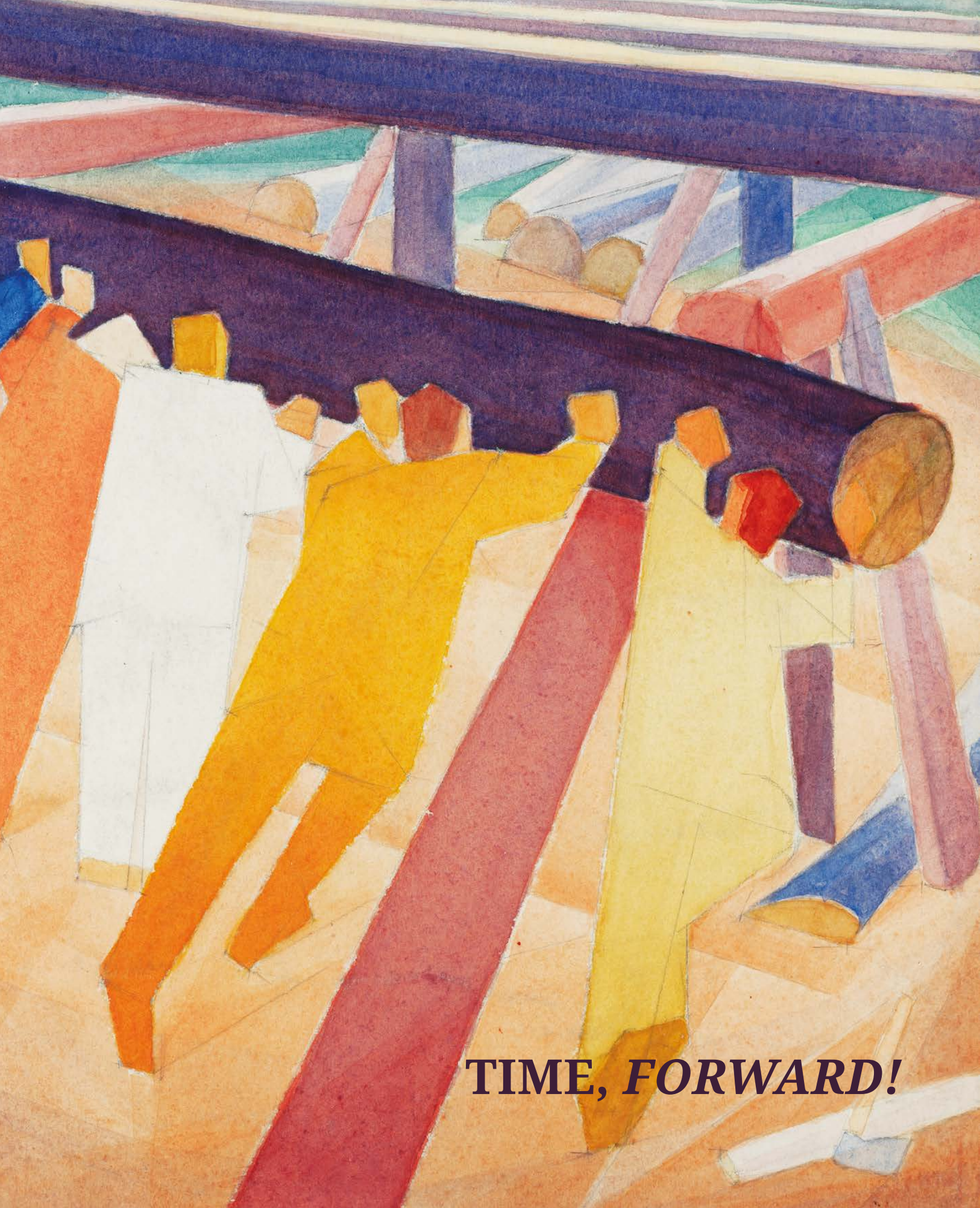
TIME, *FORWARD!*

Cover:
Alexander Bogomazov (1880-1930)
Log-Rolling (detail), 1928-29
Watercolour on paper
25 x 30 cm

TIME, *FORWARD!*

Russian & Ukrainian Art 1890-1930

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To be the first dealer in early 20th Century Russian Fine Art to be invited to exhibit at TEFAF Maastricht for twenty years is an extraordinary privilege.

Although this exhibition offers an overview of Russian & Ukrainian Art from 1890-1930, the majority of works are by two names relatively unknown to a Western audience: David Yakerson, a native of Vitebsk and disciple of Malevich; and Alexander Bogomazov, a pioneering Cubo-Futurist artist, theoretician and teacher from Kiev.

Our 1890-1930 overview begins with arguably Russia's first truly revolutionary artist, Mikhail Vrubel, and charts the period through to a logical conclusion in the form of a watercolour by Boris Kustodiev that stands at the threshold of Socialist Realism.

I have been lucky enough to work in the field of Russian Art for nearly 30 years – meeting a legion of wonderful people not just in Russia but also in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and across other fascinating lands from the former 'Eastern bloc.' The friendship and acceptance of my peers – be they private collectors, museum experts or members of the trade (especially my colleagues from the International Confederation of Art & Antiques Dealers of Russia), is priceless: it is to them that I dedicate this exhibition.

James Butterwick

MIKHAIL VRUBEL (1856-1910)

Portrait of Vova Mamontov Reading, c. 1890
Pencil on paper
Titled in Russian *Vova is reading a book and sees…*
top and *Boka* bottom right
14.5 x 8.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Moscow
A.B. Yumashev, Moscow
N.A. Sokolov, Moscow, thence by descent

EXHIBITED

MOSKh, Moscow, 1956 (n°. 38)
Mikhail Vrubel – Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 1956 (n°. 129, ill.)
Mikhail Vrubel – Russian Museum, Leningrad, 1957 (n°. 129, ill.)
Mikhail Vrubel – Museum of Omsk, June – July 1996 (n°. 2, ill.)
Mikhail Vrubel – Museum of Private Collectors, Moscow, August – September 1996 (n°. 2, ill.)
Mikhail Vrubel – Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, February – July 1997 (n°. 128, ill.)
Russian Line – Sotheby's, Moscow, 12 March – 30 March 2012 (p.4, ill.)
Acquisitions & Loans – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May – 7 July 2012

LITERATURE

Mikhail Vrubel – P.K. Suzdalyev, Sovietsky Khudozhnik, Moscow, 1991 (p.77, ill.)
Russian Art: A Personal Choice – Kit-Art, Moscow, 2004 (p.4, ill.)
Russian Works on Paper from the Collection of James Butterwick – Kit-Art, Moscow, 2011 (p.4, ill.)

Mikhail Vrubel's influence on Russian Art can be compared to that of Cézanne on Western Art. From 1890 Vrubel blazed a trail of experimentation before descending into madness and dying in an asylum in 1910, aged just 54. Fellow-artist Alexander Benois, in his funeral oration, paid tribute to his importance by evoking the 'Vrubel Epoch.' This rare portrait shows the son of the industrialist and renowned arts patron Savva Mamontov. Although drawn in the 1890s, its execution – with form proceeding from geometric shapes – is revolutionary. The portrait was formerly owned by the family of the Academician Ivan Pavlov and the *Kukrinyksy* artist trio responsible for Russia's most famous propaganda posters of World War II.

BORA

NATALIA GONCHAROVA (1881-1962)

L'Arbre Rose – Printemps, 1912
Gouache on paper
Signed *N. Gontcharova* bottom right
26 x 17 cm

PROVENANCE

Alexandra Tomilina-Larionova, Paris
David Hughes & C°., London (acquired from above c. 1965)
Private Collection, Italy
Julian Barran, London

EXHIBITED

Russian Line – Sotheby's, Moscow, 12 March – 30 March 2012 (p.10, ill.)
Acquisitions & Loans – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May – 7 July 2012

LITERATURE

Maestri Stranieri – M. Botello, Turin, 1968 (p.37, ill.)
Russian Works on Paper from the Collection of James Butterwick – Kit-Art, Moscow, 2011 (p.13, ill.)

Goncharova, who grew up in the country on her grandmother's estate, used an unusually soft palette for this dreamy study of a tree in blossom, subtitled *Spring*. She once wrote that 'Spring and its blossom seem more important in northern Russia than in the centre of the country,' evoking the 'pink, mallow-coloured, dull-green, blue and white hues' of northern icons (cf. exh. cat., *Natalia Goncharova Between Russian Tradition and European Modernism*, Lubeck, 2009, p.13).

Spring can be seen here as a metaphor not just for the regeneration of the Russian landscape but also of Goncharova's artistic career. In 1912 she moved away from Western art to explore Russia's affinity with the Orient. After disassociating themselves from the *Jack of Diamonds* group, with whom they had exhibited that Winter, she and Mikhail Larionov staged the *Donkey's Tail* exhibition in March and began to develop *Rayonnism* – their own, highly personal brand of Cubo-Futurism. Trees and forest scenes would recur in Goncharova's Rayonnist works, while her use of pink, grey and green is echoed in her painting *Les Arbres en Fleurs* (also known as *Apple-Trees In Blossom*) from Summer 1912, sold at Christie's London in 2011.

NATALIA GONCHAROVA (1881-1962)

The Bridge, 1916
Oil on canvas
64.8 x 50.2 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist
Mikhail Larionov (upon her death)
Alexandra Tomilina-Larionova, Paris
Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne (until 1987)
Modernism Gallery, San Francisco (until 1996)
S. Rothschild Collection, Baltimore
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

International Exhibition of Modern Art – Geneva, 1920/21 (n°. 26)
The Goncharova – Larionov Exhibition – Kingore Galleries, New York, 1922 (n°. 15)
Larionov – Gontcharova – Galerie Beyeler, Basel, June – September 1961 (n°. 40)
Natalia Gontcharova – Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon, 21 December 1969 – 8 February 1970 (n°. 37)
Rétrospective Gontcharova – Maison de la Culture, Bourges, 14 April – 3 June 1973 (n°. 42)
Rétrospective Larionov-Gontcharova – Musee d'Ixelles, Brussels, 29 April – 5 May 1976 (n°. 110, ill.)
Natalia Goncharova – Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 16 October 2013 – 16 February 2014 (n°. 123, ill.)

A precise dating for this audacious work has proved problematic, with one school of thought suggesting it may have been painted before June 1915, when Larionov and Goncharova left Russia at the invitation of Sergei Diaghilev, never to return. However, as their first port of call in Western Europe was Geneva, *Bridge* was almost certainly painted in Switzerland. The grey triangle in the centre of the canvas seems inspired by a mountain rising above Alpine pastures, whilst the bridge itself appears to cross a stream with rapids.

Stylistically, however, it belongs very much to the Russian period, containing aspects that evoke Goncharova's Rayonnism of 1912-13, whereas the handling of the trees reflects her earlier Primitivist style. This represents one of the rare occasions when two conflicting styles appear on the same canvas in Goncharova's work. This characterizes her 'aesthetic volatility' of the time before Goncharova returned to a more realist style in the late 1910s.
The structure of the painting, with its flat, geometric shapes, suggests Goncharova's interest in architecture (her father's profession); the intersecting diagonals, compositional dynamism and fiery brick red reflect her 'energetic, lapidary and sharply modern' artistic personality (cf. Irina Vakar).

This magnificent painting surely counts among Goncharova's most powerful works. As the critic Vladimir Denisov wrote, 'everything is calculated to strike you at once, to grab us from the outset. They (the paintings) encompass you immediately and throw everything at you.'

ARISTARKH LENTULOV (1882-1943)

Study for the painting 'Victory', 1914
Gouache and watercolour on paper
Signed in Russian on verso by the artist, Лентулов, and by the artist's daughter 'A.V. Lentulov. I confirm, M.A. Lentulova'
18.7 x 24.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Marianna Lentulova, daughter of the artist, Moscow
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

101 Masterpieces, Russian Graphic Art 1790-1920 - Paris, Galerie de La Scala, March – April 1999 (n°. 9, ill.)
The Russian Revolution in Art. Russian Avant Garde 1910-1932 – St Petersburg Gallery, London, 3 April – 20 September 2014

The definitive, large-scale painted version of *Victory* was finished in a Cubist, almost mosaic-like style. The only figure with facial features – albeit just eyes and mouth – is Tsar Nicholas II on horseback, centrally positioned as if anointing the war with Germany as a Pan-Slav Crusade.

The background soldiers are faceless and emotionless; their presence seems almost negligible. Various elements to be found in the final work are already present in this dynamic study, including the halo-like circle, itself a motif taken from icon painting, surrounding the Tsar, partly entwined with the ribbon and medal of the Cross of St George (Russia's top military award). The composition is frenzied and chaotic.

The Tsar's hand is raised to command his soldiers to attack; a loose wheel rolls drunkenly between the hoofs of his steed; another horse rears its head wildly bottom right; a German soldier drops dead as a shell explodes nearby.…

MIKHAIL LARIONOV (1881-1964)

Young Jester, 1915
Costume design for Leonid Massine in *Dance of the Buffoons, Soleil du Nuit.*
Watercolour on artist's board
Signed *M. Larionow* lower right
38 x 26 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Paris
Private Collection, Arizona
Bonhams Russian Sale, London, 7 July 2010 (lot n°. 59)

EXHIBITED

Œuvres de Gontcharova et de Larionow – Galerie Sauvage, Paris, 16 April – 7 May 1918 (177-194)
Œuvres de Gontcharova et de Larionow – Galerie Barbazanges, Paris, 11 – 28 June 1919 (237-247)
Artistes Russes (organized by *Mir Isskustva*) – Galerie La Boétie, Paris, 1921 (as *Le Bouffon*)
Artistes Russes (organized by *Mir Isskustva*) – unknown location, Paris, 1921 (as *Le Bouffon*)
The Goncharova – Larionov Exhibition – Kingore Gallery, New York, 1922 (as *Soleil de Minuit*), 97-101
Russian Line – Sotheby's, Moscow, 12 March – 30 March 2012 (p.8, ill.)
Acquisitions & Loans – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May – 7 July 2012

LITERATURE

The Soul of Russia – Macmillan, London, 1916 (p.176, ill.)
Russian Works on Paper from the Collection of James Butterwick – Kit-Art, Moscow, 2011 (p.10, ill.)

Larionov worked with Diaghilev and the *Ballets Russes* on a number of productions, including this re-working of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snowmaiden, Le Soleil du Nuit* which premiered in Geneva in December 1915 and saw Larionov at the height of his creative powers as a stage and costume designer. The Larionov archives in the State Tretyakov Gallery reveal that he gave a signed lithograph copy of this work (with dedication) to the distinguished collector Simon Lissim in 1932. It would appear Larionov valued his *Jester* so highly that he used it as a sort of visiting card.

M. Larionow

LIUBOV POPOVA (1889-1924)

Untitled, 1917
Gouache, watercolour & pencil on paper
33.7 x 25.1 cm

PROVENANCE

Pavel Popov, Moscow (Artist's Brother)
M. Goldberg, Zvenigorod (Stepson of the above)
George Costakis, Moscow (later Athens), acquired c.1955
Private European Collection
Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York, acquired 2000
Private European Collection, acquired from the above in 2007

EXHIBITED

Künstlerinnen der Russischen Avantgarde – Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne, 1979/80 (n°. 66, ill.)
Gouaches & Drawings by Liubov Popova & Kazimir Malevich – Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York, 1986 (n°. 8, cover ill.)
Karo Dame – Konstruktive, Konkrete und Radikale Kunst von Frauen von 1914 bis Heute – Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau, 1995 (p.62, ill.)
Malevich and his Influence – Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein, Vaduz, 17 May – 7 September 2008 (p.169, ill.)
The Russian Revolution in Art: Russian Avant-Garde 1910-1932 – St Petersburg Gallery, London, 3 April – 20 September 2014

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Russian Avant-Garde Art – The George Costakis Collection – Zander Rudenstien, (ed.): Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1981 (pp.376-382)

In 1916 Popova joined Malevich's Suprematist group after abandoning Cubo-Futurism in favour of an abstract style featuring irregular shapes known as *Painterly Architectonics*. This coloured drawing is the third in a series of six which Popova produced between 1917-19 when preparing a portfolio of linocuts entitled *6 Gravures* (engravings). The numbers visible in each shape are colour codes for the attention of the printers, although Popova subsequently touched up some of the linocuts using watercolour, gouache and occasionally oil. The design here is the most colourful of the six, and one of two whose composition slants diagonally to the right; two others slant in the other direction, while two have a vertical emphasis. All six of the original designs were once owned by the legendary Russian art collector George Costakis.

1
1
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ILYA CHASHNIK (1902-29)

***Suprematist Cross Architecton*,** 1926
Pencil on paper
22 x 17.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Ilya Ilich Chashnik (Artist's Son), Leningrad
Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

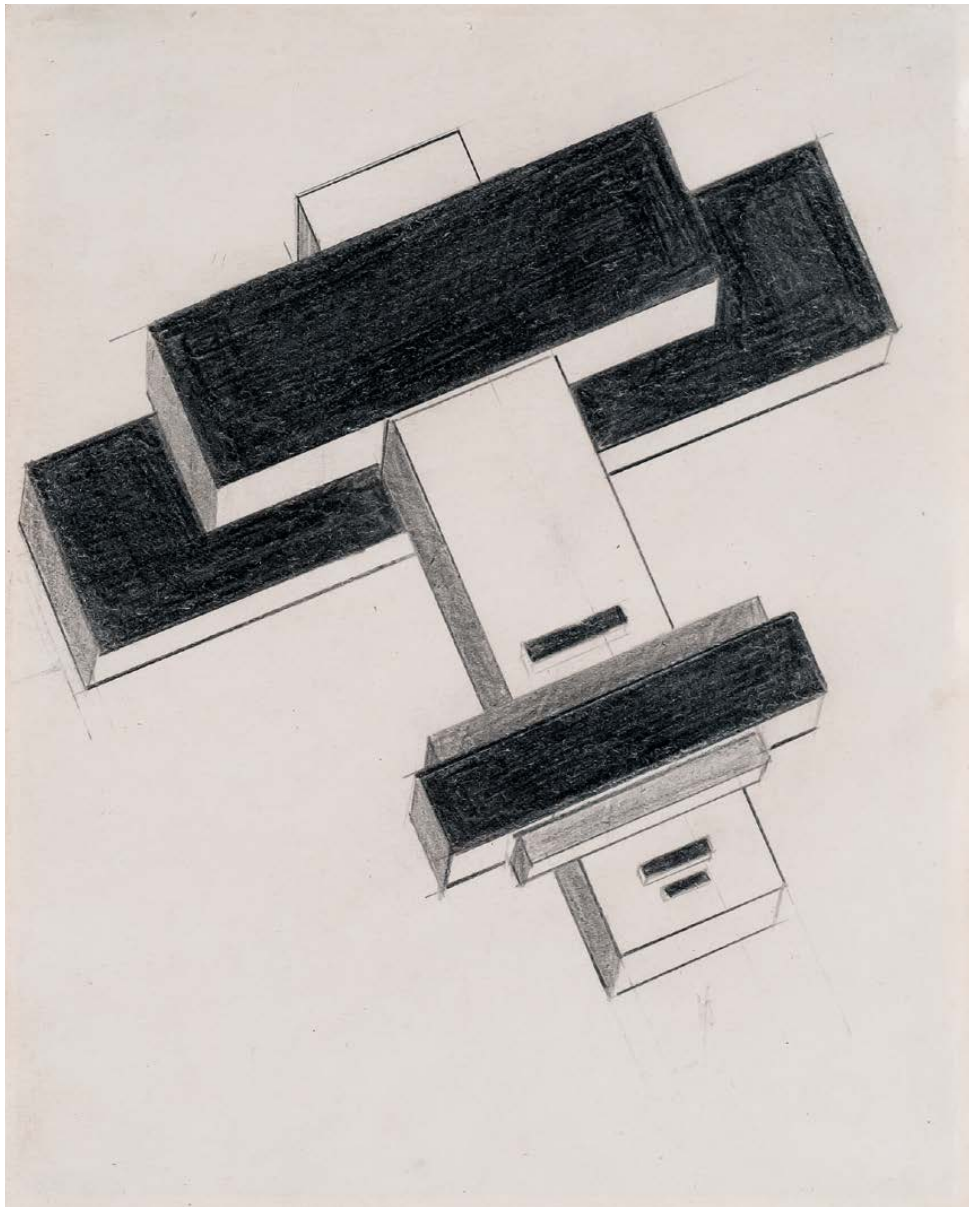
Russische Avantgarde 1910-1930 – Bilder Konstruktionen – Galerie Bargera, Cologne, 31 May – 30 September 1978 (n°. 78, ill.)
Ilya Chashnik – Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York, 2 November 1979 – 15 March 1980 (n°. 71)
Malevich, Suetin, Chashnik – Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York, 21 October – 15 December 1983 (n°. 48)
Die Grosse Utopie – Die Russische Avantgarde 1915-1932 – Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 1 March – 10 May 1992 (p.184, ill.)
Die Grosse Utopie – Die Russische Avantgarde 1915-1932 – Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 5 June – 23 August 1992 (p.184, ill.)
The Great Utopia – The Russian & Soviet Avant-Garde 1915-1932 – Guggenheim Museum, New York, 10 October 1992 – 3 January 1993 (n°. 181, ill.)
Kasimir Malewitsch, Werk und Wirkung – Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 10 November 1995 – 28 January 1996 (n°. 172, ill.)
Ilya Chashnik Suprematist works 1921-1926 – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2012 (p.16, ill.)
The Russian Revolution in Art: Russian Avant-Garde 1910-1932 – St Petersburg Gallery, London, 3 April – 20 September 2014

LITERATURE

Malevitch – Le Méconnu in Cimaise – M. Lamac, Art et Architecture Actuels, 1968
Suche und Experiment – L. Shadowa, Dresden & London, 1978/1982

Architectons were Suprematist architectural models made from white plaster, produced to Malevich's design by his assistants Chashnik, Suetin and Khidekel at GINKhuK (Institute of Artistic Culture) in Leningrad between 1923-26. This Chashnik drawing derives from Malevich's *Future Planets for Earthlings* of 1923/4 – a larger graphite design for a futuristic space dwelling, embodying a form of 3-D Suprematism that Malevich dubbed 'aerovisual architecture.'

Latvian-born Chashnik's interest in architecture dated to his teenage years. In 1918 he left Vitebsk – where he had grown up and studied under Chagall's teacher Yuri Pen – to attend painting and architecture classes with Malevich in Moscow. He returned to Vitebsk in 1919, joined El Lissitzky's architecture class, and soon after became a prominent member of Malevich's UNOVIS (Champions of New Art) movement: Chashnik was a member of the UNOVIS Creative Committee and the first edition of the *UNOVIS* leaflet, printed in December 1920, contained his design for a rostrum (it would serve as a basis for El Lissitzky's more famous *Lenin Tribune*). In 1921 Chashnik described the goal of UNOVIS as to produce 'builder-scholars'; shortly before he had launched the pamphlet *AERO*, whose name was inspired by the concept of aerial views of Suprematist buildings.



DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)

Composition with Bar, 1920
Indian ink on paper
11 x 15 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private Collection, USA
Private Collection, London

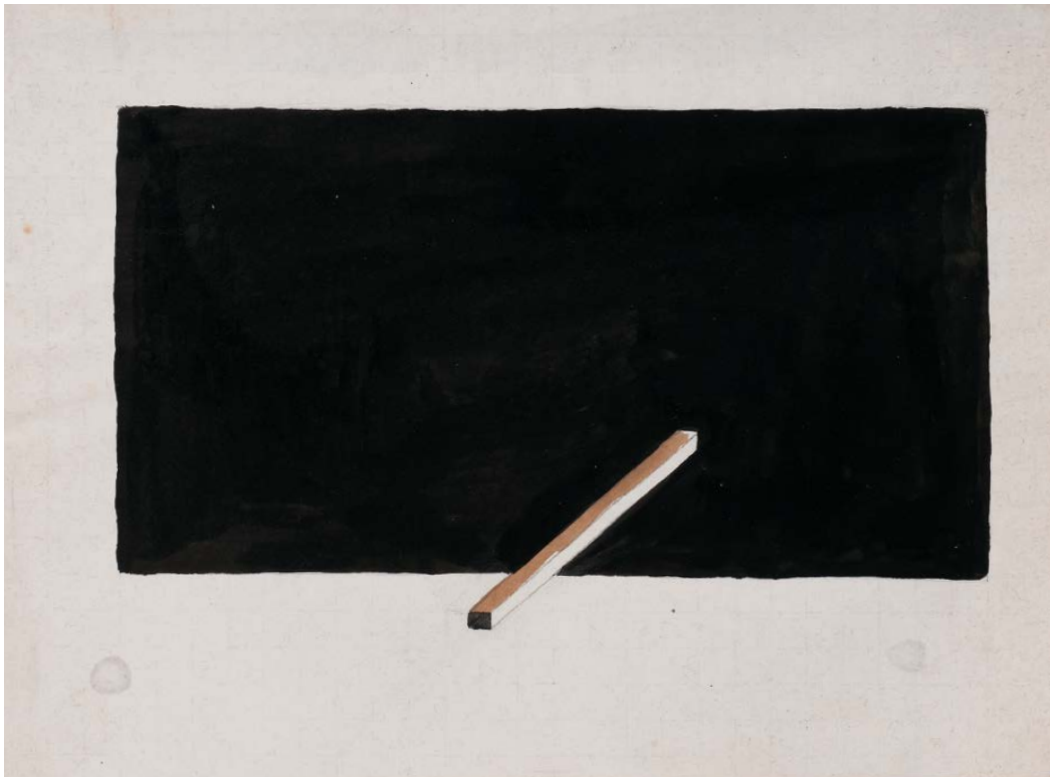
EXHIBITED

Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private Collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 44, ill.)

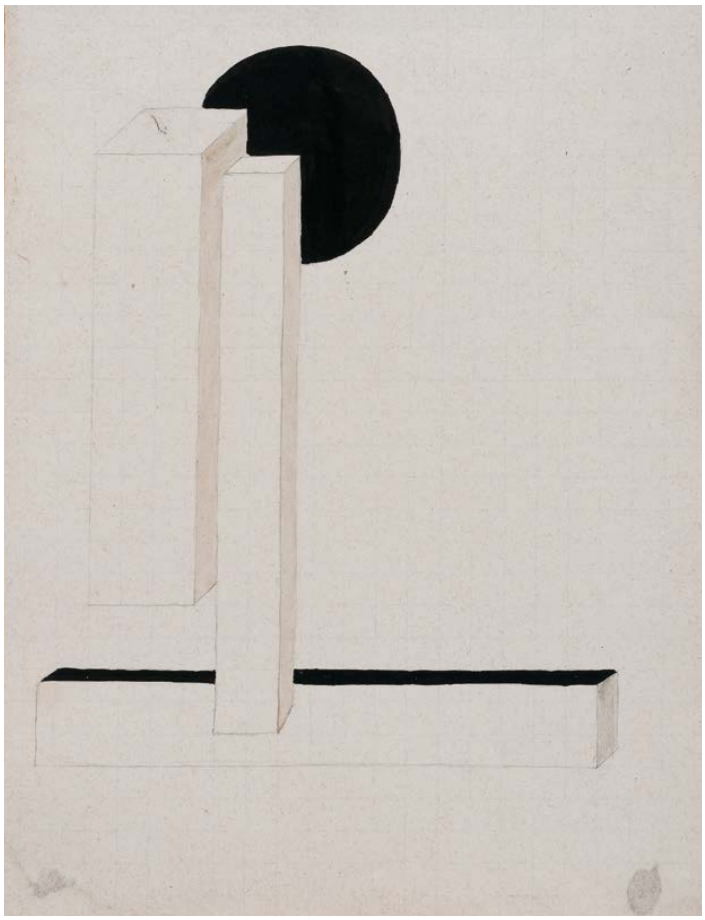
LITERATURE

David Yakerson, Artist from Vitebsk – Alexandra Shatskikh, Subject of Art 1996 (pp.16-25, ill.)

David Yakerson was born in Vitebsk and displayed such precocious artistic talent – he studied with Chagall's teacher Yuri Pen – that, along with Chagall, he was one of the five artists appointed to oversee the festivities held in the town to mark the first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1918. The following Summer Chagall asked Yakerson – then just 23 – to replace Ivan Tilberg as head of the Sculpture studio at the Vitebsk Art School (El Lissitzky joined the teaching staff at the same time). Yakerson's identity card, signed by Chagall, is among a large number of pieces donated to the Chagall Museum in Vitebsk by his widow Elena Kabishcher Yakerson.



DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)



Black Square with Three Bars, 1920
Indian ink, pencil on paper
15.2 x 11.2 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private collection, USA
Private collection, London

EXHIBITED

Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private Collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 48, ill and on catalogue cover.)

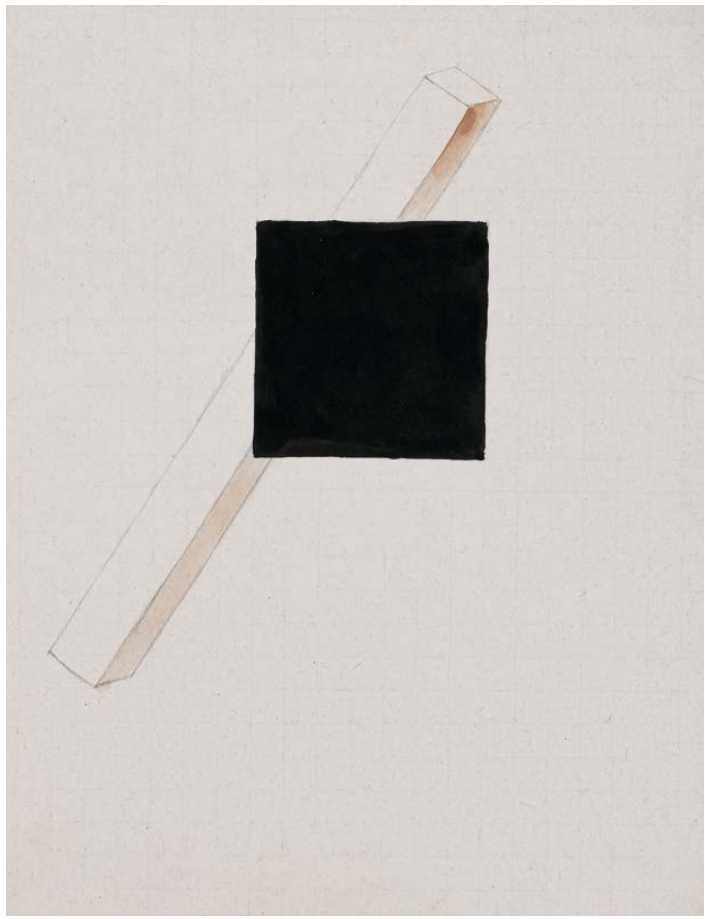
LITERATURE

David Yakerson, Artist from Vitebsk – Alexandra Shatskikh, Subject of Art 1996 (pp.16-25, ill.)

Most of Yakerson's non-Figurative work dates from 1919/20. The three small works on paper in this catalogue owe a debt to El Lissitsky and Malevich, who joined the Viebsk Art School school at El Lissitzky's initiative in November 1919.

DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)

Bar Behind a Black Square, 1920
Indian ink and pencil on paper
15.2 x 11.2 cm



PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private Collection, USA
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

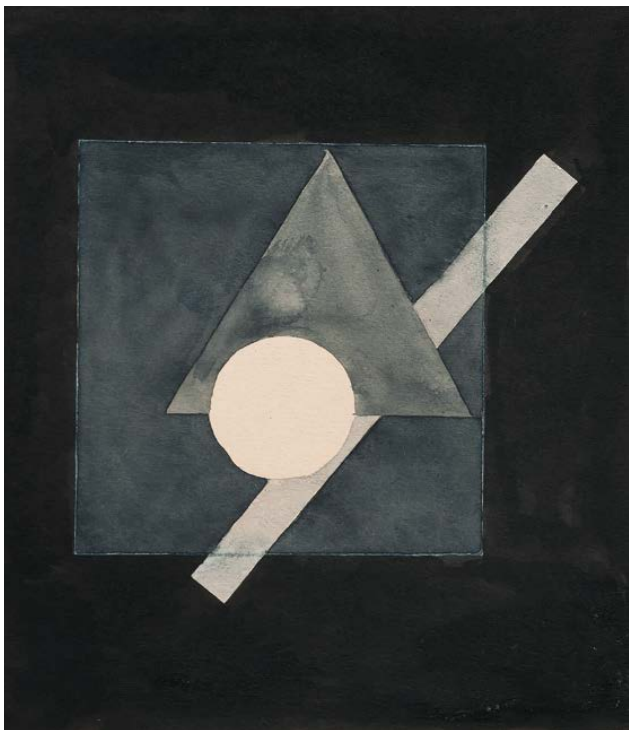
Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 55, ill.)

LITERATURE

David Yakerson, Artist from Vitebsk – Alexandra Shatskikh, Subject of Art 1996 (pp.16-25, ill.)
Vitebsk: A Life of Art 1917-1922 – Alexandra Shatskikh, Yale University Press 2007 (ill.)
The Sculptural Suprematism of David Yakerson – S.O. Khan-Magomedov, 'Architecture S' (ill.)

Yakerson's 'Suprematist Construction' drawings featuring flat geometrical shapes, often combined with diagonal bars portrayed in three-dimensional relief, invite comparison with El Lissitzky's *Prouns*.

DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)



Suprematist Composition with Applied Forms, 1920
Indian ink and pencil on paper
21.7 x 20.2 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private Collection, USA
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private Collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 74, ill.)
Malevich's Circle – State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 2000 (n°. 769, ill.)

LITERATURE

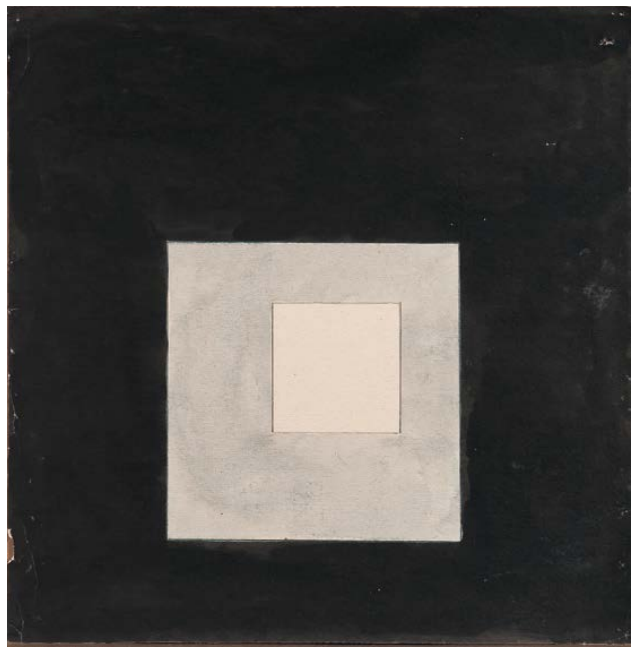
David Yakerson, Artist from Vitebsk – Alexandra Shatskikh, Subject of Art 1996 (pp.16-25, ill.)
Works on Paper by Russian Artists from A to Ya - A.S. Vinogradov G. Klimov, Slovo 2002 (ill.)
Vitebsk: A Life of Art 1917-1922 - Alexandra Shatskikh, Yale University Press 2007 (ill.)

It is hard to date precisely when Yakerson was more closely influenced by El Lissitisky or Malevich. The 'sketch' here comes from Yakerson's *Black Cycle* of mid-1920, when he used broad frames of Indian ink extending up to the edges of the sheet.

Yakerson's artistic output in 1920 was prodigiously varied, including sculpture as well as works on paper. He produced a series of graphic works depicting the male figure in disjointed geometric forms ('personage-idiograms' consisting of 'tectonic-constructive formations,' in the words of Alexandra Shatskikh), and also carved several monumental busts from half-set cement, using a technique pioneered by the French sculptor Joseph Bernard. Yakerson supported his busts on asymmetrical Suprematist plinths – sometimes dubbed *proto-architectons* – with no visual equivalent in the history of art (his monuments would later be dismantled because of their supposed 'Formalism.')

DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)

Suprematist Composition (Grey and White Squares on a Black Background), 1920
Indian ink and pencil on paper
24.2 x 25.2 cm



PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private Collection, USA
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private Collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 75, ill.)

LITERATURE

David Yakerson, Artist from Vitebsk – Alexandra Shatskikh, Subject of Art 1996 (pp.16-25, ill.)

Numerous works by Yakerson were exhibited at UNOVIS exhibitions in Vitebsk and Moscow. Such was Yakerson's association with the aesthetic ideas of Malevich's UNOVIS movement that, in September 1921, the art classes of Yuri Pen and Robert Falk were described in a local press advertisement as run 'in accordance with the UNOVIS programme of Yakerson's sculpture studio.'

DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)

Cubo-Suprematist Composition (Grey Stripes on a Yellow Background), 1920
Gouache, indian ink and pencil on paper
22.2 x 10.4 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private Collection, USA
Private Collection, London

EXHIBITED

Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private Collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 70, ill.)
Malevich's Circle – State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 2000 (n°. 767, ill.)

In the second half of 1920, Yakerson produced a number of coloured Suprematist works incorporating elements of Cubism, mainly in tempera or mixed media. Few have survived.

DAVID YAKERSON (1896-1947)

Cubo-Suprematist Composition, 1920
Oil on paper
Indistinctly inscribed bottom right
16-ого (?) октября 1920
14.5 x 12 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Vitebsk
Elena Kabishcher-Yakerson, Moscow
Private collection, USA
Private collection, London

EXHIBITED

Geometric Abstractionism: the Moscow Experience – Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1992
David Yakerson Sculpture, Works on Paper – State Pushkin Museum, Department of Private Collections, Moscow, 2000 (n°. 69)

LITERATURE

David Yakerson, Artist from Vitebsk – Alexandra Shatskikh, Subject of Art 1996 (pp 16-25, ill.)

Yakerson's interest in this style of Cubo-Futurism, the intricate interplay of planes and perspective, proved fleeting. By 1922 he had adopted an expressionistic, highly stylized Figurative approach, epitomized by gouache and watercolour scenes based on Christ's Passion. After leaving Vitebsk for Moscow he became a member of the Society of Russian Sculptors, a medium on which he concentrated until the end of his life.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Alexander Bogomazov belongs to the circle of early 20th century artists who pioneered a new aesthetic and, through their radical artistic language, sought to create art that would change human perception of the objective world. Their names are widely known – Kasimir Malevich, Alexandra Exter, Vasily Kandinsky, Alexander Arkhipenko - but the reputation of Alexander Bogomazov has remained unjustly in their Avant-Garde shadow for far too long.

Anyone encountering Bogomazov's work for the first time is likely to ask why such an idiosyncratic artist, whose distinctive use of paint makes him instantly recognizable, should remain so little known. And why his theoretical work – the fruit of an intense 15-year study of art's constituent elements – should be a mere footnote in art history.

The sheer audacity and picturesque boldness of Bogomazov's paintings are mesmerizing. The power and sophistication of his works on paper amaze us. The ensemble presented by James Butterwick at TEFAF Maastricht reflects the artist's knowledge of different strands of both Russian and European Avant-Garde art, including the Futurist concept of depicting the world through the movement of the objects of which it consists.

Bogomazov created a range of highly individual artistic methods that allowed him not only to convey the dynamic make-up of the objects he depicted, but also to give the spectator a psychological perception of the feeling of movement. He used overlapping and convergent lines to clearly delimit form, although their emphasis is not limited to the edge of the sheet (or canvas). Bogomazov accentuated the forms with specific shading (or colour, in his paintings) which take the direction of the forms themselves. This approach can be admired in such drawings as *Kreshchatik* (1914), *Tramway – Lvov Street* (1914) and *Locomotive (*1915). Everything here is subordinated to the main goal: to portray the movement of animate and inanimate objects. Kiev street-scenes are transferred to paper, becoming the embodiment of an urban world alive with car horns and tramway bells, as headlights slice through the night.

Bogomazov evolved his distinctive style while working on his theoretical study *Painting and Elements*, concerning the nature of creativity and its constituent elements. He wrote the first sections in 1912/13, completing the manuscript by Summer 1914. In it he outlined the path to further creative development – culminating in his own formal experiments; his paintings and drawings from 1914/15 were to put his main theoretical ideas into practice. Bogomazov continued to address both theoretical and practical problems in subsequent years.

A highlight of the present collection is a watercolour sketch for the unfinished painting *Log-Rollers*, intended as the left-hand part of the triptych *Sawyers* (1926-29) which, due to the artist's premature death, was never completed. Bogomazov conceived the triptych as a work to highlight his achievements in the fields of psychology and the perception of form and colour – notions with which he was much concerned while teaching at the Kiev Art Institute from 1922-1930. He managed to complete two of the paintings for the triptych: the central panel *The Work of Sawyers* (1927-29) and the right-hand panel *Sharpening the Saws* (1926-27). His intentions for the left-hand panel can only be deduced from surviving sketches, outlining its planned composition and colour-scheme. It is important to note that the two existing paintings have never been considered or exhibited as part of an organic whole. The *Log-Rollers* sketch is therefore of paramount importance in understanding Bogomazov's œuvre as a whole: it not only allows us to glimpse the intended structure of the missing painting, but also provides an accurate picture of the triptych's overall concept – with its vivid colours, dynamic shapes and compositional rhythm.

Interest in individual works by Alexander Bogomazov has been growing in recent years among collectors, gallery owners and art historians. There is every reason to hope that the work of this superb artist will soon be the subject of in-depth research and fundamental reappraisal.

Elena Kashuba-Volvach
National Academy of Arts of Ukraine
Modern Art Research Institute

“I am so glad that a wider public will have the opportunity to see works by my grandfather. My grandmother said that artworks lived their own lives and should make people happy.

For my grandfather, the resonance between object, artist, picture and spectator was one of the core aspects of art (cf. his treatise Painting And Elements*, 1914). This interaction begins with the creative perception of the object. My mother remembered how my grandfather taught her to look at everything surrounding us with an artistic eye: ‘For him art was not entertainment – it was persistent hard work that gives pleasure and helps the comprehension of life. Your grandfather was a philosopher.’*

When speaking of my grandfather’s work, the concept of rhythm cannot be ignored. To Alexander Bogomazov, artistic rhythm was the foundation of the picture’s plane. Here are some of his salient words on the subject: ‘Our “picture-viewing multitude” should smile, be glad, moody. They should carry a certain rhythm. Rhythm is the only creator of Life and its diversity. I want to sing my songs, I want to create joy and tragedy, I want real art… I want to have my say, and so I shall!’

I hope that your visitors will experience the many wonderful effects of interacting with the artistic rhythms of Alexander Bogomazov.”

Tatiana Popova
The artist’s granddaughter

Image:
Opening of the personal exhibition of Alexander Bogomazov, State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Art, Kiev, December 1991. Tanya Popova is second from the right, on her right is Yaroslavna Bogomazova, the artist’s daughter.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Portrait of The Artist's Wife, 1913
Charcoal on paper
Signed & dated *АБ 1913* lower right
21 x 16.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Daughter, Kiev
I. Dychenko, Kiev
E. Dymshits, Kiev
Private Collection, Kiev

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Art, Kiev, December 1991 – January, 1992
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.7, ill.)

Bogomazov's courtship of his fellow art student Wanda Monastyrska was long and tortuous but, after they finally married in 1913, Bogomazov enjoyed a fresh outburst of creativity. This early, touching portrait of his wife – the first of many such representations – is set in a fantastic, Symbolist landscape that reflects his euphoric state of mind at the time.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Woman Reading, 1914
Red chalk on paper
30.5 x 28.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Daughter, Kiev
G. Ivakin, Kiev

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse, 21 June – 28 August 1991
Alexander Bogomazov – State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Art, Kiev, December 1991 – January 1992 (ill.)
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.9, ill.)

This portrait – almost certainly of the artist's wife Wanda – may well have been painted after the influential *Ring* exhibition in Kiev in 1914, when Bogomazov exhibited 88 pieces; it is part of the 'explosion of creativity' referred to by Bogomazov scholar Dmitry Gorbachev, and represents an abrupt departure from the Symbolist work of the previous year. This angular tension would underpin Bogomazov's unique style until 1917.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Tramway – Lvovskaya Ulitsa, Kiev, 1914
Charcoal on paper
Signed & dated *1914 АБ Львовская ул.* bottom right inscribed on verso *This drawing by A. Bogomazov purchased by me from V.V. Bogomazova, 8 September 1973, Igor Dychenko*
40.2 x 30.2 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Widow, Kiev
I. Dychenko, Kiev

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse, 21 June – 28 August 1991 (p.36, ill.)
Alexander Bogomazov – State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Art, Kiev, December 1991 – January 1992
The Good and the Great – Arsenal Museum Complex, Kiev, 2013
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.11, ill.)

A number of Bogomazov's works on paper were preparatory drawings for his better-known oils. The most famous of these is *Tramway* in the Valery Dudakov Collection (Moscow). To an extent, the image celebrates the first tramway system in Tsarist Russia (and the third in Europe) - built in Kiev in 1891. It is precisely this awareness of modern sensibility which captured Bogomazov's imagination - he bears witness to his own images of futurist trains, urban scenes and landscapes.

In August 1914 Bogomazov finished his treatise *Painting & Elements* (first published in English in 2003) analysing the psychology of image-making and how the senses react to colour. Bogomazov transformed the hills, valleys, streets and churches of Kiev – whose environs he rarely left – into geometric shapes imbued with idiosyncratic tension, power and dynamism.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Khreshchatik, 1914
Charcoal on paper
Signed & dated *1914 АБ Крещатик* bottom right
30.2 x 32.3 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
Gift from Wanda Bogomazova to Yuri Ivakin, Kiev in 1968
By descent to G. Ivakin, Kiev

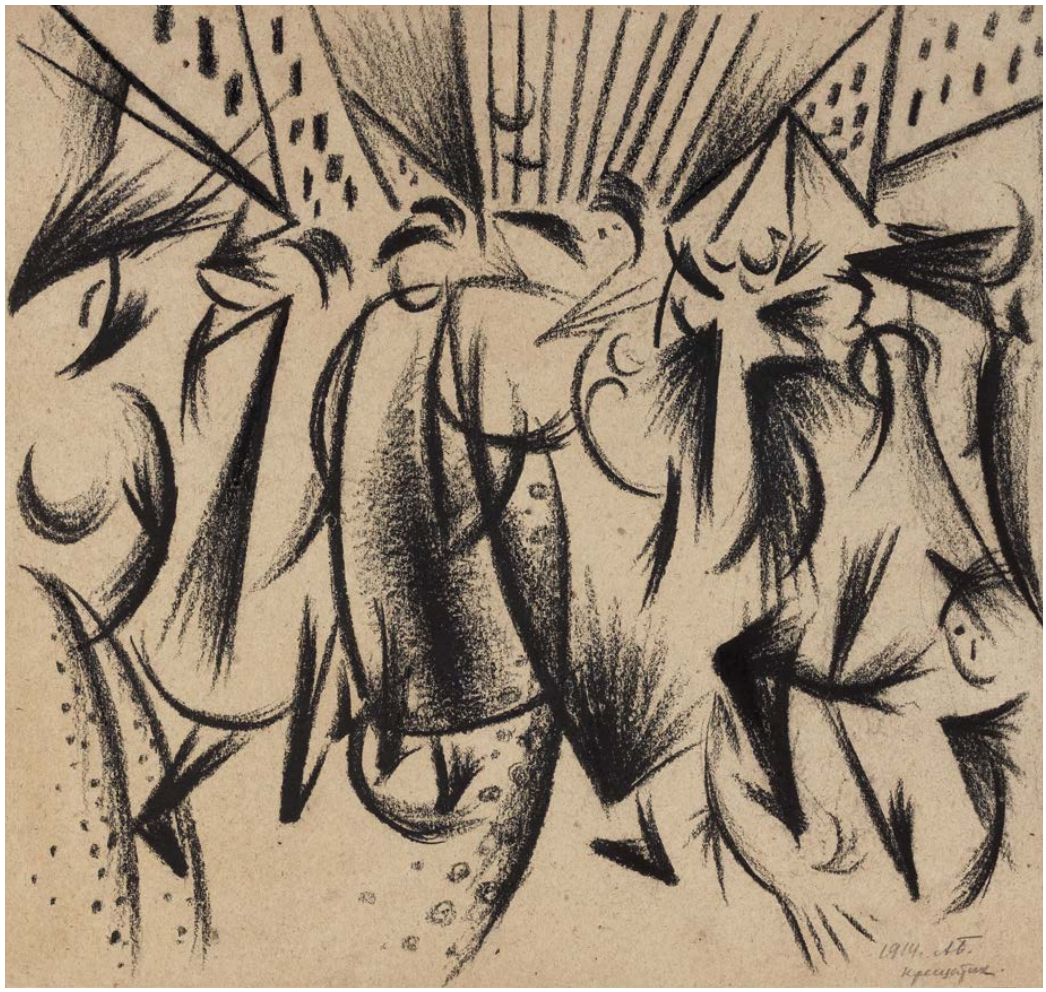
EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse, 21 June – 28 August 1991
Alexander Bogomazov – State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Art, Kiev, December 1991 – January 1992
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.13, ill.)

LITERATURE

Ukrainian Avant-Garde – Mistetsvo Publishers, Kiev 1996 (p.77, ill.)

Although aware of the work of the Italian Futurists through publications brought to him from Paris by his friend and fellow-student Alexandra Exter, Bogomazov gave the genre his own, highly personal slant. In this street scene crackling with energy, pedestrians funnel down Kiev's grandiose main avenue into a spiral of tension produced by the flanking buildings.



ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Landscape – Locomotive, 1914-15
Oil on canvas
Inscribed on verso *Painting by A.K. Bogomazov. I confirm. V.V. Bogomazova 2/6/1968*
33 x 41 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Daughter, Kiev
Purchased from above by Yuri Ivakin in 1968
By descent to G. Ivakin, Kiev

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse, 21 June – 28 August 1991
Alexander Bogomazov – State Museum of Ukrainian Fine Art, Kiev, December 1991 – January 1992
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.15, ill.)

This work – one of fewer than 100 known Bogomazov oil paintings – was exhibited in Toulouse and Kiev with the simple title *Landscape*. But it is now thought that the blue spiral channelling its way across the canvas is a locomotive – a favoured Bogomazov theme. Like the Italian Futurists, he felt steam trains symbolized a new age, and a new frontier to be examined in art. He had already experimented with abstraction in 1913-14, but this canvas is too structured to fit into such a category. The image of the locomotive is best seen in the drawing of the same name in this catalogue, and in the large painting in the Konstantin Grigorishin Collection (Kiev).

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Locomotive, 1915
Charcoal on paper
30 x 26 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
Purchased from the above (early 1970s)
Private Collection, Paris

EXHIBITED

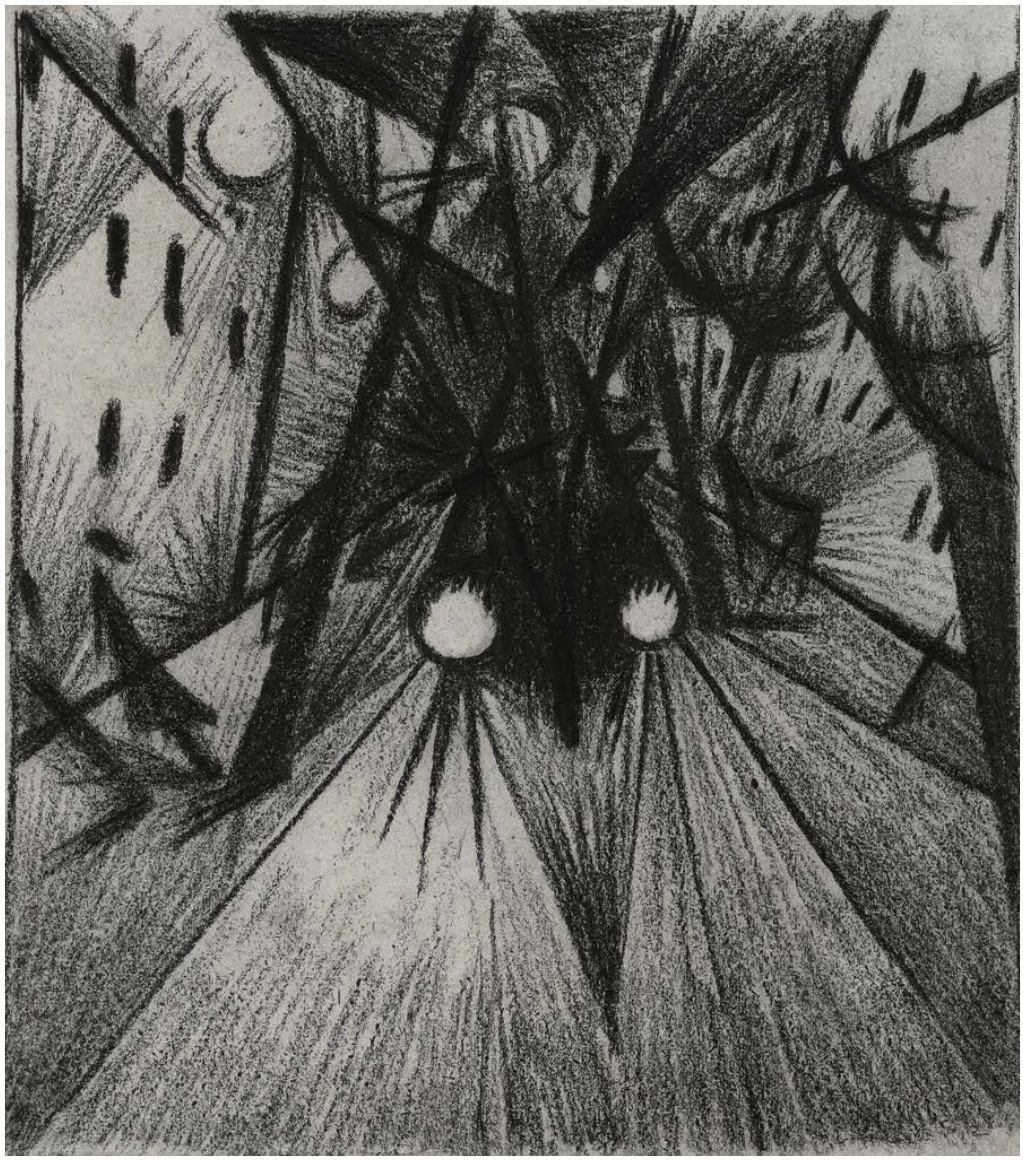
Alexander Bogomazov – Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse, 21 June – 28 August 1991 (p.34, ill.)
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.19, ill.)

LITERATURE

Ukrainian Avant-Garde – Mistetsvo Publishers, Kiev 1996 (p.77, ill.)

Bogomazov's flirtations with a variety of styles, from pointillism to symbolism, were all part of the artistic melting pot that resulted in this, probably his finest work on paper. Whilst Bogomazov studied with some of the leading lights of the Avant Garde, Archipenko, Lentulov, Exter and exhibited with Goncharova and Larionov, he had embarked on his own unique stylistic path by 1914.

Though some of Bogomazov's works on paper were preparatory studies for major oils, this drawing seems to have less in common with its counterpart oil 'Locomotive', painted in the previous year. In this work, a locomotive seems to burst out of the paper and hurtle towards the viewer. This stunning rendition of mechanical might is one of Bogomazov's supreme achievements, imbued with a power and dynamism reminiscent of Balla or Boccioni at their peak.



ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Forest – Boyarka, 1915
Red chalk on paper
Signed & dated *1915 АБ* bottom right
32 x 26 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
S. Grigoriants, Moscow
Sun Group, Moscow

EXHIBITED

Russian Line – Sotheby's, Moscow, 12 March – 30 March 2012 (p.27, ill.)
Loans & Acquisitions – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May - 7 July 2012
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.17, ill.)

LITERATURE

Russian Art: A Personal Choice – Kit-Art, Moscow 2004 (ill.)
Russian Works on Paper from the Collection of James Butterwick – Kit-Art, Moscow 2011 (p.25, ill.)

Bogomazov was young when he first stayed at a dacha in Boyarka, close to Kiev. It was a place of refuge, where Bogomazov wrote his revolutionary *Painting & Elements* treatise in 1914 and, together with his wife and daughter Yaroslavna, saw out the years of war and famine between 1917 and 1921. The angular, almost Vorticist approach of earlier works is combined here with circular motions of the pencil to create greater harmony.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

The Caucasus, 1915
Oil on canvas
Signed & dated *АБ 1915* bottom right
35 x 32 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
Private collection, London

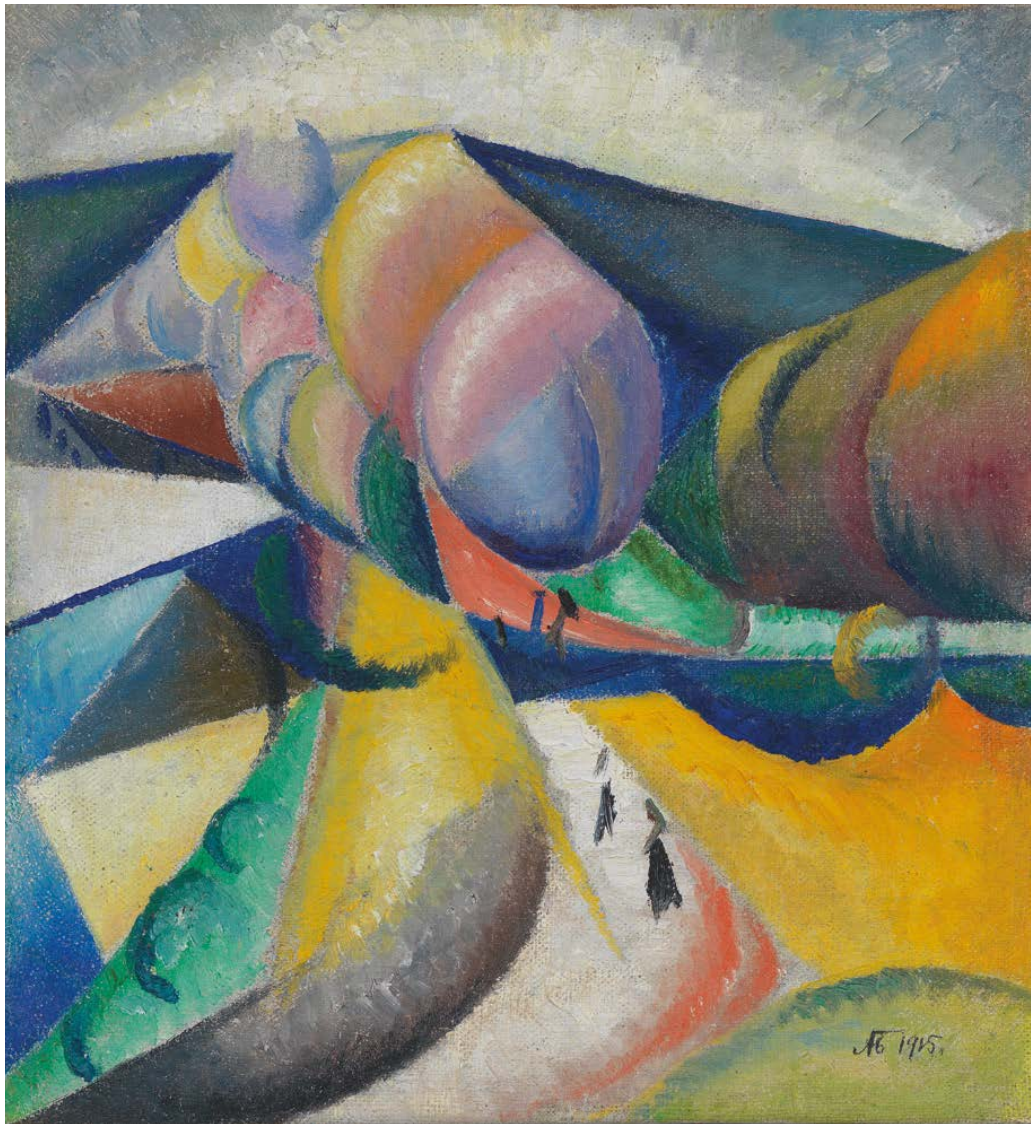
EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 22 May – 22 July 2008 (p.42, ill.)
Acquisitions & Loans – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May - 7 July 2012

LITERATURE

Ukrainian Avant-Garde Art 1910-1930 – Mistetsvo Publishers 1996 (p.93, ill. & on cover)

In 1915 Paris was still the preferred destination of Russian artists, but Bogomazov chose to travel to the Caucasus – primarily to look for work. He fell in love with the mountain scenery, finding swirls and movements he had never seen before and, amidst conditions of grinding poverty, produced some of his most mature work. The rhythms and angles became softer, the movement more circular. This early landscape, painted in the Caucasus foothills, is a work of stylistic transition: a quasi-Fauve study of exceptional beauty.



ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Experimental Still Life, 1927/8
Watercolour on paper
Inscribed on verso *Alexander Bogomazov 1927-28 coll(ection) of Igor Dychenko*
34.4 x 24.7 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Daughter, Kiev
I. Dychenko, Kiev

EXHIBITED

The Good and the Great – Arsenal Museum Complex, Kiev 2013
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.23, ill.)

In 1918 Bogomazov, oppressed with the fight for survival, abandoned easel-painting and took up a variety of teaching jobs. He was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1920, and only returned to painting in 1926, as Professor of Easel-Painting at the Kiev State Institute. By then his palette had changed entirely under the influence of Petrov-Vodkin, who provided the inspiration for this study.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Portrait of The Artist's Daughter (1928)
Pencil on paper
Signed & dated *АБ IV. 1928* bottom left
22 x 24 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
E. Dymshits, Kiev

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 22 May – 22 July 2008 (p.79, ill.)
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.25, ill.)

By 1928 Bogomazov had returned to a Cubo-Futurist approach, as this portrait study for a painting in the Ivakin Collection (Kiev) demonstrates. Bogomazov's only child, Yaroslavna (1917-2008), is depicted with the swirling movements and confident pencil-strokes of an artist at the height of his powers.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Back of the Legs, 1928-29
Pencil on paper
36 x 31 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
E. Dymshits, Kiev

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov – State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 22 May – 22 July 2008 (p.76, ill.)
Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.21, ill.)

As his doomed fight against tuberculosis neared its end, Bogomazov threw himself into one last masterpiece: his triptych *Sawyers*. He completed only two of the three paintings and a large number of studies; most are in the National Archive Museum in Kiev, others in the Museum of Arkansas and the collection of Modernism, Inc. (San Francisco). This drawing relates to the final, uncompleted, left-hand section of the painting.

ALEXANDER BOGOMAZOV (1880-1930)

Log-Rolling, 1928-29
Watercolour on paper
Study for the left-hand panel of the 1926-29 triptych *Sawyers*
25 x 30 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Kiev
V. Vitruk, Lvov

EXHIBITED

Alexander Bogomazov: Master of Cubo-Futurism – Central House of Artists, Moscow, March 2014 (p.27, ill.)

LITERATURE

The Collection of Vladimir Vitruk – O. Sidor, Lvov, 2008 (p.117, ill.)
The Rhythm of Creative Will – E.Koshuba, Decorative Arts, Kiev, 2014 (p.67, ill.)

The left-hand canvas of the *Sawyers* triptych, *Log-Rolling*, was never started; Bogomazov had completed only *Sharpening the Saws* and the central panel (both in Kiev's State Museum of Ukrainian Art) before his death in June 1930. Bogomazov scholar, Elena Koshuba has has recently outlined the development of the left-hand side, for which this work is the only surviving colour study – a poignant reminder of the triptych's incomplete nature… and of the lost genius of Alexander Bogomazov.

ALEXANDER VOLKOV (1886-1957)

Eastern Fantasy, 1918
In verso *Woman in front of a Temple*
Watercolour on paper
Signed A Волков bottom right
16 x 36 cm

PROVENANCE

Artist's Family, Tashkent
Abramian Collection, Moscow
Sun Group, Moscow

EXHIBITED

Alexander Volkov: Sun and Caravan – Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 2007 (n°. 40, ill.)
Russian Line – Sotheby's, Moscow, 12 March – 30 March 2012 (p.32, ill.)
Acquisitions & Loans – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May – 7 July 2012

LITERATURE

Sovietsky Khuzdozhnik: *Works from the Collection of Professor Abramian* – Slovo, Moscow, 1988 (n°. 43, ill.)
Russian Art: A Personal Choice – Kit-Art, Moscow 2004 (ill.)
500 Treasures of Russian Art – Harvest Publishers, Minsk, 2008 (p.78, ill; incorrect size)
Russian Works on Paper from the Collection of James Butterwick – Kit-Art, Moscow, 2011 (p.32, ill.)

Alexander Volkov was a unique figure among the Russian Avant-Garde in that he lived and worked primarily in Soviet Central Asia. This swirling composition blends Oriental colours and motifs in Volkov's hallmark manner. It was formerly owned by Leonid Brezhnev's private physician Professor Abramian, who donated the bulk of his collection to the Armenian capital Erevan.

BORIS GRIGORIEV (1886-1939)

Woman Peering Behind a Screen, 1920
Original drawing for 1921 *Russiche Erotik* series
Pencil on paper
Signed *Boris Grigoriev* bottom right
35 x 30 cm

PROVENANCE

Y.E. Rubenstein, Moscow
Frank Virasoro, Argentina
Zurburan Gallery, Buenos Aires
Bonhams Russian Sale, London, 30 November 2011 (lot n°. 75)

EXHIBITED

Manoas, Brazil, (date unknown)
Russian Line – Sotheby's, Moscow, 12 March – 30 March 2012 (p.16, ill. and on catalogue cover)
Acquisitions & Loans – James Butterwick Gallery, London, 30 May – 7 July 2012
B. Grigoriev: Possessed by Line – Kit-Art, Moscow, 2012 (p.15, ill.)
Russian Expressionism – Heritage Publishers, 2013 (pp 50 & 149, ill.)

Boris Grigoriev was dubbed the 'Wizard of Line' by publisher Vyacheslav Voinov, and his mastery of the Grotesque is unrivalled among Russian artists. In 1920, along with his wife and son, Grigoriev fled Russia for Germany, where he produced 12 drawings for a series of lithographs entitled *Russische Erotik*, depicting a variety of risqué situations and sexual moods. With a limited number of editions, 300, very few sets have survived, moreover most of these prints were destroyed by the Nazis during their campaign against 'degenerate' art. This curious, titillating scene is one of the few surviving original drawings from that series.

BORIS KUSTODIEV (1878-1927)

On the Riverbank – Spring, 1927
Cover for magazine *Red Panorama*
Watercolour on paper
Signed and dated *Б Кустодиевъ 1927* bottom right
30 x 22 cm

PROVENANCE

Simon Belits, Paris
Bonhams Russian Sale, London, 28 November 2012, (lot n°. 56)

EXHIBITED

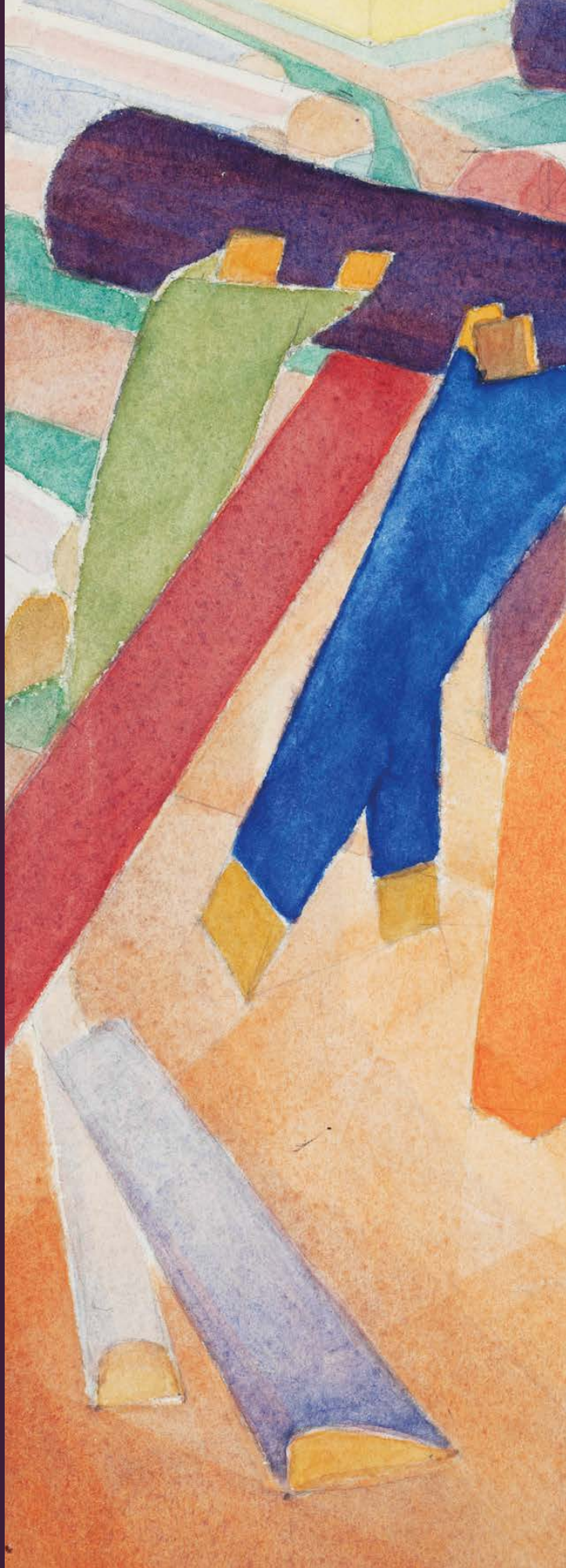
Posthumous Exhibition of the Works of Boris Kustodiev, Leningrad, 1928 (n°. 745)

LITERATURE

Red Panorama N°26 – 24 June 1927 (pp.12-13, ill.)
Gollerbach, E.F.: *The Drawings of B.M. Kustodiev* – Moscow/Leningrad, 1929
Etkind, M.G.: *Boris Kustodiev* – Leningrad/Moscow, 1960 (p.209)
Etkind, M.G.: *Boris Kustodiev* – Moscow, 1982 (n°. 2781)

Boris Kustodiev is sometimes referred to as a 'poet of the Russian provinces' whose unfailingly optimistic view of Russian life remained undimmed despite serious illness, which left him in a wheelchair from 1916 until his death. His views of Russian towns, the merchant class and peasants were sentimental and idealised. Yet Kustodiev was not indifferent to political events – producing satirical work for both *Bugbear* and *Hells Mail* magazines in reaction to the 1905 Revolution; his monumental canvas *Bolshevik* (1918) remains one of the best-known images of Russia's New Man.

The 1920s saw Kustodiev pioneer a new Soviet-style folk art – termed 'Soviet lubok' (popular print). This watercolour, published on the cover of *Red Panorama* in June 1927, was described inside the magazine as Kustodiev's 'final work, produced just before his death' the previous month. Nonetheless, the mood here retains the sentimentality of earlier work and is, if anything, radiantly optimistic, with a glossy young Couple of the Future lolling in an ideal landscape, as if privileged to be part of a New World Order.

James Butterwick

www.jamesbutterwick.com