

The Museum of Modern Art

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WORKS BY RODCHENKO ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

An exhibition of works by the Russian Constructivist artist, Alexander Rodchenko, will be on view from February 2 through April 11/ at The Museum of Modern Art. Directed by Jennifer Licht, Associate Curator of Painting and Sculpture, this exhibition, comprising paintings, watercolors, drawings, photographs, book designs and documentary photographs of lost works, is the first ever to be held outside of Russia. All of the Museum's material by Rodchenko will be exhibited, including a group of recently acquired photographs which have not been shown before.

As Jennifer Licht says, "The slightness of documentation on Rodchenko, especially in regard to the earlier part of his career as a painter and sculptor, and the lack of surviving examples, have obscured his position. Because of the pioneering interest in Rodchenko's work on the part of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., first Director of The Museum of Modern Art and subsequently Director of Museum Collections, the Museum came to possess a small but unique core of paintings and watercolors. Later, this was amplified by examples of graphic design, and recently, by the purchase of a group of photographs. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to view the most important aspects of this versatile artist."

Born in Leningrad in 1891, Rodchenko went to Moscow in 1914 to continue his studies in art. It was then that he came under the influence of Malevich and Tatlin, and began his first non-objective paintings and drawings; in a synthesis of the simple geometric elements of Malevich and the cylindrical, planar forms of Tatlin's reliefs, he arrived at a "distinctive personal style that placed him in the forefront of the Russian avant-garde."

He later began to make three-dimensional constructions, and designed stage and film sets. In 1921, he headed a group of Constructivist artists who issued a proclamation on the death of "fine art," and, the following year, abandoned painting, which he had come to consider an "atrophied" form of art. He took up photography and furniture and graphic design. Later in the 1930's, he turned more to sports photography, celebrating Soviet youth in parades and displays of physical culture. He continued to work in photography and graphic design until his death in 1956.

Photographs and further information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019. Telephone (212) 956-7501.
