

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1985

FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION CONTRASTS OF FORM: GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT ART 1910-1980

DATES October 7, 1985 - January 7, 1986

ORGANIZATION John Elderfield, Director, and Magdalena Dabrowski, Assistant Curator, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art

CONTENTS CONTRASTS OF FORM is a full-scale survey of geometric abstract art, including seventy-five paintings, forty-eight works on paper, sixteen sculptures, and nineteen reliefs. The exhibition is divided into five distinct historical periods:

1. Pioneers of the Nonobjective: 1911 - 1914
Cubism, Futurism, Cubo-Futurism
2. From Surface to Space - Suprematism, De Stijl, Russian Constructivism: 1915 - 1921
3. International Constructivism: 1922 - 1929
4. The Paris - New York Connection: 1930 - 1959
5. Nonfigurative Tendencies: 1960 - 1980

CONTRASTS OF FORM illustrates the evolution of geometric abstract art, tracing the style internationally, from its origins in Cubism and Futurism, through Minimalism, up to relatively recent work by American artists who were inspired by earlier styles. The exhibition reveals the profound impact that these innovations have had--and continue to have--on twentieth-century art. It is organized to present a variety of important works of geometric abstract art, primarily emphasizing its most pioneering, original movements. It concentrates on Suprematism, Constructivism, and De Stijl, as well as on the development of International Constructivism between the two world wars.

Artists represented in the exhibition range from the Russian Constructivists to contemporary Americans, including Robert Delaunay, Aleksandra Exter, Ellsworth Kelly, Fritz Glarner, Jean Gorin, Frantisek Kupka, Kasimir Malevich, László Moholy-Nagy, Ben Nicholson, Kenneth Noland, Liubov Popova, Jean (Ivan) Puni, Ad Reinhardt, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Theodore Roszak, Olga Rozanova, Frank Stella, Theo van Doesburg, and George Vantongerloo.

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SOURCE

All of the works in CONTRASTS OF FORM are drawn from the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art. Most of the objects are from the Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation which the Museum received in the Spring of 1984. John Elderfield, director of the Department of Drawings, and curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, noted: "The McCrory Collection is characterized by its commitment to works of the highest quality...under the informed guidance of Celia Ascher, (it) has led to a reappraisal of the Russian avant-garde and its influence on many important movements of twentieth-century art. The esthetic that gave form to Russian Constructivism has had an impact that is still present in today's art. These...fine works...reinforce The Museum of Modern Art's standing as the world's foremost exhibition and research facility for twentieth-century art."

Despite their significance as examples of original artistic breakthroughs, the works in The Riklis Collection have never been exhibited in New York.

The exhibition and its accompanying catalog work together to create an expanded context for understanding the tradition of geometric abstract art, exploring the relationship between the earliest experiments in the style and the art of subsequent decades.

PUBLICATION

A fully illustrated catalog by Magdalena Dabrowski is being published by The Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the exhibition. It includes an introduction by John Elderfield; chronologies and biographies of artists by Ms. Dabrowski; and a selected bibliography. All of the works in the exhibition are illustrated in the 288-page book. 70 color and 88 black-and-white illustrations. Clothbound \$45.00; paperback \$19.50 until February 14, 1986; \$23.50 thereafter.

PRESS PREVIEW

Wednesday, October 2, 1985, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

EDUCATIONAL
EVENTS

A lecture series is planned. Schedule of speakers and dates to be announced.

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For additional information and photographic materials contact Jeanne Collins or Jessica Schwartz, Department of Public Information (212) 708-9750.