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43-01 FUTURISM

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Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, Tate

- This is Section 43 on Futurism, an early 20th-century art and social movement that was started in Italy by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. It glorified modernity, speed, technology, youth, and dynamism and rejected the past and traditional values.

NOTES

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Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), *Words-in-Freedom*, various dates 1912-1944, Typography and Design, Various Collections

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), *Words-in-Freedom*, various dates 1912-1944, Typography and Design, Various Collections

- Marinetti was the movement's founder and tireless promoter. He was **born in Egypt** to Italian parents and **educated in French** before moving to Italy. His aggressive manifestos and performances scandalised and energised Italian culture. He judged Futurist performances **successful only if fight broke out**.
- This **1912 poem Zang Tumb Tumb** described the Battle of Adrianople through explosive typography. Letters arranged to suggest bombs falling, gunfire crackling. Mathematical symbols, numbers, musical notations integrated. Page became battlefield where language exploded into pure sound and sensation.
- Marinetti's continuous leadership **ensured movement's cohesion for three and half decades until his death in 1944**. The movement is best seen as coming in two waves or phases. The first was idealistic and pre-dated World War I and was destroyed by the war. The second was continued by Marinetti who formed a relationship with Mussolini and his Fascist state and ended with Marinetti's death in 1944.
- The **relationship with Italian Fascism is controversial**. It is one of the most contentious "double-edged" histories in modern art and historians generally approach this controversy from two directions..
- Some argue that Futurism provided the **blueprint for Mussolini's regime**. Marinetti's Manifesto—with its glorification of "**war as the world's only hygiene**," virulent nationalism, and celebration of aggressive masculinity—

established a "**cult of violence**" that **Fascism later codified into state policy**. In this context, Futurism was not merely a bystander but an **active participant**; Marinetti **co-authored the 1919 Fascist Manifesto** and sought to make Futurism the official state art of Italy. The movement's obsession with technological speed and industrial power mirrored the regime's desire to transform Italy into a disciplined, modernised powerhouse.

- On the other hand, some historians maintain that Futurism was co-opted rather than synonymous with the state. Futurism predated the formal Fascist Party and included a spectrum of political voices, including **anarchists and socialists**. Futurism demanded the total destruction of the past, while Mussolini increasingly relied on romanità—a traditionalist, neoclassical appeal to Roman imperial glory. In this light second wave Futurism in the 1920s and 30s is viewed as a pragmatic survival strategy, where artists sought state patronage while maintaining an experimental edge that often sat uncomfortably alongside the regime's more conservative "Return to Order."
- Regarding antisemitism, unlike German National Socialism, early Italian Fascism and Futurism were not defined by antisemitism. In fact, many Jews were early members of the Futurist movement, and Mussolini's mistress and primary art advisor for years was a Jewish woman. However, recent analysis of Marinetti's later novels has uncovered antisemitism.
- There are other differences, the Futurists hated the Catholic Church but Mussolini made peace with the Vatican. Mussolini favoured neoclassicism which the Futurists rejected in favour of radical abstract modernity. In Germany, the Nazis labelled modern art "degenerate" but in Italy the Futurists successfully argued that modernism was the only true expression of the Fascist revolution.

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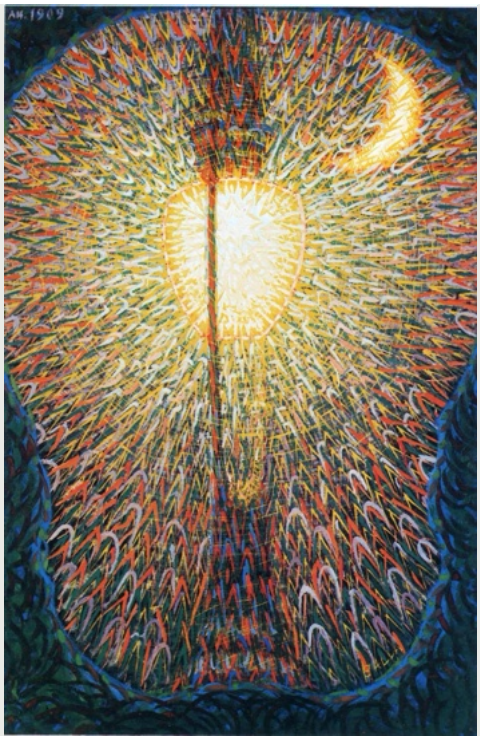

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), *Street Light*, 1909 (dated on painting c. 1910-11), 174.7 × 114.7 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), *Street Light*, 1909 (dated on painting c. 1910-11), 174.7 × 114.7 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Futurism had an unusual beginning, in October 1908 Marinetti swerved his car into a ditch to miss two cyclists. As he was climbing from the wreck he had a profound revelation about the beauty of speed, technology and the glorification of violence. He declared racing cars more beautiful than ancient Greek sculpture. He assembled his thoughts into a manifesto which he published on 20th February 1909 in ***Le Figaro***.
- The movement's key figures included **Giacomo Balla**, shown here, **Umberto Boccioni,**, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, and Gino Severini.
- This painting by Balla shows an electric street lamp radiating light in sharp geometric rays. A tiny crescent moon fades in the background. Marinetti had written "**Let's kill the moonlight**", attacking sentimental traditions. The lamp represented modernity's triumph over nature. Balla dated the painting 1909 but actually completed it in 1910-11. He was already an established artist at 38 when Futurism began.
- Balla and the other artists just mentioned signed the **Manifesto of Futurist Painters in 1910**.
- To give you an idea of what was in the Manifesto let me quote two articles from it:
    - Article 9: "We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful

ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman."

    - Article 10: "We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice."

- The misogyny seems clear but Marinetti **wanted to destroy the traditional family** he wanted to abolish marriage, allow easy divorce, give women the vote and equal pay. His "scorn for women" was aimed at the traditional idea of a fragile, fainting weakling. He wanted to turn women into warriors.

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Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916), *The City Rises*, 1910, 199.3 × 301 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Boccioni created **his first major Futurist painting** at age 28 in 1910. The work was originally titled ***Il Lavoro (Work)***. It depicts the construction site for a **new electric power plant** on Milan's outskirts. Italy's first modern industrial city was rising.
- **A massive horse** races into the foreground. Several workers struggle to control it. This suggests **primeval conflict** between humanity and beasts. The horse and figures blur with rapid movement. Buildings in the background appear more realistic. The perspective tilts dramatically in different sections.
- The painting testifies to Neo-Impressionism and Symbolism's continuing **hold on Futurist artists** even after the movement's 1909 launch. **Boccioni wouldn't adapt Cubism** to create distinct Futurist style **until around 1911**. Nevertheless, the work captures Futurism's love of dynamism and modern cities.
- Boccioni applied paint using **modified Divisionist technique**. Small brushstrokes of complementary colours create bright, flickering surface. **No shadows appear**. Swirls and rays of white paint overwhelm figures with glowing light. Composer Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) purchased the painting in 1912 during the travelling Futurist exposition in Europe. It was purchased by MoMA from his son in 1951.

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Carlo Carrà (1881-1966), *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli*, 1910-11, 198.7 × 259.1 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Carrà **witnessed this funeral** as a young man. **Anarchist Angelo Galli was killed by security guards** at the Macchi and Pessoni factory in Milan on 10 May 1906. Galli had organised the **general strike** and the authorities feared his funeral would become political demonstration. When anarchists resisted police barring the cemetery entrance, violence erupted.
- The painting shows **Galli's red coffin** held precariously aloft. Figures in anarchist black surround it. Chaotic explosion illuminated by light from coffin and sun. **Police cavalry oppose the anarchists** on the left. Harsh angles and diagonal lines indicate banners, lances, flagpoles, cranes drawing parallels to weapons of war.
- Carrà initially drew a pastel study in 1910 using one-point perspective. After visiting Paris in 1911 and encountering Picasso's **Cubism**, he changed the canvas to **fractured perspective** we see today. The Technical Manifesto described using sheaves of lines corresponding to conflicting forces following the general law of violence.
- Critics noted compositional similarities to Paolo **Uccello's** *Battle of San Romano*. There are three versions and clash between anarchists and police recalls the Uffizi version, the dominance of black and red the Louvre version. The melee of poles jutting into sky appears in all three paintings.

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Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Scrutando*, 1911-13

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*, 1912, 89.9 × 109.9 cm., Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*, 1912, 89.9 × 109.9 cm., Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo

Étienne-Jules Marey

Anton Giulio Bragaglia, *Scrutando*, 1911-13

- Balla painted this **amusing** study in May 1912 whilst visiting his student Contessa Nerazzini at Montepulciano near Siena. A skittering dachshund alongside the staccato steps of the owner.
- The feet of the woman, the leash, and dog's body from nose to tail all blur and repeat. To enhance impression of speed, Balla painted ground using diagonal lines. He placed signature and date at dynamic angle. This rhythmic gesture extends to the frame which both contains and continues composition.
- (CLICK) **Chronophotographic studies of animals in motion** created by scientist Étienne-Jules Marey beginning in 1880s influenced the painting. These mechanical images led to introduction of techniques showing motion through blurring, multiplication, and superimposition of body parts.
- (CLICK) The decomposition of movement into moments in time likely inspired Futurist photographer Anton Giulio Bragaglia's photodynamic technique.(CLICK)
- Critics **initially dismissed the work**. Artist Cornelia LeBoutillier wrote Balla takes himself and his dog so seriously that it is doubtful any pleasure has ever come out of it anywhere. Critic Henry Hope called it a **cliché of modern art**. Yet in 2014, historian Robert C. Morgan re-evaluated it as **probably the most elegant**

and accurate works ever painted in the Futurist tradition.

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Gino Severini (1883-1966), *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*, 1912, 161.6 × 156.2 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gino Severini (1883-1966), *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*, 1912, 161.6 × 156.2 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Severini spent most of his life dividing time **between Paris and Rome**. Born into **poor family** in Cortona. Father was junior court official, mother a dressmaker. **Expelled from Italian school system** at 15 for attempted theft of exam papers. Never attended formal education again. Unlike fellow Futurists, he was less attracted to machines and **frequently chose dancers** to express dynamism.
- The painting draws viewers into **frenzied excitement of Paris nightclub**. Combining **Cubist technique** of fractured planes with repetition, Severini creates brilliant kaleidoscope of partially-glimpsed figures in motion. Two dancing women dominate centre—one blonde, one dark-haired—with a swirling pink and purple dress with looping patterns of real sequins decorate dress, adding shimmering play of light.
- Painting was created from memory. Following philosopher Henri Bergson's ideas, it attempts to convey painter's intuitive vision of reality where time and space suffuse with memory and sensation. Dancers' movements fragment and fill painting with energy and traces of momentary presence. They embody Bergson's concept of élan vital, the vital force of universe uniting all matter.
- On the periphery appear many figures and objects completing frenetic nightclub scene. **Lower left corner** shows Cubist **tabletop still life** with martini glasses. Woman in **blue dress and black hat** stands laughing. **Lower right corner** shows **mustachioed man** wearing monocle, black suit, tie, and top hat. **Streamers and national flags** drape across upper portion. Enigmatic figures

appear: **black cat head**, **North African man riding camel**, **nude woman riding scissors**—possibly references to cabaret acts or costume parties.

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Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916), *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913 (Cast 1931), 111.2 × 88.5 × 40 cm. Bronze, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916), *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913 (Cast 1931), 111.2 × 88.5 × 40 cm. Bronze, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- **Boccioni** (pronounced "bot-CHOH-nee") **had been painter first and foremost**. His brief forays into sculpture proved significant. Up until 1912, he focused on painting. After visiting Paris and seeing sculptural innovations like Braque's three-dimensional Cubist experiments in paper, he became **obsessed with sculpture**.
- The speed and fluidity of movement—what Boccioni called **synthetic continuity**—is brilliantly captured. Human figure gliding through space. Almost as if **man himself becoming machine**, moving head-on into forceful winds. Face abstracted into cross, suggesting a helmet, appropriate reference for **war-hungry Futurists**. Figure doesn't appear to have arms, though wing-like forms emerge from rippling back.
- Boccioni produced **original in plaster**, not bronze. Original white plaster sculpture today sits in **São Paulo**. Looks more transient and delicate than later bronze casts. More fitting for Futurism. **Many Futurists claimed to want their works destroyed** by more innovative artist successors rather than preserved in museums.
- F.T. **Marinetti began making casts in 1930s after Boccioni's death**. He wanted to preserve artist's legacy in more robust material even though **Boccioni himself argued against** use of bronze in sculpture. The sculpture appears on obverse of **Italian-issue 20-cent euro coin**. **World War I broke out** year after Boccioni created this work. Believing modern technological warfare would

shatter Italy's obsession with classical past, **Futurists welcomed conflict**. Tragically, **Boccioni was killed in action** in 1916 at age 34, falling from horse during cavalry exercises.

- There are 18 to 20 booze casts now in museums around the world. This one in MoMA is an original 1931 cast. The one in Tate Modern is one of two made from the original plaster.

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Luigi Russolo (1885–1947), Dynamism of a Car, 1913, 139 cm × 184 cm, National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Luigi Russolo (1885–1947), Dynamism of a Car, 1913, 139 cm × 184 cm, National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou

- Luigi Russolo (1885–1947) was one of the most **provocative figures** of the early 20th-century avant-garde. Born in Portogruaro in 1885, he initially **studied violin** but by turned to painting. After moving to Milan around 1901, he immersed himself in art circles and experimented with Symbolism and Divisionism.
- He became a **founding member of the Futurist movement**: in 1910 when he signed the "Manifesto of the Futurist Painters" and shortly after the Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting, rejecting traditional art and embracing the modern world's speed, technology and energy.
- This 1913 oil painting presents not a static machine but **a car in explosive, kinetic motion**, rendered through the fragmentation of form and reassembly into angular, triangular facets. Stacked red arrows streak across the canvas, suggesting both direction and velocity; their compression on the left side evokes a powerful surge forward, as if the vehicle is tearing through space. The vivid reds and contrasting blues amplify the sense of heat and energy — a machine overwhelming air and earth alike.
- Critics have linked the painting's approach to the influence of Cubism: the breaking-up of surfaces and re-assembly recalls Cubist methods, yet the intent is different — not analytical stillness but dynamic motion. ([Wikipedia][4]) According to one commentator, the work "**illustrates the Doppler effect**" — as though you can sense the compression of air and sound ahead of the speeding car. ([The peacock's tail][6])

- Russolo's **reputation as a painter faded** after he turned increasingly to music. In 1913 he authored his seminal manifesto *The Art of Noises*, arguing that the modern industrial city with its cacophony of machinery demanded a new language of sound. Alongside fellow artist Ugo Piatti he built **experimental instruments** intended to bring noise under aesthetic control.
- Some modern critics remain harsh; one described Russolo as "**the greatest of the Italian Futurists**" but argued that as a painter he was "**the least competent**," his brushwork and composition crude even for his time. Others stress that precisely because his painting lacks subtlety, the visual rhetoric of speed and noise becomes unavoidably blunt — a deliberate, unapologetic assault on the senses.
- As early as 1913, when he delivered the manifesto and premiered the noise-instruments in a concert at Rome's Teatro Costanzi (with sounds like "roars, explosions, hissing, crackling"), the **reaction was chaotic** — some **audience members attacked the performance** with shouts and sticks, defending traditional music against what they considered just noise.

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Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), *Abstract Speed + Sound*, 1913-14, 54.5 × 76.5 cm., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), *Abstract Speed + Sound*, 1913-14, 54.5 × 76.5 cm., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

- Following his 1912 exploration of movement through chronophotographic means, Balla entered **exploratory abstract phase** in late 1912 and into 1913. He painted **movement of cars driving**, **birds in flight**, even movement of light itself via geometric shapes, dynamic lines, and abstract patterns of colour.
- This painting represents culmination of his abstract speed series. **No recognisable objects** appear. Pure abstraction captures sensation of velocity and sound. Curved forms suggest speeding automobile. Triangular wedges imply force cutting through air. Lines radiate outward suggesting sound waves emanating from vehicle.
- Balla was lyrical painter **unconcerned with contemporary technology or violence** unlike most Futurists. He gave sense of speed and urgency consistent with Futurism's interest in energy of modern life despite his distinctive taste in subjects. He had attended Turin academy for limited period but had **little formal training in art**.
- Around 1902, **Balla taught Divisionist techniques** to Umberto Boccioni and Gino Severini. Both became leading Futurist painters. Influenced by Marinetti who started literary movement Futurism in 1909, Balla progressively adopted style. He signed Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting in 1910. His work differed from fellow Futurists in celebrating light and movement without glorifying machines or warfare.

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Carlo Carrà (1881-1966), *Interventionist Demonstration* (*Patriotic Celebration*), 1914, 38.5 × 30 cm. Collage, Gianni Mattioli Collection

- Carrà created this collage-painting during the **pivotal year 1914**. Italy debated entering World War I. Interventionists wanted Italy to join conflict. Title refers to demonstrations demanding war. Work epitomises Futurism's embrace of modernity and dynamic energy.
- Collage incorporates **actual newspaper fragments**, advertisements, onomatopoeic words. Spiral composition draws eye inward. Words spin around central vortex. "EVVIVA," "TRRRR," "STRADA" visible. Bold lines and fragmented forms capture chaos and motion of urban life and political rallies.
- Carrà employs vibrant colours to emphasise movement. Reflects Futurist fascination with speed and technological advancement. By depicting sounds, mechanical elements, industrial scenes, he illustrates transformative impact of machinery on society. Composition's layering and overlapping shapes create sense of depth and intensity.
- It demonstrates movement's problematic political associations. **Futurists' celebration of war and violence** would tie them to **Italian Fascism**. When Mussolini took power in 1922, **Futurism received official acceptance**. This association later adversely affected many artists.

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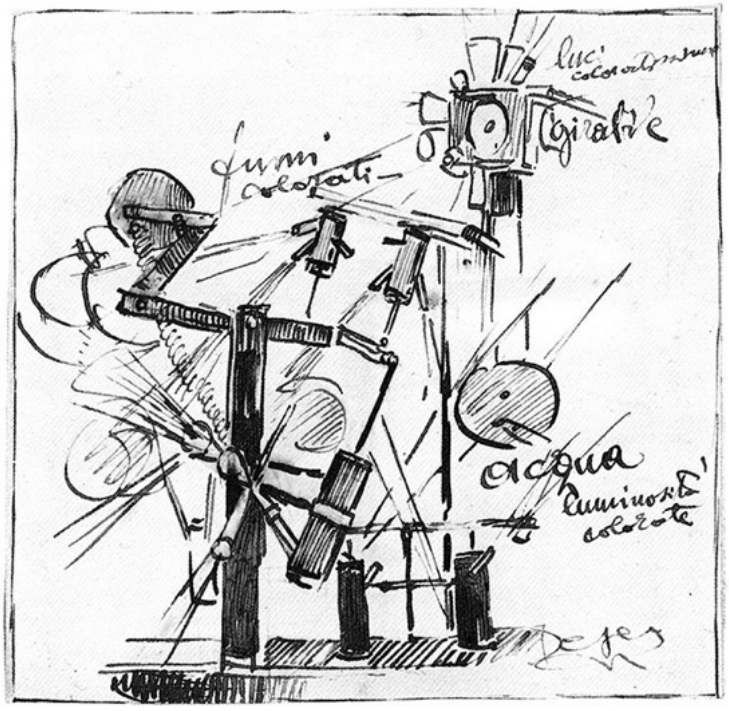

Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), *Complesso Plastico Motorumorista* (*Kinetic and Noise-Producing Ensemble*), 1914-15, Various Materials, Lost

Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), *Complesso Plastico Motorumorista* (*Kinetic and Noise-Producing Ensemble*), 1914-15, Various Materials, Lost

- Depero was born in Fondo in **Italian Trentino region**, then part of Austrian-Hungarian empire. He grew up in Rovereto, first exhibiting works whilst serving as **apprentice to marble worker**. On a 1913 trip to Florence, he discovered a copy of a paper by Lacerba inspired by Marinetti.
- In 1914, he moved to Rome aged 22 and **met fellow Futurist Giacomo Balla**. Balla introduced him to Giuseppe Sprovieri who included thirteen of his paintings in Free International Futurist Exhibition April 1914.
- These kinetic and noise-producing ensembles were focal point of Depero's interchange with Balla. Further development from sculptures Boccioni exhibited in Paris June-July 1913 under the heading Ensembles Plastiques. Inspiration also provided by Carrà's manifesto The Painting of Sounds, Noises and Smells of August 1913.
- Depero's noisy, movable, polymaterial sculptures complemented marionettes he called **Artificial Living Being**. Organisms designed to operate as actors in scenic environments with rhythmically vibrating elements from which would emerge and disappear animals and clouds, open and close doors, windows, eyes and mouths. Innocence and playfulness ensured they would stimulate audience's sense of wonder, amazement, fascination, joy. These works represented new character-type built of elementary geometric forms like cone, cube, cylinder.

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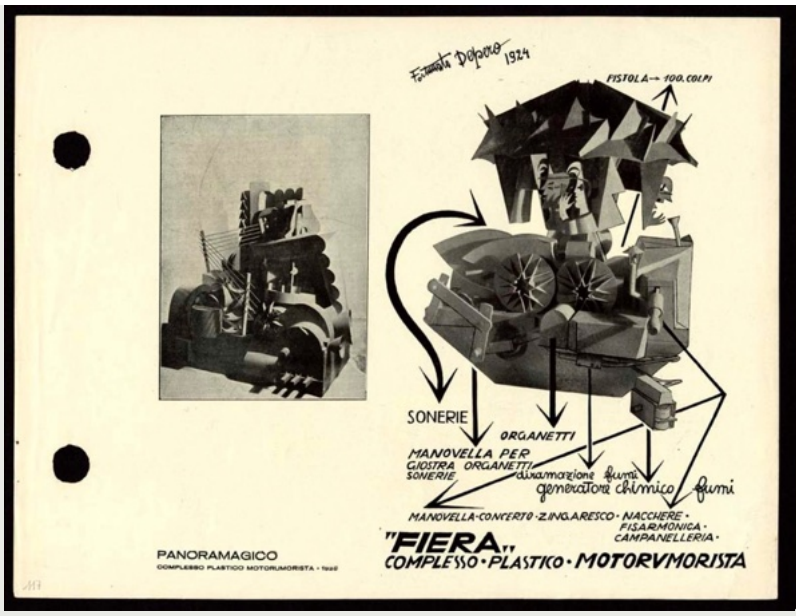

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958) and Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), *Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe Manifesto*, 11 March 1915, Published Document

Giacomo Balla (1871-1958) and Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), *Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe Manifesto*, 11 March 1915, Published Document

- This manifesto **represented pivotal moment in Futurism's evolution**. Balla, senior artist at 44, collaborated with young Depero aged 23. Published amid Italy's pre-war fervour. Positioned them as **leaders of "second wave" Futurism** prioritising integral dynamism over mere representation.
- Document advocated Futurism's expansion beyond traditional media into "plastic complexes." Toys, furniture, clothing proposed to "reconstruct the universe" with **joy and mechanised harmony**. Called for creation of **millions of metallic micro-organisms**. Dynamic edifices fusing architecture with sculpture to generate autonomous, vital spaces.
- Partnership had been developing since December 1913 when Depero arrived in Rome. Balla's studio became laboratory for **anti-naturalistic experiments**. Depero absorbed techniques that flattened forms into bold, synthetic imagery suited to both canvas and propaganda.
- Balla's vision materialised in ***Plastici*** (Plastic Ballets) of 1918-1921. Stage architectures that integrated puppetry, lighting, motion into total environments. Designs featured **mechanical dancers and abstract sets**. One of earliest avant-garde theatre **experiments with automata**. Actors were puppets, movements stiff and mechanical, recalling values of childhood, dreams and magic.

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Gino Severini (1883-1966), *Armoured Train in Action*, 1915, 115.8 × 88.6 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

Gino Severini (1883-1966), *Armoured Train in Action*, 1915, 115.8 × 88.6 cm., Museum of Modern Art, New York

- **World War I began in 1914**. Severini spent part of war in Barcelona but **returned to Paris** by July 1915. During the conflict he produced some of the **finest Futurist war art**. This painting along with *Italian Lancers at Gallop* (1915) represented war's mechanical violence.
- This painting depicts an **armoured train in dynamic motion**. Fragmented geometric forms suggest train's metal plating, machinery, weapons. Diagonal lines convey speed and force. Explosion of angular shapes creates sense of violent action. Work reflects Futurist belief that war would cleanse and modernise society.
- Severini had met and **befriended British artist C.R.W. Nevinson** during 1913. Nevinson had a solo exhibition at Marlborough Gallery, London and would become England's only true Futurist. Both artists produced significant war imagery. Severini's approach more geometrically abstract than Nevinson's.
- After First World War, **Severini departed from Futurism** in 1916. He painted several works in naturalistic style inspired by **interest in early Renaissance art**. Gradually **abandoned Futurist** style, painting in synthetic Cubist style until 1920. By 1920, he was applying theories of classical balance based on the Golden Section to still lifes and figurative subjects from traditional commedia dell'arte.

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Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), *Skyscrapers and Tunnels*, 1930, 68 × 102 cm. Tempera on Paper, MART, Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto

Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), *Skyscrapers and Tunnels*, 1930, 68 × 102 cm. Tempera on Paper, MART, Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto

- Depero **travelled to New York in 1928**. Aimed to conquer American market with Futurist designs. City's vertical architecture and mechanical energy fascinated him. Unlike his first visit's lukewarm reception, he produced significant work during two-year stay.
- Painting depicts Manhattan's dramatic skyline. Geometric forms of skyscrapers thrust upward. Tunnels and bridges suggest city's infrastructure. Bold colours—reds, browns, ochres with accents of bright blue—follow Futurist colour schemes. Diagonal compositions create sense of movement and dynamism.
- Work represents **Depero's synthesis of Futurist aesthetics with American modernism**. New York's relentless verticality and speed matched Futurist ideals perfectly. City embodied future Marinetti had prophesied. Depero saw **America as natural home for Futurist** principles even as movement waned in Europe.
- During American stay, Depero **struggled financially**. Found reception less welcoming than hoped. One achievement was publication of ***So I Think, So I Paint***, translation of his 1940 autobiography. From the winter of 1947 to October 1949 he lived in cottage in New Milford, Connecticut. He relaxed and continued his long-standing plans to open a museum. He returned to Italy and in **1957 he signed an agreement with Rovereto Municipality involving** donating over 3,000 works..

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Benedetta Cappa Marinetti (1897-1977), *Synthesis of Aerial Communications*, 1933-34, approximately 324.5 × 199 cm. Post Office Building, Palermo

Benedetta Cappa Marinetti (1897-1977), *Synthesis of Aerial Communications*, 1933-34, approximately 324.5 × 199 cm. Post Office Building, Palermo

- **Benedetta Cappa** was born in Rome. **Met Marinetti in 1918**. They exchanged series of letters discussing their respective work in Futurism. In letter dated 16 August 1919, Marinetti wrote to her: "**Do not forget your promise to work. You must carry your genius to its ultimate splendour every day**."
- **They married and Benedetta became first woman to have art displayed at Venice Biennale** since exhibition's founding in 1895. Occurred during 1930-1936 Biennales. Also exhibited at 1935 Rome Quadriennale and several other Futurist exhibitions. She was often **overshadowed by her husband** despite her significant achievements.
- This large-scale fresco represents the culmination of her aeropittura (aeropainting) phase. **Views from an aircraft showing landscape**, communication networks, modern infrastructure below. Work celebrates technology's ability to connect humanity. Geometric abstraction combined with aerial perspective creates dynamic composition.
- The first introduction of Benedetta's feminist convictions regarding Futurism came in form of **public dialogue in 1925** with L.R. Cannonieri **concerning role of women in society**. This **despite movement's notorious misogyny** expressed in founding manifesto's contempt for women. Higher percentage of women participated in Russian Futurist circles from start. Natalia Goncharova, Aleksandra Ekster, Lyubov Popova were major female Futurists. After Marinetti's death in 1944, Benedetta inherited his estate including bronze casts of

Boccioni's sculptures. She sold ***Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*** to Museum of Modern Art in 1948. She lived until 1977, the final link to Futurism's founding generation.

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43-01 FUTURISM

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Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, Museum of Modern Art, New York

- Futurism spanned from 1909 to 1944 but came in two waves.
- The first wave ended during World War I partly as many of the artists died, particularly the death of the movement's **most significant** painter and sculptor, **Umberto Boccioni**, and partly because the horror of the war led many of the artists who survived, like **Carlo Carrà and Gino Severini**, to **abandon Futurist abstraction** in favour of traditional, classical styles.
- The second phase was heavily associated with Fascism, the state and Mussollini and was much longer. One important movement was **Aeropittura** or Aeropainting, a celebration of the **Italian airforce**. As Mussolini's government became more oppressive and aligned with Nazi Germany, Futurism lost its status as a revolutionary avant-garde movement and became a **tool of the state**.
- The movement officially ended on 2nd December 1944 when **Marinetti died of a heart attack**. After 1945, Futurism was treated as "**the art of the enemy**." Because of its deep ties to Fascism, the movement was largely **scrubbed from art history for decades**, only being "rediscovered" and critically re-evaluated in the 1970s and 80s.

- Thank you for your interest, time and attention and I look forward to recording the next talk in my overview of Western Art.

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