

"CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUPREMATISM TO MODERN ART AND DEVELOPMENT OF ABSTRACTION"

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Abstract

His Suprematism, avant-garde art movement which was started in 1915 by Kazimir Malevich marked a significant revolution in the modern art. Coeval with such artists as Vasiliy Kandinsky and Marc Chagall, this movement, originating in Russia, was characterized by excessive use of circles, squares and triangles and by compaction of tones. Suprematism, in effect, emphasized a principle of the "superiority of the purely artistic emotion over the artistic depiction of things." , Malevich was focused on the concept of freeing art from the formal constraints since he was interested in conveying literal emotions. There are difficulties in developing Suprematism because of Russian government censorship the movement has had great influence on abstract art and contributed to changing art in the twentieth century.

Keywords: *Kazimir Malevich, Suprematism, Abstract Art, Russian Avant-Garde, Cubo-Futurism, Black Square, White on White*

Introduction

Suprematism began in Russia in 1915 from the masters of Abstraction and was an extreme form of abstraction in art giving up on object representation and invoking only emotion. Malevich claimed to be influenced by Cubism to which he marveled at capability of the approach to dissect art and alter the referential coordinate system in creative work. With some other artists including Liubov Popova, Olga Rozanova and Ivan Kliun Malevich founded suprematism as way of liberating Russian art.

It formed as Malevich built a community of avant-garde individuals to promote this particular idea. With a view of supporting the movement, he created the magazine *Supremus*, initially called "Nul" or "Nothing." Despite the fact that the journal was never started due to the Russian revolution, the main purpose of this venture was to explain Suprematism and extend it to people. The artist publicly declared Suprematism in 1915 at the Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 0,10 in St Petersburg; Malevich and other artists exhibited 36 works that consist of a triangular primitivism of simplified geometrical shapes and the stark opposition of colours against Cubo-Futurism, Russia's leading art movement.

Suprematism arose at a time when modern art in various fields such as painting sculpture poetry, drama, was in the process of rapid growth. Malevich main assumption was art works importance was not in the display of visual signs of the objective reality but in artist's ability to convey pure emotion. This was explained in the book titled *The Non-Objective World*, which was released in 1927, and in it the author posited that art has purposes going beyond maintaining practical purposes and instead symbolizes abstract moods. It therefore disavowed representation to become the first art movement to express the word via non-Objectivity.

Suprematism's main founder, Malevich also went on to establish a syntactic base for Suprematist practice calling upon such fundamental outlines as squares and circles. His painting *Black Square* produced in 1915, and exhibited at the 0,10 Exhibition became a major icon of Suprematist art; literally representing what some art historians have referred to as the 'zero point of painting'. The painting can be said to have heralded complete abstraction in modern art as in his later work described as, *White on White*. These pieces highlighted him and his desire to dematerialize from the polychromatic drives and coalesce more on a monochromatic aesthetic.

Suprematism only differed from another Russian movement called Constructivism in terms of ideology. Constructivism was vitalistic and utilitarian, seeing in art an objectified sign within a social whole. On the other hand Suprematism was highly anti practical and anti-artisan, rebuffing the idea of art for the state or God or for anything at all. According to Malevich, the art works should be created without any direct relation to real life and they should not have agenda.

Suprematism also impacted other areas not limiting itself simply to painting. The Suprematist concept was formed in part by Malevich's work for sets and costumes for the opera *Victory Over the Sun* (*Венок поэта*), which was written in a Futurist spirit of anti-Tradition. In conclusion, Malevich's forms – products of geometric evolution – and the ideas of non-Euclidean character introduced higher temporal and more pictorial ideas different from practical perception.

However, in 1915, Malevich established the *Supremus* group to form a united family for such a tendency. Thus, the discussed group included such outstanding Russian artists as B. B. Anisonov, N. A. Dudiin-Bekaa, E. I. Denisiuk, and others who gathered to introduce Suprematist concepts. However, the planned journal of the group, *Supremus*, was never to

be produced following the outbreak of the Russian revolution. Initially, the new young state developed at Bene class avante-garde movements such as Suprematism; however this was not to last In 1927 Stalin took direct control of the country and his reformation of the government included strict control of art. In 1934 the state policy in Soviet adopted Socialist realism as their new direction of the art which put out from the circulation such avant-garde movements as suprematism.

Key Ideas Behind Suprematism

Among Kazimir Malevich's key source of ideas in elaborating Suprematism, poetic and literary criticism can be named. The Russian Formalists were the group of critics who had refused the idea considered to be language as the medium that was obviously clear and did not need any interpretation. The Formalists' convention considered that the connection between words and things was not all that significant. But words like art could also provide a form of seeing through a new, strange and fresh pair of eyes to the world. That's exactly what Suprematist artists tried to do—they wanted to clear up all the references to the real life in the art to make the viewer transcendental. Pratt and Poignant pointed at simplified forms that left behind the physically rather focusing at reflections that go well beyond the physical. He also used elements of folk art and ornamentation of Russian sympolena and pictorial traditions customary in the Russian Orthodoz church.

Famous Suprematist Artists and Artworks

Kazimir Malevich (1879–1935)

Thus, the founder and main representative of Suprematism, Kazimir Malevich, immediately got acquainted with the movements: Impressionism, Symbolism, Fauvism, etc. Cubism influenced it after he had visited Paris in 1912; in the end he was to evolve this style as being made up of pure geometric elements and their interconnection. This point of view was almost closer to mysticism, here is a myth-making work: Black Square (1915) – black on white square that become the core of the Suprematist art and one of the most minimalistic and often called 'minimal abstractionism' abstract paintings ever made.

It is thought that Malevich painted a second Black Square circa 1923, although some also think there is a third Black Square from 1929 for the solo exhibition because the 1915 one is in poor condition. A fourth, smallest Black Square, likely intended as a diptych alongside the Red Square, was created for the exhibition Artists of the RSFSR: 15 Years, held in Leningrad in year 1932.

Malevich divided Suprematism into three stages: Black,” colored,” and white” are some of the categories that are available with regards to the choices. Murs began with the ‘black’ phase, signifying the ‘zero point or degree of painting – from Black Square of 1915. Another stage called the “colored” stage, or the Dynamic Suprematim, was carried out by such artists as Iilia Chasnik, El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko where color and form are conceived to produce the impression of the movement into space. The “white” stage was the final stage in Suprematism. During the Tenth State Exhibition: In the Suprematism 1915–1916 and Non-objective Creation and Suprematism in 1919, Malevich showed works from this phase, but the best one was White on White (1918), which brought what resulted in the rejection of form in preference for the concept.

El Lissitzky (1890–1941)

Like El Lissitzky, the artist also did work for Constructivist movement; although he was heavily invested in Suprematist movement during 1919-1923; he later came up the “Proun” variation of Suprematist movement himself. Among them, Lazar Markovich Lissitzky who is considered one of the primary contemporaries of Malevich and the man who contributed most to the penetration of Suprematist concepts outside Russia. When in 1923 he presented Non-Objective Art in Berlin, Lissitzky got in touch with Theo van Doesburg and connected Suprematism, De Stijl and Bauhaus.

The Decline and Legacy of Suprematism

As a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917, new attitudes toward art emerged closely. Stalinist culture had adopted Socialist Realism by the late twenties and all forms of avant-gardism was prohibited. Evans K., Malevich Kazimir. //The Oxford Dictionary of Art. – 3rd ed. C.: Oxford University Press, 2004. In the period 1919–1927 Malevich ceased painting and dedicated himself to his theoretical propositions. He later resumed painting, and actually started using the Socialist Realism technique, yet he was able to incorporate some of his usual work as well as his concepts. For instance, in his Self-Portrait he carefully wrote his name in a very small black square in the bottom right of the canvas. However, such attempts were made, but the zenith of Suprematist movement had diminutive considerably.

Still, there would be no question about Suprematism’s impact for the fate of abstract art in the twentieth century. It is impossible to overemphasize the formal debt of Constructivism to Suprematist notions and forms, which were employed by El Lissitzky. He was also

playing important role in propagation of Suprematism in foreign countries and becoming influence on such artists as László Moholy-Nagy. The examples of transcendental attitudes in art are inspired by Theosophy and works of Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian. In 1936 Cubism and Abstract Art at MoMA was the revolutionizing event for the American avant-garde that featured several of Malevich's Suprematist pieces. Today the reader can recognize reflections of Suprematism in contemporary architecture and the architecture products identified as 'Suprematist', such as Zaha Hadid.



Avant-Garde Art Success in Moscow: Malevich and the Rise of Cubo-Futurism

Indeed, Malevich with his dynamic cooperation with the avant-garde movements of Moscow in the early 1910s depicts the fast changing trends of Russian art. Malevich was first included into the Jack of Diamonds group by Mikhail Larionov, he incorporated elements from movements such as cubism and futurism: geometrical dissection and the glorification of the modern. However, Simachev's disagreements with Larionov gifted him the task to form a new crew; the Youth Union, in St. Petersburg. The "cubo-futuristic" style he was part of included other famed artists such as Marc Chagall, a fact evident at exhibitions like the Donkey's Tail in Moscow in 1912.

Kazimir Malevich and the Suprematist Revolution: "White on White" and Beyond

Kazimir Malevich has been attributed to the Suprematist creation style and this is a movement that was based on the thin line between form and feeling rather than logic. In 1918, he showed his work known as 'white on white' where a square tilts slightly on a different type of white background. While some of his paintings like the Black Square are

simple, paintings like *Supremus No. 55* the artist gives geometrical complexities a try. Malevich was pretty clear about what he wanted the audience to do in front of his creation: he wanted them to think with their hearts and not with their heads; “Black Square” was the feelings and the white was the void.



Malevich's Post-Revolutionary Career: Utopian Visions and Suppression

After the revolution in 1917, Malevich worked in the newly established Soviet power, as an educator in the Free Art Studios in Moscow. He urged students to abandon illustration and ‘pretty wife and mashed potato’ and espouse newly significant abstraction. In 1919 he published “On New Systems of Art” these were the Suprematist ideas put into application in government and society. In the 1920s he created the *Architectona* series of dream town constructs which he presented in Germany and Poland. Nevertheless, having returned to Russia the emergence of the new movement of Social Realism did not benefit to him for further experiments.

While visiting Bauhaus in Germany in 1927, Malevich came across Wassily Kandinsky another Russian avant-garde artist who was as EFFECTIVE outside Russia as Malevich was ineffective on his return to the Soviet Union. Malevich was arrested in 1930 when he was thrown out and his friends burnt some of the writings to save him from political repression. Despite exhibiting work in a 1932 show to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Revolution, his art became “degenerate”, with the Soviets prohibiting him from creating any more art.



Kazimir Malevich's Legacy: From Suppression to Global Influence

Alfred Barr became a guardian of what Malevich created in European and American art since he was the first director of New York's Museum of Modern Art. The art dealer also made her famous getaway in 1935 when she tried to smuggle 17 pieces of work by Kazimir Malevich out of Nazi Germany by rolling them in an umbrella. These works were showcased in MoMA's famous exhibition of the 1936 "Cubism and Abstract Art".

The first significant traveling show dedicated to Malevich's art was at New York's Guggenheim Museum in 1973 and a more complete survey of his work was shown in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1989 after many of works were freed under glasnost by Gorbachev. The manner, in which Malevich has commandeered the progression of future art movements is seen in the minimalist painters like Ad Reinhardt, who has drawn directly from Malevich's Black Square.

Conclusion

Influenced profoundly by Malevich the world embraced abstract paintings as capable of changing the world. Instead of the images, Malevich turned to feelings and emotions in Suprematism, the art he created at the time of his death. Political turmoil and repression in Soviet Russia failed to deter Malevich from developing his ideas and creating his artwork as his concepts are now associated with further movements such as minimalism and contributed to the further evolution of modern art on a worldwide scale. Through his work his political vision has been preserved beyond politics and artistic limitations which is why his work continues to influence artists and viewers.

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