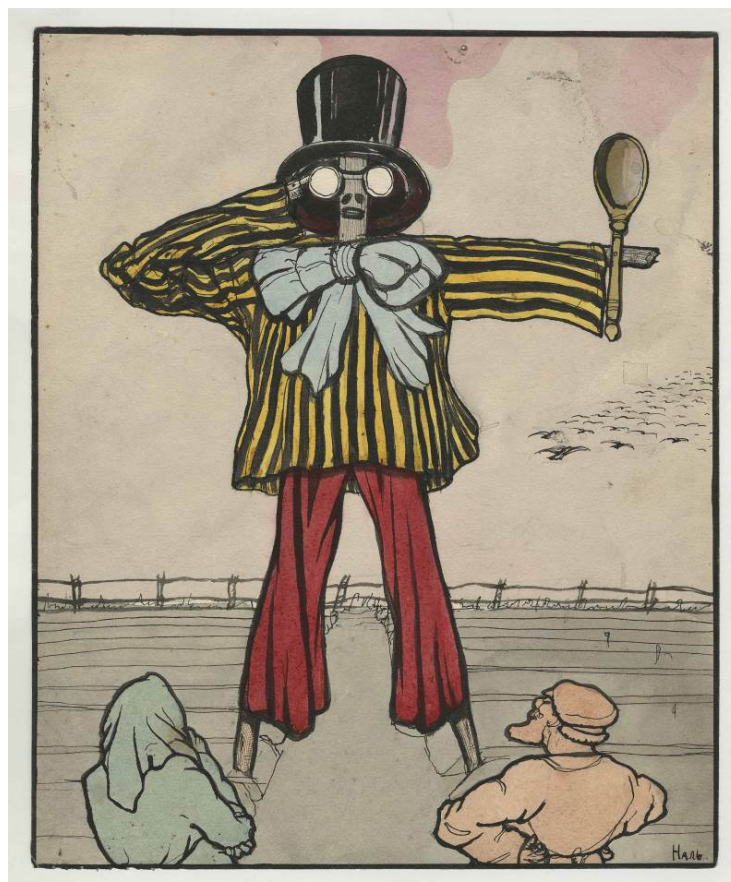


Russian Dada 1914–1924



ILIN (NAL)
Futurismo en un pueblo, 1914
Acuarela sobre papel
30,5 x 25,2 cm
Museo Literario Estatal Ruso Vladímir Dahl

DATES:	5 June – 22 October 2018
PLACE:	Sabatini building, Floor 1
ORGANIZATION:	Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid
CURATOR:	Margarita Tupitsyn
COORDINATION:	Leticia Sastre and Sofía Cuadrado
RELATED ACTIVITIES:	<i>Heterodoxias radicales de Dadá</i> . Curso de Servando Rocha. 7, 8, 12, 14 y 15 june, 2018-19:00h / Nouvel building,

With the support of abertis

Russian Dada 1914-1924 is an exhibition organised by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía which, for the first time, looks at **Russian avant-garde art** from the perspective of the **canons of the Dada movement** and explores the features of innovation and artistic agitation shared by both trends.

Despite the fact that the term "futurism" has been used to refer to the first Russian avant-garde and although most canonical narratives situate Dada's irruption in different western cities (Zurich, Paris, Berlin or New York), the discourse of this exhibition curated is oriented towards paying due attention to the artistic context of pre and post-revolutionary Russia and to claiming the leading role of the creators of the Slavic country in the aesthetic radicalism of the Dada.

Thus, as a result of painstaking research and the recovery of a **significant amount of unreleased material**, some **500 works** will go on display, including **250 paintings, collages and drawings; 73 photographs; 150 documents and publications, and 22 films and audio pieces.**

The aforementioned works were produced at the height of the Dada movement — between the First World War and the death of Lenin in 1924 — by nearly **90 artists** from Russia and other European countries, such as **Natan Altman, Ivan Kluin, Gustav Klutis, Valentina Kulagina, El Lisitzki, Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Ivan Puni, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova, Vladimir Tatlin, Ilya Zdanevich, Natalia Goncharova, and Francis Picabia, Kurt Schwitters, Man Ray and Tristan Tzara**, among numerous others.



KARL BULLA
Mijail Matiusin, Alekséi Kruchónij y Kazimir Malevich, 1913
Gelatinobromuro sobre papel
17,8 x 23,8 cm
Museo Estatal Mayakovski, Moscú

Moreover, **the works hail from several museums and private collections** in Russia and other countries in Europe, for instance the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Moscow's Mayakovsky Museum, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, the Tretyakov Gallery, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, the Vladimir Dahl Russian State Literary Museum, and the Lafuente Archive, to mention but a few.

The exhibition, organized with the collaboration of the **Community of Madrid**, punctuates the multimedia nature of art — spanning paintings, drawings, printed material, film, music pieces, poetry recitals — and the **political implications** during the First World War, the two Russian Revolutions and the change of leader from Lenin to Stalin. The works selected also demonstrate the intentions of many artists to become involved in projects of public agitation and to adopt **rejection, irony, absurdity and chance** as the basic principles underpinning their artistic manifestations.

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Extravagant performances, anti-war campaigns, a rejection of classical art and an **innovative way of fusing the visual and the verbal** are just some of the common traits between the Russian avant-garde and the international Dada movement.

Exhibition's tour

Divided into a **three-section chronological survey**, the exhibition sets out from 1914, the outbreak of the First World War, with this first part focusing on 'alogical' abstraction developed with the conception of the readymade, collage, and publications, and featuring one of the first operas of the absurd in the *zaum* language, the influential *Victory Over the Sun* (1913), with the participation of Kruchenykh, Khlebnikov, Malevich and others. It also highlights how artists in this period — the aforementioned Malevich and Vladimir Mayakovski and Rozanova — supported anti-war campaigns, making posters and collages which condemned militarism.

The second section looks at the period stretching from 1917 to 1924, from the **triumph of the Russian Revolution** to the death of Lenin, calling attention to strictly revolutionary themes and notions around internationalism. The nihilistic attitude of avant-garde artists towards established norms made them receptive to a new political reality, and many of them became involved in public propaganda projects of agitation in the name of the Revolution. Accordingly, the new army of artists adapted original forms of production as they sought to build a different world, developing an alternative view of man and the city.

The final section, under the name "Dada Bridge", analyses the **connections between Russia and the main Dadaist centres** – Paris, Berlin and New York — evinced through the publications of Russian works in these cities and the presence of artists like El Lissitzky in Berlin and Serguei Sharshun and Ilia Zdanevich in Paris.

The exhibition opens with an introductory area screening three videos which allude to the aforementioned sections: the recreation, in 1981, of the absurdist opera *Victory Over the Sun* (1913), Nikolai Chodatajew's *Interplanetary Revolution* (1924), and Lev Kuleshov's *The Death Ray* (1925).

Proto-Dada and World War I

Although Russian artists of the time openly renounced Futurism and even though Marinetti, its founder, in 1914 called them "false Futurists", the Russian avant-garde has traditionally been associated with the Italian movement.

However, and articulating a different reflection in the exhibition catalogue, the curator, **Margarita Tupitsyn**, recovers the following quote from Hans Richter Dada's book. Art and Anti-art: "Interestingly, it seems that the given trends made their first appearance in Russia, where the futuristic influence was still very strong. Tupitsyn also points out that the critic Nikolai Jardzhiev, a contemporary of Malévich's, agreed in his last writings with Richter's idea when he identified characteristics and protodadaist actions in the influential opera *Victoria on the Sun* (1913).

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In this sense, the first part of the show focuses on **'alogical' abstraction** developed through the conception of the **readymade** and **collage**, thereby presenting works related to one of the first operas of the absurd in the **zaum language** (transrationalism), the influential *Victory Over the Sun*, by **Aleksei Kruchenykh** and **Velimir Khlebnikov** (libretto), **Kazimir Malevich** (design) and **Mikhail Matyushin** (music).

Transrational creativity — outside logic and consciousness — steeped in laughter and perverse parody, became the operative mechanism employed to shock the public, pour scorn on artistic and traditional social values and mock technical adroitness.



OLGA ROZANOVA
En la calle, 1915
Óleo sobre lienzo
101 x 77 cm
Museo-Centro de Exposiciones Slobodskói

In the climate of this theoretical strategy, and in the first major anti-academic shows, **Ivan Kliun**, **Mikhail Larionov**, **Kazimir Malevich**, **Aleksei Morgunov**, **Ivan Puni**, **Olga Rozanova**, **Vladimir Tatlin** and **Kirill and Ilia Zdanevich** jointly exhibited work, presenting non-objective art works, paintings with assemblages, reliefs made with found objects and installations built from readymades. Such forms of production would be pivotal to Dada.

Therefore, this space displays works which reflect the new modern construction types embarked upon by the Russian artists, for instance **Malevich's** *Four Squares* (1915) and **Rodchenko's** *Line and Compass Drawing* (1915), one of his black-and-white formalist pieces, drawn

with a ruler and aspiring not to be an object for continual perception but a concept.

On another note, and akin to the European Dadaists, the Russian avant-gardes loathed and endured the First World War, its outbreak in 1914 coinciding with an awareness of the political sway of their cultural revolt. **Aleksei Kruchenykh**, **Kazimir Malevich**, **Vladimir Mayakovsky** and **Olga Rozanova** all supported campaigns against the war, making posters and collages which condemned militarism and German brutality.



KAZIMIR MALEVICH (diseño) y VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKI (texto)
El carrusel de Guillermo, 1914
Litografía
39 x 52 cm
Museo Estatal Mayakovski, Moscú

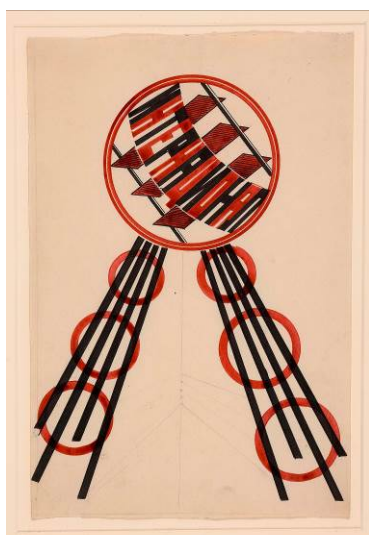
The Triumph of the Revolution

Formalist critic Roman Jakobson and art historian Abram Efros established a link between the radical aesthetic of Dada and the October Revolution. The nihilism of avant-garde artists with respect to established norms made them receptive to the new political reality implicit in the Revolution, with many becoming involved in public propaganda projects of agitation in the name of the Revolution, mocking those representing the deposed classes.

Consequently, the section accentuating this period begins with **Nikolai Evreinov's** film *The Storming of the Winter Palace* (1920), and the original cover of the commemorative album of the uprising *October 1917–1918. The Heroes and Victims of the Revolution*, with a text by **Vladimir Mayakovsky**, and some of the illustrations that appear inside — two of which are also originals — by **Kseniya Boguslavskaya**, **Ivan Puni**, **Vladimir Kozlinski** and **Sergei Makletsov**. Its content includes **Mayakovsky's** first attempt at “agit-poetry” and scenes of brutal social change juxtaposing representatives from the deposed classes with those who had overthrown them. Through images and words, the mockery of the former is balanced out with the acts and misery of the latter.



LEV KULESHOV
El sueño de Taras, 1919
Película de 35 mm transferida a DVD, b/n, sin sonido (extracto 10'54")
Fundación Cinematográfica Nacional de la Federación Rusa



GUSTAV KLUTSKIS
La Internacional, 1922
Tinta china, gouache y grafito sobre papel
27,1 x 17,8 cm
Museo Estatal de Arte Contemporáneo-Colección Costakis

This period saw artists and poets work on parallel practices based by turns on reason and anti-reason, meaning and non-meaning, rational design and random collages, absurdist and political theatre, parody and propaganda film, all of which sought to build a new world, working on a new vision of the city and man. This can be appreciated in the photomontages of **El Lissitzky**, **Aleksandr Rodchenko** and **Gustav Klutskis** in this part of the exhibition.

Non-objective practices created a universal language and, more specifically, an effective method for disseminating the revolutionary project and anti-bourgeois stance in Russia and among the international community, in which the German Dadaists demonstrated a more receptive point of view.

The same artists who impelled this campaign of public agitation to advocate Marxist ideology railed against the culture of mass propaganda and social reality with a good dose of Dada negativity and “vandalism”.



ANÓNIMO
Escena de la obra Zangezi, de Velimir Khlebnikov, escenario diseñado por Vladimir Tatlin. Leningrado, Museo de Cultura Material, 1923
Papel fotográfico, impresión de fotografías en b/n
18 x 13,2 cm
Archivos Estatales Rusos de Arte y Literatura

This area also shines a light on cinema and theatre through films such as *Glumov's Diary* (conceived as a key part of the adaptation of Nikolai Ostrovsky's 1868 comedy), directed in 1923 by **Sergei Eisenstein** — for whom the film was a parody of an American detective film — and the stage and costume designs from *The Death of Tarelkin* by **Varvara Stepanova**, and **Mayakovsky's** *Mystery Bouffe* (1919).

The section concludes with the death of Lenin and the work *Uprising*, by **Kliment Redko**, before picking up the *zaum* language once more via the Nothingists, a branch of Russian Dadaism and self-proclaimed “Dada of the West”, with slogans such as “everything begins in nothing”. The Nothingists published their poems, texts and manifestos in a self-produced magazine entitled *Sobachiy yashchik* (The Dog Box). The Nothingist association, which

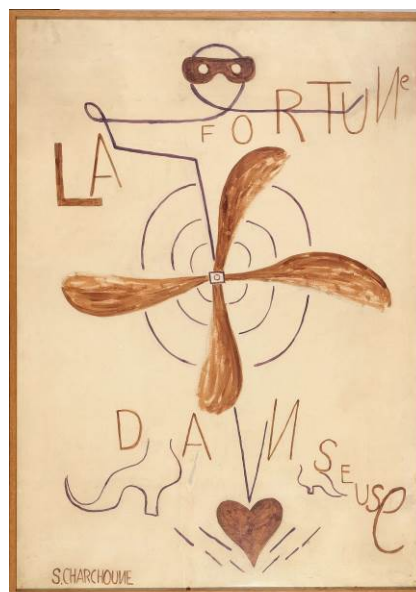
included **Borís Zimenkov**, **Susanna Mar**, **Yelena Nikolaeva**, **Riurik Rok**, **Sergei Sadíkov** and **Oleg Erberg**, would only last from 1920 to 1922.

Dada Bridge

The end of the First World War reconciled the international art community and signalled the end of the East-West divide. At this point, an awareness began to take shape of how Dadaism had crystallised to give form to a common project; a political leftist project entailing a social critique which, although severe, was imposed through parody, passionate experimentation and agitation campaigns advocating new artistic ideas expressed through different mediums.

Thus, the exhibition straddles the Dadaists and Russian artists who either visited Paris, Berlin and New York in the early 1920s or lived in these cities.

At that time, along with **Ilya Ehrenburg** and **Viktor Shklovsky**, other eminent Russian avant-garde artists moved to Europe, or at least spent time there, all of them coming into immediate contact with the Dadaists and, to differing degrees, contributing to the expansion of Dada's conceptual pool.



SERGUEI SHARSHUN
La fortuna danzante, 1922
Carboncillo y tinta sobre papel
100,3 x 71,2 cm
Centre Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne / Centre de création industrielle
Legado del artista en 1976

Therefore, **Natalia Goncharova**, **El Lissitzky**, **Mikhail Larionov**, **Ivan Puni**, **Sergei Sharshun** and **Ilya Zdanevich** signed up with different Dadaist factions, exhibiting work in the Berlin gallery Der Sturm (a staunch Dada supporter) and organising key Dada actions, for instance the *Evening of the Bearded Heart* (1923).

Mayakovsky, in particular, was a go-between for the Russian and European milieus; in 1922 he set off for Berlin, a time which coincided with the opening, on 15 October, of the **First Russian Art Exhibition** in the city. The show included works pertaining to all non-objective principles, an influence on Dadaism's formal parameters and the mounting interest in the movement by the politicised model of non-objective art.

The popularity of the posters made by Mayakovsky between 1919 and 1921 for the Russian Telegraphic Agency (Rosta), also on view in the exhibition, escalated through his poetry readings prior to the appearance of his books **For the Voice**, designed by Lissitzky, and **150,000,000**.



VLADIMIR TATLIN
Construcción de la maqueta del Monumento a la
Tercera Internacional de Tatlin, 1929
De izda. a dcha: Sofia Dymshits-Tolstaia, Tatlin, Tevel
Shapiro y Iósif Meerzon
Gelatinobromuro de plata sobre papel
9,8 x 13,3 cm
Museo Estatal de Arte Contemporáneo-Colección Costakis

Lissitzky, meanwhile, began his work by mechanically reproducing Prouns (an acronym of "project for the affirmation of the new"), and designs created in the time of *Victory Over the Sun*, re-installed in Vitebsk in the 1920s.

As a result, the version of non-objectivity maintained by Lissitzky and Malevich could effectively be popularised, and characters from this iconic proto-Dada interpretation globalised, since the illustrations Lissitzky produced for *Victory Over the Sun* and published in Germany — where, between 1922 and 1925, he worked closely with **Kurt Schwitters**, **Hans Arp**, **Raoul Hausmann** and **Tristan Tzara** — were opportune for the international dissemination of characters from this influential proto-Dada performance, revealing their importance to the development of subsequent Dadaist dogmas.

In turn, Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International* became the anti-art paradigm for Dadaists, and, due to the European trips made by Mayakovsky and critic **Osip Brik**, Dada publications and the reproductions of key works circulated in Russia.

At the same time, in the USA **Katherine S. Dreier**, the celebrated collector devoted to promoting Dada in New York, viewed the Soviet avant-garde as being particularly relevant to and influential on her plans. The iconoclast **David Burliuk**, who reached New York in 1921 after fleeing from the Bolsheviks' anarchist purge, joined Dreier and her artists, and before long his paintings were displayed in the collector's apartment along with **Marcel Duchamp's**.

These and other examples of Russian artists' integration into Dada circles, and their correspondence with **Tristan Tzara**, **Paul Éluard** and **Francis Picabia**, powerfully substantiate the legitimacy of Russian Dada and illustrates the reciprocity between Western and Eastern influences was integral to the enhancement and the the global scope of the Dada movement.

Catalogue

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía will publish the catalogue *Russian Dada 1924–1924*, which includes essays by the show's curator, Margarita Tupitsyn, and others written by Olga Burenina-Petrova, Natasha Kurchanova and Victor Tupitsyn, in addition to texts from the time written by some of the artists present in the exhibition.

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