

F U T U R I S M

The heart of futurism cherishes the advanced world of technology and modernity. Being the most significant Italian avant-garde movement, the artists here strived to leave past art forms behind and focus on the new world of technology and speed. Energy, change, and violence are recognized in art pieces and the artists were intrigued by all things mechanical.

Post-Impressionism and Cubism artistic forms influenced Futurism until it became its own distinct art. It borrowed qualities from Symbolism and Divisionism. Futurism combined modern media, machines, and urban qualities in order to convey certain feelings to its viewers. The goal of futuristic pieces was to embody emotions not seen by the eye, but rather felt with the heart. Metropolitan qualities such as heat, rhythm, and noise can not only be seen in futuristic art forms, but felt.



The City Rises
By Umberto Boccioni

Considered to be
the first Futuristic Painting

HISTORY



*Futurist Manifesto
Published in Le Figaro*

Writer Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published *Futurist Manifesto* in 1909 and made an appearance on the front page of (at the time) France's most widely known newspaper. This helped spark the start of Futurism and the artists' desire to spread their ideas and beliefs of leaving behind other art forms, while focusing on the new mechanical world. Marinetti would then go to publish more about this art form, and soon it was spread abroad. During the early stages of World War I, the art of futurism would soon lose its energy, but other European cities such as Rome were influenced from its creation.

INFLUENCES

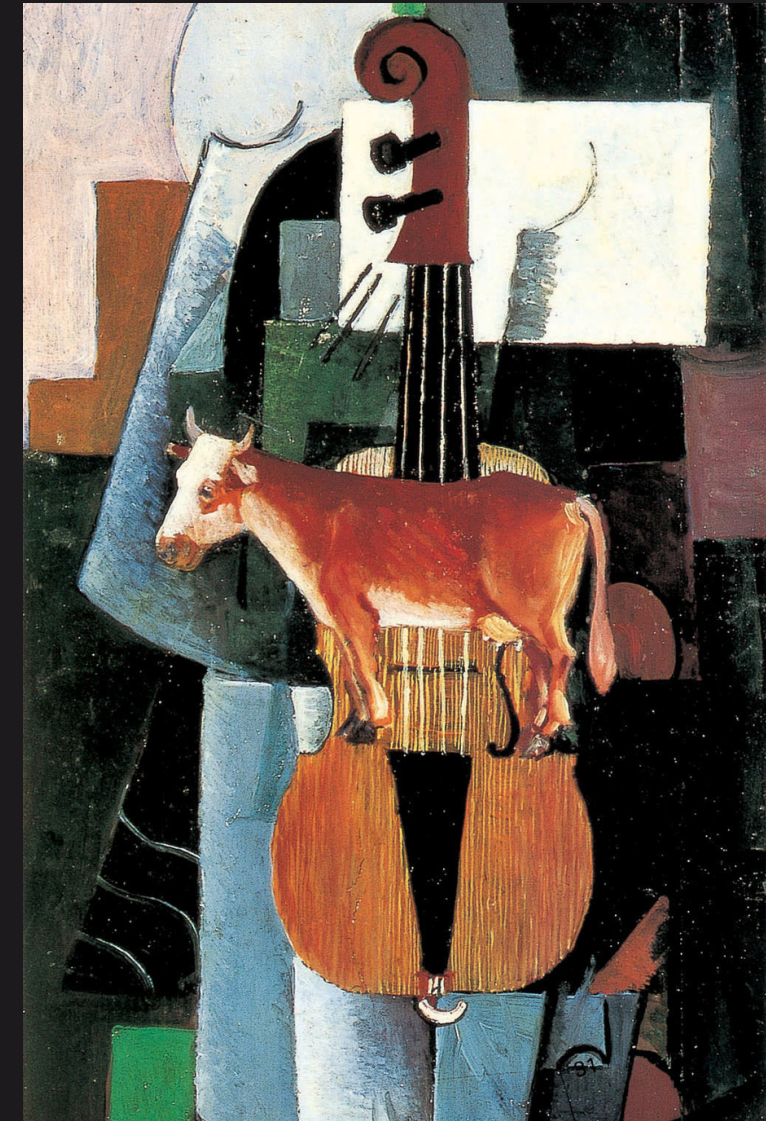
Though the art of futurism is highly conveyed through visual arts, it came about through literature and many people who had the same dream: to demolish traditional ways and move into a new world of technology. Young artists Umberto Boccioni, Luigi Russolo, and Carlo Carrà approached the poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in order to join his movement. Gino Severini and Giacomo Balla would give approval to the three artists to bring this idea of futurism to visual arts. From there, the artists work would spread from Milan outwards, spreading the beliefs and ideas behind futurism. Cubism (along with other minor art forms such as symbolism, divisionism, and impressionism) would go to help create the distinct form of futuristic art.



Filippo Tommaso Marinetti
An Italian art theorist, poet, and editor. The founder of Futurism.

SOCIETAL IMPACTS

Once the art of Futurism was set and firm in Italy, it began to spread to other areas within and outside of Europe. It helped to influence many other art forms. For example, Parisian Cubism and Italian Futurism combined in Russia from 1912-1920 with an end result of Rayonist and Cubo-futurist art forms. Cubo-futurism would then give power to the Vorticist Movement which emphasized on other artists of the age. In addition, art décor, architecture, music, and literature were eventually all impacted from Italian futurism and the art forms branched off from it. The heart of futurism (noise, energy, speed) would be integrated into other areas besides Italy, and the societies around would be more exposed to the changing, contemporary, and more technological world.

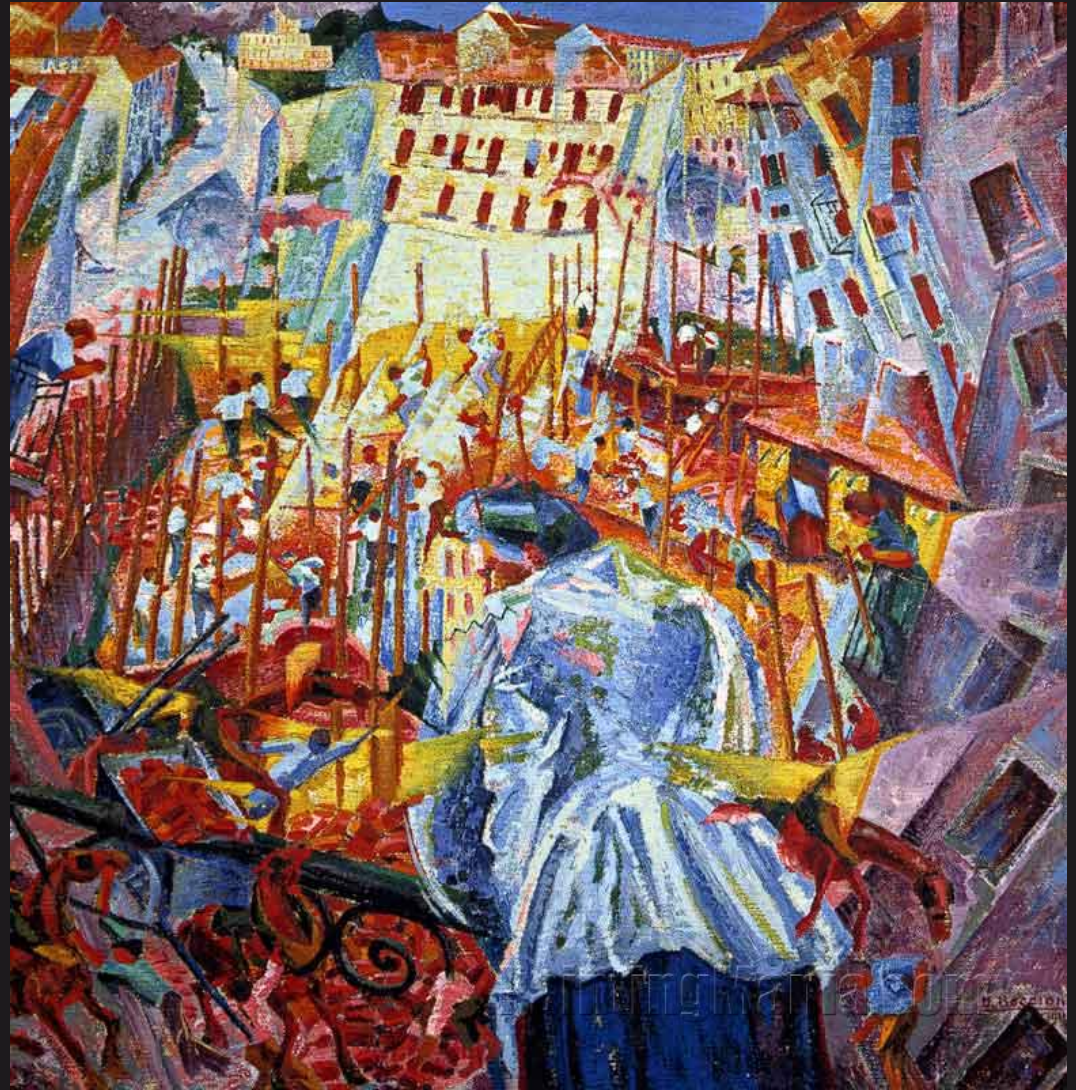


Cow and Violin
Cubo-Futurist art by
Kazimir Malevich

OIL ON CANVAS

The Street Enters the House by Umberto Boccioni

This oil painting represents the impacts of Cubism and Expressionism on Boccioni to create a futuristic piece. The design elements of line, texture, and color dominate the art in order to convey a feeling of chaos and energy in the outside city. The vibrant colors mix with the disorganized lines and texture to give one the feeling of noise, energy, and motion within the metropolitan world.



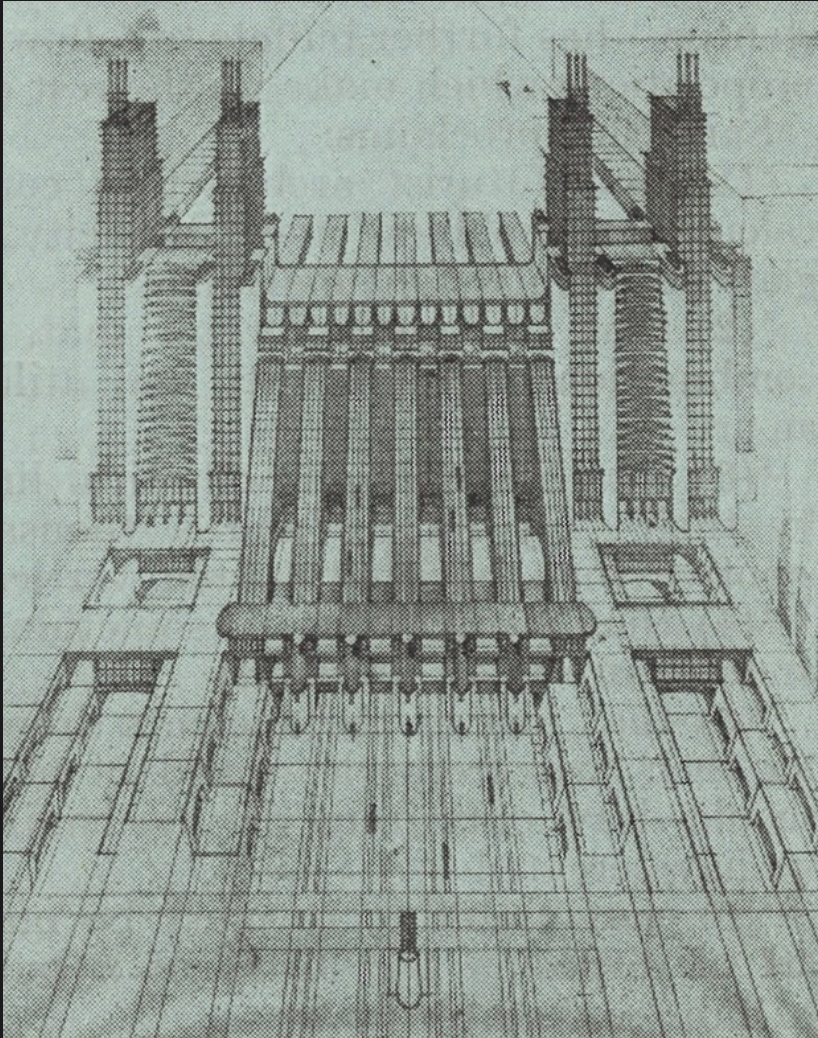
SCULPTURE

Unique Forms of Continuity in Space By Umberto Boccioni

Uniquely, Boccioni incorporated design elements of line, color, and space in order to create a piece representing the energy flow and modernity of the time. The lines help to display the energy of shifting motion which helps to fill the positive space with machine and motion-like qualities. Additionally, the rusted texture elegantly adds to the machine related style. This shows how futuristic artists wanted to move from past art forms into the modern, mechanical ways of the metropolitan world.



ARCHITECTURAL SKETCH



Architectural Sketch
by Italian architect Antonio
Sant'Elia

Futuristic art made its appearance in visual painting, sculpture, and even architecture. Though Sant'Elia has little to no records of actual buildings from his design, he still inspired future architects of a more modern look and style with his ideas on paper. Elements of line and space are seen here in order to create a mechanical, machine-like building for the more contemporary world.

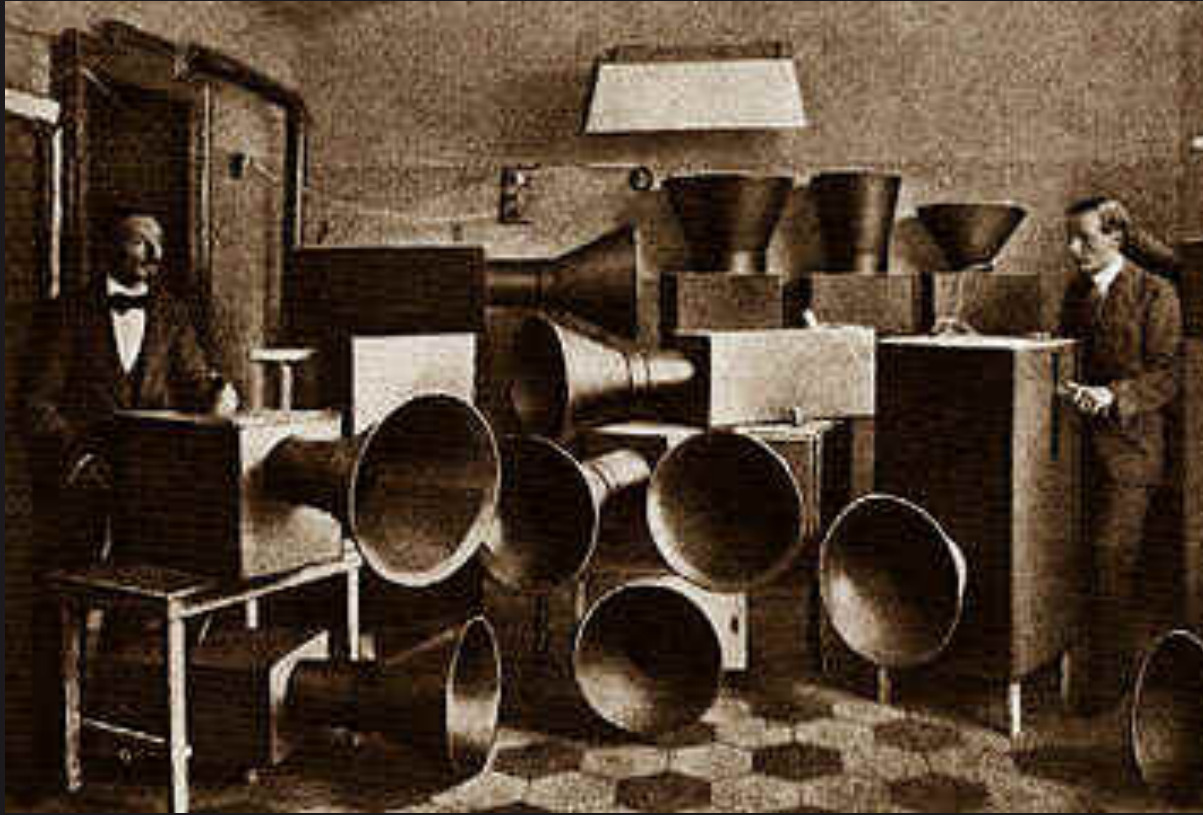
PAINTING



Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash
by Giacomo Balla

Balla, an Italian futuristic painter, created this piece in order to display the rushed feeling of being in the city and new society. The painting is a prime example of how futurists loved the aspect of chrono-photography, or the display of images frame by frame. The lines and texture of the painting cause its viewers to feel a sense of urgency, energy, and chaos of the metropolis. This is exactly what Italian futurism artists wanted from viewers.

THE ART OF NOISE



Futuristic Music from 1910-20
Photograph of Luigi Russolo &
Francesco Balilla Pratella

The most eccentric futuristic painter, Luigi Russolo, decided to branch out from painting and make his mark on music. He shared his beliefs that alternative sounds such as nature and city-like noises should belong in music. Though most people believed that only pure and rhythmic tunes belonged in music, Russolo argued that all sounds can be beautiful, and the creation of futuristic music began.

FUTURISTIC THEATRE

Just like futuristic visual art, futuristic theatre was born as a result of its popularity in Italy and desire of the futurists to move forward. The futurists were determined to move beyond traditional, melodramatic, and nostalgic theatre and into a more speedy and compressional drama. This form of theatre focuses on rather short scenes with only a couple of sentences and ridicules past theatre traditions through parody and mimic.

Milan, 1915

While awaiting the great war which has been invoked for so long, we futurists are alternating our violent antineutral action in the city squares and universities with our artistic action upon the Italian consciousness, which we want to prepare for the great hour of major Peril. Italy will have to be fearless and relentless, as flexible and quick as a fencer, as indifferent to blows as a boxer; impassive at the announcement of a victory which might have cost fifty thousand lives, and even at the news of a defeat.

For Italy to learn to make a decision with lightning speed, to rush forward, to sustain every exertion and every possible mishap, books and reviews are not needed. These interest and occupy only a minority; they are more or less tedious, awkward, and burdensome; all they can do is turn enthusiasm cold, reduce impetus, and poison a fighting people with doubt. The war-intensified futurism—makes it absolutely necessary for us to rise up, and not to rot in libraries and reading-rooms. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT TODAY, THE ITALIAN SPIRIT CANNOT BE INFLUENCED WITH WARLIKE STRENGTH, EXCEPT THROUGH THEATRE. In fact, ninety percent of Italians go to see plays, whereas only ten percent read books and reviews. Therefore, what we need is a FUTURIST THEATRE; that is, a theatre absolutely opposed to old-fashioned drama, which drags out its depressing, monotonous processions on the somnolent stages of Italy.

Without going into a polemic against historical drama—a nauseating form of theatre which has already been discarded by old-fashioned audiences—we condemn all contemporary drama, because it is long-winded, analytical, pedantically psychological, over-explanatory, watered-down, meticulous, motionless, as full of prohibitions as a police headquarters, divided into cells like a monastery, and moldy as an old abandoned house. In short, it is pacifist, neutralist theatre, directly opposed to the ferocious, roaring, and synthesizing speed of war.

We are creating Futurist Theatre, which is:

SYNTHETIC

that is, very brief. Grasping in a few minutes, a few words, and a few gestures innumerable situations, feelings, ideas, sensations, events, and symbols.

The Synthetic Futurist Theatre
By Filippo Tommaso Marinetti,
Emilio Settimelli, Bruno Corra



Here, Marinetti constructed an overexaggerated costume that does not resemble a realistic king. He altered this design element against traditional theatre in order to express that the king is not always as he seems.

LE ROI BOMBANCE

In 1905, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti wrote what is considered to be the first Futuristic theatre piece. Information can be difficult to find on the play, since it did not have a successful path. The show utilizes the futuristic element of parody and ridicule against traditional theatre. It was not successful, because critiques at the time did not enjoy how far Marinetti took the piece. He mocked the traditional behavior of the king in past theatre productions, showcasing a kind as something ridiculous and overrated.

TOO MUCH LIGHT MAKES THE BABY GO BLIND

Greg Allen founded the Neo-Futurists group in 1988 in which the group of artists strive to present something real, live, and connected to the current life outside the theatre. *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind* is a show that lasted fifty weekends in Chicago, presenting thirty different plays in only an hour.

The Neo-Futurists wrote, designed, and directed this show based off of the Italian Futurist movement. The scenes are short, the people only act as themselves, the fourth wall is broken, and the play coincides with what is happening in the current, real life.

Scenery, costumes, and lighting were very simplistic and real due to the neo-futurists beliefs. The scenery resembled basic settings and small pieces in order to gain a general idea of where the scene takes place.



The costumes appear as 'everyday' outfits, and the lighting is only used in order to light the actors. There are little to no special effects.

THE VARIETY THEATRE

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti presented this play in 1915. The Variety Theatre is a prime example of breaking the fourth wall to the extremes and highlights the importance of audience in theatre. Presenting topics on politics and technology, the somewhat controversial show would allow the audience to be a direct participant. You couldn't distinguish between actors and audience members. Itching powders and other skin/body irritants were used in the audience in order to provoke and raise the energy before the show.



A poster representing the chaos of Variety Theatre. This show helps to display Futurism's tendency to have theatre represent the current life- what is actually happening right then and now.

TURANDOT

Turandot is an Opera written by Franco Alfano and Giacomo Puccini. The photo to the right depicts a production from 1921. This particular production was directed by Yevgeny Vakhtangov and designed by Igor Nivinsky. Though the costumes remain on the simpler side, the set design is abstract and geometrical in form. This adds to the Russian, Cubo-futurist style. Just by looking at the scenic design alone, it is apparent that this show resembles a more modern world where buildings are predominant and the metropolis feeling is in gear.



Actors break the fourth wall in this production of
Turandot

LA DONNA E MOBILE



Photo of the Script Cover

Another play written by Marinetti, *La Donna e Mobile* represents a futuristic theatre style, because it presents the human relationship with technology (literally). In the show, costumes are chosen carefully in order to create a very mechanical look. The main character is indeed a robot/machine, and people mistake it as an actual human. From there, the characters begin to have sexual relations with the robot without knowing. Marinetti presents many important themes in this show of the new, close relations between man and machine. This show is not very popular, but some theatres showcase it today.

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