

ZVU- 200)- 900) Â© 4G 96.

5. DE STIJL

The Artists:

Theo van Doesburg (C E M Kipper) 1883 - 1931
/ Piet Mondrian 1872 - 1944

Bart van der Leek 1876 - 1958

Georges Vantongerloo 1886 - 1965

â\200\230J J P Oud 1890 - 1963

Gerit Rietveld 1888 - 1964

Cornelis van Eesteren 1897 -

Constantin Brancusi 1876 - 1957

This group comprised painters, sculptors, architects,
designers and illustrators and the above list contains some

of each, though only paintings are illustrated. The most
typical figures in the group are Van Doesburg and Mondrian in
that the former was the creator and inspiration and the latter
the best-known member. ,

Pictorial characteristics:

/

â\200\230 The most uncompromisingly abstract of all modern painting,
De Stijl work can be recognised by the use of the primary
colours (red, yellow and blue) or near primaries, and
horizontal and vertical lines dividing the areas of the
canvas. In one characteristic of De Stijl, the vertical and
horizontal lines give way to diagonals but the same use of
primaries is observed. (Van Doesburg)

The name:

De Stijl is Dutch for â\200\230The Style'. It was the name given by
Van peebues to the periodical of the arts that he first
produced in 1917. The introduction to the first issue contains
the following: â\200\230The object of this little periodical is to
contribute something towards a new sense of beauty. It wishes
to make the modern man aware of the new ideas that have sprung
up in the plastic arts. It wants to set up the logical
principles of a maturing style which is based upon a clearer
relation between the spirit of the age and the means of

expression, against the archaic confusion, the â\200\234modern baroque".

It want to combine in itself the present day ideas on modern
plastic art, ideas which, though fundamentally the samie, have
been developed individually and independently

Damelin

Without describing the particular form the art of the group took, this passage shows that its intention was similar to other modern movements in its dissatisfaction with the existing situation and in its determination to produce a new relevant art.

Neo Plasticism was the term Mondrian preferred to De Stijl as descriptive of the movement. Mondrian said that Neo Plasticism was the means by which the variety and ingenuity of nature could be reduced to a plastic configuration defining natural relationships. Thus art could become the method of communicating the imminent order of nature.

The origins and development:

The name of the group, De Stijl, indicates its Dutch Origin. It is the Dutch contribution to the development of modern art and in Mondrian it has one of the most uncompromising of modern painters.

The movement has received less general attention than the other groups considered here, partly because it has appeared to be so uncompromisingly 'abstract', partly because by the time it had formed Paris had become the recognised and apparently only centre

of creative experiment, partly because since the seventeenth century Holland had not been looked to for creative work, and partly because the group was never stable, members joining, resigning or just sliding away at all times after 1917.

The only continuous apologist and enthusiast was Van Doesburg whose inspiration the whole movement was. He has said: '.... the embryo of what was realised five years later, in the idea and the periodical De Stijl, was at the base of the thought I had formulated in 1912; . strip nature of its forms and you will style left.' Throughout his life Van Doesburg worked energetically for the group and its ideas; he was the core and centre of its activities. When he died in 1931 the group ceased to exist, although the ideas which it had formulated

had in any case become part of the whole modern idea of pictorial expression.

Curiously, however, De Stijl is generally associated more with the painter Mondrian with Van Doesburg. Mondrian's theory of Neo Plasticism is essentially different from Van Doesburg's, and so much did they disagree that in 1925 Mondrian left De Stijl.

Although, as Van Doesburg indicated in the Passage quoted above, discussion which led to De Stijl started as early as 1912, the public inauguration of the movement did not occur until 1917 with the publication of the periodical De Stijl. The editor and

Damelin

minis st 2) 5 | sme ain eo enemy caine creams
TE OT ET I a ee

itd ee VI
: | aM ails

Ben MACALA (1935-)

W37/68 Boy on a scooter; charcoal 710x518 s
S4/68 Mother and child; bronze h:355 5s

nos MAKHUBEDU (1938-)

W54/71 Scene ina township with women in bDlankets; pen 509x734 s 1971.

Enos MATITOANE g |
(new acc.) Cloth trees; lino 310x4U2 5 1986

Azaria MBATHA (1942-)

P126/67 Pentecost; lino 303x461 s 9/100

Gladys MGUDLANDLU (1925-1979)

on ee Mother and chicks; crayon 370x502 s 1962
on loan) Red beaks; crayonâ\200\231 370x502 s 1962
new acc.) Landscape; oil/board 752x508

Leonard MKHABELA

(new acc.) Rain queen; lino 314x393 s 1986

John MUAFANGEJO (1948-)

P174/70 Sermon on the mount; lino 306x272 s 1969
P173/70 Shiyane - Home; lind 559x852 ns

N_MUKOMBERANWA (1940-).

S6/69 The prisoners; steatite h:405 ns
Albert NDLOVU

P175/70 Dancers; etch 315x396 s ee 1969
P176/70 Shaka; lino 510x564 s 28/50

Simon NKWADIPO

W368/84 The family; charcoal 615x526 5 1976
Esther NXUMALO

M2 Shaka's cruelty; tapestry 1925x2990
RORKE'S DRIFT (ELC CRAFT CENTRE)

M2 Tapestry: Shaka's Eh, jose Nxuma lo

M10 Landsca tapestry; 222
(new acc.) Tapestry: 1330x1870

Cyprian SHILAKOE (1946-1972)

Pi72/70 Stop crying mother; etch 231x306 s

Upside down of miseries: lino 332x334 s 1986
Rain queen; lino 322x249 s 1986
Birth of Christ; lino 323x229 s 1986

[see also ceramics]