1920  

**Naum Gabo/Antoine Pevsner:**

*Basic principles of Constructivism*

The brothers Gabo and Pevsner, both sculptors, wrote in Moscow in 1920 the *Realist Manifesto*, in which they laid down the basic principles of Constructivism, which exercised a powerful influence especially on post-war Russian architecture (Tatlin, the brothers Vesnin, Lisitsky). Gabo and Pevsner are concerned with constructions in space, which, however, are interpreted primarily not as architecture, but as sculpture. An important part is played in their conceptions by haptic and optic charms arising out of the combination of various materials in these spatial constructions. These materials are without exception those produced industrially.

1. We reject the closed spatial circumference as the plastic expression of the moulding of space. We assert that space can only be modelled from within outward in its depth, not from without inward through its volume. For what else is absolute space than a unique, coherent, and unlimited depth?

2. We reject the closed mass as an exclusive element for the building up of three-dimensional and architectonic bodies in space. In opposition to it we set the demand that plastic bodies shall be constructed stereometrically.

3. We reject decorative colour as a painterly element in three-dimensional construction. We demand that the concrete material shall be employed as a painterly element.

4. We reject the decorative line. We demand of every line in the work of art that it shall serve solely to define the inner directions of force in the body to be portrayed.

5. We are no longer content with the static elements of form in plastic art. We demand the inclusion of time as a new element and assert that real movement must be employed in plastic art, in order to make possible the use of kinetic rhythms in a way that is not merely illusionistic.

1920  

**Bruno Taut:**

*Down with seriousness!*

In November 1919 the Berlin Arbeitsrat für Kunst was merged with the November Group. But Taut and Behne kept together their architect friends. At their instigation there was an exchange of circular letters, sketches, and essays in the nature of confessions of faith, known as *Die Glöserne Kette* (The Glass Chain). From January 1920 onward Taut had a new mouthpiece: in every issue of the periodical *Stadtbaukunst alter und neuer Zeit* (Urban Architecture Ancient and Modern) he had four to six pages to do with as he liked. Taut called this appendix *Frühlicht* (Daybreak). The text reproduced below occupies the introductory page of this series.

Hopp! Hopp! Hopp! My sweet little horsey!
Hopp! Hopp! Hopp! Where do you want to go?
Over that high wall?
Well really I don’t know!
Hopp! Hopp! Hopp! My sweet little horsey!
Hopp! Hopp! Hopp! Where — do — you — want — to go?

(Scheerbart, *Katopoesie*)

Away with the sourpusses, the wailing Willies, the sobersides, the brougham furrowers, the eternally serious, the sweet-sour ones, the forever important! ‘Important! Important!’ This damned habit of acting important! Tombstone and cemetery façades in front of junk shops and old clothes stores! Smash the shell-like Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns, demolish the pinheads! Down with the ‘respectability’ of sandstone and plate-glass, in fragments with the rubbish of marble and precious wood, to the garbage heap with all that junk!

‘Oh, our concepts: space, home, style!’ Ugh, how these concepts stink! Destroy them, put an end to them! Let nothing remain! Chase away their schools, let the professorial wigs fly, we’ll play catch with them. Blast, blast! Let the dusty, matted, gummed up world of concepts, ideologies and systems feel our cold north wind! Death to the concept-lice! Death to everything stuffy! Death to everything called title, dignity, authority! Down with everything serious!

Down with all camels that won’t go through the eye of a needle, with all worshippers of Mammon and Moloch! ‘The worshippers of force must knuckle under to force!’ We are sick of their bloodsucking — caterwauling in the early light.

In the distance shines our tomorrow. Hurray, three times hurray for our

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