Redefining Naum Gabo: A Critical Consideration of Vasily Kandinsky's Theories

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In a review of the *Naum Gabo: The Constructive Process* exhibition held at the Tate Modern Gallery in 1976, an artist named Matthew Meadows provided a keen insight into the development of Naum Gabo Neemia Pevsner's artistic endeavours. Meadows is of the opinion that Gabo "has an almost Platonic conviction that the artist is the enabler of pure form."[1] This idea lends itself to the multiplicity of previously composed comparisons to Vasily Kandinsky's belief in the malleability of art in the spiritual realm. Though known throughout history as a Constructivist sculptor, Gabo's orientation in the art historical canon may be reconstructed to reflect his work in a larger context. One way this may be done is by investigating the influence of Kandinsky's art-historical writings and artistic practice in his life. This application of Kandinsky's theories provides the opportunity to analyze Gabo's artistic career without the limitations of Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko's definition of Constructivism.

Gabo's artistic career will first be outlined in a biographical approach to provide a more complete understanding of his background, as it relates to the evolution of his Constructivist ideals. Barnaby Haran's description of Gabo's "laboratory mode of Constructivism," will be addressed through the investigation of the divergences in his artistic approach with that of other artists whose works have been defined as utilitarian.[2] Similarly, this paper will propel Christina Lodder's argument which situates him further away from the utilitarian-mode of production. This will form the foundation for differentiating Gabo from his contemporaries, while crafting a complex narrative to expand his legacy past previously explored historical constructs. A bibliographic account of Kandinsky and his influencers will then be shared to provide the necessary foundation for the interpretation and critique of Gabo's oeuvre through the perspective of Kandinsky's art historical texts. The Viennese composer Arnold Schönberg will be examined thoroughly as his desire to transcend his natural environment, as discussed with Kandinsky, is

inextricably linked to Kandinsky's idea of the "inner springboard of the human spirit."[3] As a prolific writer, Kandinsky left the world with many pages of his thoughts on art theory. Scholars like Robert Morris, an American minimalist sculptor, and well–known English art historian Paul Overy, have studied his tactics in relation to the events in his life, categorizing his writings as pre-war and spiritual or post-war and geometric, in accordance with his paintings. This previous development of scholarship is crucial to the present argument as this paper seeks to apply both of these categories to Naum Gabo's work. At its core, this paper will ignite Kandinsky's early theories to identify the implications of Gabo's spoken and written words as they pertain to the creation of his sculptures through the application of the ideals established in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (written in 1910, published in 1912) and *Point and Line to Plane* (1926). John Bowlt's extensive contributions to the recorded history of the Russian avant-garde are an invaluable resource for this interpretation of Gabo.[4]

Naum Gabo was a meticulous creative and a demanding craftsman who went on to become a leader in his field of Constructivism.[5] He was born in Russia in the town of Bryansk on August 5th, 1890 where his father owned a copper refinery. In his early twenties, he began studying medicine and natural sciences with a focus on engineering at the University of Munich, where he was first exposed to the scholarship of Kandinsky.[6] Gabo met Kandinsky in 1910 and immediately upon publication, he absorbed the ideas contained in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.[7] It was then he gained a new affinity for a synthesis of the arts. Near the age of twenty-five, he began to focus on sculpture as his primary discipline. His brother, Antoine Pevsner, was already a practicing painter so when Naum Gabo began to establish himself in the artistic community, he eliminated Pevsner from his name.[8] Unlike other early Constructivist artists, with the exception of Varvara Stepanova's training in industrial design, Gabo was initially trained as

an engineer.[9] He quickly proved that he could apply concepts from a multitude of disciplines while using "aesthetic configurations as counterparts to scientific fact," and not limiting himself to reason alone.[10] He was very familiar with the formulaic and precise properties of geometric construction. Soon, he began to create three-dimensional models of "simultaneously open and closed forms" to represent what Wölfflin would identify as "a synthesis of opposite qualities."[11] The idea of a unification of the arts is a recurring theme in this essay, just as it is in the histories of Kandinsky and Gabo's careers.

In the late-nineteenth century, Russia experienced a dynamic evolution of artistic criteria, and Moscow quickly became a buzzing center of avant-garde activity. The beginning of the twentieth century was dominated by the divergence from naturalistic tendencies toward a more symbolist approach. This trend in creation increasingly shifted to focus on individualistic interpretation. Artists, like Kandinsky, led this transformation into the growing field of non-objective art. Among the painters and theorists of his time who contributed to creating and defining abstract art, Vasily Kandinsky is one of the most widely studied. His father, Vasily Silverstrovich, was a Siberian tea merchant and his mother was a Russian novelist named Lidia Ivanovna Tikheeva. He was born in Moscow in December 1866. He was quickly immersed in the classical arts and began studying piano and cello at the age of ten. His family moved to Odesa, present-day Ukraine, in 1871 and he began to visit Italy during the summer months to paint copies of church interiors. When he was twenty years old he moved back to his hometown when he was admitted to the University of Moscow to study economics and Russian law.[12] Not long after, his previous experience in the auditory arts permeated his interests and played an integral part in Kandinsky's desire to begin his training in the visual arts.

Kandinsky was heavily influenced by different disciplines, most notably music. In 1896, he first heard Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow.[13] It was then he began to develop his thoughts for *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. The German term, *Gesamtkunstwerk*, is defined by Wagner as a total unification of the arts and proved to be, in a sense, synonymous with Kandinsky's search for synthesis in his written theory. Near the end of the same year, Kandinsky moved to the international art hub of Munich, Germany. Between 1909 and 1911, Kandinsky developed his own version of abstract art while working in the bohemian arts district of Schwabing in Munich.[14] He characterized his works to be inclusive of "a spiritualizing force," dramatically opposed to the "rationalized, instrumentalist [and] increasingly materialistic" present approach to art in society.[15] In 1911, Kandinsky grew increasingly fond of the compositions of Viennese composer, Arnold Schönberg when he attended his concert in Munich. Kandinsky was especially intrigued by the development of his twelve-tone compositions and his ideas of dissonance. Schönberg's work influenced much of Kandinsky's thoughts of harmony, both in color and composition. Their friendship was maintained through letter correspondences, one in which Schönberg later identifies that Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* appeared in print at the same time as his *Haromonielehre* in 1911.[16] When these two texts, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* and *Theory of Harmony*, were sent into public circulation, they would permeate ideas of the avant-garde in their respective cities of current residence, Munich and Vienna. Also during this time, his early *Composition* painting series, as inspired by Schönberg, was exhibited in various galleries across Russia and Germany and thought to have "shocked the bourgeoisie."[17] It was in 1913 when he became completely abstract and increasingly more hesitant towards the applied fine arts, as it took him further from what he believed to be painting in its most pure form.[18] Kandinsky's focus between 1911 and 1916 on the

"spiritual aura of the painter's vision," and "the autonomy of art as an object of aesthetic contemplation" is later mirrored by Gabo in the creation of his sculptures and his underlying artistic intention.[19]

The development of the Bolshevik Revolution beginning in 1917 in Soviet Russia has become fundamental to the historiography of Constructivism as this art movement "tends to be appreciated almost exclusively as a product of the new political order."[20] During this time of turbulence, the act of producing art to reflect the post-World War I era was influenced by this new rise in Communist ideals. Throughout the course of this revolution, some practitioners of abstract art evolved towards more communistic behaviors and the production of 'useful' objects.[21] Artists like Rodchenko and Malevich did in fact "equate artistic innovation with political radicalism," and they considered "their artistic boldness" to have "anticipated the political spirit" of the revolution.[22] Following the revolution, Gabo and Kandinsky were both in Moscow when Gabo's *Realistic Manifesto* was published in 1920. Gabo's work inherently reflects the belief that the comprehension of the visual arts "cannot be attained through their formal traits alone," but instead only through the spiritual attitude reflected through the "sensation of their essence."[23] This manifesto remains a collection of his personal convictions on the ideals of constructive art.

In 1919, The Bauhaus School was founded by a man named Walter Gropius. He shared that he wanted to destroy all the separations between paintings and sculpture and architecture and design.[24] This is reflective of his "ultimate…aim of the Bauhaus,'" being to create a "great structure," in the form of one "unified work of art."[25] His vision went on to "set the fashion for the art of the future," by challenging the artistic principles of production and duty."[26] At the same time Gabo moved from Russia to Weimar, Kandinsky accepted a position from Gropius to teach

at the Bauhaus in 1922.[27] His first few years as a teacher in Weimar were characterized by turbulence and uncertainty as German nationalists became increasingly wary of the radical ideals of the Bauhaus.[28]

At the end of WWI, Kandinsky "abandoned his early style to focus on Constructivist philosophies of the Bauhaus."[29] Magdalena Dabrowski is one of many scholars who acknowledges this period in Kandinsky's career as the turning point in his theories as he now emphasized form over color.[30] This marked a transition in his writings to focus on geometric principles of technical construction. These notions, as expanded upon in *Point and Line to Plane* (1926), explain the "principle of parallelism and the principle of contrast," to be derived from the law of juxtaposition and are of "decisive importance for abstract art."[31] These ideas are not novel, but instead transformed from the very early stages of the *Der Blaue Reiter Almanac* (1911) in which Kandinsky shared, "Realism = Abstraction, Abstraction = Realism. The greatest difference in the external becomes the greatest likeness in the inner."[32] It is these developments, as bound to his earlier ideas of inner 'spiritual' necessity, that will be engaged to recontextualize Gabo's constructivist techniques.

Gabo's intentions as a sculptor are often shared to be synonymous with his fellow Constructivists, but in fact, Gabo himself shared he "had quarrels with Tatlin's group," seen in his dialectical opposition to their "nihilistic attitude towards art."[33] Characteristically, Gabo parallelled Kandinsky's beliefs that the 'spiritual' was also fundamental to his thinking.[34] This objection to Tatlin's version of Constructivism was ultimately based on his "turn toward the production of utilitarian art, a direction [Gabo] found distasteful."[35] Christina Lodder's argument aligns with the "non-utilitarian" vision of Gabo, as he focused more on the introspective

development of his artwork and "ignored the radical disparities between his own version of Constructivism," and that of Rodchenko and Tatlin.[36]

A critical similarity of Gabo's beliefs with that of Kandinsky is his emphasis on utilizing each material's "particular tone… very carefully."[37] This may be seen in tandem with Kandinsky's ideas derived from his exploration of the "sources of 'internal necessity.'"[38] Further, Gabo believed the "Constructive method is characteristic [of] our civilization," and as such understood the only way to interpret the world in the form of a sculpture is by acknowledging that the "structure grows from your inner center."[39] This defines the argument of the importance of analyzing Gabo through Kandinsky's scholarship, as the way the sculptor approached artistic creation was a fluid process of inner being, rather than a direct representation of his surroundings. Gabo, like Kandinsky, drew inspiration from "spiritual, societal, and ideological associations" in his goal to work "toward a geometric, abstract language in the visual arts."[40] Kandinsky's texts, most notably that of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, serve to both "establish the conflict that exists between the material and the spiritual," and to analyze how form and color create a "unified 'vocabulary' of art [which] can contribute to the turn from the materialist to the spiritual world-view."[41] Kandinsky shares that he investigated art through what he calls the artist's "dictionary of a living language."[42] By connecting this to Gabo's version of 'vocabulary' one may deduce the similarities between these two artists in relation to the focus of the origins of their creations. Social art historian and professor of Russian culture in New Zealand, Peter Stupples, shares a plethora of information surrounding the 'Constructivist' mode of utilizing "non-representational strategies as a way of releasing artistic creativity."[43] Gabo's sculptures reflect this creative construction, however, the blueprints as transfigured by Kandinsky's theories, function to expose Gabo's beliefs that there is an inherent tone in artworks. To further

strengthen the significance of interpreting Gabo's works through Kandinsky's theories, Gabo explicitly shares that "everything has its own essential image," which "are all entire worlds with their own rhythms, their own orbits."[44] In alignment with this notion, a major influence of Naum Gabo was the Russian *fin de siècle* artist, Mikhail Vrubei. Gabo was influenced by how Vrubei "freed the arts of painting and sculpture from the academic schemata," by reviving the importance of visual elements.[45] This is indicative of Schönberg and Kandinsky's ideals of harmony and dissonance.

Expanding the historical construct of Gabo's oeuvre may be best charged with the assistance of Kandinsky's *Point and Line to Plane*, which is grounded in Schönbergian ideals. There is a substantial amount of scholarship analyzing the relationship between Kandinsky's writings and Schönbergian theory. Scholars like Shannon Annis, a curator of the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, have often examined the similarities between Kandinsky's theories and Schönberg's innovations. The writings of Magdalena Dabrowski and Lisa Florman have also been examined as their analyses of Schönberg illuminate the creation of Kandinsky's theories.[46] This will serve as an introduction to Kandinsky's writings and how they will be dissected in relation to his evolving ideas of dissonance and the 'spiritual' art, respectively. Schönberg's influence is evident in the ideas Kandinsky writes as tantamount to his early works of inner-necessity and is conducive to the complex idea of the analysis of harmony in opposites.[47] The Schönbergian belief that to comprehend dissonance, one must also be able to comprehend consonance, may be seen here as a direct application to the visual arts.[48] Kandinsky's VII. Theory section of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* describes how the "external lack of order… constitutes its internal presence," which demonstrates "the fusion of a 'single unity.'"[49] Kandinsky's development of an artistic theory of harmony, as derived from his

Concerning the Spiritual in Art, is expressive of the influences of Schönbergian principles and is employed in this essay as a basis for the interpretation of Gabo's sculptures.[50]

Gabo discussed space and time as the only entities of which art must be constructed as they make up life itself. He shares his belief that the "political and economic systems perish, ideas crumble, under the strains of ages… but life is strong and grows and time goes on in its real continuity."[51] In other words, like Kandinsky, he understood art as a living portrayal of all "spiritual and intellectual life of the twentieth century."[52] In accordance with Lodder, this paper supports the idea that Gabo's creations were less of a political gesture, like that of the other Constructivists, and instead suggests his "ultimate aim was always spiritually didactic."[53] This is directly responded to with Gabo's statement that this "kinetic art was born out of a dissatisfaction…with an art form that seemed to exclude movement or the fourth dimension."[54] Here, Gabo acknowledges the transitory nature of both time and space as foundations for not only the "laws of life," but also as the "only aim of [the] pictorial and plastic art."[55] Kandinsky believed, "'Constructivist' works [were] 'pure' or abstract constructions in space," and this is seen in the development of Gabo's methods, as he built his sculptures with the idea of representing time itself.[56]

Gabo constructed his work with true inner necessity at the forefront of each creation's inception. Specifically, two of Gabo's works, *Column* and *Linear Construction in Space No. 4*, serve as visual representations of the possibility of understanding Gabo outside of his status dictated by art history. He was very much "opposed to the mechanical production of multiple prints," as well as copied renditions of works.[57] This is ultimately reflected in how he perceived the sciences as, "constructs of the human mind, paralleling each other in their essentially intuitive and imaginative processes," demonstrated in his artworks.[58]

Originally conceived in Russia in 1920, Gabo's sculpture *Column*, physically constructed in 1923 reflects his budding interest in exhibiting the human experience in his sculptures (Fig. 1). In the middle of his career, Gabo was at the forefront of the artistic trend to utilize industrial materials, such as glass, plastic, and galvanized steel in the construction of his sculptures.[59] As expressed above, Gabo shared that the "realization of our perceptions of the world in the forms of space and time is the only aim of our pictorial and plastic art" in life.[60] This notion is demonstrated in his *Linear Construction in Space No. 4*. It is also reflected in his *Realistic Manifesto* when he expressed that, "space and time are the only forms on which life is built and hence art must be constructed."[61] It was at this time that his interests returned to interpreting both the positive and negative spaces instilled in his creations concerning "vortices, torsion, and the interplay of energy and solidarity."[62] Constructed in 1959, his *Linear Construction in Space No. 4*. provides a visual representation of the external and internal worlds, "revealing the independent operation" of these two realms of art and nature (Fig. 2).[63] This work, produced nearly half a century later, demonstrates Kandinsky's ideals from *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* as they remain ingrained in Gabo's subconscious and continue to be translated into his sculptures.

The Constructivist ideals are not as synonymous as they seem. Individually, Gabo's creations reflect his understanding that the "more organized or mathematically sound the work of art, the more universal its appreciation."[64] This is reflected in his conversation with Leif Sjöberg. Sjöberg, a Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature professor, had the opportunity to interview Gabo in the summer of 1959.[65] This interview remained unpublished for three decades, and it provides critical insights into Gabo's artistic intentions.[66] In conversation with Sjöberg, Gabo clarified his notion of all artists being the "creators of the images of life."[67] The contradictory nature of tangible reality and the subjectivity of the mental constructs that define

how each human lives are discussed by Gabo to be intertwined within the creation of "a Constructive work of art."[68] This paper has explored merely a few of the myriad of possibilities scholars may employ to apply Kandinsky's theories as an art historical tool in understanding another artist's oeuvre. Now, with a more complex understanding of Gabo's definition of Constructivism, it is evident that there is much more to be learned from the application of Kandinsky's theories to his contemporaries. While recognizing the many facets of the definition of a 'constructivist' artist, this essay seeks to redefine Naum Gabo as a construct of history by way of a previously unexplored avenue: Vasily Kandinsky's theories of art.

Notes

[1] One of few articles published in an exhibition catalogue that directly defines Gabo's sculptures in relation to his "Realistic Manifesto" (1920) and is subsequently comparable to the language utilized in Kandinsky's theories of art is, Matthew Meadows, "Naum Gabo—Live at the Tate," *Oxford Literary Review* 2, no. 2 (1977): 24-25.

[2] Similarly, George Rickey, a well-respected teacher, sculptor, and painter, shares Constructivism to be, "the work of a group of Russians between 1913 and 1922, which includes Tatlin, Malevich, Rodchenko, El Lissitzky, Naum Gabo, Antoine Pevsner, and briefly, Vasily Kandinsky," in his book, *Constructivism: Origins and Evolution* in 1967, yet this paper seeks to analyze Gabo individually. Haran's original description is found in, Barnaby Haran, "Constructivism in the USA: Machine Art and Architecture at The Little Review Exhibitions," in *Watching the Red Dawn: The American Avant-Garde and the Soviet Union*, 1st ed. (Manchester University Press, 2016), 13.

[3] This is described in a letter from Franz Marc to August Macke about Kandinsky and Schönberg's friendship and artistic engagements found in, Peg Weiss, "Three: Evolving Perceptions of Kandinsky and Schoenberg: Toward the Ethnic Roots of the Outsider," in *Constructive Dissonance: Arnold Schoenberg and the Transformations of Twentieth-Century Culture*, ed. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 39.

[4] It is important to note the term "avant-garde" will be used throughout this essay in congruence with John E. Bowlt's acknowledgment of the understanding of the implicit warnings of oversimplification and to "remain aware of the heterogeneity of the Russian Avant-Garde and its many internal dissensions and factions," defined in, John E. Bowlt, "Art in Exile: The Russian Avant-Garde and the Emigration," *Art Journal* 41, no. 3 (Fall, 1981): 215.

[5] Michael Mazur, "The Monoprints of Naum Gabo," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 9, no. 5 (1978): 148.

[6] The knowledge of his exposure to the lectures of Heinrich Wölfflin and the readings of Kandinsky is found in Susanne F. Hilberry, "Naum Gabo, A Constructivist Sculptor," Bulletin of the *Detroit Institute of Arts* 54, no. 4 (1976): 176, while the documentation of Kandinsky and Gabo both being in Munich at the same time is found in, Paul Overy, *Kandinsky: The Language of the Eye* (London: Elek Books Limited, 1969), 18.

[7] Ruth Olson and Abraham Chanin, *Naum Gabo [and] Antoine Pevsner* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1948), 16.

[8] It has been documented in a 1959 interview with Leif Sjöberg which is cited later in this essay that "Gabo" also referred to himself by this name while often speaking in the third person. Further information about his brother may be found in, Daniel Kunitz, "Naum Gabo: Pioneer of Abstract Sculpture' at PaceWildenstein," *New Criterion* (January 2000): 49.

[9] John E. Bowlt, "5 × 5 = 25?: The Science of Constructivism," in *Aesthetic Revolutions and Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde Movements*, ed. Aleš Erjavec (Duke University Press, 2015), 50.

[10] The likelihood of the meeting of Kandinsky and Gabo in 1910 during his time at the University of Munich is also supported in, John E. Bowlt, "The Presence Of Absence: The Aesthetic Of Transparency In Russian Modernism," *The Structurist*, no. 27 (1987): 22.

[11] Olson and Chanin, 17.

[12] Magdalena Dabrowski received her Ph.D. from New York University and was a Senior Curator at the Museum of Modern Art for twenty-five years. Magdalena Dabrowski, *Kandinsky Compositions* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., The Museum of Modern Art, 1995), 15.

[13] Peter Vergo, "Music, Kandinsky, and the Idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*," in *Vasily Kandinsky: From Blaue Reiter to the Bauhaus*, 1910-1925, ed. by Jill Lloyd. (New York: Neue Galerie Museum for German and Austrian Art, 2013), 49.

[14] Steven G. Marks, "Abstract Art and the Regeneration of Mankind." *New England Review* (1990) 24, no. 1 (2003): 54.

[15] Robert Morris, "Words and Images in Modernism and Postmodernism," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (1989): 341.

[16] Following the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Kandinsky returned to Russia and lost contact with Schönberg. "The Path to the New Music: Mödling, 1918-1925," in *A Schönberg Reader: Documents of a Life*, relays a 1923 correspondence from Kandinsky asking Schönberg if he would teach at the Bauhaus. Unfortunately, Alma Mahler, Austrian composer, socialite, and previous wife of Walter Gropius, spread rumors about Kandinsky being an anti-Semite. Schönberg did not hold back in his scathing response. Kandinsky wrote back in deep dismay, saddened that such a lie would ruin their friendship, but never heard from him again. This correspondence is found in, Joseph Henry Auner and Arnold Schönberg. *A Schönberg Reader: Documents of a Life*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 169-173.

[17] John E. Bowlt, "Jacks and Tails," *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 60/61 (2002): 15.

[18] I acquired this book from a store in Venice that was selling reading glasses last fall, where I saw it on a table in the back corner. The owner kindly let me purchase it. Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, *Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art. Published following the exhibition, Bauhaus 1919-1933: *Workshops for Modernity* November 8, 2009-January 25, 2010 at MOMA, 122.

[19] In the same year that *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* was published, Kandinsky formed Der Blaue Reiter. He led this group with Franz Marc with the intention to explore the spiritual qualities they believed to be inherent in the abstract art form. Kandinsky believed that abstract art was grounded in the universal truth that only the "divine" could express. More in, Marks, 53.

[20] Bowlt, "5 × 5 = 25?," 42.

[21] Hilberry, 175.

[22] Bowlt suggests that this shift in the Russian avant-garde art scene was spearheaded by the evolution of a group in Moscow called Inkhuk, founded in 1920. Initially headed by Vasily Kandinsky, Inkhuk was created to be the hub of post-Revolutionary art in Russia. Soon after it began, there was a shift in the focus of the group away from the psychological approach to advancing the radical ideals of Rodchenko, Malevich, and Tatlin. Kandinsky's beliefs of the inner, spiritual arts did not align with the "constructions" the Inkhuk collective began creating, and he left after only a few months. Notes about Rodchenko and Malevich's political radicalism are found in, Bowlt, "5 × 5 = 25?," 47. While a brief introduction to the InkHuk collective is found in, Bowlt, *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde* (New York: Thames & Hudson Inc., 1988), xxxiii.

[23] Hilberry, 175.

[24] Julia Cave, *Bauhaus*: *The Face of the 20th Century*, (Anonymous Monarda Arts, 1994), https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/bauhaus. 9:33.

[25] Gillian Naylor, *The Bauhaus Reassessed: Sources and Design Theory* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1985), 56.

[26] An investigation of the power of the principles of rhythms, patterns, and tones in music as analogies to the "formal designs of modern plastic art and architecture" is described in this source. The spelling of 'Gropius' has been corrected in the author's identification of the Bauhaus found in the ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times database in, Oscar Bie,

"Rhythm," *Musical Quarterly 11*, trans. by Theodore Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), 338.

[27] This source is a gift from my grandmother after she attended this exhibition at the Guggenheim in the fall of 2021, Megan Fontanella and Tracey Bashkoff, *Vasily Kandinsky: Around the Circle.* New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2021. October 8, 2021-September 5, 2022 at the Guggenheim, New York.

[28] Deanna Brooks, "It Could Have Been Great: An Examination of Kandinsky's Bauhaus Paintings and the Great Synthesis of the Arts," (Old Dominion University, 2016), 46.

[29] Deanna Brooks, in conversation with the author, phone call, Los Angeles, California, November 15th.

[30] Dabrowski, *Kandinsky Compositions*, 46.

[31] Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982), 625.

[32] Schönberg's ideas of dissonance and harmony are explicitly defined later in this paper and may be further explored through primary source quotations in this E-Book, Weiss, 39.

[33] Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 38-39.

[34] A discussion of Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian's evolution of spiritual ideals in art at this time is also found in this catalogue, Mark Rosenthal, "The Two Great Waves of Abstract Painting," in Donna, Emmanuel Di. *Paths to the Absolute*. Published following the exhibition, *Paths to the Absolute: Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian, Newman, Pollock, Rothko, and Still* October 13-December 3, 2016 at the Di Donna Gallery, New York, 11.

[35] Tamara Machmut-Jhashi, review of *Constructing Modernity: The Art and Career of Naum Gabo*, by Martin Hammer and Christina Lodder, *The Slavic and East European Journal* 46, no. 1 (April 1, 2002): 197.

[36] Haran, 13.

[37] Leif Sjöberg, "Naum Gabo: Some Reminiscences And An Unpublished Interview," *The Structurist*, no. 29 (1989): 88.

[38] Christopher Short, *The Art Theory of Wassily Kandinsky, 1909-1928: The Quest for Synthesis* (Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2010), 48.

[39] Sjöberg, 88.

[40] Hilberry, 175.

[41] Short, 88.

[42] Originally printed in 1913 in Kandinsky's Reminiscences as translated by Lindsay and Vergo on page 373 in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, was initially found in, Patricia Railing, "The Cognitive Line in Russian Avant-Garde Art," *Leonardo* 31, no. 1 (1998): 69.

[43] Peter Stupples, "Malevich and the Liberation of Art," *New Zealand Slavonic Journal* (2001): 11.

[44] This citation refers to a statement made by Gabo published in this collection, Vincent van Gosh, Wassily Kandinsky, Juan Gris, Paul Klee, Fernand Léger, Piet Mondrian, Joan Miró, et al., "Statements and Documents: Artists on Art and Reality, on Their Work, and on Values," *Daedalus* 89, no. 1 (1960): 113.

[45] Bowlt shares his perspective that the Symbolist views of Gabo are synonymous with Kandinsky's vocabulary and other major influencers such as Vrubei in, Bowlt, "The Presence Of Absence," 17-18.

[46] Lisa Florman has written extensively on Kandinsky and is currently the Department Chair of Art History at Ohio State University.

[47] Although this topic is heavily debated among scholars, Florman also shares she believes Kandinsky had already begun to develop ideas of dissonance prior to learning of Schönberg's work. Instead of singularly applying these learned notions to painting, she believes he merely needed a grounding in a discipline better suited for the analogy, like music. Find further details in, Lisa Florman, *Concerning The Spiritual and The Concrete in Kandinsky's Art* (California: Stanford University Press, 2014), 25.

[48] Daniel J. Jenkins. *Schoenberg's Program Notes and Musical Analyses: Schoenberg in Words* vol. 5 (New York: Oxford University Press 1973), 56.

[49] Originally cited in Lindsay and Vergo, 209.

[50] Short, 89.

[51] Unlike previous scholars who believed his work to be in accordance with the reactionary tactics of the now all-encapsulated group practicing Constructivism, Michael Mazur, believed that his artistic evolution instead, "reflected his belief in continuity, space as continuous, [and] culture as continuous in its change," in Mazur, 9.

[52] This catalogue was found at The Last Book Store in the fall of 2021, 453 South Spring Street Ground Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90013. Stephanie Barron and Maurice Tuchman, *The Avant-Garde in Russia 1910-1930: New Perspectives.* Los Angeles: MIT Press, 1980. Published following the exhibition, *The Avant-Garde in Russia 1910-1930: New Perspectives* July 8-September 28, 1980 at the Los Angeles Museum of Art, 162.

[53] Lodder, 43.

[54] Semir Zeki, "Art and the Brain," *Daedalus* 127, no. 2 (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998): 78.

[55] Stephen Bann, *The Tradition of Constructivism* (The Viking Press: New York, 1974), 9.

[56] Lindsay and Vergo, 625.

[57] Stupples, 11.

[58] Machmut-Jhashi, 196.

[59] Kunitz, 50.

[60] Bann, 9.

[61] A translated copy of "The Realistic Manifesto" in which Gabo announces his refusal of the utilitarian methods employed by Tatlin may be found in, Naum Gabo (1890-1977) and Anton Pevsner (1886-1962), "Rationalization and Transformation: Abstraction and Form: 10 Realistic Manifesto," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 298-300.

[62] Kunitz, 50.

[63] Lindsay and Vergo, 626.

[64] Bowlt, "5 × 5 = 25?" 47.

[65] Sjöberg, 89.

[66] Perhaps the most intriguing element of this interview is Gabo's declaration that his brother never contributed to the *Realistic Manifesto*. Instead, he shared that he was the sole author and Antoine merely "seconded it by his signature." Nearly every published scholarly text, found in the research of this paper thus far, details the brothers working together to write this manifesto; however, there is also a considerable amount of scholarship sharing their feuds as both brothers and artists. The debate among scholars of whether Gabo was the solitary writer of this manifesto or rather if this piece was conceived in conjunction with his brother Antoine Pevsner continues today.

[67] Sjöberg, 89.

[68] Ibid.

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Figure 1. Naum Gabo, *Column*, c. 1923, 41 1/4 x 29 1/2 inches (104.5 x 75 cm), perspex, wood, metal, and glass, Courtesy of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Figure 2. Naum Gabo, *Linear Construction in Space No. 4*, c. 1959, 20 1/2 × 13 3/4 × 13 1/2 in. (52.07 × 34.93 × 34.29 cm), steel, Courtesy of Los Angeles County Museum of Art.