

CONSTRUCTIVISM

+ ARCHITECTURE

El Lissitzky, a huge influence on graphic design, created a lithographic soviet propaganda poster, "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge." The poster uses geometric shapes derived from Suprematism to convey political symbolism.⁴

1919

The founder of constructivism, Vladimir Tatlin, planned a Monument to the Third International, also known as Tatlin's Tower. It remained unbuilt yet inspired a generation of Constructivist architects in Russia and abroad.¹

VKhUTEMAS, the school for art and design was established. The focus for Constructivism in Moscow was built here.³

1920

The Lenin Tribune by El Lissitzky was started. It was planned to be a speakers podium but by the time the project was completed Lenin had died and there was no use for the tribune.¹

1921

Constructivists rejected the idea of "art for art's sake" and influential artists like Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko turned away from sculpture and painting to graphic design.⁵

After visiting Berlin and experimenting with photomontage and printmaking, Lissitzky became the voice of constructivism ideas in Western Europe.³

1922

Vladimir Shukhov's Shukhov radio tower, was completed. The steel structure was designed with hyperboloid geometry and still stands one-hundred and sixty meters high above Moscow today.²

Rodchenko designed an advertisement for Moscow's state department store. The image is built from blocks of type and images of products. He pushed the integration of photography and type.⁴

1923

The Vesnin brothers designed a glass office model of Moscow's daily newspaper. They used a technological Constructivist style and expressed the propaganda nature of the building.¹

1924

An iconic advertising poster was also designed by Rodchenko for the Soviet publisher Gosizdat. He used a black and white portrait of Lilya Brik shouting the word "books" with simply colored geometric shapes and strong angles.⁴

1927

The Zuev Workers' Club was designed by Ilya Golosov. It was built to house facilities for Moscow workers. The building façade consists of cylindrical staircases intersecting with stacked rectangular floor planes.²

1928

The Constructivists organized themselves into the 'Left Front of the Arts', who produced an influential journal. It was dedicated to maintaining constructivism against the development of Socialist Realism, realistic art that depicts subjects of social concern.⁴

1929

The Van Nelle Factory was designed. Leendert van der Vlugt expertly used the massing of blocks and disposition of elements to create an important industrial building.²

1933

Richard Paul Lohseco, founder of the Association of Independent Graphic Designers, began graphic design work for landscape architect Walter Mertens.³

1934

The Intourist Garage by Konstantin Melnikov was designed. It features geometrically shaped windows on the façade and still remains today. Constructivism was also beginning to fall out of favoritism at this time.¹

Socialist Realism took Constructivism's place. Many designers continued to produce work, such as Lissitzky and Rodchenko's designs for the magazine *USSR In Construction*.³

1919-1934

The Constructivist movement lasted from 1919 to 1934. This time period was transformed by technology. The Russian Revolution just ended and Communism was emerging. Russia was becoming industrialized and designers and architects were not only inspired by the machine, but the political movement Communism, as well. These external forces were the foundation for this Russian art and architectural movement. Graphic design developments parallel the developments of architecture because of the similar characteristics and symbolism in their designs. Influenced by Cubism, Futurism, and Suprematism, Constructivism in graphic design and architecture encompassed the use of geometrical shapes, angles, and the importance of lines in design. The graphic work embraced collage, photomontage, and new printing technologies. It was typified by the use of bold lettering designs, sans serif typefaces, typographic rules, and symbolic colors which stressed the use of red and black. The Constructivist's experimental, abstract designs, gave way to a more modern society. The influential developments of architecture and graphic design can be seen throughout this timeline.

Kopp, Anatole. Constructivist Architecture in the USSR. London: Academy Editions, 1985. Print.¹ Ingberman, Sima. ABC: International Constructivist Architecture, 1922-1939. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1994. Print.² History/Constructivism." Anneser Home. Web. 14 Sept. 2010. <<http://anneserdesign.com/Constructivism.html>>.³ Typology: Type Design from the Victorian Era to the Digital Age. San Francisco: Chronicle, 1999. 74-77. Print.⁴ Meggs, Phillip B. History of Graphic Design. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998. Print.⁵