

# Manifesto of the Futurist Painters

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On the eight of March 1910 from the stage of the Chiarella Theatre at Turin we hurled at the public our first manifesto.

The eager and excited crowd consisted of 3,000 people, chiefly artists, students and writers and at them we hurled our disgust, our scorn, our violent and determined revolt against vulgarity, academical and pedantic mediocrity and fanatic worship of all that is ancient and worm-eaten.

This was our declaration of futurism begun by the futurist poet F. T. Marinetti in the columns of the *Figaro*.

The fight in Turin has become legendary. We exchanged almost as many blows as ideas in our struggle to rescue from a miserable death the genius of Italian art.

It was a fierce and formidable struggle and during this momentary truce we come forward to explain as technically as possible what we meant by futurism in painting, though at our exhibition in Milan we have already given a practical demonstration.

Our growing art can no longer be satisfied with form and Colour; what we wish to reproduce on canvas will no longer be one fixed instant of universal dynamism, it will simply be the dynamic sensation itself.

Everything is movement transformation. A profile is never motionless but is constantly varying. Objects in movement multiply themselves, become deformed in pursuing each other, like hurried vibrations. For instance a runaway horse has not four legs but twenty and their movement is triangular. In art all is conventional nothing is absolute. That which yesterday was a truth, today is nothing but a lie.

We declare for instance that a portrait must not resemble its model and that a painter must draw from his own inspiration the landscape he wishes to fix on canvas. To paint a human face one must not only reproduce the features but also the surrounding atmosphere.

Space no longer exists, in fact the pavement of a street soaked by rain beneath the dazzle of electric lamps, grows immensely hollow down to the centre of the earth.

Thousands of miles divide us from the sun but that does not prevent the house before us being encased in the solar disk.

Who can believe in the opaqueness of bodies since our sensibilities have become sharpened and multiplied through the obscure manifestations of mediumnity?

Why do we forget in our creations the doubled power of our sight with its scope of vision almost equal in power to that of X Rays?

It will be enough to quote a few of the innumerable examples which prove our statements.

The sixteen persons around you in a tramcar are by turn and at once and the same time one, ten, four, three, they are motionless yet change place; they come and go, are abruptly devoured by the sun, yet all the time are sitting before us and could serve as symbols of universal vibration. How often, while talking to a friend do we see on his cheek the reflection of the horse passing far off at the top of the street.

Our bodies enter the sofa on which we sit and the sofa becomes part of our body.

The tramway is engulfed in the houses it passes and the houses rush on the tramway and are melt with it.

The construction of pictures has hitherto been stupidly conventional. The painters have always depicted the objects and persons as being in front of us. Henceforth the spectator will be in the centre of the picture.

In all domains of the human spirit a clearsighted, individual enquiry has swept away the obscurities of dogma.

So also the life-giving tide of science must free painting from the bonds of academical tradition.

We must be born again.

Has not science disowned her past in order better to satisfy the material needs of our day? So must art deny her past in order to satisfy our modern intellectual needs.

To our renewed consciousness man is no longer the centre of universal life. The suffering of a man is as interesting in our eyes as the pain of an electric lamp which suffers with spasmodic starts and shrieks, with the most heart-rending expressions of colour. The harmony of the lines and folds of a contemporary costume exercises on our sensibility the same stirring and symbolic power as nudity did to the ancients.

To understand the beauties of a futurist picture the soul must be purified and the eye delivered from the veil of atavism and culture, go to nature and not to museums.

When this result is obtained it will be perceived that brown has never circulated beneath our epidermis, that yellow shines in our flesh, that red flashes, and that green, blue and violet dance there with voluptuous and winning graces.

How can one still see pink the human face, when our life doubled by nocturne life has multiplied our colorists' perceptions? The human face flashes of red, yellow, green, blue, violet.

The pallor of a woman gazing at a jewellers ship-window has rainbow hues more intense than the flashes of the jewels which fascinate her like a lark.

Our ideas on painting can no longer be whispered, but must be sung and must ring on our canvasses like triumphant fanfares. Our eyes accustomed to twilight will soon be dazzled by the full light of day.

Our shadows will be more brilliant than the strongest light of our predecessors and our pictures beside those in museums will shine as a blinding day compared to a gloomy night.

We now conclude that now-a-days there can exist no painting without Divisionism. It is not a question of a process which can be learned and applied freely. Divisionism for the modern painter must be inborn complementarism which we declare to be essential and necessary.

Our art will probably be accused of decadence or lunacy but we shall simply answer that, on the contrary, we are primitives with quickened sensibilities and that our art is spontaneous and powerful.

## **WE DECLARE:**

- 1.° That all forms of imitation must be despised and all forms of originality glorified;
- 2.° That we must rebel against the tyranny **HARMONY** and **GOOD TASTE** which could easily condemn the works of Rembrandt, Goya and Rodin;
- 3.° That art-critics are useless or harmful;
- 4.° That all worn-out subjects must be swept away, in order that we may have scope for the expression of our stormy life of steel, pride fever and swiftness;
- 5.° That the name of madmen with which they try to hamper innovators, shall henceforth be considered a title of honour;
- 6.° That **INBORN COMPLIMENTARISM** is an absolute necessity in painting as free verse in poetry and polyphony in music;
- 7.° That universal Dynamism must be rendered in painting as a dynamic sensation;
- 8.° That above all sincerity and purity are required in the portrayal of nature;
- 9.° That movement and light destroy the materiality of bodies.

## **WE FIGHT:**

- 1.° Against the bituminous colours with which one struggles to obtain the patin of time on modern pictures;
- 2.° Against superficial and elementary archaism founded on flat uniform tints and which imitating the linear manner of the Egyptians reduces painting to an impotent childish and grotesque synthesis;
- 3.° Against the false avenirism of secessionists and independents, who have installed new academies as traditional as the former ones;
- 4.° Against nudity in painting as nauseous and tiring as adultery in literature.

Let us explain this last question. There is nothing immoral in our eyes; it is the monotony of nudity that we fight against.

It is said subject is nothing, and all depends upon the way of treating it. Granted. We also admit it. But this truth which was unobjectionable and absolute fifty years ago, is no longer so to-day, as to nudity, since painters beset by the longing to reproduce on canvas the bodies of their lady-loves have transformed Exhibitions into fairs of rotten hams!...

We require during the next ten years the total suppression of nudity in painting!

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