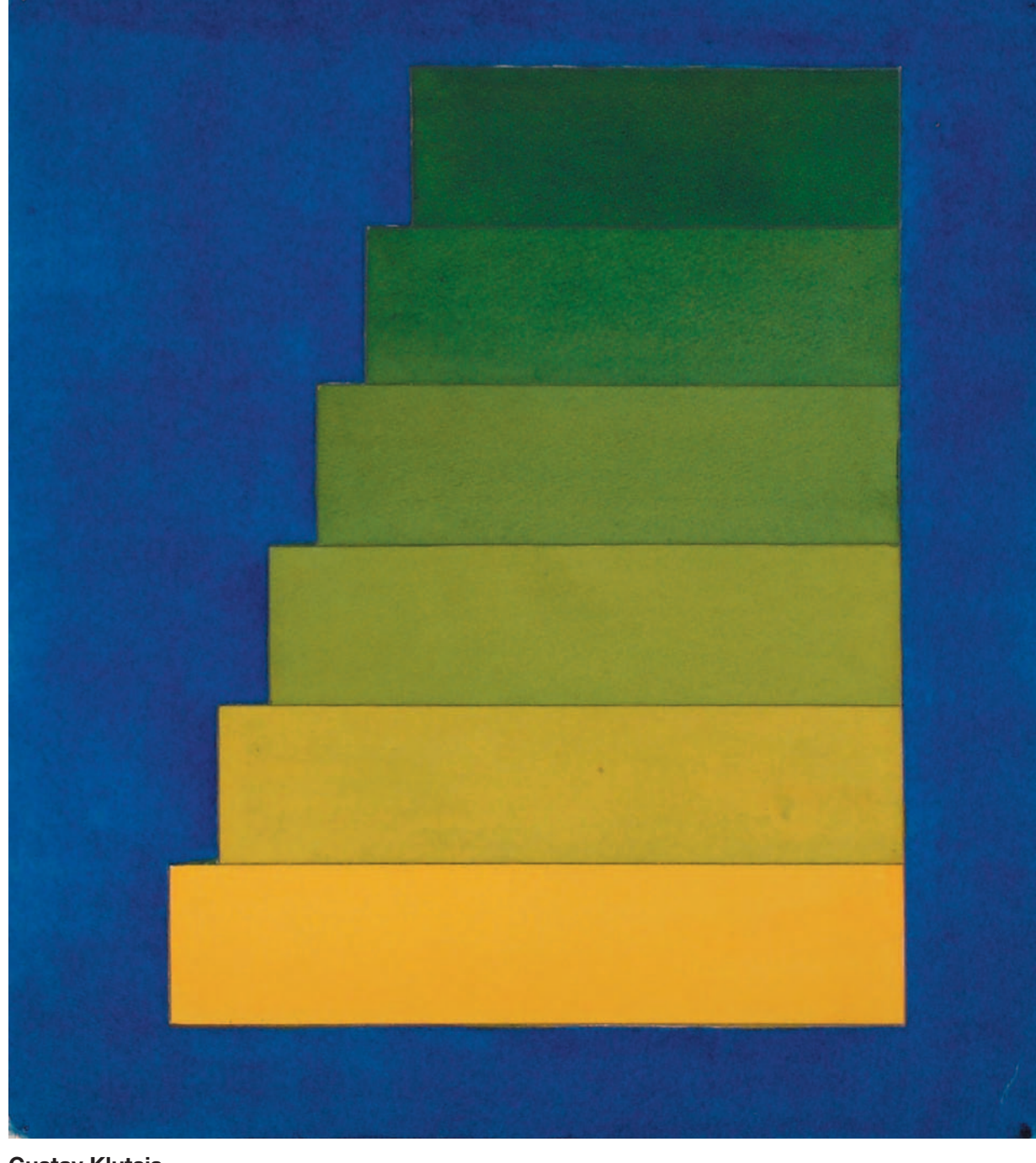


Aspects of Russian Art 1915–1935

Selections from the Merrill C. Berman Collection

Tuesday, September 6 – Saturday, October 8, 2005



Gustav Klutskis

Color Study ca. 1924–1930, Gouache and pencil on paper, 12 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (30.8 x 28.9 cm)

Natan Al'tman, Iakov Chernikhov, Aleksandr Deineka, Aleksandr Dortman, Vassily Elkin, Vassily Ermilov, Gustav Klutskis, Valentina Kulagina, Vladimir Lebedev, Elena Melnikova, Grigorii Miller, Yurii Pimenov, Lyubov' Popova, Mikhail Razulevich, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Elena Semenova, Nikolai Sidelnikov, Georgii & Vladimir Stenberg, Solomon Telingater, Konstantin Vialov, Elena Zernova, Georgii Zimin and others

To coincide with *Russia!*, opening September 16, 2005 at the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Ubu Gallery** will be extending *Aspects of Russian Art, 1915–1935: Selections from the Merrill C. Berman Collection*. Drawn from one of the foremost collections of Russian avant-garde art, the exhibition features superb examples of Futurist, Realist and Constructivist painting, drawing and collage. While the exhibition *Russia!* explores Russian art from the 13th Century to the present, *Aspects of Russian Art* focuses specifically on the remarkable range of artistic expression during the early part of the 20th Century in Russia—an era when innovative tools of visual communication were forged to define Soviet society and historic or representational approaches took on new life. Ubu's exhibition calls into question the notion of a monolithic Soviet style and emphasizes that figurative art persisted and evolved parallel to abstract movements.

From the years leading up to the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and continuing to the end of Stalin's second Five Year Plan in 1934 (in which Stalin decreed that only Socialist Realism would be permitted in the arts), artists and designers experimented with new forms of representation and object making, rejecting stodgy academic practices and the elitism of imperial government. Harnessing the power of technology, industrialization and political revolution, they were intent upon bringing about an advanced modern society—one acting in the interests of all of its members. Through art, architecture, product and graphic design, Soviet society was being redefined, as was the artist's role within it. While Gustav Klutskis and Aleksandr Rodchenko were developing Constructivism, artists such as Aleksandr Deineka, Yurii Pimenov and Vladimir Lebedev were reinvigorating representational modes of working. Despite many differing approaches, the artists and designers of the founding decades of the Soviet State were linked in their commitment to communicate with the whole of society in new ways that emphasized clarity, order and accessibility.

A unique look at Futurism of the 1910s, Realism of the mid- to late 1920s, and Constructivism of the 1920s and 1930s can be found in Merrill C. Berman's collection of Russian avant-garde art. Berman is best known as a collector of graphic design and, while his collection covers many facets of early 20th Century art and spans the U.S. and Europe (as surveyed in Ubu Gallery's 2004 exhibition, *Avant-Gardes*), it is particularly rich in Russian avant-garde art and graphics. Berman has been the source of numerous museum exhibitions curated solely or principally from his collection and he was a primary lender to the Guggenheim's last major survey of Russian art which focused on the early 20th Century, *The Great Utopia: Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915–1932* (Fall/Winter 1992–1993). As an avid collector of celebrated artists of the avant-garde, as well as artists and movements unrecognized in the West, Berman has built a collection that is fertile ground for the curatorial community. Exhibitions drawn solely from his collection, such as *Building the Collective: Soviet Graphic Design, 1917–1937* (Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, 1996) and *Art for the Masses: Russian Revolutionary Art* (Williams College Museum of Art, 1985), have revealed the various ways in which artists reacted to the rapidly changing social and political climate of the time and have sought to challenge the perception of a rigidly uniform Soviet style. For *Aspects of Russian Art*, Berman has personally selected a group of works from his collection that reflects the breadth of the period—from the abstract to the representational, from the political to the apolitical—with fine art, design and ephemera all represented.

Ubu Gallery is located at 416 East 59th Street between First Avenue and Sutton Place. Gallery hours are 11:00 AM–6:00 PM, Tuesday through Saturday.

For further information or for visuals, please contact Miriam Kienle or Colleen Connolly at 212 753 4444.

UBU GALLERY

416 EAST 59 STREET NEW YORK NY 10022

TEL: 212 753 4444 FAX: 212 753 4470

Email: info@ubugallery.com www.ubugallery.com

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