

**MANIFESTO OF THE FUTURIST PAINTERS**

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GIACOMO BALLA, AND GINO SEVERINI

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**To the Young Artists of Italy!**

The cry of rebellion that we launch, linking our ideals with those of the Futurist poets, does not originate in an aesthetic clique. It expresses the violent desire that stirs in the veins of every creative artist today.

We want to fight implacably against the mindless, snobbish, and fanatical religion of the past, religion nurtured by the pernicious existence of museums. We rebel against the spineless admiration for old canvases, old statues, and old objects, and against the enthusiasm for everything worm-eaten, grimy, or corroded by time; and we deem it unjust and criminal that people habitually disdain whatever is young, new, and trembling with life.

Comrades! We declare that the triumphant progress of science has brought about changes in humanity so profound as to dig an abyss between the docile slaves of the past and us who are free, us who are confident in the shining splendor of the future.

We are nauseated by the vile laziness which, from the sixteenth century on,<sup>1</sup> has made our artists live by an incessant exploitation of ancient glories.

In the eyes of other countries, Italy is still a land of the dead, an immense Pompeii of whitewashed sepulchers. But Italy must be reborn, and its political resurgence is being followed by an intellectual resurgence.<sup>2</sup> In this land of illiterates, schools are being continually constructed: in this land of "dolce far niente,"<sup>3</sup> innumerable factories are roaring; in this land of traditional aesthetics, today we see flights and lightning inspirations of newness that stand out.

The only living art is that which finds its distinctive features within the environment that surrounds it. Just as our forebears took the subject of art from the religious atmosphere that enveloped them, so we must draw inspiration from the tangible miracles of contemporary life, from the iron network of speed which winds around the earth, from the transatlantic liners, the dreadnoughts,<sup>4</sup> the marvelous flights that plow the skies, the shadowy audaciousness of submarine navigators, the spasmodic struggle to conquer the unknown. And how can we remain unresponsive to the frenzied activity of the great capitals, the ultra-recent psychology of noctambulism, the feverish figure of the *viveur*, the *cocotte*, the *apache*, and the alcoholic?

Wanting to contribute to the necessary renovation of all artistic expression, we resolutely declare war on all those artists and institutions that, even when dis-

guised with a false costume of modernity, remain trapped in tradition, academism, and above all a repugnant mental laziness.

We denounce as insulting to youth that entire irresponsible rabble of critics who in Rome applaud a nauseating reflowering of doting classicism; who in Florence praise the neurotic cultivators of a hermaphroditic archaism; who in Milan remunerate blind and pedestrian handicrafts going back to 1848;<sup>5</sup> who in Turin adulate a painting made by retired bureaucrats; and who in Venice worship a woolly hodgepodge concocted by fossilized alchemists. In short, we rise up against<sup>6</sup> the superficiality, banality, and handyman's facility which render utterly contemptible the greater part of the artists currently *respected* in every region of Italy.

So, down with mercenary restorers of antiquated incrustations! Down with archaeologists afflicted by chronic necrophilia! Down with critics, complacent pimps! Down with gouty academies and drunken and ignorant professors! Down!

Go ahead and ask one of these priests of the true cult, these repositories of aesthetic laws, where can you find the works of Giovanni Segantini today? Why do the arts commissions ignore the work of Gaetano Previati? Where does anyone appreciate the sculpture of Medardo Rosso?<sup>7</sup> . . . And who bothers to think about the artists who don't already have twenty years of struggle and suffering to their credit, but who nevertheless are preparing works destined to honor our country?

They have quite different interests to defend, the paid critics! Exhibitions, contests, and criticism that is superficial and never disinterested, these condemn Italian art to ignominy and a state of true prostitution!

And what should we say about the *specialists*? Let's do it! Throw out the Portraitists, the Genre Painters, the Lake Painters, the Mountain Painters. We have put up with enough from them, all these impotent painters of country vacations.

Down with the defacers of marble whose works clog up the piazzas and profane our graveyards. Down with speculative architecture of contractors in reinforced concrete. Down with hack decorators, ceramicists who make forgeries, sold-out poster painters, and shoddy, idiotic illustrators.

Here are our final conclusions. With our enthusiastic adherence to Futurism, we want:

1. To destroy the cult of the past, the obsession with antiquity, pedantry, and academic formalism.
2. To disdain utterly every form of imitation.
3. To exalt every form of originality, however daring, however violent.
4. To bear bravely and proudly the facile smear of "madness" with which innovators are whipped and gagged.
5. To regard all art critics as useless or harmful.
6. To rebel against the tyranny of words: *harmony and good taste*, those too loose

expressions with which one could easily destroy the work of Rembrandt and Goya.

7. To sweep away from the ideal field of art all themes, all subjects that have been already used.
8. To render and glorify today's life, incessantly and tumultuously transformed by victorious science.

Let the dead stay buried in the deepest entrails of the earth! Let the threshold of the future be swept free of mummies! Make room for the young, the violent, the bold!

## FUTURIST PAINTING: TECHNICAL MANIFESTO

UMBERTO BOCCIONI, CARLO CARRÀ, LUIGI RUSSOLO,  
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In the first manifesto that we launched on the 8th of March, 1910, from the stage of the Chiarella Theater in Turin,<sup>1</sup> we expressed our deep-rooted disgust with, our proud contempt for, and our happy rebellion against vulgarity, mediocrity, the fanatical and snobbish worship of all that is old, attitudes which are suffocating Art in our Country.

On that occasion we were concerned with the relations between ourselves and society. Today, instead, with this second manifesto, we are resolutely abandoning contingent considerations and rising instead to higher expressions of the pictorial absolute.

Our growing desire for truth can no longer be satisfied with traditional Form and Color.

The gesture that we want to reproduce will no longer be a *moment* in the universal dynamism *which has been stopped*, but the *dynamic sensation* itself, perpetuated as such.

Indeed, all things move, all things run, all things are rapidly changing. A profile is never motionless before our eyes, but constantly appears and disappears. On account of the persistency of an image upon the retina, moving objects constantly multiply themselves, change shape, succeeding one another, like rapid vibrations, in the space which they traverse. Thus a running horse has not four legs, but twenty, and their movements are triangular.<sup>2</sup>