

## New Movements in Twentieth-Century Architecture and Design Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism

First three decades of the twentieth century, and especially after World War I: the explosion of new ways of looking at and creating art and architecture. Italy's late national unification and industrialization as impetus for radical outlook promoted by "**Futurism**" in *The Futurist Manifesto*, by Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, 1909, Milan, Italy. The intoxicated and revolutionary embrace of technological modernism and its symbols: speed, mechanization, oversized urban scale – all fetishized in an aim to replace outdated styles and traditional past ways of life with a new art for a resolutely modern time (no Loos-ian critical conventionalism or separation between art and architecture here).

Futurist Projects are dramatic, but generally remain unbuilt "paper architecture." Futurism amounts to the opposite of the organic vision of National Romantic architecture that seems to "grow" out of the ground and native soil, and forms part of the nascent later 20<sup>th</sup>-century high-tech architectural movement. Glorifies and celebrates technology as a symbol of man-made salvation, rather than evoking historic or religious architecture of the past. Examples: Antonio Sant'Elia (1880-1916): **Stazione Aeroporti/Airplane Station** in Milan, 1912, a reconstruction of Milan's Central Station for modern forms of transit; in this project he combines rail travel, air travel, and pedestrian access. **Apartment Building project, 1913**; **La Citta Nuova** (The New City), 1914. Sant'Elia's projects travel throughout Europe in a popular exhibition that generates much excitement among other young, aspiring architects before World War I (1914-1918). Nicola Djulgheroff (1901-1982) **Lighthouse to mark the victory of the machine**, 1927; Piero Portaluppi, **Studies for dwellings and offices in "Hellytown" (1926)**; Giacomo Matté-Trucco, **FIAT Lingotto car factory** (1916-1926)

**Expressionism**, a movement with pre-World War I roots in modernist painting. Influence of painting on architecture important in early 20<sup>th</sup> century: search for distillation of natural essences, of vital properties, of emotion and elemental forces exposed and naked as expressions of a truth higher than that which ordinarily meets the eye in everyday life. Thus Expressionism seeks to reveal a reality that is NOT visible to the eye in ordinary vision; it expresses other psychic impulses and energies that affect human existence and experience. Architecturally, Expressionism reaches for utopia: Bruno Taut (1880-1938), **Alpine Architecture**, 1919, "crystalline" projects for the Alps in Germany and Switzerland. Remaking the world while rebuilding from W. War I, using glass as symbol of spiritual aspirations, but also as the material par excellence for a reformed, reorganized, and just society. Expands on ideas from his Glass Pavilion of 1914 at Cologne, with Paul Scheerbart. Hermann Finsterlin, **project for a house of glass**, 1920 – complete freedom of expression anticipating the later built sculptural works of Frank Gehry (in form, if not entirely in materials), e.g., in the **Guggenheim Museum**, Bilbao, Spain, 1997.

Erich Mendelsohn (1887-1953), the adaptable curves, glass, and dynamism of form in projects such as the **Einstein Tower Observatory**, Potsdam, Germany, 1921; Mendelsohn, **Schocken Department Store**, Stuttgart, 1926; Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, **Project for a Glass High Rise**, 1922, Berlin Friedrichstrasse. The influence of cubist painting and expressionist painting on the rise of De Stijl, Dutch movement meaning "The Style" (as in *The Style* of modern life).

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), painter and spiritual co-founder of movement, led by Theo Van Doesburg beginning with publication of first issue of journal, *De Stijl*, in 1917

Mondrian's **Tree** studies (1912), **Composition No. 6** (1914), and **Composition in Blue, Yellow, and Black** (1921): development of De Stijl theory of "neo-plasticism," in which the action of color and forms was reduced to utter simplicity of geometrical shapes. Mondrian's gradual move to purist abstraction, anti-perspectival development of a non-traditional, non-representational art with spiritual intentions, a new art for "truly" modern life. **New York City** (1942) and **Broadway Boogie Woogie** (1943) as examples of his mature work.

Gerrit Rietveld, **Table, Chair** (both 1923), De Stijl furniture; and Rietveld's **Schroeder House** 1924, Utrecht, Holland. Schroeder house as fullest realization of a complete "De Stijl" sensibility in 3-D. Flexible living w/ movable panel walls for open or closed spaces, radical primary color schemes, built-in furniture, and expressive planar structure.