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| **Cubo-Futurism** |
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| Cubo-Futurism (Kubo-Futurizm) was a term used by the early 20th century Russian avant-garde to describe literary and artistic works that represented a fusion of Cubist and Futurist styles and principles. The term surfaced in 1912, at a point when the Russian avant-garde were exposed simultaneously to Analytical Cubism and Italian Futurism. |
| Cubo-Futurism (Kubo-Futurizm) was a term used by the early 20th century Russian avant-garde to describe literary and artistic works that represented a fusion of Cubist and Futurist styles and principles. The term surfaced in 1912, at a point when the Russian avant-garde were exposed simultaneously to Analytical Cubism and Italian Futurism. At this stage in their development, young Russian poets and painters were beginning to move away from forms of Expressionism and to explore more innovative approaches. Cubism and Futurism offered the ideological and practical means to engage with abstraction and, ultimately, non-objectivity, in a serious and distinctive manner. By 1915, however, Cubism and Futurism had exhausted their usefulness for these poets and painters, who had now passed into completely new territory in the form of Velimir Khlebnikov’s and Aleksei Krucheynykh’s *zaum* (transrational)poetry, Kazimir Malevich’s Suprematism and, subsequently, Vladimir Tatlin’s and Aleksandr Rodchenko’s Constructivism. A distinctive movement of the pre-war period, Cubo-Futurism possessed an episodic character and manifested as a transitional phase in the history of Russian avant-garde art and literature in the early 20th century. It was a bridge by which the Russians approached their radical non-objective conclusions of the 1920s.  In terms of painting, the key male practitioners of Cubo-Futurism included Mikhail Larionov and Kazimir Malevich. The former used his Cubo-Futurist learning to develop the first non-objective style of Russian painting known as Rayism, whilst the latter used it as a launching pad for the development of Suprematism. Cubo-Futurism demanded an aptitude for synthesis, which, according to contemporary male critics, bred a style that appealed particularly to women painters (who were held to a have a capacity for synthesis over that of analysis). Cubo-Futurism, therefore, was chiefly taken up by the women artists of the Russian avant-garde : Natalia Goncharova, Aleksandra Exter, Olga Rozanova, Liubov Popova and Nadezhda Udaltsova. For all of these artists Cubo-Futurism represented a transitionary phase towards their mature work. They were sufficiently aware of their dependence upon their sources to openly acknowledge their interests. Popova, for example, boldly stencilled the words ‘Cubi Futurismo’ across her *Portrait* of 1914-1915 ( Thesaloniki: State Museum of Contemporary Art). The Cubo-Futurist work of these artists was highly individualistic. Cubo-Futurism was not a group style but was extremely diverse, being dictated by the particular predilections of each artist for specific Cubist and Futurist painters and their individual encounters with specific examples.  File : popova\_study\_for\_a\_portrait.jpg  1 Liubov Popova, Study for a Portrait, 1914-1915, oil on cardboard, 59.5x41.6cm. State Museum  In terms of Russian avant-garde literature, Cubo-Futurism was explored by the poets David Burliuk, Benedict Livshits, Alexandr Kamensky and Vladimir Maiakovsky. It found its fullest and most accomplished expression, however, in the work of Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh. These two poets began to fragment both the word and syntax as Picasso and Braque were perceived to have fragmented the objects in their paintings. The images in their poems frequently overlap and merge, recalling the use of Cubist passage or or the ‘stream of consciousness’ imagery of Futurist painting. By a applying a Cubist and Futurist approach to the written word, Khlebnikov and Kruchenych created a revolutionary form of abstract sound poetry called *zaum* (beyond sense) in which conventional meanings associated with words began to erode as the poem increasingly operated as an excercise in pure sound . This paved the way for the formation of the Russian Formalist School of literature and literary criticism. Some of the greatest achievements of Russian Cubo-Futurism are to be found not simply in the paintings or the poems but in the Russian avant-garde books that these artists published at the time. These interdisicplinary publications, which combined word and image, provided the poets and painters with a space within which they could test out both the limitations and potential of Cubism and Futurism as they approached more mature and innovative conclusions. |
| Further reading:  (Bowlt)  (Compton)  (Gray)  (Janececk)  (Livshits) |