**SEMENKO, Mykhail' (Семенко, Михайль) (1892-1937)**



Founder, theoretician and major poet of the Ukrainian futurist movement; editor of the journal, *Nova generatsiia* (NEW GENERATION, 1927-1930). He was executed during the Stalinist terror on trumped up charges of Ukrainian nationalism. A prolific poet, he began writing in the spirit of symbolism, but turned to futurism in 1914 with the collections *Derzannia* (Bravado) and *Kvero-Futuryzm* (Quaero-futurism, 1914), which created a major scandal. His 1924 collection, *Kobzar*, appropriated the title of Ukraine’s greatest romantic poet Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), further alienating a conservative public. Semenko relished being the bad boy of Ukrainian poetry, offering a broad spectrum of innovative, sometimes shocking, verse, ranging from *vers libre*, to playful trans-sense lyrics to self-deprecating, prosaic love poems. He wrote visual poetry, dubbed “poetry-painting.” Urban themes and satirical topical verse are a hallmark of his creativity. As a theoretician, he developed Panfuturism, defined in 1922 as being “at once Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism, and Dadaism—but… not simply a synthesis of these useful things” (*Semafor u Maibutnie* 1 (May 1922): 12). Influenced both by Italian and Russian futurism, Semenko rightly insisted on the originality and autonomy of his movement, which became a major force in transforming Ukrainian culture of the 1910s and 1920s.

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