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| Boccioni, Umberto (1882-1916) |
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| Umberto Boccioni was the most famous painter and sculptor of the Italian Futurist movement. After an early career as a painter and illustrator, he joined FUTURISM in 1910, quickly becoming one of its leading members. Together with CARLO CARRÀ, LUIGI RUSSOLO, GIACOMO BALLA and GINO SEVERINI he signed the *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters* (1910) and the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting* (1910) and exhibited at legendary Futurist shows in Italy and abroad. His numerous conferences and articles were pivotal in furthering the theoretical development of Futurist aesthetics and defining FUTURISM’s identity in opposition to Cubism and Expressionism. His work is marked by a constant intertwining of theoretical definition and material experimentation. Artistic debates, but also contemporary scientific and philosophical theories, influenced his Futurist masterpieces, such as [*La città che sale*](http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A624&page_number=1&template_id=1&sort_order=1) (*The City Rises*, 1910-1911) and [*La risata*](http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A624&page_number=9&template_id=1&sort_order=1) (*The Laugh*, 1911). In 1912 his interest in sculpture led him to pen the [*Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture*](http://www.unknown.nu/futurism/techsculpt.html)*.* [http://apicesv3.noto.unimi.it/site/reggi/0003-0482/(1912)/index.djvu] and resulted in a famous exhibition of works in plaster and multi-media assemblages. |
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In 1901, he moved to Rome and worked as a graphic designer and illustrator. In Rome, he met Giacomo Balla, who introduced him to the principles of divisionism, and he befriended Gino Severini and Mario Sironi. He took life drawing classes at the Academy of Fine Arts and exhibited in some local art shows. In 1906, he traveled to Paris for the first time, eventually going also to Russia. After a brief time spent at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, he moved to Milan in 1907.  Milan’s artistic environment was influential for the young Boccioni. He worked as an illustrator for several publications, such as those for the Italian Touring Club, banded together with other young artists such as Carlo Carrà and Luigi Russolo, made the acquaintance of Gaetano Previati and, in 1910, officially joined Filippo Tommaso Marinetti as a member of the newborn Futurist movement. Together with Carrà, Russolo, Balla, and Severini he wrote the *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*, dated February 11, 1910. In March, he took part in a famous Futurist evening at the Politeama Chiarella in Turin, where he recited passages of the *Manifesto*. The following month, he was among the major contributors to the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting* (11 April 1910), signing it with Carrà, Russolo, Balla, and Severini. In July, his one-man show opened in Venice at Ca’ Pesaro.  His detachment from Divisionism and involvement with the theoretical definition of a Futurist agenda for modern painting became quite consistent between 1911 and 1912. This period is marked by the creation of his first Futurist masterpieces such as *La città sale* [The City Rises] (1910-1911); two versions of the triptych *Gli stati d’animo* [States of Mind] (1911); *La risata* [The Laugh] (1911) and *Materia* [Matter] (1912). He participated in numerous Futurist happenings and soirées, and, in the winter 1911-12, he travelled repeatedly to Paris to organize the Exhibition of Futurist Painting at the Bernheim-Jeune Gallery, which opened in February 1912. Boccioni wrote the theoretical preface to the catalogue and participated in several conferences that accompanied the exhibition’s opening in other European capitals.  Back in Italy, in April 1912, he published the *Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture* and started to work in this medium. Modern sculpture would, according to Boccioni, incorporate a plurality of materials and capture the continuity of the environment, abolishing the artificial concept of figures isolated from their surroundings. He showed his sculptures, consisting of works in plaster and assemblages, the following year in Paris at the La Boëtie gallery and subsequently in Rome at the Sprovieri Gallery. His attitude toward art was marked by a continual correlation between theoretical definition and material experimentation. His writings from this period were influenced by the theories of Henri Bergson and fostered a new conception of space and matter applied to painting and sculpture. He also penned more polemical essays aimed at charting the distinction between Futurism and Cubism. Boccioni reworked this theoretical material, which had appeared in the form of articles in the Florentine journal *Lacerba*, and turned it into a book, *Pittura, Scultura Futuriste (Dinamismo Plastico)* [Futurist Painting, Sculpture. Plastic Dynamism] (1914). He took part in 1914 in the Futurist pro-war demonstrations and enlisted in 1915. He died in Verona on August 17, 1916 from injuries sustained falling from a horse during military manoeuvres.  **Key biographies of Umberto Boccioni:**  Guido Ballo (1964), *Boccioni. La vita e l’opera.*  Zeno Birolli (1983), *Umberto Boccioni. Racconto critico.*  Gino Agnese (1996), *Vita di Boccioni.*  Gino Agnese (2008), *Boccioni visto da vicino.*  **Writings and correspondence:**  Zeno Birolli (ed., 1971), *Umberto Boccioni. Gli scritti editi e inediti*.  Zeno Birolli (ed., 1972), *Umberto Boccioni.* *Altri inediti ed apparati critici*.  Federica Rovati (ed., 2009), *Umberto Boccioni. Lettere futuriste.*  **Catalogues raisonnés and major exhibitions:**  Maurizio Calvesi, Ester Coen (1983), *Boccioni. L’opera completa.*  Paolo Bellini (1972), Catalogo completo dell’opera grafica di Umberto Boccioni.  Paolo Bellini (2004), *Umberto Boccioni*: *catalogo ragionato delle incisioni, degli ex-libris, dei manifesti e delle illustrazioni.*  Laura Mattioli Rossi (ed., 2004), Boccioni's materia: a futurist masterpiece and the avant-garde in Milan and Paris.  Laura Mattioli Rossi (ed., 2006), *Boccioni: pittore sculptore futurista*. |
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