**Manifesto**

A manifesto is an articulation of a particular (sometimes numerically or hierarchically ordered) set of theses that correspond to a political or aesthetic movement. In early forms, manifestos appeared as religious, then legal, tracts and gained prominence in socio-political discourse in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Janet Lyon, the manifesto sets out the particular terms of exclusion or repression of a minority group by a majority oppressor, activating a complex binarity of inclusion (of sympathetic individuals or movements) and rejection (of the dominant order against which the group identified in the manifesto defines itself). Manifestos were the preferred form of aesthetic proclamation for early twentieth modernist and avant-garde art movements, including, notably, Futurism, Vorticism, Dada and Surrealism. The genre is often performative, expressing or calling sympathetic readers to action, as in the famous edict of the *Communist Manifesto* – ‘Working Men of All Countries, Unite!’, or Mina Loy’s 1914 ‘Feminist Manifesto’, an address to ‘Women’ who ‘want to realize yourselves’ to not bother ‘scratching on the surface of the rubbish head of tradition’, but to instead engage in ‘Absolute Demolition**’** [611; emphasis Loy’s]). Aesthetic manifestos often employ jarring or confrontational typographical design to communicate a sense of urgency or combativeness. This is characterized by the manifestos produced by Italian Futurists F. T. Marinetti and Umberto Boccioni, among others. In ‘Futurist Synthesis of War’ (1914), a visually pugilistic example, an aggressive and dynamic typographical presentation weights ‘Futurism’ against ‘Passéism’ in light of the beginnings of war, which the artists herald as ‘the only hygiene of the world’ (170-171). By contrast, the later ‘Dada Excites Everything’ (1921) gestures once more towards the new: ‘The Futurist is dead’, proclaim its authors. ‘Of What? Of DADA’ (290).

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**References and further reading**

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Loy, M. (1914) ‘Feminist Manifesto’ in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

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Marinetti, F. T., Boccioni, U., Carrà, C., Russolo L. and Piatti, U. (1914) ‘Futurist Synthesis of War’ in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

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Varèse, E. *et al.* (1921) ‘Dada Excites Everything’ in *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Yanoshevksy, G. (2009) ‘Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The Making of a Genre’, *Poetics Today* (30.2): 257-86. (An effective summarization of the manifesto’s secondary literature, which capably traces the nuances between the political, aesthetic, and literary manifesto. See especially Yanoshevsky’s annotated bibliography in *Poetics* 30.2 [immediately following the present article] for a thorough list of scholarship on the genre.)

**Paratextual material**

(1921) ‘Dada Manifesto’, *The Little Review* 7 (4): [62-63]. *The Little Review* Archives, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Available via Modernist Journals Project, a joint project of Brown University and The University of Tulsa <<http://bit.ly/KUadKi>>. Reproduction and Permissions information available through UMW <<http://bit.ly/NSDClM>>.

