**Matiushin, Mikhail Vasilevich**

Nizhni Novgorod 1861 – Leningrad 1934

The musician, painter, and theoretician Mikhail Matiushin is best known for his music for the Cubo-Futurist opera *Pobeda nad Solntsem* [Victory over the Sun], which he wrote in 1913. Together with Elena Guro, he founded the artists’ group *Soiuz Molodezhi* [Union of Youth], in December 1909, and was one of the main organizers of the publications, exhibitions, and events of the St. Petersburg avant-garde in 1912-13. Matiushin stands at the center of what we today refer to as the Organic School of the Russian avant-garde. He developed the concept of *Organicheskaia Kultura* [Organic Culture], first with his students at the reformed Petrograd Art Academy (SVOMAS), from 1918 to 1926, and then in his research groups at the State Institute of Artistic Culture (GINKhUK), from 1923 to 1926, and the State Institute of Art History (GIII), from 1926 to 1929. In the late 1920s and 1930s he worked on a color theory, parts of which were published in 1932 as *Zakonomernost izmentaemosti tsvetovykh sochetanii: Spravochnik po tsvetu* [The Laws Governing the Variability of Color Combinations: A Handbook of Color]. Matiushin was an influential teacher; among his students were the Ender siblings, Nikolai Grinberg, Valida Delakroa, Elena Khmelevskaia, and Nikolai Kostrov.

Matiushin initially pursued a musical career, studying violin at the Moscow Conservatory from 1876 to 1881 and serving as first violinist in the St. Petersburg Court Orchestra from 1882 to 1913. In the 1890s, he took up drawing and painting and attended classes at the School of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts in St. Petersburg. He was a student of the Impressionist painter Jan Ciągliński in 1903-05 and a member of Nikolai Kulbin’s circle of Impressionists and his Triangle group from1908 to 1910. Under his own imprint, *Zhuravl* [Crane], he published his musical compositions, Guro’s books, and a series of avant-garde publications. Matiushin held a holist worldview; his intense studies of the developmental processes in organic and inorganic nature resulted in his root sculptures of 1910-16 and his crystal portraits of 1914-19. Following the October Revolution, Matiushin founded the studio of *Prostranstvenny Realizm* [Spatial Realism] at the SVOMAS, in which he explored the perception of universal space in nature and developed the method of *Razshirennoe Zrenie* [Extended Viewing]. His interest in a synthesis of all sensory experience led him to his concept of *Zorved* [See-Know] and the staging of a number of color-volume-sound performances in the early 1920s. At the research department of organic culture at the GINKhUK, Matiushin concentrated on “the investigation and development of the human organism, the senses of touch, hearing, vision, thought and their centers” and systematically studied the interrelations of color, form, and sound and their perception. In the 1930s, he particularly focused on color perception and the application of color in architecture and design.

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Fig.: Mikhail Matiushin, *Painterly-Musical Construction*, 1918, gouache on cardboard, 51.4 x 63.7 cm, The George Costakis Collection, Museum for Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, No. 154.78