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| Balla, Giacomo (1871—1958) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Giacomo Balla was an Italian painter and an important exponent of Futurism. He began his career as a self-taught artist inheriting the passion for photography from his father, an industrial chemist as well as an amateur photographer. During his stays in Turin, Rome and Paris, Balla gained experience at various academies and inspired many young people eager for modernity, including Boccioni and Severini. |
| Giacomo Balla was an Italian painter and an important exponent of Futurism. He began his career as a self-taught artist inheriting the passion for photography from his father, an industrial chemist as well as an amateur photographer. During his stays in Turin, Rome and Paris, Balla gained experience at various academies and inspired many young people eager for modernity, including Boccioni and Severini.  Until the first decade of the twentieth century he painted in the tradition of romantic realism, then Italian divisionism before joining the Futurist adventure. From 1910 onwards he put his name under several Futurist Manifestos and became one of the first abstract artists in Europe. His most successful and famous paintings belong to the time span between 1912 and 1916, marked by the search for the dynamism propagated by Futurism, which he interpreted literally in the well-known painting *Cagnetta al guinzaglio* (*Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*), where the movements of the animal and his master appear as multiplied steps, in accordance with the photographic and cinematographic principle of the persistence of vision. Another means he used to suggest the sensation of motion and light was the use of triangles, circles, lines and spirals, also called ‘Compenetrazioni iridescenti’ because they could evoke.  File: Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash by Giacomo Balla 1912.jpeg  Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash 1  Source: The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy; image available at <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/8725/Dynamism-of-a-Dog-on-a-Leash-oil-on-canvas>  In his manifesto *The Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe* (March 11, 1915), he sought, together with Fortunato Depero, to mimic the shapes of the natural world in materials such as cardboard and wood with bright colors to make it more cheerful. Fascinated by these ideas, Balla decided to name his daughters Elica (Propeller) and Luce (Light).  Balla also dealt with furniture and decoration (the pub *Bal Tic-Tac* in Rome), design (the Futurist Suit) photography, cinema and scenography (the *Fireworks* ballet with music by Stravinsky), always in his personal style: colorful, imaginative and full of rhythm. He also designed men’s suits in the Futurist style, with the intent of creating men’s clothing that was more dynamic, colorful and asymmetrical, in an attempt both to break with tradition and to make men look more aggressive and belligerent.  File: Images of Anti-Neutral Suit Manifesto by Giacomo Balla 1914.jpeg  Images of Anti-Neutral Suit Manifesto 1  Source: Available at <http://www.futur-ism.it/collezioni/libri/libri.asp?sez=2&det=18>  In the 1930s Balla continued in a Futurist mode, even after everyone else had abandoned it. He became the fascist artist *par excellence*, acclaimed by critics. At the end of the decade Balla formally broke with the Futurism, which placed him at the margins of the official culture until the post-war re-evaluation of his works and of Futurism in general. |
| Further Reading:  (Crispolti and Gambillo)  (Fagiolo Dell’Arco)  (Fagiolo Dell’Arco, Balla: The Futurist)  (Giovanni) |