

## Artyfacts episode 1

Hello and welcome to the 1st episode of Artyfacts where we will pondering the question

What is Futurism?

To try and understand Futurism, I first want you to think back to the last time you were in a car driving or being driven at night. Think about the rush of cars zooming past you from both sides, remember the lights of the city as they become a blur as you pressed forward on your journey. Allow yourself to perceive that thousands of other people within this city are on the same hustle and bustle to try and get to their destination. Can you imagine that the concrete structures that you are traversing though are the body of this city and that you and everyone are only red blood cells speeding though the veins of the cobble street keeping this society alive and evolving. That is Futurism the ever growing expanse of society shown though the city scapes, blurred lights and speed of mechanical beasts we have created, it is the ever growing advancements in this technological race, were the arts attempts to depict it and set the path as to not get left behind in the dust of cultural revolution.

Futurism is truly a journey to be undertaken, a rush of euphoria and adrenaline in the form of speed and advancement. This is all made very clear in the Manifesto of Futurist Painters, written by a bunch of people whose names I can't begin to pronounce and published in 11th February 1910.

Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carra, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla and Gino Severini

It's important to note is that this manifesto serves as a spiritual successor and shares the same ideals and visions as the original Futurist manifesto, written by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and published in 1909.

Also do take in mind that the entire futurism movement glorifies war with many of the contributors to the movement dying in world war 1, I myself do not believe in war or violence in any way and by nature I'm a pacifist.

As this is a fairly large piece of written media, I shall only be reading select quotes of which I believe to hold significance in providing us with some clear answers.

I will provide a link in the description so you can read the entire manifesto at your leisure.

<http://391.org/manifestos/1910-manifesto-of-futurist-painters-boccioni-carra-russolo-balla-severini.html#.W9wt4qecZ0Q>

**We will fight with all our might the fanatical, senseless and snobbish religion of the past, a religion encouraged by the vicious existence of museums.**

The start of this manifesto is a call of rebellion against the regime of the past. What is meant by this is that those in a place of authority, within the artist community put a larger value on the items of old. This is due to a combination of factors one being the ideal of style over substance, that the beauty of a painting speaks more than the meaning behind it.

Another reason being that items of antiquity or works of dead artists of the past, will inherently be worth more due to their rare exclusive nature.

The last factor being a country's culture, the work of an artist that becomes known as a symbol of a country or history will become priceless in time.

It's unfortunate but we will museums will always try and presser the old instead of the new, due to the old being fragile, higher in value, a symbol of a country, history or states.

**We consider the habitual contempt for everything which is young, new and burning with life to be unjust and even criminal.**

Many collectors in all walks of life will naturally hold contempt for new and developing art styles and movements, partly due to the effect it may

have on the very field of art. For them it can be an attack on their field of study, culture, value of their collection or even job.

If a collector deals in classical works and all of a sudden no one wants said classical works, well this collector might have to find another form of income or even start selling his priceless works off for a much-reduced price.

In many ways well at least to the collectors in the artistic field, art is literally the same as gold in the way that its value over time can change and be affected by the value the society puts in said product.

This is why getting into an esteemed gallery is such a big deal, there will always be blockades not so much from your level of skill, but more so from the collectors... no investors of the arts.

**We are sickened by the foul laziness of artists, who, ever since the sixteenth century, have endlessly exploited the glories of the ancient Romans.**

This is statement on the way in which we are taught art, how to paint draw or even sculpt. It was mostly all invented by the Romans and passed down through history and shared to other cultures via trade. However since then we have invited many new mediums and methods of production art, however many artists still cling onto the old methods like a calf to its mothers teat. This is partly due to the educational system, but more so the influence of collectors and critics, why should they have to learn a new medium to be able to value its worth; when they can just continue to deny access to the new to entire their exclusive club.

**Living art draws its life from the surrounding environment. Our forebears drew their artistic inspiration from a religious atmosphere which fed their souls; in the same way we must breathe in the tangible miracles of contemporary life**

The living art that is talked about is machinery, this is all in an attempt to distinguish themselves from the artists of the past. As they wouldn't have had access to such mechanisms or mechanical wonder, allowing for the artist of the new to recognize their own and condemn those that didn't conform to the revolution they were setting in place.

**we declare war on all artists and all institutions.....ensnared by tradition, academicism and, above all, a nauseating cerebral laziness.**

This is a declaration of war upon academia, for them to change the way in which the arts taught. In a way the Futurists won this war both on the collectors, the critics and the academics. As we can now see their work's in gallery's, museums and even schools; but not just their works but the works of many new and emerge artist, this isn't to say that there isn't still a club of exclusivity and rookie bashing those fresh off the academic system. To be honest I would say it's acutely gotten worse, but this is from my own opinion.

These paid critics have other interests to defend...And what about our esteemed 'specialists'? Throw them all out.

Unfortunately it's the same with all forms of corruption in this world, it's either to do with money, one's image or ignorance; because you know what they say ignorance is bliss. This is a demand that all those that willfully allow for this corruption to continue be it critic, collector or educator to be removed from a place of influence.

In some ways this has happened and in others it hasn't, their views were changed by they still have a large impact on our artist community and filter out what they deem to be a threat.

These are our final CONCLUSIONS:  
With our enthusiastic adherence to Futurism, we will:

Note I will only quickly touching upon these points, have many of them already been stated

1 Destroy the cult of the past, the obsession with the ancients, pedantry and academic formalism.

In a way they succeeded in doing this, as we now have many new mediums and artistic movements emerging even today.

2 Totally invalidate all kinds of imitation.

This only partly come to pass, as we still hail the almighty masters of the past, but we are now also taught about this and many other artistic styles and movements; as well as them being appreciated by the masses.

3 Elevate all attempts at originality, however daring, however violent.

This his completely come to pass as Sock Art is now a thing and even the most obscure of styles can gain recognition via social media.

4 Bear bravely and proudly the smear of 'madness' with which they try to gag all innovators.

This has only partly been implemented, there are many more ways these days for an artist to garner attention and to proclaim themselves to the world. But the exclusive clubs still remain inexcusable to anyone by a seasoned veteran.

5 Regard art critics as useless and dangerous.

I believe all critics these days are taken with a pinch of salt, mainly due to the fact that we know they can be easily swayed by many different factors. But also as they do not speak for the general public, as well as that everyone now has a means to have a voice via social media.

6 Rebel against the tyranny of words: 'Harmony' and 'good taste' and other loose expressions which can be used to destroy the works of Rembrandt, Goya, Rodin...

This sentiment is still very much the same as it was back then, however having a different taste to someone else these days even if it is a famous critic; is much more excitable and even celebrated at times.

7 Sweep the whole field of art clean of all themes and subjects which have been used in the past.

Such a statement would never become a reality, as history will always remain as a necessity as we have a need to learn from the past to enact the future.

8 Support and glory in our day-to-day world, a world which is going to be continually and splendidly transformed by victorious Science.

Personally I would say that we glorify the mechanical world we live in too much these days, the irony being the digital platform that I wrote and now sharing this on. To be honest I feel as if we have come to really on technology too much as a society, not that this is completely a bad thing, but it has definitely changed the way in which we as a social species have come to operate and communicate with one another. After all receiving an email has a very different feeling to receiving a hand written letter.

Hopefully I by going through this manifesto with you all, I have giving you some understanding about the philosophical stance the original futurists. As well as the evolution of the mechanical age and how it affected the artist community in both of a sense of its inner politics and shifts in influence. Now I would like to take you through the visual side of futurism for this I will be looking at some futurist media from each medium that I can think of at this moment in time, however I will be limiting it to one artist per medium to help move things along.

## Painting

For painting I want to talk about Luigi Russolo's futurist painting *Automobile in corsa - Corsa car* in 1912, as I see it as the definitive visual respiration of futurism. you can truly see the movement within the image represented by the warping color red of the street lamps that acts as a marker of distance and divergence between one another. They may also act as the barking of a sound barrier in relation to the moving car in blue. Something else apparent are the yellow and blue buildings in the background, which show a relation to the moment through their tilted angle; which would be the point of view from the person driving the blue car. In the right top corner we see a two dark green rectangles, most likely representing a dark alleyway, however it may also be portraying the idea that everything within this image being of the drivers point of view and the green is what is now out of view, this would also explain the way in which the car is painted and positioned; it is painted by both memory and from the view of the few car mirrors giving it a disjointed look and it is placed within the center of the image, as that is how a driver views their car in relation to the surrounding to both avoid obstacles and navigate around the dark city streets only lit by yellow, orange luminescent lights and the cars headlights with the very light warping around the car as if where a fluid object along with everything else when one drives fast enough for their vision to undergo motion blur, this might also explain why objects are represented by color due to the blurring effect producing similar results to a color mixing wheel.

## Aeropainting

If futurist painting is all about the idea of forward speed and the beauty of interworking gears, then we can see aeropainting as the second

generation of futurist painting. In the aims of the manifesto *The Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe* written by Giacomo Balla and Fortunato Depero we can see their themes clearly laid out. Which I will quote and give my passing comments on. There will be a link in the description so you can read the full manifesto during your own <https://www.unknown.nu/futurism/reconstruction.html>

- *'1 Abstract.'*

Abstraction is perhaps the best way to create artificial movement in an inanimate object. For you see without shape or form to focus on the eye naturally drifts and creates movements from seemingly nothing.

- *'2 Dynamic. Relative movement (cinematographic) + absolute movement.'*

Bold and contrasting colours, with exaggerated lines to show movement and the blending of colours, objects and forms to convey the feel of motion blur.

- *'3 Extremely transparent. Because of the speed and volatility of the plastic complex, which must appear and disappear, light and impalpable.'*

To apply the use of fading, smudging and blending of any kind; in other to create the feel of transparent materials such as plastic and glass, how is one to navigate with velocity in an enclosed space.

- *'4 Brightly colored and extremely luminous (using internal lights).'*

The images you depict should show the radiant beauty of the night life, with vivid colours and the amplified feel of luminosity.

- *'5 Autonomous, that is, resembling itself alone.'*

The vehicles depicted should resemble their real-life equivalents

- *'6 Transformable.'*

The vehicle should represent two states one in motion and one motionless

- *'7 Dramatic.'*

The image you are portraying should show some form of drama be it violence, revolution or speed

- '8 Volatile.'

Your style must be able to change to fit the times, technology is advancing at a rapid pass as should we.

- '9 Odorous.'

Your work should induce the sense of smell via strong blacks to represent petrol

Music

To be able to understand and fully comprehend the themes and emotions behind futurist music, I believe it would be best to look at the *Manifesto of Futurist Musicians* 1910 by Francesco Balilla Pratella. I will be quoting anything I deem of importance from the list at the end of the manifesto and giving my reasoning behind it whilst the futurist music plays in the background. There will be a link in the description so you can read the full manifesto during your own time. <https://www.unknown.nu/futurism/musicians.html>

## Pratella Musica Futurista Op30 - Ruocchio 2009

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7y3UAvMKtY>

- '1 To convince young composers...free study as the only means of regeneration.'

To me this is a statement about academia leading young and developing music students astray, by not teaching new and developing art movements to them. As the present is often more important than the past when it concerns the development of students and their individual styles. It also suggests that students drop out of the academic system in



favor of explain their musical talents for free instead of paying to go to an institution.

- '2 To combat the venal and ignorant critics with assiduous contempt'

This is a statement about most critics having alter motives and often being told write either discrediting or misleading articles on emerging artists. This is usually the doing of galleries and collectors whose investment would be put in jeopardy If the genre they sunk their fortune into suddenly went out of style.

- '3 To abstain from participating in any competition with...admission charges, denouncing all mystifications publicly, and unmasking the incompetence of juries'

This is basically a call for the boycott of contests which charge for entry, as well as their misleading and obscure advertising methods. As well as making judges reveal their identity's if they are going to judge a contest.

- '4 To keep at a distance from commercial or academic circles, despising them, and preferring a modest life to bountiful earnings acquired by selling art.'

Not allowing academia, galleries, collectors and critics to control or profit from their work.

- '5 feeling and singing with the spirit open to the future, drawing inspiration and aesthetics from nature, through all the human and extra-human phenomena present in it. Exalting the man-symbol everlastingly renewed by the varied aspects of modern life and its infinity of intimate relationships with nature.'

Taking inspiration from the future not the past, not rehashing or reinterpreting the old masters; to gain inspiration form nature coinciding with man and to use the sounds of nature and man-made marvels within their music.

- '6 to shape in Italy a Futurist musical taste, destroying doctrinaire, academic and soporific values, declaring the phrase "let us return to the old masters" to be hateful, stupid and vile.'

They wished to influence the ideals and musical taste of the Italian public, by rewriting what is considered to be stylish, proper and to renew the music industry.

- '7 To proclaim that the reign of the singer must end, and that the importance of the singer in relation to a work of art is the equivalent of the importance of an instrument in the orchestra.'

At the time I believe to wasn't very common to see orchestras and musicals to be treated in the same manner as singers. I believe this might be true even today, having singers and solo musicians put up on a pedestal whilst larger orchestras receiving little attention beyond large plays and productions.

- '9 To combat categorically all historical reconstructions and traditional stage sets and to declare the stupidity of the contempt felt for contemporary dress.'

They wished to change the way in which stages and plays are set, due to the lack of free will in which they get to express themselves both in the way they dress and the music the play.

- '11 To provoke in the public an ever-growing hostility towards the exhumation of old works which prevents the appearance of innovators,'

To drive the public to want more from the music industry, to stop the giants from the industry disrupting progress. By publishing misleading and harmful articles, only promoting the work that they see as proper and using everything in their power to overshadow the emerging talented musicians.

## Sculpture

Now I would like to move onto the topic of Sculpture mainly the work of Umberto Boccioni titled Unique Forms of Continuity in Space 1913. You might be asking yourself why I find this to be a symbolic representation of futurism? Well to understand why I believe this I want you to imagine a human runner, now think about every body movement that must be made to achieve that momentum. Captured here are the contracting and extending body parts shown by the warped figure, the twists and adjustments we make to achieve balance and the flapping cloths of the figure also give the proportion of speed or even wind resistance. Now I would like you think about the most historical representation of human anatomy within the Italian arts, what should immediately come to mind is Michelangelo's David. What you see before you is an amazingly defined

portrayal of man the strong, unmoving and graceful; this is what the movement of futurism wished to change. Instead of arms strong arms holding a sling, we get arms lost within the movement of the body, where the strong muscular body looks towards Rome, the Forms of Continuity are lost in the Space between A and B; lastly what was consider to be the ideal male is made irrelevant by the posture and speed that is indicative of a race that is the symbol of change.

## Photography

As for photography I would like to look at the work of Anton Giulio Bragaglia and his brother Arturo Bragaglia, who developed the photography technique called photodynamism, to achieve this method they would use a small aperture with multiple light sources, in a dark enclosed room and a black backdrop. For the actual image I would like to look at this Typewriter, 1911 by Anton Giulio Bragaglia, first we must ask ourselves why the focus on the typewriter, it can't just be because of its mechanical workings? No it's because of its significance being the main way in which one would write and communicate their deepest morals and thoughts for the masses to read; this combined with the frantic movements of someone's hands typing away, shows the futuristic convention speed not in the sense of distance traveled, but in the sense of the progression and articulation of thought.

## Architecture

Let's move on to the use of futurism in architecture, for this subject I would like to talk about the work of Antonio Sant'Elia who's architectural designs and influence would later lead him signing the 'Manifesto of Futurist Architecture' in 1914. In this manifesto it highlights the main goals of the futurist architects in the sections "I combat and despise:", 'And Proclaim:', here are some of the more important points we must considered when looking at Antonio's work. I'll explain their meaning after each quote and I'll also provide a link in the description so you can look at the manifesto in greater detail in your own time.

<https://www.abc.net.au/cm/lb/4285602/data/manifesto-of-futurist-architecture-data.pdf>

- I combat and despise:
- 'All the pseudo-architecture...All classical architecture...The embalming, reconstruction and reproduction of ancient

- monuments and palaces'
- 
- Basically put the futurist architects disliked the fake and pretentious architecture of their age that tried to elevate and
- imitate classical themes. They hated the preservation and replication of the past. They believed that the future belonged
- to the new, innovate and daring builders of their day.

- And proclaim:

- '1 That Futurist architecture is the architecture of calculation,... temerity and of simplicity.....all those substitutes for wood'

It was their firm belief that the future of architecture should be based of accuracy and mathematics, much like the mechanical precision that allows car to run. Yet the architecture needed to be bold but manageable and made with materials stronger, flexible and reliable yet as cost efficient as wood

- '3 That oblique and elliptic lines are dynamic, and by their very nature possess an emotive power a thousand times stronger than perpendiculars and horizontals'

It can be seen in all of Antonio work, that the use of parallel and right angles are not used only slanting and elliptic angles are shown; this is to help convey the feeling of motion in a still object.

- '4 the decorative value of Futurist architecture depends solely on the use and original arrangement'

The futurist buildings should not be adapted, modified or added on to in any shape or form.

- '5 pre- established criteria is finished'

If they had acutely built any buildings according to the futurist plans, then it wouldn't follow any rules or guidelines set by the establishment or law. It's no wonder why there is no functional futurist architecture today.

- '8 fundamental characteristics of Futurist architecture will be its impermanence and transience. Things will endure less thanus. Every generation must build its own city.'

- Futurist architecture would be temporary and short lived, so that every generation would have their future build around them to enable them to have their own creative and vision for the world realized. In a sense the purpose of futurist architecture was predetermined to be destroyed to make room for the next generation of architects.

## Film

For film I wanted to take a brief look at the movie *Thaïs* directed by Anton Giulio Bragaglia, which is the only surviving film of Italian futurism cinema. However only 35 minutes of the original 70 minutes are currently known to have survived. The plot of this film is of the basic love story and isn't really that relevant to what I wish to talk about. The set design however is a truly amazing representation of the futurism with a stunning use of geometry expressing bold slanting lines with direct your eyes towards the main character and emphasizes her state of emotional distress. Even when the camera is still the use of these designs seems to bring the scene to life, creating movement when the person on screen moves in relation to the background.

Another use of these backgrounds was to give a sense of scale and depth to the sense, making an enclosed room seem vast by comparison to other shots. Using these methods the producers were able to create new ways of portraying and encapsulating their vision on a tight budget.

I would still like to talk about film for a few more minutes, as you see I wanted to bring to your attention the movie classic master piece *Metropolis* 1927 and how it seems to reflect much of what futurism tried to show. Notice how the landscape shots all depict towering skyscrapers made of glass, metal and concrete, how they're presented at an angle and built with a slightly elliptical feel; this can easily be seen in the design of the Tower of Babel held at the center of the city. Something else to note is the many common themes of futurism that are presented within this moving, such as classism, revolution, becoming one with machine, the distraction of the old and the advancement of technological wonders leading to a new way of living.

In the end the revolution that the futurists had hope their moment to be to not come to pass. They hoped to inspire a cultural revolution that would change the way with think about our relationship to machine, how we may develop our society in a way in which nurtures the creativity of the next generation, that doesn't consider the history more important than the future, a place that doesn't favor the rich or try to suppress the new and bold.

But what would be of the arts if they had succeeded? I find the answer might be in the movie Metropolis, towards the end of the movie the workers take to arms to destroy the very machines that are their livelihoods, the same machines they metaphorically feed themselves to in one scene. Very much a representation of futurism agenda and how it would lead to their own downfall, by giving themselves to the machines they end up destroying what they love most. That is to say, by destroy the history and academy of the arts they might hope to rebuild what's left but all art must have a history and a foundation, as without that all we are left with a story without a beginning very much like The Tower of Babel. A story where humanity becomes to prosperous so god punishes us by dividing us. Art is naturally subjective yet it has a life of its own, we might not be able to perceive this life as living being; but just a machine that is constantly moving and shifting with the times, art is always advancing both in its range, its ability and the effect it has on us. No one definition of art will last forever just as no one system or technology will be considered advanced forever, everything in existence has an expiration date. The very same can be said about Futurism, even though it might have a name that suggests something yet to come it is very much something of the past, both in philosophy and in practice. However at the very end of the movie there is one sense that does suggest an uplifting note of please and change for the future, perhaps that was the end goal they wished for but were not able to achieve because they focused too much on the future instead of the present.