

# Russian Constructivism Photography

By Donna Geer

# Constructivism Defined

- Primary focus on construction rather than composition
- Creation of art fostering an industrialized version, putting into mass production creations designed and produced as functional objects
- Art was based on materials used and was not for esthetics
- Art as a means of social purpose and not just as an object
- Embodied all forms of art, including photography
- Began in 1913 and ended in the mid 1920s in Russia; internationally, the movement survived in Germany until the 1950s

# Vladimir Tatlin (1885 - 1953)

- Vladimir Tatlin, Soviet painter, architect and sculptor, started the Russian Constructivism movement in 1919
- Important figure in the Soviet avant-garde art movement in the 1920's



# Monument to the Third International (1919 - 1920)

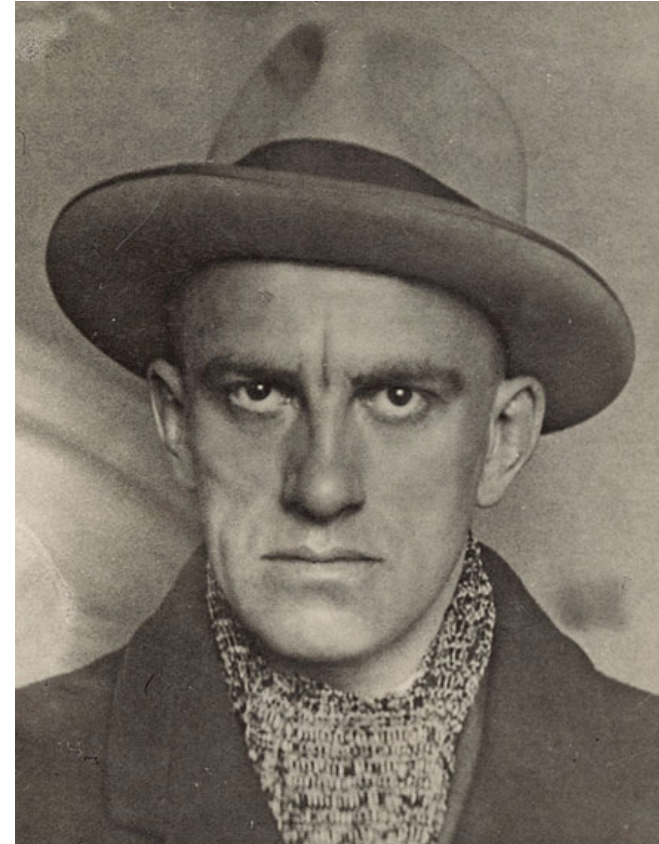


- Vladimir Tatlin's popular design and model, based on iron, steel and glass, was never produced
- Following the Bolshevik Revolution, structure was meant to be taller than the Eiffel Tower

Picture courtesy of By Unknown -  
<http://barista.media2.org/?cat=14&paged=2>, Public Domain,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12958279>

# Aleksander Mikhailovich Rodchenko (1891 – 1956)

- Aleksander Rodchendo was a sculptor, photographer and graphic designer
- Most famous work in 1923 is the photomontage for Vladimir Mayakovsky's poem About This



[https://www.google.com/search?q=vladimir+mayakovsky+poem+illustrated+by+vladimir+mayakovsky&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi\\_g\\_Gs08rTAhVC2WMKHdNPcKQsAQIRQ&biw=1422&bih=781#imgrc=KVFuk-Ai6EBOoM:](https://www.google.com/search?q=vladimir+mayakovsky+poem+illustrated+by+vladimir+mayakovsky&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi_g_Gs08rTAhVC2WMKHdNPcKQsAQIRQ&biw=1422&bih=781#imgrc=KVFuk-Ai6EBOoM:)

# Photomontage



- News photographs were rearranged into abstract parts and combined to make one new abstract design
- A single photograph was created of the final montage
- Photomontage from Aleksander Rodchendo

[https://www.google.com/search?q=vladimir+mayakovsky+poem+illustrated+by+vladimir+mayakovsky&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi\\_g\\_Gs08rTAhVC2WMKHdNPCkQQsAQIRQ&biw=1422&bih=781#imgrc=KVfuk-Ai6EBOoM:](https://www.google.com/search?q=vladimir+mayakovsky+poem+illustrated+by+vladimir+mayakovsky&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi_g_Gs08rTAhVC2WMKHdNPCkQQsAQIRQ&biw=1422&bih=781#imgrc=KVfuk-Ai6EBOoM:)

# LEF's Influence on Photography



- LEF (Left Front of the Arts) – established by the Russian Constructivists in the 1920's
- Responsible for a specific form of photography known for its jagged angles and abstract use of light
- Picture from Boris Ignatovich

# Boris Ignatovich (1899 – 1976)

- Boris Ignatovich was a photographer, photo reporter and camera man
- Popular for his avant-garde photography in the 1920s and 1930s



By Innovator BVI - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=52963527>



# Sources

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism\\_\(art\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism_(art))
- <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-tatlin-vladimir.htm>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Rodchenko](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Rodchenko)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris\\_Ignatovich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_Ignatovich)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max\\_Penson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Penson)