

tendency, led by Khlebnikov, to create a new and properly poetic language has emerged. In the light of these developments we can define poetry as *attenuated, tortuous speech*. Poetic speech is *formed speech*. Prose is ordinary speech [. . .]

4 De Stijl: 'Manifesto 1'

The De Stijl group was founded in Holland in 1917, dedicated to a synthesis of art, design and architecture. Its leading figure was Theo van Doesburg. Other members included Gerrit Rietveld and J. J. P. Oud, both architect-designers, and the painters Georges Vantongerloo and Piet Mondrian. Links were established with the Bauhaus in Weimar Germany, and with similar projects in Russia, particularly through contacts with El Lissitzky. The 'Manifesto', principally the work of van Doesburg, was composed in 1918. It was published in the group's journal *De Stijl*, V, no. 4, Amsterdam, 1922. The present translation by Nicholas Bullock is taken from Stephen Bann (ed.), *The Tradition of Constructivism*, London, 1974, p. 65.

- 1 There is an old and a new consciousness of time.
The old is connected with the individual.
The new is connected with the universal.
The struggle of the individual against the universal is revealing itself in the world war as well as in the art of the present day.
- 2 The war is destroying the old world and its contents: individual domination in every state.
- 3 The new art has brought forward what the new consciousness of time contains: a balance between the universal and the individual.
- 4 The new consciousness is prepared to realize the internal life as well as the external life.
- 5 Traditions, dogmas, and the domination of the individual are opposed to this realization.
- 6 The founders of the new plastic art, therefore, call upon all who believe in the reformation of art and culture to eradicate these obstacles to development, as in the new plastic art (by excluding natural form) they have eradicated that which blocks pure artistic expression, the ultimate consequence of all concepts of art.
- 7 The artists of today have been driven the whole world over by the same consciousness, and therefore have taken part from an intellectual point of view in this war against the domination of individual despotism. They therefore sympathize with all who work to establish international unity in life, art, culture, either intellectually or materially. [. . .]

5 Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931) from *Principles of Neo-Plastic Art*

This was van Doesburg's main statement of the principles of De Stijl. It was begun as early as 1915, first published in Dutch in 1919, and subsequently issued in Germany by the Bauhaus, as *Grundbegriffe der Neuen Gestalten Kunst*, Bauhausbuch, vol. 6, Munich, 1925. The present extract is taken from the English translation by Janet Seligman, London, 1969.