



# The Italian Futurist Movement

By Joseph Levy

# What is Futurism

- Futurism was an Italian art movement in the 20th century, which aimed to capture the dynamism, speed and energy of the industrialization of the modern world through art.
- Italian futurism glorified modernity and according to its doctrine aimed to liberate Italy from the weight of its past.
- The Italian Futurist art movement lasted from 1909-1944 and historical analysis suggests that its founders were somewhat associated with Benito Mussolini's fascist party.
- To some extent futurism would come to influence art movements like Art deco, constructivism, surrealism, dada, and the architectural neo futurism movement.

Surrealism



Dadaism



Constructivism



Neo Futurist architecture

# Filippo Tommaso Marinetti

-Filippo Tommaso Marinetti was the founder of futurist movement, as well as the author of the futurist manifesto.

- In 1908 while living in Milan, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti was driving a car and almost got into a crash, nearly killing two cyclists.
- From this experience Marinetti was enamored with the speed and dynamism of cars and other pieces of technology and became obsessed with everything the future had to offer.
- In 1909 He put his ideas on display when he created his “Manifesto of Futurism” which made the front page of the french newspaper “Le Figaro”, where it became a very popular due to its polarizing views at the time.
- In the Manifesto, Marinetti states how he wants Italy to become a hub of embracing cutting edge industry and rid Italy of old Archaic institutions like museums and libraries.



Filippo Tommaso Marinetti



Futurist Manifesto

# Founding of Futurism

-Marinetti's philosophy caught the attention of a group of young like-minded Italian artists: Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carra, Luigi Russolo, Gino Severini, Giacomo Balla.

- Inspired by Marinetti's manifesto, Boccioni, Carlo Carra and Luigi Russolo banded together to write the manifesto of futurist painters where they denounced the existing art scene as stagnant, academic, and full of copycats.
- With Gino Severini and Giacomo Balla joining their cause, this group of futurist artists began to create new art that incorporates chaotic portrayals of speed, movement, and power. The artists also used their art to glorify industrialization and war.
- These artists are the main progenitors of the Italian Futurist art movement.



Futurism Founders Group

# Umberto Boccioni

-Umberto Boccioni 1882-1916 was born in Italy and was an influential painter and sculptor.

-Despite his short life, Boccioni helped shape the revolutionary aesthetic of the futurist movement as one of its principal figures.

-His approach to the dynamism of form and deconstruction of solid mass in his art influenced many artists long after his death.

-Umberto Boccioni believes in the theory of dynamism, the futurist philosophy that a painting or sculpture should display movement and energy in an abstract or figurative piece of work.



Umberto Boccioni

# Umberto Boccioni's Artworks

-Umberto Boccioni was a passionate futurist as well as a painter and sculptor but he is also known as the main theorist of the artistic movement. In 1910 he painted "The City Rises", the painting is considered his first big step into futurism.

-It depicts the construction of the electric power plant in Milan. In the center of the composition are men who are trying to control a giant red horse. This represents one of the light motives for futurists which is the conflict between humans and nature.

-futurists believe that humans can subdue nature, that it can triumph over it.

-Boccioni uses Divisionist painting techniques while creating this work of art.



The City Rises by Umberto Boccioni.

## More artworks by Umberto Boccioni

In 1911 Boccioni painted “The Laugh” and is considered to be his first Completely futuristic work, for he turned his back on the divisionism Techniques he would use prior to painting “The Laugh”.

In Boccioni’s three panel series “States of Mind” contain the paintings known as “The Farewell” “Those who go” , and “Those who stay” are major statements of futuristic art that represent the complex experience of the modern world. It represents the existence and motion of the object through the combination of memories, present awareness and the expectation of future events.

“The farewell” by Umberto Boccioni



“Those who go” by Umberto Boccioni



“Those Who Stay” by Umberto Boccioni



“The laugh” by Umberto boccioni

## Umberto Boccioni Artworks continued...

-In 1913 Boccioni made the sculpture “Unique Forms of Continuity in Space” It represents the relationship between the object and its environment and is one of the pieces closely related to his theory of dynamism.

-The Futurists’ celebration of fast paced mechanical power of the modern world is emphasized in the sculpture’s dynamism and energy. The figure’s marching silhouette appears deformed by wind and speed, while its sleek metal contours allude to machinery.

-World War I broke out the year after this work was created. Believing that modern technological warfare would shatter Italy’s obsession with its classical past, futurists welcomed this war, and Boccioni was killed in action in 1916 at age 34.



“Unique Forms of Continuity in Space” by Umberto Boccioni



Video explanation.



# Giacomo Balla

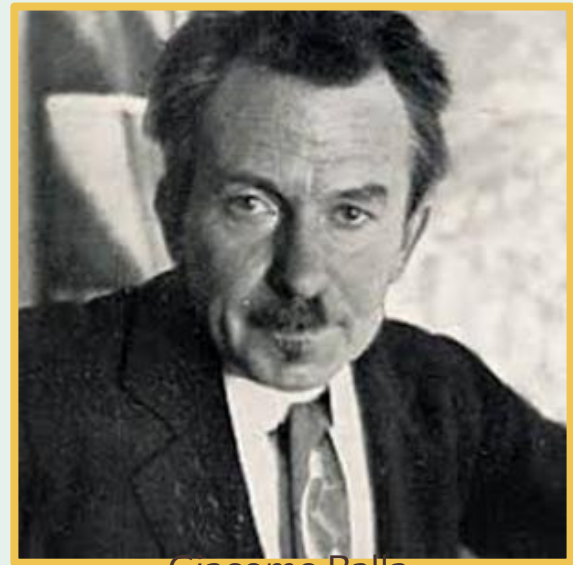
-Giacomo Balla ( 1871-1958) was an Italian painter, art teacher, and a key proponent of futurism.

- Balla was concerned with expressing movement in his works, but unlike other futurists he wasn't as interested in machines or violence, rather he was interested in his works depicting the witty and whimsical.

-As a Signatory of Marinetti's futurist manifesto, Balla adopted the futurism style creating a pictorial depiction of light movement and speed.

-With this new style of painting he created "Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash" in 1912 and "Abstract Speed + Sound" in 1914.

- He began to design futurist furniture and eventually became a sculptor in 1915 and designed the sculpture named "Boccioni's Fist, Based on Lines of Force".



Giacomo Balla



"Boccioni's Fist, Based on Lines of Force"

# Giacomo Balla's Artworks

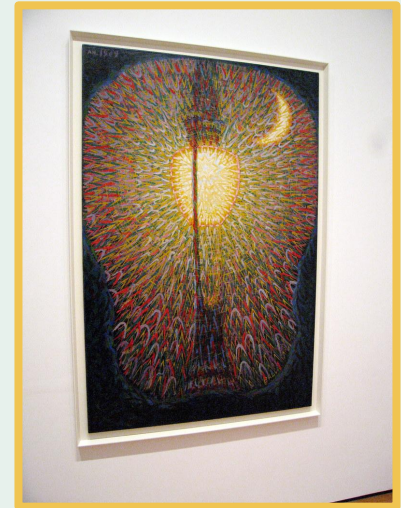
-In 1909 Giacomo Balla painted "The Street Lights". This painting typifies his exploration of light atmosphere and motion.

-Giacomo Balla uses divisionism styles in this painting where the lights are divided into multiple separate units.

-In 1912 Balla created his most famous work "Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash" where in the painting he aims to express movement through the passage of time through painting. This painting was inspired by the chronophotography of Etienne-Jules-Marey.



"Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash" by Giacomo Balla

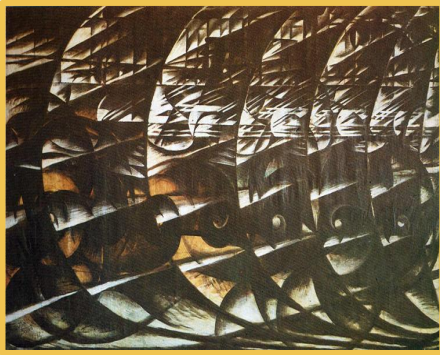


"The Street Lights" by Giacomo Balla

## Giacomo Balla Artworks continued..

-In 1914 Balla Painted “Abstract Speed + Sound”. The painting is interpreted as a study of speed and narrates the passage of a racing car through a landscape in the two other paintings inside of it.

-It is the Second installment of a triptych and is the intermediate stage between paintings “Abstract Speed”, and “The Car has Passed”.



“Abstract Speed” by Giacomo Balla”



“Abstract Speed + Sound” by Giacomo Balla



“The Car Has Passed” by Giacomo Balla

## Carlo Carra Artworks

-In 1911 Carlo Carra painted “Funeral of the Anarchist Galli”  
The painting depicts the violent funeral of anarchist Angelo Galli, an event Carra witnessed in his early adulthood.

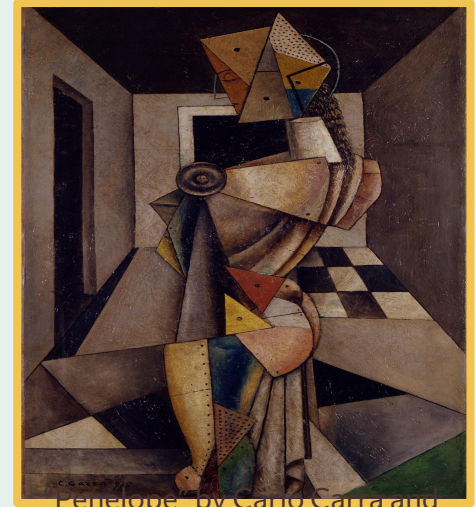
-Reception of the piece has praised its use of intense heavy lines as means to display movement. The Futurist Manifesto praises Carra’s adaptation of Pablo Picasso’s cubist techniques  
In this piece.

In 1917 After World War I, Carlo Carra Collaborated with Giorgio de Chirico to Paint “Penelope”, in this painting Carlo Carra makes the transition To Futurist art into Metaphysical art.

-This was the point in time when he began implementing mannequin styles and stillness in his work. The painting has shapes That indicate Cubism While also sharing some nods to Futurism .



“Funeral of the Anarchist Galli” by Carlo Carra.



Penelope by Carlo Carra and Giorgio de Chirico.

# Carlo Carra video

- This video will further explain the artworks of Carlo Carra



## Gino Severini and Luigi Russolo's artworks

-In 1912 Gino Severini painted the “Dynamic Hieroglyph of the Bell Tavern”.

- Gino Severini took some inspiration from cubism and synthesized the style with futurism in order to create this work of art.

-in 1913 Luigi Russolo painted “Dynamism of a Car”.

-This painting's fragmentation and reassembly into of an aerodynamic car suggests cubist influences.

-Horizontally stacked red arrows indicate the direction of the car's motion. The compression of the arrows on the left also suggests that the car is moving at an extremely high speed.

-Due to its focus on speed and machinery, this artwork exemplifies the futurist ideas proposed in Marinetti's manifesto of futurism.



Dynamic Hieroglyph of the Bell Tavern



“Dynamism of a Car” by Luigi Russolo

## The Next Stage of Futurism

- As well as creating art, the futurists wanted to spread their aesthetic political and social ideals as much as possible.
- Marinetti considered war and violence as a necessary step towards making a new, modern Italy, and the artists who supported him were encouraged to fight for their country.
- This led to the death of some of its members like Boccioni which stopped the movement in its tracks.
- As this was happening Mussolini was rising to power and Marinetti who formed his Futurist political party joined Mussolini's fascist party and went on to write its manifesto causing him to play a big role in Mussolini's fascist regime.
- However, after the WWI the movement again revived into what was called "second futurism". The futurist artists in the 1920s were focused on "mechanical art" representing modernity and the industrial city.
- In the 1930s, Futurist artist focused on a new style of futurist art called aeropittura a movement focused on the aerial perspective of the world in aviation.



Photo of Marinetti and Mussolini standing side by side



## Mechanical Futurist Art (1920)

-In the 1920s futurist celebrated the triumphs of machinery and the futurist manifesto of mechanical art was written by Palniggi and Panagi.

-Across the pre-war and post war periods, mechanical art and Aesthetics were seen in stage designs of Fortunato Depero who took Inspiration from the manifesto.

-In the pictorial field we can see some signs of Depero's Addition to what was called the "Mechanical Dynamic Course" In his works such as "Depero and the Metropolis".

In 1926 Depero created his masterpiece, a painting named "La Rissa Discussione del 3000 (The Brawl or The Argument of 3000)" It represented a ballet of heavy rhythms. It displayed a row of robots With outstretched arms brandishing furniture with wine and food flying In the air. The painting represented reality on the level of rustic mechanical actions



Depero and the Metropolis by Fortunato Depero



"The Brawl or the Argument of 3000 by Fortunato Depero"

## Aeropittura 1930s Futurism

Aeropainting mainly known as “Aeropittura” was a major expression of the second generation of futurism starting in 1926.

- Aeropainting was launched in a manifesto of 1929 named “Perspectives of flight” signed by various artists like Gerardo Dottori, Tullia Cralli, and Tato (Guglielmo Sansoni).

-Aeropittura emerged from the futurists interest in modern aircraft and photogenic technologies. Propelled by Italy’s military preeminence in aviation, their fascination with the machine shifted from automobile to airplane.

-As we will soon see from the works of Cralli, Dottori, and Tato Aeropittura represented a novel painting approach that allowed the Futurists to address nationalism, speed, technology, and war, providing radical perspectives that exalted these concepts.

- Benito Mussolini equated his fascist regime with the Roman empire at its peak, not coincidentally, artworks from the 1930s incorporated imagery from Roman antiquity.



Gerardo Dottori



Self portrait of Tato

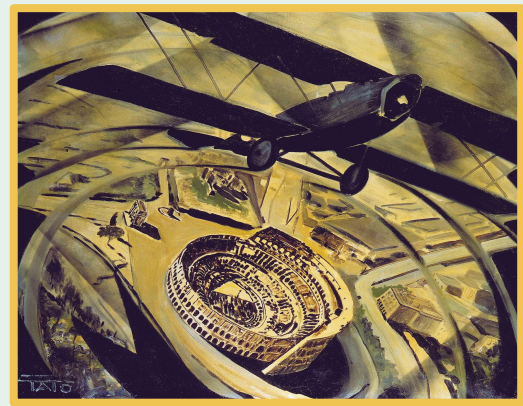
## Aeropittura artworks

-Tato's painting named "Flying over the Coliseum in a Spiral"(1930) Depicts an airplane soaring above an iconic Italian structure the circles of the plane's path echoing the ancient building's form. Roman antiquity is incorporated in this work of art.

-Dottori was the author of the aeropainting manifesto signed in 1929 His painting "Ascending Forms" (or "Ascending Forces") is a well known example of futurist aerial landscape. This painting is created with the context of the Futurist's fascination with observing nature from a moving airplane.

- Landscape painting used to focus on calm, still scenes like countryside views. But then, when futurism emerged this style of painting became more dynamic. There were two main movements happening: first, the actual shapes in the painting seemed to move and change constantly.

-Secondly, the artist's brushstrokes created a sense of movement as they shaped and modified the scene while painting. Dottori used this approach in creating "Ascending Forms."



"Flying over the Coliseum in a Spiral" by Tato (Guglielmo Sansoni)



"Ascending Forms( Ascending Forces)" by Gerardo Dottori

## Aeropittura artworks continued...

-In 1932 Tullio Crali painted “Tricolour Wings”. In this painting Crali depicts the plane ascending in sudden stages, scattering its target bubbles. The plane’s geometry, repeated as if in stop-start motion perfectly describes the sharp sensation of sudden arial uplift, catching at each new thermal current.

-Crali’s inspiration for this painting came from his awe of the consciousness-altering potential of taking to the skies and seeing the world from new perspectives..

-In 1938 Tullio Crali painted “The Upside Down Loop (Death Loop)” which depicts a pilot’s open cockpit view while the plane is upside down during and aerobatic maneuver, where the pilot relies on the G-forces generated by the plane’s high speed to keep him from falling.

-This painting in the Aeropittura group stands out for coming close to the goal of conjuring motion in an immobile medium like painting.



“Tricolour Wings” by Tullio Crali.



“The Upside Down Loop (Death Loop)” by Tullio Crali.

# Tullio Crali Video Explanation

- This video comes to give a further explanation on Tullio Crali's futurist philosophy while displaying his works of Aeropittura art.
- Cralli continued to produce futurist aeropittura art up until the 1980s.



# The Death of Futurism




-Marinetti's association with Mussolini caused the Futurism movement to become associated with Mussolini's fascist Ideals as:

-Both movements were patriotic, supported disruption glorified workers, and opposed parliamentary democracy.

-Although this bolstered futurism reputation at the time, it would severely damage its reputation in the future when facism was ultimately condemned.

-After the second world war younger artists wanted to return to traditional art styles due having different, and nostalgic ideals.

-As a consequence of this, When Marinetti died in 1944, and the futurist movement for the most part would die along with it.



# Where to Find Futurist Art.

-Majority of the art pieces presented in this presentation can be found in the Guggenheim museum. Located on 1071 Fifth Avenue between 88th and 89th streets on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in New York City.

-This videos contains a summary of Futurism given by the Guggenheim Museum.





**The End.**

**Thanks for Watching!!**