

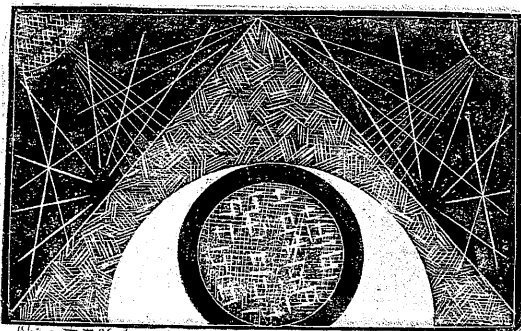
Peter Weibel

Viennese Kinetism and Hungarian Constructivism (2005)

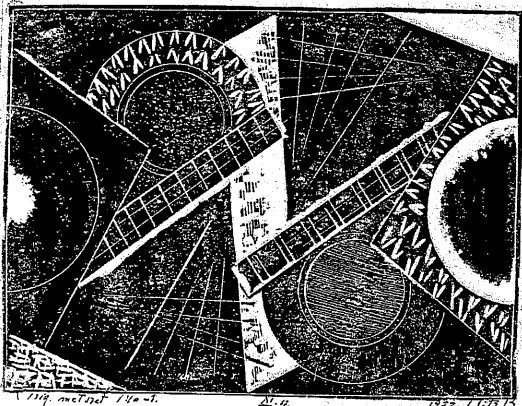
Béla Uitz, born 1887 in Mehal-Temesvár (Romania). Studied at the University of Applied Arts, Budapest, 1907. First exhibition in Budapest, 1914. From 1916 publisher of the magazine *MA* together with L. Kassák. Director of the Arts School for Workers, 1919. After the fall of the Soviet Republic he emigrated to Vienna. Journey to Moscow, participated at the III Congress of the Comintern, 1921. Encountered the Russian avant-garde and their constructivist manifesto. End of friendship with L. Kassák, 1922. Uitz founded the magazine *Egység (Unity)* together with Aládár Comját in Vienna. 1922-1924 he was living in Paris, writing under the pseudonym W. U. Martel for various magazines. Worked as a poster artist and set designer. From 1926 he lived in the Soviet Union and taught composition at WCHUTEMAS/ WCHUTEIN. Director of planning of decorative works in public places. Organizer of the International Bureau of Revolutionary Artists, 1930-1934. From 1950 commissions for monumental frescos together with a collective. In 1970 he returned to Budapest, where he died in 1972.

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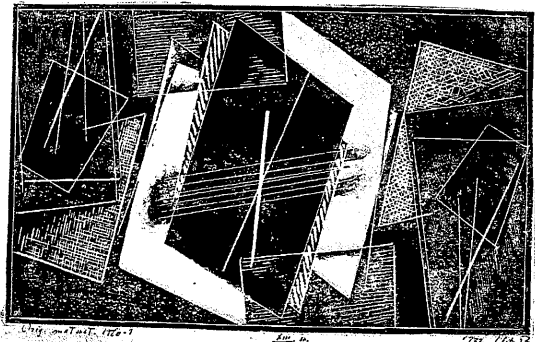
Éva Bajkay, *Béla Uitz. Arbeiten auf Papier aus den Jahren 1913-25* (Budapest-Vienna: Graphische Sammlung Albertina, 1991).



Béla Uitz, *Analysis VII*, 1922
Linocut, 20 x 32.2 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



Béla Uitz, *Analysis XI*, 1922
Linocut, 20.5 x 26.1 cm
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Béla Uitz, *Analysis XIII*, 1922
Linocut, 20 x 32.4 cm
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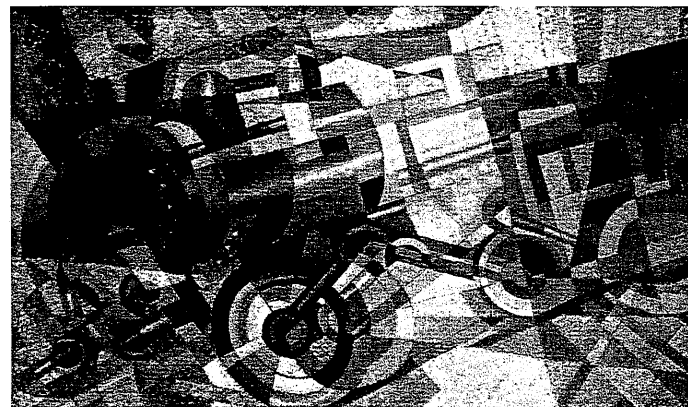
Beyond Art - ... Culture

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Peter Weibel



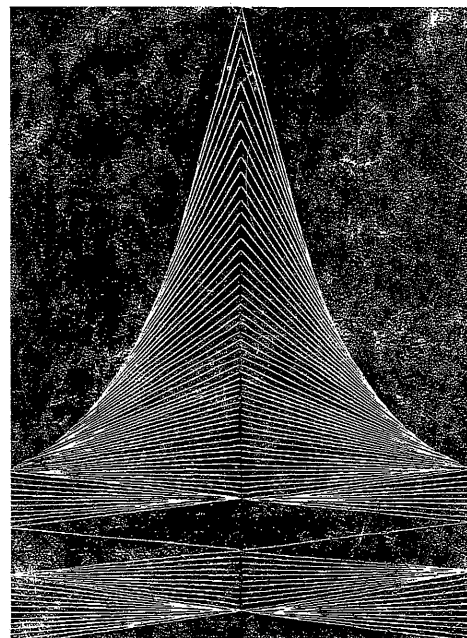
Erika Giovanna Klien
Composition with Circles, c. 1923



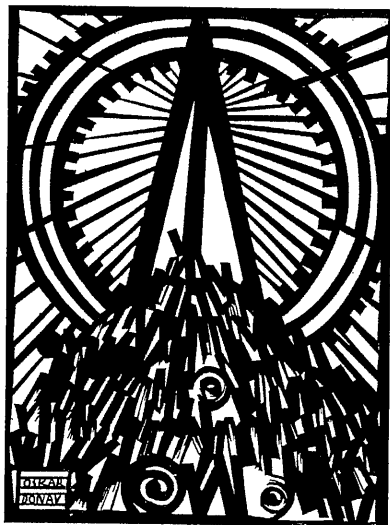
Erika Giovanna Klien, *Engine*, 1926
Oil, tempera on canvas, 59.5 x 100 cm



Erika Giovanna Klien, *Figure in Motion*, c. 1933-35
Original Linocut plate



Erika Giovanna Klien, *Bird Flight II*, c. 1935
Linocut



Oskar Donau
Sun Wheel, 1918
Linocut, 26 x 36 cm



János Mattis-Teutsch
Rhythm (Landscape), 1917
Linocut, 23.3 x 33 cm



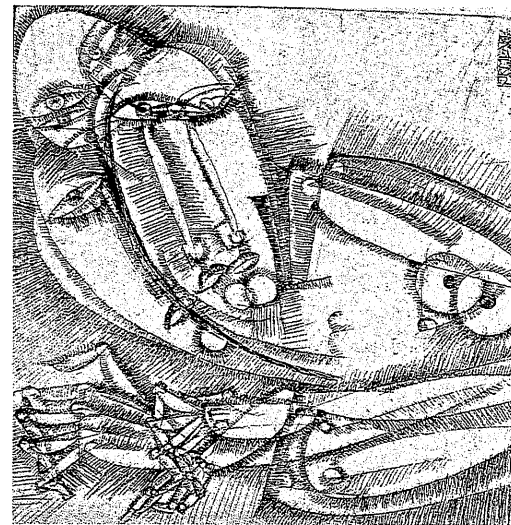
Béla Uitz, *Landscape in Hietzing Under Cloudy Sky*,
1920, Etching, 65.5 x 50 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



Béla Uitz, *The Fisher*, 1920
Tempera on cardboard, 90 x 12.6 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



János Mattis-Teutsch, *Man*, 1920
Linocut, 24.7 x 13.3 cm



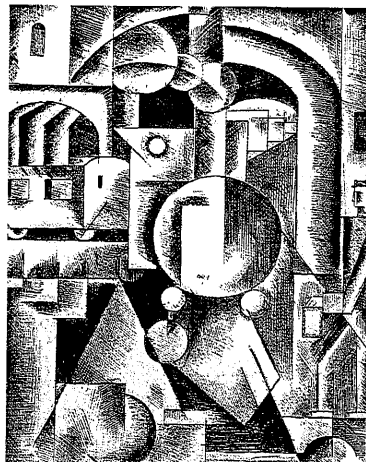
Irmgard Lang, *Girl I*, 1923
Etching, 35 x 50 cm



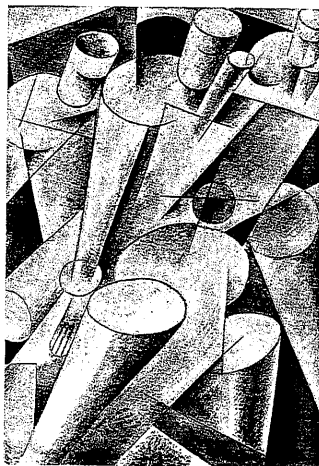
Béla Uitz, *Abstract Self-Portrait*, 1920
Colored Chinese ink, 53 x 45.5 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



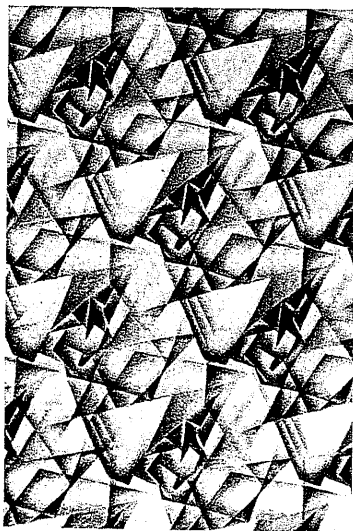
Béla Uitz, *Two Heads in the Space*, 1920
Chinese ink, 53.6 x 45 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



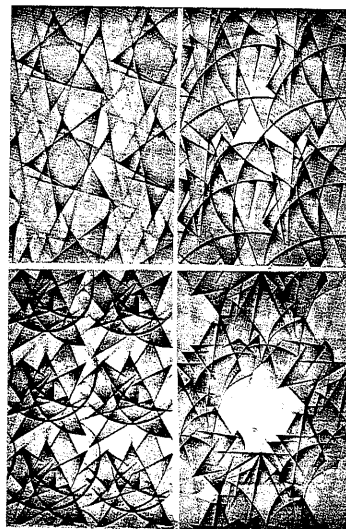
Sándor Bortnyik, *The Train Station*, 1921
Etching, 31.5 x 24.5 cm



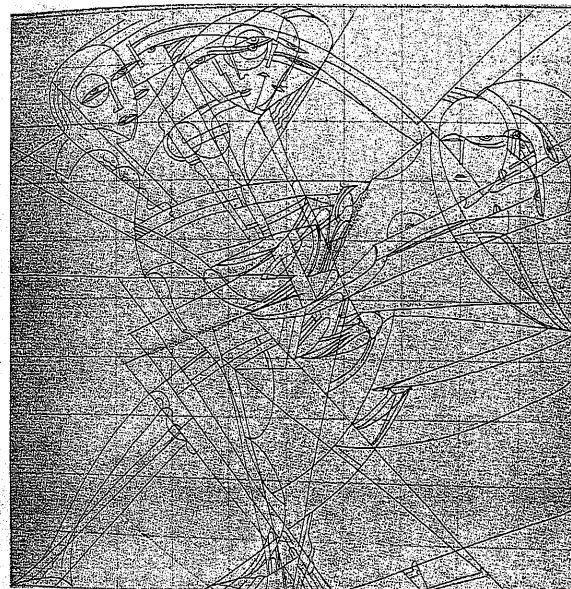
Sándor Bortnyik, *The Marching*, 1921
Watercolor, 27 x 19 cm



Gertrude Fischel, *Kinetic Ornament*, 1921
Sketches for tapestry



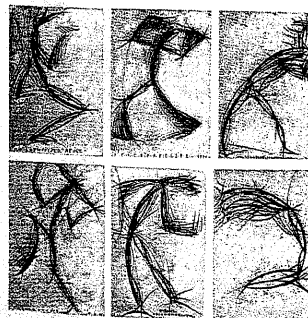
Fritzi Nechansky, *4 Abstract Compositions*, 1922
Charcoal, paper on cardboard, 22.98 x 63 cm



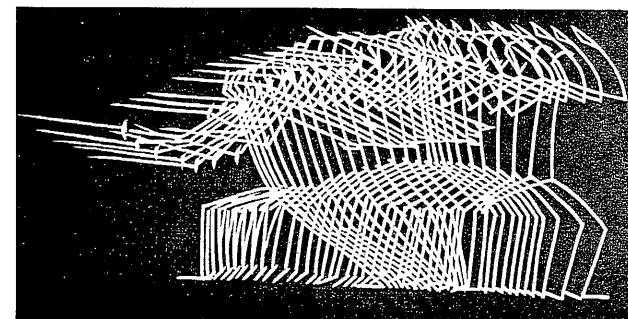
Otto Erich Wagner, *Dancers*, c. 1922
Chinese ink, cardboard, pencilled grid
31 x 30 cm



Gerta Hammerschmied, *Rhythmic Figure*, 1923
Linocut
42.5 x 34.5 cm



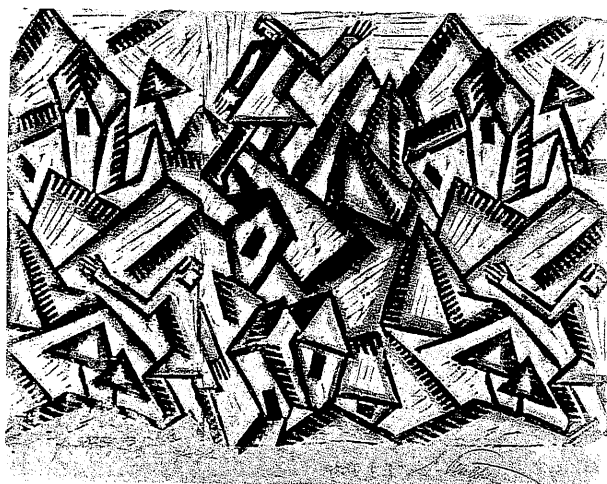
Heinz Reichenfelser, *Rhythms of Dance*, 1921
Charcoal on paper



Hans Hofmann, *Foil Fence*, 1924
Linocut, 15.8 x 31 cm, © VBK, Vienna, 2005



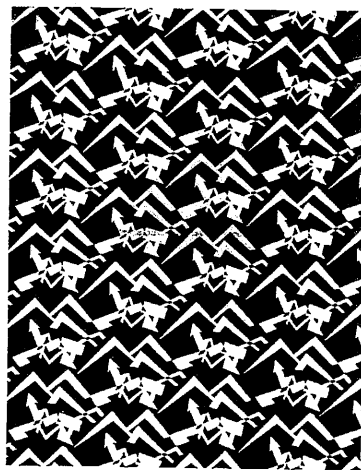
Oskar Donau, *Shelled Town*, 1918
Woodcut in black and brown



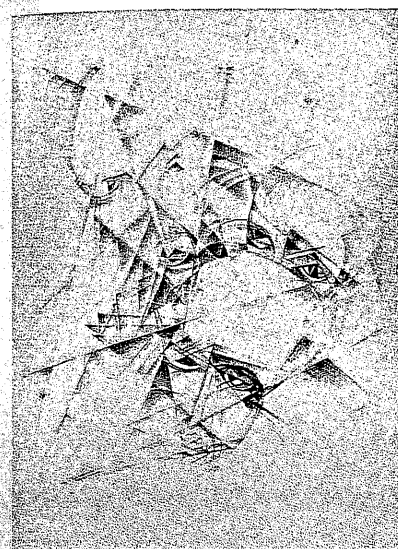
Sylvia Penher, *Town and Figures*, c. 1921/22
Woodcut, water-colored, 25 x 32 cm



Hans Pitsch, *Abstract Composition*, 1918
Linocut, 26.5 x 35.5 cm



Johanna Reismayer-Fritsche, *Abstract Composition*, c. 1922, 25.8 x 20.4 cm



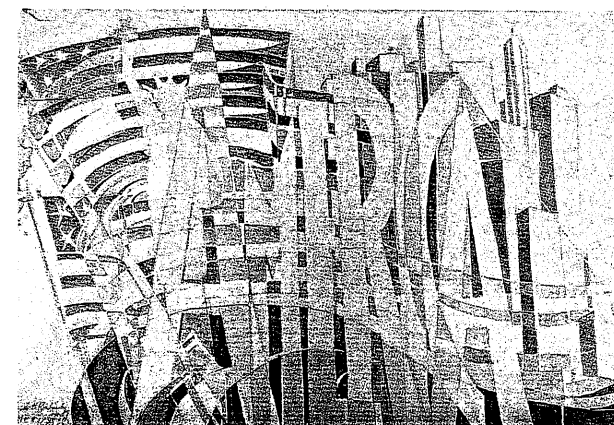
Gertrude Tomasek, *Head*, 1926
Lithography, 63 x 47.5 cm



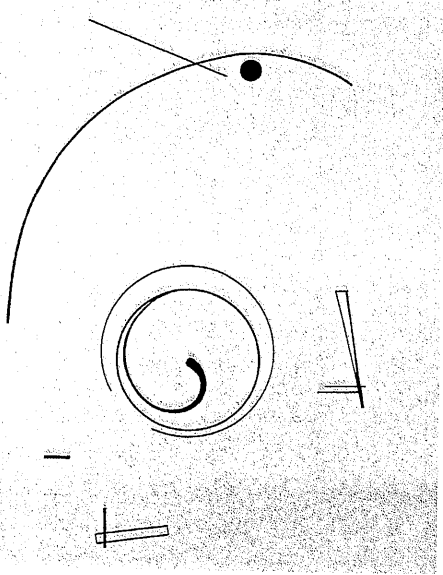
Gertrude Tomasek, *Growth, Motion, Rhythm*, 1927
Lithography, 47.5 x 31.3 cm



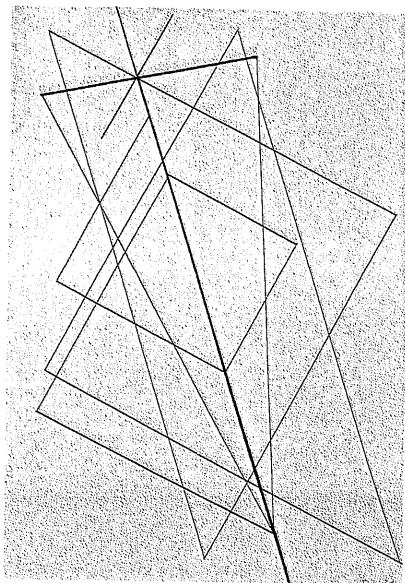
Elisabeth Karlinsky, *Motion of a Dancer*, c. 1927
Lithography, 59 x 44 cm, © VBK, Vienna, 2005



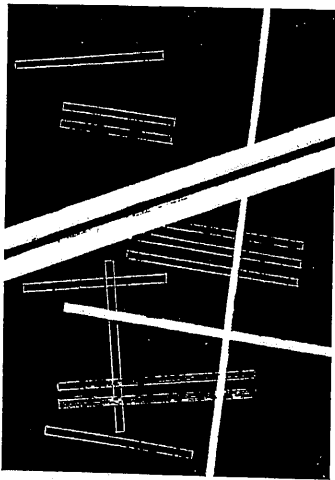
Elisabeth Karlinsky, *America*, 1928
Water-color on cardboard, 72.5 x 51 cm, © VBK, Vienna, 2005



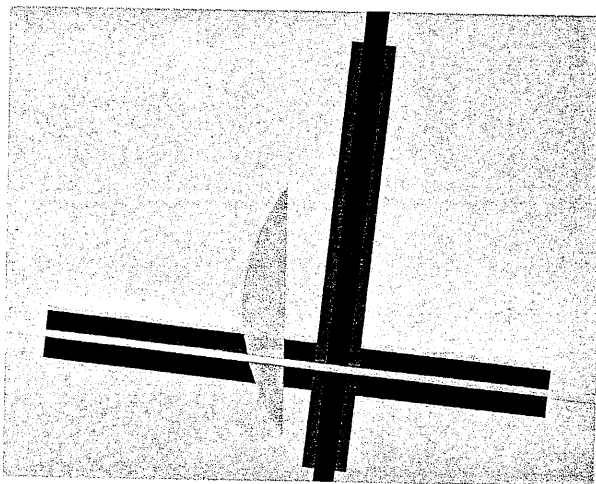
Raoul Hausmann, *Abstract Picture Idea*, 1921
Chinese ink on paper, 20.7 x 35.5 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



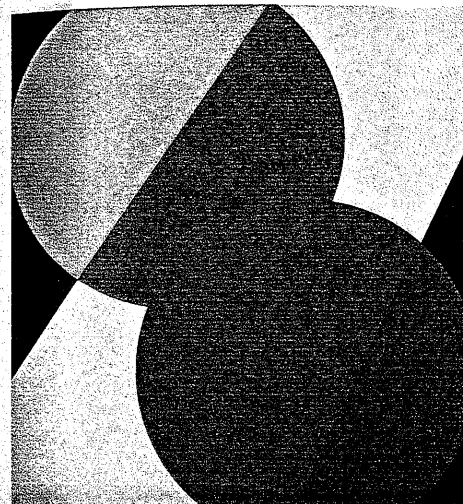
Raoul Hausmann, *Abstract Picture Idea*, 1925
Chinese ink on paper, 28.6 x 38.1 cm
© VBK, Vienna, 2005



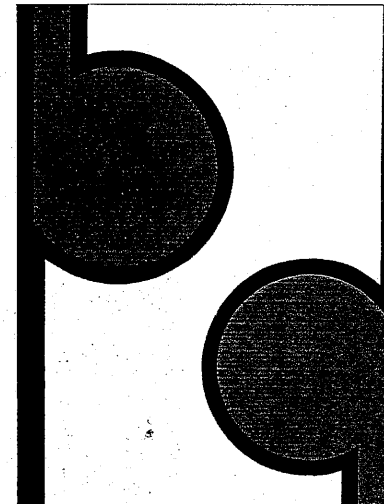
László Moholy-Nagy, *Floating Lines*, 1924
Woodcut, © VBK, Vienna, 2005



László Moholy-Nagy, *Composition IV*, 1922
Reprint 1970, 66.4 x 51 cm, © VBK, Vienna, 2005



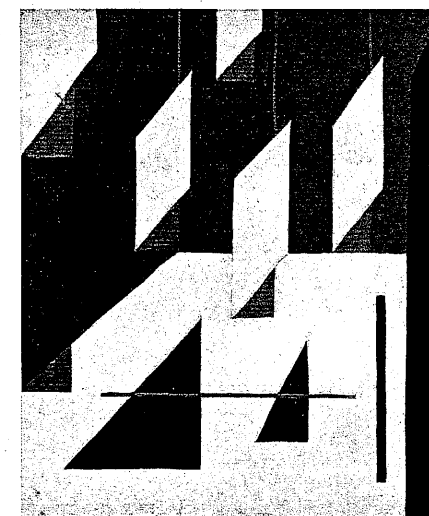
Anna Béothy-Steiner, *Two Circles*, 1930
Reprint 1972, 52.4 x 48.4 cm



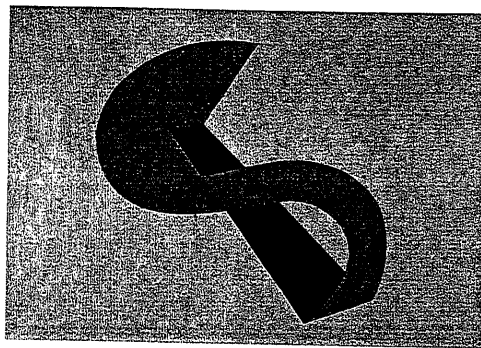
Anna Béothy-Steiner, *Geometrical Composition*, c. 1930
Gouache, 32 x 25 cm



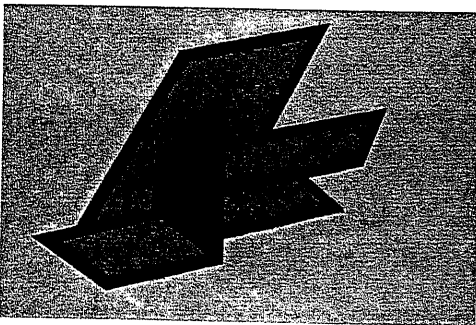
Étienne Béothy, *Composition*, 1930
Chinese ink on paper, 63.5 x 39.5 cm, © VBK, Vienna, 2005



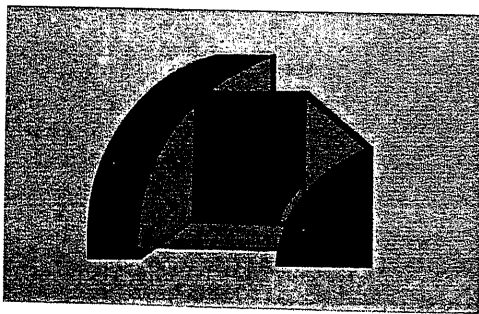
Lajos Tihanyi, *Blue-Yellow Composition*, 1934
Oil on canvas, 45.5 x 38 cm



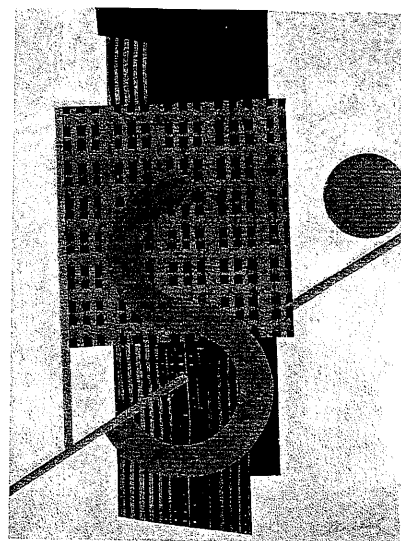
László Péri, *Linoleum Cuts, No. 12*, 1922-1923, portfolio of 12 prints
Published by *Der Sturm*, Berlin, 24.1 x 25 cm



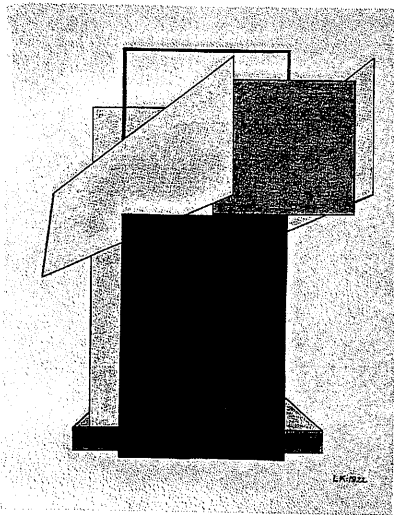
László Péri, *Linoleum Cuts, No. 1*, 1922-1923, portfolio of 12 prints
Published by *Der Sturm*, Berlin, 15.9 x 21.5 cm



László Péri, *Linoleum Cuts, No. 8*, 1922-1923, portfolio of 12 prints
Published by *Der Sturm*, Berlin, 21.4 x 28.1 cm



Lajos Kassák, *The Red "S,"* 1923
Collage, 40 x 30 cm



Lajos Kassák, *Image Architecture*, 1922
Pencil, Chinese ink, 28.3 x 22.8 cm

On the Origins of Hungarian Constructivism in Vienna: MA 1920-25 The Only Instance of Modernism Between the Wars

Hungary and Austria have in common not only many film stereotypes left over from the Habsburg monarchy, but they also share the question of their artistic avant-garde and the function of exile. As in Hungary, Austria's avant-garde, at the time it existed, had to fight bitterly for survival and was then buried in official history. Emigration, at the time, all too often appeared as the only way to resolve the conflict. For Hungary and Austria, the role of exile in the development of their avant-garde is thus related. Even more interesting, then, is the historical case of Hungary's avant-garde going to Austria for exile.

The intention of this essay is, first, to point out the highly interesting and informative fact that, in the first half of the century, Hungary's avant-garde — leading twentieth-century artists such as Vasarely, Moholy-Nagy, Kepes, Béthony, Breuer, and Kassák — brought forth an independent movement, the MA movement, which flourished most successfully in exile — namely in Vienna of the 1920s (of all places). Second, I intend to place the development of Hungarian Constructivism in the general context of logical Constructivist contributions in Vienna. It is interesting to note that, in both Hungary and Austria, the decade from 1910 to 1920 was considered Expressionist. However, under the influence of revolutionary Russian art, the exiled Hungarian avant-garde turned from Expressionism and Activism to Constructivism, while in Austria, Expressionist Activism developed further, leading to the Actionism of the 1960s.

Hungary's Avant-Garde, 1909-1930

According to Éva Körner, Hungary's avant-garde between 1909 and 1930 can be subdivided into four phases: 1909-1912, 1915-1919, 1920-1925, and 1926-1930. The two most important phases, the decade from 1915 to 1925, are tied together in the magazine *MA*, published primarily by Lajos Kassák. Kassák himself appeared to be a central figure of the avant-garde movement in the years 1915 to 1930, due to his artistic as well as theoretical and organizational activities.

Phase 1: Nyolcak, 1909-1912

The Nyolcak [or Group of Eight] consisted of painters Károly Kernstok, Róbert Berény, Dezső Czigány, Béla Czöbel, Ödön Márffy, Dezső Orbán, Bertalan Pör, and Lajos Tihanyi. The group combined a social, proletarian mission with Cézanne's early Cubist experiences. The tendency toward formalization led to the abandonment of themes and an Expressionistic focus that aimed at the essential. In addition to still-lives, nudes, portraits, and landscapes, they were also the first urban artists to turn cityscapes into abstract monumental compositions that could have been borrowed from the Renaissance.

Phase 2: Activist Avant-Garde, 1915-1919

The writer and later painter Lajos Kassák (1887-1967), who, stimulated by the writer and later painter, Emil Szittya (1886-1964), had discovered German Expressionism. Inspired by Franz Pfemfert's magazine, *Die Aktion*, which began publication in 1910, Kassák also founded the activist group and magazine, *A Tett* [The action], in 1915. The magazine combined internationalism, socialism, and Expressionism with futuristic dynamics, publishing Apollinaire, Ivan Goll, Marinetti, and others. The October 1916 issue of *A Tett*, with contributions from Emil Verhaeren, George Duhamel, George Bernard Shaw, and Wassily Kandinsky, was banned because of its antiviral position. Kassák initiated a new journal, *MA* [Today], whose first issue appeared one month later in November 1916.

In Vienna in 1924, Kassák began to write his six-volume, two-part autobiography, *Egy Ember Élete* [One man's life]. Kassák, who came from a poor family, was a workman until the age of twenty-two. In Budapest he made contact with the worker's movement early on. At twenty-two he left Hungary and wandered around Europe with his friend, Gödrös, a wood carver. It was then that he met Szittya. Kassák was in Paris in 1909, but in 1910 he returned to Budapest. Familiar with all the "-isms" — particularly with Picasso, Modigliani, Apollinaire, and Cendrars, who was a friend of Szittya — he became their proponent in Hungary.

In the beginning, *MA* had the subtitle *Magazine for Activistic Art* (later *Activistic Magazine*). The painter Béla Uitz was long-time co-editor with Kassák. As the subtitle indicates, in the beginning *MA* still had Expressionist-Activist tendencies, and it developed slowly at first, but quickly in Vienna it became a forum for Constructivism, which to a great degree would become synonymous with the Hungarian avant-garde. But like German Expressionism, *MA*'s program for liberating the human being had developed in Hungary in the direction of abstract forms under the influence of Futurism and Cubism. In addition to the new avant-garde — Sándor Bortnyik, József Nemes Lampérth, János Mattis-Teutsch, László Péri, György Ruttkay, Ferenc Spangher, János Schadt, János Kmetty — *MA* also had contact with the Nyolcak and published or exhibited its members: Tihanyi, Berény, and Kernstok. Between 1916 and 1919 it also published Dezső Szabó, Sándor Galimberti, Valéria G. Dénes, Sándor Gergely, Karl Otten, Rubiner, Goll, Walt Whitman, Paul Hatvani, János

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