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orthogonal

international forum for non-objective art

to boryana



concept/design georgi dimitrov
advisors georgi kostov, valentin slavov

photography [unless mentioned otherwise]
proyko proykov, josé heerkens, dóra maurer,
tíbor gáyor, angela thomas, erich schmid, georgi dimitrov
catalogue publisher format.bg

table 3 and table 9 by nikolay diulgheroff
courtesy vladimir dimitrov – maystora art gallery, kyustendil

abstraction IV and present by georgi yanakiev
courtesy petko zadgorski art gallery, burgas

isbn 978-619-90088-1-2

© 2013 by nonsafia and all authors
printed in bulgaria

website valentin slavov, maya trifonova
poster preprint maya trifonova
poster silkscreen julian guermanov
video radoslav sharapanov, nadia mihova
additional photography svoboda tzekova
cat kotyo botyo

www.orthogonal.bg | www.nonsafia.org

preface

due to a complex of historical and cultural factors, the absolute and pure visual forms reached by malewicz and mondrian in the early 1910s have almost no influence on bulgarian modern art. hence, one may well argue that bulgarian modernism is deprived of its natural integrity without a consciously held non-objective period.

a prerequisite for the emergence of non-objective tendencies within the local art context can be found in the maturation of contemporary bulgarian civil society. on the other hand, this is an interactive process in which civil society is the principal beneficiary of the promotion of non-objective art forms. examples of such successful collaboration between society and non-objective aesthetics can be observed in countries like the netherlands, germany, france and switzerland, as well as in societies much closer to our political fate like poland, hungary, the czech republic and romania, where constructive and conceptual traditions date back to several decades ago.

conceived as an international forum, orthogonal introduced the bulgarian cultural public to a number of contemporary artists and theoreticians, who work in the field of non-objective art. it's debut edition took place between 18 october and 18 november 2012 at the red house centre for culture and debate, sofia. the forum's opening was followed by a screening of *max bill – the master's vision*. more screenings as well as a number of presentations were held during the following days. the show visited the burgas city art gallery from 29 january to 5 march 2013.

this catalogue fails to convey the friendly spirit in which the forum was carried out and the strong fire that it started. it only comprises reproductions of works, installation views from the shows and textual contributions by some of orthogonal's participants. you are welcome to enquire further information at info@orthogonal.bg.

georgi dimitrov

dear colleagues and friends,

welcome to orthogonal – the first ever international forum on non-objective and constructive art in bulgarian history! i remember last time when i was so excited was when my girlfriend nina told me her water had broken. she was soon to give birth to a wonderful creature. it is hard to explain how pleased i am to see all of you here. i greet you for your fine taste and thank you for coming.

as you may already know, orthogonal's debut edition features the participation of 13 remarkable people. there are more than 30 artworks here on display. as part of the exhibition we have oil and acrylic painting, graphic and video art. the event will also offer a programme of open lectures and screenings which deal with contemporary and historical issues of this yet little known here art movement. nonsafia's ambition is that this forum becomes a regular art festival which will expand in the future and remain permanently on the bulgarian cultural agenda.

apart from the exclusive screening of *max bill – the master's vision* which you are about to see in a few moments, presented by erich schmid and dr angela thomas of switzerland, orthogonal's 2012 edition includes the bold works of andrás wolsky and barna benedek, a number of dóra maurer's experimental videos, as well as a retrospective slideshow by tibor gáyor – all 4 artists from hungary. josé heerkens and guido winkler will show some of the finest non-objective examples from the contemporary dutch scene. the rich traditions of the german constructive aesthetics will be represented by prof. bruno haas or maybe not, since he has his own very unique way of expression. apart from his visual systems he will contribute with an open lecture tomorrow morning.

richard van der aa of new zealand has sent over two of his gorgeous *reasons to be cheerful*. bulgaria is represented by the legendary nikolay diulgheroff and georgi yanakiev. also the very skillful and promising maria chakarova is showing her latest work made especially for this historic occasion.

for those who believed that this forum was too ambitious to materialise or hear about it for the first time i would like to introduce myself. my name is georgi dimitrov – founder of the nonsafia association.

this forum has two main groups of objectives. the first group is inclined towards the local context and aims at provoking an aesthetic debate within the bulgarian society. a debate which will supposedly result in the formation of a local non-objective art scene. the second group of objectives focus on the international echo

that this forum will generate abroad. in times when the international non-objective art movement is in a strong need of consolidation, orthogonal's participants will be able to exchange their cultural experiences and bulgaria could be eventually brought onto the world map of non-objective art.

i think it is also necessary that i stress on the observations which appeared while preparing the organisation for this event. the process took around a full year during which there was a massive documentation and communication involved. nonsafia applied for financial support here and there, at various cultural institutions, national and international, private and public, diplomatic missions, etc. despite our efforts, i should admit the result was rather humble. everyone was talking about 'restructuring' and 'budget optimisation'. having some corporate experience, my conclusion is that cultural administrations and corporations seem to act increasingly similar these days – doing their best to cut costs in favour of people's stupidification and alienation.

the corporations have become the educational institutions of our time. controlling the media and even the states. the values that they preach, however, are focused on the short-term period. hence, the risk of accumulating a powerful wave of aggression is rising.

despite these difficulties, i am proud to say that we made it! only a few, but very far-sighted cultural institutions supported the project. my sincere gratitude goes to the gaudenz b. ruf foundation, the max bill georges vantongerloo foundation, the osas collective, the kyustendil and burgas city galleries and of course, to our hosts from the red house centre for culture and debate, sofia.

most of all, however, this forum managed to materialise and is currently taking place thanks to the solid foundation of common ideals and trust shared by all of its participants.

last but not least, i would like to thank valentin slavov, maya trifonova, georgi kostov and nina malcheva, for their hard work and moral support. i must say that all challenges and successes around orthogonal's organisation consolidated the circle around me and made my ideals even stronger.

18 october 2012

the red house

sofia

bruno haas

abstract painting today

1. the fact that artists had to defend their art in order to obtain the public recognition necessary to survive with the product of their hand's work produced something of a performative effect: concept art, insofar as this is an art which consists in its own legitimation, be it selfmade or furnished by someone else. nowadays no international artwork can survive without such a sort of legitimation, and art theory has gained very much in importance since then. it may be noted nonetheless, that this tendency resembles very much to 19th century academism, even if contemporary academism teaches methods of being exceptional. by doing so, modern academism has eradicated the very possibility of a vanguard. is there anything left to do for contemporary artists, if this sort of a person exists any more?

this is not the place to propose some childish view on our historic situation, e.g. to adopt danto's opinion about the end of history and the endless freedom of art in this age 'after history', a freedom similar to that offered by contemporary supermarkets, where there is something for everybody, but, alas, nothing for me.

this is the place only to remind with humility on some very fundamental facts, nothing new indeed, but maybe something interesting anyway.

2. why do we paint? if we knew why we paint, probably, we would not paint any more. we paint, because we want to paint, we need to paint. this is to say that painting is a quite contemporary activity, may it be worthless or worthwhile. we do not really know whether painting today is an art or not. this does not matter very much to us, because we do not really know whether it is necessary or even good to make art today. what 'is' art? if art is what the institution defines as art, then i do not care to make art, having little interest indeed in what the institution and especially certain colleagues believe to be art. in this sense, painting may become a very solitary activity lacking recognition. i know a very famous writer on art, often cited as an authority, but i fear to read without intelligence, who seems to have taught something similar. his name was nietzsche. but i should not have given the name. a name is enough to get definitely refuted and to be ranged as a nietzschean for example, even if you do not even have read his books, as is my case. i just do very much admire all those nietzsche specialists who tell us what the philosopher 'wanted to say', but did not say, even as much as those who pretend to know what

you are telling them, when you just cite the name.

but this was not the purpose. why do we paint? some very well intentioned people ascertain that painting is something beyond language (something more immediate, more corporeal, or even carnal – but you have to be french to believe this), but then they do not explain exactly what it is, they so intimately feel it to be infra- or trans-linguistic. maybe you have to find this in some semiological treatise, albeit this kind of science may be too cold for passionate art lovers. i remember having heard, as the apex of such an art loving speech that after all, only painting can tell us what painting is. this is sympathetic to a painter anyway, but i find, if this is your thought, you may do better to be silent than to write books, at least on this topic.

3. even after the works of barthes, greimas, eco, klinkenberg, goodman and many others, there still is no semiology of the imaginary. as many have written before me, the image has too much been treated as a sub-category of the linguistic [arbitrary] sign. but it is not enough to express this criticism; you have to really endorse it. we do not even know whether the image is a sign at all, maybe it is not. but it has passed nearly unnoticed that the phenomenon 'image' is unthinkable without some relation to arbitrary signs [symbols]. an image can deceive you, but then it does not appear as an image to you, it then appears as reality. if you want an image to appear as an image, it must not deceive you, even though you still must be able to see something in it it actually is not. the image of an apple is not an apple; this negation necessarily accompanies every appearance of an image. without this negation, the image does not appear as an image. but what is negation? negation has no positive existence, so it has a negative one; it appears to us insofar as we are able to use symbols [arbitrary signs]. so the access to language seems to be a necessary condition for the experience of an image. image and symbol are interrelated structures. this interrelation may even be reciprocal. the symbol constitutes the very framework of the image. but what are symbols without images? probably, they could not refer to anything.

let us say, the symbol *a* refers to the object *x*, then *a* must not be *x*, *a* is the absence of *x*. but it refers to *x*, so it refers to it insofar as *x* is not *a*, or else: insofar as *x* is not there. but 'the thing without being' is the exact definition of an image. when you see an apple, but it is not an apple, than it is an image of an apple. in a way, symbols seem to refer structurally to images. this obviously does not mean we possess 'mental images'; nothing is said about the existence of 'mental images'

here. all we say is that insofar as humans can use symbols, they can conceive images as well. but this does not imply they really execute them.

all this suggests that our signitive activities have a double structure, symbolic and imaginary at the same time. but is this analysis complete? there is no guarantee about this, and in fact, at least one main feature still lacks: music.

4. i now will give a very strange definition of music. ‘und schon gesanglos..’, says the poet in his very beautiful hymn to hope: without singing any more, without any music. he asks hope where she is, ‘wo bist du?’, the german word for ‘where’ [wo] being very similar to the english word ‘who’ [german: wer]. maybe he asks hope, not where, but who she is. maybe both questions have the same meaning. the poet tells that it is evening, that he resembles the shadows, ‘stille, den schatten gleich, bin ich schon hier’, still as he is, ‘here’, which means that he is entering a very saint [hier, ἱερόν, the greek word for ‘saint’] that is to say horrible place. this place is *stille*, ‘gesanglos’. what is when there is no music any more in a heart? this is death. the poet cannot be dead yet, he is still [still = german: noch which is the opposite of ‘schon’, yet] singing. but his song sings above an absolute stillness which you literally can hear in the very calm and deaf rhythm of:

wo bist du? wenig lebt ich, doch
atmet kalt mein abend schon, und
stille, den schatten gleich, bin ich
schon hier. und schon gesanglos schlummert
das schauernde herz im busen.

heidegger said, there is no ‘form’ in a poem as opposed to its ‘contents’, but something else he called ‘schwingung’, we may say *rhythm* in the greek sense which means a flow. the poet is not prisoner of this rhythm and flow, he abandons himself to it, floating on the flow, and carried away by it. we may say that this flow is language’s music. but why does it mean death, when the music is over? what *is* music?

music is ‘stimmung’ [heidegger], that is to say mood. there is no being-in-the-world without a mood, be it a mood of indifference. we cannot encounter whatsoever without a mood. mood is the way in which humans hit on what is coming to them. if there was not a mood, the encounter would not mean anything to them. mood

seems to be imponderable. probably it is, but what is not imponderable, is music. music consists of functions, this is to say, of relations within a whole. this is the essence of rhythm, flow and *schwingung*. music is intimately relational. every note defines itself from its relations to other notes. everyone is defined by its specific place within a whole of relations, the music piece. the function defines its value and mood. the function is no symbol and no image. it is a third mode of significance.

5. there is no reason not to be occupied with the development of new ways of functionality. traditionally, this kind of work was executed by artists. i do not know whether danto’s definition of art is compatible with this more traditional view. but this does not matter very much. to develop our dealing with functionality seems to be interesting and important in itself, be it art or not. it is structurally historical, always in response and anticipation of our own time and future. every painting is concerned with functionality, but abstract painting seems to be so in an especially intensive way. but this is not the main question. the main question would be: which type of functionality it is concerned with? unfortunately, it is really difficult to give a good definition of a functional system.

a functional system defines the very way mood is constituted by holistic relational systems. this does not function in the same way at any date. we are living in an epoch in which things are developing so quickly, that we have lost control. some people consider nonetheless having enough time to develop their own possibilities of functional elaboration. as far as i am concerned, i just do not engage in quickness.

georgi dimitrov

non-objective art in bulgaria

today one would easily notice that bulgaria is geographically close to greece, turkey and the former soviet union. in fact, the byzantine empire, the ottoman empire and later the ussr were the states which have periodically mostly influenced bulgaria's culture. it is also true that ever since its foundation in the 7th century ad bulgaria has kept its original name, however, the country has been occupied by the byzantines for 170 years [1018–1185], ruled for 500 years by the ottomans [1396–1878] and controlled by the soviets for almost half a century [1944–1989].

despite those prolonged foreign interferences, the people who have populated bulgaria have made a significant contribution to the global cultural heritage. for instance, the oldest man-processed gold in the world was found at the *varna necropolis* which signifies the existence of an advanced human civilisation some 7,000 years ago. the *orphic mysteries*, preaching human immortality and universal balance with nature, were also quite present in the lands of today's bulgaria. the *cyrillic script* – officially used by many other countries nowadays – was elaborated and adopted in the 10th century ad as an alternative to the mainstream greek alphabet. around the same time the *bogomils* emerged – a powerful dualistic sect opposed to institutional hierarchy and materialistic values.

but unlike its vibrant middle ages, bulgaria began developing a modern capitalist society way too late. this indirectly explains why there are almost no local traditions in modern non-objective aesthetics.¹

five centuries of ottoman rule – until the end of the eighteen hundreds; the volatile, often violent, political situation and autocratic monarchy afterwards, and finally, the totalitarian regime² prevented the dawn of a blooming bulgarian modernism. positively, certain signs of modernism in the post-liberation years can be pointed out.³ nevertheless, the significant cultural phenomenon that shook almost all corners of the world in the first half of the 20th century never matured or concluded in bulgaria. if it had, we would have had a constructive module as part of it – as it was in germany, holland, france, switzerland, italy, england, hungary and more or less in other central and eastern european countries, e.g. russia, poland, romania, the former federations of czechoslovakia and yugoslavia.

¹ the most generic term *non-objective* is intentionally being used here, as reaching a *constructive* phase requires strong individual self-awareness and active social maturity which are impossible to cultivate in a severe totalitarian climate.

² the years between 1944 and 1989 are popularly referred to as 'the communist era'. a reference which reveals the actual level of political culture within bulgarian society.

³ see the work of geo milev [1895–1925], ivan milev [1897–1927] and the dadaist/futurist *crescendo* circle around kiril krustev [1904–1991].

the abundance of decorative patterns applied even today in our traditional pottery or weaving [fig. I] is the consequence of a rich folklore heritage stemming back from neolithic, ancient and medieval times. along with these encrypted stylisations there are only two artists worth mentioning, whose non-figurative oeuvre received international recognition during the interwar years of the previous century. georges papazoff [1894–1972] and nikolay diulgheroff [1901–1982] were born and grew up in bulgaria. both of them, however, made their contribution to european modernism after fleeing the country in their early twenties.

having arrived in paris in 1924 georges papazoff easily entered the city's avant-garde circles among which he quickly gained popularity. he participated in exhibitions together with paul klee, joan miró, max ernst, jean arp, georges braque, pablo picasso and others.⁴ it was the time when surrealism was taking shape. andré breton's 'sectarian' despotism, however, kept the bulgarian artist away from the emerging movement.⁵ papazoff is often described as a dissident [see andrei nakov, *georges papazoff: franc-tireur du surréalisme*, éditions de la connaissance, bruxelles, 1973] thanks to his moral values and spiritual longings. in the 1930s an attempt, on his part, to resettle in bulgaria and promote non-objective aesthetics failed due to the exuberant cultural discrepancies he and his family refused to comply with.

but most of all, papazoff's natural inclination towards seclusion, or more precisely, his strife towards personal freedom, is observed in the genuine painterly style he developed over the years [fig. II]. a series of childhood memories, visions and dreams come alive – in terms of anthropoid structures and cosmic landscapes – to constitute the surrealist body of his oeuvre. meanwhile, a solid spatial literacy and an eloquent use of geometric rhetorics reveal papazoff's sharp constructive flair. yet, his expressive palette provokes the viewer's sensitivity with a deep spectrum of emotions. it is needless to say that such an eclectic approach to art could hardly evolve or survive in bulgaria of the early 20th century. honestly speaking, it would be quite difficult to exist here even nowadays.⁶

similar to his compatriot papazoff nikolay diulgheroff had already gathered some international experience before enrolling at the architecture faculty of the albertina academy in turin at the age of 25.⁷ from 1926, when he settled in the industrialised and culturally lively italian city, diulgheroff unfolded a profound artistic career until he died as an honorary citizen in 1982. nikolay diulgheroff was one of the two

⁴ kiril krustev, *georges papazoff* [yambol, 2009], 29–30, [in bulgarian].

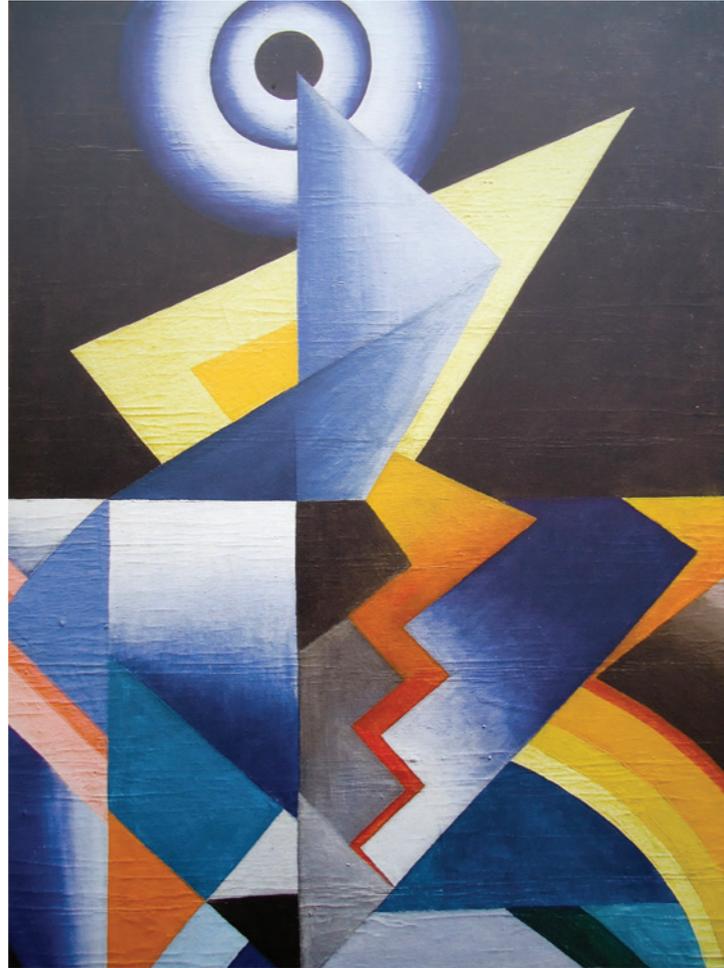
⁵ *ibid*, 53.

⁶ works of georges papazoff from private collections in bulgaria were exhibited in 2012 at the rakursi gallery in sofia to mark the 40th anniversary of the artist's death. none of the invited government officials turned up at the vernissage.

⁷ papazoff studied in prague and munich before going to berlin, geneva and then paris, whereas diulgheroff did his university education in vienna, dresden and weimar prior to turin.



I

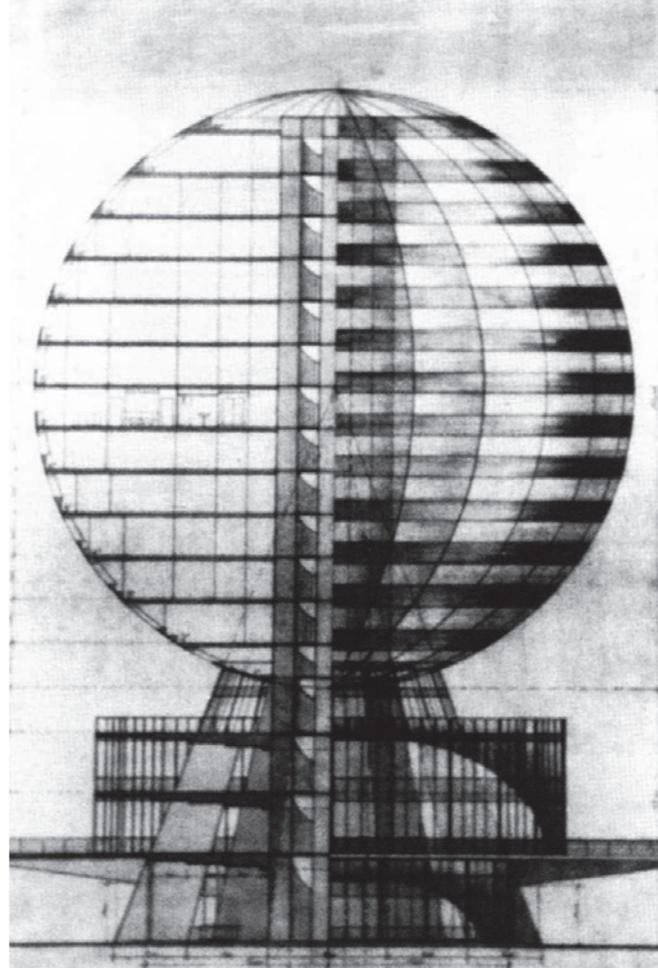


III



II

I. female shirt sleeves with wool and gold thread embroidery, kichevo region [now part of the republic of macedonia]. photo taken from kostow/petewa, broderies nationales bulgares, 2ième partie, imprimerie d'etat, sofia, 1928.
II. georges papazoff, formes se détachant de la terre, 1930s. private collection.
III. nikolay diulgheroff, spiritual equilibrium [transcendental reality], 1923. galleria narciso, torino. photo lee keoma.



IV

IV. nikolay diulgheroff, apartment building project, 1927. private collection.
V. spectrum, front cover, 1964.
VI. veselin dimov, bowsprit, 1982. photo courtesy ruen ruenov.



V

VI



bulgarian nationals⁸ to have studied at the original bauhaus in weimar where he became friends with the swiss painter and *mazdaznan* follower johannes itten [figs. III and IV]. a remarkable polymath, diulgheroff would remain true to the bauhaus tradition and employ various media, e.g. painting, architecture, graphic and interior design, furniture and ceramics for the materialisation of his ideas [see irina genova, ed., *nikolay diulgheroff: the multiple artistic identity*, ministry of culture, sofia, 2008].⁹

furthermore, his intellectual capacity allowed him to contribute to the theoretical base of the *second futurist generation*, i.e. the group around fillia – and more specifically to the rising *aeropittura*. until fillia's death in 1936 nikolay diulgheroff took part in the most significant futurist exhibitions around italy and abroad, including several editions of the venice biennale. later on the artist's paintings and collages continued to articulate his fascination for the astral/cosmic space and mankind's relation to it. in 1975 and 1976 the kyustendil art gallery received a total of 23 artworks on behalf of nikolay diulgheroff. these were recent serigraphs as well as neon light boxes from the mid 1920s and 1930s.¹⁰ together with works from the collection of the national art gallery they formed a show at the halls of the sofia city art gallery to celebrate the 100th anniversary of this prominent visual thinker.¹¹

after the second world war bulgaria was left behind the iron curtain. the new people's government abolished the monarchy, nationalised the economy and monopolised the cultural activities in the country. art was simply reduced to craft. apart from a few motion pictures made in the spirit of the italian neorealism and later in the line of the french new wave only graphic design managed to keep up with the existing european tendencies.¹² during the years of the cold war bulgaria was often regarded as the 16th soviet republic. there was nothing like the hungarian revolution of 1956, the prague spring of 1968 or the solidarity movement of the 1980s. naturally, no alternative art movements were present either.

not until the early 1980s, when a series of non-conventional artifacts appeared in both largest cities on the black sea coast – varna and burgas. perhaps, the geographic distance from the capital and the natural communication to the world have made such processes possible. the outdoor exhibition *terrain and constructions* by the sculptor veselin dimov [b. 1955] took place in varna's sea park in 1982 [fig. VI]. just two months after it was installed, however, the exposition was brutally demolished

⁸ bauhaus-archiv, berlin provided also information for mara utschkunowa-auboeck [1894–1987].

⁹ it is also known that diulgheroff has shortly worked at fiat's design studios, contributed to the list of futurist meals and produced numerous graphic advertisements.

¹⁰ during the transit the light boxes had to be dismantled for a check at the yugoslav border. unfortunately, the neon pipes did not survive the ignorance of the customs officers.

¹¹ the travelling outdoor exhibition *nikolay diulgheroff: the multiple artistic identity* [2008/09] has already visited rome, turin, sofia and kyustendil – diulgheroff's birthplace. the aluminium plates presenting a considerable scope of the artist's oeuvre are now installed at the union of bulgarian architects, 11 krakra st., sofia.

¹² e.g. the work of bulgarian designer stefan kanchev [1915–2001] and the *spectrum* almanac [спектър] published between 1964 and 1986 [fig. V].

and its remains were carried away by the authorities.

around the same years georgi yanakiev [1933–1998] had already developed his extraordinary geometric style away from the popular trends of the day [fig. VII]. his contemporaries remember him as a scrupulous, analytical and very consistent personality. neglected by the official art clique he lived humbly and survived by teaching fine arts in burgas. a graduate of the art academy in sofia [1969] yanakiev maintained contact with a number of notable bulgarian intellectuals such as dimitar avramov, ivan kirkov among others. dobrinka yanakieva, his widow [who lost their son nikolay – also an artist and a citizen of the world – five years after her husband's death], speaks through tears about georgi yanakiev's correspondence with victor vasarely and his solo exhibitions in portugal [evora, 1987], england [london, 1988], etc. despite the international exposure he enjoyed in the late 1980s, yanakiev's work is yet to be scrutinised and evaluated. no other bulgarian artist has reached such an elaborate level of *concretion* in their plastic expression.

another intriguing and again sadly late painter is ivan shumanov [1961–1993]. it was the summer of 2010 when i accidentally came across his posthumous exhibition at the shipka 6 gallery in sofia.¹³ compared to his early work his 1990s paintings reveal how he had recently discovered the power and beauty of the non-figurative geometric abstraction [fig. VIII]. this plastic maturation came just a couple of years before his unfortunate death at 32, leaving the question, how far would he have gone, were he still alive today?

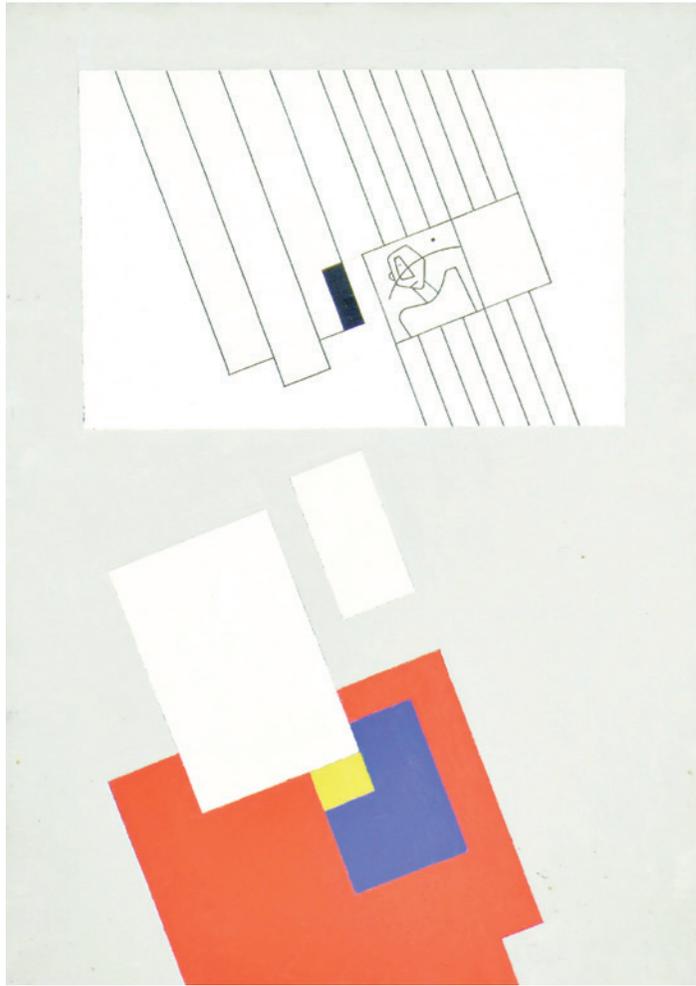
nikolay petkov's *epical abstraction* exhibition is one of the most important non-objective art shows of 21st century's first decade. probably the most recognisable among all active non-objective artists in bulgaria, petkov, born in 1967, holds a m.a. degree in mural painting and has also studied art theory at the new school for social research, new york before completing his ph.d. in art history from the national academy of arts, sofia. but his literacy is visible outside of the curriculum vitae too [fig. IX]. in 2008 *epical abstraction* presented 20 oil canvases with a different narrative compressed in each of them. the show was reviewed and highly rated by the art-historian ruen ruenov [1958–2011], who was one of the very few bulgarian art critics to possess the necessary sensuality for non-figurative art.¹⁴

the last name in this subjective and hopefully incomplete selection of bulgarian artists is that of maria chakarova [b. 1972].¹⁵ a graduate of one of the most conservative faculties at the national academy, she has resisted the institutional

¹³ shipka 6 is the name of the gallery facilities administered by the union of bulgarian artists. shumanov's exhibition is partly covered at nonsofia.org.

¹⁴ the exhibition review [in bulgarian] is still online at grosnipelikani.net. ruenov attempts on a historic analysis of the bulgarian abstract tradition which is partly the subject of this short essay.

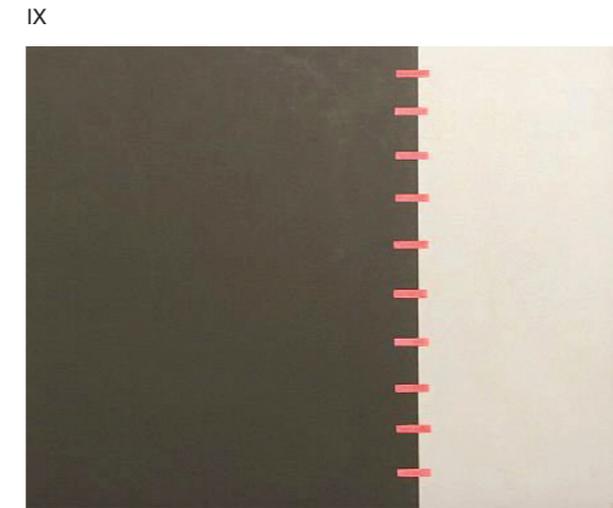
¹⁵ one could also be interested in the work of petar dochev [1934–2005], particularly in his late period; and also in the development of the banat bulgarian ivan vasilchin [b. 1974]. another deal of non-objective artwork found around bulgaria could be seen online at nonsofia.org.



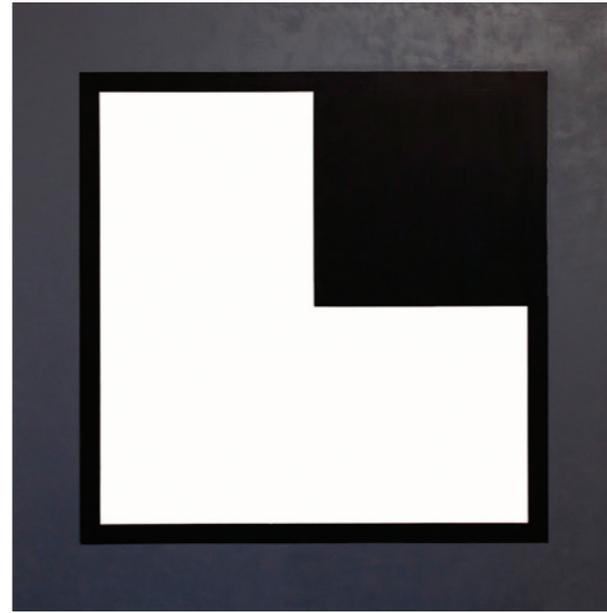
VII



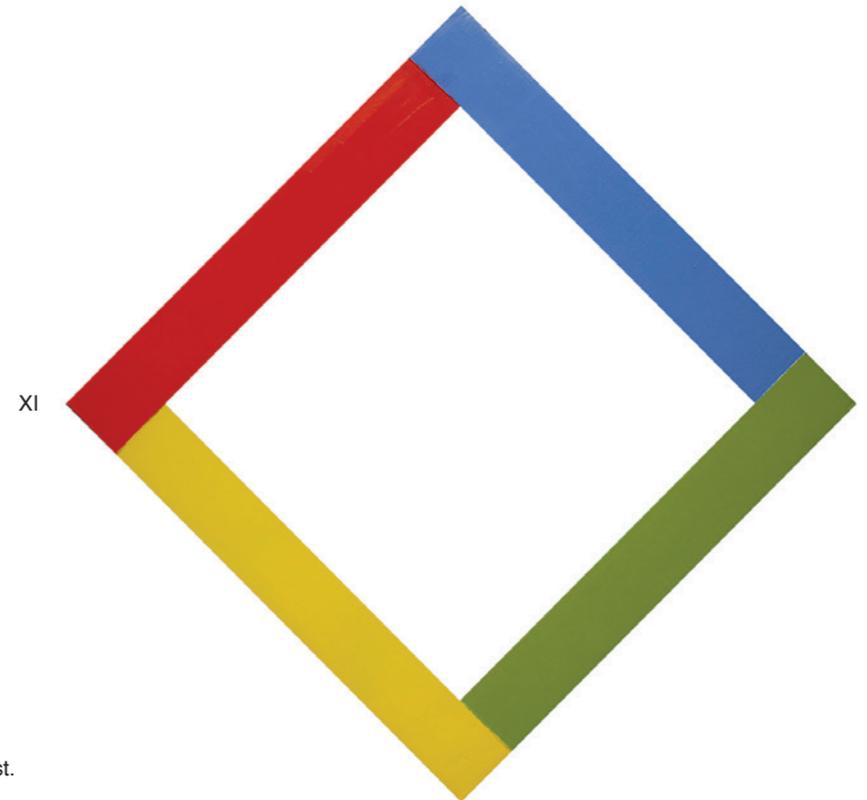
VIII



IX



X



XI

VII. georgi yanakiev, present, 1990s. photo proyko proykov.
VIII. ivan shumanov, untitled, 1990s. photo georgi dimitrov.
IX. nikolay petkov, transitions b, 2005. coll. the artist.

X. maria chakarova, black and white [3/3], 2010. coll. the artist.
XI. georgi dimitrov, white circle, 2013. coll. the artist.

pressure by creating a fortified refuge out of her non-objective work. moreover, this secure shelter has kept chakarova away from the contamination of the public prejudice and is increasingly becoming an effective communication medium for her. she finds a true comfort in the square format and feels confident within its larger scales [fig. X]. surprisingly, her work is not planned in advance, but that only uncovers her deep intuition and natural intelligence.

today – a century after the first appearance of malewicz’s *quadrilateral*¹⁶ – the acceptance of non-objective aesthetics still seems to be a tremendous cultural challenge for bulgarian society. but this is a useless conclusion which one should not just passively complain about. art’s public function is not only to reflect on the on-going social tendencies, but to actively assess their ethical basis and if necessary, to correct it. that should be the responsibility of every creative individual, e.g. artist, architect, philosopher, designer, etc. the facilitatory role of the mass-media is also essential here, especially when overconsumption has become the determinant of our daily agenda. only a consolidated group of self-aware strategic thinkers could lead bulgarian modernism to its end. bulgarian conceptual art will then have a chance to lose its prematurity and mediocrity. naturally, there is a long way in front of us all and loads of work has to be done in that respect. nevertheless, one thing is certain – the foundations have been laid, long before nonsafia¹⁷ and orthogonal existed.

¹⁶ malewicz’s *quadrilateral*, commonly known as the *black square*, was part of the stage design for the opera *victory over the sun* in 1913.

¹⁷ nonsafia is the first legally registered non-profit entity to offer institutional support for non-objective art in bulgaria.

barna benedek

about orthogonal

absolute, abstract, abundant, accidental, accomplished, accurate, acoustical, active, actual, advanced, aerial, aesthetical, affecting, affluent, akin, algebraical, alike, alive, amazing, ambient, amicable, amorphous, ample, analogical, ancestral, angelic, apparent, approaching, approximate, arithmetical, arresting, articulate, artistic, audible, austere, authentic, balancing, bare, basic, beaming, beautiful, benignant, blameless, bombastic, bottomless, bounteous, brilliant, calculated, candid, careful, categorical, ceaseless, cerebral, chirpy, circular, clean, coexistent, cohesive, combined, commensurate, communal, complementary, composed, concise, concrete, congruent, conjunct, constant, constructive, contemplative, convergent, converse, creditable, deathless, decided, definite, descriptive, deserving, determinate, diffuse, drastic, dynamic, ebullient, edifying, effective, effulgent, elaborate, energetic, engaging, enjoyable, exhaustless, expansive, extra, farreaching, fervent, flowing, forceful, free, fundamental, geometrical, glorious, good, grand, heartily, human, identical, ignescent, illimitable, immaterial, implausible, important, impressive, instructive, just, knowable, large, lifegiving, light, like, main, massive, masterly, mathematical, memorable, motory, nascent, nice, nonobjective, numerical, nutrient, observable, omnipotent, open, optimistic, orient, original, oscillatory, parallel, particular, perfect, permanent, perpetual, plus, powerful, progressive, proportional, qualitative, reactive, reasonable, reflective, relation, revolving, sapiential, spiritual, substantive, sure, synthetical, system, thinkable, thorough, unattached, veritable, versatility, very.

andrás wolsky

1969

hungary

wolsky.hu

i have long been interested in the presence of chance in my works. allowing chance into the creative process brings unexpected, exciting phenomena. prior to the creation of an artwork, i have some vague ideas about the future result, but i never see the desired or 'inspired' work in my mind's eye. my works are created by a previously established system of rules, generated by chance and time. my system of rules which limits the infinite possibilities of chance to a narrow framework, renders the artwork visible in time in a layered fashion. thus, these works cannot really be regarded as my own exclusive creations; they are more the result of a curious team effort in cooperation with phenomena that are independent of me – in other words, the collision of a geometric order and system with the unpredictable.



present dynamic system
2012
acrylic/canvas/wood
100 x 100 cm

angela thomas

1948

switzerland

hausbill.ch



*mit subversivem glanz –
max bill und seine zeit
band 1: 1908–1939
scheidegger & spiess
zurich, 2008*

barna benedek

1973

hungary

benedekbarna.hu

visuality influences our everyday life, our surrounding and the reality.

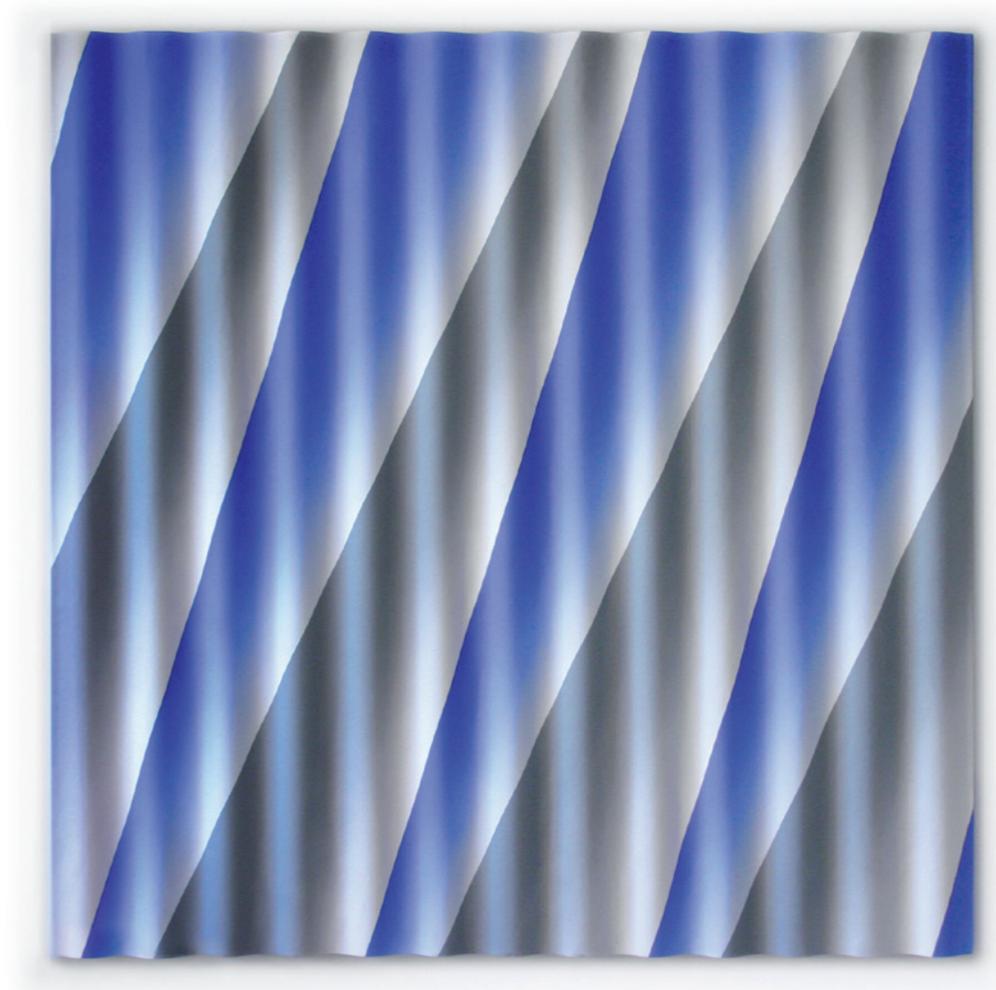
visuality is the reality so visuality is power.

painting is the highest quality of visuality.

visuality has to be discovered, where painting has to participate. every picture is

an invention or the improvement of it.

art has not finished, it is just starting now.



sinus relax
2012
acrylic/canvas/polyester/
polycarbonate
100 x 98 x 4 cm

bruno haas

1967

germany



else
2012
oil/acrylic/canvas
50 cm

dóra maurer

1937

hungary



space quasi image
space painting
buchberg project
1982

erich schmid

1947

switzerland

erichschmid.ch

max bill – the master's vision
2008
35 mm, colour, dolby sr-d, 93 min



max bill

DAS ABSOLUTE AUGENMASS

Ästhetik der Einfachheit.
Schönheit der Reduktion.



buch und regie erich schmid kamera ueli eisech ton dieter meyer, forian eidenbenz
schnitt antoine boissonnas musik andré belmont gespielt von daniel schenker, christoph
grab, adrian frey, dominique giroud, elmar frey mitarbeit georg janetti, richard dindo produktion
ariadnefilm verteilung accent films international im vertrieb der edition salzgeber



georgi dimitrov

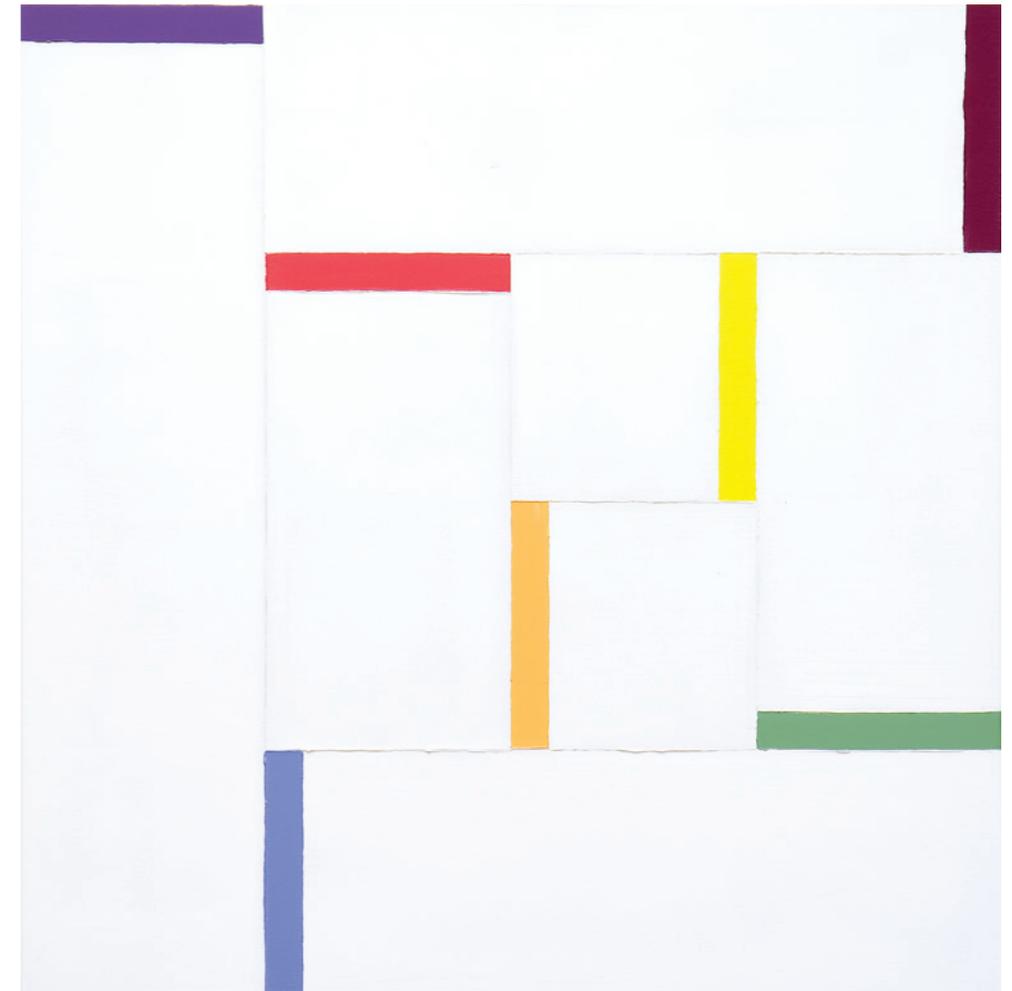
1980

bulgaria

larypsed.com

human memory is infinite, so writing your ideas down is actually a very good thing. the principles of constructive art, on the other hand, offer us all an opportunity to make these ideas look rather simple, no matter of their complexity. thus, achieving a highest ratio between the scale of your ideas and their optimised visualisation is possible. based on natural laws, constructive art is universal in terms of place and time. it spares resources and has not only an aesthetic, but a strong social function – to educate society in firm moral values and high spirituality until its complete maturation.

equilibrium in white
2011
oil/canvas
80 x 80 cm



georgi yanakiev

1933–1998

bulgaria



abstraction IV
1990s
oil/canvas
70 x 50 cm

guido winkler

1969

the netherlands

guidowinkler.com



one of the endless possibilities of seeing
a particular rectangle a little different
2011
acrylic/wood
38 x 27 x 1 cm

josé heerkens

1950

the netherlands

joseheerkens.nl

painting is directed toward concentration in a line, the exact colour and the appropriate dosage.



19. dawn. titanium white
and cadmium red light
2012
oil on linen
35 x 40 cm

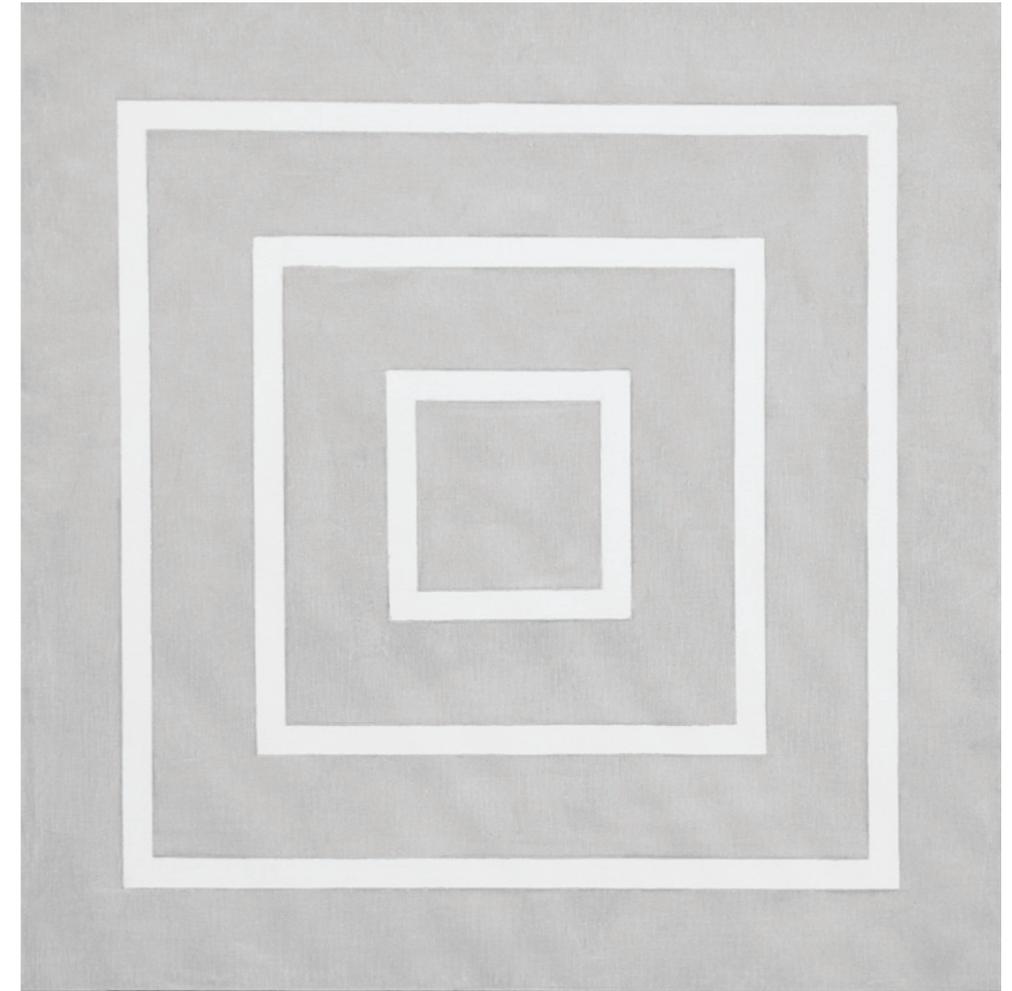
maria chakarova

1972

bulgaria

while aiming at an increasingly refined imagery we are coming closer to the universal, but then we are gradually losing our right for authorship, because the universal image belongs to the collective consciousness more than it belongs to each and everyone of us.

composition in gray and white
2012
oil/canvas
80 x 80 cm



nikolay diulgheroff

1901–1982

bulgaria/italy



table 9
1970s
serigraph
40 x 40 cm

richard van der aa

1963

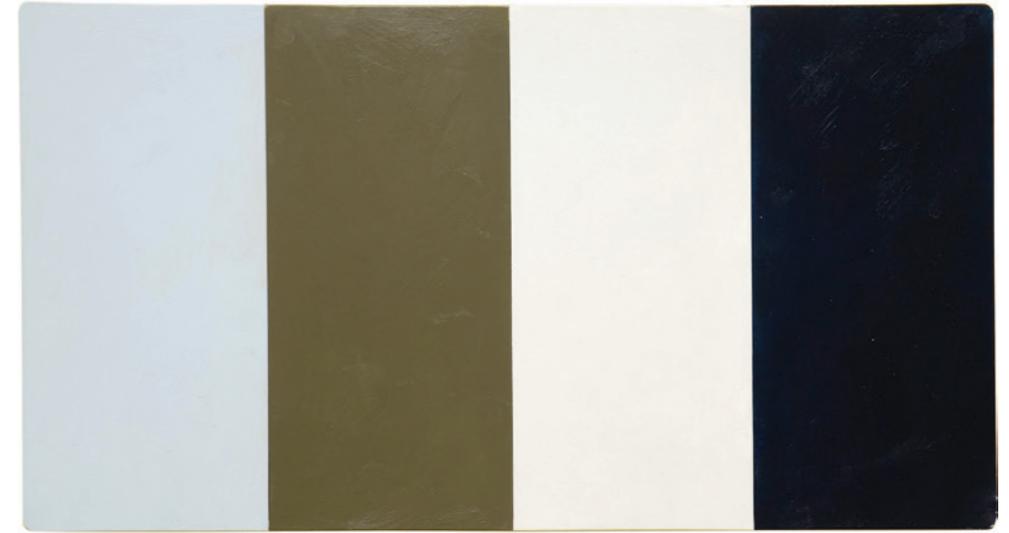
new zealand/the netherlands

richardvanderaa.com

one of the characteristics i appreciate in non-objective art is its lack of specificity. it can be about everything and nothing at the same time. rather than giving the audience answers to questions they are not asking, non-objective work has the ability to draw the viewer into asking pertinent questions. questions about the nature of art and life. an art which functions in such an open ended manner is to my mind a healthy state of affairs.

the future of non-objective art rests in the imagination of the artists. i am not a political person – i do not work to a manifesto. i do know that many artists are using the language of abstraction today with fresh eyes. if artists continue to work with authenticity and integrity and a commitment to quality, the world will be a richer place and history will surely tell the story.

reasons to be cheerful, no. 54
2011
acrylic/aluminium
35 x 65 cm



tibor gáyor

1929

hungary/austria

capriccio 1
1982
canvas/collage/wood
100 x 100 cm





orthogonal.bg orthogonal.bg

andrás wolsky angela thomas bama benedek
bruno haas dóra maurer erich schmid georgi
dimitrov georgi yanakiev guido winkler jose
heerkens maria chakarova nikolay diulgheroff
richard van der aa tibor gáyor

opening: 18.00 h, 18 october, 2012
the red house centre for culture and debate
15, lyuben karavelov st., sofia

international forum
for non-objective art

ангела томас андраш волски барна бенедек
бруно хаас георги димитров георги янакиев
дора маурер ерих шмид йозе хееркенс гидо
винклер мария чакърова николай дюлгероф
ричард ван дер аа тибор гайор



международен форум
за безпредметно изкуство

откриване: 18.00 часа, 18 октомври, 2012 г.
център за култура и дебат 'червената къща'
ул. 'любен каравелов' 15, софия

screenings

max bill -
the master's vision
18 october, 19.00 h

space painting -
buchberg project
19 october, 14.00 h

прожекции

макс бил -
абсолютният поглед
18 октомври, 19.00 часа

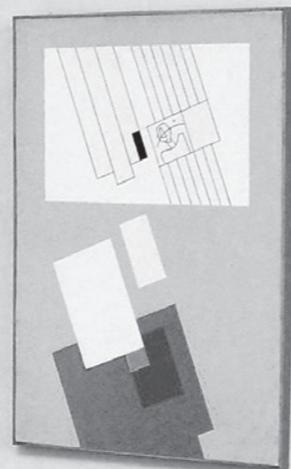
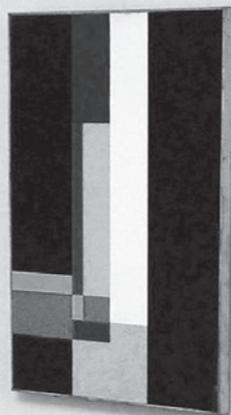
просторна картина -
проектът 'бухберг'
19 октомври, 14.00 часа



georgi dimitrov
orthogonal poster
2012
silkscreen print
edition: 115



Small white label with illegible text.



Small white label with illegible text.

