

Many of the works from the Van Abbemuseum Lissitzky collection to be exhibited in the Pompidou Centre in Paris

Chagall, Lissitzky, Malevich. The Russian avant-garde in Vitebsk

The Pompidou Centre in Paris is organising the exhibition *Chagall, Lissitzky, Malevich. The Russian avant-garde in Vitebsk, 1918-1922* from 28 March to 16 July 2018. The idea for this exhibition originated at the Van Abbemuseum. Willem Jan Renders, the curator of Russian art at the Van Abbe, researched this important but barely known period in the history of the Russian avant-garde. He realised that no exhibition about this subject had ever been put on and developed a plan for it.

Chagall, Lissitzky and Malevich were all in Vitebsk a hundred years ago. Chagall founded the People's Art School and invited Lissitzky and Malevich to teach there. In 1919 Malevich founded the Unovis artists' collective in Vitebsk, together with Lissitzky. It was not possible for the Van Abbemuseum to organise this expensive exhibition itself, but the Pompidou Centre did see an opportunity to carry out the plan. The exhibition includes many of the works from the Van Abbe's Lissitzky collection.

In addition an international conference will be held on the theme of the exhibition in the Old Library of Pembroke College, Cambridge on 19 and 20 April 2018. This conference, with many international experts in the field of the Russian avant-garde, has also been organised by the Van Abbemuseum. Willem Jan Renders will be one of the speakers.

The exhibition

2018 is the hundredth anniversary of Chagall's appointment as Commissar of the Arts in Vitebsk. The People's Art School served as an unparalleled artistic stimulus for this provincial town. The Unovis collective spread the new ideas about art to a number of other cities in the new Soviet state. The exhibition in the Pompidou Centre will give visitors an opportunity to explore this unknown period in the history of the Russian avant-garde in great detail.

Willem Jan Renders, the curator of Russian art at the Van Abbemuseum, was instrumental in the preparation of the plans for the exhibition. He had previously organised the exhibitions *Lissitzky+* and *Lissitzky-Kabakov* using the museum's Lissitzky collection, the largest outside Russia. As a co-curator of the exhibition, Renders worked out the plan for the exhibition and requested the loans in close consultation with Angela Lampe, a colleague at the Pompidou Centre. He has also written an essay about Lissitzky in Vitebsk for the catalogue.

The conference

The two-day conference, The People's Art School and Unovis in Vitebsk, will be held in Pembroke College, Cambridge. The theme is connected to the exhibition in Paris. International speakers will explore the revolutionary character of both the Art School and the artists' collective, the relationship with the cultural policy of the Soviet Union at the time and the interaction between the three protagonists – Chagall, Lissitzky and Malevich. The conference has been made possible with the support of the In Artibus Foundation.



Marc Chagall. *Above the City*, 1914-1918, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. © Adagg, Paris 2018

For the editors:

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Van Abbemuseum

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the leading museums for contemporary art in Europe. The museum has an intensive international collection of more than 2,700 works of art, including key works by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. Questions in the field of art and society are raised by the museum in an experimental way. An open attitude, hospitality and the exchange of information are important for the Van Abbemuseum and we encourage both ourselves and the visitors to think about different subjects, for example about the role of the collection as a cultural "memory" or about the museum as a public space. As a result of international cooperation and exchange, the Van Abbemuseum is also a place where cultural cross-pollination takes place. It is a source of wonder, inspiration and imagination.

Van Abbemuseum,
Bilderdijkstraan 10, Eindhoven.
www.vanabbemuseum.nl

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Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. 1st Thursday of the month 11.00 - 21.00.

Admission

Adults: € 12.00 / Groups of 10 or more: € 9.00 / Young people 13-18 years old, students, CJP holders, Eindhoven city pass (stadspas) holders: € 6.00/ Children under 13 years of age, Museum card: free. Tuesday 15.00 – 17.00: free.