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Luigi Russolo

Vita e opere di un futurista

SKIRA

Luigi Russolo

Life and Works of a Futurist

Curated by
Franco Tagliapietra
Anna Gasparotto

From Symbolist Influences to Futurist Art and Theory: Etchings and Paintings

Franco Tagliapietra

Every history of Futurism narrates – with a wealth of details and anecdotes – the meeting of early 1910 between the poet and father of the movement, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and the artists who were to develop the theories of Futurist painting: Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà and Luigi Russolo.

These three artists of differing ages – the first two being twenty-eight years old, the latter twenty-five – had only known one another for a matter of weeks, but from the beginning held an instinctive admiration for each other. During the years leading up to the First World War these three young painters – to whose ranks were quickly added the Roman artist Giacomo Balla and Gino Severini, at that time resident in Paris – were to give life to the most intense and extraordinary period in the history of the Italian avant-garde.

The occasion of their first meeting was the annual exhibition of art held between December 1909 and January 1910 at Milan's Famiglia Artistica, an exhibition space of great importance for the city, devoted to celebrating and launching young artists. This exhibition constituted a crucial focal point in Russolo's early artistic career, representing a precocious success for him inasmuch as the etchings he presented – the fruit of a period of intensive experimentation with different techniques and of reflection on contemporary art – were considered to be among the most interesting of the entire exhibition. It was also significant for the young artist in terms of giving him a sense of participating in a shared artistic adventure with such worthy peers as Bonzagni, Bucci, Carrà, Dudreville, Erba, Romani and (above all) Boccioni.

Russolo had already been in the city for several years and had made his decision to devote himself to the arts there, undergoing several significant experiences that are often omitted or only alluded to incidentally by biographers. The years before 1910, unfortunately deprived of systematic documentation, constitute an extraordinarily interesting phase in terms of the works Russolo produced and the impulses that led him to become one of the protagonists of the Futurist avant-garde in the second decade of the twentieth century.

Milan in the first Decade of the Twentieth Century: A City and Culture in Evolution

Any precise reconstruction of Russolo's early career and initial output is thwarted by objective difficulties owing to the scarcity of information concerning the period. There have been several attempts to determine the exact date of his arrival in Milan and the details of his artistic training and first attempts at etching. As far as we know, and on the basis of the most thorough biographies of the artist – that of his wife, Maria Zanovello (1958)¹ and those of Gian Franco Maffina of 1977² and Anna Maria

¹ M. Zanovello Russolo, *Russolo. L'uomo e l'artista* (Milan: Cyril Corticelli, 1958).

Damigella of 1978³ – one can only formulate hypotheses regarding the evolution of his activities, fortunately substantiated by a number of previously unknown documents in the artist's archives that were in the possession of Russolo's heirs and which have recently been acquired by Mart.

To begin with, the dating of Russolo's arrival in Milan is not unequivocal. Zanovello's monograph – and all subsequent biographies – claims he arrived at sixteen years of age: that is to say, in 1901. However, in a letter of 1932 Russolo claimed to have arrived two years before this.⁴

Milan – the first 'modern' Italian city – was a centre of industrial, entrepreneurial and social ferment. At the same time it was a city very rich in artistic experimentation, patronage and exhibition spaces, which enabled a constant stream of indigenous artistic developments to pass before the vigilant eyes of the young Russolo, from the Scapigliatura to Divisionism, in addition to a slew of cultural stimuli from abroad, such as Symbolism and Art Nouveau, albeit translated into an Italian idiom.

From the Brera to Commercial Artist and Fashion Designer

A 'Biographical Note' of 1945, written in the third person and presumably composed by Russolo himself on the occasion of his exhibition at Como's Galleria Borromini, supplies the most detailed information concerning his early figurative work:

The contemporary and friend of many pupils at the Accademia di Brera, he nevertheless chose not to enrol at the Accademia itself, but kept in touch through frequent visits [...] in order to observe the studies and works that the various students were producing. Working alone, he drew the pictorial anatomical tables of Sabbatini, copied plaster casts and models and travelled around the countryside with his box of colours to take impressions from reality.⁵

Beginning around 1905, Russolo's training was thus typically academic, notwithstanding his refusal to enrol on a course. As is known, copying works by the great masters always constituted a practical exercise for young artists and Russolo did not shirk such tasks: he 'dedicated himself to the study of drawings and sketches by

² G. F. Maffina, *L'opera grafica di Luigi Russolo* (Varese: CEAL, 1977) and *Luigi Russolo e l'arte dei rumori. Con tutti gli scritti musicali* (Turin: Martano, 1978).

³ A. M. Damigella, *Futurismo 1909-1918. Corso tenuto all'Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma 1996-97* (Rome: Lithos, 1997), p.39 onward. Damigella is the only academic who provides information on phases of Russolo's early artistic development never mentioned by other historians.

⁴ Luigi Russolo, letter to Sig. Cominotto, Paris, 8 January 1932, in S. E. Parrino, 'Il futurista Luigi Russolo pittore e musicista', *Veneto Orientale*, III, no.5, 1985, p.5.

⁵ 'Nota biografica' in *Russolo*, catalogue of the exhibition, Como: Galleria Borromini, April 1945 (Como: Antonio Nosedà, 1945), p.19.

Leonardo', as his eldest sister Anna Maria stated in an unpublished typewritten memoir of 1947,⁶ a source of further information that we shall draw on presently.

Russolo came into direct contact with the work of Da Vinci when he was engaged as a restorer on the fresco cycle at Castello Sforzesco and on the *Last Supper*, as mentioned in his wife's monograph.⁷ It was highly appropriate for the young restorer to be involved with the work of a figure such as Leonardo who for the rest of his life Russolo was to consider as a sort of ideal model,⁸ being a 'polyhedral' artist, scientist and thinker.⁹

To complete the cycle of Russolo's early training one must add at least another two experiences – we do not know in which order they occurred – that are never discussed in biographies other than that of his sister Anna Maria; experiences that were destined to inspire with greater precision Russolo's future printmaking production.

In a similar way to his other artist friends Boccioni, Bonzagni and Romani, who designed commercial posters for the celebrated company Casa Ricordi, Russolo for some time frequented 'the studio of the then famous painter and designer of posters, Taddio, who immediately awoke the great imagination of his pupil in the creation and application of subjects'.¹⁰ The studio of the Milanese painter and architect Arturo Taddio (Trieste 1859 – Varese 1912), which up to 1910 produced a notable series of commercial posters commissioned by numerous important firms,¹¹ employed Russolo's services around the middle of the decade. This collaboration paralleled the beginning of his printmaking activity, which can legitimately be said to have benefited from the technical skills learned in the poster studio.

Another activity, until recently unknown and not dissimilar to the other – likewise being determined by necessity – was that of Russolo's work as a designer of women's clothing, in which context he participated in the celebrated Milan Exposition of 1906 (a vast, hugely successful exhibition organised to celebrate the opening of the Sempione Tunnel).¹² Russolo won a prize and went on to create costumes for a Parisian theatre, in

⁶ A. M. Russolo, 'Luigi Russolo nota biografica', 24 December 1947. Unpublished typescript, formerly property of the family, now in the Fondo Russolo of the Archivio del '900 at Mart (henceforth 'Fondo Russolo'), p.3.

⁷ M. Zanovello, *op. cit.*, p.20.

⁸ In his philosophical treatise *Al di là della materia* (Milan: Bocca, 1938) Russolo, already a mature thinker, considered Leonardo in depth (particularly on pages 198-200).

⁹ In his commemorative 'Prefazione', placed at the beginning of Zanovello's monograph, Russolo's long-standing friend the poet Paolo Buzzi defined as 'polyhedral' the multi-disciplinary work of Russolo (p.11) and identified him with Leonardo 'by the faceted nature of his speculative investigations in the face of nature's enigmas' (p.14).

¹⁰ A. M. Russolo, *op. cit.*, p.3.

¹¹ Regarding the Studio Taddio of Milan see the eight posters datable to 1900-07 in the Salce Collection, housed in Treviso's Museo Civico Luigi Bailo.

¹² Looking at the official exhibition catalogues (*Guida 'Ufficiale'. Inaugurazione del Nuovo Valico del Sempione. Esposizione di Milano 1906* (Milan: Max Frank & C., 1906); *Catalogo 'Ufficiale' della Sezione Arte Decorativa. Inaugurazione del Nuovo Valico del Sempione. Esposizione di Milano 1906*, (Milan: Max Frank & C., 1906) one is unable to verify with certainty the presence of Russolo, as only the

addition to securing an exhibition of his designs in Paris and a visit to the French capital in early 1907, where ‘he received a hearty reception [his sister continues] and an artistic debut that he himself had perhaps not foreseen’.

This brief visit to Paris – which occurred just when artists from all around the world were arriving in the French capital to make their own contribution to the development of avant-garde art – had a very different significance to that which it had for many other Italians of his generation.¹³ Nevertheless, it marks a chronological boundary within which one can legitimately examine his printmaking production and the ways in which it took account of his early artistic experiences.

General Remarks on Russolo’s Etching and its Chronology

Russolo’s entire output of etchings comprises around forty works¹⁴ and thirty extant copper and zinc plates, which remain in possession of the Russolo family.¹⁵ There exist a number of contemporary print runs. The most complete, however, was executed by the artist as late as 1940 in collaboration with a printer from Laveno, Marco Costantini,¹⁶ whose family owns the entire *corpus* of works. Some later editions were authorised by the artist’s wife and family in the 1960s and late 1970s.

On the basis of our present knowledge, the current exhibition presents the most extensive chronological arrangement of Russolo’s prints. His previously unknown artistic activities account for his understanding of the technical processes involved and, above all, his precise choice of subjects. Earlier studies of Russolo’s printmaking give the impression of a rather casual and incoherent thematic development, with dating stretching from around 1907-08 to 1911. Given our knowledge of the early artistic development of Russolo – firstly at the Brera, subsequently at Studio Taddio and finally as a fashion designer – we are able to propose a printmaking production running parallel with these experiences. This means we can bring forward the dating of some works to late 1906 or early 1907, at the time of his first visit to Paris. The entirety of Russolo’s Symbolist output can be located between this date and the exhibition of late 1909 at the Famiglia Artistica. Following this, and his meeting with Marinetti, Carrà and Boccioni, Russolo’s artistic vocabulary became closely influenced by the latter artist and the new

fashion houses are credited, not the individual designers. However, there is no reason to doubt the testimony of Anna Maria Russolo, *op. cit.*, 1947, pp.3-4.

¹³ It is interesting to note an episode involving Anselmo Bucci, who left Italy for Paris in 1906, and who told Maria Zanovello in a letter from Monza of 14 February 1953 (Fondo Russolo) of an earlier, fraternal association in Milan with Russolo: ‘As for my friend Russolo, I made my first portrait (in the style of Lotto) of him in 1906, or perhaps 1905, dressed as a medieval knight.’ Bucci’s portrait remained in the Russolo family until 1990, but is now lost. The present exhibition displays for the first time a preparatory drawing entitled *Portrait of Russolo in Medieval Costume*.

¹⁴ The most detailed study of Russolo’s printmaking to date can be found in G. F. Maffina, *L’opera grafica...*, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ On close examination, in a few, significant cases the thirty remaining plates reveal that they were used on both sides. This leads, as we shall see, to a unified *corpus* of prints.

¹⁶ See G. Musumeci and L. Paoli, ‘Il pittore Luigi Russolo nei ricordi dell’incisore Marco Costantini: “Un fungo al posto del naso...”’, in *Cūnta sū Cronaca Vostre*, XX, no.5, 2001, pp.10-12.

formal researches propagated by the manifestos that the artists were meanwhile developing, at least for the greater part of 1911, after which Russolo soon abandoned printmaking to concentrate on painting. (There is only one exception to this, *Simultaneous Movements of a Woman*, which Russolo probably produced as a preparatory study for a painting of early 1913.)

In conclusion, therefore, we are able to date Russolo's etchings to between 1906-07 and 1912-13, with the greatest concentration being between 1909 and 1911.

The First Etchings: From Landscapes to Posters; from Fashion Designs to Symbolism

Within Russolo's early body of prints there exist a number of naturalistic works concerned with landscape and portraiture that were executed without doubt around the time of his first visit to Paris between 1906 and 1907. We can talk with more precision of another group of works executed at the time of his association with the Brera. Subjects such as *The Pool*, *Farm-house*, *Calm*, *Willow Tree* and *Landscape* already possess a certain stylistic elegance, but seem to be naturalistic exercises still betraying a sense of immaturity and were, not by chance, quickly abandoned.

To these landscapes one can add at least nine portraits: two of his sister (*Tina's Hair* and *Young Girl*¹⁷) a *Self Portrait* and portraits of six unknown persons.¹⁸

By contrast, more attentive to clothing, hats and female elegance in general are works such as *Head and Flower*, with its strong Art Nouveau characteristics, and *Woman with Hat*, a work revealing Russolo's interest in the field of fashion. Genuinely surprising is an image discovered on the plates deposited in the archives of Russolo's family entitled *Bat Woman*, an etching seemingly left incomplete on the rear of a plate that Russolo would later use to execute the more famous *Sleeping City*.¹⁹ *Bat Woman* is extraordinarily indicative of the change of direction that Russolo was taking around 1907-08. While the same motifs of the inclined female face and hat of *Woman with Hat* remain, these elements blend with the unreal and fantastical apparition of a bat whose wings and head emerge from behind the woman's own head. With this work, Russolo demonstrated his gravitation towards Symbolism. This was a truly international tendency, the most significant followers of which included Böcklin, Redon, Ensor, Munch and a few other artists certainly known to Russolo, and was to find an extraordinary continuity and surprising depth in the work of Italian painters such as Segantini, Pellizza da Volpedo, Previati, the young Alberto Martini and his contemporary and friend Romolo Romani. Symbolism was already well known and widely discussed in Italy. A young artist such as Russolo would have been aware of

¹⁷ The identical subject of *Young Girl*, with the same model, was represented in an oil of 1921.

¹⁸ *Female Portrait*, *Head of a Child*, *Profile of a Young Child*, *The Drinker*, *Mother and Child* and *Woman Sewing at a Table*.

¹⁹ The title *Bat Woman* is confirmed by an oral account from Ugo Piatti's family. Russolo in fact gave and dedicated to Piatti a charcoal drawing of an identical subject to that on the plate. This drawing, of which only photographic evidence exists, remained in the possession of the Piatti family until the previous decade, but is now lost.

Vittorio Pica's major article of 1904 in *Emporium* dedicated to Symbolism north of the Alps and discussing the work of two artists – James Ensor and Edvard Munch – in great detail; these were artists that very quickly, and for some time to come, would have been considered as ideal role models by Russolo.²⁰

Moreover, Gaetano Previati – for a short time destined to become the artist closest to Boccioni and Russolo, even though being a generation older – had already conceived of a similar motif of a woman and a bat in his illustrations to *Tales from Poe* (1887-90), and in 1906 exhibited an oil with an identical image entitled *Day Awakening the Night* (now in the Museo Revoltella, Trieste). Russolo would certainly have been aware of this work, which without doubt became the principal iconographic inspiration for his unpublished print.

First Experiments with Painting: 'Self Portrait with Skulls'

Russolo's earliest known painting was executed during this period of Symbolist-inspired printmaking. Significantly titled *Self Portrait with Skulls*, it is signed and dated 1908 and now belongs to the Civiche Raccolte d'Arte in Milan. As has been observed elsewhere, every phase of Russolo's career – be it predominantly focused on printmaking, painting, music or philosophy – is marked by the presence of one or more self portraits,²¹ expressing the artist's wish to reflect on his own production through the most appropriately expressive means (painting) and the most emblematic representation (his own face) in the reflective act *par excellence*. In this specific case, the work is fully representative of the stage Russolo's work was going through at the time. The young artist, with his astonished gaze, hallucinatory eyes and full-frontal pose, surrounded by a disturbing halo of skulls, seems to be engaged in a sort of *danse macabre*, suggesting the constant presence, the immanence of death.

The young but cultured Russolo would have been able to draw on a wide range of influences and reference points in constructing this image. One may suppose an awareness of Böcklin's singular *Self Portrait with Death playing the Violin* (1872), Munch's *Self Portrait beneath a Woman's Mask* (1891-92) and *Self Portrait with Cigarette* (1895), as well as the many examples of Ensor's use of masks and skulls around the turn of the century. Moreover, an immediate precedent would seem to have been Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo's *Self Portrait* of 1897-98 in the Uffizi, which has a similar frontal pose – albeit one that reveals more of the sitter's upper body – and a skull in the background resting on a shelf. It is highly possible that this work, and its Symbolist aesthetic, to which Pellizza also adhered around the turn of the century, could

²⁰ Vittorio Pica, 'Tre artisti d'eccezione: Aubrey Beardsley James Ensor Edouard Munch', *Emporium*, no.113, XIX, May 1904, pp.347-68. Some interesting illustrations accompanied the article that Russolo would have been able to admire and digest: Ensor's *Skulls* and Munch's *Portrait of Mallarmé*, *Vampire*, *Life and Death* and *Macabre Embrace*.

²¹ An earlier essay of mine is based on the idea of the self portrait as an 'emblem' characterising each creative period of Russolo's work. See F. Tagliapietra, *Luigi Russolo. Pittore musicista filosofo* (Treviso: Europrint, 2000), particularly pp.16-18.

have been studied by Russolo and adapted in such a way as to draw attention to the face, the gaze and the disquieting skulls.

Exhibitions of 1909 and Symbolist Etchings

As far as is known, there are two documents that attest to the production of etchings by Russolo in 1909. Some of his works were exhibited for the first time in the X Internationalen Kunstausstellung exhibition of early May 1909 in Munich. Russolo's participation is known from an unpublished document in which the artist speaks of sending three etchings: *Triumph of Death*, *Middle Ages* and the previously unknown *Morphine*.²² A second surprise awaits those who are familiar with the surviving plates in possession of the artist's family. On the *verso* of *Mother Sewing*, a work belonging to a later period, Russolo etched the reclining and serene head of a naked young woman who appears to be peacefully dreaming with her long wavy hair blowing in the wind. What is striking is the sleepy attitude of the subject, seemingly justifying the hypothesis that this is the etching entitled *Morphine*, previously considered lost and being presented here under this title for the first time.

In a later exhibition of December 1909 - January 1910 at the Famiglia Artistica, Russolo exhibited a number of unspecified etchings alongside his portrait of Nietzsche – a work which had the honour of being reproduced in the catalogue.²³ It is not unreasonable to suggest that in addition to the four known etchings exhibited at Munich and Milan there are at least another six that may be seen as being related to these stylistically and iconographically and that may be dated to within a year of them, namely: *Meditation*; *The Caress of Death*; *Temptation*; *Pride – Avarice – Lust*; *Light* and *Masks*. There is not space to consider each of these works individually, such are the cultural references they contain – both artistic and literary – and the matter of Russolo's acquisition of technical skills that brought him unparalleled success at this time. It is here sufficient to note, in agreement with the most knowledgeable writers on this specific aspect of Russolo's work,²⁴ that in a similar manner to *Self Portrait with Skulls* Russolo was investigating a macabre and spiritualistic world in images such as *Meditation*, *Middle Ages* and *The Caress of Death*. This developed in a twofold direction: on the one hand toward an expressive deformation of the face into a kind of mask, as in *Pride – Avarice – Lust* and

²² Unpublished form completed and signed by Russolo indicating three registered works sent to 'Renseignements sur ses oeuvres qu'il enverra à la XIème Exposition Internationale de Munich 1909' in the Archivio dell'Accademia di Brera. The document is undated, but was presumably completed before 30 April 1909, as requested.

²³ See the *Catalogo illustrato della Esposizione annuale d'arte della Famiglia Artistica* (Milan: Officine Tip.-Lit. dell'I.G.A.P., 1909).

²⁴ For Russolo's Symbolist prints, see the cited texts of Maffina and the notes of G. Lista to his 'Russolo, peinture et bruitisme', in L. Russolo, *L'art des bruits* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1975), p.11. See also: M. Calvesi, 'Quattro maestri del primo futurismo italiano', in *Catalogo della XXXIV Biennale d'arte* (Venice: Edizioni La Biennale, 1968), pp.XLI-LII; L. Caramel, 'Milan e il Futurismo – Il Futurismo a Milano', in *Arte a Milano 1906-1929*, ed. by P. Biscottini, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Fiera di Milano, Pavillion 35, 24 November 1995 - 7 January 1996 (Milan: Electa, 1995), pp.136-38; A. M. Damigella, *op. cit.*, pp.40-41 and I. Schiaffini, *Umberto Boccioni. Stati d'animo. Teoria e pittura* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2002), pp.57-58.

Masks, and on the other toward an erotic-decadent orientation, as in *The Caress of Death, Temptation, Light, Triumph of Death and Morphine*. With these works, Russolo wished to explicitly identify himself with multiple cultural, artistic, literary and philosophical currents of the recent past and immediate present, demonstrating his ability to swiftly progress through Wagnerian, D'Annunzian and Nietzschean allusions and a cultural heritage of images and art-historical knowledge of the first order, the origins of which can be traced back to Goya and Blake.

The Famiglia Artistica's Annual Exhibition: December 1909 - January 1910. Meeting with Boccioni. Birth of Futurist Painting

The etching *Nietzsche* therefore occupied a position of some prominence in the exhibition of the Famiglia Artistica at the end of 1909. It is a typically neat and realistic profile of the German philosopher, and possibly a study for a lost painting. The work is distinguished by the thin, wavy lines describing the hair of the philosopher that mysteriously bind him to a young woman in the background (the personification of madness). Russolo in fact titled this work *Nietzsche and Madness*,²⁵ intending to allude to that part of the philosopher's thought concerned with the irrational, as well as representing in a single, dramatic image, the German thinker's emotional state during the last years of his life.

At this exhibition at the Famiglia Artistica, therefore, Russolo presented works revealing a mature cultural and technical understanding of the medium, so much so as to be referred to many times as one of the best printmakers of the day by contemporary newspapers.²⁶ Russolo's fame led to his meeting with Umberto Boccioni, whose career up to that point had been short, turbulent and multilayered, comprising experiences very different to those of Russolo.

I met Boccioni one evening at the Famiglia Artistica in Milan. It was 1909. He wore a red fur cap, boots up to his knees and a short overcoat with a large fur collar. One would have taken him for a Russian. He had in fact returned only shortly before from Russia, following a visit to Paris.

His appearance attracted attention, his eyes and expression attracted sympathy. We introduced ourselves to one another and found that our ideas were very similar, our artistic ideals very close, and that we shared an equal hatred for the already-seen, the stale and the commonplace in art that made us immediately very close. We became friends, very good friends.²⁷

²⁵ This is the exact title of the work, written by Russolo himself in the margins of a sheet on which the work is printed (similar to the editions of the 1940s) in possession of the Russolo family.

²⁶ In the 'Recentissime' column of the *Corriere della Sera* of 19 December 1909 (p.6) an unnamed writer speaks of the 'so effective' etchings of Russolo.

²⁷ Luigi Russolo, 'Articolo in memoria di Umberto Boccioni', original manuscript sent to Fortunato Depero for publication in *Dinamo Futurista*, 1933, Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Fortunato Depero, p.1.

In this manner, Russolo recalled the meeting that was to change the destiny of Italian art. Boccioni himself sent four etchings to the exhibition, while their future comrade Carlo Carrà was represented by eight works.²⁸ Russolo's memoirs continue:

One evening, standing before a large poster announcing a Futurist event, we were commenting with admiration on the passionate work Marinetti was carrying on in the field of literature and Boccioni said: 'We need something like that in painting!' Some days later, after having personally met Marinetti, he expressed his desire to create something equal in painting to what had been achieved in literature and poetry. Marinetti, with characteristic enthusiasm, not only approved the idea but encouraged us to write down our ideas on painting in the shortest possible time in order to publish them and launch them publicly! Thus came about the manifesto of the Futurist painters and the adhesion of Boccioni, Balla, Carrà, Russolo and Severini to the Futurist movement which until then had been purely literary.²⁹

From this beginning at the Famiglia Artistica began a comradeship without equal between the three painters and the poet.

The later testimonies and comments regarding the first painting manifesto and subsequent birth of Futurist art belong to histories of the movement. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile citing two direct sources here – those of the poet Aldo Palazzeschi³⁰ and Carlo Carrà³¹ – who decades later described the extraordinary, almost clandestine meeting in Marinetti's house between Boccioni, Carrà and Russolo, the lively discussions which ensued, the hours spent in drafting the 'Manifesto of the Futurist Painters' and the completion of the finished text.

This is not the place to enter into a minute analysis of the manifesto, nor of the more important and enlarged 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' completed two months later. Still less is this the place to attempt to attribute the authorship of certain ideas in the two manifestos to this or that painter, as has been attempted in the past. Certainly, it would appear that Russolo found himself in a fairly privileged position as a studious, attentive and refined observer of the stylistic tendencies that he had incorporated into his pictorial and graphic works. Neither is it appropriate to narrate again here the acts of the painters and writers in their participation in the Futurist evenings that took place

²⁸ See *Catalogo illustrato della Esposizione annuale d'arte della Famiglia Artistica*, *op. cit.* Here Russolo also had one of his first meetings with Ugo Piatti, soon to become a great friend of the artist, and from the beginning of 1913 an indispensable collaborator on the construction of the *intonarumori*. Piatti exhibited four paintings at this exhibition.

²⁹ Luigi Russolo, 'Articolo in memoria...', *op. cit.*, pp.1-2.

³⁰ Often finding himself in Marinetti's house in early 1910, Palazzeschi recalled the meeting between the painters and the poet at least three times in print: the first time in 1957 in an article in the *Corriere della Sera* entitled 'Ricordo di Boccioni', 4 June 1957, p.3, a second time in the introduction to the 1959 exhibition catalogue *Il futurismo*, ed. by J. Recupero (Rome: De Luca, 1959), p.15, and a third – more detailed and definitive – time in 1968 in the preface to L. De Maria's *Teoria e invenzione futurista* (Milan: Mondadori, 1968), p.XVIII onward.

³¹ C. Carrà, *La mia vita* (Rome: Longanesi, 1943), pp.129-31

throughout 1910. Rather, it is important to return to Russolo's printmaking and painting in order to ascertain the nature of the cultural and technical exchanges that took place between the three artists at this time. If Russolo's existence during the first year of his Futurist involvement was characterised by a frenetic round of collective participation in events throughout the peninsular and ongoing attempts to recruit new adherents or reject others³² – that is to say, a life beneath a spotlight of notoriety – we must also imagine to ourselves an intent and reflective artist engaged in conceiving and executing a notable number of oils and etchings. It has been observed that the friendship between Boccioni and Russolo in this first year of Futurist painting constituted for both artists a privileged occasion for reciprocal cultural enrichment. It is difficult to determine who benefited most from this relationship: the younger Russolo's output seems to be located in the wake of Boccioni's, who influenced him greatly from an iconographic and stylistic point of view. But this was not always the case.

The Exhibitions of 1910. First Examples of Contiguity with Boccioni: His 'Female Head' in relation to Russolo's Oil and Etching 'Perfume'

Once again, the visual documents and exhibitions of which we are aware help us to disentangle the threads and identify an evolution in the work of Boccioni and Russolo that was indisputably reciprocal. There were two occasions when the newly formed Futurist group is known to have exhibited as individual artists rather than as members of a movement. The first, organised by the Regia Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan, which took place at the Palazzo della Permanente from 18 September - 6 November, was entitled National Exposition of the Fine Arts; the second, promoted by the Famiglia Artistica and hosted at San Raffaele, was the traditional end of year Intimate Exposition, running from 20-31 December. While the catalogue of the former exhibition is not much assistance – identifying the presence of Russolo in the eighth room, but only with an unidentified group of etchings³³ – that of the Famiglia Artistica is an extraordinary resource for determining the output of Boccioni (with the presentation of new works following his one-man show at Ca' Pesaro) and of Russolo until the end of the year.³⁴ Russolo's works were eight in number, more than his Futurist companions, and included three unspecified etchings and five paintings: *Perfume*, *Impression*, *Nietzsche*, *Lightning* and *Railway*.

While it is not possible to determine what the title *Impression* refers to, one may propose the following sequence in relation to the pictorial output of Russolo during that

³² For example, Dudreville recalled being excluded from the Futurist group on the basis of Boccioni's veto. See L. Dudreville, *Il romanzo di una vita* (1946) (Milan: Charta, 1994), p.44. Modigliani, on the other hand, declined an invitation to join the group from Severini in Paris. See G. Severini, *La vita di un pittore* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1983), p.90.

³³ *Esposizione Nazionale di Belle Arti, Regia Accademia di Belle Arti di Milano*, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Palazzo della Permanente, 18 September - 6 November 1910 (Milan: Alfieri & Lacroix, 1910).

³⁴ *Catalogo illustrato della Esposizione intima annuale d'arte della Famiglia Artistica, Esposizione intima*, 20 - 31 December 1910 (Milan: Officine Tip.-Lit. dell'I.G.A.P., 1910). Boccioni presented four oil paintings, showing *Scuffle* and *Grief* for the first time.

extraordinary year: firstly, the oil painting *Nietzsche* (whereabouts unknown) that would certainly have been different from the celebrated etching. Following this *Perfume*, which is similar to a work by Boccioni, then *Railway* (the title of which was presumably later changed to *Suburbs-Work*), *Lightning* and finally the difficult to classify *Head of Hair* (also known as *Tina's Hair*). Alongside these works was a coherent body of prints that need to be analysed in the context of the paintings.

The oil version of *Nietzsche* being lost, the first painting worthy of note is *Perfume*, the stylistic and iconographical similarity of which to Boccioni's *Female Head* (also known as *Portrait of a Futurist*) is very evident, to the extent that these two works almost constitute a diptych.³⁵ Moreover, there exists an etching by Russolo with the same title as the oil painting and which, unusually, is closer to Boccioni's work than to his own. There are different interpretations of this kind of 'short circuit' in the production of Russolo and Boccioni. Recently, the academic Iaria Schiaffini³⁶ has proposed a plausible analysis of this, recognising above all in the two paintings a fine, flowing brushstroke in the style of Previati³⁷ and an anti-realistic tonality, as well as synaesthetic notions evidently derived from Khnopff, Conconi and Previati himself. Schiaffini concludes: 'The recurring subject of *Perfume* in the two versions [...] leads one to attribute the iconographical invention to Russolo rather than to Boccioni.'³⁸

The Series of Mothers in Russolo's Printmaking

The exchange of ideas between Boccioni and Russolo which, in the above case, would appear to have originated from the latter, bore fruit in the younger artist's work in the form of a series of etchings certainly inspired by Boccioni and taking as its subject the maternal portrait, frontally or in profile, and of varying degrees of closeness: a subject favoured by both artists. Around 1907, Boccioni executed an etching and a pastel depicting an entire figure in profile, placed in a domestic interior before a window (the former, a portrait of his own *Mother Crocheting* and the latter entitled *Mother Working*, which is now in the Raccolta Grassi at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan). Two years later, between 1909 and 1910, Boccioni produced a frontal, close-up study entitled *Mother Sewing*. Both motifs were adopted by Russolo after he met the older artist.

³⁵ Around thirty years ago, Maurizio Calvesi first noted how each of the Futurist painters created a work that seemed to represent a literal illustration of a precise passage from a Futurist manifesto by Marinetti, published the preceding April, entitled 'Let's Murder the Moonshine'. These were: Carrà's *The Swimmers*, Boccioni's *Female Head* and Russolo's *Perfume*. See M. Calvesi, *Il futurismo. La fusione della vita nell'arte*, Enciclopedia Arte Moderna (Milan: Fabbri, 1967), pp.48-49, as well as the development of this idea in G. Di Milia, 'Boccioni contro Marinetti', in *La grande Milano tradizionale e futurista: Marinetti e il futurismo a Milano*, ed. by A. Bartori and G. Lopex, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, 10 October - 18 November 1995 (Rome: De Luca, 1995), p.120 and G. Di Milia, 'Boccioni', *Art Dossier*, no.133, April 1998 (Florence: Giunti, 1998), p.27.

³⁶ Iaria Schiaffini, *op. cit.*, pp.59-60.

³⁷ In January 1910 at the Società per le Belle Arti ed Esposizione Permanente di Milano, a large anthological exhibition of Previati's work opened, which the Futurist artists no doubt visited.

³⁸ Iaria Schiaffini, *op. cit.*, p.60.

In 1910, following *Morphine*, Russolo executed the etching *Mother Sewing* using the same plate, evidently adapting the title of Boccioni's work. Equally similar is the close-up, frontal view of the figure and the subject matter, with its focus on women's work. All this is not a casual coincidence. Russolo had probably already executed other plates depicting his mother in a foreground position, both rigidly frontal (*Small Portrait of Mamma* and *Mamma*) and three-quarter length (*Woman Reading*) as well as profile (*Head of Mother in Profile*). Boccioni's influence is still more evident in another work from this series entitled *Woman Sewing*, signed and dated 1910, in which the view is enlarged to take in the entire figure in a surprising echo of the etching and pastel by Boccioni of three years before. The only distinction between these works is that here the light source – a window – is placed behind the figure, rather than to one side, which decidedly changes the atmosphere of the piece. This variant in the light source compared to Boccioni's 'prototype' is of compositional significance insofar as it permitted Russolo to introduce another innovation, consisting of the simple but efficacious motif of the open window, which enabled him to explore the urban transformation developing in his own neighbourhood – at that time Prolungamento Nino Bixio. This is taken further in the following etching, *Woman on the Balcony*, in which Russolo's mother stands out against a minutely described background of buildings, roofs and smoking chimneys in an identical pose to the preceding image. This element of the expanding industrial city with its factories and chimneys fascinated Russolo as much as Boccioni at this time, when he was searching for an up-to-date, modern technique (at this point, still based on Previati's art, as we have seen) and subject matter as removed as possible from every decadence and Symbolism in the pursuit of a realistic description of the incipient industrial modernisation of the metropolis. This is the reason why in the work which one may consider to be the next in the series (*Suburbs-Work*) an affectionate theme such as that of the mother sewing gives way to the vision of a landscape comprising anonymous housing blocks, smoking chimneys, telegraph poles and tram lines: an entirely modern panorama³⁹ of a growing (or rising) city, that Boccioni had been magisterially capturing from 1908 in paintings such as *Factories at Porta Romana*.

In the above sequence of works, Russolo seemingly retreads paths beaten by Boccioni, who in this light becomes a fundamental point of reference. This is not to the extent of plagiarism, however, seeing how Russolo's work consistently maintained an undoubted originality and individuality at this time – something very much in evidence in the oil painting with the same title and theme as the etching *Suburbs-Work*, presumably presented at the exhibition at the Famiglia Artistica of late 1910 under the title *Railway*.

Visions of the Industrial City and Divisionism: 'Suburbs-Work', the Two Versions of 'Lightning' and related Etchings

³⁹ A later etching from the period, with a similar subject, is *Roofs*, a raised-up view of housing in a downward-sloping perspective, with a background containing a smoking chimney and figures hurrying along the street.

The oil paintings *Suburbs-Work* and both versions of *Lightning* constitute a moment of resolution in Russolo's art at this time, free of Symbolist overtones and concerned with industrial subject matter that one might term proto-Futurist. It is most likely that these three paintings were executed in 1910 and not – as some have suggested – between 1909 and 1910,⁴⁰ insofar as they are unequivocally a consequence of the artist's friendship with Boccioni.

At this time, Russolo still seemed to be searching for a precise reference point in the field of Divisionism. If in *Suburbs-Work* he appeared to be closest to Pellizza da Volpedo, making an explicit reference to the Piedmontese artist's 1904 work *The Sun (Rising Sun)*, then in the first version of *Lightning* his model was more the works of Previati, while the second version reveals a more mature synthesis of these experiences, blended with the influence of Boccioni. The presence of a powerful sun throwing out its rays in the manner of that in the celebrated oil by Pellizza⁴¹ is evident in *Suburbs-Work*, while in the first version of *Lightning*⁴² the brushstrokes appear more fluid and extended, recalling the work of Previati in the juxtaposition of complementary colours and the interest in a nocturnal scene being shattered by the outbreak of a lightning bolt.

The chromatic filaments seem to dissolve in the second version, being substituted with a more studied pictorial structure composed of minuscule dots and dashes of pure colour according to an authentically Divisionist vocabulary, mindful of the lessons of the great masters and the example of Boccioni, to which this work refers. One can assert that Russolo's *Lightning* may be seen as a nocturnal pendant to Boccioni's earlier *Factories at Porta Romana* or *Morning*. The aim of capturing an atmospheric light through the visualisation of luminous rays proceeding from a single light source is shared by both works. In Boccioni's painting, the sun cuts through clouds or industrial smog, while in Russolo's the burst of lightning tears apart the clouds and cuts through the rain above the sleeping city, illuminating it as much as the gas lamps.

The subjects of Russolo's above oil paintings were reworked in two related etchings: *Morning* and *Sleeping City*. It is difficult to determine the precise chronological relationship between these and the paintings. In fact, if the graphic version of *Morning* presents the subject of a sun which, similarly to that in the oil *Suburbs-Work*, pours forth its light on a railway, the surrounding countryside and a convoy that disappears over the horizon, the etching *Sleeping City* appears to blend the proto-Futurist element

⁴⁰ A. Negri, 'Un quadro di Russolo del 1909 e uno di Bucci del 1919-20 in una collezione privata', *L'uomo nero. Materiali per una storia delle arti della modernità*, I, no.1, June 2003, pp.139-42.

⁴¹ As pertinently suggested by Antonella Negri (*ibidem*, p.139), this work by Russolo is situated within certain boundaries: '[...] Divisionist in terms of its technique – with that sun, presented as a modernised and updated version of the famous motif of Pellizza da Volpedo (from the countryside to the city), streaming Symbolist and progressive humours [...] – and proto-Futurist in terms of its theme, an evident development or counterpoint to Boccioni's suburban views'.

⁴² The first opportunity of seeing the more basic version of *Lightning* was at the cited Milanese exhibition curated by P. Biscottini in 1995. The first reference to the painting, on the other hand, is contained in a letter from Russolo to his wife from Montrouge, a suburb of Paris where the artist lived, on 5 December 1929. Letter published in Maffina, *op. cit.*, 1978, p.289.

of the city sundered by the bolts of *Lightning* with a residual Symbolism which, as we shall see, continued to be present in Russolo's work over the coming year.

In the etching, Russolo seems to imagine the moment of dawn, when the *Sleeping City* of chimneys and electric lights beneath industrial smoke and clouds is caught up in restorative sleep and the most lascivious or bizarre dreams, as is clearly revealed by the forms of naked bodies erotically entangled in the clouds, which gradually transform themselves into grotesque masks. In this etching Russolo seemed to combine and synthesize all his previous experiences, as well as incorporating that attention to the social element and the growing industrial city that his Futurist companions (Boccioni and Carrà in Milan and Severini and Balla in their own locations) had also been addressing in their works.

Temporary Abandonment of Etching and Preparation for the Events of 1911

The final etching of this period that we have yet to consider – and which inspired an oil painting concerning the same subject matter – is *Head of Hair*, a work that is signed and dated 1910. This etching certainly derived from the earlier and more realistic *Tina's Hair*, having the same model (the artist's young sister) the same composition and the same flowing hair that in *Head of Hair* recalls the curls entangling the figure of Nietzsche. The real novelty, however, is constituted by the oil painting derived from these etchings entitled *Head of Hair* or *Tina's Hair*. Here one recognizes an entirely coherent and up-to-date pictorial language in the fluid line describing the length of the model's hair. Incandescent globes on either side of the head and hair and in front of the bust seem to suddenly illuminate and emanate light in rays. A luminous beam that descends and sweeps through the painting from left to right creates an atmospheric light recalling that of the earlier versions of *Lightning* and some of Boccioni's landscapes and portraits, such as *Three Women*, *Modern Idol* and *The Laugh* of 1911.

Russolo's output at the end of this decade therefore seems to be pervaded by a fervent and unequalled experimentalism, leading him to the most advanced limits of Divisionism and an exchange of ideas with Boccioni. In mid-January 1911 the young Russolo attempted to sell those works and etchings of his recently exhibited at the Famiglia Artistica. He deferentially wrote to the influential artist and gallery owner Vitter Grubicy de Dragon in a handwritten letter,⁴³ asking him for advice and assistance:

Since you had the kindness to say some complimentary things about these things of mine, I believe I am not offering works deprived of artistic merit, possessing the knowledge of having worked on them with great love and complete sincerity.⁴⁴

⁴³ Luigi Russolo, Letter to Vitter Grubicy de Dragon, 13 January 1911, Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Vitter Grubicy. Along with the letter is conserved the envelope, addressed by Russolo: 'To the artist Vitter Grubicy de Dragon HERE'.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

Russolo admitted going through a particularly difficult phase, finding himself:

[...] in absolute and immediate need of money for life and for paints since, unfortunately, among other things I cannot even work due to lack of primary materials.⁴⁵

The nature of Rubik's response, which may have been spoken, is not known. Three and a half months later, however, the crisis would seem to have been averted, as Russolo had some paintings ready to be exhibited in the scandalous exhibition at the former Stabilimento Ricordi in Milan.

The Futurist Exhibition at the Free Art Exposition

On 30 January 1911 a circular was released, bearing the address 'Società Umanitaria (Fondazione Loria), Casa del Lavoro, Milano, Via Manfredo Fanti, 17', in the form of a 'Letter-invitation for the Free Art Exposition', signed by Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Dalmazzo Carrà and Ugo Nebbia.⁴⁶ The invitation was open to all artists in Milan who wanted to send their works to an exhibition that would long be remembered. The exposition opened on 30 April in Viale Vittoria 21, at the former Stabilimento Ricordi, whence the oft-used description 'Mostra al Padiglione Ricordi' [Exhibition at the Ricordi Pavillion]. Boccioni, Carrà and Russolo exhibited around fifty works in a special room; many other artists, such as Dudreville, recalled the event, writing:

I was also invited to that exhibition, and I sent (God forgive me!) an ugly portrait of my sister and a landscape, which were the last of my essays in Divisionism. Boccioni exhibited *Three Women* and the mastodontic '*Ville qui monte*' [City Rises] among other works, Carrà *The Martyrs of Belfiore* and *The Funeral of the Anarchist*, a great and lively composition, and Russolo *Music*. Excluding Russolo who, with [...] the most violent and clashing colours, essentially seemed a figurehead and was nothing from the point of view of painting, Boccioni and Carrà still remained in the same positions.⁴⁷

Notwithstanding the tardy and dry opinions of Dudreville, particularly those concerning his friend Russolo, who never stored up negative judgments, this citation is useful for an understanding of the artistic panorama presented by the exhibition on the part of a participant, above all in the Futurist room. The presence of certain works is particularly notable, namely: Boccioni's *The City Rises* and *The Laugh* – defaced during the exhibition – Carrà's *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* and Russolo's *Music*, presented there for the first time.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁶ Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Dalmazzo Carrà, Alessandro Mazzucotelli, Guido Mazzocchi, Ugo Nebbia and Giovanni Rocco, 'Lettera-invito per l'Esposizione d'Arte Libera', 30 January 1911, in M. D. Gambillo and T. Fiori (eds), *Archivi del futurismo*, vol.I (Rome: De Luca, 1958), pp.102-03.

⁴⁷ Leonardo Dudreville, *op. cit.*, p.181.

No catalogue exists for the Free Art Exposition,⁴⁸ making it difficult to determine with any precision which were the fifty works exhibited by the Futurists. Few and controversial were the responses of the critics, which may have given clues about this. The most trustworthy testimony is that of the artist's wife, who cites the presence of a number of works in her biography of Russolo, 'among which: *Music*, *Self Portrait*, *Sky-Houses-Light*, *Memories of a Night* and *One and Three Heads*', and the critic Filippo Quaglia of *Avanti!* who on 11 June 1911 listed *Music*, *Perfume*, *Head of Hair*, *Dying Man* and *Nietzsche* in the Milanese exhibition.⁴⁹ From the following year, with the beginning of the large European exhibitions of Futurist art, one is able to precisely determine which works were present in individual shows due to the accompanying catalogues. By contrast, determining by deduction which works Russolo executed for the spring exhibition in Milan requires an understanding of the evolution of his Futurist vocabulary in relation to that of his colleagues. Excluding the oils already presented in other circumstances, or unknown to us – such as *Dying Man* – and the apparently later *Sky-Houses-Light* that was exhibited on later occasions, frequently with different titles, the sole work unanimously agreed upon as being present in the exhibition is *Music*.⁵⁰ The presence of other oils is only conjecture; however, on the basis of evidence we shall presently consider it is possible to add *Speeding Train at Night*, *The Revolt* and, with good probability, a *Self Portrait*.

The Two Versions of 'Music'

The evidence for the presence of *Music* in the exhibition at the end of April 1911 is, then, unequivocal. There remains the mystery of why, only two years later, the work reappeared with the title *Musical Dynamism* in a Futurist exhibition in the Foyer of Rome's Teatro Costanzi, the very place where Russolo was inspired to formulate his 'art of noises'.

A testimony recorded by Marianne W. Martin, the author of a detailed study of Futurism, mentions a manuscript by Paolo Buzzi shown to her by Maria Zanovello that attests to a later execution of the work on the part of the artist: '[...] this picture was repainted after the Free Art Exposition, giving it the controlled structure which it had not possessed earlier'.⁵¹ Anna Maria Damigella elaborates further, proposing that:

⁴⁸ In the letter cited above (note 46) of 30 January 1911, it is stated that 'no catalogue will be published or compiled'.

⁴⁹ See M. Zanovello Russolo, *Russolo. L'uomo...*, *op.cit.*, p.26.

⁵⁰ A later – visual – testament to the presence of *Music* at the *Esposizione d'Arte Libera* at the Padiglione Ricordi is supplied by Boccioni who, in an illustration featured in the 17 June edition of the Milanese magazine *Uno, due, tre*, reconstructed the inflammatory climate of a Futurist evening with caricatures of Marinetti, Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo and a conducting Balilla Pratella provoking the audience with their histrionics before a backdrop on which one can identify caricatures of three paintings: Boccioni's *The Laugh*, Carra's *Swimmers* and Russolo's *Music*.

⁵¹ M. W. Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.89.

We know the second, schematic and geometric version of *Music* (1912), while the first, exhibited at the first *Esposizione d'Arte Libera* of April 1911, gave the dominant curve, spiral and sound wave a Previati-esque linearity.⁵²

I do not believe it is possible to speak of two works, but rather of a later intervention on the first (and in my opinion, sole) work,⁵³ despite the significant change of title. It is certain that from its first appearance this oil – now in the Estorick Collection, London – obtained an unequalled critical success. It is possible that the very early commentators saw the work deprived of that later ‘controlled structure’ of which Martin speaks, and therefore dominated by the ‘Previati-esque linearity’ spoken of by Damigella. And yet, reading the sole description of interest belonging to the period preceding February 1913 by Attiglio Tegilo in Bergamo’s *Giornale*, there do not appear to be significant changes. Admittedly, this is more a careful description of the work’s content, which does not mean that the work was actually in front of him. Nevertheless, it seems to reflect the painting familiar to us today:

A ghostly musician, to whom the artist gives the appearance of Beethoven, is seated at the piano; his hands multiply and draw music from the keyboard, guided by inspiration. Into the air winds a long, serpentine blue ribbon; it is the melodic wave that unrolls into infinity. A nimbus of concentric circles denotes the vibrations of the sound wave. The notes, sounds and harmonies are rendered as masks around the long, coloured trail and each has its own particular face. They sing high and low, laugh and smile, cry, groan and occasionally shout, each contributing to that complex of sentiments from which the symphony is constructed. This canvas, rich in lively, suggestive colours, is accessible to anybody concerned with music, even if they have not yet been initiated into Futurism.⁵⁴

An eloquent explanatory note regarding this work was published by Russolo in 1920 in the journal *Poesia*:

With this painting the artist wanted to make a kind of pictorial translation of the melodic, rhythmical, harmonic, polyphonic and colouristic impressions forming the complex of musical emotion. Against a blue sky that becomes progressively darker, so as to render the spatial radiation of the sound wave, a spectral musician moved by the fury of inspiration draws a collection of sounds, rhythms and harmonies from a vast keyboard: the unravelling of the melodic line in time is translated pictorially into that deep blue beam which, snaking through space, dominates and envelops the entire painting.

⁵² A. M. Damigella, *op. cit.*, p.42.

⁵³ G. Lista, in his ‘Russolo, pienture...’ *op. cit.*, p.12, speaks explicitly of two versions: ‘[...] la deuxième version du tableau, la seule don’t on dispose actuellement’.

⁵⁴ A. Teglio, ‘L’arte libera in Italia. La prima esposizione inaugurata a Milano’, in *Il Giornale*, 4 July 1911, cited by M. Zanovello Russolo, *Russolo: L’uomo...*, *op. cit.*, pp.26-27.

Like sudden meteors, leaving trails of their movement across the blue space, numerous serene, happy and grotesque masks accumulate, interweave and overlap, forming harmonic or complementary accords of lively colouration, thereby translating the indefinite sentiments of music into definite human expressions. These differently grouped and differently coloured masks form harmonies of pictorial colourations, reflections and resonances of chords, timbres and musical colourations.⁵⁵

An element of great interest in the work is the musician depicted at the keyboard in a counter light, one that nevertheless still permits the viewer to distinguish his face and hands, moving across the keys in accordance with a Futurist theory of movement that Giovanni Lista recognises as the first instance of its illustration: 'Il s'agissait donc de la première oeuvre mouvementiste précédant de quelque temps le cinématisme de Balla.'⁵⁶ It would certainly appear that in the depiction of the musician, Russolo was the first of the Futurist painters to apply some of the Futurist principles of dynamism and simultaneity expressed in the 'Technical Manifesto' of April 1910.

Additionally, the work contains a further example of the repetition of forms in the visualisation of the atmosphere to denote the persistence of the sound wave, which expands from the center of the composition in concentric blue-white circles: atmospheric motifs that are identical to those used to give form to other kinds of atmosphere – meteorological in *Solidity of Fog* and spatial in *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt* and *Interpenetration of Houses + Light + Sky*.

Next to these concentric elements, characteristic of Russolo's Futurist vocabulary, a number of other Symbolist elements are present in this work. As Guido Ballo has noted:

the line, from an impulsive pictorial sign of Divisionist origin, becomes more cerebral: the cursive sign has become a more detached, geometric one. But the undulation of the art nouveau line persists: the chromatism of the complementary Divisionists is defined in clean fields, where the light assumes a psychic dimension.⁵⁷

To yield to the evidence, the blue ribbon, of which we have noted the significance from the words of Russolo, possesses a certain art nouveau undulation, while the masks, according to a persuasive interpretation by Ilaria Schiaffini,

could allude to spiritual apparitions, in keeping with the definition of 'spectral musician' proposed by the artist himself [...] and the colours of the faces,

⁵⁵ L. Russolo, 'La Musica: quadro di Luigi Russolo', typecript sent to Depero, Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Fortunato Depero, published for the first time in *Poesia*, no.9, December 1920.

⁵⁶ G. Lista, 'Russolo, peinture...', *op. cit.*, p.12.

⁵⁷ G. Ballo, *Preistoria del futurismo*, Corso monografico di storia dell'arte, Accademia di Brera, 1959-60 (Milan: Maestri, 1960), p.128.

restricted to red, yellow and green [...] introduce a visionary and spiritualistic dimension.⁵⁸

In essence, *Music* introduced a series of significant conceptual and pictorial techniques. The work can also be read as a self portrait, on this occasion an ‘unconscious one of the artist, in a certain sense prophetic of his future occupation’⁵⁹ as a musician, soon to be occupied before a keyboard similar to that represented in the oil painting – that of his noise-harmonium (*rumorarmonio*), an instrument that emitted all the tones and sounds of his earlier noise-intoners (*intonarumori*).

The Course of the Futurist Self Portrait

The self portrait – conscious or not – was a constant in the figurative work of Russolo. He had already shown an interest in this genre in his etchings and *Self Portrait with Skulls*. It is even possible that Russolo presented a self portrait in the Free Art Exposition or, at least, that he had executed one between the end of the year and the beginning of the following year, 1911. In the international exhibitions of 1912 and 1913 there in fact appeared at least two self portraits: *Portrait of the Artist* and *My Dynamic Self*. Both lost, these two portraits are known from photographs discovered in the artist’s archives and reproduced in several publications. The first self portrait was only exhibited in certain international exhibitions: London in March 1912, Berlin between April-May, and on other occasions before the end of the year, prior to its disappearance.⁶⁰

The three catalogues in which this unknown self portrait appears carry notes written by each of the exhibitors, Russolo describing his self portrait as an ‘interpretation of the artist’s state of mind’. It is probable that the portrait exhibited was *Self Portrait with Etheric Double* insofar as it expressed its will to represent the artist’s state of mind through the duplication of his face in a spiritual double that corresponded to it figuratively.

In addition to bringing a complex occult reading into play, the work alludes to the theory of ‘states of mind’ which Boccioni had lucidly expressed a few months earlier in

⁵⁸ I. Sciaffini, *op. cit.*, p.61. Sciaffini further elaborates her reasoning, determining an analogy between Russolo’s work and theosophical thought of the first years of the century.

⁵⁹ F. Tagliapietra, *op. cit.*, p.65 onward.

⁶⁰ The portrait is mentioned in three exhibition catalogues: those of London (*Exhibition of Works by the Italian Futurist Painters*, The Sackville Gallery, March 1912) and Berlin (*Futuristen. Der Sturm. Zweite Ausstellung*, April-May 1912). A third catalogue mentions the work in question: *Die Futuristen*, again printed by Der Sturm, which was probably used for later exhibitions that took place at The Hague (Galleria Biesing) in August, Amsterdam (Galleria Audretsch) in September and Munich (Galleria Tannhäuser) in October.

a successful lecture at the Circolo Artistico Internazionale in Rome on 29 May 1911,⁶¹ the contents of which were no doubt discussed with Russolo, Carrà and Marinetti.

In a word, we may conclude that the *Self Portrait* in question, likewise executed between 1910 and 1911 and taking Previati as its formal model, could have first been entitled *Self Portrait with Etheric Double*, being described as representing ‘the interpretation of the state of mind of the artist’ following Russolo’s adoption of Boccioni’s theory of ‘states of mind’.

‘Speeding Train at Night’: Works in Pastel and Ink on Paper

Two later oils, probably presented at the *Esposizione d’Arte Libera*, were *Speeding Train at Night* and *The Revolt*, united by a common language and interest in movement and states of mind, as conceived of at that time by the Futurist painters.

Regrettably, only photographic documentation of the former work remains, the painting itself having disappeared without trace following its last recorded appearance in a Futurist exhibition at the Galerie Georges Giroux, Brussels, between May and June 1912 – the fourth stage of that international tour of Futurist works – in which it appeared (uniquely among Russolo’s works) with the statement ‘Vendu a M. Max Rothschild’ alongside it in parentheses.

Nevertheless, an earlier study in pastel and ink for this work exists, documented on several occasions in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁶² Despite the difficulty of comparing the photograph of the lost oil with the study, the latter seems perfectly sufficient to convey the intentions of Russolo in the painting sold to Max Rothschild. It illustrates a close attention to the atmosphere surrounding the train, described by means of a complementary tonality of linear streaks, elongated into wedge shapes to describe the trajectory of the vehicle towards the left of the image. The later pictorial translation had analogous characteristics, with the exception of a greater descriptive attention in relation to the buildings in the background.

Russolo’s work represents the first appearance of a train in a Futurist painting, the incorporation of railway elements in Boccioni’s triptych *States of Mind* and Severini’s *Memory of a Voyage* being some months later. However, unlike the above works, it did not intend to confront the existential poetics of ‘states of mind’ or the re-emergence of

⁶¹ For an in depth historical and critical consideration of Boccioni’s Rome lecture, see the interesting study by I. Schiaffini, *op. cit.*, in particular chapter III, ‘La teoria degli stati d’animo di Boccioni’, pp.69-115.

⁶² The work was published on several occasions in the period after World War I. See *Mostra artistica. I futuristi*, ed. by A. Viviani-Burali, catalogue of the exhibition, Rome: Galleria d’Arte del Giornale Politico Quotidiano *L’Epoca*, 20 December 1919 - 4 January 1920, p.27; *Piccolo mondo. Esposizione d’Arte per Bambini. Il giornalino della domenica*, catalogue of the exhibition, Florence: Via dei Conti, 1920 (Rome: Tipografia Agostiniana, 1920), p.14; *Arte italiana*, ed. by L. Scivo and A. Viviani-Burali, catalogue of the exhibition, Rome: Circolo delle Arti e delle Lettere, 1934 (Rome: Cosmopoli, 1934), p.83.

past events in the memory, but rather to convey the sensation of watching a speeding vehicle and the surrounding night-time atmosphere lit up by flashes of light, including those originating from the train itself. The sensations of speed and the movement of the air are aspects that Russolo resolved through a singular and personal compositional approach. In this and successive cases such as *The Revolt* or the later *Dynamism of an Automobile* Russolo described movement and direction through the repetition of triangular forms which cut into the atmosphere like wedges, indicating the direction of the event in the phase of its evolution.

The Tempera 'Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt'

A work in tempera on paper entitled *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt*⁶³ constitutes an early and, in some senses, preparatory study for works including the large oil painting *The Revolt*. The tempera, dated 1910-11, would seem to be the basis for a series of paintings that Russolo devised over the following months. In the upper section one notes the employment of a motif already familiar from *Music*: that of a blue-white atmospheric wave spreading outwards in concentric circles. This motif was later repeated as the single source of illumination – almost certainly a gas lamp – in *The Solidity of Fog*. In *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt*, however, the source of illumination is constituted by the full moon, the hated ‘moonshine’ that the Futurists wanted to murder and which Russolo alone was to resurrect in this nocturnal image. Moreover, the tempera painting presents a series of urban buildings seen from above in perspective, buildings that Russolo was to reuse some months later as an analogous motif in *Interpenetration of Houses + Light + Sky*. Four angular force-lines of reddish-orange overlap these structures, with the vortex oriented towards the left. *The Revolt*, unlike *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt*, contains no advancing crowd, only the origin of the revolt itself, visualised as a burst of light located at the centre of the composition.

A Later Painting of 1911: 'The Revolt'

Russolo's breakthrough work, entitled *The Revolt*, was exhibited on various occasions – firstly in the Free Art Exposition and, successively, at all stages of the Futurist tour of 1912, obtaining a notable success. Together with Carrà's *The Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* and Boccioni's *Raid and Riot in the Galleria*, Russolo's large oil painting constituted the most acute work of the three Futurist flag bearers in terms of its formal vocabulary, significance and political content. As early as 1912, in a text entitled ‘The Exhibitors to the Public’ – the introduction to the catalogue of the first international exhibition which began in Paris at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune – there is an interesting passage regarding some of the exhibited paintings with a clear subversive content:

⁶³ Exhibited for the first time in the Esposizione di Pittura Futurista di *Lacerba*, Florence: Galleria Gonnelli, 30 November 1913 - 18 January 1914 (not in the catalogue) and then presented on various occasions after World War II. See, *Mostra artistica...*, *op. cit.*, p.25, *Piccolo mondo...*, *op. cit.*, p.18 (with the title *The Circles of the Moon*) and the catalogue *Arte italiana*, *op. cit.*, p.79.

If we paint the phases of a riot, the crowd bustling with uplifted fists and the noisy onslaughts of cavalry are translated upon the canvas in sheaves of lines corresponding with all the conflicting forces, following the general law of violence of the picture.⁶⁴

This was perhaps most fully illustrated in Carrà's *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli*. However, contemporary French critics did not fail to note similar characteristics in Russolo's oil painting, noting his 'vision dynamique ou cinématique',⁶⁵ commenting that 'les lignes forces sont visiblement indiquées',⁶⁶ and that 'il a de qualités linéaires qui [...] lui donnent l'intérêt d'une belle affiche'.⁶⁷

From its first appearance, therefore, *The Revolt* won widespread and warm approval, so much as to quickly find a buyer in Berlin, recalled in some letters by Boccioni and in later catalogues by the name of Doctor Borchardt.⁶⁸

All art criticism to date⁶⁹ concurs on the singularity of this image of the marching revolutionaries in Futurist art. These advance from the right *en masse* and are depicted in a flaming red to indicate their state of mind. They move in a wedge-shaped manner preceded by an explosion of yellow streaked with green – the work evidently depicting an event occurring subsequent to the sparks of revolt in the earlier tempera – and by the angular red force-lines that envelope them and disrupt the perspective of the surrounding buildings.

Like *Speeding Train at Night*, *The Revolt* also boasts of a faithful small-format study: a work in tempera on paper entitled *The Revolt (Study)*. Another is that of *Simultaneous Visions (Study for Memories of a Night)*. Unlike many other drawings that have recently

⁶⁴ U. Boccioni, C. Carrà, L. Russolo, G. Balla, G. Severini, 'Les Exposants au public', in *Les Peintres futuristes italiens*, catalogue of the exhibition, Paris: Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, 5 - 24 February 1912, p.8. This preface was published almost unaltered in the various catalogues of the Futurist exhibitions of 1912 and 1913.

⁶⁵ J. D'Aoust, 'La peinture Cubiste, Futuriste... et au-delà', in *Livres et Art*, Paris, I, 5 March 1912.

⁶⁶ J. Des Gachons, 'La peinture d'après-demain (?) En route pour le Futurisme', in *Je sais tout*, Paris, LXXXVII, 15 April 1912.

⁶⁷ G. Khan, 'Les Futuristes Italiens', in *Mercure de France*, XXIII, no.353, p.185.

⁶⁸ In the catalogue of an exhibition of the following year beginning in Rotterdam (*Les Peintres et les Sculptures futuristes italiens*, catalogue of the exhibition, Rotterdamsche Kunstrking, 18 May - 15 June 1913 (Rotterdam: J. De Jong, 1913), p.15), one notes that Dr Borchardt acquired numerous Futurist works in Berlin, among which were *The Revolt*, *Memories of a Night*, *One and Three Heads* and *Tina's Hair*.

⁶⁹ Among the more acute interpretations, see G. Ballo, *Preistoria...*, *op. cit.*, p.43; M. W. Martin, *op. cit.*, pp.118-19; G. Lista, 'Russolo, peinture...', *op. cit.*, p.14; E. Piselli, *Aspetti dell'opera di Luigi Russolo fra pittura e musica (1907-1916)*, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, academic year 1983-84, pp.120-24; E. Piselli, *Luigi Russolo incisore e pittore 1907-1913* (Bornato in Franciacorta: Sardini, 1990), pp.36-39; G. Anzani and C. Pirovano, 'La pittura in Lombardia nel primo Novecento (1900-1945)', in *La pittura in Italia. Il Novecento 1900-1945* (Milan: Electa, 1991), p.129; L. Caramel, *op. cit.*, p.137 and Anna Maria Damigella, *op. cit.*, pp.62-63.

appeared⁷⁰ these two small works come with a rich and comprehensive bibliography⁷¹ that proves them to be indisputably authentic.

Events and Works between the End of 1911 and the Beginning of 1912: 'One and Three Heads' and 'Memories of a Night'

The events of 1911, both before and after the Free Art Exposition, demonstrated a strengthening of the bonds between the Futurist painters and Marinetti. Artists and writers alike participated in many *serate* and the punitive action taken against the *La Voce* group around Soffici, following a ferociously critical review of the Milan exhibition, has passed into legend.⁷²

As we have noted, Boccioni's aforementioned Rome lecture was of great importance in relation to the development of the pictorial theory of 'states of mind', which represented a kind of technical *point de repère* prior to the painters' imminent exploration of French aesthetics, particularly those of Cubism.

It was thanks to their Parisian correspondent, Gino Severini, that Futurism ceased to be a domestic phenomenon and became an international event. Due to the contacts Severini was able to establish between Milan and Paris, and to Marinetti's standing in French artistic circles, the Futurists were able to organise an exceptional exhibition in the undisputed world capital of art at the beginning of the following year. This exhibition demanded laborious preparation, leading to an intense period of study, organisation and production.

Thanks to this first encounter between the three painters and Severini, the necessary arrangements were put in place to organise a preparatory voyage to the French capital for inspection and instruction. This took place in the autumn of 1911, the exhibition being planned for early February 1912. Despite their harsh – and *a priori* – criticism of French aesthetics, particularly Cubism, they intended to directly inform themselves of the current trends in order to confirm or rectify their already provocative pictorial vocabularies. In spite of Severini's recollections to the contrary, Russolo did not take part in the autumn visit to Paris, which coincided with the 1911 Salon d'Automne.⁷³ As

⁷⁰ The curators of the present exhibition, in agreement with the scientific committee, have decided not to present a number of preparatory drawings attributed to Russolo, owing to a lack of adequate documentation and the fact of their being uncharacteristic of his work. An exception is the work *Untitled*, unique in Russolo's *oeuvre*. Signed and dated 1912, it was exhibited for the first time in 1968 and has been included in many prestigious later exhibitions. It is included here on the basis of its atypical character, which makes for interesting comparisons with the rest of Russolo's work.

⁷¹ Exhibited for the first time at the cited exhibition *Esposizione di Pittura Futurista di Lacerba*, 1913-1914. See also A. Viviani, *Mostra artistica: I futuristi*, *op.cit.*, pp.25-26; *Piccolo mondo...*, *op. cit.*, pp.15 and 18 (where they are called *Running Man* and *Shadows in the Night*); *Arte italiana*, *op. cit.*, 1934, pp.80-81 and *Il poeta Marinetti e il futurismo*, ed. by L. Scrivo, catalogue of the exhibition, Turin: Casa Editrice Paravia, 1940, p.8 (only *The Revolt (Study)*).

⁷² Ardengo Soffici, 'Arte libera e libera pittura futurista', *La Voce*, no. 25, 22 June 1911.

⁷³ Severini erroneously suggested that Russolo made the 1911 trip: 'The visit to Paris made an enormous impression on Boccioni, even more than on Carrà and Russolo' (Gino Severini, *op. cit.*, p. 96), but it is

a consequence, Russolo felt the influence of Cubist theories to a much lesser extent than either Boccioni or Carrà. However, he seemed to have been fascinated by certain aspects of the work of Boccioni, who had developed a number of substantial novelties over the course of the previous year, particularly following the visit to Paris. In other words, works such as *One and Three Heads* and *Memories of a Night*, presented at the Parisian exhibition the following February and executed in Milan between the end of 1911 and the beginning of 1912, were indebted to the influence of a mature and informed Boccioni.

This close thematic and chronological relationship between the work of Boccioni and Russolo can be seen in a painting entitled *One and Three Heads*, which was exhibited at the Parisian Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, as well as the other venues in the touring exhibition of 1912, but which is now lost. In its conception and composition it is very close to a contemporary work by Boccioni entitled *Simultaneous Visions*. Both illustrate the concept of dynamic and simultaneous interpenetration and the point of view is similar, both works depicting a woman contemplating a growing city from high up on a balcony. Certainly, the compositional structure of Russolo's work is much less articulate than that of Boccioni: the surrounding buildings are still perfectly legible, the brushstrokes still seem to be elongated streaks of colour and the three heads are simply multiplied (as in the earlier *Self Portrait with Etheric Double*) rather than being built up in geometric, faceted planes synthesising the subject and the vision external to it.

Much more complex and significant is another painting of the same period, *Memories of a Night*, which was also included in the touring exhibition of 1912 and which is now in a private American collection. More than other works, this seems to correspond more closely to the ideas propagated in 'The Exhibitors to the Public', in which the Futurists established the necessity of pictorially representing the so-called 'simultaneity of states of mind', which was described as being 'the intoxicating aim of our art'.⁷⁴

This implies the simultaneousness of the ambient and, therefore, the dislocation and dismemberment of objects, the scattering and fusion of details, freed from accepted logic, and independent from one another.

possible that he was confusing this with a later visit of 1912. In addition, a letter from Severini to Marinetti of April 1930 (published in Silvia Evangelisti, 'Italiani a Parigi: 1900-1935', in *La pittura in Italia. Il Novecento...*, *op. cit.*, p.645) is no more convincing, as Severini seems to commit the same error. However, Carrà narrates the episode in these words: 'One September morning, Boccioni and I left for Paris, and Severini immediately came to meet us.' (cf. Carlo Carrà, *op. cit.*, p.152). Russolo's copy of Carrà's book (*La mia vita*, Rome: Longanesi, 1943), dedicated and presented to him by the author, and now in the Biblioteca Civica di Laveno, bears no corrections in the margins in relation to this episode – something that Russolo often did in the pages of his books – which suggests that Carrà's recollection was accurate.

⁷⁴ U. Boccioni, C. Carrà, L. Russolo, G. Balla and G. Severini, *Les exposants au public...*, *op.cit.*, Here the Italian translation is being used (cf. note 64) from the catalogue to the Rome exhibition at the Ridotto del Teatro Costanzi, from 21 February 1913, p.9.

In order to make the spectator live in the centre of the picture, as we express it in our manifesto, the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*.⁷⁵

These concepts seem the best way of interpreting *Memories of a Night*, as well as later Futurist paintings presented in the international tour, in particular Boccioni's *States of Mind* triptych, Carrà's *What the Tram told Me* and Severini's *Memories of a Journey*, all these artists pursuing a similar aim. To this line of research, exploring the principles of congenital complementarism, pictorial dynamism and lines of force, one might add plastic dynamism, simultaneity and states of mind, in addition to the philosopher Henri Bergson's ideas regarding intuition in relation to concepts of duration and of memory's role in perception.⁷⁶

Memories of a Night is in fact a work in which a memory of perception comes into play that gives perceptual, colouristic and auditory stimuli the same kind of representation as their recollection, presence and duration in time. Every representational hierarchy is abolished to merge past and present, the former acting contextually in the stimuli of the present. Here, therefore is a coexistence of visions and memories, a 'mnemonic simultaneity',⁷⁷ a possible coincidence between that which one sees and that which one remembers: a crowd of figures, some buildings of the city at night, a 'running horse [that] does not have four legs, but twenty',⁷⁸ the charming and, in some respects, hallucinatory, face of a woman, bright lights and hurrying passers-by.

With this work Russolo demonstrated his total adhesion to the principles of Futurist dynamism, even if not employing the technical principles of Cubist deconstruction, as Boccioni had already done by that period. These essentially remained foreign to Russolo, who continued to favour extended filaments of colour in accordance with the style of Previati. Russolo's work thus remained closer to the first version of Boccioni's *States of Mind* triptych than the second, closer to *The City Rises* than *The Laugh*, which it nevertheless resembled by virtue of a similarly nocturnal, noisy and dissolute atmosphere.

The European 'Grand Tour' of Futurist Exhibitions, 1912

The extraordinary events of 1912 relate more to the history of Futurism than to the evolution of Russolo's work in particular. However, it is worth briefly recalling the

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁶ A number of French critics immediately noted the importance of *Memories of a Night* during the Paris exhibition of 1912, for example André Salmon in 'Les Futuristes', *Paris Journal*, 6 February 1912. Maurizio Calvesi in *Il futurismo...*, *op. cit.*, p.206, was the first to discuss the influence of Bergsonian theory on these and other Futurist paintings of the period. This was then taken up and developed by Marianne W. Martin, *op. cit.*, p.89 and other writers such as I. Schiaffini, *op. cit.*, pp.62, 119-20, 131.

⁷⁷ A. M. Damigella, *op. cit.*, p.42.

⁷⁸ U. Boccioni, C. Carrà, L. Russolo, G. Balla, G. Severini, 'La pittura futurista: manifesto tecnico', 11 April 1910.

specific references made to his work among the large number of judgements made about the group as a whole.

The logistics surrounding the trip to Paris must have been very complex given the economic difficulties in which the artists found themselves, Russolo in particular. Carrà described the days leading up to the visit as follows:

There were only a few days to the date fixed for the inauguration of the Futurist exhibition in Paris and Boccioni, Russolo and myself scraped around to find the necessary money for the voyage. As things looked rather bleak, Russolo maintained that he would recklessly sell his famous violin which, although not a Stradivarius, had a value that made it the equal of such historical instruments.⁷⁹

Thanks to Marinetti's generosity the trip finally went ahead, enabling the artists to be present at the inauguration of the first international exhibition, 'Les Peintres futuristes italiens', at the Galeries Bernheim-Jeune, near Place de la Madeleine, 15 Rue Richenpanse, on 5 April 1912. Russolo exhibited the paintings *The Revolt*, *Memories of a Night*, *Speeding Train at Night*, *One and Three Heads* and *Tina's Hair*. This exhibition constituted an event of extraordinary promotional power in addition to stimulating cultural debate.

Their time in Paris allowed the Italian painters a splendid opportunity to move in the city's intellectual and cosmopolitan circles and, thanks to Marinetti's contacts and organisational skills, they became undisputed protagonists. By virtue of the wise rule of Marinetti there were numerous opportunities for lectures, encounters and occasions to propagate the new language of contemporary Italian art.⁸⁰ There were also numerous articles dedicated to the Futurists in the press. The majority of these considered them as a group when mentioning and commenting on specific works; few spoke of the members individually. One esteemed commentator, the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, published two detailed articles of 7 and 9 February concerning the exhibition, not failing to underline – much to the Italians' indignant response – a certain provenance for Futurism in Cubist painting, particularly that of Picasso. Apollinaire maintained that 'Russolo est le moins influence par les jeunes peintres français. Il faudrait chercher ses maitres à Munich ou à Moscou'.⁸¹ The poet reiterated the same belief two days later, affirming: 'Russolo semble plus influence per les peintres de Munich, de Berlin, de

⁷⁹ C. Carrà, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁸⁰ On 9 February, at the Maison des Etudiants, and on 15 February at the Bernheim-Jeune Gallery, Marinetti, with his customary exuberance and vitality, expressed the pictorial principles of the movement drawing on a still-unpublished text entitled 'Origines du futurisme pictural'. The text took its starting point both from the essay in the catalogue, 'Les Exposants au public' – and therefore from the ideas expressed predominantly by Boccioni – and a text by Russolo previously ascribed to Boccioni entitled 'Researches in Art'. The merit of having untied the knot of the paternity of the ideas behind Marinetti's two Parisian lectures is entirely that of Ilaria Schiaffini, *op. cit.*, p.67 and p.105.

⁸¹ Guillaume Apollinaire, 'La vie artistique: Les Peintres futuristes italiens', *L'Intransigeant*, 7 February 1912, now in G. Apollinaire, *Chroniques d'art 1902-1918* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p.272.

Vienne, de Moscou. Souhaitons-lui de bien profiter de son séjour à Paris'.⁸² In short, Russolo was perceived as being untouched by the contemporary aesthetics of Paris and much more influenced by Symbolism and the Secessionists. Apollinaire was not wrong: as we have seen, Cubism never entered into Russolo's Futurist vocabulary, despite the momentary attraction of Boccioni's contemporary works that was quickly abandoned to follow the path laid out in 1911.

After Paris, opportunities for exhibiting opened up throughout Europe. From 1 March 1912 the paintings were on show at the Sackville Gallery in London – also including a new addition from Russolo, in the form of his *Portrait of the Artist*. Only Boccioni and Marinetti were present at the opening of the London exhibition and the successive inaugurations at the gallery of Der Sturm in Berlin, directed by Herwarth Walden, and the Galerie Georges Giroux in Brussels. There are no examples of particular interest in the work of Russolo on the part of the British, German or Belgian press – instead, a great curiosity about the entire movement that brought the exhibitions great success, inspiring thousands of people to visit them.

This 'grand tour' continued throughout Europe during 1912 – unaccompanied by the artists themselves, but only by a multi-language catalogue printed in Berlin thanks to Walden – visiting the cities of Hamburg, Amsterdam, The Hague, Munich, Vienna and Budapest. On all these occasions the usual works of Russolo were exhibited, including *Portrait of the Artist* but lacking *Speeding Train at Night*, which remained in London in the Rothschild Collection. On the occasion of the exhibition in Munich an authoritative opinion was voiced, albeit in private, by Paul Klee in the pages of his *Diary* when in October, having seen 'the little Herwarth Walden, intent on including the Futurists in the Tannhäuser Gallery',⁸³ he remarked: 'Carrà, Boccioni and Severini are good, very good. Russolo is more characteristic.'⁸⁴ Precisely what Klee meant by this distinction between Russolo and his three colleagues remains an open question as he was to make no further reference to Futurist art. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in both Paris and Munich two brilliant and influential personalities such as Apollinaire and Klee recognised the uniqueness of Russolo's art in relation to that of the other members of the movement.

New Events and Works of 1912

The second half of 1912 was spent in the confident anticipation of feedback from various European cities and press reviews and sales from the shows in London and Berlin, all of which encouraged the Futurists to untiringly continue in their experimentation and production of new works. In a letter of early June to Nino Barbantini, Director of Ca' Pesaro, Russolo lamented not being able to exhibit in

⁸² Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Chroniques d'art: Les futuristes', *Le Petit Bleu*, 9 February 1912, *Ibidem*, p. 276.

⁸³ Paul Klee, *Diari 1898-1918* (1957) (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1960), p.281.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

Venice due to the fact that all the paintings were still being shown in the international exhibition, and attested to the new period of gestation and production of Futurist work:

As you see, we cannot take part in your exhibition. It is very displeasing to miss an opportunity for battle [...]. We are working on new paintings with ardour and great faith: we hope another opportunity will present itself to show our works, but for the time being we are unable to do so.⁸⁵

The exhibition in the Foyer of the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, which opened one year after the Paris exhibition, included a number of works that had never been seen before, not only by Russolo but also by other members of the group, such as Boccioni's *Matter and Elasticity*.⁸⁶

In addition to the well known *Musical Dynamism (Music)*, re-emerging after a year of elaboration, were another three works entitled *Force-lines of a Thunderbolt*, *Shadows-Lights-Houses* and *Solidity of Fog*. In these paintings, Russolo's personal language is clear – far removed from the Cubist influences that marked the work of his colleagues.

The Development of 'Cosmic' Themes: From 'Force-lines of a Thunderbolt' to 'Interpenetration of Houses + Light + Sky'

In every inventory of Russolo's works – the primary source for which are the writings of the artist's wife – the painting *Force-lines of a Thunderbolt* is listed as having been 'destroyed by the artist in 1943 in order to use the canvas to paint another three works'.⁸⁷ It seemed as if the work was truly lost, with the exception of a small, and not particularly significant, fragment that was rediscovered around 2000, belonging to the artist's family. As with other works by Russolo, all that remained was a black and white photographic image, used as the basis for certain scholarly interpretations.⁸⁸

Maria Zanovello's claim about using the canvas 'to paint another three works' found an unexpected confirmation in the spring of 2005 when the central and most significant section of this work was discovered on the back of another entitled *Three Pines* (1944), belonging to the Comune di Portogruaro, hidden by a thick, uniform layer of varnish.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ L. Russolo, Letter to Nino Barbantini, Milan, 3 June 1912, in G. Perocco, *Origini dell'arte moderna a Venezia (1908-1920)* (Treviso: Canova, 1972), p.376.

⁸⁶ Prima Esposizione Pittura Futurista, Rome: Ridotto del Teatro Costanzi. The exhibition opened on 21 February and closed on 9 March, and was accompanied by various Futurist events, such as lectures, conferences and *serate*. It was during one of these Futurist evenings (9 March) that Russolo conceived of his letter to Francesco Balilla Pratella, dated 11 March, in which he first expounded the concept of an 'art of noises'.

⁸⁷ See M. Zanovello, 'Elenco di tutti (o quasi) i quadri di Luigi Russolo', unpublished typewritten manuscript, Archivio Russolo, p.2. This list was probably compiled shortly after the mid-1950s in preparation for the monograph of 1958.

⁸⁸ Among which, see M. W. Martin, *op. cit.*, p.150 and E. Piselli, *Aspetti...*, *op. cit.*, pp.143-46.

⁸⁹ This discovery is owed to Vanni Tiozzo, Professor of Restoration at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice, who, when he was cleaning *Three Pines*, noticed the presence of a painting on the rear and

Once the work was cleaned, the central panel of what from old photographs seems to have been a triptych was discovered. Russolo here once again took the motif of an explosion of lightning as his theme, as he had done in the two versions of *Lightning*, giving this subject an almost *da sotto in su* treatment that makes us feel we are inside the painting. The usual industrial buildings of the outskirts of Milan, with their soaring chimneys, constitute the only ‘narrative’ element of the work, which is dominated by the instantaneous atmospheric event of the burst of lightning – the work’s indisputable protagonist – that sunders the atmosphere, and the energy of force-lines that spread outward in all directions through volumetric, sinuous and violet waves touched with yellow flashes of light and colour. Russolo here focuses our attention on the mysterious world of electrical and magnetic forces that he was to explore more deeply over the following decades. This was part of the artist-thinker’s growing interest in the idea of the spiritualisation of matter, which led to an interest (well-documented in later writings and paintings) in cosmic manifestations. One of these works is the contemporaneous *Interpenetration of Houses + Light + Sky*, now in Basel.⁹⁰ This work was exhibited – while Russolo was still alive – in numerous exhibitions and frequently with different titles. On its debut at the Teatro Costanzi it was entitled *Shadows – Lights – Houses*; at exhibitions in Rotterdam (May-June 1913) and Berlin (September-November 1913) it was listed, respectively, as *Les maisons continuent en plein ciel* and *Fortsetzung der Häuser in den Himmel*; in the 1914 exhibition at Rome’s Galleria Futurista Sprovieri as *Dynamic Expansions. Houses + Lights*; at the 1914 London exhibition as *Dynamic Expansions (Houses – Lights)*; in the ex-Caffè Cova exhibition in Milan of 1919 as *Interpenetration of Houses + Light* and, finally, at the Parisian Galerie Reinhardt in 1921, as *Maisons + lumières dans la nuit*. The punctuation elements that some of the titles include demonstrate the artist’s intention of fixing the duration of the phenomenon of the spatio-temporal simultaneity of an event in a single moment of reality: a vision of houses and roofs, very similar to that of *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt*, taken from such a point of view that the spectator is placed at the centre of the picture. Houses and roofs expand upwards and in depth, merging with the sky, with the cosmos. From a strictly pictorial and compositional point of view, Russolo employed his usual colouristic vocabulary, composed of blue and violet rays, force-lines and concentric waves that seem to form an ogival arch,⁹¹ evoking still more, and almost spiritually, the ascendant movement toward the skies.

Solidity of Fog

contacted me to identify it. Comparison with old photographs makes it clear that the work is, without doubt, the lost *Force-lines of a Thunderbolt*.

⁹⁰ This title seems more appropriate since, in the course of 1914 the work was twice published in works by Russolo’s Futurist colleagues. See U. Boccioni, *Pittura e scultura futuriste (dinamismo plastico)*, (Milan: Edizioni futuriste di ‘Poesia’, 1914) and A. Soffici, *Cubismo e futurismo. Con 32 illustrazioni di Balla, Boccioni, Braque, Carrà, Cézanne, Picasso, Russolo, Severini, Soffici* (Florence: Libreria della Voce, 1914). Russolo must have personally approved the choice of his friends.

⁹¹ The allusion to an ogival gothic arch in this work was noted by M. W. Martin, *op. cit.*, p.150. More than many other scholars, Martin has provided an in-depth analysis of the piece: ‘The arched triangle, or Gothic ogive, which is the chief compositional element, suggests the unity and transitions between ground, buildings and sky.’

The third new picture by Russolo in the Rome exhibition of February 1913 was *Solidity of Fog*, a work belonging to the Mattioli Collection and on loan to the Guggenheim Museum in Venice.⁹² Given its presence in many international exhibitions and publications, this perhaps represents one of Russolo's most successful works. Thanks to recent work by Philip Rylands and Flavio Fergonzi in publications concerning the Collezione Mattioli,⁹³ this work has received thorough analysis.

Its singularity probably derives mostly from its colouration – almost entirely blue – making it unique not only in Russolo's output but that of the entire Futurist group. The subject matter of the painting is, as the title suggests, the consistency of fog that erases distinctions and smothers everything in its uniform blanket – a materialisation of fog that has descended on the night-time city, illuminated by a gas lamp.

Taking its starting point as *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt*, the upper section of which is very similar to that of the Mattioli work, Russolo aimed at representing a source of illumination from which emanate the by now customary concentric circles, spreading outward in waves and reflecting on the cobbled street, rendered lucid by the humidity of the atmosphere. The two sets of waves intersect at the center of the painting, hiding from view – or just allowing one to make out – an automobile or a carriage with the same profile as the later *Dynamism of an Automobile*. Movements and noises are muffled, and the furtive movements of men in overcoats and hats have their passage delineated by a kind of halo and diagonal force-lines that unify them and unite them with their surroundings. It is precisely the presence of these anonymous figures that cross one another's paths and brush against each other that has led to interpretations of the work in relation to some verses of 1908 by the French poet Jules Romains, entitled 'Rien ne cesse d'être intérieur' from the collection *La Vie unanime*:

La rue est plus intime à cause de la brume'
Autor des becs à gas l'air tout entire s'allume;
Chaque chose a sa part de rayons;

[...]

Les êtres ont fondu leurs formes et leurs vies
Et les âmes se sont doucement asservies.
Je n'ai jamais été moins libre que ce soir

⁹² The painting passed from the artist to Margherita Sarfatti at an unknown date and was then acquired by the Milanese collector Gianni Mattioli in 1950, being exhibited at the Guggenheim Collection in Venice in 1997. The Collection recently published the catalogue *La Collezione Mattioli: Capolavori dell'avanguardia italiana* (Milan: Skira, 2003), rich in scholarly information and edited by F. Fergonzi, which constitutes an essential instrument for interpreting this work.

⁹³ P. Rylands, 'Luigi Russolo: Solidità della nebbia', in L. Mattioli Rossi, E. Braun and P. Rylands, *Capolavori della Collezione Gianni Mattioli* (Milan: Electa, 1997), p.92, and F. Fergonzi, 'Luigi Russolo, Solidità della nebbia (La nebbia; Nebbia su Milano), 1912', in *La Collezione Mattioli...*, *op. cit.*, pp.320-27, with a large bibliography.

Ni moins seul.⁹⁴

Many commentators have drawn attention to the Futurists' interest in Jules Romain's poetics of 'Unanimism', particularly Marinetti.⁹⁵ Among the first to note this was Guillaume Apollinaire who, in his article 'Les Peintres futuristes' of 7 February 1912, asserted: 'Les titres des tableaux futuristes paraissent empruntés au vocabulaire de l'unanimisme',⁹⁶ emphasising once again a few lines down that Russolo was the least influenced of all the Futurists by contemporary French painting and that his inspiration lay in the work of artists based in Munich and Moscow rather than Paris. It is possible that Apollinaire's remarks encouraged Russolo to deepen his Unanimist concerns to the point of making an almost literal correspondence between his painting and the passage from Romain's poem.

Exhibitions of 1913, from Rotterdam to Florence: Final Futurist Paintings

Russolo's pictorial output temporarily ceased at the end of 1913. His latest paintings were first exhibited in the exhibition *Les Peintres et les Sculpteurs Futuristes* of May-June at the Rotterdam Kunstkring and, later, at the *Lacerba* exhibition that was held at the Galleria Gonnelli at the end of the year. Following the aforementioned exhibition at Rome's Teatro Costanzi, Russolo had formulated his theory of the 'art of noises' that for some time led him to carry on a dual activity as a painter and as a theorist and inventor of instruments for producing a range of different noises. The first of these – an 'Exploder' – was presented on 2 June 1913 at Modena's Teatro Storchi.

Nonetheless, these early experiments did not prevent Russolo from exhibiting some new Futurist paintings of notable quality in which he achieved a definitive analysis of the dynamism of the human figure, of speed and – in particular – of the self portrait.

Two new works were included in the exhibition at Rotterdam of May-June – the oils *Plastic Synthesis of the Movements of a Woman* and the self portrait *My Dynamic Self* – while *Speeding Automobile* and *Dynamic Volumes* were exhibited in the Florence show. The probable date of execution of these works was spring 1913 at the latest for the first two pieces, and autumn of the same year for the latter two.

Definitive Reflections on Movement: From 'Plastic Synthesis of the Movements of a Woman' to 'Dynamism of an Automobile'

These two works, exhibited six months apart, may be considered as climactic statements of Russolo's Futurist journey. *Plastic Synthesis of the Movements of a Woman* once

⁹⁴ J. Romain, 'Rien ne cesse d'être intérieur', in *La Vie unanime: Poème 1904-1907* (Paris: Editions de l'Abbaye, 1908), pp.30-31.

⁹⁵ The relationships of the Futurists and Marinetti with Unanimism are described in detail in M. W. Martin, 'Futurism, Unanimism and Apollinaire', in *Art Journal*, XXVIII, winter 1968-69, pp.258-68.

⁹⁶ G. Apollinaire, *Chroniques d'art 1902-1918...*, *op. cit.*, p.272.

more employed the technique of a repetition of forms to convey the idea of movement through space, whereas *Dynamism of an Automobile*⁹⁷ returned to the motif of force-lines in the shape of wedges that disrupt the urban space and indicate the vehicle's rapid movement forward. Two different forms of movement were addressed in these works: the one concerning the limited movement of a human body, the other the dynamism of an object synonymous with speed and modernity, as well as beauty (Marinetti having claimed that 'a roaring automobile that seems to run on grapeshot, is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*' in his 1909 'Founding and Manifesto of Futurism').

Plastic Synthesis of the Movements of a Woman is unique in Russolo's Futurist oeuvre insofar as it focused its attention on the dynamism of the entire body of a woman – perhaps a dancer⁹⁸ – as well as her clothing and hat. The oil painting is very different in its 'cinematographic' treatment of the subject to the etching that Russolo produced on the same theme. Probably preceding the painting,⁹⁹ this presented a more simplified and recognisable image. One is able to identify the woman's face both frontally and in profile, while the allusion to the idea of movement in space is conveyed solely through a repetition of the figure's legs. By contrast, the oil painting repeats the silhouette of the woman and suggests the idea of a rotation of the figure,¹⁰⁰ creating a dynamic wave that is similar to the concentric circles one can find in other works by Russolo and here developed with great colouristic skill. It is this element that appears singular in Russolo's entire oeuvre: the ability of the artist to maintain a chromatic register 'of a hallucinatory and spectral luminosity',¹⁰¹ here achieved through the maintenance of cold blue and violet tones enlivened by glimmers of yellow.

On the other hand, *Dynamism of an Automobile* seems to be a return to previous approaches to the problem of suggesting motion – so much so that it has raised some debate among scholars over its date. But it would appear to date from the end of 1913, despite the visibility of the date '1911' at the lower right hand corner, which should be considered as an erroneous retrospective dating. There are no doubts that the work dates from 1913: its reproduction in Boccioni's book *Futurist Painting and Sculpture (Plastic Dynamism)* bears the caption '1913' and there are no doubts surrounding its first public appearance in Florence in the exhibition of that year. What reason would Russolo have

⁹⁷ These two works have undergone interesting changes in ownership: according to two letters sent to Gino Severini by two of Russolo's friends, Vera Idelson Labusquière, 29 May 1952 and Fanny Hefter, 5 June 1952 (both in Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Severini), it transpires that Russolo, having left Paris, gave these works and *Interpenetration of Houses + Light + Sky* to Sonia and Robert Delaunay. Sonia, in turn, gave the three works to the museum where they are today.

⁹⁸ See the interesting comparative analysis of Russolo's oil with the contemporaneous dancers of Severini, as well as Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, in M. W. Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory...*, *op. cit.*, p.149.

⁹⁹ A significant portion of the commentaries on Russolo's work hypothesises that the etching *Simultaneous Movements of a Woman* may be dated to between the end of 1912 and the beginning of 1913. However, no document to enable us to date it with any precision exists, other than its iconographical similarity with the oil. Neither is it clear what induced Russolo to take up a technique abandoned after several years once again.

¹⁰⁰ See G. Lista, 'Russolo, peinture...', *op. cit.*, p.14.

¹⁰¹ G. Anzani and C. Pirovano, *op. cit.*, p.130. The two academics, however, express a negative opinion on the work as a whole, despite their favourable judgements concerning its colouration.

had for hiding from view such an important work for two years? Certainly, the execution of the work may have taken a considerable time, but not to the extent of justifying a dating of 1911. Nevertheless, it is true that the work constituted a sort of return to previous techniques and vocabularies. This final Futurist work by Russolo brought into play a series of technical and conceptual elements which had by this point arrived at full maturity: those more informed developments around dynamism and simultaneity, on the unprejudiced use of colour and the vitalistic, overwhelming energy embodied in this vehicle. Anziani and Pirovano have both identified a transcendent meaning in the

almost idolatrous exaltation of the myth of the machine, the symbol of movement, speed and vitalistic energy, but also of the irrationality and madness that flows through the modern world. The heightened palette also alludes to this irrationality and madness, with combinations of violent and piercing colours, and the abstract tension of the lines, converging in a single direction and into which penetrates the aerodynamic outline of the automobile, projected in a sort of impossible challenge to the universe.¹⁰²

Further Self Portraits and Futurist Portraits

In our earlier analysis of Russolo's self portraits we were able to determine the identity of *Self Portrait with Etheric Double* (1910-11) in relation to that presented in several exhibitions with the caption 'Interpretation of the artist's state of mind'. Several months were to pass before a new self portrait, *My Dynamic Self*, was exhibited at Rotterdam, the work subsequently travelling to Berlin for the exhibition at Der Sturm in 1913 (where it was entitled *Ich = Bewegung*), then to Rome for an exhibition at the Galleria Futurista Sprovieri between February and March (where it was entitled *Io dinamico*), and to London's Doré Galleries in April of the same year, where it was exhibited under the title *My Dynamic Self* before the trail went cold in the summer of 1915 at the Panama Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco.¹⁰³

The only sources that carry the image of the painting are the well known texts of Boccioni and Soffici of 1914: the two painters both identified the work as *Self Portrait*; Boccioni, moreover, dated it as 1912. This is surely the same work which was lost following the exhibition in San Francisco. The titles given the work in its various public appearances emphasise its dynamic aspect and concern with movement. It is a particularly effective example of the idea (which was not unique to Russolo by any means) of endowing the self portrait – the static subject *par excellence* – with a dynamic, Futurist dimension. Russolo's work is different to that of Severini's self portrait entitled *My Rhythm*, as if drawing attention to his preoccupation with rhythm and dance, an expressive genre to which he was particularly drawn. It is also different to

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

¹⁰³ *Panama Pacific International Exposition – Catalogue de Luxe of the Department of Fine Arts*, ed. by J. Trask and J. Nielsen Laurvik, catalogue of the exhibition, San Francisco: The Palace of Fine Arts, summer 1915 (San Francisco Art and Association, 1915).

Sironi's work of 1913 which, despite its adhesion to the Futurist lexicon, betrays an interest in static chromatic and chiaroscuro contrasts, among which black predominates, as well as to the work of Boccioni who, as early as 1912 had created portraits of his mother (in tandem with his sculptural research) as a sole mental dimension of a unique form in space. Russolo's piece is based in a repeated spiraling evolution of forms¹⁰⁴ and somatic tracts evident in the face – from the eye to the chin – which expand in parallel with the dynamic-energetic waves.

It is unfortunate that one is only able to consider this work from black and white illustrations, given the importance of colour in Russolo's *oeuvre*. Two other paintings – with which this analysis of Russolo's Futurist phase will close – were to suffer the same fate: *Dynamic Volumes* and *Green Self Portrait*.

Although sometimes considered a late self portrait of the artist, and confused with the above work, *Dynamic Volumes* would not appear to be a self portrait, but rather a portrait – perhaps of a woman. It was exhibited for the first time at the *Lacerba* Exposition of Futurist Painting in Florence in November 1913. It was shown in all of the pre-war exhibitions that Russolo participated in but, unlike the preceding work, also featured in postwar exhibitions – firstly in Milan, at the Galleria Centrale d'Arte (March-April 1919) and subsequently in Paris at the two exhibitions both entitled *Peintres futuristes italiens*, one of which took place in 1921 at the Galerie Reinhardt and the other between 1929 and 1930 at Galerie 23,¹⁰⁵ following which all trace of the work was lost. Datable to mid-1913, being mentioned and reproduced in the aforementioned book by Boccioni, *Dynamic Volumes* is an atypical Futurist portrait of an unidentified sitter, the focus of which is, as the title explains, his or her dynamic volumes, the position of the face at the centre of an expansion of lines and colours in a composition which, beyond the usual curls which appear in the background, seems to have been the only exception to Russolo's disinterest in employing Cubist fragmentation, as Caramel astutely observed in the mid-1990s.¹⁰⁶

Two Self Portraits not exhibited during the 1910s

To complete our consideration of Russolo's Futurist period it is opportune to look at two other self portraits by the artist, of which, however, there is no record of their having being exhibited in the course of his lifetime. The existence of these is attested to by the 'List of All (or almost All) Paintings by Luigi Russolo' that was drawn up in the mid-1950s,¹⁰⁷ in which Maria Zanovello indicated the two paintings with great

¹⁰⁴ In the identification of his character, a literary portrait of Russolo in 1912 made by Severini is very apt: see G. Severini, *op. cit.*, p.95: 'Russolo was also very kind to me, in those subtle – I would almost say spiralic – ways of his.'

¹⁰⁵ See *Exposition des Peintres Futuristes Italiens et conférence de Marinetti*, catalogue of the exhibition, Paris: Galerie Reinhardt, May 1921 (Paris: Devambez, 1921) and *Peintres futuristes italiens*, catalogue of the exhibition, Paris: Galerie 23, 27 December 1929 - 7 January 1930 (Paris 1929).

¹⁰⁶ See: L. Caramel, *op. cit.*, p.138.

¹⁰⁷ M. Zanovello, 'Elenco di tutti...', *op. cit.*, p.2.

precision: *Self Portrait in Profile* and *Green Self Portrait*, both dating from 1912. The *Self Portrait in Profile* was displayed in the two largest Futurist exhibitions of the last twenty years, that of 1986 at Venice's Palazzo Grassi, and that of 2001 at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome. The same cannot be said of the so-called *Green Self Portrait* which, even though included in two of the Venice Biennales (of 1960 and 1968) was sold at auction in 1982 and has not reappeared since. There is no cause to question Maria Zanovello's dating of these works: both may be considered as conclusive in terms of his Futurist period, at the moment when his interest in music was beginning to overtake that of painting. Both works in fact reveal a certain paucity of inspiration in the search for a new dynamic Futurist motif. Deprived of a certain creative energy in painting, nothing remained to inspire Russolo (and, perhaps, placate his preoccupations concerning the difficulties encountered in the new theoretical field he was working in) but his own face. These two final self portraits assume, therefore, beyond the usual function of the emblem, also an intimate, private and perhaps cathartic function.

The *Self Portrait in Profile* has an unusually static quality, despite the fact that those piercing colours typical of Russolo's paintings remain, as well as the somatic qualities that made him famous: the spirited eye and pointed beard. On the other hand, the *Green Self Portrait* remains an enigma due to its disappearance and the consequent unsatisfactory knowledge of it that we have through black and white photographs. We are unable to ascertain, for example, where the areas of the specified colour are located that led the artist's wife to give it the title it is known by. On the other hand, we can identify an effective agility of brushwork, determined by an elegant scroll that begins by the head of the subject, circles around it and is lost as a luminous ray in the right hand section of the painting, intersecting with another scroll which, by contrast, balances and frames the elegant and tapering neck. This is the ideal extension of the face, almost deprived of physiognomy apart from some glimmers giving an idea of the sinister outline of the face and nose; a face equally characterised by an oval that is elongated and pointed in the lower section to describe, once more, the incomparable chin of Russolo. We must imagine this work as a colouristic game, accentuated and elegant in the choice of its tones between the figure – in which the curving line predominates – and the background, where geometry is dominant. Essentially, if executed during that passage from Russolo's interest in painting to music (that is to say 1913, rather than 1912, as Zanovello suggests) it demonstrates a formal elegance and compositional harmony analogous to that which Russolo was searching for in his music and the principles in which he had been educated since his youth.

Perhaps more than any other, this self portrait assumes an emblematic function in the context of Russolo's passage between two creative phases. With this final work, the artist wished to say farewell to painting and his public and, as an authentic performer – similar to an orchestral conductor, which he was indeed soon to become – to bow out from painting with a true *coup de théâtre*, as the scrolls which elegantly cross this work seem to suggest. In a short while, Russolo would in fact give numerous encores with his new occupation: the art of noises.

Artistic Theory and Production, 1919-30

Franco Tagliapietra

For Russolo, painting was like a karst river. Even during those periods when his artistic interests seemed to oscillate between music and philosophy he never ceased to consider it his primary form of expression. The period between 1919 and 1930 – even though seeing the production of around only twenty works – was of extraordinary importance, not only in terms of the creative journey that he undertook in producing this body of work, but also in terms of the correlated, intense, singular and nonconformist artistic theory and criticism that he formulated during this time.

The years 1919-20 were crucial for Russolo in relation to the artistic and socio-political events that were taking place in Milan under his attentive gaze; fully recovered from his wartime injuries, he engaged in these with renewed energy. The events we are about to relate – and which were to radically alter Italy's political and artistic destinies – created several protagonists whose names have gone down in history because of their cultural significance and who were to come into direct contact with Russolo in one way or another. He was particularly attentive to the vicissitudes of the aesthetic and political relationship between F.T. Marinetti and Margherita Sarfatti, with their privileged links to Benito Mussolini, and was to find himself involved behind the scenes in political events in Milan as they developed around Marinetti and Mussolini with Gabriele D'Annunzio, Mario Carli and others. These relationships and politico-cultural developments engendered a critical awareness in Russolo's art and life that shaped his subsequent cultural, ethical and political stances.

As is well known, the influence of Margherita Sarfatti on many artists of Russolo's generation had first been felt during the war years. The growing importance of this Venetian writer as a cultural beacon, dominating the artistic scene from the late 1910s to the end of the 1920s, has been noted many times over the course of the years by more astute scholars.¹ Sarfatti initially aligned herself with the Futurist activism of Marinetti before moving on to propose a new form of art² that would build upon, and surpass, the experiences of that movement's painters in the creation a new form of expression which would come to be known as the art of the 'Novecento'.

¹ Concerning Margherita Sarfatti, see: S. Marzorati, *Margherita Sarfatti* (Como: Nodo Libri, 1990); S. Salvagnini, 'Margherita Sarfatti, una vita nella tormenta', in *Arte*, no.221, September 1991, pp.78-85; S. Salvagnini, 'L'avanguardia arriva dal nord', in *Arte*, no.222, October 1991, pp.94-101; S. Salvagnini, 'Mussolini le intimò: "Smetta di confondere Novecento col fascismo"', in *Arte*, no.223, November 1991, pp.72-79; P. V. Cannistraro and B. R. Sullivan, *Il Duce's Other Woman* (Italian trans.: *Margherita Sarfatti. L'altra donna del Duce* (Milan: Mondadori, 1993); S. Urso, *Margherita Sarfatti. Dal mito del Dux al mito americano* (Venice: Marsilio, 2003). A series of detailed studies by Elena Pontiggia, to which frequent reference will be made, is also of significance.

² Sarfatti's rise was a gradual one that took place in several phases. As early as 1919 she published an anthology of her writings on art entitled *La fiaccola accesa* (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Italiano, 1919). In this book, with a renewed strength of soul following the grief of losing both her son and one of her dearest friends – Umberto Boccioni – in the war, she tried to emphasise the importance of a new generation of artists, including Carpi, Carrà, Russolo, Sironi, Oppo, Spadini and Martini.

The Exhibition at the Galleria Centrale d'Arte (the former Caffè Cova) in Milan

Around the time of Mussolini's formation of the Fasci di Combattimento at the Fascist movement's inaugural meeting of spring 1919 in Milan's Piazza San Sepolcro, Marinetti organised the important 'Great National Futurist Exposition: Paintings, Plastic Complexes, Architecture, Free-Word Tables, Futurist Plastic Theatre and Futurist Fashion', which was hosted by the Galleria Centrale d'Arte from 22 March until 30 April. Marinetti previewed and extended the catalogue text in an article that appeared on the opening day of the exhibition in the newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia*, introduced by a brief note written by Sarfatti herself.³ In both texts the Futurist leader intended to focus on the movement's involvement in the prewar interventionist struggles, its member's heroic wartime gestures and the tragic price paid in battle by many of its adherents, as well as to highlight those revolutionary and anticlerical sympathies that united it with the Arditi, out of which the first Fascist squads had been drawn. A great many works and artists were included in the exhibition in order to indicate the expansive – one might even say ecumenical – approach of Marinetti. The ranks of the Futurist movement were now swollen by many new adherents. Both Carrà and Severini were absent, having moved on to other forms of painting, as was Boccioni – to whose memory the exhibition was dedicated.

Of the original nucleus of five Futurist artists, then, only Balla and Russolo were represented – the latter by five paintings all dating from before 1913.⁴ As for the other painters, Fortunato Depero showed many works, and the Nuove Tendenze artists Leonardo Dudreville and Achille Funi were finally admitted to Marinetti's mainstream Futurist movement. Mario Sironi, already associated with Futurism through his wartime activities, was also included as an integral member of the group, exhibiting no less than fifteen works. This exhibition – enlivened at the beginning of April by an acclaimed concert of *intonarumori* (now understood and appreciated by the Milanese audience) and a related lecture on music by Russolo – presented the image of a completely renovated movement.

It is Elena Pontiggia's contention that the exhibition at the Cova and the events that sprang from it presented 'the occasion [for Dudreville] to make his peace with Funi (if he had not already done so), to make closer contact with Sironi, who had that year

³ *Grande Esposizione Nazionale Futurista. Quadri, Complessi plastici, Architettura, Tavole parolibere, Teatro plastico futurista e Moda futurista*, ed. by F. T. Marinetti, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Galleria Centrale d'Arte, 22 March - 30 April (Milan: La Presse, 1919), with an introductory text signed and dated 11 March 1919. See also F. T. Marinetti's article 'L'Esposizione nazionale futurista che si apre oggi al Cova. Pittori futuristi combattenti e teatro plastico poliespressività e tavole parolibere', in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 22 March 1919, p.3. The brief introductory note to this article, signed M. G. S. (Margherita Grassini Sarfatti), anticipated that the newspaper would carry further features on this event – a fact that would soon be verified with the appearance of Sarfatti's own articles of 4, 10 and 13 April.

⁴ The catalogue, subdivided into four sections, listed no less than 461 works. The first section of 314 works included Russolo's five paintings, easily recognisable despite some minor alterations to their generally accepted titles: *Dynamism of Automobile*, *Interpenetration of Houses + Light*, *Lightning*, *Dynamic Volumes* and *Dynamism of a Woman*.

definitively established himself in Milan, and to intensify his relationship with Russolo'.⁵ These four artists were to give evidence of their solidarity at the beginning of the following year with the composition of a Futurist manifesto which, in a certain sense, pulled together the threads of their work and opened the way to unexpected artistic results.

Margherita Sarfatti's Analysis of the Exhibition

Among the most authoritative critical commentaries of the exhibition to appear in the press were three articles by Margherita Sarfatti, serialised in the pages of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, in which she eulogised the work of Dudreuil, Funi, Russolo and Sironi. These four artists were already favourites of hers, having frequented her Wednesday evening *soirées* for quite some time – meetings also often attended by her close friend, and *Il Popolo d'Italia*'s founding editor, Benito Mussolini.

These articles outlined the precise conception of a new art and aesthetics that Sarfatti hoped to substitute for those of Marinetti. They articulated a cardinal principle of her personal historical-critical conception of art – a preference for synthesis over analysis, identifying Paul Cézanne as the initiator of this new synthetic artistic vision. According to Elena Pontiggia, this constituted a rethinking of the 'entire history of art in terms of the categories of analysis and synthesis. The Medieval and Renaissance periods, which expressed themselves through grand decorative schemes, were followed by analytical and fragmentary epochs. However, with Cézanne a new era of synthesis was born.'⁶

Following a brief consideration of the contribution of Balla and Depero to the exhibition, in the second article of 10 April Sarfatti turned her attention to the work of 'Funi, Russolo, Dudreuil and Sironi [which] merits our close attention'.⁷ From the mid-point of this second article until halfway through the third there followed a deeper reflection on each of her four favourite painters, Russolo receiving great attention in the third article of 13 April. Conscious of the fact that Russolo's artistic production had temporarily ceased before the outbreak of war, and having praised his wartime activities, Sarfatti stated:

He therefore presents no more than three or four canvases. But some of these have a truly significant importance in the wider context of his *oeuvre* and his artistic intentions. An attentive and meditative musical spirit, the appearances of things reveal themselves in him above all in lines of atmospheric movement,

⁵ E. Pontiggia, 'Leonardo Dudreuil: la realtà e la natura', in *Dudreuil*, ed. by E. Pontiggia, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Galleria Gianferrari Arte Moderna, October - November 1994; Verona: Galleria dello Scudo, February - March 1995; Monza: Galleria Antologia, April - May 1995 (Milan: Charta, 1994), p.21.

⁶ E. Pontiggia, "'Novecento' milanese, Novecento Italiano', in *Il 'Novecento' milanese. Da Sironi ad Arturo Martini*, ed. by E. Pontiggia, N. Colombo and C. Gianferrari, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Spazio Oberdan, 19 February - 4 May 2003 (Milan: Mazzotta, 2003), p.16.

⁷ M. Sarfatti, 'L'esposizione futurista a Milano. II. Di alcuni pittori', in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, VI, 10 April 1919, p.3.

varying in rhythm, orientation and form, according to the speed and the essential quality of the body that carves its imprint into the air, and prolongs in ethereal oscillations the music of its own gesture.⁸

Sarfatti was drawn to the '[...] succession of soft and voluptuous atmospheric waves' in *Dynamism of a Woman*, 'created by the serpentine qualities of feminine movement',⁹ continuing:

A parallel synchronism of sharp vertices in *Dynamism of an Automobile*, on the other hand, represents an audacious attempt to render and synthesise a sense of speed and of space violently pierced by the prow of a machine by means of a series of abstract lines.¹⁰

In conclusion, she observed:

Still other lines – shifting volumes of dense, indigo darkness, so full-bodied that one feels as if one could touch them – describe the fulminous gash and capricious, sinuous yellow flash of *Lightning*. Meanwhile, under the livid and fragmented starry space, appear distant glimpses of earthly landscapes that are small, clear and remote like stereoscopic visions, and as if fringed with a rim of dazzling and unreal light.¹¹

Margherita Sarfatti and Luigi Russolo

For more than a decade, Italian artistic historiography has been re-examining and attempting to correctly evaluate Margherita Sarfatti's critical theories. This is not the appropriate place to consider the conclusions reached by scholars such as Elena Pontiggia, who has dedicated several publications and exhibitions to Sarfatti.¹² However, it is worth reaffirming (in agreement with Pontiggia) that the articles which appeared in April 1919 in *Il Popolo d'Italia* constituted the essence of the future Novecento aesthetic in terms of their introduction of a number of fundamental critical concepts, such as synthesis.¹³ It is still more useful to further explore the role of Russolo in that quartet of painters so admired by Sarfatti, and the reasons for this preference.

⁸ M. Sarfatti, 'L'esposizione futurista a Milano. Terzo e ultimo articolo', in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, VI, 13 April 1919, p.3.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² See E. Pontiggia, 'La classicità e la sintesi. Margherita Sarfatti critico d'arte (1901-1932)', in *Da Boccioni a Sironi. Il mondo di Margherita Sarfatti*, ed. by E. Pontiggia, catalogue of the exhibition, Brescia: Palazzo Martinengo, 13 July - 12 October 1997 (Milan: Skira, 1997); E. Pontiggia, "'Novecento" milanese ...', *op. cit.*, and the useful critical anthology of texts *Il Novecento italiano*, ed. by E. Pontiggia (Milan: Abscondita, 2003).

¹³ The concept of synthesis, as it was understood by Sarfatti, changed in her writings over the course of the years. Drawing on multiple philosophical, literary and pictorial sources, from Plato to Ruskin, Cézanne and Boccioni, synthesis came to mean 'a sharp, decisive, pure, dry, clear, accurate, concise,

Although Russolo was esteemed by the influential journalist, this estimation was ‘on credit’, as it were. While Dudreville, Funi and Sironi presented recent works Russolo, by contrast, exhibited five famous Futurist canvases that were by this point already five years old. Only one of these – *Dynamism of an Automobile* – was spoken of favourably by Sarfatti in relation to the concept of synthesis, and this in a dissimilar sense to that which she had matured in the meantime.

However, this faith of Sarfatti in relation to Russolo’s work (and, in a smaller way, to that of his three colleagues) was repaid in full. During 1919 and over the course of the following year each significantly reoriented their own painterly styles along more synthetic lines. For his part, Russolo responded with a series of portraits fully justifying Sarfatti’s expectations. Moreover, he played a prominent role as the principal – if not sole – author of a Futurist manifesto of late 1919 that until recently was presumed to have had multiple authorship, entitled ‘Against all Returns in Painting’, which may be considered a more detailed and revised articulation of Sarfatti’s ‘synthetic’ theories.

1919: The Evolution of ‘Against all Returns in Painting’ and the ‘Circular’ to the Futurist Painters

The months following the exhibition at the Cova were ones of great reflection, rethinking and upheaval for Sarfatti’s favoured artists – not only in artistic terms, but in social and political ones also. Throughout the year, Russolo remained a little elusive. His participation in crucial political events of the early postwar period was limited to an ideological sympathy with Marinetti, who was by contrast an absolute and undisputed protagonist.¹⁴ Russolo appears to have adopted a strategy of temporary and attentive observation, so as to be able to make a radical and decisive choice when the appropriate time came. His participation in artistic events was primarily directed towards an attempt at uniting the avant-garde aesthetics of Marinetti’s movement and Sarfatti’s ‘synthetic’ theories. All this emerged with singular evidence at the beginning of 1920, when on 11 January the manifesto ‘Against all Returns in Painting’ appeared in the form of a leaflet.

It is clear that the manifesto was not casually put together and that, if the product of a several authors, its content would have to have been discussed at length. This document is linked, chronologically-speaking, to another text signed by Russolo, Funi and Marinetti (in that order) dated 15 December 1919. Far from proposing political actions or ideas, it took the form of a ‘Circular’ sent to artists associated with the Futurist movement, at the end of which was requested a response ‘of the utmost clarity, synthesis and brevity’ to the question posed at the beginning of the text: ‘Do you

incisive and hard sign [...] that gave form to a painted image by means of outline’. (E. Pontiggia, ‘La classicità e la sintesi ...’, *op. cit.*, pp.16-17). See also “‘Novecento’ milanese ...’, *op. cit.*, pp.15-16.

¹⁴ Marinetti’s politics are well known. See E. Crispolti, ‘Appunti su futurismo e fascismo: dal diciannovismo alla difesa contro l’operazione “arte degenerata”’, in *Storia e critica del futurismo* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1986), pp.208-14.

believe that avant-garde and Futurist painting can be divided into the following four currents or tendencies of pictorial sensibility?’¹⁵

In this chronological chain of documents, therefore, one is able to note a symbolic as much as transitory shift from Marinettian aesthetics, apparently deprived of a momentary project (not by chance are the painters themselves asked to indicate which path they wish to follow) to the significant innovation of an art constituted from Sarfatti’s theory of synthesis, reaffirmed by the signatories of the manifesto ‘Against all Returns in Painting’.

‘Against all Returns in Painting’ and Luigi Russolo

The true significance of ‘Against all Returns in Painting’ in the context of the transition between Futurist orthodoxy and Novecento aesthetics has only been realised in the last few decades.¹⁶ It began to be considered by scholars at the end of the 1960s, shortly before one of the two still-living signatories, Achille Funi, underlined its importance in a text of 1971 (‘in 1920, with Sironi, Dudreville and Russolo, I signed the manifesto ‘Against all Returns in Painting’. Thereafter, according to my recollections, began the period of the “Novecento.”’)¹⁷

Beyond the importance of the manifesto as a necessary phase in the foundation and initiation of the Novecento group, there is a significant issue that must be confronted: that of trying to determine the nature of each of the four artists’ contribution to its formulation. Camesasca considers the drafting of the text to have been ‘predominantly (and credibly) assigned to Sironi, particularly on the basis of the specified will to move away from analysis toward synthesis’.¹⁸ Salvagnini and Pirovano initially favoured the same attribution,¹⁹ while Pontiggia, Rosci and (later) Salvagnini judged it to be related

¹⁵ These being ‘1) Pure painting; 2) Plastic dynamism; 3) Dynamic decorativism in flat fields of colour; 4) Coloured states of mind painting, without plastic preoccupations.’ For the entire text of ‘Circolare di L. Russolo, A. Funi e F. T. Marinetti’, see *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by M. Drudi Gambillo and T. Fiori, vol.I (Rome: De Luca, 1958), p.383.

¹⁶ E. Pontiggia, ‘Alle origini del Novecento italiano (1919-1923)’, in *Il Novecento italiano, op. cit.*, p.160, states that the text ‘was already impregnated with the spirit of the Novecento - it is not a manifesto. It does not give unequivocal precepts, but limits itself to delineating a horizon of thought and to launching some polemical arrows. It resembles an editorial more than a prescriptive programme.’

¹⁷ A. Funi, ‘Il Novecento’, in *Mostre e Gallerie*, no.3, 10 March 1971, now in *Funi 1890-1972. L’artista e Milano*, ed. by E. Pontiggia and N. Colombo, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Spazio Oberdan, 15 December 2001 - 24 February 2002 (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001), p.174.

¹⁸ An opinion expressed by E. Camesasca in an untitled introductory text commenting on the entire transcription of ‘Against all Returns in Painting’, in M. Sironi, *Scritti editi e inediti*, ed. by E. Camesasca (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1980), p.13. Surely unfavourable to this view is the fact that Sironi had never attempted to write a Futurist manifesto alone by this date.

¹⁹ S. Salvagnini, *Il teorico, l’artista, l’artigiano del Novecento* (Verona: Bertani, 1986), p.89; C. Pirovano, ‘1920: coincidenze singolari’, in *Arte a Milano 1906-1929*, ed. by P. Biscottini, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Fiera di Milano, Pavilion 35, 24 November 1995 - 7 January 1996 (Milan: Electa, 1995), p.182.

to certain contemporary affirmations of Dudreville,²⁰ whereas Cannistraro and Sullivan compromised themselves by stating, without supporting evidence, that the manifesto was ‘drawn up by Russolo’.²¹ The evolution of Elena Pontiggia’s arguments – not conclusions – over the years are of great interest. Since 2003 she has favoured the idea of a group formulation of the text,²² adding a further testimony intended to consolidate her theory, but which would appear to only throw it further into question and instead imply the importance of Russolo’s contribution in comparison to the other three signatories.

A page in Marinetti’s *Notebooks* dated 12 January 1920 (that is, one day after the official publication date of the manifesto) narrates an episode of notable relevance:

I see Russolo in Milan. He talks of the cowardice of Picasso in his return to Ingres (precise museum painting), Carrà in his return to Giotto and de Chirico who is also turning to minute, precise *tromp-l’oeil* portraiture already done by many others (such as Balla).²³

This brief note of Marinetti’s therefore captures Russolo’s disdain for the return to art of the past by some of the most important painters of the day – a tendency against which the manifesto’s signatories were rebelling. That only Marinetti and Russolo spoke of this is not, of course, definitive evidence in itself for the attribution of the text to Russolo.

However, there is more: at a Futurist exhibition held at the Winter Club in Turin between 27 March and 27 April 1922, Russolo appeared as the sole signatory of the manifesto, which was reprinted in the catalogue. At that time, he was the only one of the four signatories of ‘Against all Returns...’ who could be considered a Futurist. Given the great propriety and friendship between the four painters, yet it seems unlikely that the other three would have withdrawn their signatures, or that Russolo would have assumed the right to sign a collective work on his own. Whatever be the case, a later episode again relating to Marinetti gives further weight to the hypothesis that Russolo was its author. In an essay for the catalogue to an exhibition of October 1929 at Milan’s Galleria Pesaro entitled ‘Thirty-three Futurists: Painting, Sculpture and Decorative Art’, greatly influenced by Sarfatti’s ideas and, consequently, rekindling the polemics between Futurism and the Novecento, Marinetti stated: ‘As Luigi Russolo observed, Italy’s only tradition is that of not having any tradition. Today’s Italy is the result of a series of political, artistic and intellectual revolutions.’²⁴

²⁰ E. Pontiggia, ‘Leonardo Dudreville...’, *op. cit.*, pp.22-23; M. Rosci, ‘Il “Realismo” sono stato io ad iniziarlo’, in *Dudreville il volto, il ritratto*, ed. by E. Pontiggia and M. Rosci, catalogue of the exhibition, Madonna di Campiglio: Centro Rainalter, 11 July - 13 September 1998 (Milan: Charta, 1998), p.16; S. Salvagnini, *Il sistema delle Arti in Italia 1919-1943* (Bologna: Minerva, 2000), p.176.

²¹ P. V. Cannistraro and B. R. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p.293.

²² E. Pontiggia, ‘Note’, in *Il Novecento italiano*, *op. cit.*, p.146. This is the same opinion as that expressed in the text “Novecento” milanese..., *op. cit.*, p.17.

²³ F. T. Marinetti, *Taccuini 1915-1921*, ed. by A. Bertoni (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987), p.469.

²⁴ *Mostra di trentatré artisti futuristi*, ed. by F. T. Marinetti, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Galleria Pesaro, October 1929, pp.10-11. Marinetti’s catalogue text is almost identical to that of a later essay in

The first part of Marinetti's citation faithfully reproduces the passage from the manifesto that asserts: 'We declare that the true tradition of Italy is that of never having had any tradition, since the Italian race is one of innovators and constructors.'²⁵ What reason would Marinetti have had for omitting the three other signatories of the manifesto? For all of the above reasons, it is possible to cast serious doubt upon the notion of a group composition of the manifesto, of which Pontiggia speaks, and to instead propose the voice of a single author – Luigi Russolo.

Beyond identifying the author of the text, it seems interesting to mention some other observations here. Its chronological relationship with the 'Circular', the adoption of the subtitle 'Futurist Manifesto', the date of publication (the eleventh of the month, in keeping with Futurist custom), the references made by Marinetti in his diary regarding the 'returns' of Picasso, Carrà and de Chirico – these are all facts that suggest the continuing influence of Marinetti, in these if in no other forms. In its substance, on the other hand, the manifesto is inspired by Sarfatti insofar as it vigorously promotes the idea of pictorial synthesis. This double-edged manifesto is today recognised for the significant document that it undoubtedly is in the context of the critical-artistic situation in Italy,²⁶ at that time in a fluid state of becoming in its journey from Futurism to the Novecento, passing through the experiences of Valori Plastici and Metaphysical art. However, this momentary and apparent solidarity between the father of Futurism and Mussolini's muse was destined to last *l'espace d'un matin* as the crystallisation of political and historico-critical alliances was to soon see some of these protagonists battling on different fronts.

Margherita Sarfatti's Art Criticism; the First Exhibition at the Galleria Arte: Russolo's 'Portrait of a Woman (Maria Zanovello)'

The publication of the manifesto was only the beginning of the activities of Sarfatti and the four artists closest to her at that time. The former, with ever-greater cultural and political influence thanks to her writings in *Il Popolo d'Italia* and her political connections, began an arduous personal ascent towards the position of Italy's most influential art critic.

the catalogue of an exhibition he curated entitled 'Arte futurista. Pittura scultura architettura ceramica arredamento', organised by S.G.U.F., 22 - 31 March 1930 in Alexandria. The phrase Marinetti attributes to Russolo (p.9 in the latter catalogue) is reproduced exactly. During the six months from October to March nobody disputed the paternity of the phrase: a further reason to affirm that it was Russolo's own, and that Marinetti was aware of it.

²⁵ L. Dudreville, A. Funi, M. Sironi, L. Russolo, 'Contro tutti i ritorni in pittura. Manifesto futurista', 11 January 1920.

²⁶ The turning point of the manifesto is summarised by E. Pontiggia, in "'Novecento" milanese...', *op. cit.*, p.17, thus: 'The identification of the concept of synthesis with that of construction is predominant. There is no construction without synthesis, maintain the four artists: there is no return to an architectonic and volumetric form without a new, synthetic vision. And already, in embryo, the concept of a modern classicism subscribed to by the Novecento is defined: classicism, yes, but synthetic classicism, not a copy or a pastiche of the antique, as was promoted by the supporters of Valori Plastici.'

The exhibition curated by Sarfatti at the Galleria delle Mostre Temporanee Arte in Milan between 20 March and 15 April was of great significance. In addition to the four signatories of ‘Against all Returns...’ the exhibition included the work of Carrà and de Chirico – artists who were criticised in the manifesto – and many others such as Anselmo Bucci, Aldo Carpi, Vincenzo Costantini, Leto Livi, Piero Marussig, Arturo Martini, Enrico Mazzolani, Emilio Pettoruti, Ugo Piatti,²⁷ Siro Penagini, Ada Van der Schalk and Gigiotti Zanini, the large number of artists participating suggesting a more open critical stance.

Elena Pontiggia and, more specifically, Nicoletta Colombo, have written in great depth on the importance of the show at the Galleria Arte (or Galleria degli Ipogei, as it was pompously and jokingly called, being slightly below street level)²⁸ as well as on the first exhibition there (the only one in which Russolo participated) and those which took place over the course of 1920. Both have underlined the fact that Sarfatti’s critical hegemony was sufficient for her to obtain the use of a gallery in the centre of Milan which, for a brief period, indisputably became the most important in that city, despite its small size. Sarfatti did not curate all of the nine shows hosted by the gallery during its first year, and only the inaugural group exhibition and the fifth show, devoted to the work of Achille Funi, were accompanied by introductory texts penned by the critic.

Sarfatti’s catalogue essay for the group exhibition of early spring,²⁹ and two later journalistic commentaries,³⁰ demonstrated a will both to go beyond the affirmations contained in ‘Against all Returns in Painting’ and her preference for its four signatories, with the aim of enlarging the field of adherents to the nascent Novecento movement. In the articles that appeared in *Il Popolo d’Italia* and *Il Convegno* all the works of Sironi, Carrà and de Chirico received praise, while only in the first did Sarfatti comment on the single painting exhibited by Russolo:

A very strong work is Luigi Russolo’s *Portrait of a Woman*, which recalls the work of Vallotton to some degree in its symptomatic and deliberate crudeness of form, compacted and solidified with tenacious implacability.³¹

The unpublished – and lost – portrait of the artist’s future wife, Maria Zanovello, demonstrated that sober and essential constructive, compositional and synthetic efficacy that was promoted by the artist in the manifesto at the beginning of the year. The work

²⁷The presence of Ugo Piatti as a painter need not surprise, despite the fact that he is better known as Russolo’s assistant in the development of the *intonarumori*. His artistic production, which is still to obtain proper consideration, spanned many years – to 1920 belongs a notable *Self Portrait* in charcoal, unpublished until today and in the possession of the Piatti family.

²⁸E. Pontiggia, “Novecento” milanese..., *op. cit.*, pp.17-18; N. Colombo, ‘Le gallerie private milanesi protagoniste della storia di “Novecento” (1920-1932)’, in *Il ‘Novecento’ milanese...*, *op. cit.*, pp.31-35.

²⁹M. Sarfatti, ‘Prefazione’, in *Arte. Pittura e scultura. Mostre temporanee*, ed. by M. Sarfatti, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Galleria Arte, 20 March - 15 April 1920 (Milan, 1920).

³⁰M. Sarfatti, ‘La nuova Galleria Arte,’ in *Il Popolo d’Italia*, VII, 3 April 1920, p.4; M. Sarfatti, ‘Considerazioni sulla pittura a proposito dell’Esposizione “Arte”’, in *Il Convegno*, I, no. 3 April 1920, now in *Il Novecento italiano*, *op. cit.*, p.26.

³¹M. Sarfatti, ‘La nuova Galleria...’, *op. cit.*, p.4.

perfectly embodied Sarfatti's principles of synthesis and style: the frontal pose, the intentionally cursive brushstroke, the judicious use of shadow and the expressiveness of the face all contribute to the construction of an intense portrait in which the strong-willed and stubborn personality of Maria Zanovello is clearly apparent, notwithstanding her relaxed pose.

Dischord between Russolo and Sarfatti

The exhibition in Milan was significant for Russolo for two reasons: firstly, his *Portrait* was the only one of three known works from this period to be publicly exhibited, and secondly it was the last official occasion on which Sarfatti showed interest in Russolo's work, despite the fact that it perfectly corresponded to the principles contained in the manifesto.

The theoretical bases of 'Against all Returns in Painting' therefore seemed to vacillate before Sarfatti's critical conception at that time, with her attempts to gather around herself artists who, without hesitation, favoured precisely those 'returns' so scorned in the manifesto. This single public encounter between Sarfatti and Russolo, therefore, essentially seemed to register a sort of rupture between the rigorous application of the principles of the manifesto on the part of the latter and the critical activity of the journalist, ready to make compromises. If we attribute a good part of the manifesto to Russolo, it seems perfectly reasonable that he would have been unwilling to make such compromises and, on the contrary, to continue to produce work more coherent than that of others in its adherence to the principles outlined in the manifesto text. It is not by chance that from this moment Russolo withdrew from Sarfatti's circle, no longer being associated with the initiatives surrounding the launch of the Novecento group³² – initiatives that were simultaneously critical and political.

At this time, Russolo seemed to be closer to Marinettian aesthetics, sharing a number of artistic and political views with the poet that distanced him from Sarfatti and the Novecento, from Mussolini and Fascism.

However, these changes were not sudden, nor did they take the form of a dramatic rupture. Russolo was committed to various fields of activity at this time – music perhaps slightly less than painting for the time being, the artist nevertheless executing two interesting portraits. He was also paying great attention to the political events surrounding the Second Fascist Congress in May (although not taking part) at which Marinetti broke away from Mussolini. Moreover, he was engaged with art criticism in the context of Funi's aforementioned exhibition at the Galleria Arte, of which he wrote an important review.

³² Notwithstanding the break between Russolo and the Novecento 'the fundamental propositions of "Against all Returns in Painting" were restated to the letter in the official texts of Sarfatti's movement'. This is the opinion of G. Anzani and C. Pirovano in their 'La pittura in Lombardia nel primo Novecento (1900-1945)', in *La pittura in Italia. Il Novecento 1900-1945* (Electa: Milan, 1991), p.238.

Russolo and the Political Events of the Day: Taking Sides

The temporary and difficult rupture between Futurists and Fascists occurred on the occasion of the Second Fascist Congress, held in Milan between 24 and 25 May 1920, when Marinetti's genuinely revolutionary stance became irreconcilable with the political opportunism of Mussolini. Marinetti's vision of Italy remained that of an anticlerical and anti-monarchical state, a position that was too intransigent for Mussolini. At the same time, D'Annunzio and his Fiume legionnaires broke away from the Fasci di Combattimento, with a consequent split in the philosophy of *arditismo* that led its followers take up differing stances, some of which were avowedly anti-Fascist.

This also appeared to be the position of Mario Carli,³³ a writer and associate of D'Annunzio who was also the editor of an important journal *La Testa di Ferro. Libera voce dei legionari di Fiume* ['The Head of Iron: Free Voice of the Fiume Legionnaires']. This represented a mouthpiece for the Futurist wing of the *Arditi*, in which members of the movement were welcome and able to find a voice on politics and art. In the almost subversive, libertarian climate open to the revolutionary left that Carli fostered³⁴ – and to some degree, Marinetti also – it was not by chance that at the beginning of November Russolo re-emerged in an article written for *La Testa di Ferro* dedicated to his friend Funi on the occasion of his exhibition at the Galleria Arte.

Russolo once again seemed to favour Marinetti's Futurism at this turning point; even if his public interventions were restricted to purely artistic matters more congenial to him, one can imagine an idealistic and intransigent participation in the Second Fascist Congress and the events in Fiume.

From this moment on, Russolo completely withdrew from political life. If, prior to the war, his total adhesion to the Futurist cause saw him adopt the most intransigent, radical positions, then in the confused and turbulent period of the *vittoria mutilata* ['mutilated victory'] Russolo found it much harder to take political sides. He seemed to only be more reflective: his choices, once complete, were consistently oriented in the direction of a total adhesion to the political theories of his friend Marinetti. At the same time, there occurred a move away from the artistic theories and political choices of Sarratt. In a short period of time, Russolo became anti-Sarratt and anti-Mussolini: two sides of the same coin.

This is where Russolo's anti-Fascism stemmed from – often mentioned but never fully accounted for by art historians. Above all, it was a resistance to regimentation, and not a retrospective anti-Fascism dating from the 1940s, but one predating even the March on Rome; an anti-Fascism well thought through and deeply rooted – even if never

³³ See the biographical portrait in C. Salaris, *Alla festa della rivoluzione. Artisti e libertari con D'Annunzio a Fiume* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), pp.32-36.

³⁴ For a history of *La Testa di Ferro* and its editor, see *ibidem*, pp.99-124.

explicitly declared³⁵. Possibly for these reasons Russolo never participated in any official exhibitions, excepting those which were conceded to the Futurists by the cultural and political hegemony of Sarfatti and Mussolini throughout the 1920s: the 'First Exhibition of the Novecento' of 1926, the Biennale of the same year and one or two others.

In conclusion, the presence of an article concerning Funi's Milan exhibition in the pages of *La Testa di Ferro* constituted an implicit taking of political sides on the part of Russolo, as well as a critical leave-taking of great interest in terms of the admissions expressed and the intuitions regarding his future production which took as its starting point some of Funi's visual ideas. In short, this represented a break from Sarfatti's ideas which, by the end of the year, had evidently moved far away from those expressed in 'Against all Returns in Painting'.

Russolo's Review of Achille Funi's Exhibition at Milan's Galleria Arte

Funi's exhibition ran from 23 October to 5 November 1920. It is remarkable how Sarfatti (in her essay for the catalogue) and Marinetti and Russolo (in their articles for *La Testa di Ferro*) chose to write about the work of this painter from Ferrara, and how these texts demonstrated the by then enormous aesthetic distance separating the leader of Futurism from the founder of the Novecento.³⁶ Russolo – being an artist, and a friend and colleague of Funi – assumed a less ideological position than the other two professional writers and occupied the middle ground on certain points. After energetically reiterating the principles outlined in the January manifesto, Russolo considered and described a number of works by Funi in the exhibition, including *The Holiday-makers*, *Profile of a Woman*, *Woman with Flowers* and *Spring*, all of which corresponded perfectly to the criteria of both in this time of transition between Futurism and an art of synthesis.

It would appear to be no coincidence that the first of Funi's works to be praised by Russolo was *The Holiday-makers*, in which 'the qualities of Achille Funi seem to be particularly well expressed'.³⁷ In this intriguing work, in fact, the possible interpretations go beyond a purely visual, art historical or literary reading to form part of a personal 'short circuit' between his past and future production. In other words, if the work corresponded at that time to those principles of strong, solid construction and a synthetic, resolved vision of 'style', then on the other hand the painting opened itself to

³⁵ One finds a little hint much later in a letter sent from Tarragona on 22 April 1933 to Fortunato Depero. In it, Russolo – in self-imposed exile in Spain – asks to borrow some books from his friend, adding: 'I will send them back to you, or return them personally if I can bring myself to breathe an air that my intellectual lungs cannot withstand, too poisoned by politics, rhetoric, nationalism and war.' See Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Russolo (henceforth 'Fondo Russolo').

³⁶ See M. Sarfatti, *Achille Funi*, catalogue of the exhibition, Milan: Galleria Arte, October 1920, now in *Funi 1890-1972...*, *op. cit.*, p.179; F. T. Marinetti, 'Paolo Buzzi e il suo "Popolo, canta così!"', in *La Testa di Ferro*, II, 7 November 1920, p.3; L. Russolo, 'La mostra di Achille Funi', in *La Testa di Ferro*, II, 7 November 1920, p.3.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

further literary meanings³⁸ in virtue of the explicit presence of *The Beautiful Corpse*, a book by Russolo and Funi's mutual friend, the Futurist poet Paolo Buzzi. Funi's literary reference to Buzzi's work certainly fascinated Russolo. But more than this: with its compositional structure and its elements of figures and background, this work seemed to offer Russolo a point of departure twenty years later when he returned to painting, creating that body of 'classical-modern' work (as the artist himself defined it) which occupied him from 1940 until his death. There is a similar vague atmosphere of magical realism that permeates this and many of his paintings of the 1940s; a similar coarseness and painterly linearity that may be defined as synthetic in the treatment of the skies, the clouds, the vegetation and the faces of people.

In essence, because of Russolo's extreme interest in this work, one may consider *The Holiday-makers* a conscious – albeit never declared – source of inspiration for a new, future and singular creative period for Russolo.

The Uffizi 'Self Portrait'

The period of reflection and change that Russolo was going through coincided with the production of a body of pictorial work that was as sparse as it was reflective and profound. In 1920 he painted a *Self Portrait* (his second painting of that year) which formerly belonged to a private collection in the Ticino but was recently acquired by the Uffizi. With a compositional structure similar to that of *Portrait of a Woman* – a work that could be considered its pendant – this self portrait corresponds better than any other to the criteria outlined in 'Against all Returns in Painting' – a true thematic fulcrum for all of Russolo's past, present and future art and theory in that continuity of rupture which characterised his work, whichever creative language he chose to express himself in.

Beyond its undoubted and skillful exterior qualities, represented by the disquieting shadow of the face that is vividly thrown against a wall behind, the work – more than any other contemporary piece or artist, Funi included – seems to emblematically represent the entire period just analysed: a period of transition, of changes of style, of choices made in relation to a determined vision of the artistic, social and political worlds.

Following this period, Russolo retreated into a dignified silence, quickly returning to his beloved construction of musical instruments and to a discreet presence as a painter and concert performer at several national and international Futurist exhibitions, excluded from the homogenous group of painters favoured by Sarfatti that constituted the Novecento School.

1921: Final Contact between Sarfatti and Russolo

³⁸ See the accurate entry for the work, exhibited in Funi's one-man show and the catalogue *Funi 1890-1972...*, *op. cit.*, no.23, p.76.

Two authoritative critical commentaries by Marinetti and Sarfatti concerning an exhibition of modern and Futurist art in Geneva brought 1920 to a close and opened 1921.³⁹ These once more demonstrated the continuing critical and artistic hegemony of the two writers. If the relationship between Russolo and Marinetti continued to be affable, the painter's relationship with Sarfatti seemed to grow colder over the following months, to the point of dissolving altogether in the years to come, despite the maintenance of a formal, polite cordiality.

In April, Sarfatti published her book of poems *The Living and the Shadow*, dedicated to her son Roberto who had died in combat at a very young age. The authoress intended to promote her work with an intense campaign, presenting the book to numerous high-profile Italian intellectuals.⁴⁰ An original copy given to Russolo by Sarfatti is conserved in the Fondo Russolo and contains the following dedication:

To Luigi Russolo,
to the strong
solider of
war and of art
in memory of our
injuries and
of our friendship,
Margherita Sarfatti
April 1921⁴¹

This is the last known evidence of contact between the two. With this dedication, the paths of the prestigious intellectual and the Futurist painter seem to have definitively parted, despite the fact that Russolo was invited to the two Novecento exhibitions of 1926 and 1929 and that his *Solidity of Fog* remained in Sarfatti's collection until the Second World War.

Russolo's 'Portrait of a Girl' and further Futurist Events

During the course of 1921 Russolo only executed a single pictorial work, *Portrait of a Girl*, employing the same compositional structure as the two preceding portraits of the previous year – one which was in fact of even more distant origin than these, being derived from his printmaking works of the early years of the century. The painting in fact represents Russolo's sister Tina in an identical pose to an etching of 1906 entitled *Girl*; only the face of the sitter demonstrates the passing of the years, despite her still

³⁹ See *Exposition Internationale d'Art Moderne; peinture, sculpture*, ed. by E. Faure, catalogue of the exhibition, Geneva: 26 December 1920 - 25 January 1921 (Geneva: Sadag, 1920). There was also a lecture delivered by Marinetti and an article written by Sarfatti for *Il Popolo d'Italia* entitled 'L'esposizione moderna a Ginevra' (2 January 1921).

⁴⁰ See S. Urso, *op. cit.*, p.131.

⁴¹ M. Sarfatti, dedication to Luigi Russolo, unpublished document, Fondo Russolo.

young age. This is last piece created in the sparse run of works by Russolo following the drafting of the manifesto ‘Against all Returns in Painting’.

After 1921, having withdrawn from the circle of artists and critics associated with the Novecento group, Russolo’s creativity and a large part of his energies were once more developed in the context of Futurism, particularly in the field of music.

On only one occasion did Russolo have the opportunity to garner the international success that had been his, many times, before the war. In Paris, the exhibition ‘Peintres futuristes italiens’ opened on 6 May at the Galerie Reinhardt in Plâçe Vendôme, presenting a panorama of Futurist art updated in the light of postwar developments and including the work of artists such as Sironi, Dottori, Dudreville, Funi and Prampolini, in addition to Balla, Boccioni and Russolo himself, who exhibited four famous works dating from the 1910s.⁴² The text of ‘Against all Returns in Painting’ was reproduced in the catalogue, with the names of the four signatories, but that which caused the greatest stir were the three ‘Concerts des bruiteurs futuristes’ given by Russolo on 17, 20 and 24 June at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris that were directed by his brother Antonio, signalling the return of a major interest in the musical sphere. During the first of these concerts a Dadaist uproar exploded; nevertheless, all three performances received exceptional reviews and drew significant and eminent audiences, including musicians such as Falla, Ravel, Stravinsky, Honegger and Casella, and writers such as Gustave Kahn and Paul Claudel. Piet Mondrian published an extensive article in *De Stijl* entitled ‘Neo-Plasticism in Music and the “Bruiteurs futuristes italiens”’ which, taking its starting point from the new ‘rumorist’ music of Russolo, explored his own doctrine of Neo-Plasticism.⁴³ This was the first encounter between Russolo and Mondrian – but it is not known if the two artists actually met one another, or if the Dutch painter and theoretician merely listened to the concert. In any case, the two were destined to meet in Paris in 1930 through the avant-garde Cercle et Carré group.

The First Half of the 1920s and the Sanguine ‘Self Portrait’

Russolo’s relationship with the Novecento group was limited to a parallel yet distant painterly activity, to which the artists around Sarfatti responded with indifference, Russolo himself likewise maintaining a critical distance with regard to their work.

Between 1922 and 1926 the cultural politics of Margherita Sarfatti were still in their ascendancy, with the individual and collective exhibitions of seven artists at the Galleria Pesaro, her influence reaching its zenith with the ‘1st Exhibition of Italian Art of the Novecento’ at Palazzo della Permanente between February and March 1926. During

⁴² Cf. *Exposition des Peintres Futuristes Italiens et conférence de Marinetti*, catalogue of the exhibition, Paris: Galerie Reinhardt, May 1921 (Paris: Devambez, 1921). Russolo exhibited the well known works *Houses + Light at Night [sic]*, *Synthesis of the Movements of a Woman*, *Dynamism of an Automobile* and *Dynamic Volumes*.

⁴³ P. Mondrian, ‘De “Bruiteurs futuristes italiens” en “Het” nieuwe in de Muziek’, *De Stijl*, IV, no.8, 1921, pp.114-18. The Italian translation can be found in H. Holtzmann (ed.), *Piet Mondrian. Tutti gli scritti*, (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975), pp.163-73.

these years, Russolo led a life far from the limelight. They were very difficult times for the artist, spent trying to balance the need to earn a living with his desire to devote himself full-time to inventing musical instruments.⁴⁴ One should not understate his continuing Futurist militancy at this time, as witnessed by his passionate participation in the First Futurist Congress of November 1924 in Milan, which sanctioned a late and radical break with the Fascist movement, albeit brief.

According to the list of works drawn up by his wife at the end of the 1950s⁴⁵ Russolo, continuing a reduced activity as a concert performer,⁴⁶ produced a single figurative work in the mid-1920s – a *Self Portrait* in sanguine – giving proof of a virtuosity that seems to be located even beyond the propagated art of the research into synthesis. This drawing, a true and proper *unicum* in his production, consists in a pure and simple representation of his double through a series of soft yet decisive lines that reflect the character of the artist with extreme precision. A tenacious and volatile, sometimes subtly polemical character in the constant search for recognition: a character that never allowed Russolo to make artistic compromises and which was still strongly bound up with Futurism, even in its inevitable metamorphoses.

1926: Russolo's Participation in the '1st Exhibition of Art of the Italian Novecento' and Withdrawal

Proof of Russolo's stubborn and consistent character can be identified in the events leading up to and following the above exhibition that was hosted at the Palazzo della Permanente between 14 February and 30 March 1926 and in which Russolo had already been invited to participate the previous year. The artist exhibited in Room IV, appropriately enough identified as the 'Futurist Section', together with Balla, Prampolini and Depero – those painters who were at that time the most advanced members of the group. Russolo only presented three works: *Music*, his *Self Portrait with Skulls* of 1908 and *Forms and Rhythms* – an unknown title behind which was perhaps concealed a Futurist painting from the 1910s.

Russolo's presence at the Permanente in an exhibition celebrating the memorable events of a revitalised Italian painting in a phase of transformation ever since the famous 'Against all Returns in Painting' signified, through the considered choice of the works

⁴⁴ For a long time Russolo worked at Thiene dismantling abandoned cableways after the war. This period is documented in a long correspondence from January 1923 to March 1924 with his future wife Maria Zanovello, published in part in G. F. Maffina, *Luigi Russolo e l'arte dei rumori* (Turin: Martano, 1978), pp.270-73 and partly in the Fondo Russolo at Mart.

⁴⁵ M. Zanovello, 'Elenco di tutti (o quasi) i quadri di Luigi Russolo', unpublished typewritten manuscript, Fondo Russolo, drafted around the mid-1950s in preparation for the monograph concerning her husband.

⁴⁶ A letter to Fortunato Depero of 13 December 1925 is indicative of the difficulties of the period, describing his state of mind: 'If it was not because I am preparing my concert with the Enharmonic Bow I would be tempted – and I have been, in a terrible manner – to finish with this disgusting life. I am at the end of my energies and since struggle here is futile I have given up struggling!' See original manuscript in Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Depero, ms 1249.

on display, an unequivocal withdrawal from the Novecento group, its artists and supporters.

Russolo's calm but firm articles for the press concerning this exhibition are still more incisive, demonstrating once more the profound gulf separating him from Margherita Sarfatti and those around her. His two articles were separated by little more than a month: the first, of 4 March, appeared in the newspaper *La Borsa* under the title 'The Italian Novecento',⁴⁷ and the second in *L'Impero* on 7 April, entitled 'Art is Creation, not Plagiarism'. In both, Russolo lamented a lack of faith in the artists of the moment, incapable of continuing the tradition of the masters of the past:

Since Italian tradition [...] is a tradition of revolutionary creators [...] the Futurists are the only ones who have given, are giving and will continue to give the new artworks of our times. Everything else is plagiarism, misery and impotence.⁴⁸

This clear-cut stance against the exhibition at the Permanente was final. With these words Russolo decreed the principles of the manifesto 'Against all Returns in Painting' finally abandoned, despite the fact that it had contributed to opening the way for the Novecento.

Participation in the XV Biennale: 'Impressions of Bombardment (Shrapnel and Grenades)'

Russolo's position was made evident around this time in the rooms of the Soviet Pavilion at the XV Venice Biennale, which ran from April to October 1926. The USSR put its own exhibition space at the disposal of an 'Exhibition of Italian Futurism' that was curated by Marinetti. For the first time at the Biennale Futurism received institutional recognition, with works by several second generation Futurists also being included. Russolo presented his most recent work, *Impressions of Bombardment (Shrapnel and Grenades)*, which he created especially for the occasion and which is another singular work within his *oeuvre*. This oil was once more Futurist in conception, but a Futurism updated in the light of the artist's most recent musical and pictorial theories, and contained explicit references to the still-vivid experiences of trench warfare.

A decade earlier in *The Art of Noises*, Russolo had already theorised the noises of warfare; in this work one finds the precise visualisation of those words and sensations through the evocation of the flash and explosion of grenades and shrapnel in semicircular and angular lines, colour also being applied in certain areas in a Divisionist manner, according to principles which the artist knew well and had employed for

⁴⁷ L. Russolo, 'Il Novecento italiano', *La Borsa*, 4 March 1926, now in G. F. Maffina, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-62.

⁴⁸ L. Russolo, 'L'arte è creazione, non è plagio', in *L'Impero*, 7 April 1926, now in G. F. Maffina, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-60.

several years. It is a work that signals a philological and polemical return to the Futurism of the preceding decade: the only such 'return' the artist allowed himself.

Paris: Theatre, Music, Cinema and Painting

In May 1927 Russolo felt the need to visit Paris, returning to Italy later that year, in July. Following a subsequent spell in Italy, which lasted until early autumn 1928,⁴⁹ and which proved to be very profitable in terms of his activities as a musician and concert performer, he decided to move to Paris once more, remaining there without interruption until the beginning of 1932.

These two Parisian sojourns coincided with a particularly prolific period for Russolo in the undoubted world capital of art. There Russolo definitively put behind him his earlier turbulent artistic relationship with Margherita Sarfatti and the Novecento group, to the extent that he declined to exhibit at the 'Second Exhibition of the Italian Novecento' in March-April 1929.

As is clear from correspondence with his wife,⁵⁰ Russolo's main intention in making these two Parisian trips was initially related to his musical experiments. As is examined in more detail in other essays in this catalogue, Russolo attempted to use his instruments in various multi-media events, with varying levels of success. These ranged from performances of Enrico Prampolini's 'Pantomime futuriste', to scores for an avant-garde film by Eugène Deslaw shown in the famous cinema Studio 28 and scientific films by Jean Painlevé, in addition to fully-fledged concerts which, on more than one occasion witnessed the use of his *bruiteurs*, his *Russolophone* and *archet enharmonique* as he baptized his noise-intoners, noise-harmonium and enharmonic bow.

1929: A Return to Painting and the Exhibition 'Peintres futuristes italiens' at Galerie 23

The regular correspondence between Russolo and his wife allows one to partially reconstruct the later painterly phase of Russolo's career that seems to have begun around January 1929 when, in a letter of the fourteenth day of that month, the artist, searching for a studio to match his requirements and preoccupied with economic

⁴⁹ An autobiographical text by Depero, written on the point of leaving for the United States, describes an enjoyable and fortuitous meeting in Rovereto with Russolo which took place at the end of summer 1928. See Mart, Archivio del '900, Fondo Depero, ms.296. Additionally, an unpublished photograph (in the same deposit) in which numerous Futurists appear, including Marinetti, Prampolini, Depero, Somenzi, Mazza and Russolo himself, at the extreme right, has a cardboard support signed by Russolo and dated 'Rovereto 20 August 1928'.

⁵⁰ Russolo sent twenty-five letters to his wife from Paris, from 12 May 1927 until 20 December 1929, some of which have been published in G. F. Maffina *op.cit.* and some of which remain unpublished in the Fondo Russolo in Mart.

problems stated: ‘given that I have already begun painting’.⁵¹ This was an affirmation that was confirmed on 9 February when the artist wrote of having returned to painting:

In the meantime I am painting – as I can – I must demand the hospitality from whoever poses for me, beyond asking them that they should pose for me, but am concentrating on portraiture since it is not improbable that I could have a paid portrait to complete in the future. And portraiture is not easy, as it is necessary to try and combine the greatest artistic novelty with not being bound to the subject.

It is the 17th anniversary of our first great Futurist exhibition in Paris (5-24 February 1912) and I used to think then that to paint could bring me a fortune! However, I am working with great enthusiasm and faith!⁵²

Following three months of silence on the subject of painting Russolo once more spoke about it to his wife: ‘I paint in all of my free time and have already finished 6 things. When I have more I may try to have an exhibition or make some contact with a dealer. For now, I have still too few to show to anybody.’⁵³

Finally, during the summer, Russolo updated his wife again concerning his new pictorial output, stating: ‘I am doing all sorts, figures, landscapes and still lifes. I already have 12 small paintings and am doing other, larger ones. I think I am having a good phase.’⁵⁴ This total was to increase to ‘around twenty finished pieces’ by October,⁵⁵ a selection that was added to a group of his paintings from previous decades that Russolo asked his wife to send him for an exhibition that was to take place on 27 December.

The exhibition ‘Peintres futuristes italiens’, which was held at Galerie 23 in Rue de la Boétie (at that time a very prestigious address, and the location of Picasso’s luxurious residence) brought together the best Futurist painters of the day, with works spanning from the 1910s to the late 1920s. To accompany the exhibition three important events were organised, two of which were literary and led by Marinetti, and one musical – a performance of Futurist music by Russolo.⁵⁶ The show received favourable reviews in the press, as did the evening events, despite the fact that Futurism, now twenty years old, was hardly a novelty in Paris.

Russolo’s final letters to his wife of that year are useful for identifying which Futurist works were in Milan at the time and which were sent to Paris for the exhibition, being easily recognisable from their catalogue titles: *Speeding Automobile*, *Dynamic Synthesis of a Woman* and *Dynamic Volumes*.

⁵¹ Luigi Russolo, unpublished letter to Maria Zanovello, 14 January 1929, FondoRussolo.

⁵² Luigi Russolo, unpublished letter to Maria Zanovello, 9 February 1929, Fondo Russolo.

⁵³ Luigi Russolo, unpublished letter to Maria Zanovello, 11 May 1929, Fondo Russolo.

⁵⁴ Luigi Russolo, unpublished letter to Maria Zanovello, 16 August 1929, Fondo Russolo.

⁵⁵ Luigi Russolo, letter to Maria Zanovello, 11 October 1929, in G. F. Maffina, *op. cit.*, p.287.

⁵⁶ See the catalogue of the exhibition *Peintres futuristes italiens*, Paris: Galerie 23, 27 December 1929 - 7 January 1930 (Paris: 1929) with a ‘Préface’ by Gino Severini.

To these were added three new pieces: ‘In addition to these three paintings I will show another three (one of which is quite large) which I have been working on recently’ the artist wrote to his wife on 5 December.⁵⁷ In the exhibition catalogue three previously unknown works indeed appear: *Still Life*, *Self Portrait* and *Soap Bubbles*. The latter work, reproduced in the Galerie 23 catalogue, is the only one of the twenty works Russolo claimed to have produced at this time that has survived. As a statement, it may be related to the *Still Life with Flask of Wine and Bunches of Grapes*, sold at auction in 1990 and no longer traceable. The entirety of Russolo’s work from 1929 – part of which was later exhibited in other exhibitions of 1930 – has unfortunately been lost. Only a photographic reproduction of *Still Life*, and *Soap Bubbles* itself, remain. Both bear the influence of post-Cubist eclecticism and Purist aesthetics that were current in Paris at that time, with a certain Deco edge.

Links with the International Avant-garde: Cercle et Carré

Russolo’s acquaintanceship with artists of all tendencies through the theatrical and cinematic events of the Pantomime futuriste and Studio 28, as well as through his own personal friendships, brought him into contact with the most advanced international artistic experimentation. In Paris, notwithstanding the various postwar *rappels à l’ordre*, the avant-garde did not lose its vivacity. Completely untouched by the formation of groups such as Les Italiens de Paris, which had close ties to the Novecento, Russolo preferred instead to establish a solid and fruitful friendship with the Belgian intellectual Michel Seuphor who founded the Cercle et Carré group together with other artists.

Some photographs from as early as 1927 show Russolo in the house of Seuphor, Céline Arnould and Paul Dermée, together with Piet Mondrian and Georges Vantongerloo, amongst others.⁵⁸ Seuphor tells how, from January 1929, he often received visits from several artists in his house in Vanves:

Mondrian, Vantongerloo et Russolo y venaient presque chaque dimanche boire le thé, puis diner très sobrement autour d’un saladier. Torres-Garcia, très vite, fut admis parmi ces intimes auxquels se joignaient parfois Arp et Sophie Taeuber. C’est là que Torres-Garcia nous révéla qu’il avait longuement parlé à van Doesburg de son projet de fonder un groupe ou une association de combat contre le surréalisme.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ L. Russolo, letter to Maria Zanovello, 5 December 1929, in G. F. Maffina, *op. cit.*, p.289.

⁵⁸ These were taken during the *Soirées d’esprit nouveau* which took place at the Galerie *Au sacre du Printemps* and which, as Michel Seuphor states in *Cercle et Carré*, *cit.*, p. 10, were eleven in number, with poetic declamations in several languages.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

Thus was born Cercle et Carré, Russolo being among its founding members as well as one of its principal exponents. To these were quickly added other artists of the first rank, such as Baumeister, Gropius, Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy, Schwitters, Prampolini and others. This group aimed to set itself against the nascent Surrealist movement, favouring non-objective art and geometric abstraction, yet also accepting figurative art providing that it was of a rational, Purist and mathematical derivation.

The group's first public manifestation took the form of the publication of the first number of its journal, also named *Cercle et Carré*, in which each artist wrote a few lines introducing themselves.⁶⁰ Immediately afterward, from 18 April until 1 May, there followed an exhibition at Galerie 23 comprising 130 works by affiliated artists and a series of evening events, the last of which featured Russolo at the Russolophone.⁶¹

The group's sole exhibition is remembered for its illustrious participants and the quality of many of the works listed in its catalogue. Regrettably, in Russolo's case, one is only able to list the titles of his three works included in the catalogue, which coincided with the second edition of the journal.⁶² These three paintings, similarly comprising part of his most recent period of work, and at the moment unidentifiable, were entitled *Portrait*, *Portrait of the Painter* and *The Cat* and constitute that obscure part in the list of Russolo's paintings drawn up during the 1950s by his wife and described generically as 'paintings made in Paris, where they remained, of small dimensions'.⁶³

Little remains of the experience of Cercle et Carré, which ran out of steam between 1930 and 1931 due to a long illness on the part of Seuphor, except for three editions of the journal, one exhibition of paintings, numerous statements of direct interest and much written and photographic material. Russolo's role was, as we have seen, of primary importance. Just as significant was his decision to associate himself and exchange the most profound experiences with artists such as Arp, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Schwitters, Vantongerloo and others who constituted, without a shadow of a doubt, the best of the international artistic avant-garde at that time. Not only did Mondrian write a long article on Russolo, Kandinsky was to use Russolo's notions of noise-sound in his lessons at the Bauhaus at the beginning of the 1930s.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Russolo's introductory remarks, longer than those of the other artists and accompanied by a photograph of him at the Rumorarmonium, concentrated predominantly on his musical experimentation and instruments. There were three numbers of the journal (15 March, 15 April and 30 June 1930).

⁶¹ Seuphor, in *Cercle et Carré*, cit., p. 19, states that the contract with Galerie 23 was signed by himself, Vantongerloo, Torres-Garcia and Russolo: that is to say, the group's directorate.

⁶² 'Première exposition internationale du groupe Cercle et Carré', Paris: Galerie 23, Rue de la Boétie, 18 April -1 May 1930, in *Cercle et Carré*, no. 2, 15 April 1930, pp. 10-11.

⁶³ M. Zanovello, *Elenco...* cit.

This musical and ‘rumorist’ element continued to be preeminent in Russolo’s activities during the first decade following the war, yet it was not the only one. If a great attention to artistic theory and production had existed, there also developed a growing interest on the part of the artist in a reflection upon himself, not only through self portraits but also in the study and awareness of other, non-artistic practices.

The Final Exhibition of 1930: The Venice Biennale

On 1 May 1930 the XVII Venice Biennale opened – an artistically very rich year, which presented an important survey of first and second generation Futurism, introduced in the catalogue with a vibrant text by Marinetti entitled ‘The New Futurist Painting’.⁶⁵

As a guest of honour, Russolo necessarily had to send different works from those at Galerie 23, due to an overlap with the exhibition of Cercle et Carré. Comparing the list of works sent to Venice with those in Paris, one notes the presence of another *Self Portrait*.⁶⁶ Three other works are unfortunately unidentifiable, their catalogue titles of *Lights*, *Figure* and *Study* being rather too vague. The only certainty is again constituted by *Soap Bubbles*, a reproduction of which was included at the end of the catalogue to signify its importance.

Of the twenty or so works executed in Paris, comparing the titles listed in the three catalogues of 1930 and considering it possible that in each exhibition there would have been included unpublished works, one is capable of deducing the presence of two or three *Self Portraits*, a *Still Life* (perhaps that with a flask of wine), a *Cat*, a *Portrait* (perhaps also called *Figure*) a work entitled *Lights*, another entitled *Study* and, finally, the only surviving work *Soap Bubbles*, which was surely the most popular, being reproduced in both catalogues and then not by chance acquired by the Musée de la Ville de Paris. The mystery surrounding the fate of Russolo’s Parisian works of 1929-30 seems destined to remain unsolved – it is hoped this essay may contribute to the disclosure of some material evidence.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ See *Wassili Kandinsky. Tutti gli scritti. Punto linea nel piano. Articoli teorici. I corsi inediti al Bauhaus*, P. Sers (ed.) (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1973), pp. 251-52.

⁶⁵ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, ‘La nuova pittura futurista’, in *Catalogo della XVII Biennale di Venezia*, (Venice: Grafiche Ferrari, 1930), pp. 135-36.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 140.

⁶⁷ A letter conserved in the Archivio Russolo from Véra Idelson Labusquière – a friend of the Delaunays – addressed to Maria Zanovello, 20 February 1953, would appear to remove all hope: ‘The post-Futurist works were destroyed by Russolo himself at the end of his stay in Paris.’ Given the existence of *Soap Bubbles* and *Still Life with Flask of Wine and Bunches of Grapes*, one hopes that Idelson Labusquière’s remark only partly corresponds to the truth.

Little is known of Russolo's activity in the last phase of his time in Paris: he developed interests very different to those of painting and music and, in a short time, left the French capital to settle in Spain, leaving behind his musical instruments which, like his paintings were never rediscovered.

Russolo's life and art required an uninterrupted silence at this point, a pause for necessary reflection that was to last for several years, throughout his time in Spain and beyond.

Biography of Luigi Russolo

Franco Tagliapietra

1885

Luigi Russolo is born in Portogruaro, Venice, the fourth son of the local cathedral organist. The registry of baptisms states his date of birth as 1 May, while the town council records indicate 30 April.

1901-05

Russolo moves to Milan to join his family, who have settled there in order for his elder brothers Giovanni and Antonio to study at the Conservatory. Here he develops his interest in the visual arts through an irregular apprenticeship comprised of occasional visits to the Brera, the execution of *plein air* landscape paintings and studies from anatomical tables, and copying sketches and drawings by Leonardo. He also undertakes restoration work on the frescoes at Castello Sforzesco and Da Vinci's *Last Supper*.

1906-09

Working for Arturo Taddio's studio Russolo creates a number of fashion designs (a little-known sphere of his activity, documented by his sister) that bring him a measure of success in Paris. Russolo's first mature artistic production, however, is in the medium of etching, in which he begins to work from 1906, creating a great many works around 1909 and continuing to produce prints up to 1911-12. His output – widely respected for the variety of its subject matter and styles, ranging from Symbolism to realism – is also admired by his future friends Carlo Carrà and Umberto Boccioni, whom Russolo meets at the annual art exposition of the Famiglia Artistica in 1909. Works in oil from around this time such as *Self Portrait with Skulls* signal the beginning of Russolo's move into painting.

1910

Following their meeting with F. T. Marinetti in Milan, Boccioni, Carrà and Russolo formulate two theoretical texts on painting – the 'Manifesto of the Futurist Painters' (11 February) and 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (11 April) – in addition to creating a body of visual art reflecting the principles outlined therein. Russolo produces a series of works still strongly marked by Divisionist and Symbolist aesthetics such as *Suburbs-Work*, the two versions of *Lightning*, *Perfume* and *Head of Hair (Tina's Hair)*.

1911

In the course of one year Russolo executes *Self Portrait with Etheric Double*, *Music*, *Nocturne + Sparks of Revolt*, *Study for 'Night Train'*, *Speeding Train at Night* and *The Revolt*. He participates with his Futurist friends in the Free Art Exposition in Milan. In the autumn Boccioni and Carrà visit Paris as guests of Severini where they are both strongly impressed by Cubist painting. Back in Milan, Russolo prepares for the international Futurist exhibition planned for the beginning of the following year.

1912

In the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in Paris, which inaugurates Futurism's European 'Grand Tour', Russolo presents six oils completed during the preceding few months, among which are *One and Three Heads* and *Memories of a Night*. From 1 March the exhibition is in London, where Russolo exhibits the lost *Self Portrait with Etheric Double*. Thereafter the show continues its tour, calling at Brussels, The Hague, Amsterdam, Munich and Budapest, among other cities.

1913-14

Throughout 1913 the Futurists continue to exhibit in various European and Italian cities. Russolo's new – and practically final – Futurist paintings *Force-lines of a Thunderbolt*, *Solidity of Fog* and *Interpenetration of Houses + Light + Sky* are featured in an exhibition in the foyer of the Teatro Costanzi in Rome. His Futurist output continues with *My Dynamic Self* and *Plastic Synthesis of the Movements of a Woman*, concluding with *Dynamic Volumes* and *Dynamism of an Automobile*, exhibited at the *Lacerba* exhibition in Florence that ends in January 1914. On 11 March 1913 Russolo composes his letter-manifesto 'The Art of Noises', which is dedicated to the Futurist musician Balilla Pratella and which will constitute the basis of his subsequent experiments with 'noise-sound', 'enharmonism' and the instruments conceived to produce such effects – the *intonarumori* (noise-intoners). One of these – a *scoppiatore* ('exploder') – is used in a performance of 2 June 1913 at the Teatro Storchi in Modena and a series of twelve concerts at London's Coliseum theatre takes place the following summer, a testament to the immediate success of Russolo's invention.

1915-19

Russolo's artistic activity is interrupted with Italy's entry into World War I and his subsequent enrolment in the Volunteer Cyclist and Automobilist Battalion along with his Futurist colleagues, who are trained at Gallarate in the summer of 1915. In September 1916 Edizioni Futuriste di Poesia publishes *The Art of Noises*, an enlarged and restructured disquisition around the ideas first expressed in the 1913 manifesto.

Russolo's mood upon the outbreak of war is initially exultant (a chapter of his book concerning his experiences of combat and the noises of warfare) but is to become ever more tragic with the deaths of his friends Boccioni and Antonio Sant'Elia and reaches a nadir in December 1917 when he receives a head injury in combat on Monte Grappa that necessitates an extended period of convalescence in several different locations.

1920

Russolo re-enters Italian cultural life at the beginning of the year as the probable single author of a Futurist manifesto entitled 'Against all Returns in Painting' that was also signed by Leonardo Dudreville, Achille Funi and Mario Sironi. The manifesto, and the subsequent group exhibition in Milan organised by Margherita Sarfatti in March-April, constitute the first expressions of the nascent Novecento aesthetic. Around this time Russolo also produces several oil paintings, such as the lost *Portrait of My Wife* and a *Self Portrait*.

1921-26

During the early 1920s Russolo continues to be primarily occupied with his ‘rumorist’ musical experiments, with the Parisian debut of an orchestra of *intonarumori* (1921) and the invention of other instruments, such as the *rumorarmonio* (noise-harmonium) in 1922 and the enharmonic bow in 1925. In 1921 he executes *Portrait of a Girl* and, in 1925, a *Self Portrait* in sanguine. In 1926 he participates in the first Novecento exhibition, albeit in the Futurist section. At the Venice Biennale he exhibits a painting related to his wartime and Futurist experiences entitled *Impressions of Bombardment (Shrapnel and Grenades)*.

1927-28

In the first months of 1927 Russolo plays his *rumorarmonio* to accompany numerous performances by the Théâtre de la Pantomime Futuriste in Paris, directed by Enrico Prampolini. From the summer of 1927 until the autumn of 1928 Russolo resides in Italy, where in the spring he participates in further performances of Prampolini’s Theatre in Turin and Milan with his new instruments, as well as various other events.

1928-32

Between October 1928 and early 1932 Russolo returns to live in Paris where, in addition to perfecting his musical instruments and renewing his painterly experiments, he is associated with the Cercle et Carré group led by Michel Seuphor. Between the end of 1929 and April-May 1930 he exhibits twice at Galerie 23 in Paris – firstly in the exhibition *Peintres Futuristes Italiens*, where he shows *Soap Bubbles* (1929), and subsequently with Cercle et Carré, when he presents further new (but unfortunately now lost) works. A group of paintings from these two Parisian exhibitions is sent to the Venice Biennale of 1930. He regularly uses his *rumorarmonio* (or a slightly different model, named the ‘Russolophone’) to accompany avant-garde films by the director Eugène Deslaw that are shown in the Parisian cinema Studio 28, and scientific teaching films by the film-maker Jean Painlevé. In the French capital he also meets the Italian magnetiser Guido Torre and moves in circles where mediumistic spiritualism is practised.

1932-33

Russolo moves to Spain from February 1932 until June 1933 where he lives in the environs of Tarragona, also visiting Barcelona and Madrid. There he expands on and applies his studies in various fields: Oriental philosophy and yoga, somnambulism and magnetism, Chinese acupuncture and the divided body.

1933-40

Having returned to Italy, Russolo works on his philosophical tract *Beyond Matter* (Milan: Bocca, 1938) in the peaceful surroundings of Lake Maggiore. In the same year he paints *Aurora Borealis*, which anticipates a new, fruitful and prolific phase of painting.

1940-47

This new phase begins in earnest in 1940, only to be interrupted by his death in 1947. Surrounded by the affection of his wife and a group of friends including the painters Mario Auber, Boris Georgiev and Innocente Salvini, as well as several writers and musicians, Russolo creates a body of figurative work comprising over 100 paintings in which the peaceful soul of the artist-philosopher shines through, as it does in the unpublished pages

of his diaries and a later, similarly unpublished, tract *Dialogues Between the Self and the Soul*. Russolo dies at Cerro di Laveno on 4 February 1947.