





COVER IMAGE Collage of profile photograph of marinetti, *tumb, tumb* bookcover, carra's

FUTURISM

filippo tommaso marinetti, 1876-1944

timeline

marinetti

destruction of
syntax manifesto

futurism

mussolini

personal
interpretation

Presented in a modern interpretation of
imagination~without~strings words~in~freedom
designed by Kathryn Kelley in the Spring of 2003.

MARINETTI TIMELINE

BASIS OF TIMELINE

Dr. Orto, Luisa. "Futurism."
20th Century Italian Art
And Design Lecture Series.
University Of Houston,
Houston. February 2003.

R.W. Flint, Ed., R.W. Flint,
and Arthur A. Coppotelli Trans.
Marinetti: Selected Writings.
New York: Farrar, Straus And
Giroux, Inc, 1972.

FUTURIST MANIFESTO

LE FIGARO, PARIS NEWSPAPER
FEBRUARY 9, 1909
BEGINNING OF PAN MOVEMENT
LITERARY AND ART REVOLUTION

CELEBRATING

"THE CONQUEST OF THE STARS", 1902

LITERARY SUCCESS

"THE OLD SAILOR", 1898

PUBLISHED IN ANTHOLOGIE-TREVUE, PARIS

RECITED BY SARAH BERNHARDT

"POESIA" INTERNATIONAL REVIEW JOURNAL, 1905

FATHER

ITALIAN
ENTREPRENEUR
COMMERCIAL LAWYER
SOLITARY
EXTRAVAGANT
FOND OF LOOSE WOMEN

EDUCATION

LAW DEGREE, GENOA
PER FATHER'S WISHES
BACCALAURETTE, PARIS
LITERATURE
JESUIT SCHOOL, FRANCE
EXPELLED

MOTHER

ITALIAN/MILANESE
DAUGHTER OF LITERARY PROFESSOR
ATTEMPTED TO REDEEM SONS BY READING POETRY TO THEM

BROTHER - LEON
FAVORED SON

FILIPPO TOMMASO MARINETTI, BORN 1876, EGYPT

AMERICAN CULTURE
UNKNOWINGLY
EMBRACES / ABSORBS
FUTURISM IDEOLOGY

MARINETTI DIES
UPON RETURNING
FROM RUSSIAN FRONT
1944

WORLD WAR II

2ND FUTURISM
MUSSOLINI NEUTERS FUTURISM

- VITALITY
- ACTION
- VIOLENCE
- ANARCHY

FASCISM

WORLD WAR I

CHANGE + ORIGINALITY + INNOVATION
DISCARD STATIC + IRRELEVANT PAST
GLORIFY TECHNOLOGY + BEAUTY SPEED + MOTION + POWER
EXALT VIOLENCE + CONFLICT

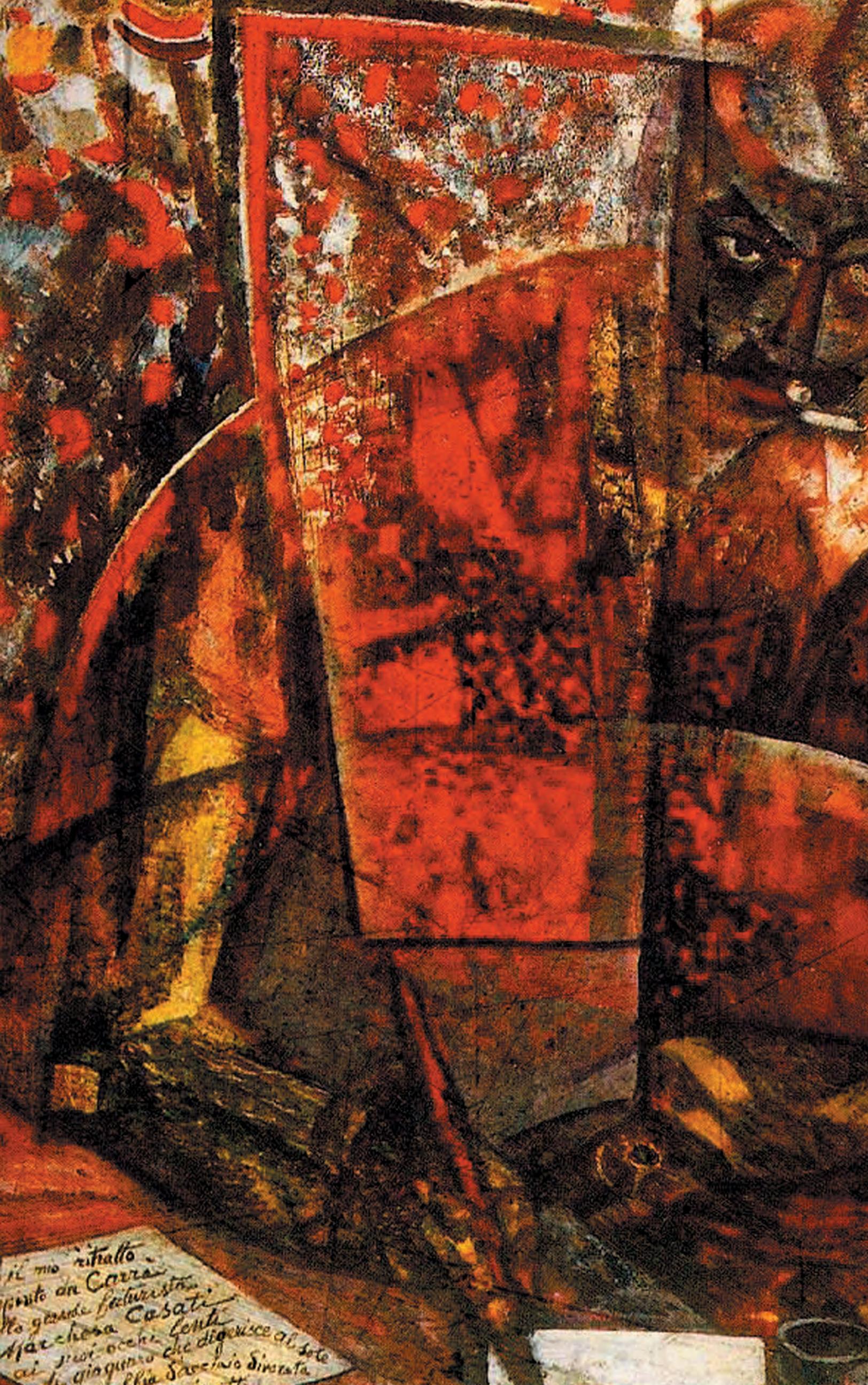


IMAGE "portrait of marinetti." carlo carra, 1911. private collection, turin.



MARINETTI

rich +
personable +

poet

revolutionary +
loyal and courtly toward friends
immensely energetic
manic for action

art = action

violent
fascist

delight in scandal
exhibitionist +
aroused and divided the cultural
scene

successful
soldier ++++

appealing, radical,
belligerent

= the caffeine of europe

organizer, expert breeder and
trainer of artistic minds and
personalities (RUSSOLO, BOCCIONI,
BALLA, CARRA, DEPERO, and more)

manifesto writer

the father of futurism

the father of american culture norms

SOURCES

Dr. Orto, Luisa. "Futurism." 20th Century Italian Art And Design Lecture Series. University Of Houston, Houston. February 2003.

R.W. Flint, Ed., R.W. Flint, and Arthur A. Coppotelli Trans. *Marinetti: Selected Writings*. New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux, Inc, 1972.

DESTRUCTION OF SYNTAX

imagination—without—strings words—in—freedom.
ft marinetti, may 1913.

...Futurism is grounded in the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries of science.

Those people who today make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the dirigible, the aeroplane, the cinema, the great newspaper (synthesis of a day in the world's life) do not realize that these various means of communication, transportation and information have a decisive influence on their psyches. An ordinary man can in a day's time travel by train from a little dead town of empty squares, where

the sun, the dust, and the wind amuse themselves in silence, to a great capital city bristling with lights, gestures, and street cries.

By reading a newspaper the inhabitant of a mountain village can tremble each day with anxiety, following insurrection in China, the London and New York suffragettes, Doctor Carrel, and the heroic dog-sleds of the polar explorers.

The timid, sedentary inhabitant of any provincial town can indulge in the intoxication of danger by going to the movies and watching a great hunt in the Congo. He can admire Japanese athletes, Negro

boxers, tireless American eccentrics, the most elegant Parisian women, by paying a franc to go to the variety theater. Then, back in his bourgeois bed, he can enjoy the distant, expensive voice of a Caruso or a Burzio.

Having become commonplace, these opportunities arouse no curiosity in superficial minds who are as incapable of grasping any novel facts as the Arabs who looked with indifference at the first aeroplanes in the sky of Tripoli. For the keen observer, however, these facts are important modifiers of our sensibility because they have caused the following significant phenomena:

1. ACCELERATION OF LIFE TO TODAY'S SWIFT PACE. Physical, intellectual, and sentimental equilibration on the cord of speed stretched between contrary magnetisms. Multiple and simultaneous awareness in a single individual.

2. DREAD OF THE OLD AND THE KNOWN. LOVE OF THE NEW, THE UNEXPECTED.

3. Dread of quiet living, love of danger, and an attitude of daily heroism.

4. Destruction of a sense of the Beyond and an increased value of the individual...

5. The multiplication and unbridling of human desires and ambitions.

6. An exact awareness of everything inaccessible and unrealizable in every person.

7. SEMI-EQUALITY of man and woman and a lessening of the disproportion in their social rights.

8. DISDAIN for amore (sentimentality or lechery) produced by the greater freedom and erotic ease of women and by the universal exaggeration of female luxury.

Let me explain:

Today's woman loves luxury more than love. A visit to a great dressmaker's establishment, escorted by a paunchy,

gouty banker friend who pays the bills, is a perfect substitute for the most amorous rendezvous with an adored young man. The woman finds all the mystery of love in the selection of an amazing ensemble, the latest model, which her friends still do not have.

Men do not love women who lack luxury. The lover has lost all his prestige.

Love has lost its absolute worth.

A complex question; all I can do is to raise it.

9. A modification of patriotism, which now means a heroic idealization of the commercial, industrial, AND ARTISTIC solidarity of a people.

10. A modification in the idea of WAR, which has become the necessary and bloody test of a people's force.

11. The passion, art, and idealism of Business. ~~New-financial sensibility.~~

12. Man multiplied by the machine. New mechanical sense, a fusion of instinct with the efficiency of motors and conquered forces.

13. The passion, art, and idealism of sport. Idea and love of the "record".

14. New tourist sensibility bred by ocean liners and great hotels (annual synthesis of different races).

Passion for the city. Negation of distances and nostalgic solitudes.

Ridicule of the "holy green silence" and the ineffable landscape.

15. The earth shrunk by speed. New sense of the world. To be precise

One after the other, man will gain the sense of his home, of the quarter where he lives, of his region, and finally of the continent. Today he is aware of the whole world.

He little needs to know what his ancestors did, but he must assiduously discover what his contemporaries are doing all over the world.

The single man, therefore, must communicate with every people on earth.

He must feel himself to be the axis, judge, and motor of the explored and unexplored infinite. Vast increase of a sense of humanity and a momentary urgent need to establish relations with all mankind.

16. A loathing of curved lines, spirals, and the tourniquet. Love for the straight line and the tunnel. The habit of visual foreshortening and visual synthesis caused by the speed of trains and cars that look down on cities and countrysides.

Dread of slowness, ettiness, analysis, and detailed explanations.

LOVE OF SPEED, ABBREVIATION, AND THE SUMMARY.

"Quick, give me the whole thing in two words!"

17. Love of depth and essence in every exercise of the spirit.

So these are some elements of the new

Futurist sensibility

that has generated our pictorial dynamism, our antigraceful music in its free, irregular rhythms, our noise-art and our words-in-freedom...

FUTURISM

Futurism revolutionized

literature

music

dance

performance

painting

architecture

clothing

food

war

lust

Futurism, in manifesto form in the Paris Le Figaro on February 20, 1909, essentially declared all things of old mute, inessential, dead and called artists of all kinds to celebrate change, originality, and innovation, glorify new technologies, with its beauty of speed, motion and power, and finally to exalt violence and conflict. The last of which is one of the great obstacles to futurism—the notion that “war is the great hygiene of the world.”

Marinetti birthed futurism by organized, mass promotion—extrinsicating his will across Europe

from riot to **riot**

pamphlet to pamphlet

exhibition to exhibition

theater to **theater**

twining together art and life.

The original scale of operation... massive...run and promoted like a fine tuned machine pushed Futurism to the forefront.

“the world’s magnificence
has been enriched
by a new beauty—
the beauty of speed”

After WWI Marinetti helped to make sentimental veteran’s camaraderie vogue...which helped give fascism a powerful opening wedge...Futurism was for fascism to at its inception. ¹





SOURCES

Dr. Orto, Luisa. "Futurism." 20th Century Italian Art And Design Lecture Series. University Of Houston, Houston. February 2003.

R.W. Flint, Ed., R.W. Flint, and Arthur A. Coppotelli Trans. *Marinetti: Selected Writings*. New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux, Inc, 1972.

Umbro Apollonio, Ed., R.W. Flint, J.C. Higgitt, Caroline Tisdall, Trans. *The Documents of 20th Century Art. Futurist Manifestos*. New York: The Viking Press, 1972.



IMAGES of mussolini and hitler from various websites

MUSSOLINI

Futurism was largely neutered by its internal contradictions and the evil genius it seemed to have summoned from the depths - Mussolini...

Excerpt from *Portrait of Mussolini*, 1929

“...Square **crushing** jaws.
Scornful jutting lips

that spit with **DEFIANCE**
and swagger on everything
slow, pedantic, and finicking.
MASSIVE rock like head,
but the ultradynamic eyes dart
with the speed of automobiles
racing on the Lombard plains.

To **RIGHT**

and
LEFT

flashes the gleaming
cornea of a **WOLF**...

But he lowers it (his head)
in conclusion, ready to **SMASH**
THE QUESTION HEAD ON or,
better, to **gore** it
like a bull. **FUTURIST** eloquence,
well

masticated
by teeth of steel,

plastically sculpted by his
intelligent hand that shaves off
the useless clay of
HOSTILE OPINIONS.

From time to time, the great
gesture-fist-image-conviction
forcing a passage through a tangle
of **objections**...”

SOURCES

R.W. Flint, Ed., R.W. Flint, and Arthur A. Coppotelli
Trans. *Marinetti: Selected Writings*. New York: Farrar,
Straus And Giroux, Inc, 1972.



We will glorify war-the world's
only hygiene-militarism,
patriotism,
the destructive gesture of
freedom-bringers,
beautiful ideas worth dying for,
and scorn
for we man.

WAR
FUTURE

WAR
FUTURE

militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom
bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for women.
We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia,
the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap.

F. T. MARINETTI

militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom
bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for women.
We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia,
the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap.

F. T. MARINETTI

Futurism struck my interest. The lecture series by Dr. Luisa Orto1 struck a cord in me. It hummed with the notion that American culture, the culture I am a part of, is the offspring or fruition of Futurism—the good and the bad. Specifically, I've researched Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), because he is considered the father of Futurism.

The bulk of writings on Marinetti himself are in Italian, thus not accessible to me. I spent the majority of my time reading many of his manifestos (translated)—thinking that if I could absorb his words, firmly implanting them in my mind, I could understand and know him. This task was difficult. I attempted to see the world through his mind, his eyes, and many of the Futurist ideas I discovered have been fulfilled in our present American culture. Some of this ideology that we have embraced is benign, some positive, but much of it frightens me for our future.

Their are four main underlying premises repeated throughout the majority of Futurist manifestos. These were intended by Marinetti and his peers to be agents of change at the turn of the century.

1 Discard of the static and irrelevant past

2 Celebrate change, originality, and innovation in culture and society

3 Glorify new technology... and the beauty of speed, power and movement.

4 Exalt violence and conflict.2

Additionally, Futurists had the idea that art is not a personal thing remote from the intricate details of everyday life, but that art is a fount of energy capable of altering cultural ways.3

And that art equals action—with politics and life being intertwined.

What is it that I see reflected in our culture of Futurism? Let me break it down based on the four premises of Futurism.

1 Discard of the static and irrelevant past

To have forward motion, to explore the new, is good. We need to move forward, try new things, expand our thinking and technology beyond what it is today. Or in the words of a TREKKEE, "...to explore strange new worlds. To seek out new life

and new civilizations. To boldly go where no one has gone before."

For much of the past century we have striven boldly forward—the invention of the computer and Internet, stepping onto the moon, creating an international space station, inventing plastic and other new materials, and medical miracles. It has been amazing. The exact thing hoped for by Marinetti.

I believe as we've crossed over into this new century our forward motion has come to a grinding halt. We've become repeaters of the past, recycling our creations, and have become overly dogmatic in our academic theories and practices. Additionally, we wallow in the mundane, the trivial—we've become spectators in the events of life. This too is in line with what Marinetti experienced at the turn of the 20th century.

In agreement with Futurists, to chain ourselves to the past, to hold to traditions and thinking that have become obsolete, is bad. This is where we stand now. We've chained ourselves to repeating the past.

2

Celebrate change, originality, and innovation in culture and society

Americans have been agents of change, creating original innovations, but in recent years that has begun to wane greatly. This past fall, I visited the Museum of Modern Arts (Houston) where the curator stated that in recent years no new original pieces in the decorative arts were being created.

I agree.

Are we creating new things or just rearranging the furniture?

Why? Are we not raising up thinkers and explorers? Or, are they being suppressed?

There are great needs for cures for HIV and other diseases, needs for new energy sources, needs for creating a system in which are world can be at peace. But, where are the truly new, ingenious discoveries? We have some such as the Genome project, Bose-Einstein Condensation, Buckminster Fullerenes (Bucky balls), and the fuel cell, which are tremendous advances, but they are coming fewer and far between. The slowing pace of new discoveries worries me.

3

Glorify new technology... and the beauty of speed, power and movement.

The wonders of technology are astounding, from the trivial to the life altering.

I can dialog with someone around the world via the Internet, make a phone call while riding my bike, have my hip replaced or have a cochlear implant that allows me to hear. Our technologies are amazing. Yet in the last 20 years machines have increased in performance by a factor of 200. Why hasn't software performance improved by a factor of 2? 3

I am repeating myself but, it is my perception that to a large degree we have simply been rearranging or reprogramming the same things over and over again.

What of the rate of CONSUMPTION of these technologies? Can our world sustain our consumerism? What are the true costs?

I believe that the new innovations are decreasing while consumerism is continuing to increase. The Futurists believed things should regularly be discarded in order to make room for the new as well does the American consumer. But unlike the Futurists our system

leans towards rewarding economic gains over new ideas or solutions. Furthermore, the idea of "supply and demand" has been inverted to maintain our economic system. Advertising and marketing groups generate pseudo demands (false needs) in order to sell clients' products, which further escalates consumerism. We are being trained to be dissatisfied until we get our next "Happy Meal." We have learned that enough is NEVER enough. I have a TV that works fine, BUT I need a flat screen digital TV. I neeeeeed a stereo system with surround sound in my home, in my car, on my computer and a portable version to carry with me.

Our culture tells us that to have unsatisfied desires is unbearable, unendurable. America has defined a lifestyle of the frenzied pursuit of having it all.

I need. I need. I need. I want. Consumerism masks real needs that are inherent in humans--the need to know and be known, the need for community and many other needs. This system of unchecked consumerism is a sick system, and it is not sustainable in the long run. The costs to us are so great, yet as a whole we stick our head in the sand when it comes to counting the costs. I find this very frightening.

4 Exalt violence and conflict.

Our culture has fully embraced violence and conflict as part of its everyday pulse. Just try to merge onto I-10 in Houston during rush hour or turn on the TV and watch Fear Factor. Or look at the competition between sodas—it is a battle for our attention.

I find the thoughts of William Morris (1884) still have a ring of truth, in spite of not being a socialist or Marxist:

“...Our present system of Society is based on a state of perpetual war. Do any of you think that this is as it should be? I know that you have often been told that the competition, which is at present the rule of all production, is a good thing, and stimulates the progress of the race; but the people who tell you this should call competition by its shorter name of war if they wish to be honest, and you would then be free to consider whether or not war stimulates progress, otherwise than as a mad bull chasing you over your own garden may do. War, or competition, whichever you please to call it, means at the best pursuing your own advantage at the cost of someone else's loss, and

in the process of it you must not be sparing of destruction even of your own possessions, or you will certainly come by the worse in the struggle. You understand that perfectly as to the kind of war in which people go out to kill and be killed; that sort of war in which ships are commissioned, for instance, “to sink, burn, and destroy”; but it appears that you are not so conscious of this waste of goods when you are only carrying on that other war called commerce; observe, however, that the waste is there all the same.” 5

On a more personal note, contemporary writer Johann Christoph Arnold comments:

“We live in an unpeaceful world, and despite constant talk about peace, there is very little. No one will deny that violence affects public life everywhere around our globe, from current hot spots such as Iraq, Chiapas, Northern Ireland, East Timor, and the West Bank, to the streets of our own decaying cities. In personal life too, even in the most “peaceful” suburbs, unpeace is often the order of the day—in domestic violence, in unhealthy addictions, and in the destructive tensions that divide businesses, schools, and churches.

“Violence hides behind the most respectable facades of our supposedly enlightened society. It is there in the turbines of greed, deceit, and injustice that drive our greatest financial and cultural institutions. It is there in the unfaithfulness that can erode even the best marriages. It is there in the hypocrisy that deadens life...” 6

I strongly disagree with the Futurist stance on violence. Action is needed, but it need not be violent. Unfortunately our culture has fully embraced violence.

American culture for the most part seems to be the offspring of Futurism—living out both its positive and negative attributes.

And very much like the stagnation that occurred at the turn of the 20th century so we are experiencing a similar stagnation.

Will we simply retread tires?

Will consumerism consume us?

Will we be able to create new systems without violence?

- 1 Dr. Orto, Luisa. "Futurism." 20th Century Italian Art And Design Lecture Series. University Of Houston, Houston. February 2003.
- 2 R.W. Flint, Ed., R.W. Flint, and Arthur A. Coppotelli Trans. Marinetti: Selected Writings. New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux, Inc, 1972.
- 3 Umbro Apollonio, Ed., R.W. Flint, J.C. Higgitt, Caroline Tisdall, Trans. The Documents of 20th Century Art. Futurist Manifestos. New York: The Viking Press, 1972.
- 4 Paul Haerberli and Bruce Karsh. Futurist Programming Notes. A Publication of GraphicaObscura, 1991. <http://www.sgi.com/grafica/future/futnotes.html>
- 5 William Morris. Lecture delivered to the Hammersmith Branch of the Socialist Democratic Federation (S.D.F.) at Kelmscott House, November 30th, 1884.
- 6 Johann Christoph Arnold. SeekingPeace. Farmington, PA: The Plough Publishing House, 1998.

filippo tommaso marinetti
imagination-without-strings words-in-freedom
designed by Kathryn Kelley in the Spring of 2003.

