Audience slaves:
Architecture and medium in El Lissitzky's *Pressa*

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Abstract

Charting the relationship between avant-garde processes and audience reception as mapped in the writing of Peter Bürger and Walter Benjamin, this paper will look at the specific example of Lissitzky's Pressa installation, with a particular emphasis on the related categories of production and reception and their broader relationship to architecture. Recent American art-theory has drawn attention to the instrumental role that Pressa has played in framing a paradigmatic relationship between architecture and audience. This paper will focus on the nature of audience in Lissitzky's project and the extent to which the disciplinary boundaries of architecture are challenged within it.

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Lissitzky's design for the *Soviet Pavilion at the International Press Exhibition* [Internationale Presse-Austellung *Pressa*] in Cologne in 1928 (known as the *Pressa* exhibition) was a groundbreaking work that used architecture to provide an innovative spatial platform for both images and text. The purpose of the pavilion was to celebrate the evolution of printing as well as the role that it played in educating the masses. As Christina Lodder observes, the approach embodied the techniques of propaganda that were prevalent at the time and particularly in regard to the use of descriptive photographs which connected everyday Soviet life with the production and distribution of art.[1] Lissitzky's commission coincided with the start of the first Five Year Plan (1928-1932) in the Soviet Union, which initiated a widespread programme of reform and dramatically reshaped industry and agriculture as well as, indirectly, culture and politics. The *Pressa* pavilion comprised a large constructed space, organized in zones that required the visitor to circulate through the space three-dimensionally while focusing their visual attention centrally in concentrated areas. The monolithic forms drew inspiration from the mechanics of newspaper presses, where images literally rolled down the walls, connoting not only the production of printed text but the manufacture of meaning through the mechanical reproduction of communal ideals. The exhibition was celebrated at the time for the "spatialisation" of montage, to such an extent that the architecture was effectively

engaged in creating surfaces upon which images (generally collaged) were applied. One primary characteristic of these investigations into the boundaries between architecture and audience was the collapse of the traditional categories of the work of art and the invention of new (architectural) ones. Central to Lissitzky's project was a broadening of the political function of architecture, enabling architecture to be experienced by a wider audience and with a clear and directed ideological message.[2] Most explicit, in this sense, was the photofrieze which Lissitzky compiled with Sergei Sinkin entitled *The education of the masses is the main task of the Pressa in the transitional period from capitalism to communism*. Mobilising the power of the press in a rejuvenated architectural context, the overt political messages embedded in the mural were later reproduced by Lissitzky in the form of a fold-out catalogue, reproducing the rhythms of architecture in book form. This innovative format was an acknowledgement of the restricted audience of constructed architecture and the requirement for its dissemination to the broader population at large. Underpinning this was a united faith that architecture, if mobilized (and repackaged) in the right way, would underpin all aspects of revolutionary life, not only articulating an innovative new spatial and architectonic language but also a social and political structure upon which a society (and its representation) could be grafted.[3] The traditional medium of architecture was eroded as it engaged energetically with the advances of both image and screen.

Lissitzky was living in the Soviet Union in 1928 when he was invited to become the chief designer for the *Pressa* pavilion. Lissitzky had a number of connections in Germany and had lived there continuously from 1921 to 1925. In the late 20s, he had already completed his *Proun Room* in Berlin (1923), his *Room for Constructivist Art* (1926) and *Abstract Cabinet* (1927) in Dresden and had curated the *Union Polygraphic Pavilion* (1927) in Moscow as part of the *All-Union Printing Trades Exhibition*. While all of these projects had expanded Lissitzky's reputation amongst the avant-garde, it was following the success of this last exhibition[4] (and the limited timeframe and budget that was attached to it) that he was selected to prepare plans for the overall design of *Pressa*.[5]

While all of Lissitzky's installations in this period expanded the traditional audience for art, the *Pressa* installation has been disproportionately praised within the recent history of the avant-garde for both its originality and influence in this regard. The installation's idiosyncratic spatial and textual structure has been singled out by scholars of the historical avant-garde as worthy not only of attention but historicisation. This has been particularly clear in relationship to American art theory and the narrow circle of

intellectuals connected to the journal *October*.[6] The 2004 publication of *Art Since 1900*, under the co-authorship of Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve Alain Bois and Benjamin Buchloh,[7] is the best evidence yet of the harmonising critical views of these authors and the collaborative force of their larger project to critically redeem the historical avant-garde and establish its presence in the activities of contemporary art. It was in response to the publication of this volume that Amelie Jones coined the term "Octoberism"[8], arguing that the collaborative efforts of these authors had assumed the force of a hegemony: effectively providing a platform from which a selective reading of art history (and modernism) was being projected.[9] The hegemony of *October* is involved not only in the production of ideology, but its selective redistribution, allowing a history of modernism to emerge that reflects the concerns of an intelligent, but powerful elite, who have inadvertently created a new scholarly audience for explorations into the historical avant-garde.[10]

The evolution of a dominant ideology within the Octoberist circle should be understood as a cyclical affront to the preceding hegemony of Clement Greenberg, which dominated the theorization of twentieth century art and organized postwar appraisals of the avant-garde around the medium-centric concerns of formalism. Greenberg's depoliticisation of art practice and emphasis on the art product (usually a painting) not only served to marginalise the importance of the historical avant-gardes but the contributions of any creative practice that didn't conform to experimentations with the surface of painting. Krauss (to whom Greenberg was an early mentor) had split away from the journal *Artforum*, primarily as a result of editorial conflicts that emerged in the mid 70s[11] and particularly with regard to the enclosing legacy of Greenberg (distilled through Michael Fried's writing). Krauss's essays from the late 1970s and early 1980s demonstrate the extent to which she sought to methodically expose the limited role that formalism could play in the interpretation and criticism of contemporary art, instead turning to linguistics and post-structuralism as the only viable means through which to position the divergent and multi-disciplinary practices of the 1970s and 80s.[12] There is an attitude adopted in these texts that rejects the definitive categorisations of medium that Greenberg had argued for, charting instead the dissolution of the categories of the work of art as a primary strategy of the avant-garde.[13]

Not surprisingly, the themes which have preoccupied *October*—the collapse of medium, the fragmentation of language and the spatialisation of artistic experience—have been central to the critical reappraisal of Lissitzky's work in the same period. Nowhere is this

more evident that in relationship to the *Pressa* exhibition, which is a recurring theme in a number of writings from this group. Benjamin Buchloh, George Baker and T.J Demos have all highlighted the significance of the *Pressa* installation in altering the trajectory of modernism, not only dismantling the pre-conceptions pertaining to a work of architecture but establishing a new critical audience through which the avant-garde reinvented the art object and its reception.[14] The importance of this "new audience" is conspicuous in all of their accounts. George Baker, for instance, has argued that *Pressa* was a prototypical avant-garde project, occupying a form that was "called into being by the claims of new audiences, offering new modes of reading [and] new forms of cultural distribution."[15] Positioning the work of Lissitzky in the broader context of Kurt Schwitters and Marcel Duchamp, T.J Demos, in a similar vein, describes *Pressa* as the "spatialisation of collage" where the traditional models of spectatorship are dismantled. Demos writes:

> [b]y encouraging mobile and varied physical interactions with their displays […] these projects created zones of perceptual activation that challenged conventional modes of viewership. Rather than reproduce the conditions of passive spectatorship that were understood to typify the traditional museum experience, Lissitzky's designs promoted the revolution of perception along with the perception of revolutionary propaganda, both directed towards the political unification of its mass audience.[16]

The formation of this "mass audience" for architecture also runs through the analysis of Benjamin Buchloh, who draws on *Pressa* as a paradigmatic example in a number of his writings.[17] Buchloh establishes the political significance of *Pressa* and its new audience in his essay "The Social History of Art" which serves as a methodological introduction to *Art Since 1900.*[18] Insisting on the importance of ideology and "mass-culture" in the analysis of the historical avant-garde, Buchloh argues for Lissitzky to be included alongside Heartfield and Duchamp as "one of the most important paradigm shifts in the epistemology of twentieth century modernism."[19] Buchloh, like Baker and Demos, identifies a shifting of the audience of art in this work and a reinvention of its architectural and political contexts. Buchloh argues strongly for the "utilitarian aesthetic" of Lissitzky's installation, which "assumes a variety of productive functions such as information and education or political enlightenment, serving the needs of a cultural self-constitution for the newly emerging audiences of the industrial proletariat"[20]. That these audiences are "emerging" and, indeed, framed by a radicalized art practice is a recurring theme for Buchloh who argues that the spatialisation of art in Lissitzky's work exaggerates its *public*

character. Like Hal Foster[21] and Rosalind Krauss[22] (in their respective studies of surrealism), Buchloh sees architectural space as a central concern of the historical avant-garde, integrating the work of art with the passage of life and situating aesthetics within the public (and proletariat) sphere. Of *Pressa*, Buchloh writes, "Lissitzky was one of the first (and few) artists of the twenties and thirties to understand that the spaces of public architecture (that is, of simultaneous collective reception) and the space of public information had collapsed in the new spaces of the mass-cultural sphere."[23]

It is not accidental that Buchloh, Demos and Baker all draw from *Pressa* in their various explorations of the historical avant-garde and privilege the role of audience in their analysis of Lissitzky's work (as well as stressing its architectural characteristics). All three authors construct an argument in relationship to the work of art and its reception which has its origins in Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* and, more distantly, the writing of Walter Benjamin.[24] The emphasis on Bürger's theory is lamented by a number of critics of Octoberism, such as Jones, who argues that the methodological approach rests on "an early-twentieth-century conception of avant-gardism, reinforced and refined […] by Peter Burger's arguments in his 1974 *Theory of the Avant-Garde*."[25] Bürger's theory, which privileges the reception of art (audience) over the production (object) is a particular theme in Buchloh's work and his 1984 review of the English translation is one of the enduring critiques of the work (as well as a tacit endorsement of its value).[26] Despite his criticisms,[27] Buchloh's appraisal is drawn from a shared affiliation with the dialectical approach of Adorno,[28] and so his frustration with Bürger's theory is not its ideological standpoint but its failure to go further.

The relationship between production and reception was a central concern in Bürger's theory that, drawing from the writing of Walter Benjamin, argued for a conflation of the processes of art and life as a prerequisite of avant-garde practice (at least in its historical form). Benjamin's primary critique of the historical avant-garde movements was that they failed to find a medium through which they could use art (or architecture) to communicate, in a transformative way, with the public (or proletariat). Benjamin saw the strategies of avant-garde art as merely a precursor to revolution, laying the foundations for future radical transformations to build upon.[29] He maintained that the academic author must operate in solidarity with the proletariat but at the same time the avant-garde must develop techniques that disrupt the cycle of aesthetic production and tend towards revolutionary forms, rather than reactionary ones. This was something that, in the 1920s the avant-garde had simply failed to achieve, despite numerous advancements in other

areas. As a result the audience is a central, and undervalued, category of avant-garde production and Lissitzky's *Pressa* is synonymous with this trajectory.

For Bürger, the development of the category of *reception* enabled a deeper investigation of avant-garde tactics, focussing not on the works themselves but the complicated and politicised lenses through which these works were received and the audiences that were constructed around them. By concentrating on the reception of art (as opposed to its practice) Bürger repositioned the avant-garde within a context of radical politics. Bürger's argument is relatively straightforward. He argued that a process of institutionalising art had occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and this had led to the gentrification of art and the isolation of its inherently bourgeois audience.[30] In this sense he follows the earlier precedents of Adorno and Benjamin, who drew a distinction between "organic" and "nonorganic" artworks: the former being associated with the bourgeois structures intrinsic to the production of art and meaning and the latter with the category of avant-gardiste works characterised by fragmentation and a collapse of the structures of holistic meaning.[31] Bürger maintained that the radical creative approaches of the first decades of the twentieth century were an attempt to both identify and dismantle this institutionalisation of art, attacking the bourgeois gentrification of art process and, ultimately, realigning creativity with the experience of modern life. In short, the historical avant-garde attacked the *autonomy* of the art object and its institutionalisation and conflated the categories of art and life. While outside of Bürger's narrow focus, the coincidental emergence of the themed exhibition (and its greatly expanded social audience) was a politicized and popular cultural phenomenon that signalled the erosion of the bourgeois institution of art, expanding the narrow categories of aesthetic reception to include the social and everyday realities of the period as well as its ideologies.

In his conceptualisation of the changing nature of the "work of art", Bürger draws from the writing of Benjamin in some detail and especially in regard to the historical transformation of aesthetic production. It was primarily in the period from the late 20s to the mid 1930s that Benjamin's writing addressed the critical category of "work" as his position moved gradually closer to a radical Marxism, culminating in his twin essays from 1934: "Author as Producer"[32] and the "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"[33]. Embodying his argument, Benjamin is critical of film as it consumes the audience, removing the opportunities for contemplation or interpretation and assembling the fragmentary elements of a script in a coherent and entirely *organic* form. To this model of mass-consumption, he juxtaposes the Dadaist work of art that "sacrificed market values

which are so characteristic of the film in favour of higher ambitions."[34] The ambition of Dada was to invert economics by outraging the audience and disassembling the conventional systems of representation and communication. *Pressa* is a possible third category, where the blurring of print and architecture employs the techniques of mass-communication (and capitalism) with the experience of art and architecture.

Buchloh's writing on *Pressa* stresses its importance in creating a forum for the collective reception of art, using a newly discovered "architectural dimension" to reposition the relationship between audience and art.[35] However, in 1928, this "architectural dimension" and its relationship to the audience of avant-garde activities had been well established as an avant-garde tactic and especially in Cologne. Writing in regard to Ernst and Baargeld's 1920 incursion into Cologne (entitled *Early Spring*), Camfield has argued that this provocation "angered the audience in a manner worthy of the legendary position it came to acquire in the history of Dada."[36] Similarly, The *First International Dada Fair* held at the Otto Burchard Gallery in Berlin (30 June—August 25) in 1920 radicalised the relationship to the audience in a profound way, initiating anarchy as a negation of architecture's traditional function.[37] Frames of paintings merged with doors and architraves; posters were plastered across walls and mannequins were suspended from the ceiling and littered throughout the spaces of the gallery. In the introduction to the catalogue Wieland Herzfelde had established that "the production of pictures was not important" and that the "only programme that the Dadaists recognise is the duty to make current events"[38]. The scandalous reception that the exhibition received from the local press[39] shifted the emphasis away from the spatial and architectural themes that permeated this period of Dada production but established a new (and volatile) relationship with the audience which became a fascination of the avant-garde in the coming decades. Where Lissitzky had cultivated an audience for art *through* architecture, Dada sought to obliterate its audience and its architecture.[40]

Buchloh's emphasis on the connection between architecture and "simultaneous collective reception" in *Pressa* embodies the revolutionary cycle of aesthetic production that is at the heart of Bürger's theory. In Bürger's argument, the traditional mass audiences for art and its communal production were replaced by individualism in the nineteenth century (in both reception and production) and, in opposition, the avant-garde set out to reconnect art with the praxis of life. While Bürger's focus remains on the practices of Dada and surrealism, on a number of occasions he draws attention to the broader concerns of the Russian avant-garde although it is never his primary focus. In a footnote to the second

chapter, Bürger clarifies that the "concept of the historical avant-garde movements used here applies […] also and equally to the Russian avant-garde after the October revolution."[41] What is critical is not the development of new artistic techniques in this period but the rejection of art in its totality and its formulation in a radically different spatial and political form thus, in Bürger's terms "bringing about a radical break with tradition"[42]. Bürger argues that the avant-gardist work of art is characterized by the negation of the traditional work of art and a direct challenge to its autonomous status. *Pressa*, as a piece of architecture, not only challenges the autonomous nature of the work of art but the traditional audience that sustains it. The confluence of "public architecture" and "public information" that Buchloh detects in the *Pressa* installation embodies the dialectical marrying of art and life that structures Bürger's argument, however not to the extent of the Cabaret Voltaire or the Duchampian readymade (which are his primary examples).

Similarly with Benjamin, while his writing in "Author as Producer" is applicable to the Russian avant-garde it was never his primary concern and he frequently evokes Dada as the most radical disavowal of the relationship between art and its audience. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" he wrote that "Dada hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to [them] thus acquiring a tactile quality"[43]. Benjamin also argued for the discovery of the outmoded in architecture, embodied in the iron constructions of the nineteenth century which, as the primary legacy of the historical avant-garde, was central to its revolutionary capacity.[44] This is clearly antithetical to the work of Lissitzky which, while employing discovered (and curated) images in its conceptualisation, is engaged in the production of original and highly idiosyncratic spatial forms.

This notwithstanding, *Pressa* was significant as it drew into question the nature of the work, and the relationship this work had to its traditional and contemporary audience. In this way, it was the architectural embodiment of reception and a challenge to the conventions pertaining to the work of art. Equally, the concurrent production of *Pressa* as both a work of architecture and printed publication is an important, and under-recognised aspect of this new audience. Where the Octoberist critics focus on the mass-spectacle of the 1920s exhibition, it is the migration of architecture into the techniques of reproduction that requires more detailed analysis, particularly in regard to the political and social implications of this work. While the installation itself embodied the strategies of mechanical reproduction through the plastering of posters across its constructed surfaces, the book avoided the "communal reception" of the work: experienced, by definition, in a state of isolation and attention. If the "mass-audience" of the 1920s was

critical to the transformation of architecture and its audience, then the production of *Pressa* as a reproducible work that could be distributed and disseminated indiscriminately (and outside of the pressures of both time and geography) is an evolution in avant-garde tactics that has not been properly assimilated with the trajectory of architecture. Lissitzky's strategy is an acknowledgement of the narrowing audience of architecture in the 1920s and a recognition of the way that images and text would condition its future inhabitation.

However it is not this aspect of *Pressa* that Buchloh has in mind when he identifies Lissitzky as an "exemplary artist-as-producer"[45]: paraphrasing Benjamin and echoing the arguments of Maria Gough.[46] Buchloh, who had previously criticized Bürger for his lack of specificity in relationship to the shifting writings of Benjamin[47] (and its audiences), is arguing for a confluence between the manifesto of Benjamin and the collaging tactics of Lissitzky's exhibition design which, despite its bespoke nature, is rendered radical through its aesthetic and political context. The collision of "public architecture" and "public information" in Lissitzky's work, for Buchloh at least, situates his art practice "within the very parameters and modes of production of a newly developing proletarian public sphere"[48]. This positions *Pressa* as the reification of Benjamin's "author-producer" embodying the radical politics with an alteration of technical reproduction and a new language of representation and communication. Architectural space (and public architecture) rather than the reproduced book are the innovations that radicalize this moment of aesthetic production.

Most significantly, it was the introduction of collage as a political (and spatial) instrument that was the primary interest of both Benjamin and Bürger. In the work of Heartfield, for instance, photomontage was transformed from a visual strategy into a political one that concentrated the technical advancements of the twentieth century onto the narrow plane of two-dimensional representation.[49] In this regard, *Pressa* represented a major advance in the technical and architectural display of images. For Lissitzky, the trajectory of the avant-garde led away from the two-dimensional surface altogether, reinventing painting through its systematic negation.[50] The power of collage rested in its ability to render the architectural cinematic embodied in the photofrieze which Lissitzky compiled with Sergei Sinkin. The compiling of such a large image was not unique to the Soviet pavilion, or this time period in general.[51] It was a favourite technique since the 1900s and, ironically, had been developed by the advertising imagery of western capitalism. What was significant was the spatialisation of montage that Lissitzky employed, which dismantled the

traditional panoramic perspective and deliberately distorted the printed image.[52] Constructed from a variety of press images, including portraits and cropped images of crowds, the reproduction of the frieze in the form of a fold out catalogue reproduced the rhythms of the architecture (and its elevation) through curated folds in its surface. In both instances the nature of architectural space was problematised; blurred by the surfacing techniques that are used to disguise it and the folding process that reproduces and encloses it.

For Bürger, the essential aspect of collage is that, as a visual strategy, it is able to reconcile incompatibilities that, to the viewer (or audience), are registered as shock.[53] Through collage, spatial and temporal boundaries can be erased and the entrenched traditions of creative production are subverted. In an essay from 1991, Buchloh draws upon a passage from Leo Malet (a second-wave surrealist) who argues, in 1934, that "the collage of the future" will not be produced by scissors or glue but "will take its place on the walls of the big city, the unlimited field of poetic achievements."[54] Buchloh's analysis makes reference to Malet's naïve utopianism, which he sees as a characteristic of second-generation surrealism[55] and distanced from the political realities of the 1920s. Paradoxically, the decades after Malet's statement saw the walls of the city effaced not with "unlimited poetic achievements" but, as Buchloh demonstrates, Nazi propaganda (in the first instance) and capitalist advertisement (a decade later). As the post-war consumerist culture began to articulate itself at the urban scale and with ever-increasing aspirations, collage shifted from a creative strategy to a lived reality. The city was transformed into a colossal inhabited collage, immersed in the consumerist forces which used images to adulterate the static surfaces of architecture prophetically, in the case of Malet, "devouring its walls" in the process.

While a paradigm of post-war urbanism, Kurt Schwitters had noticed this collaging of the architectural surfaces of the city, much earlier.[56] The point that Schwitters makes is that there is a correlation between architecture and collage and, more specifically, the construction of architecture creates surfaces that are easily appropriated towards collagist ends. That this process was a legacy of the mechanisation of reproduction techniques and the despatialising characteristics of collage also furthers Bürger's argument that the authentic avant-garde occurred in the 1920s and the post-war period was merely a stage of its commercial reproduction. The natural affiliation between architecture and fragmentation meant that the realm of the city was particularly vulnerable

to the effects of this process, visually represented on its surfaces and experienced (through vacation) at its centre.

When Rosalind Krauss argued in the 1970s that architecture should be considered as part of a broader network of creative strategies that characterised an "expanded field" of creative production, she was articulating an attitude towards medium that was intrinsic to the concerns of the historical avant-garde and embodied in the hegemonic writings of the Octoberist critics in the decades after.[57] One of the primary barriers to this project occurring in architecture has been the critical focus on the production of architecture and the creation of architectural works at the expense of a systematic reappraisal of the social and cultural values attached to architecture in the historic avant-garde and the influence that this had on the negation of production as an architectural strategy. Arguing for the radical nature of capital that both dismantles historical structures while at the same time recodes new ones, Hal Foster concludes that "[m]ore than any avant-garde, capital is the agent of transgression and shock—which is one reason why such strategies in art now seem redundant."[58] The immersion of architecture and art as economic strategies, regardless of their oppositional intentions, has radically transformed the critical theory of art and suggests that the potential of avant-gardism as a creative strategy has entered a new historical epoch. This has had the effect that new modes of engagement need to be established in both criticism and practice. The only avant-garde tactics available to architecture are through the independent forums of publication and, as a result, representation. The practices that Lissitzky undertook in the 1920s empowered architecture by negating the "work" as such, readying architectural production for a future outside of its specific discipline. This provided a model of the work of architecture that was infinitely more adaptable to the later concerns of advertisement, television and new media and, ironically, capitalism.[59]

When Lissitzky argued in the 1920s that "monumentality" in art would be consumed by form he was already conscious of the important role that the spectacle would play in shaping this new aesthetic experience. Architecture, in this setting, had become transient, reduced to the status of the event, while the art object, reviled by the avant-garde, had become replicated and adulterated through reproduction. Rather than constituting, as Baker posits, a "revolutionary telos and brief destiny"[60], the *Pressa* exhibition was the migration of architecture *from* experience *to* reproduction. The distillation of Lissitzky's theory in the seductive visual saturation of *Pressa* articulates a deeper crisis or undercurrent that underpins the historical avant-garde and the more recent theoretical

trajectories that have positioned it. Nowhere is this more relevant than in the recent dialogues regarding the historical avant-garde which go to lengths to depict its authenticity when juxtaposed with the 1960s neo-avant-garde of American capitalism. The critical urge to proselytize the historical avant-garde against the wallpaper aesthetic of pop art neglects that, on numerous occasions, the trajectory of the historic avant-garde was proudly and deliberately in that direction. These trajectories were never complicit in a broader historical programme but uniquely and dramatically independent: specific strategies tailored to unique and individual cultural and political circumstances and vastly different architectural audiences.

Endnotes

[1] Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 192.
[2] For more on the use of politics in Lissitzky, see: Lodder, *Russian Constructivism*, p. 192; Ulrich Pohlmann, "El Lissitzky's Exhibition Designs: The Influence of His Work in Germany, Italy and the United States, 1923-1943", in Margarita Tupitsyn, *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 27, p. 52; Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), p. 84.
[3] Lissitzky described the need for "the new architecture" to dismantle the established notions of architecture and the values that it adheres to by "[creating] spatial interpenetration between outside and inside". See: El Lissitzky, *Russia: An Architecture for World Revolution*, trans. Eric Dluhosch (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology), p. 29.
[4] Lissitzky's wife Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers speculates that over 100 000 people attended the pavilion during its short life. See: Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lissitzky,* p. 84.
[5] Margarita Tupitsyn, "Back to Moscow", in Tupitsyn, *El Lissitzky*, p. 34; see also: Yve-Alain Bois, "El Lissitzky: Radical Reversibility", *Art in America* **76** 4 (April 1988): 165; Ulrich Pohlmann, "El Lissitzky's Exhibition Designs: The Influence of His Work in Germany, Italy and the United States, 1923-1943", in Tupitsyn, *El Lissitzky*, p. 52.
[6] For a history of these authors influence in art theory, see: David Carrier, *Rosalind Krauss and American Philosophical Art Criticism: From Formalism to Beyond Postmodernism* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2002); see also: Daniel A. Siedell, "Rosalind Krauss, David Carrier and Philosophical Art Criticism", *Journal of Aesthetic Education* **38** 2 (Summer, 2004), pp. 95-105.
[7] Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism and Postmodernism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2004).
[8] Jones writes: "For lack of a better term, this hegemony marked in such definitive—one might even say final—form by the publication of this book might be called Octoberism." Amelie Jones, "Review of *Art Since 1900*", *Art Bulletin* **88** 2 (June 2006), p. 377.
[9] Krauss had acknowledged this in passing in the 1990s, when she wrote "[m]y modernism is, of course, another name for a discursive field that, like any such field, is structured." Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994), p.12. Amongst the reviews that took issue with the historical account of *Art Since 1900* see: Robert Storr, "All in the Family", *Frieze Magazine* **95** (November-December, 2005) [up]; Robert Storr, "Review of *Art Since 1900*", *Art Bulletin* **88** 2 (June 2006), pp. 382-385; Geoffrey Batchen, "Review of *Art Since 1900*", *Art Bulletin* **88** 2 (June 2006), pp. 375-376; Nancy J. Troy, "Review of *Art Since 1900*", *Art Bulletin* **88** 2 (June 2006), pp. 373-375; Pamela Lee, "Review of *Art Since 1900*", *Art Bulletin* **88** 2 (June 2006), pp. 379-381.
[10] A primary characteristic of this new "hegemony" is its self-referential nature. See: Robert Storr, "All in the Family", [up]

[11] Jones argues that Krauss's departure was not due to the Greenbergian conflicts within the editorial circle, but the conflict caused by a full-page advertisement taken out by Lynda Benglis, where she appeared in a highly-sexualised pose and used the forum of advertising to question issues of sexuality (pornography) and subjectivity. Krauss expressed outrage following the publication of the image, further evidence, for Jones of the conservative and artificially objective stance of October. See: Jones, "Review of Art Since 1900," pp. 378-9; Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962-1972* (New York: Soho Press, 2000), p. 414; Foster's review is also insightful. See: Hal Foster, "Art Agonistes: Review of Challenging Art," *New Left Review* **8** (March/April, 2001), pp. 140-149.

[12] Of critical importance here is: Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America, Part 1", *October* **3** (Spring, 1997), pp. 68-81; Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America, Part 2", *October* **4** (Autumn, 1977), pp. 58-67; Rosalind Krauss, "Poststructuralism and the Paraliterary", *October* **13** (Summer, 1980), pp. 36-40.

[13] One of the most critical texts in this regard is: Rosalind Krauss, *Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999); see also the collection of essays published as: Rosalind Krauss, *Perpetual Inventory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2010).

[14] See also: Maria Gough, "Paris, Capital of the Soviet Avant-Garde", *October* **101** (Summer, 2002), pp. 53-83; Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Maria Gough, "Tarabukin, Spengler and the Art of Production", *October* **93** (Summer 2000), p. 89.

[15] George Baker, "Entr'acte", *October* **105** (Summer, 2003), p. 162.

[16] T. J Demos, *The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2007), p. 134.

[17] See also: Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography", *October* **30** (Autumn, 1984): 82-119; Benjamin H. D Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003).

[18] Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "The Social History of Art: Models and Concepts", in Foster, Krauss, Bois and Buchloh, *Art Since 1900*, pp. 22-31.

[19] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art", p. 23.

[20] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art", p. 25.

[21] Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993).

[22] Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994); For the connection to Bürger, see: Rosalind Krauss, "The Master's Bedroom", *Representations* **28** (1989), pp. 55-76; Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, pp. 53-58.

[23] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," p. 24.

[24] For the connection between Lissitzky and Benjamin, see: Gough, "Paris, Capital of the Soviet Avant-Garde", pp. 53-83;

[25] Jones, "Review of *Art Since 1900*", p. 378.

[26] The seminal essay is Buchloh's review of the first the English translation, published ten years after the original. See: Buchloh, "Theorizing the Avant-Garde", pp. 19-21; Buchloh's argument is significantly extended in: Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry,* p. xxiv.

[27] Buchloh rejects Bürger's theory as being over-determined by a number of fixed assumptions and he demonstrates the inherent simplification that Bürger's limited examples give rise to. Part of this critique arises from the brevity of Bürger's thesis that, as Buchloh demonstrates, is ambitiously small to cover such a vast subject and does so with an exceedingly limited number of creative examples. While Buchloh took issue with a number of aspects of Bürger's argument, his primary criticisms were twofold. First of all, Bürger had constructed a theory of the avant-garde that positioned all radical activity in historical relationship to the original avant-garde. For Buchloh, this was a devaluation of contemporary practice and represented an inability to recognise the creative potential of the present. Secondly, Bürger's theory presumed that the intention and motivation of all artistic activity was political and thereby failed to acknowledge the possibility of engaging other fields that the art-object may impact upon. In this sense, Buchloh saw Bürger's theory as part of a broader Frankfurt School pessimism that was inherently and robustly critical of the present and ideologically opposed to its capitalist allegiances. See: Buchloh, "Theorizing the Avant-Garde", p. 21.

[28] Thierry de Duve, for instance, refers to Buchloh as a "post-Adornian" theorist. See: Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996), p. 22 [note. 10].

[29] Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer", in Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 229.
[30] This argument is detailed in the chapter on "The Problem of Autonomy in Bourgeois Society" in: Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 35-54.
[31] Benjamin's understanding of the organic and non-organic work of art shifted over the course of his writing. Benjamin's writing on the non-organic work of art in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1924) provides a quite different definition to the one that is central to his essay "Author as Producer" (1934). Bürger's failure to take into account the nuances of this category has been a source of criticism of his work: See, for instance: Buchloh, "Theorizing the Avant-Garde", p. 21.
[32] Benjamin, "Author as Producer", pp. 220-238.
[33] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), pp. 217-251.
[34] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", p. 237.
[35] In *Neo Avant-Garde and the Culture Industry*, Buchloh refers to the "architectural dimension in Lissitzky's work which creates "a tactile culture of simultaneous collective reception" (p. 267). In a separate essay in the same work, he argues that the transition towards architecture in Lissitzky's work "convincingly argued for a newly emerging phenomenology of spatial experience and social interaction" somewhere between " a proletarian public sphere" and the "discursive public space of experience" (p. 309). He also discusses "simultaneous collective reception" in the same volume in regard to Lissitzky's *Abstract Cabinet*. See: Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry*, p. 337.
[36] The *Early Spring* exhibition also betrayed emerging rifts between Ernst and the Berlin Dada movement which, to some extent, were central to the dispersal of a number of key members to Paris in the immediate years that followed. See: William Camfield, *Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1993), p. 74; Denis Crockett, *German Post Expressionism: The Art of the Great Disorder 1918—1924* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University, 1999), pp. 79-80.
[37] As with Duchamp's installations, the provocations extended to the catalogue. In the case of the *International Dada Fair*, the various texts and written documents were covered with drawings and stamped images rendering large sections indecipherable and negating the linguistic properties of the text. For reproductions of the catalogue, see: Robert Motherwell (ed), *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1979), pp. 88-90. Keunzli describes the exhibition as "the last great event of Berlin Dada" and the end of its collaborative ethos. See: Rudolf Kuenzli, *Dada* (London: Phaidon, 2006), p. 27.
[38] Wieland Herzfelde, "Introduction: First International Dada Fair", trans. Rose-Carol Washton Long in Rose-Carol Washton Long, *German Expressionism: Documents from the end of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1995), pp. 273-274.
[39] Gertrud Alexander, reviewing the show for the KPD, asked in the leftist journal *Rote Fahne*: "Do these gentleman really believe they can harm the bourgeoisie with that? The bourgeoisie laughs at it." Gertrud Alexander, quoted and translated in: Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996) p. 145.
[40] Baker, in his writing on *Pressa*, contrasts the approach of Lissitzky with the radical tactics of Dada. Focussing on the work of Picabia, Baker asks: "Was Picabia listening to his audience? He chose to assault it. Did he want a new audience?" See: Baker, "Entr'acte", p. 162.
[41] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 109, n. 4.
[42] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 109, n. 4.
[43] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", p. 238.
[44] Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia", in *Reflections,* p. 230.
[45] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art", p. 24.
[46] See: Gough, *The Artist as Producer;* Gough, "Paris, Capital of the Soviet Avant-Garde", pp. 53-83;
[47] Buchloh is referring primarily to the contradictory writings that Benjamin produced on the organic and non-organic work of art which, despite their differing contexts, appear side-by-side in Benjamin's theory. See: Buchloh, "Theorizing the Avant-Garde", p. 21.
[48] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art", p. 24.

[49] Bürger uses the terms collage and montage interchangeably. See: Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 76

[50] Lissitzky pronounced that he had "nothing in common with painters who propagandise for the end of painting by means of painting itself". See: El Lissitzky, "Blokada Rossii zakonchaetsiia", quoted and translated in: Gough, "Tarabukin, Spengler and the Art of Production", p. 89.

[51] Ulrich Pohlmann, "El Lissitzky's Exhibition Designs", p. 53.

[52] As Lodder writes:

> the image juxtaposed elements of reality, according to their significance for subject without regard for their natural proportions, and traditional perspectival relationships...making it possible to incorporate different viewpoints, themes and subjects within the scope of one composite image, almost as a type of motionless moving picture

Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 192.

[53] See Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 73-74.

[54] Leo Malet, quoted in Benjamin Buchloh, "From Detail to Fragment: Décollage Affichiste", *October* **56** (Spring, 1991), pp. 98-110. By far the most authoritative account of Malet's work in English to date is: Michelle Emanuel, *From Surrealism to Less-Exquisite Cadavers: Leo Malet and the evolution of French Roman Noir* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1994).

[55] Buchloh, "From Detail to Fragment", p. 99.

[56] Schwitters wrote:

> [h]ouses are not advertising pillars. But the empty gable is the underpants of the house. And here in Berlin the underpants of the houses are painted with advertising. Is that supposed to be beautiful? Is it really? It is Dada when one is wearing Dadaist advertising in one's underpants. Or is the house supposed to be a Janssen's meat vol-au-vent? […] But I say to you, your houses are mostly dada, but very rarely Janssen's meat vol-au-vents. Advertising is a sign of our times.

See: Kurt Schwitters, "Dadaism in Holland [January 1923]," trans. Michael Kane in Dawn Ades (ed), *The Dada Reader* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 291-292.

[57] Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* **8** (Spring, 1979), pp. 30-44; also published in: Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), pp. 276-290.

[58] Hal Foster, *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1985), p. 147.

[59] For a more detailed investigation of these forces, see: Andreas Huyssen, "The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of US Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany", *New German Critique* **4** (Winter, 1975), p. 92.

[60] Baker, "Entr'acte", p. 162.