

Retrograde Chapbooks

# DE STIJL MANIFESTO

Theo van Doesburg

Lucas Battich



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*by Theo van Doesburg*

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*by Lucas Battich*

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**T**ranslating articles in different languages or distributing thoughts published in De Stijl.

Sending critical philosophical, architectural, scientific, literary, musical articles or reproductions.

Sending, with entire approval, name, address and profession to the editor of De Stijl.

9. Co-operation is possible by:

8. The monthly editions of De Stijl, founded for that purpose, try to attain the new wisdom of life in an exact manner. They therefore sympathize with all, who work for the formation of an international unity in Life, Art, Culture, either intellectually or materially.

7. The artists of to-day have been driven the whole world over by the same consciousness, and therefore have taken part from an intellectual point of view in this war against the

domination of individual despotism.

6. The founders of the new plastic art therefore call upon all, who believe in the reformation of art and culture, to annihilate these obstacles of development, as they have annihilated in the new plastic art (by abolishing natural form) that, which prevents the clear expression of art, the utmost consequence of all art notion.

5. Traditions, dogmas and the domination of the individual are opposed to this realisation.

4. The new consciousness is prepared to realise the internal life as well as the external life.

3. The new art has brought forward what the new consciousness of time contains: a balance between the universal and the individual.

2. The war is destroying the old world with its contents: individual domination in every state.

The struggle of the individual against the universal is revealing itself in the world-war as well as in the art of the present day. The new is connected with the universal. The old is connected with the individual.

1. There is an old and a new consciousness of time.



## Retrograde Chapbooks

*Retrograde:*

adj.: directed or moving backwards.

verb: revert to an earlier and inferior condition.

The Oxford Dictionary

In Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone system, *retrograde* refers to the operation of time-reversing the tones in a musical series, while maintaining the original pitches and rhythms on the sequence. As a literary counterpart to Schoenberg's retrogression technique, *Retrograde Chapbooks* presents existing texts from the history of modernism and the avant-garde, where all sentences have been re-arranged in the inverse order. The immediate meaning and readability of each sentence is maintained, but the overall sense is displaced within the text as a whole.

*Retrograde Chapbooks* aims to celebrate the original texts, while at the same time proposes an inquiry on the forward linearity of historical development in culture, by performing a literal "going back" movement to modernist paradigms.



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