**Manifesto of abstract (non-figurative) idealism.**

This work is written as a manilogue, a new literary form which has characteristics both a manifesto and a philosophical dialogue.

Not painting. Not painting what is it? Do you know what is it? - It is when you dream that you are standing in front of a canvas, thoughtfully chewing the thick handle of your brush, and when you wake up, you clearly feel in your mouth the taste of the wooden handle, and its weight in your hand. Not painting is when you walk through the woods, and as you pass by a small swamp it hits you that this is how that big acrylic painting smells - YOUR PAINTING. Not painting - when the scent of your wife's nail polish when she's doing her nails brings to mind the thinner you use for your oil paints.

And color starvation and the thirst for color - do you know what that is? If you paint all the time, the colors "come to you," smooth and even. In terms of internal sensations it can be compared to the usual breakfast, lunch and dinner, but if you stop painting, then life becomes an unconscious search for colors, like the life of a starving person in search of food. The color from the huge amethyst druse in the mineralogical museum penetrates the body in dense, almost tangible, lumps, and after you spend four hours standing beside it you feel as if you have consumed an entire pot of fondue and washed it down with a couple of bottles of red wine - it's almost a physical feeling of satiation, but from color, not food. If you stop painting, the sense of color is sharply intensified, and it even sometimes starts to really aggravate you – for example, the color of your own light beige coat seems to be slightly salty, almost tasteless, and the consistency is a bit like yogurt. In the winter, the taste of the spruce in the sun is bitter like good chocolate and soothing, like when a dull, throbbing, inner pain abates. Or when you're in a taxi and see a banner mostly of a bright orange color, you ask the taxi driver to stop and you stand there like a fool and you can't tear yourself away, just like in the summer you can't tear yourself away from the cold, teeth-chattering water in a mountain stream ... well, this all defies description - you have to experience it. But to pick up a brush and start working would be a betrayal of the decisions that I had made. I mustn`t simply produce meaningless shapes. I mustn`t return to the dead end of the vanishing point. The solution turned out to be where I least thought to find it, and when I did find it, then for two years I did nothing, just read, correlated material, and slapped, SLAPPED my hands into submission. NO! Don't you DARE! Don't even THINK about it until the theoretical structure is complete, until the mental fabric is woven tight, until I am absolutely certain that there are no unlit corners in my consciousness, and only then did I finally open the floodgates of my heart and establish a new artistic order with the flow of paint.

And finally this day came when I realized that I am ready to do it. I leased a house for six months in a rundown, almost abandoned village located about two hundred kilometers from the capital, and rented a small covered truck to transport canned goods, vegetables, processed foods, paints, packs of paper for drawing, different sized canvases stretched on their frames, and all of the texts that I had recently produced.

This sounds like the start of a cheap adventure novel, but it was actually something much simpler - it was avtonomka[[1]](#footnote-1). There is a rule: You cannot merge those spaces where you live and where you create **for a long time**, because it`s just dangerous for your mental health. But if you need a breakthrough this is what you have to do. And you must act decisively. You must not only combine these spaces, you need to cut off all else, anything not related to creativity, physical space, communications - EVERYTHING. The cell phone, that umbilical cord that connects me with the outside world, was cut off by means of turning it off and leaving it in the hallway. The taxi driver could not believe that I really wasn't going back and muttered that he was willing to wait if need be, and finally, with one last shrug of his shoulders he took the money and shoved off, leaving me alone.

Then like a caravan there was procession of clean, brazen, wide sheets of paper, openly laughing in my face with their whiteness, and I, with my clumsy and weak strokes of the brush after my break of many years, was not able to show them who was boss. The colors that at one time would not dare to argue, and knew their place, mingling and lying together just the way I wanted them to, were now either quarreling with each other or retreating inward, leaving behind them on the slightly - rough paper surface their recalcitrant traces. As for approaching the vast expanse of the canvas, I dared not even contemplate this. My quarrel with time grew stronger and stronger; it rolled the sun in and rolled the sun out, it illuminated the night with the moon and the stars, but I, paying no mind to it, continued to work, walking outside only to set ablaze the misfires, that is, to burn almost everything that I had done over the past several days of work, and then again setting to work painting.

When at last I was ready for the canvas, I, half-naked, unshaven, with a hastily opened can of stewed meat covered in my colorful fingerprints and a brush in one hand and a piece of dry bread with deep furrows marking where I had gnawed on it in the other, approached, so as to apply a stroke of paint, when suddenly I found myself in the room with the lengthened platform and a lot of people sitting in the chairs around it. On the platform people were appearing and disappearing, or rather they didn't so much appear and disappear as enter and exit from a spaces that was not visible to me.

In this movement a face caught my eye. Seeing him, I shouted: "Ah, Kazimir, come on, tell me about the royal baby[[2]](#footnote-2)," I lurched forward, the rusk fell from my hand, and a strange, big-nosed, wide-mouthed, puffy-cheeked, man of about fifty picked it up. I spent some time trying to find the words to depict the fullness of his face, but then spat and waved my hand, because he was, frankly, fat-faced.

"No, that just won't do, lay out all your issues and claims in order, all the more so since you're not the only one here."

Then it dawned on me that there was also that hall here, and it didn't just disappear, and that people were sitting there looking at me.

"And, as I understand it, you have questions not only for Malevich, and not only questions, but also your own counterproposal which you're working on right now," and he glanced at my paint-stained hand holding the brush.

I tried to catch his glance, but I suddenly again found myself in front of the canvas, against its white, primed, slightly coarse side.

Well, order is as order does, so just a little less sleep, more text on the paper, and more paint on the canvas. About ... probably ... approximately ... I just can't say for sure, because time really has gotten away from me, but judging from how much of the groceries have been eaten, it's probably been a week. A kind of unreal ringing sobriety, an amazing sharpness and contrast of subjects, a heightened sense of smell to the point that even with closed eyes, just by smelling you can distinguish sugar and salt, and the quietest rustle rolls over and shakes up your insides with an unbearable wave of sound. While finishing another picture, I decided to strengthen the texture, but lathering the paint onto the canvas, I tumbled into it, and found myself in the above mentioned hall, and in the very place where I worked was Turner's cheek, which my brush hit. And if only it had been a kolinsky sable brush, or at least rough synthetic filaments, but this was a homemade construction from a sponge and the needles of a fir tree growing next to the house.

Turning so that his very long nose was directed my way like a rare, double-barreled shotgun, he shook his head and said: "Uh-huh, Alexander."

Suddenly I felt a stack of sheets, as if somebody invisible put them in my hand. I quickly, as if pulling a weapon from its sheath, shuffled through them and found the right place: "William, you asked that I start from the very beginning, listen: at the beginning of the twentieth century, almost simultaneously in several countries abstract art was born. The name, from the Latin *abstractio*, meaning removal, abstraction, accurately conveys its essence and implies rejection from the reality of the existing forms and objects. "

"Generally all forms?" And he made an unexpected grasping gesture, as if he wanted to sweep the entire world into a pile and put it in his pocket.

"Yes in abstract art there is no sea, no ship or shore with a lonely dog, or burning parliament building," I paused and continued, ironically, "and by the way, they have designated one of the forerunners of this art - can you guess who? ... Right - Joseph Mallord William Turner."

He rolled his eyes as much as possible, but he said nothing, although he flushed so much that even his sideburns seemed red.

"But like in nature there isn't just stone," I continued, "there's rock crystal, ruby, tourmaline, thousands of rocks, and each has its own unique shape, size and color, just as there isn't merely abstractionism - there are different trends and techniques. From the outset, it bifurcated into so-called geometric and lyrical abstraction. Although they both rejected lifelikeness and a realistic reflection of the current reality, choosing to create their own non-figurative art space, but deploy it in different ways, geometric abstraction prefers strict geometric shapes, while the lyrical, trying to express the emotional state of the artist, generally doesn`t limit itself using any defined shapes. In geometric abstract art we can include: Suprematism, whose followers attempted to explain and transform the world with their compositions from the simplest geometric shapes; Neoplasticism propagandized the path to world harmony through a perfect balance that can be achieved by the composition of vertical and horizontal lines and a few local colors; Rayonism - artists who worked in this direction tried to portray a kind of fourth dimension of radiant-energy by not denoting actual shapes and objects, rather, by depicting the colored rays which are reflected from them. By the way, Larionov, the founder of Rayonism, came to this understanding of art after seeing an exhibition of paintings by ... ba-da-boom!" - I waved my hands like the host of some supposedly intelligent, but actually quite stupid TV show - "oh yes, right again – Joseph Mallord William Turner!"

Turner "simmered" in silence, holding himself back, but he breathed deeply, and his eyes were covered with cracks from blood vessels that seemed about to burst, but I did not give him time to recover, and continued: "Lyrical Abstraction is also characterized in a multitude of styles."

His head tilted and it seemed as if it would snap off his neck, fall to the floor, and with a bang like a bowling ball roll towards the audience seated in the hall.

"They consider Kandinsky the progenitor of it."

"Lyrical Abstraction in Europe evolved into an informal art, a tree with numerous abstract flowers, leaves and fruits, where the emotion and spontaneity imbued in works of art were more important than their semantic content. The most powerful shoot on the tree then branched off into its own movements Tachisme - painting in spots without recreating images derived from reality, and expressing the unconscious activity of the artist."

"And in America ..."

It was clear that William did his best to disengage from abstractionism, but he simply did not succeed in this: his clenched teeth actually creaked from the strain, his massive torso swayed, and all this together resembled a drunk penguin.

"...It is reflected in abstract expressionism, which can be divided into action painting, where more importance is attached not to the work of art itself, but to the process of its creation, and Сolor Field painting, which is based on the artist's use of large planes of and uniform colors, after which abstractionism, by and large, stopped saying anything new, and gradually began fading from the stage of world art."

At this point, Turner, it seems, still managed to remain disengaged, and he did not even realize that I had finished. He blinked for a long time and finally, mentally getting himself together, said: "Is that ALL, I hope?"

"Well, that's it for the short version, but if you want, I can also tell you about Lissitzky's Prouns, Strzeminski's Unism or, for example, about Mark Tobey's calligraphic abstractionism. Or..."

" Alexander, my head is about to explode! Don`t torture me with this torrent of words. Just tell me what all this is to you, and what questions you have."

"Questions? QUESTIONS? Seven billion, and a couple of more for good measure, and another wagon full with a cart – that's how many questions I have!"

"Alexander, can`t you summarize all these questions?" he asked, grimacing at the same time, as if someone had taken a needle-point file to his aching tooth.

"No, I cannot summarize them, but if it this is too much for you, I can present my claims, so to speak, against the founding fathers of abstract art."

"Alright, tell me what, in specific, you need from him" he pointed to Kandinsky, "What's your question?"

"For him? It's purely abstract."

At the word "abstract" William looked at me as if I had pissed in his butter dish, and it even seemed to me that his ears started to wiggle, and the whites of his eyes were so engorged they were more like the ‘reds’ of his eyes.

"More precisely about the relation of text and images," I continued, "...if *On the Spiritual in Art* was originally written as a form of abstract reflections, then *Point and Line to Plane[[3]](#footnote-3)* is presented as a very specific alphabet, so to speak, like a kind of system for decoding any of your paintings. But on closer examination, it becomes clear that this text, Vasily Vasilievich, in essence does not really relate to any of your works. And if one takes your book, goes to the museum and stands in front of your painting, for example, *Composition No.7* at the Tretyakov Gallery, like I did, then it appears that any kind of system that you strived toward in the text is instantly crushed and broken down into multiple elements, the end is no longer correlated with the beginning ... but I’m still standing there, flipping through the pages in hopes of grasping some of the dissipating meanings, but the text itself is written and structured such as to maximize obscurity. I’m flipping through it, first page by page, then I start to erratically jump through it, struggling with my confusion, and then with my irritation, until I finally give up, feeling like a complete idiot. AND I REALLY DON'T LIKE BEING MADE TO FEEL LIKE A COMPLETE IDIOT, even if it's Kandinsky himself who's responsible," I said, making a sweeping gesture in his direction. I caught some movement in the corner of my eye, but when I turned, it took me a moment to understand what had changed: the glasses, the three-piece suit were both as they should be, but the face was alien, with a strong receding hairline, a mustache reminiscent of Hitler and the pupils in his inquisitive eyes - cold as frozen berries.

"And as for you, Pieter Cornelis Mondrian, I have some very specific questions. It's you who came up with your rules of Neoplasticism, where you claim that the means of plastic expression must be a plane or a rectangular prism of primary colors of red, blue and yellow, and the non-colors of white, black and gray. Piet, have you lost your mind? You're an artist, and therefore should realize that you have no right to permanently elevate some colors, and treat others with contempt, and in such an arbitrary fashion. Where did you get it that some of them can be called colors, others do not deserve this name and the green, for example, does not exist for you at all, and only because you are simply afraid of it. You think that I don't know that when you were out visiting you tried not to sit by the window or else you would turn the chair around so as to avoid the sight of the green crowns of trees? So here's what I have to say to you: for the artist to inflict his personal issues with color perception on the whole of humanity is as vile as it is for a chef to deprive children of desserts on the grounds that he does not like the taste of whipped cream. Furthermore, to call some – colors, and others – non-colors is the same as calling some of us people, and others – non-people on the basis of the color of our skin, and therefore I conclude that your Neoplasticism is nothing but a form of color racism. Yes, colors can be local, but they are like people who live in solitude, and for life to go on, colors must be mixed and thus give birth to new colors, they must be fruitful and multiply, so that the population of the arts does not die out, but what did you do? – a world-wide, or, more accurately, art-wide prison of colors: red, yellow, blue – these are *blatnoys*, black, gray, white – they're the *muzhiks*[[4]](#footnote-4), but what about all the other colors? Why can't we see them? Are they prison bitches that have been driven under the bunk to sleep? And everywhere bars, bars – it is impossible to breathe! And these laws of yours are most cruel and outrageous, if your compadre in the art movement, Theo Van Duisburg, proposed the squares in the compositions be rotated by only 45 degrees, you treated him like the worst kind of traitor and broke off relations, such a situation is like the Soviet camps: a step to the left is an attempt to escape, a step to the right is an attempt to escape, and jumping in place is provocation. Shoot on sight.

I looked at the disheveled stack of papers in my hand, but as I was talking they somehow had become twisted up and at the top was a sheet with a photocopied quadrangle and crowding it, in uneven rows, pugnacious groups of words. When I raised my head, I caught a piercing look of hatred leveled at me.

"And as for you, Kazimir, I have a lot to talk about, but I'll start with the main thing - the art manifesto of Suprematism. In 1915 at the 0.10 exhibition in St. Petersburg, a 79.6 x 79.5 cm painting was exhibited which displayed a black rectangle with irregular sides against a white background - the world famous *Black Square*. And now it's been a hundred years that the art critics have been putting the hard sell to the public about it, they go on about how revolutionary it was, its super-duper originality and absolute innovativeness. You yourself said that the square is the embryo of all possibilities. The first step in the pure art of creativity. All true, right? These are your words, Kazimir? Okay, then. But how then to explain the fact that a black square on a white background, incidentally, also with rather uneven sides, appeared in 1617, that is 298 years before you, drawn by the alchemist Robert Fludd, who named it *The Great Darkness*? *"The View of La Hougue (night effect), Jean-Louis Petit*", by the cartoonist and illustrator Bertall, who in 1843 painted a black rectangle covered in a variety of obscure signs that we have, perhaps, for the purity of the experiment omit-, but then there's the satirical book by Gustave Dore, *Dramatic and Picturesque History of Holy Russia*, published in 1854, and I cannot fail to take note of how it begins, namely with a rough-hatched black square, with the following written underneath: "The origin of Russian history is lost in the dark ages," and this is 61 years before your Malevich square. And there's more: in 1882 Paul Bilhaud unveiled a picture:"*Negroes Fighting in a Tunnel*", and in 1893 Alphonse Allais exhibited another version, entitled "*Negroes Fighting in a Tunnel Deep in the Night*", and both canvases are black...true, they are not square, but they are rectangular, and, moreover, in Allais's work it is set against a white backdrop. How is this to be understood? Is it a coincidence? Alright, let it be a coincidence, although it is not in your favor. And there's more: in that very year, the same Alphonse Allais presented to the public two more pictures:"*Anemic Girls Going to their First Communion through a Blizzard*" and "*Apoplectic Cardinals Collecting Tomatoes on the Shores of the Red Sea*", and they were....Right - white and red squares against a white background. Now we remember the rule: one match is a match, two are a coincidence, three - a pattern and we read: "Suprematism is divided into three stages according to the number of squares - Black (1915) Red (1915) and White (issued in 1918), the black period, colored and white." What do these pictures represent? Exactly what is stated in the names appended to them: black, red and white squares on a white background. And you want us to believe in your originality?! Are we to understand, Kazimir, that you quietly stole it, and pretended that it was your great discovery? It must be said that in terms of the history of art in the twentieth century Allais is a nasty, unwanted and suppressed figure, because despite the fact that Alfonso was not an artist, but a journalist, three years after the cardinals, he published the *Album primo-avrilesque* (April Fools Day album), which consisted of seven monochrome sheets of paper, and this was indeed 24 years before Rodchenko's monochrome and, accordingly, fifty or so years before Yves Klein and other ‘monochromists’ of abstractionism. Altogether, it looks rather ugly, though, doesn't it, Kazimir?

But let's continue. You stated that the major Suprematist element is a square, and the rotation of the square forms a circle, and the movement of black and white planes forms a cross – the secondary Suprematist elements. These are the elements from which you and your students build their Suprematist compositions. Do I understand this correctly? If I do understand this correctly, then explain why you exhibited your black square at the white backdrop?

Yes, of course, now everyone is free to exhibit everything he wants, but an element, after all, is a part, while you put it out there as a finished composition - that is, you passed it off as a whole. Figuratively speaking, you showed us a letter of the alphabet as if it was an intelligent and even brilliant text. Moreover, along with the square, you exhibited a black circle and a black cross on a white background stating that all this is a triptych. Do you take all the people for nitwits? No, really, whoever writes rave reviews about you without themselves ever having held a brush in their hands with them all is clear, but did not it not occur to you that artists would be reading your books? You're just a trickster, and of the worst kind. Should I describe to you what it looks like? You create the rules of the game called Suprematism, but when anyone with the slightest bit of experience sits at the table and extracts from you six aces pulled from foreign decks - yes, I'm talking about those foreign ‘squares’ – well, then, you're like a real card shark - striving to distort the meanings. Well now, here's what I want to say to you: What do you think, that it's like a hundred years ago, when you pulled a fast one on the - suckers, and that you can get away with it now? No, my dear fellow, that just won't fly with me. Yes, perhaps my reasoning is controversial, but I won't just shut up and take it, and smile and look the other way, and I'll take your Suprematism, all five volumes written by you and throw them in your face. And if anyone thinks that I have no right to call you the cardsharp of art, then I won't run away from them and am ready to provide a detailed explanation of who you are and what you are.

Alright, let's move on. Tell me, Kazimir, about another subjective and perhaps, for you, a complicated matter, but you are an artist, after all, and therefore should understand such things. Here you write: "I destroyed the ring of the horizon, and got out from the circle of things, from the circle of the horizon that has imprisoned the artist and the forms of nature." Well, then why do so many of your Suprematist compositions have a spatial construction?

 You ask me which? Well, let's take the 1915 *Suprematist Composition: Airplane Flying*. That's your work, right?



Alright, what do we see there? We see a group of figures of different shapes and colors. The dominant in this picture is the construction of a large black prism, a smaller rectangle and a small square. I cannot call this composition anything other than a perspective, and to me it's not important what this perspective is comprised of: of buildings, people, lights, or prisms, rectangles and squares. But if it is a perspective, then there are the vanishing point of the lines, and so the line, even if imaginary, nevertheless it represents a horizon. Do you understand what I'm saying? And if you understand, then tell me what have you destroyed, Kazimir?

But what is most foul is the paltry thinking that you and those like you brought into art. You wanted to change the world, but only changed yourselves, and brought with you to art the worst kind of political backbiting and bickering. What you don't understand is that before you there were, of course, intrigues in art, and passions and competitions, but there was also a sense of common purpose. What you constructed out of art was a snake farm. Some kind of strange growths emerged on the body of art, not really sects, not really para-political associations, such as your UNOVIS[[5]](#footnote-5) or De Stijl[[6]](#footnote-6). You start talking about the universality of art, and all around it starts to reek of a worldwide, or, more precisely an artwide barracks. Uniforms, ammunition, zinc coffins - all this is potentially universal, but not art.

"I say to all:" These, of course, are Kazimir’s own words, "cast aside love, cast aside aestheticism, cast aside bags of wisdom, for in the new culture your wisdom is ridiculous and insignificant." Or this: "Cleanse yourself of the accumulation of forms that belong to past centuries." Who is it you are talking to? Is that me you're talking to? Cast everything aside? Raze to the ground my internal empire? Napalm it with your hatred of beauty? And what do you propose instead of it? Is this your Suprematist idea, which, as we have just found out, is really false like a trickster`s marked deck of cards?

You Suprematists, Futurists, etc, etc, why did you get together? To create a new world? To create a new art? IT'S A LIE! ALL OF IT IS A LIE! You have come to annihilate and destroy. Like vampires, smelling the blood of great art, Futurists howled from the Italian land: “Long live war - only it can purify the world. Long live weaponry. Down with women!.. We will blow to smithereens all museums, libraries... Hey now, where are the glorious arsonists with burned hands? Get on over here! Come on! Set ablaze the library shelves! Aim the water channel at the museum vaults and flood them!.. And let the current carry away the great canvasses! Grab the picks and shovels! Shatter the ancient cities!" And from the Russian side they howl in unison with you: Right on, down with it all, down with it, throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc., from the Ship of Modernity.” Your manifestos are showers from the bricks of ‘radioactive malice’ that strives to blow to dust my inner world and I, calling forth the fire onto myself, together with Rozanov cry: the soul of Alexander Art is a zone for the fine arts, a grid of the twentieth century "LOVE, MORE LOVE, LET THERE BE LOVE, I AM GASPING FOR BREATH IN THE COLD."

I have two questions for you and all other 'overturners' of art: Who is it you’re picking a fight with? And what is the point of your beef with them? Duchamp painted a mustache onto Mona Lisa, and you, Kazimir, preceded him seven years before in your masterpiece *Partial Eclipse* where you crossed out her portrait twice. Well, what can I tell you, except don't be so blatantly envious, Guys! Especially since it's not even anything new. Pushkin wrote as follows ninety years before your shit-masterpieces:

*The barbarian artist with his indolent brush*

*Blackens out the genius's picture*

*And his own lawless drawing*

*Traces senselessly over it.*

All your novelty arises from envy. You are artistic pygmies, and thus, your relationship to art is such. Under the guise of political upheavals and revolutions you have in mind the art of the coup, and your goal is clear – to topple the great, and then subject them to oblivion. But what were the great ones guilty of? The *Venus de Milo*, Michelangelo's *David*, *Madonnas Renascence*, the aforementioned *Mona Lisa* - it turns out these are a real outrage against humanity?!? Well, I understand the essence of your intrigues, because the wheel on a chair looks objectively less impressive in semantic and formal terms than the Ghent Altarpiece. You did not have the strength and talent to battle them with a brush and chisel, and so you decided to stage a coup.

You think that they blocked all the creative space and there wasn’t any place for you to forge your own path in art. And yet again, this proves the pettiness of your thinking, because, for example, I see in fine art billions of possibilities, but if it should happen that someone obstructs me in some way, then I can always simply ask them, politely, to stand aside. It's like in the subway, could you imagine if Buanarotti or Velasquez were to sprawl out all over the seat and cry out *I'm a genius!* and in the meanwhile not let anyone else have a seat? No, they wouldn't. They would give me a seat, and not in the subway car, but in the realm of art. The main thing is you must ask civilly and don't be boorish on the pages of your manifestos, like a drunk on the collective farm after payday. You've decided to employ authoritarian methods, but have failed to comprehend that in the realm of art the laws are completely different. You thought to destroy the works of the great masters, but have failed to understand the main thing: one work of art cannot be replaced by another. In the army, sure, one general might be replaced with another, and in business this manager can take over instead of that one, and even in politics if one senator fails to win re-election, then another one will take his place, but that's not the way it works in art, be it painting, music, or literature. In art, there is no "instead of". Giotto, Bach, Petrarch – you can attach only the word "after," to such names as theirs. But no matter how you try, you can never, ever apply the words "instead of." Not instead of, but together with, just like that, and no other options. In Soviet times, there was a sign in the trams: "Conscience is the best controller" and in art the best monitor is time, and it is time that will, in the words of Mayakovsky, show "who it is that Mother History values most". But you, paper tigers, impotent warriors of the pen, know that I rise up in defense of those who do not need protection, and now I will gnaw at you, because art is the realm of the great achievements of humanity, and not a prison, a political platform, a brothel, and it's most certainly not a back room for your underhanded dealings. HAVE I MADE MYSELF CLEAR?!!

"Alexander, Alexander, wait a minute, I believe you've strayed from topic somewhat. Have you any more questions for Kazimir?"

I had completely forgotten about Turner, who looked bad, and who was actually starting to look rather like a formless abstract sculpture.

"Of course I do and many! But out of respect for you I'll move on to the reason why I'm here. The time has come to take stock, and the results are disappointing: abstract art first meandered in intellectual masturbation, and then finally settled into meaningless artistic form-building. The proportion of form and meaning in contemporary non-figurative art works is like the weight of the body of a stegosaurus in proportion to its brain (its body weight is five to seven tons while its brain is approximately the size of a walnut). Speed has replaced contemplation; the total subconscious movement leaves no chance for the conscious work of the mind. Under abstract painting modern audiences understand the senseless jumble of different color-shapes. Abstract art is in a spiritual coma, and if nothing is done, it will wither away, as has Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism and other artistic trends of the 20th century.

If you look at the history of abstract art from the perspective of its evolutionary development, the question arises: where is the apex? After all, if the aim was only to leave behind a few new art movements and a few thousand new forms on the canvases, then to me it seems that the pioneers of abstract art are like savages that, seeing a plane crash in the jungle, rather than reflecting on what happened, can only tear through it and make themselves some necklaces and gongs – some shiny bright novelties, but in essence nothing of value to our inner worlds. And now I want to recall Wassily Kandinsky: “Today abstract art also creates more or less primary artistic organisms, whose further development an artist can predict only in a rough outline and which attract, excite him, but also calm him when he stares into the prospect of the future that faces him.” He concludes his book *Point and Line to Plane* with the phrase: "This work leads to Inner Revelations insofar as these can be given to each epoch."

"And so you’re sure that the whole history of abstract art should be seen as a preparatory springboard for a leap to the top of that (which we talked about above) mysterious evolutionary apex?"

"That's right, William."

"And you want to say that you know where this apex is?"

"Not only do I know it, I have made my way to the top, and even managed to dig up such a number of creative nuggets that my statements about the billions of possibilities were not just words, but real facts."

"And what is the name of this apex?"

"Abstract idealism."

"Abstract idealism?"

"Yes, YES! It is INDEED abstract idealism!"

"And what is this? Only Alexander," he roused himself, "let's get right to the point, okay?"

"Broad brushstrokes?" I asked.

He winced as if I had singed his whiskers. "Broad strokes-shmokes, make it short and to the point, TO THE POINT!"

"Okay, and so right to the point then, the main problem of abstract art is that with the liberation from forms it has also insensibly been divesting itself of meanings. If Kandinsky, Malevich and Mondrian wrote their texts themselves, thus giving their works meanings, then for the abstract expressionists meanings by and large were provided for the most part by critics and art theorists like Clement Greenberg, while contemporary artists either do not bother with meanings at all, or they try to fasten to their forms any pseudo-intellectual miscarriage induced by long cocaine-fueled travails, or else an interpretation is provided as needed by the curator or gallery owner. William, I understand the question, but please: be patient, I'll get to it, hang in there. And so what is meaning for a painting? And is it even necessary? My response: meaning is to a painting what value is to money. It's simple: a picture is endowed with meaning in the same way that a bill is endowed with value. Without value, a dollar bill is just a piece of paper, and without meaning, a painting is just a colored piece of canvas. That dollar bill is printed in a matter of minutes, but it takes the entire financial system of the country to give it value."

"Or, if this is difficult, I have another example that is as simple as cheese."

"Alexanderrr" Turner was practically growling like a bulldog suffering from constipation, "Cheese? What is this cheese that you speak of?"

"Regular Dutch, an entire cheese wheel. When you buy it, what is it that interests you first? Is it the vibrant red color of the wax rind or what this wax rind covers, meaning the actual product itself, its freshness, structure and taste? In a good painting, the ratio between the amount of meaning and the form containing it must be akin to the cheese and the wax. And just like it's impossible to produce a sealed package, and then place the product inside, so nobody can cram the content inside the form once it is created. The form by itself is the barren flower, an empty shell, the form itself is an unfertilized egg, or (depending on your perspective) the sperm that just couldn't complete the journey. Only form imbued with meaning can and must exist in the third millennium. We played a game called ‘meaninglessness’ and we're done with that. A prosperous society can afford idle loafers, but a problematic society can`t. Form without meaning is the slacker in today's very problematic artistic territory, and just as a person must work to prove his social value so the work of art must now affirm with its meanings its axiological significance. Contemporary art has already acquired so many empty and, frankly, rank texts, generating certain phantoms of meaning that have come to resemble thoroughly rotten onions. But if we separate the stillborn husk and with one quick blow of our sharp mind slice through the slightly dried up, somewhat musty and frankly, malodorous structure, than at the core, strange as it may seem, we discover a most banal incarnation of Marxism: the base which is the form of representational art is given a very flimsy semantic superstructure or its complete absence," - my eye suddenly started twitching so that William suddenly looked like he was being featured in some kind of art house creation: first frame - Turner, next frame - black, then - Turner, next frame - black, again - Turner, next frame - black, but I continued speaking, without letting up on the emotional intensity, "and, if this is so, then in the next step, you and I have to admit that objective reality is when the form determines consciousness. But how my consciousness, or yours, or that of any other person can be determined by a few lines or by geometric figures rendered on the canvas using a straightedge - this, alas, is something I just don't get."

"Alexander, calm down now, no need to get so nervous."

I looked and did not believe my eyes and ears. So says William Turner, a man even more explosive than nitrogen triiodide - set off by the merest breeze. If before when he spoke the forms populating the space around him were rigid and seemed to almost shoot out color into each other, changing from dark pear to light lemon, rotating crystals, wildly flickering, and distracting me from my thoughts, now these forms were more amorphous, almost without corners, sometimes falling apart and languidly circling, becoming more transparent, but with each new word uttered by Turner swelling, they acquired a rich and healthy yellow hue.

But I could not calm down, all the more so because this really was a time for getting nervous because an expressively painted form devoid of meaning and exhibited in a museum as a picture that is entitled "Untitled" brings to mind the anecdote from the life of Faina Ranevskaya, who, in response to being told that in Russian there is no such word as "ass" observed "How odd that although there - is an ass, there is not such a word. In the last century, we have already discovered that not only are people capable of creating abstract forms, so are monkeys, dolphins, dogs, horses, even ocelots, turtles, goats, pigs and anteaters. Why then do we need halls in the Uffizi, the Louvre, the Hermitage, if culture as a whole has been reduced to seeing who is better at scratching out a few strokes - a wild boar, an anteater, a goat or a man? But if we, the people, have already reached this limit, we need to make the honest choice: either accept the challenge of the animal world, throw off the shackles of culture and run ‘free and wild’ in the jungle, or turn 180 degrees and head for the shores of pure, strong, full-fledged meanings.

"Well then, maybe we don`t need this abstractionism at all?"

"No, William, we really need it.""Abstraction is a great, undeveloped resource of world art."

"And you propose, so to speak, to develop it with the help of your, what is it? - abstract idealism?"

"Exactly. And also solve the problem of the lack of true meanings in art."

"Go on."

"Just as the ancients believed that the earth rests on three whales, so it is that abstract idealism is based on three principles: insemination through meaning, the interchange of the base and superstructure, and a balance between emotional and semantic perception."

"Well, an allegory with insemination is something I can grasp: to conceive a form, you must first have the seed of meaning, but in order to impregnate the woman, the seed must first be within the man, and your abstract idealism presumes that the seed should be located outside of blatant thingness. What is it?" He nodded in my direction, "Do you think this is all beyond me? And, obviously, this is in the realms of literature and philosophy?"

"There too, of course, but not only. Abstract idealism is a tool that has never before been available to humankind."

"Alexander, what are you talking about?"

"I am talking about both the degree of freedom and the depth of penetration in the source material. Look, any text is composed of certain elementary particles – letters which comprise atoms –words, which in turn, are collected in the molecules of the proposals, and so on. So, when abstract idealism uses the literary source material, the puncture is taken from the fragment where the text is the most abstract and, hence, this place is the most subtle and an artistic form can be grown from it. If the text is taken correctly, and the form, the flesh and blood of the text, was created with talent, then those facets are opened up that were not available to researchers of literature, nor to directors of the cinema, or anyone at all until the appearance of abstract idealism. This is like Leeuwenhoek's microscope, before the invention of which single-celled organisms couldn`t be seen. Moreover, there are moments such as this, I believe, in all the great works of literature. To test this, I selected works that are known to everybody: *Hamlet*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and less obvious but very rich in meaning - Franz Kafka’s *Diaries* and Van Gogh's *Letters to Brother Theo*, (Vincent looked at me from the hall surrounded by a soft mint glow, which, when looking at it a heavy, but distinguished kind of smell emanated - you know, it's hard to explain, but if you try to get inside the smell, it's as though you're sitting in an upholstered oak-paneled, windowless room with a massive table, wrapped in natural leather on which a huge amount of high quality smoking pipe tobacco with the flavor of prunes piled and at the same time in your mouth you taste the increasingly banal flavor of barberry candy). And Andrey Bely's very 'non-obvious' *Kotik Letaev*, one of the most underrated, in my opinion, works of the 20th century, which with the help of abstract idealism, I hope, will gain its rightful place in world literature, and two boxes of fallen leaves which Rozanov carries on his shoulders, stepping between literature and philosophy."

At the word philosophy the sound thundered in the air: "Alexanderrrrrrrrr" - and the long, drawn out drrrrrrrrr at the end of my name sounded like he had just started an old rusty moped: "At least while I'm here, could we skip the philosophy?"

"We need it, William, and this is why it is necessary. Tell me, are you annoyed by the fact that the most obscure moments in philosophical works are still being interpreted, thereby generating thousands of useless dissertations that consist of millions of words and render the source texts even more incomprehensible?"

He puffed out his cheeks, bowed his head a little, but before he could burst forth with more, I continued.

"I am too, too, mainly because no one thought it through to this simplest truth: The concrete is always clear, therefore the less clear a philosophical theme is, the more abstract it is, and therefore IT DOES NOT NEED TO BE INTERPRETED: IT NEEDS TO BE PORTRAYED!!!"

"Wait a minute, how can you portray pure thought, and not the thinker, and philosophy, but not the philosopher?"

"It's elementary. The substance of the philosophy must be transformed into another state."

"Like what...?"

"Like water. When you melt ice, it goes from a solid to a liquid, and if you boil it, then it turns into steam."

"But philosophy isn't water, after all. It's completely unrelated...."

"And yet, who said that philosophy has only one state of matter the written text? Absolutely no one! That's just the way it happened and all artistic attempts to - comprehend it are perceived as a kind of mental aberration – amusing, but with no significant impact."

"What do you mean by all this?"

"It’s what we constantly hear: the crisis of philosophy, the end of philosophy, the death of philosophy, but I would like to ask: ‘Hi, philosophy. How are you? Are you still alive?’ And judging by the fact that there are new books, philosophy departments are operating, conferences and seminars are still being held, I conclude that philosophy is still alive, and if so, I want to go to her and ask, ‘What's your problem, my dear?’

"And what is it?"

"It's the fact that over the time of the existence of philosophy, philosophy has accumulated hundreds of questions for humankind which, you have to hand it to her, she has tried to answer, but what do you think, how many does humankind have?"

"How many what?"

"How many questions have accumulated?"

"For philosophy? Well, I think that no less than she has for us."

"I think that by and large, humanity, with the exception of philosophers who are the interested party in this, has for philosophy only two questions: why is it that most philosophical works betray such a repulsive, emotional insensitivity which is already too much in our world? And why for the most part is the emphasis on deliberate complexity, and such a sophisticated conglomeration of logical constructions, and sometimes even deconstructions, the divergent structure of references, verbal and terminological barricades, with which she dissociates herself from the reader? These two theoretical questions beget one that is practical: why does she (philosophy) behave in such a way? What are we, then? The poor relatives, in regards to which she considers it beneath her dignity to engage in sincere, friendly conversation? Or is humanity a gang of beggars knocking at the book-cover gates, begging for intellectual alms? It turns out that on the one hand, we see that man who, after encountering such an attitude, does not want to get any closer to her, while on the other hand philosophy has always sought out man...., and, most regrettably, she has lost him."

"Well, is that it, then? Divorce and let`s pretend we never met?"

"No. One more chance must be given."

"To who?"

"To both of them."

"How?"

"They need a neutral territory where they can meet, where they can try to build a new dialogue, to hear and understand each other, to draw conclusions and take steps towards reciprocity, and finally restart their relationship. This would be a space where philosophy would enter without her cold difficulties, and man would enter with the desire to comprehend and forgive."

"There is no such territory."

"But there is already, and it is called abstract idealism."

"In theory, then of course! Can you provide some practical examples?"

"Easily. To show you, yes, let's put forward a vivid example ... like Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, although it’s been quoted by everyone, in general it is one of the most difficult, in places completely impenetrable entanglement of thoughts in which I become caught up as if in tropical vines, and then after another ten pages the razor-sharp machete of my pure reason loses its edge and the darkness of incomprehension gradually begins to overcome me. But if you look at it from the standpoint of abstract idealism, at the very beginning of the book you can find a small black entrance, consisting of a few sentences: "The book will, therefore, draw a limit to thinking, or rather, not to thinking, but to the expression of thoughts; for, in order to draw a limit to thinking we should have to be able to think on both sides of this limit (we should therefore have to be able to think that which cannot be thought).

The limit can, therefore, only be drawn in language and what lies on the other side of the limit will be simply nonsense." But with the word you cannot conceive of ‘the inconceivable,’ but with the abstract visual image - this is possible. He also says: "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world," but if his world is limited by the text, it does not mean that beyond this border there is nothing, that behind this border lies the end. NO! What is there is only the beginning! And when the border of the text (like the border of the state) opens, then a multitude of new opportunities burst into the space. Forms that are extracted from there and, along with the source, carried forward into the space of the gallery make it possible not only to penetrate the text with the imagination, but to physically enter into it, with one's legs, understand? You don't just explore it with your eyes, but you actually sense not only its intellectual depth, but also its size, weight and color. In this, the cold complexity that I talked about, has been fully anesthetized by the wealth of directions in the real movement of the viewer, along with forms which indicate the way and invigorate thought."

At this time there was suddenly new movement taking shape around Turner. In addition to the shapes I previously described, around him my paintings and works on paper began to appear. They were moving, or rather not even moving, but slowly floating around him, forming a kind of giant ribbon. My outlines covered in my scribbled thoughts and observations appeared not one by one, but as if they had been tossed into this space in a pile. He peered into this circumambulation, and then quickly reached in and grabbed a sheet of paper and shook it, and like little golden gnats in front of his face, the letters began to swarm around him, which, after he pulled out the next sheet, died out, fading into the space.

After some time, Turner looked up at me in surprise: "If I have understood you correctly..."

"Yes, you've fully understood me. This is a massive project, and now you've only seen pictures, and that, you see, is not all, but apart from them to implement my ideas I need abstract compositions comprising sculptures with texts, photos, video mapping, special light, but you've read it yourself, and so you can estimate the scale. The physical journey through the text, breaking the philosophical monotony of lines, will let us grope and discover those planes that never emerge when the books are read. My approach to Leibniz's monadology, Aristotle's metaphysics, and some of Plato's dialogues was from a completely different position, but our discussion today is about other things. "

"I indicated the potential of abstract idealism in the arts, but I would argue that it not only has potential, it has super-potential."

He lowered his head a bit, rolled his eyes just a little, and said: "Is that right, eh?"

And in his 'Is that right, eh?' I could discern a sea, no, an entire ocean of sarcasm.

"William, can one really visualize, or let’s say, create pictures based on or directly illustrating a novel, and not just any novel, but a brilliantly written novel?"

"You know perfectly well that one can."

"How about if the novel is not yet written? And mind you, a brilliant novel that is unwritten?"

"Of course not."

"Why not?"

"Because it has not been written!"

"I assure you that it is not only possible, it is necessary."

"Well, this really is beyond the pale..."

"Yes, it`s really beyond the pale, just so, it is and I`ll prove it to you. Paradoxical as it may sound, the process of not writing a brilliant book is as complex as writing it. In fact, in the history of mankind there are a lot of unwritten novels. It's enough to remember the library invented by Rabelais with titles such as *Tarta-retus, de modo cacandi*. Or *Catalogus librorum ineditorum* of Wales, although these are not of interest. BUT if humanity has more than a hundred brilliantly written novels, then I have discovered around a dozen brilliantly UNwritten novels. And to illustrate these works ..."

"But how, HOW can you illustrate that which does not exist?" Turner, not able to hold himself back, interjected.

"You just need to write them in your head!"

"But then where can the seed that will inseminate your paintings be found?"

"You ask where. Let me tell you. In Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* the protagonist is reading a novel named *Quercus*, the biography of an oak of a few centuries, and what he had witnessed as external events, such as a dialogue between soldiers, or bandits camping under its shade, and his inner feelings from the music of water or the palette of dawn. Or Borges, who chucked into our reality a whole heap of unwritten books, and two of them, in my opinion, are brilliantly UNwritten. And Stanislaw Lem, who published two collections of reviews of novels, scientific and philosophical works that were never written, because they, their authors, and therefore the texts are fictitious."

"Wait a minute, that is, you want to say that you have found in literature certain seedlings that you have nurtured and nourished with words, which in turn have brought you a harvest of images?"

"Yes and no, the fact of the matter is that the texts are still original, but I extract the relationships and thoughts of the characters in an external medium in the form of abstract works."

"But the characters themselves aren't there - they don't even exist!"

"But they do, because their inner world has found a place in my paintings. It is a bit like the Wilson chamber, which detects the traces of charged particles. And despite the fact that the particles themselves are not visible in the printout, by studying these traces, we can confidently say that they exist. The super-potential of abstract idealism is not only the ability to make a mark for an artist, as you put it, to move beyond, to overcome it, it is also to give this opportunity to the viewer. Understand this, everyone, EVERY person who will look at these pictures, sooner or later will begin to write a novel in their head, and they won’t just write it, they’ll cultivate fantasies that will climb like ivy, and my paintings will be like nails that will secure these fantasies, so they do not break under the pressure of time.

And once again the painting roundelay began to fly round Turner`s body and my papers, which moved as if in a wild dance William reached out with his broad hand and plucked one out.

"Alright, take this one," he showed me a text, "which brilliantly unwritten novel does this relate to?"

I smiled. "Well, William, this may not be brilliant, but it seems to me, it is still an unwritten novel that shows promise...this is my UNwritten novel. I labored and developed the idea, worked out the plan, outlined the moves, but then I decided that this novel was ideal for showing the full power of abstract idealism."

"A cruel choice for the artist, a spiritual gambit, I would say."

"Spiritual gambit? Ah, I see, you have in mind a small sacrifice to capture the center!"

As I expected, under the guise of a boor was hidden a thoughtful, and, of course, a subtle, sensitive nature.

"Well, that's not entirely true, because although it is not written, it is NOT written in SUCH a way that, together with the paintings it must acquire a new form of life in art, and this will be a luminous interesting inhabitant of our inner worlds. Look, William, it's like ..." in my brain one of his paintings suddenly emerged - a locomotive. Now this seems as strange and new as the first steam locomotive to those who beheld it, but I assure you that, after several exhibitions, every person will find that thinking beyond the existence of the text, characters, images is as easy as buying a train ticket."

"Anybody?"

"Anybody who wants to travel on the train called art."

"Well, alright then, let's say that you've convinced me, or rather not quite convinced, but this does, without a doubt deserve consideration, tell me, then, how to relate the text and images, how do they correspond with each other, how do they function together?"

 "The text is integrated in the form, it is an intrinsic part of it, it is the entry point. Do you remember what I said about the replacement of the base and superstructure? In relation to art this might sound idiotic, but let me explain. Under Marx there is a base, namely the productive forces and productive relations, on which are superposed politics, ideology, religion and culture. In most cases, the situation with modern art operates the same way: The artist creates a form, on which, it does not matter by whom - the curator or the artist himself, meanings are superposed. Whatever the artistic movement and technique, I call this method of creating works of art 'art-materialism'. But just as the failure of dialectical materialism after the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries became apparent to everybody, so it is that in the contemporary world we see how art materialism, caving under current affairs, responding to day-to-day trivialities, is more and more frequently forced to admit its inadequacy."

"But what do you suggest?"

"I've already made my suggestion: switch out the base and the superstructure - first put forth the idea from which the form is then developed. There you have it: art idealism. And right now we're talking about abstract idealism, a special case of art idealism. I've just demonstrated the practical viability of this approach."

William was slow to respond, intensely working through something, and then he waved his hand with three fingers extended:

"But wait," he said, "you said that your abstract idealism rests on three whales," and he pressed his index finger into his palm, "the insemination of meanings - we figured out, the base and," he counted off on his ring finger, "the superstructure too," and then, all fingers pressed into his palm save the fully extended middle finger, "but we haven`t talked about… what is it called...?"

"The balance between the conscious and unconscious actions of the artist and, respectively, between the emotional and semantic perception of the viewer."

"What is the gist of what you’re saying?"

"For the artist - the opening up of new levels of freedom, and for the viewer - an extension in the depth of perception. Understand, William, the largest and most insurmountable problem for abstract art became the problem of artistic style."

"But is not style one of the main achievements of the artist?" Turner asked in surprise.

"What is style in abstractionism? If you scrape the patina of empty words off, then in essence it is the discovery of some form or combination of forms, easily recognizable by the viewer, and then the replication of it in different versions until creativity has been completely lost. And when an artist finds his so-called personal style, he immediately ceases developing and spends decades duplicating the 'same old same old,’ be it lines or spots. This is the artist's loss of creative freedom. "With recognition, the sense of novelty is lost."

In abstract art, an artist's personal style is, in fact, a cage, made by the artist himself, and, in most cases, from which he is unable to escape."

"This is not entirely clear."

"What's not clear, William? Let's take, for example ... well, let's take you, why stray for an example?"

"Let's not take me," said Turner, pulling back slightly.

"Okay, then let's take ..." I turned to the hall and my eyes fell upon Pablo's bald head, "...alright, what is the main value of Picasso to art?"

"I hope it isn`t dancing in a rabbit costume under the Christmas tree?" Pablo laughed.

"His value does not lie in any particular work, but in how he moved through the global art territory: a weak realistic start, pink, blue, African periods, Cubism, where in contrast to Braque, he did not lose his talent. Then came the classical period and a light surreal malady, then *Guernica*, the "war period" and another thirty years of various artistic experiments among which, for example, he produces light drawings that are completely uncharacteristic to him. Painter, sculptor, graphic artist, theater artist, ceramist, and even something of a poet and playwright, he, like an experienced tanker rushed, forward in ’the armor of his talent,’ and those who walked alongside him through the territory of 20th century art looked against his backdrop like exhausted, out-of-breath, played-out infantry. And for comparison, look at the artistic progression of, for example, Barnett Newman. Until he was forty years old he really didn't know what to do, and indolently sought out a style, and then on a monochrome canvas he painted a line and called it a 'zip', and then he drew two more, and then, as if in a fit of generosity the guy even produce three lines. Canvases and stripes - this isn't even a cell, this is some internal dungeon in which he voluntarily imprisoned himself. Meanwhile, ‘world art history’ refuses point blank to notice an artist like Olga Rozanova, who, forty years before Newman's first stripe, painted, and I emphasize this, an abstract painting that depicted a green strip in the middle of a canvas, and this instantly kills any claims of Newman for innovative achievements in art. Or Jackson Pollock, who was unable to escape from his tangled messes. Everyone knows his drip paintings, such as *No. 5*, *Blue Poles* and *Lavender Mist*. But when he wanted to get away from it, move on to the next level of his work, having produced the simple, strong, honest *The Deep*, then those around him somehow saw in it the degradation of his own style, and a response to Clyfford Still, and a consciousness oppressed by alcohol and they tried to drive him back into the hateful space of his drippings. The result was more than lamentable. And there are a lot of such examples, and all this is because there is no logical development, there is no motion vector. The problem of an individual style in abstraction is really an issue with the repeatability of forms stemming from immaturity, or a dearth of ideas, or the ambiguity of meanings, but this disappears with the arrival of abstract idealism. And, mind you, it disappears naturally."

"Meaning?"

"If before an artist would exhibit several almost identical blue canvases, differing only in the price and money earned from them, then with the arrival of abstract idealism, he, figuratively speaking, should be slapped across the face, because if the form should be discordant with the original idea, then this would be immediately evident. In abstract idealism it is impossible to promote versions of one and the same form, nor to forcibly bind to them pieces of worlds, say, of Plato and Aristotle. Even one and the same author at different times and in different sections of his work has a different narrative rhythm and verbal force..."

''I think I've understood you," interrupted Turner, "this is like, let's say, if I bought seeds to grow grass and garden flowers, but in their place solid thistles were to emerge? Right?"

"Bravo, William!"

"Well then, that would be quite evident and not figurative."

"The result of initial strangeness, vagueness, obscurity isn`t the mysteriousness of the work but a sense of irresponsibility of the artist to the viewer. The blurred boundaries of the rules give rise to additional opportunities for fraud, just like, for example obscurely worded laws foster government corruption. And if Malevich stacked the deck, at least he proclaimed the rules of the game in advance, and now an artist can say that he doesn`t want to burden his works with theories and simply exhibits before me a black canvas entitled *Painting No. 16*. How should we understand this? What does this signify? What it means is that I, you, any viewer are drawn into some kind of game with unknown rules. It`s understood that in this situation we, the viewers, will always lose. It's like the joke where the newbie goes to prison.

Right away they ask him:

"Do you play cards?"

"I sure do."

"What game?"

"I play ‘Montana’".

"Teach us, why don't you?"

The newbie deals a card out to everybody. The cons all place their bets, the newbie picks up his card, takes a look and says, "Montana! I won!" And he scoops up all the money.

The cons say: "What's the deal?"

"The first one to look at his card and say 'Montana' is the winner."

"Let's play again," say the convicts.

They deal out the cards, and put in their antes.

The convicts grab the cards and shout:

"Montana! Montana!..."

The newbie looks at his card: "Bad luck to you guys, I have a trump Montana!" and again takes all the money.

There won't be any more scams like this. And for those who want to earn a fair profit for their inner world without participating in dubious enterprises operating in the territory of art, from now on they have the option, previously unavailable to them, of abstract…, but not just abstract idealism, but art idealism in general.

And finally ... this is my final word on this issue, honestly," I said to the restless, shifting from foot to foot, Turner "And it’s about the balance between the emotional and semantic perception.

Abstract painting ceased its triumphal procession through world art not because it finally fizzled out, but because it balked at a barrier that it could not overcome. In one case, it nuzzled into a cold, prudent, therefore soulless geometrization, and in the other it entered into the complete rejection of mind control with an unbridled sensuality, pure unconsciousness visual expression. But if I set forth with a maximalism peculiar to me along one of these paths to the very point of the foundation up to the first feature, up to the origin of color, and then draw from these pictures their colors and shapes, in the first instance up to complete senselessness, in the second up to utter exhaustion, providing the pendulum of my perception with the maximum scope, because that is the only right way to build one's inner dialogue with a work of art, I would inevitably turn into either an emotional eunuch, or an emotional animal. This kind of approach does not suit me, nor humanity as a whole, and that is why abstraction was deemed a ‘classic’ and honorably retired.

But abstract idealism allows for the continuous improvement of the artist in his striving to create in his work a perfect balance, and I want to stress that this is a vital balance, as opposed to the cold and dehumanized balance of Mondrian and the ‘eternal rest’ of Malevich’s objectlessness. This balance breaks down these barriers, because the balance between the original rational beginning and how it is expressed does not allow the artist to rely on the above extremes. If the artist had felt such a balance, then he would no longer have produced pictures without names or with names like "Composition No. ...", because pictures like that are invalids, with their tongues ripped out, or mouths sealed with tape, and it is no wonder that the viewer hears only an inaudible mumbling from the inner friction and fracture of forms. But abstract idealism frees abstraction from the unjustly imposed bond of silence, and a new free community of artistic compositions, gushing with thought, has already burst into the territory of art, and it cannot be halted.

The unadulterated shape-making of many abstractionists, like the art of purely meaning-oriented conceptualists has passed, and it is time for the perfect balance. No longer is this a question of choosing between meaning and form, which would akin to selecting either a book without a cover and title page, or a cover without a book, because the book should have a cover.

You may have had the impression that the ability to operate with meanings was developed at the expense of the forms which have emerged from them, but the system of spatial toning which I created and construction of dimensional artistic structures and producing polytextual planes prove that this isn't so. If the principle of perfect balance in the work is actualized, the viewer derives satisfaction from understanding that the artist in front of him is honest, that he is not constrained by some game without rules that has been forced upon him, and therefore not only does the external logic and mechanics of the work become visible, its hidden recesses, previously unseen essences - gushing auroras, thoughts that establish the rhythm to the space, whitish Kafkaesque constructions, the orderly flickering glimpses of the consciousness of Faulkner's autistic Benji, or the black opal shades of Raskolnikov's personality, and this is, I repeat, only a small part of the huge mass of possibilities that is opened up to humankind by ABSTRACT IDEALISM.



1. Russian slang term for long swimming of a submarine without entering the port for resupply of fuel, water and food. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 'Royal baby' was Kazimir Malevich's appellation for his *Black Square.* He also hailed it as the first step in pure creation, before which any other paintings were naive deformities and copies of nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *On the Spiritual in Art and Point and Line to Plane are books by* Wassily Kandinsky. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Here the author makes a comparison with the hierarchy of prisoners in Russian prisons where *blatnoys* are the highest caste, as a rule, professional criminals hold power over the other prisoners, *muzhiks* are prisoners that often accidentally ended up in prison and are expected to return to normal life after serving their sentence. The latter did not have power over the other prisoners and did not collaborate with the prison authorities. The prison bitches are the lowest caste in the prison, subjected to real or symbolic rape in prison and various humiliating acts by other prisoners. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. UNOVIS is the group of [Russian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) [artists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artists), founded and led by [Kazimir Malevich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazimir_Malevich) at the [Vitebsk Art School](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vitebsk_Art_School&action=edit&redlink=1) in 1919. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. De Stijl is the Dutch [artistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art) movement founded in 1917 in Amsterdam. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)