

TO THE POLISH NATION: A MANIFESTO CONCERNING THE IMMEDIATE FUTURIZATION OF LIFE Bruno Jasioński

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Given that any sporadic or isolated reform of art divorced from life itself—all art being its pulse and organic function—inevitably proves itself vain, fruitless and sterile from the outset, and furthermore there being no time for preliminary and preparatory moves of this sort—Polish life and art are threatened with suffocation, and the only possible and effective measure to be taken in such a case is an immediate tracheotomy—we, the Polish Futurists, are as of today launching a huge and radical rebuilding and reorganization of Polish life. We call on all citizens of the free Polish Republic to unite in co-operation and support.

Universal war along with the colossal movement of whole states, classes and nations has brought with it a huge shift in values. The result of this is a crisis in culture in the whole of Eastern and Western Europe today. Here this crisis appears in a particularly sharp and specific form. A century and a half of political bondage has left a hard, indelible impression on our whole physiognomy, psyche and production. Our cultural awareness was unable to develop as freely as it was in the Western states. Our entire national energy was of necessity expended in directing the utmost pressure towards the arduous and laborious battle for our own language, life and institutions. Polish art also expanded itself in the same direction, struggling for its own national "self" and the building of a hard, unbroken national psyche that would be resistant to anything and capable of life.

We, the Polish Futurists, honor here the Romantic poetry of the period of enslavement, the specters of which we shall today pursue and kill without mercy—if only because, during the period of great concentration and slow maturing of the Polish Nation it was not "pure" art but a profoundly national one, because it was written with the very juices and blood of life thundering by, because it was the pulse and scream of its day, as generally only art can and must be.

For these same reasons today, when, together with regaining her political independence, Poland's life has entered a completely new phase and woken up to the prospect of a million questions lurking at her gate, to which there was just no time to give any thought yesterday, and to which it is necessary to give a categorical reply promptly if we don't want the oncoming waves to catch up with us, we call out to you:

For too long we have been a nation reminiscent of a museum of curiosities, producing nothing but mummies and relics. The crazy and unstoppable present enters through all our doors and windows, it shouts out, harasses us and makes demands. If we can't afford to create new categories into which it could fit, a new art in which it could sing to its heart's content—we shall not survive.

We must open wide all the doors and windows, to get rid of this stench of cellars and church incense which they have been teaching us to breathe since we were children. Armed with gigantic facemasks, we are coming out to meet you.

Following on from S. Brzozowski, we announce a great sale of old junk. The old traditions, categories, customs, pretty pictures and fetishes, are all going for next to nothing.

A giant nationwide museum of curiosities will be held at the Wawel.

We shall be bringing along the stale mummies of Mickiewicz and Stowackis from the squares and streets in wheelbarrows. It is time to make space on the pedestals, clean up the squares, and make space for those who are coming.

descended ... 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 to 0, then on the other side a new lines begins 0, 1, 2, 3, 4... And we saw that the new painting that is emerging from within us is no longer an image. It describes nothing; rather it constructs extensions, surfaces, lines with the goal of creating a system for a new composition of the real world. We gave this building a new name: *proun*.

The name *proun* signifies for us the station on the path to the creative design of the new form that grows from the earth fertilized by the dead bodies of the image and the artist. The image collapsed together along with the old world that the image had created. The new world will not need any small images. When it needs a mirror, it has photography and the cinema. In the new world the creator, known as an "artist," will create the world himself, not describe it. Proun—that is the path we will take to the new composition. Although science and the engineer now manage to create their realities by means of designing projects, we do not consider this the only, the categorical way. We believe in creative intuition, which establishes its own methods and its own system outside of design but in harmony with laws that are just as organic as the growth of flowers. Proun does not compose; it constructs. This is a fundamental contrast to the image. Composition is a discussion on a given plane with many variations; construction is a confirmation of the one for a given necessity. Proun has no axis perpendicular to the horizon, as the image does. It is constructed in space and brought into equilibrium, and because it is a structure, one has to walk around it, see it from below and explore it from above. The canvas has been set in motion. Proun is created from material and not from some aesthetic. From the richest gold mine of color we have taken the purest vein of subjective [sic] quality. Yellow, green, blue—those are the blondes, brunettes, and chestnut browns of the spectrum. We do not need the individual but the universal. We have taken our colors from the realm of black and white. And the contrast or harmony between two blacks, two whites, or two intermediate shades serves us like the contrast or harmony of two materials like granite and wood or iron and cement. Thus color has become the barometer of the material for us.

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In precisely the same way that religion was overcome, we are now struggling to overcome art using our newfound abilities.

The time of the hunter who chased the animal and caught it is far behind us—he described it. We are equally distant from the time of the tamer, the shepherd who sat at his oven and abstracted nature—he beautified it. We live in an epoch of reified forced concrete, a dynamic epoch: we do not describe and we do not beautify: we run and we create. We leave behind, on the one hand, the artist and his image and, on the other, the engineer and his project, and we go out to create the elements of the first, second, and third dimensions in space and time in order to grow together with nature as a whole in accordance with the law of the world. And we are the steps of our movement, which is just as independent and just as incomprehensible as the path of the moonstruck man for whom everyone steps aside in shame.

Translated by Steven Lindberg

Modern man has long ago lost the ability to be moved or expectant. Legal codes have once and for all normalized and classified all manner of the unexpected. Life, which differs from the modern machine in that it permits fairy-tale like surprises, is becoming less and less different from it. The time honored categories of logic, according to which B will always follow on from A, and the sum of these two will inevitably be C—have become intolerable. The mathematical $2 \times 2 = 4$ is spreading to take on the dimensions of a nightmarish polyps, which has spread its feelers over everything. All logical possibilities have been exhausted to the last. The moment of constant rumination until loss of consciousness. Life, in its logic, has become nightmarish and illogical.

We, the Futurists, wish to show you to the gate that leads out of this ghetto of logic. Man has ceased to feel joy because he has ceased to have expectations. Only a life conceived of as a parade of possibilities and surprises will return this joy to him.

In the vicious circle of things that are self-evident, we have understood that nothing is self-evident and that besides this logic, there exists a whole sea of illogicalities, of which each can create its own distinct logic, whereby $A + B = F$ and $2 \times 2 = 777$.

A deluge of wonders and surprises. Nonsense dancing along on streets. Art—the crowd.

Anyone can be an artist.

Theaters, circuses, street performances, all played by the public itself.

We call on all poets, painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, and actors to take to the streets.

The stage is revolving. It's time to change the decorations.

Paintings as the walls of buildings. Multi-walled houses, spherical and conical. The orchestra plays a march. People want to walk to its beat.

We call on all craftsmen, tailors, shoemakers, furriers, and hairdressers to create new, never before seen outfits, hairstyles and costumes.

We call on all technicians, engineers, and chemists to make new, unprecedented inventions.

Technology is as much an art as are painting, sculpture, or architecture.

A good machine is the model for and the culmination of a work of art by virtue of the perfect combination of economy, expediency and dynamics. The telegraphic apparatus of Morse is a 1000 times a greater masterpiece than Byron's *Don Juan*.

We distinguish amongst works of architectural, plastic and technical art—WOMAN—as an excellent reproductive machine.

Woman is a force that is immeasurable and unexploited by its unparalleled influence. We demand that unequivocally equal rights be given to women in all spheres of private and public life.

Above all equal rights in erotic and family relations.

The number of married couples not living together, officially or unofficially in separation is reaching numbers threatening the social order. We consider the only way to prevent and stop this process to be the immediate introduction of divorce.

We stress the erotic moment as one of the most vital functions of life as a whole. It is one of the most elementary and exceptionally important sources of the joys of life, provided that the attitude towards it be straightforward, clear and sunny. Sexual tragedies in Przybyszewski's manner are tasteless and are evidence that contemporary men are completely spineless and impotent. We call on women, as physically healthier and stronger, to take the initiative in this sphere.

In the interests of the above, Polish society must itself take into its own hands supervision and control over the entire social life and all production, not permitting the continued production of things not compatible with this aim, unnecessary or harmful.

We, the people of wide lungs and broad shoulders, are sneezing from all the sickly smells of your yesterday's Messianism, and propose to you the one and only new Messianism, contemporary and crazy. If you do not want to be the last nation in Europe, but, on the contrary, the first, stop once and for all (feeding off of the old spatters from the kitchen of the West (we can afford to have our own menu), and hurry to the goal-post of the great race of civilizations, with short, synthetic steps.

We set to work on building a new home for the widened Polish Nation, which can no longer be fitted into its old one. We cannot manage alone. We call on all those who are alive, dissatisfied, and willing to help.

We announce:

A huge shifting of classes is taking place in the East and the West. A new power is finding its voice—the proletariat with a new awareness. A great reevaluation of values is beginning. All the rights and wrongs of the previous 1000 years of culture created at its expense are vying with one another. They are being measured against the one touchstone of the life of struggle—hard, steely, organic work. A great review of legitimacy is taking place. Whoever cannot legitimize his participation in life with this single coin—shall not survive.

We stress three fundamental moments in contemporary life: the machine, democracy and the crowd.

The life of the intellectual classes is undergoing a slow period of degeneration and neurasthenia. The old categories are outlived, and consumed—new ones are not yet here. It is a moment of crisis. Life itself, instead of being fundamentally a joy and a dihyramb, is increasingly coming to resemble a hard, externally imposed duty. Modern man is no longer able to enjoy life organically. The epidemic of suicides, human wrecks, breakdowns and human tragedies is none other than the logical extension of this phenomenon. This state of affairs cannot remain unchanged any longer. Immediate and energetic remedial action must be taken. We propose that one of its fundamental elements be:

More sunshine.

The wisdom of the ancient Chinese proverb: "carry your umbrella even in good weather," has for us become organically constituted.

We reject parasols, hats, bowler-hats; we will go about bareheaded. Bare-necked. It is necessary for everyone to become as tanned as possible. Houses ought to be built with south-facing walls of glass. More light, air, and space. If the Polish Seym deliberated outside, we would be sure to have a much sunnier Constitution.

Modern man, who expends ¾ of his energy working, needs a strong and healthy diet, and new, sharp, synthetic sensations. At present it is only art that can provide these sensations. Art ought to be the juice and joy of life, and not its mourner or its comforter. We are breaking away, once and for all, from so called "pure art," "art for art's sake," "art for the absolute." Art must be foremost and above all human, i. e. for people—mass, democratic and universal art.

Aware of the obligations of art to the present day and its problems, we cry: Artists take to the streets!

The art huddled in concert halls, exhibitions, palaces of art etc. holding a few hundred or even a few thousand people is a laughable anemic monstrosity, because only 1/100 000 of all people make use of it. Modern man has no time to go to concerts and exhibitions, ¾ of people are in no position to do this. This is why they must be able to find art everywhere:

Flying *poezaco*concerts and concerts in trains, trams, canteens, factories, cafeterias, in squares, stations, halls, pedestrian precincts, parks, from the balconies of houses etc. etc. etc. at all times of day and night.

Art must be unexpected, all pervasive and knock one off one's feet.

The first and essential step is control over all artistic production. Do not allow yourselves to be drenched daily with bucketfuls of musty, senile and snobbish literature, which is not now even capable of arousing your sexual instinct. The organized public is a force, against which nothing can endure. No unnecessary book will be published, if nobody needs it.

We call on all citizens of the Polish State to organize in self-defense. The Polish public has outgrown its creators. Today's viewer is already yawning openly at *Macbeth* and experiencing an indescribable pain in the region of the appendix whilst watching dying Eagles. Polish art, on the other hand, cannot afford to provide a new, vital sustenance. The one effective means to combat this lack of creativity is the unanimous, organized sabotage of senile literature and art. Not going to theaters, not buying books, not reading periodicals etc. etc. etc.

So that Polish society can be organized to achieve communally an immediate, deep, root reaching, fundamental and lasting futurization of life, we are founding all over the Rep. of Poland a gigantic Futurist party. Every working citizen who is instinctively experiencing the present moment of general cultural crisis, and is looking for a way out of it, may become an active member of the party. There is a whole society of such neurosithenics and martyrs of contemporary life. It is to them that we extend our hands.

We turn to the so called new people, i.e. those not yet contaminated by the syphilis of civilization, which universal war has thrust to the surface, and those who the old society still unjustly treats as though they were bastards. We the Futurists are the first to extend our hands in a gesture of fraternity to the "new people." They will be that healthy refreshing juice, which will reinvigorate the old, degenerate race of yesterday's people. That painful but necessary infection with which the great cataclysm of history immunized the whole of pre-war, decomposing Europe, which was already beginning to stink.

Our party, of people tearing their way into tomorrow, will be unprecedented, all encompassing and crazy. Everyone can be a leader and none can be the leader. The broadest decentralization. We do not recognize any leaders or privates: everyone is an equal worker in life's struggle. We stress a great moment in human history. Fate has become antiquated and died. From now on everyone can be the creator of his own life and of life in general.

We, the Futurists, are coming in this action to the aid of Polish society. With every new manifesto we shall give concrete pointers and instructions in accordance with this manifesto in all spheres. Every nameless member of the Futurist Party (we do not need surnames—they are all equal, aware and universal)—ought to respond to our call at his place of work.

In order for any action on our part to become possible, we demand that the Sejm of the constitutional Rep. of Poland immediately resolves that artists receive the same immunity as any Sejm deputy. An artist is as much a representative of the Nation as a member of parliament, simply possessing a different field of activity and different powers.

In this great and groundbreaking moment, we, the Futurists are forgetting past slights, we forget the fact that all our proceedings up till now, aiming in one planned direction, have been treated with hostility, thoughtlessness and mockery by Polish society. We know well that this was a misunderstanding caused by false informers and commentators, as well as by the lack of a unified front and a statement of clear, physical faith in ourselves. Now all these misunderstandings fall away of their own accord. With a purple faith in tomorrow and its unlimited possibilities, we wipe out with one fell swoop everything that was bad, both beyond us and within ourselves, all that was dispensable and senile, and we extend our arms to Polish society. If you are a living

nation, not just a little nation, if a century and a half of national bondage has not left you spineless, if you really are the nation of tomorrow, and not an obsolete nation—come follow us.

All are called upon to commence unanimous, mass Futurist action, immediately, at the moment of the declaration of this manifesto.

Translated by Klara Kemp-Weich



MANIFESTO CONCERNING FUTURIST POETRY Bruno Jasiński

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1. Cubism, Expressionism, Primitivism, and Dadaism have outdone all other isms. The only remaining current in art not yet to have been exploited is Onanism. We propose this as a collective name for all our opponents. In justification, we point out the fundamental factors of anti-Futurist art: sexlessness; inability to inseminate the crowds with their art; calm, passive self-abuse in the murk of melancholic ateliers.
2. In a time of great accomplishment, we consider the introduction of new names to be unnecessary and out of keeping with the times. Instead of a trademark, let us raise up the name of that group of people who one and a half decades ago first issued the slogans of the battle we are now concluding, and once again, call ourselves futurists.
3. We do not intend to repeat in 1921 that which they were already doing in 1908. We know that we are that many years older than they are. That which was in their case only a premonition, a rapid issuing of new perspectives—must for us become a concerted, conscious and creative effort. As the inheritors of an enormous empire of form we announce a great standardization of currency. We will be exchanging all Cubist, Expressionist, Dadaist and Primitivist credit notes for the only talents to have remained, since the Greek times, unfalsifiable.

To this end we proclaim:

4. It is forbidden in 1921 for anyone to create and construct in any way that has already been done before. Life flows onwards and does not repeat itself. The creator has a duty to everything that he has come across + to that wonderful new leap every artist must make into the emptiness of the universe. Art is the creation of new things. The artist who does not create new and un-heard of things, but only reshapes, for the several hundredth time, that which has been done before—is not an artist and ought to be held accountable in court for using this title, as one is for using any other title without the appropriate qualifications. We call upon the public to organize a boycott of such individuals.
5. Every artist is obliged to create a completely new and hitherto UN-heard of art, which he has the right to call by his name.
6. We consider a work of art to be a fait accompli, concrete and physical. Its form is conditioned by strictly internal need. As such, it answers for itself with the whole