1 For the sake of convenience and in accordance with the prevailing custom in the West, the present essay employs the nomenclature "Eastern" Europe as a catchall term, embracing both inaccurately and somewhat uncomfortably the diverse territory of Central, East Central, and Southeastern Europe that Cold War convention assigned to the East.

2 The standard narrative has been institutionalized in the collection and exhibitions of New York's Museum of Modern Art. The presentation of progressive art as an inexorable unfolding of styles has been more or less uncritically accepted among collecting institutions, in the pedagogy of art academies, and most decisively in the standard textbooks adopted for college and university level courses. Only in specialized studies, more often found in academic journals than in books for a general adult audience, does one encounter a challenge to the authority of style as a dominant determinant or index of a modernist aesthetic, forcefully asserted as universally valid.

3 The prevailing "Western" stylistic paradigm has been by and large uncritically manifested in numerous recent exhibitions containing substantial Eastern European art. Both the exhibition of Futurism held at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice (*Futurismo & Futurismi*, ed. K. G. Pontus Hulten, 1st American ed. [New York: Abbeville Press, 1986]) and the *Europa, Europa: das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (ed. Ryszard Stanislawski and Christoph Brockhaus, exh. cat. [Bonn: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1994]) exhibition mounted in Bonn, to mention the two largest, tellingly accommodated and harmonized the art from the European "periphery" to the critical categories and theoretical framework employed for Western art. The essential distinctiveness of the "unfamiliar" art from the margins was therefore erased—or at the least ignored—in favor of a claim for the universality of modernist styles and interests.

4 Although it is customary for many European scholars to distinguish conceptually and critically among the adjectives "avant-garde," "modern," and "modernist," this practice is less common in North America. Moreover, the present essay has as a principal objective an appeal to reexamine critical paradigms and historical patterns. In this context, a reconsideration of terminology is essential. For present purposes, then, the three terms cited above are provisionally employed synonymously.

5 See, for example, Piotr Piotrowski, "Modernism and Socialist Culture: Polish Art in the Late 1950s," in *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. S. E. Reid and D. Crowley (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2000); Piotrowski, "Totalitarianism and Modernism: The 'Thaw' and Informel Painting in Central Europe, 1955–1965," in *Artium Quaestiones* X, (Poznań [Poland], 2000); Andrzej Turowski, *Éxiste-t-il un art de l'Europe de l'Est? Utopie et idéologie* (Paris: Editions de la Villette, 1986); Stephen C. Foster, ed., *The Eastern Dada Orbit*, vol. 4 of *Crisis and the Arts: The History of Dada*, (New York: G. K. Hall, 1998); S. A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

6 See Piotrowski, "Modernism and Socialist Culture," for a discussion on the reception of modern art in Poland during the 1950s. In Hungary, a greater openness toward classical modern artists is noticeable in the 1960s, when, for example, the work of Lajos Kassák, the impresario of the avant-garde in Central and Eastern Europe, was publicly exhibited for the first time under the Communist regime. For a comprehensive overview of the literature on the Hungarian avant-garde, and the consequent bibliographical chronicle of its fate under both the right-wing authoritarianism of Miklós Horthy and the left-wing Communism of 1919 and during the 1947–89 periods, see S. A. Mansbach, *Standing in the Tempest: Painters of the Hungarian Avant-Garde, 1908–1930* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

7 At various moments during the late 1920s, and increasingly with the consolidation of various and successive authoritarian regimes from Estonia in the north to the Balkan peninsula to the south, it was forbidden to display, publish, or even study formally the major figures and monuments of experimental modern art—from both Eastern and Western Europe. Those who endeavored to do so not infrequently met with official obstruction or more severe consequences, sometimes being prosecuted as Bolshevist sympathizers (especially during the 1930s and early 1940s) or, in later decades, as bourgeois decadents. In the mid-1990s, the rise of nationalist intolerance and the resulting chauvinistic programs of exclusion imperiled the free inquiry into and advocacy of modern art, both classical and contemporary.

8 Prompted in part by earlier studies of the role of governments in employing art to advertise abroad the (often idealized) social and political values at home (see, for instance, Serge Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983]), scholars are beginning to address the effective role of international exhibitions—the Venice and São Paulo biennials, for example—in fostering extra-aesthetic policies.

9 The most effective vehicles for transmitting the modernist message were the myriad small-circulation journals that surfaced in all parts of the world. By reprinting one another's articles, reviewing one another's sponsored exhibitions, and reproducing one another's images, most every periodical participated in distributing modernist aesthetics to the widest audiences, even if the readership remained quite small. Through such "little journals" Paris's reputation as a cultural capital—and the progressive styles celebrated there—spanned the globe from Japan (*Mavo*), to Madagascar (*Latitude sud 18*), to Buenos Aires (*Inicial*).
The role of journals as a principal forum for the display (through reproduction), criticism, and discussion of Eastern European modernism merits further study. In a region where travel among the various sites of modernist activities was frequently difficult, journals played a major part in uniting those of shared commitments to progressive aesthetics. Furthermore, magazines of sophisticated design and elevated content—which most all of the Eastern European journals fostered—could overcome the peripheral geography and comparatively less economically and socially developed environment of the editors' home countries. This may help to explain the large number of small-circulation and short-lived publications from Bulgaria to Estonia; and it may

help to account for the impressive number of little reviews in Poland and Romania in particular, where political, class, and "national" divisions remained even after political independence or consolidation.

10 For a counterview to Paris's primacy, see the essays in the section "Berlin: Crossroads of Art," in *Künstlerischer Austausch: Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses fur Kunstgeschichte*, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993).

11 Most noteworthy in this regard was the sequence of exhibitions begun in the 1970s and held in Paris's Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou: *Paris-Berlin, 1900–1933: rapports et contrastes France-Allemagne* (1978), *Paris-Moscou, 1900–1930* (1979), and *Présences Polonaises* (1983), to cite but a few. In order not to vitiate Paris's importance, the Centre Pompidou mounted a large exhibition in 1981 significantly entitled *Paris-Paris 1937–1957*.

12 For English-speaking students, the studies published by T. J. Clark (e.g. *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848–1851* (1973) and *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (1982)) and Thomas Crow (for instance, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (1985)) inaugurated a series of studies for the newest generation of students of the social history of Paris-based early modernism. These books were preceded by a host of social histories of art, a tradition carried into the present by Albert Boime.

13 One might cite in this context the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century debates on the meaning of the Gothic as an indigenous expression of German or French national character.

14 For a discussion of the concept of an "old-age style," see the special issue of the *Art Journal* (vol. 46 [Summer 1987]), edited by David Rosand, "Old-Age Style."

15 See for instance Heinrich Wölfflin's *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst* (Munich: H. Bruckmann, 1917), 2d ed.

16 Viz. Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraktion und Einfühlung, ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie* (Munich: Piper & Co., 1911) 3d edition; and Henri Focillon's *Vie des formes* (Paris: Alcan, 1939).

17 Serious Eastern European students of the visual arts often traveled abroad in order to matriculate in academies of art. For those living under Russian rule, the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg held attraction. However, the *numerus clausus* established by the imperial authorities persuaded many from the Baltic lands of the empire to enroll in art schools set up in distant Kazan and elsewhere in the vast interior of the Romanov empire, at least until the establishment of an academy in Riga and of the Pallas School in Tartu. Academies, private and state supported, in Germany drew significant numbers of students from throughout Eastern Europe. Düsseldorf and Munich (both the Bavarian Royal Academy and Anton Ažbé's private school), and later Dresden and Berlin, were the preferred places of study, surpassing both Vienna and Budapest. Beginning with the reforms promulgated reluctantly by the czar in 1905, there was somewhat greater liberty offered to students from the sprawling empire both in the curriculum and in the freedom to travel. For those subject to rule from Vienna, Budapest, Berlin, or the representatives of the Sublime Porte, the opportunities for education in the visual arts varied significantly, though the possibilities offered to Poles who journeyed to Cracow, Transylvanians who traveled to Nagybánya (Baie Mare), or Slovenians who migrated to Italy, for example, were considerable. What is remarkable in the present context is the comparatively lesser allure of Paris, at least as a primary choice. Considerable numbers of artists did indeed visit Paris, but most often after having formally studied for years in Central or Eastern European academies. Only from the 1920s—and then not infrequently for domestic political reasons—did young artists journey to Paris for informal instruction. By the mid-1930s, coincident with the rise of authoritarian regimes throughout Europe, support for study "abroad," especially in the traditional centers of art, dropped markedly.

18 National revivals were not limited to the region, of course. They were apparent in most of Europe from the mid-nineteenth century. Although each revival had distinctive "national" aspects, especially apparent in the Nordic lands, Germany, and Italy, there was also potent regional revivalism, most clearly manifested in France, where Breton, Norman, Provençal, and other identities contended with a centralizing (national) authority.

19 Notable in the development of these national cultural revivalisms is the prominent—and frequently formative—role of (those later labeled as) "non-native" or "non-indigenous" groups and individuals: the Baltic-Germans in Estonia and Latvia, the "Germans" in Bohemia, the Jews in the Hungarian Kingdom, the Poles in Lithuania, and so forth. What this demonstrates is the immanent fluidity of the concepts of "national," "native," and "foreign," as each is contingent on time, place, and circumstance. Moreover, these concepts are easily invoked anachronistically, and they can be politically perilous, as one has witnessed in the contemporary tragedies unfolding in the Balkans, Africa, and elsewhere. Thus, one might rightfully question the ready assignment of labels to people and events. When Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald codified the Estonian oral epic *Kalevipoeg* in 1862, was he doing so as a Baltic-German whose Germanic forebears arrived six hundred years earlier? as an "Estonian" whose national traditions he sought to promote? as a subject of the Russian czar who bestowed economic privileges on Kreutzwald and those of his class who demonstrated loyalty to the interests of imperial government? or as an individual of a latter-day Baltic Enlightenment? Whatever may be adduced of Kreutzwald's intentions may or may not have been shared by the members of the various academically liberal revivalist associations. Further, their motivations and objectives may well have differed from the adherents of the Young Estonians (Noor-Eesti), who sought to assert a national self-awareness, though from a different perspective and with differing emphases from those of Kreutzwald's Baltic-German liberals.

20 See Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*.

21 Latvian ceramics are chosen as a representative model of the successful negotiation between (what in the West—but rarely in the East—was perceived as conflicting) local and supranational demands. Even though the scope of the *Central European*

Avant-Gardes exhibition does not extend to the Eastern Baltic, the issues to which Latvian ceramics point are applicable throughout the entire region and suggest an instructive paradigm for treating Eastern European classical art in general.

22 The international prestige of Baltars's modernist inventiveness is warranted by the three medals, including the gold, garnered in Paris at the 1925 *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes*.

23 The most striking exception was the embrace of a reactionary modernism by Germany's National Socialists. See Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). To a lesser degree, Italy's support of rationalist architecture and late Futurist visual art attest to a parallel form of conservative modernism.

24 For artists who were active in nations where the intellectual class was few in number, validation of their cultural efforts was often sought abroad, and not just from among those perceived as aesthetically advanced Westerners. Frequently, one desired legitimation from Russia as well, or at least recognition by progressive figures active (or trained) there. In this regard, one might understand the receptiveness to Suprematism and Constructivism in general, and in Latvia and Estonia in particular. Despite the residual animosity harbored toward the Soviet Union and all things Russian following the civil strife in each land, warfare in which Bolshevist aggression imperiled the survival of the struggling republics from 1918–1920, Baltic artists such as Teodors Zaļkalns, Kārlis Zāle, Uga Skulme, Marta Liepiņa-Skulme, Niklāvs Strunke, Henrik Olvi, Ado Vabbe, and Arnold Akberg enthusiastically embraced Russian Constructivism—and creatively adapted it to local purposes.

25 By contrast, one might cite the telling adjectives used by Piet Mondrian, the adherents to De Stijl, and the movement's supportive critics to describe the modern art they most highly prized, often their own: "pure," "absolute," and "abstract."

26 The strategy of using style to address different audiences with different messages—which the present essay advances as a convention of the classical modern artists of this region—was not limited to the picture plane. It can be found in other visual media and, significantly, in the writings of many of the artists and their (local) apologists. In Malevich's manifold published essays, theoretical tracts, and aesthetic musings, for example, one might understand his use of language—customarily decried in the West as idiosyncratic, contradictory, or inherently illogical—as fitting a regional (and thus not solely an individual) pattern of introducing a welter of references and beliefs without the need for consistency. Not to be overlooked, as well, was Malevich's occasional practice of subtitling his Suprematist designs with explicit references to the peasantry and to life in the Russian/Ukrainian countryside, especially in the years of "high" Suprematism, roughly 1914–17. As a result, one can recognize the consistent concern with local themes, whether expressed in representational imagery or through abstract association. The manner in which local meanings were manifested to a knowing audience by means of progressive international styles varied among artists and movements, and by location. Thus, the way in which Malevich was simultaneously "local" and "universal" differed from the solutions pursued by János Máttis-Teutsch or Zbigniew Pronaszko, for example. Future research into the history of classical modern art in Eastern Europe will likely reveal further general patterns and individual departures from the methodological model suggested here.