

FIG. 1
 Contemporary photomontage
 in which three models
 of *Maison d'Artiste* have
 been assembled. The
 photomontage is signed
 and dated: lower right 'Theo
 van Doesburg' and lower
 left 'Paris 1923' and was
 published in *De Stijl* 6, no.
 6-7 (August 1924); Photo
 RKD – Netherlands Institute
 for Art History, The Hague,
 0408/1286.

THEO VAN DOESBURG AND LE CORBUSIER. AFFINITIVE AND ADVERSARY VIEWS ON ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract: Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931), the founder of *De Stijl*, once wrote: “As far as architecture is concerned, one can speak of modern architecture up to and after 1923”¹. This was not a direct reaction to Le Corbusier’s *Vers une architecture* (1923), Van Doesburg and the young architect Cornelis van Eesteren, designed a *Maison d’Artiste* in the same year that mocked many sound architectural laws. *Maison d’Artiste* and similar designs can be understood as a confrontation of his ideas on architecture with those of Le Corbusier, with whom he felt in constant competition. With these ideas he attempted, in vain, to occupy and define a place in architectural history alongside Le Corbusier.

Keywords: Theo van Doesburg, *Maison d’Artiste*, Le Corbusier, architecture, color, town planning.

Résumé : Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931), le fondateur de *De Stijl*, a écrit un jour : « En ce qui concerne l’architecture, on peut parler d’architecture moderne jusqu’à 1923 et après ». Ce n’était pas une réaction directe à *Vers une architecture* (1923) de Le Corbusier, Van Doesburg et le jeune architecte Cornelis van Eesteren, ont conçu une *Maison d’Artiste* la même année qui se moquait de nombreuses lois architecturales saines. La *Maison d’Artiste* et les conceptions similaires peuvent être comprises comme une confrontation de ses idées sur l’architecture avec celles de Le Corbusier, avec qui il se sentait en concurrence constante. Avec ces idées, il a tenté, en vain, d’occuper et de définir une place dans l’histoire de l’architecture aux côtés de Le Corbusier.

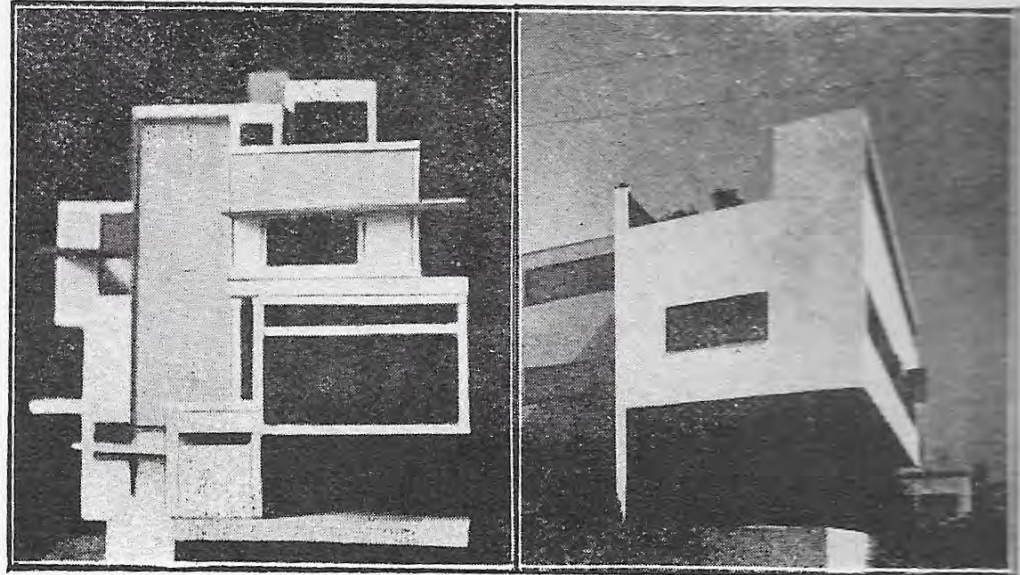
Mots clés : Theo van Doesburg, *Maison d’Artiste*, Le Corbusier, architecture, couleur, urbanisme.

Resumen: Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931), el fundador de *De Stijl*, escribió una vez: “En lo que respecta a la arquitectura, podemos hablar de arquitectura moderna antes y después de 1923”. Esta no fue una reacción al libro *Vers une architecture* publicado por Le Corbusier ese mismo año, sino al diseño de la *Maison d’Artiste* de Van Doesburg y el joven Cornelis van Eesteren, que en 1923 desafió numerosas leyes arquitectónicas. La *Maison d’Artiste* y otros diseños similares pueden interpretarse como una confrontación entre las ideas arquitectónicas de van Doesburg y Le Corbusier, con quien competía constantemente. Con estas ideas, van Doesburg intentó, en vano, ocupar y delimitar un lugar en la historia de la arquitectura junto a Le Corbusier.

Palabras clave: Theo van Doesburg, *Maison d’Artiste*, Le Corbusier, arquitectura, color, urbanismo.

FIG. 2

Photos published in *De Stijl* no. 79/84 (1927): 65. The facing captions read: 'Mod.[el] free ("floating") construction / arch.[itect] Doesburg-Eesteren, Paris, 1923' and 'Application dito constr.[uction]: Le Corbusier 1927' respectively.



Mod. vrije ('Zwevende,') constructie
arch. Doesburg-Eesteren. Parijs, 1923

Toepassing dito constr.:
Le Corbusier 1927

The publication of a picture of *Maison d'Artiste* in the jubilee issue of *De Stijl* in 1927, in which Van Doesburg made his statement, emphasized the 'floating construction'. Right next to it, Van Doesburg placed an image of a floating corner solution by Le Corbusier for his house in the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. By simply mentioning the dates 1923 for *Maison d'Artiste* and 1927 for the house in Stuttgart in the captions, Van Doesburg implicitly suggested that he had been miles ahead of his competitor. (Fig. 2) It was an attempt, characteristic of Van Doesburg, to place himself at the head of the troops. (Fig. 3) Throughout his career, he strived to present himself as precursor. As mentioned, he believed that his design for *Maison d'Artiste* had caused a paradigm shift, which had also influenced the development of Le Corbusier and Robert Mallet-Stevens, "who not only visited the De Stijl exposition, but made their studies here". Those studies had no lasting influence in the case of Le Corbusier, because his (cubist) dwellings in the Weissenhofsiedlung made him no longer "a constructor of such great importance as had been accorded him until recently" in the eyes of Van Doesburg. Moreover, Van Doesburg considered his interiors 'sculptures in color'². And that was not meant in praise. Initially, however, Le Corbusier was seen by Van Doesburg as a kindred spirit who wanted to 'de-materialize' architecture, but he later became a formidable competitor in gaining international public attention³.

Van Doesburg's idea of a floating architecture, suspended in the air, is taken to its fullest extent in *Maison d'Artiste* (OC 702.III, August-October 1923)⁴. The colored areas increased this effect by making the design fall apart even more. He accompanied his design with a number of theoretical writings, such as *Vers une construction collective (Manifeste V du Groupe 'De Stijl')*⁵. In the issue of *De Stijl* in which this manifesto was printed, Van Doesburg also published 'Tot een beeldende architectuur' ('Vers une architecture plastique' in French)⁶. Both titles echo the title of Le Corbusier's publication.



FIG. 3
Theo van Doesburg,
Weimar, 31 December 1920.
Photo Atelier Eckner: RKD,
0408/1512.



FIG. 4
First issue of *De Stijl*,
October 1917, cover
vignette: Vilmos Huzár. From
January 1921, the magazine
was given an oblong format
with a cover design by Van
Doesburg himself.

De Stijl

In late 1917, Van Doesburg, together with painters Vilmos Huszár, Bart van der Leek and Piet Mondrian, and architect J.J.P. Oud, had founded the monthly magazine *De Stijl*, one of the first radical avant-garde magazines of this period calling attention to the latest developments in visual art and architecture. (Fig. 4) Soon the architects Robert van 't Hoff, Gerrit Rietveld and Jan Wils joined the initiators. The founding of *De Stijl* was a provisional culmination point in Van Doesburg's development, which had gained momentum just before World War I when he became acquainted with the ideas of Wassily Kandinsky. In November 2018 a manifesto on the principles of *De Stijl* was publicized in French, English and German, through which the ideas became available for the international community.

Started as a traditional painter and critic, Van Doesburg, under the influence of Kandinsky, gradually manifested himself as a propagandist of geometric-abstract painting. His acquaintance with Mondrian in 1915 played a decisive role. He recorded his renewed ideas in the essay 'Grondbegrippen der nieuwe beeldende kunst' [Basic concepts of the new visual arts], a key text in his oeuvre, which in 1925 would also form the core of his Bauhaus publication *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*. (Fig. 5) He had gone public with his newly acquired insights in 1916 with a series of articles under the title 'De Nieuwe Beweging in de beeldende kunst' [The New Movement in Painting] in the prestigious journal *De Beweging*, in which he also outlined his – certainly not yet crystallized – vision of architecture and advocated cooperation between architecture and painting.

These articles brought him into contact with Oud, who gave him his first architectural commissions. Shortly after Van Doesburg also worked with Wils and made radical color designs for the interior and exterior of his De Lange House in Alkmaar (OC 554, May-October 1917). In the latter case, Van Doesburg's use of color was intended to make it appear that all architectural elements "should be loosened by a contrasting light color"⁷. He entered a new territory with these architectural designs.

Within the De Stijl movement, irritations and disagreements soon arose between Van Doesburg and his co-initiators. Van Doesburg, who would leave the Netherlands behind in early 1921, first moved to Weimar and then to Paris in 1923. He was disappointed with the direction taken by his original companions and soon shifted a considerable part of his publicity activity to architectural magazines such as *Bouwkundig Weekblad* and *Het Bouwbedrijf*. He also published the little Dadaist magazine *Mécano* in the early 1920s, which only lasted 5 issues.

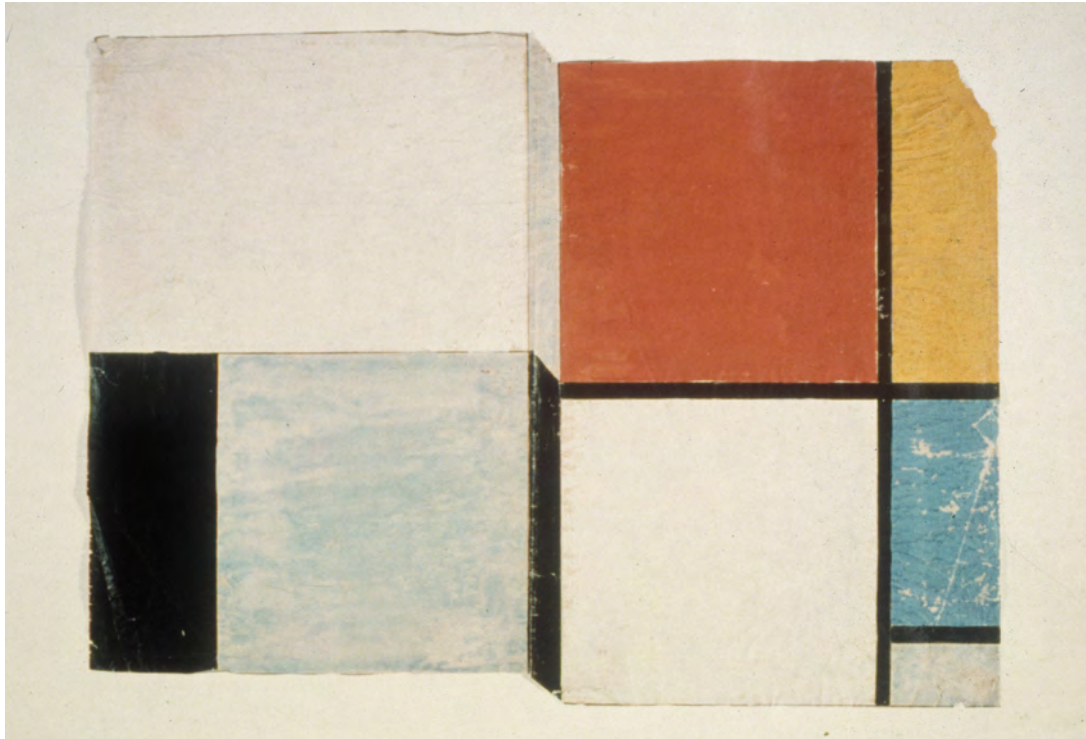
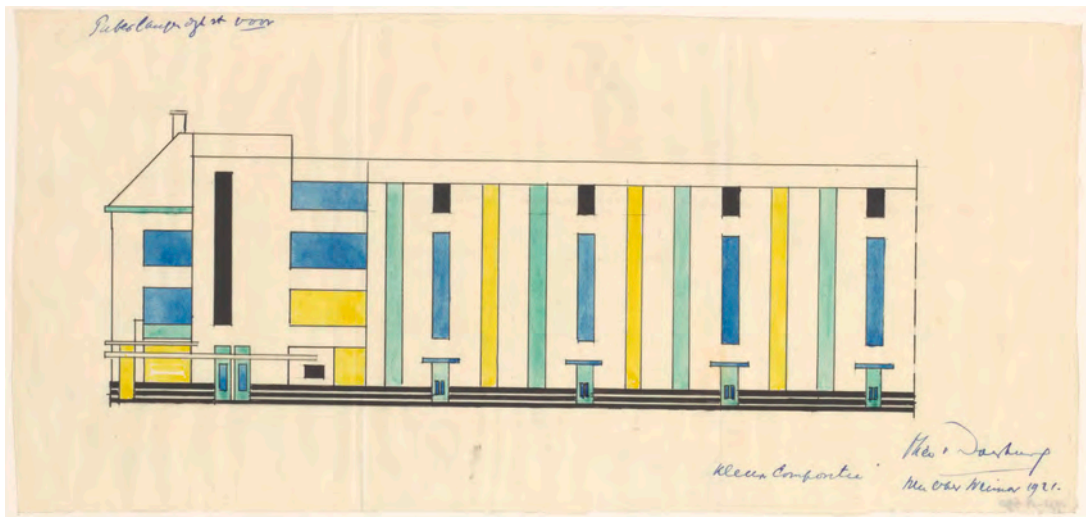


FIG. 5

Cover design for *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*, 1924, East Indian ink and gouache on transparent paper, 20.5 x 28.5 cm: Centraal Museum, Utrecht, AB4998.

FIG. 6

Color design for facade of Pieter Langendijkstraat (block VIII) in the Spangen district, Rotterdam, architect J.J.P. Oud, October 1921, East Indian ink and gouache on paper, 13.5 x 30 cm: Fondation Custodia, Paris, 1972-A.590.



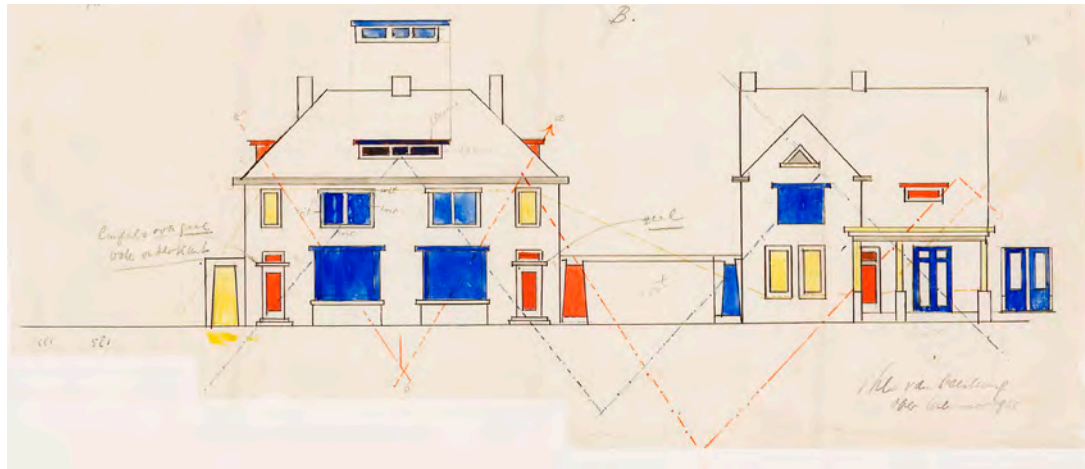
Increasing involvement in architecture

The relationship between architecture and visual art gradually became a major point of contention among the original *De Stijl* participants. Van Doesburg deeply respected Mondrian, who surpassed him eleven years. They shared the view that the primacy of collaboration between architecture and painting lay with the latter, but conflicts soon arose with his other companions over Van Doesburg's rigid views. In retrospect, Wils even attributed Van Doesburg dictatorial tendencies⁹. And things broke down with Oud when the latter rejected a color design by Van Doesburg for a number of apartment blocks in Rotterdam, on the grounds that the design affected the functionality of Oud's architecture. On that occasion, Van Doesburg wrote self-consciously to Oud: "I am not only responsible for myself, but also for the cause for which we are all fighting. In the previous blocks I have allowed changes, even though this has torn a link from the chain of my architectural-painterly development. [...] But given that I am Van Doesburg, I have, I take the right to call out to you: NO – NO – NO. Either so - or nothing"⁹. (Fig. 6) (Fig. 7)



FIG. 7
 Facade Pieter
 Langendijkstraat (block VIII),
 architect J.J.P. Oud: Nieuwe
 Instituut, Rotterdam, OUDJ-
 ph 111.

FIG. 8
Color design for exterior
Oosterstraat, Drachten,
architect C.R. de Boer,
middle of September 1921,
pencil, East Indian ink and
gouache on transparent
papier, 18 x 43 cm
(irregular): Museum Dr8888,
Drachten.



However, Van Doesburg, who had neither training nor experience as an architect, was not deterred by this failure and continued to search with unbridled enthusiasm for opportunities to realize his ideas. He had developed self-confidence through his involvement in several building projects in the town of Drachten in the north of the Netherlands. The local architect C.R. de Boer had engaged him to make color designs for a traditional block of houses and a school (OC 670, August-October 1921; OC 672, November 1921). (Fig. 8) Unlike Oud, De Boer looked up to Van Doesburg, allowing him to take enormous liberties with his color plans that were totally out of line with the architecture. As a result, Van Doesburg soon considered himself the equal of the professional architects in *De Stijl*. He boasted, for example, that Le Corbusier's 'Trois rappels à M.M. les architectes', later included in *Vers une architecture*, clearly showed "that the notions about architecture that had already been developed in 'De Stijl' since 1917 by J.J.P. Oud, Robt. van 't Hoff, v. Doesburg and others were now beginning to make way in France"¹⁰.

Van Doesburg's increasing ambition in the field of architecture is also evident from the stream of publications he contributed to *Bouwkundig Weekblad* beginning in September 1920. In that journal, Van Doesburg burst forth with such far-reaching articles as 'De beteekenis der mechanische esthetics voor de architectuur en andere disciplines' [The significance of mechanical aesthetics for architecture and other disciplines] and 'De taak der nieuwe architectuur' [The task of the new architecture]. The latter was an aggressive discussion of the book *Schoonheid in samenleving* [Beauty in society] (1919) by H.P. Berlage, the internationally highly esteemed patriarch of Dutch architecture, who in the eyes of Van Doesburg belonged to an old guard that had become superfluous. He predicted that young architects were ready "to initiate, from constructive-aesthetic relations, a new architecture, averse to all arbitrary and decorative tendencies". Van Doesburg's review, spread over no less than three issues of *Bouwkundig Weekblad*, was each time preceded by a motto taken from the first two issues of *L'Esprit Nouveau*¹¹. (Fig. 9) So he must have seen these immediately after their publication. In his review of Berlage's book, Van Doesburg stated that "the American engineers, who construct the modern factories and silos, are of more significance and give more direction than the architects, who first and foremost feel themselves to be artists" and concluded: "After all, it is the task of the new architecture to turn against the aesthetics of feeling and to consistently implement the mechanical aesthetics".

Around this time, Van Doesburg had a fierce dispute with Oud over Cubist architecture¹². And when, in 1925, Oud built a housing complex in Hoek van Holland, nearby Rotterdam, with round corner solutions, Van Doesburg reproached him for converting to the decorative 'Liberty-Wendingen style' of the Amsterdam School¹³. (Fig. 10) Le Corbusier, who had already introduced round forms for the exterior, would also use round forms in the interior in his Cook House (1926) in Boulogne-sur-Seine. It is therefore remarkable that Van Doesburg never commented on such curves in Le Corbusier. That lack of reaction on Van Doesburg's part is all the more remarkable because it was a phenomenon that did concern him. In the January 1922 issue of *Mécano* he published, for example,

statements by the Futurists F.T. Marinetti and Umberto Boccioni dating from 1912 in which they rejected the curve and championed the straight. And his dealings with Lissitsky also featured an ongoing discussion about the curved line in painting. When the latter showed his Proun room at the ‘Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung’ in 1923 and connected the reliefs on the walls by long slats, Van Doesburg and he had heated discussions about the round forms Lissitsky applied alongside the rectangular forms, which contradicted the neo-plasticism of De Stijl movement¹⁴. In this regard, Lissitsky complained to Oud that the universe had no straight but only curved lines, and that the sphere and not the cube was “the crystal of the universe”¹⁵.

Paul Dermée

In March 1920, Van Doesburg stayed in Paris with Mondrian, who, after an interruption because of the war, had returned there the year before. There Van Doesburg met members of La Section d’Or, such as the sculptor Alexander Archipenko, through whom he was appointed the Dutch representative of this group of Cubist artists. He also became acquainted with gallery owner Léonce Rosenberg, who had mainly Cubists and neo-Cubists in his stable.

Presumably Van Doesburg came into contact with Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant through Paul Dermée, who had co-founded the journal *L’Esprit Nouveau* with them in early 1920 and from whom Van Doesburg had received a number of Dadaist books and journals for *De Stijl* in late 1919. Ozenfant later claimed to have known Van Doesburg well. He had come to see him at the editorial office of *L’Esprit Nouveau* around 1921 and brought him a manuscript “full of mathematical calculations intended to find a harmonic key to the laws of rhythm”¹⁶. Whether Le Corbusier was also present at the time, Ozenfant does not say. Based in part on that manuscript, he considered Mondrian and Van Doesburg to be grandsons of Da Vinci. Ozenfant appreciated Van Doesburg’s uncompromising purity. Van Doesburg, on the other hand, makes no mention of this encounter anywhere in his correspondence or diary entries, either in March 1920 when he stayed with Mondrian nor the following year when he took a detour on his way to Weimar and made another brief visit to Paris.



FIG. 9
Beginning of the first installment of ‘De taak der nieuwe architectuur’, with motto borrowed from Le Corbusier.

FIG. 10
Front of the typescript of *Gestaltende Farbelehre*, the German-language version of *Étude plastique et construction de la couleur*: RKD, 0408/388.

FIG. 11

Color design for the ceiling of Van Eesteren's University Hall, probably June-July 1923, gouache on paper (varnished) on card, 56 x 32.5 cm: Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, EEST 3.169.



Color

The manuscript Ozenfant remembered was possibly *Etude plastique et construction de la couleur*, which was part of a four-volume study Van Doesburg had been undertaking since the early 1920s¹⁷. (Fig. 10) Rosenberg inquired as early as 1922 about the publication date of these “4 volumes de votre méthode scientifique de l’Art”¹⁸. Nothing came of it, although the book still turns up regularly in Van Doesburg’s correspondence until 1928.

Color was unmistakably a recurrent topic in Van Doesburg’s reflections. In a lecture he gave in Germany in the spring of 1922, using examples by Wils and Huszár, he said, “In modern architecture, the color problem is the most important and difficult problem of our time”¹⁹. And after the article ‘De beteekenis van de kleur in binnen- en buitenarchitectuur’ [The significance of color in interior and exterior architecture] specifically devoted to the use of color from 1923²⁰, Van Doesburg launched in mid-1924 in ‘Tot een beeldende architectuur’ [Towards plastic architecture] sixteen theorems on an intermediate state of his ideas about neo-plastic architecture. The programmatic article had also been published shortly before under the title ‘De nieuwe architectuur’ with the subtitle ‘Korte samenvatting der architectuur principes gedurende 1916 tot 1923 door den stijlgroep in Holland praktisch en theoretisch ontwikkeld’ [The new architecture: Short summary of the architectural principles developed practically and theoretically by the style group in Holland during 1916 to 1923]²¹. He conveniently saw himself as “the style group”. His former companions must have been surprised by these statements attributed to them as well, for they had not been asked. For example, Van Doesburg differed with Mondrian on the applicability of the principles of Nieuwe Beelding (Neo-Plasticism) in architecture. “What I want is, as I therefore wrote, very difficult to carry out directly. [...] That is why I do not cooperate with van Doesburg [...] who does seem to see the possibility of direct execution,” Mondrian wrote to Oud²².

One of Van Doesburg's theorems in 'Tot een beeldende architectuur' reads: "The new architecture involves color organically and as a direct element of expression of its proportions in time and space. Without color these proportions [...] are not visible"²³. Also *Vers une construction collective* states that besides space and time, color too provides a new dimension. Just as paint had to dissolve the materiality of the medium in painting, so in his view color must dissolve and disintegrate architecture. Early designs as the School of Agriculture in Drachten (OC 672, 1921-22) and the Van Zessen House that was mentioned before featured a non-static composition with a use of color that was focused on movement. Van Doesburg would later base the painting *Composition* (1924, OC 714) on his design for the floor of a university hall designed by Van Eesteren (OC 701, 1923). A sketch has survived in which he indicates the colorful planes of his floor without their architectural context. (Fig. 11) In doing so, he echoed what Constructivists such as El Lissitzky and Alexander Rodchenko had come up with. He approached architecture primarily as a visual artist, and in fact saw it as a kind of support for his views on painting. In the same way that in painting the paint concealed the materiality of the support or substrate, color had to lift and disintegrate the architecture. Van Doesburg even coined a term for it: he characterized his interventions in architecture as his "peinto-architecturales" work²⁵.

Lissitzky and other Russian and Eastern European Constructivists had met Van Doesburg soon after his arrival in Germany. A closely collaborating network of like-minded journals emerged. For the most part, Van Doesburg was not doctrinaire in his contacts, but was chiefly interested in showcasing his ideas to anyone who would listen. Together with Lissitzky, László Moholy-Nagy, Hans Richter and others, he tried in vain to found a Constructivist International in 1922. It is telling that no Frenchman was involved in this initiative. It had been Van Doesburg's chance to act, for once, not reactively but conductively, an opportunity he would seize only once the following year with his design of the unique *Maison d'Artiste*.



FIG. 12
Theo and Nelly van Doesburg with philosopher Harry Scheibe in Van Doesburg's studio Am Schanzengraben in Weimar, Februari 1922. Right, the final design for the left-hand section of the stained glass window *Large Pastorale* for the School of Agriculture in Drachten: Photo RKD, 0408/1566.

Failed collaboration on *L'Esprit Nouveau*

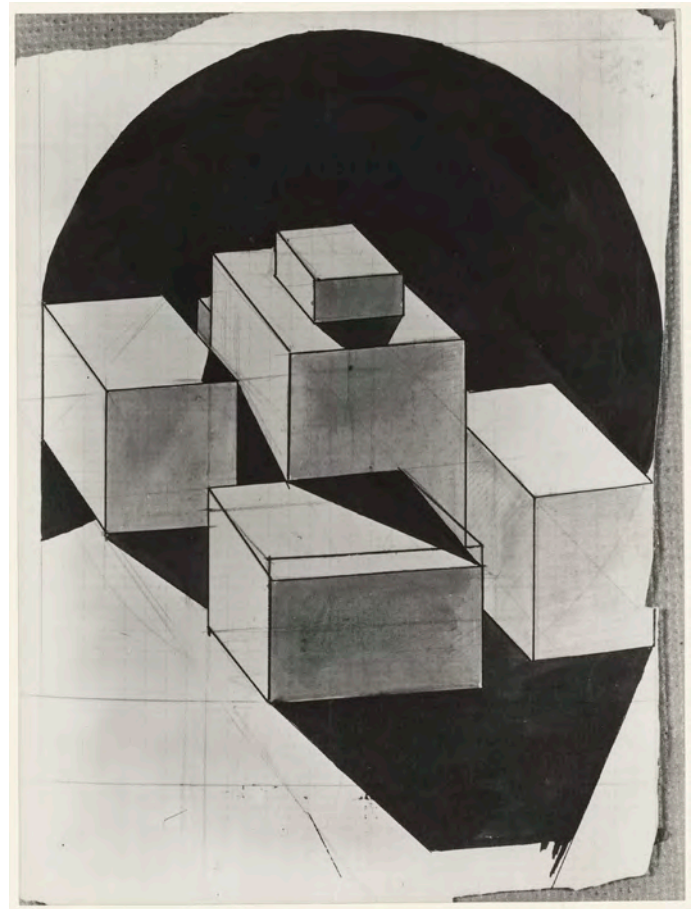
Dermée invited Van Doesburg to collaborate on *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Naturally, Van Doesburg responded with his usual bravado: “je suis heureux avec le but de votre revue ‘L'Esprit nouveau’ d’arriver à une documentation internationale d’esthétique moderne. Le mouvement du ‘Stijl’, le seul mouvement extrêmement moderne des Pays-Bas a le meme but et c’est pourquoi je me mets tout à fait à votre disposition”²⁶. Two months later this announcement followed in *De Stijl*: “L'Esprit Nouveau. The poet Paul Dermée forms an international art movement, which will publish a revue whose texts and the many reproductions will give a clear picture of international modern aesthetics. [...] The editor Paul Dermée has contacted the editors of ‘De Stijl’ to enable mutual cooperation”²⁷. To Oud, he boasted about the invitation: “This is going to be an international magazine, only from the modern masters in every field. ‘Tis a great movement, which will work on a fixed basis. Because of ‘De Stijl’ they think Holland is a paradise for modernisms”²⁸. Although Van Doesburg, like Mondrian, was announced as a contributor in issue of 15 October 1920 of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, only *De Stijl*'s second manifesto devoted to literature appeared in the magazine that month. Shortly afterwards, he complained to Oud: “Yes ‘L'Esprit Nouveau’ is already diluting. [...] Thus they *did not include* my article on ‘L'Art Collective’ either. Everything is diluting – except ‘De Stijl’, which is becoming more consistent and combative”²⁹. Incidentally, it is unclear which article Van Doesburg was referring to. After his visit to Paris in March 1920 and his appointment as representative of La Section d'Or, he immediately interfered with their upcoming exhibitions. A few months later, in a letter to Thorvald Hellesen, a Norwegian fellow member, Van Doesburg wrote emphatically that he wanted to emphasize “une direction collective” in the visual arts with those exhibitions³⁰. Perhaps in his characteristic way, he tried to set himself up as one of the spokesmen for the group with his article ‘L'Art Collective’.

New issues of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, meanwhile, were faithfully listed in the received books and magazines section of *De Stijl*, but when Dermée was removed from the editorial board after three issues, Van Doesburg's enthusiasm faded. He accused Le Corbusier and Ozenfant of more or less betraying modernism, for he credited them with a return to “classicism”. Nevertheless, he was proud as a peacock when, in May 1921, Maurice Raynal reviewed



FIG. 13

Postcard to Antony Kok, 12 September 1921. The text around the image reads: ‘Before collapse bombed by n’dimensional Stijl artillery’; RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History, 0408/2204.



Van Doesburg's programmatic pamphlet *Classique – baroque – moderne* in the eighth issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*: "Suddenly an article about me by Maurice Raynal appears in 'L'Esprit Nouveau'. He praises me very much and calls me 'one of the first artists of this époque'"³¹. At the end of May 1924, Van Doesburg was still to submit his article 'La signification de la couleur en architecture' to the magazine, but it came to nothing³²

Bauhaus

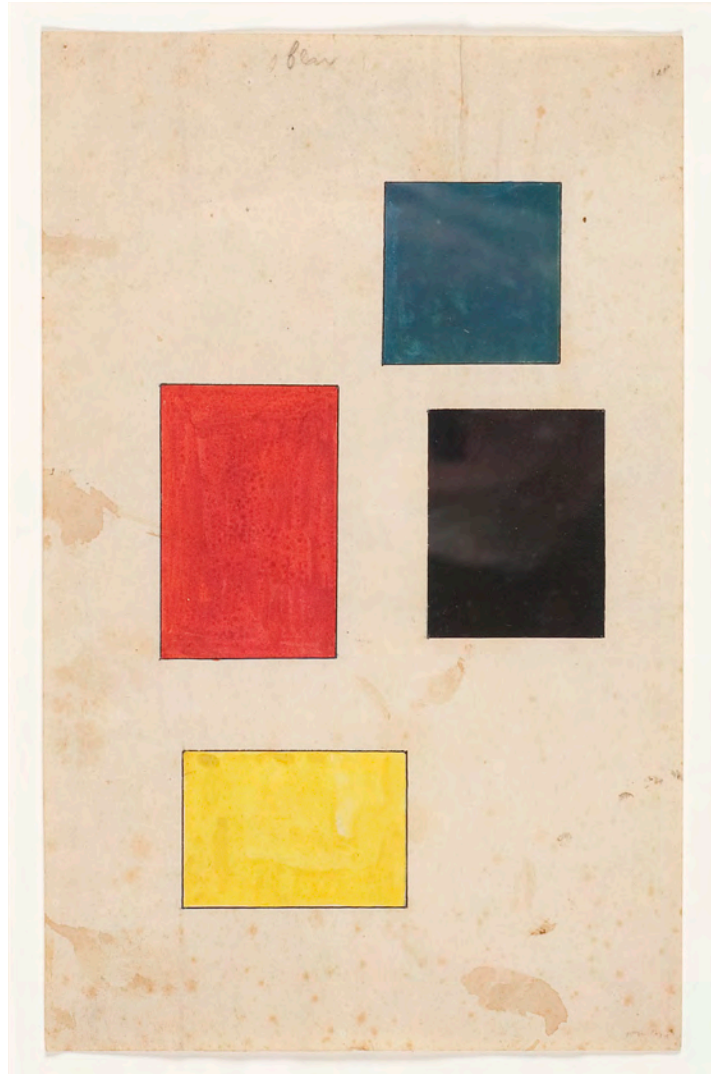
Van Doesburg stayed in Weimar for some time from late April 1921. He hoped to get an appointment as a lecturer at the Bauhaus. (Fig. 12) (Fig. 13) From his new residence, he carried out the commission in Drachten that was mentioned before. By his own admission, he gained great admiration from the young architects in Weimar for his radical designs³³. Over a year after his arrival, Van Doesburg claimed in an article, distancing himself from Oud's views, that Bauhaus director Walter Gropius, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Erich Mendelsohn and other German architects had adopted his ideas³⁴. As he did later with Le Corbusier, he marked his position within architecture by contrasting himself with those he considered competitors and by portraying himself as a forerunner.

While he was denied a teaching position at the Bauhaus, he gave a course in 1922 outside the official curriculum on the principles of the De Stijl movement, in which his designs for the houses in Drachten played a role. Basis for his course was his article 'Grondbegrippen van de nieuwe beeldende kunst' that was mentioned before. (Fig. 14)

FIG. 14
Study for color composition in 3 dimensions by Max Burchartz, one of the participants in the Stijl course in Weimar, 1922: Photo RKD, 0408/1221.

FIG. 15
Study in the basis of the *Fundamental of architecture*, 1922, pencil and East Indian ink (pen and brush) on graph paper, 25 x 19.5 cm (irregular): Centraal Museum, Utrecht, AB5103.

FIG. 16
Fundamental of the art of painting, 1922, East Indian ink and gouache on paper, 22.5 x 14.5 cm: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, AB5101.



For the purpose of his course, Van Doesburg additionally drew a number of *Fundamentals* for painting, sculpture and architecture, respectively (OC 674.I-III). They seem to be advance notices of the architectural designs and constructions he would realize shortly thereafter in Paris. In two drawings of an architectural project, also dating from 1922, Van Doesburg, like Le Corbusier did in his designs, applied a modular system (OC 674IIIa-b)³⁵. (Fig. 15) Le Corbusier and Ozenfant depicted the *Fundamental of the art of painting* in black in their 'L'angle droit', which they published in *L'Esprit Nouveau* no. 18 in November 1923³⁶. (Fig. 16)

The Bauhaus was largely ignored in France because of the aftermath of the war, although the catalog of the 1923 Bauhaus exhibition of the work of students and teachers in Le Corbusier's *L'Esprit Nouveau* received full praise. Among other things, he praised Gropius for "une alliance d'idées avec le groupe STIJL d'Amsterdam, représenté par le peintre Théo van Doesburg, peintre, mais théoricien d'une jeune architecture dont l'esthétique s'échafaude sur quelques principes brutalement simples (très intéressante du reste, puisqu'elle montre en tout cas la force des systèmes quels qu'ils soient)"³⁷.

Paris

In early May 1923, Van Doesburg arrived in Paris³⁸. He had expected to spend only six months there in connection with the De Stijl exhibition to be shown there at the end of that year at Léonce Rosenberg's L'Effort Moderne gallery, but he would live there until his death in 1931.

Van Doesburg had met Rosenberg during his visit to Paris in March 1920 and had seen him again in Amsterdam in 1921. On that occasion they had made plans for a cultural center the Frenchman wanted to build. Van Doesburg planned to take this on with Oud. The letter to Antony Kok in which Van Doesburg reported this already contained a first sketch. "Oud and I will soon start with the drawings and then the models in plaster. [...] I am starting here on my own with studies in wood and plaster and also in color"³⁹. (Fig. 17) (Fig. 18) In January 1923, Rosenberg sent him a program of requirements for the house. This time Van Eesteren, Rietveld and Wils were called in by Van Doesburg for help⁴⁰.

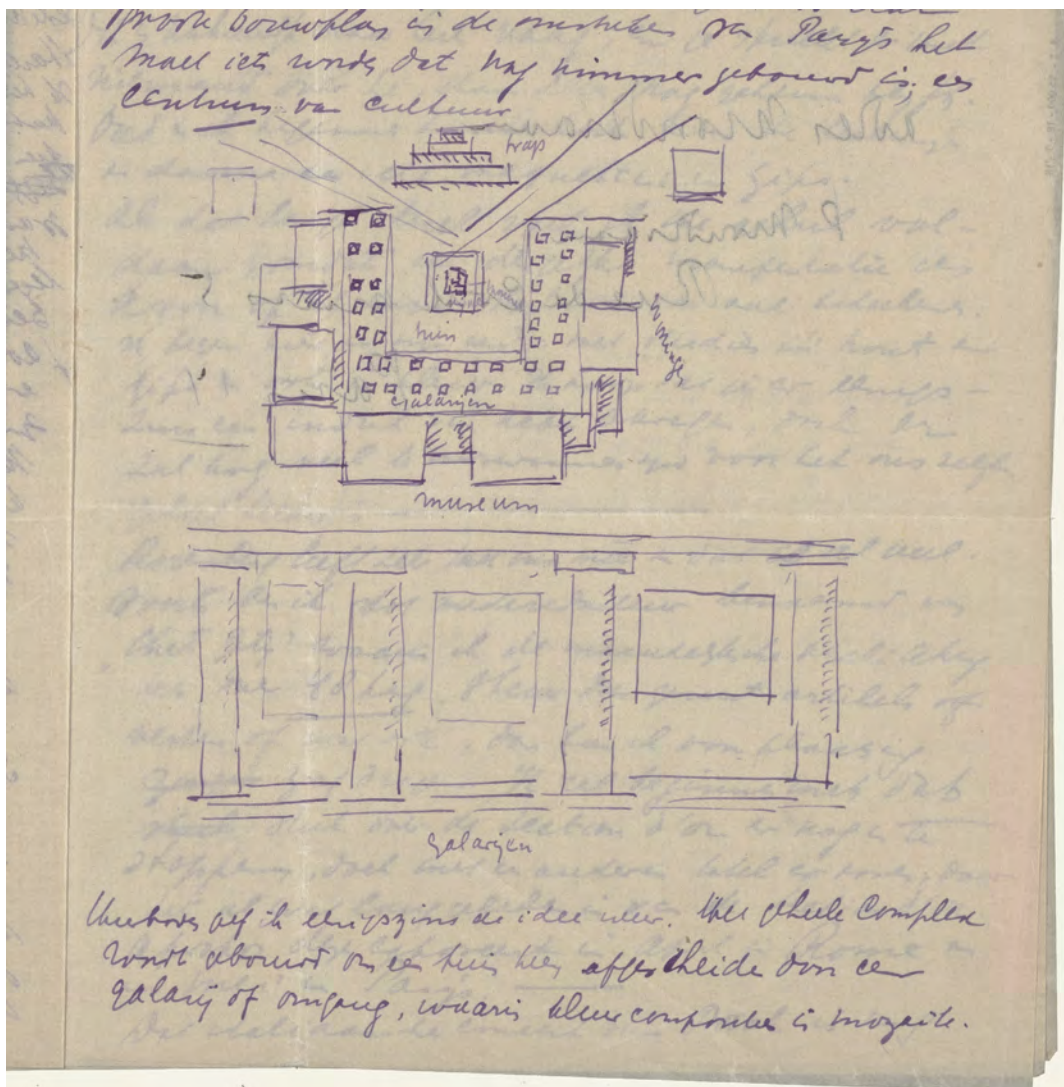


FIG. 17
Letter to Antony Kok, 24 February 1921, in which Van Doesburg makes a first sketch for the cultural center for Léonce Rosenberg, 24 February 1921: RKD, 0408/2204.

Moreover, Van Doesburg was discussing an architecture exhibition with Rosenberg. Rosenberg initially had a broader scope in mind than just architects of the De Stijl movement, but Van Doesburg demanded that the exhibition be limited to them⁴¹.

Van Doesburg had probably hoped to find fertile ground in Paris, though a year later he grumbled that it was impossible to get any commissions in Paris⁴². And moreover, “there are only a few people who (like Man Ray) work ‘constructively,” he complained⁴³.

Van Doesburg’s description of Parisian art life was exaggerated. Artists like Fernand Léger – whom he liked because he had not been carried away by “l’archaïsme modern”⁴⁴ – and Le Corbusier propagated a variant of Cubism with their purism based on geometry and color and, like himself, advocated a close relationship between painting and architecture. In October 1919, Van Doesburg had already featured a drawing by Léger in *De Stijl*. In the accompanying commentary, he pointed out the “space experience” of that drawing, which “differs greatly from the natural-plastic experience (the three dimensional) and therefore should not be thought of from a fixed point of view (perspectival)”; he therefore called it “contra-plastic”⁴⁵. The most striking of Van Doesburg’s comments is that they seem to anticipate (then unconscious?) on his architectural *Contra-constructions* (e.g. OC 702.IIaa, 702.IIIh) at the time of the exhibition at L’Effort Moderne and the resulting series of paintings with the sequentially numbered *Contra-compositions* (e.g. OC 727, 730, 737). (Fig. 19)

As for Le Corbusier, in September 1922 Van Doesburg had written appreciatively of his article ‘Le chemin des ânes et le chemin des hommes’ in *L’Esprit Nouveau* no. 17⁴⁶. And a year earlier, Van Doesburg had called that journal the most important of the avant-garde magazines published in Paris, pointing to a number of articles of much use in orienting oneself in the new aesthetics⁴⁷. Significant to his competitive and occasionally erratic nature, in turn, was his failure to fulfill a promise to devote further attention to Le Corbusier’s ‘Trois rappels à M.M. les architectes’ in a subsequent issue of *De Stijl*.

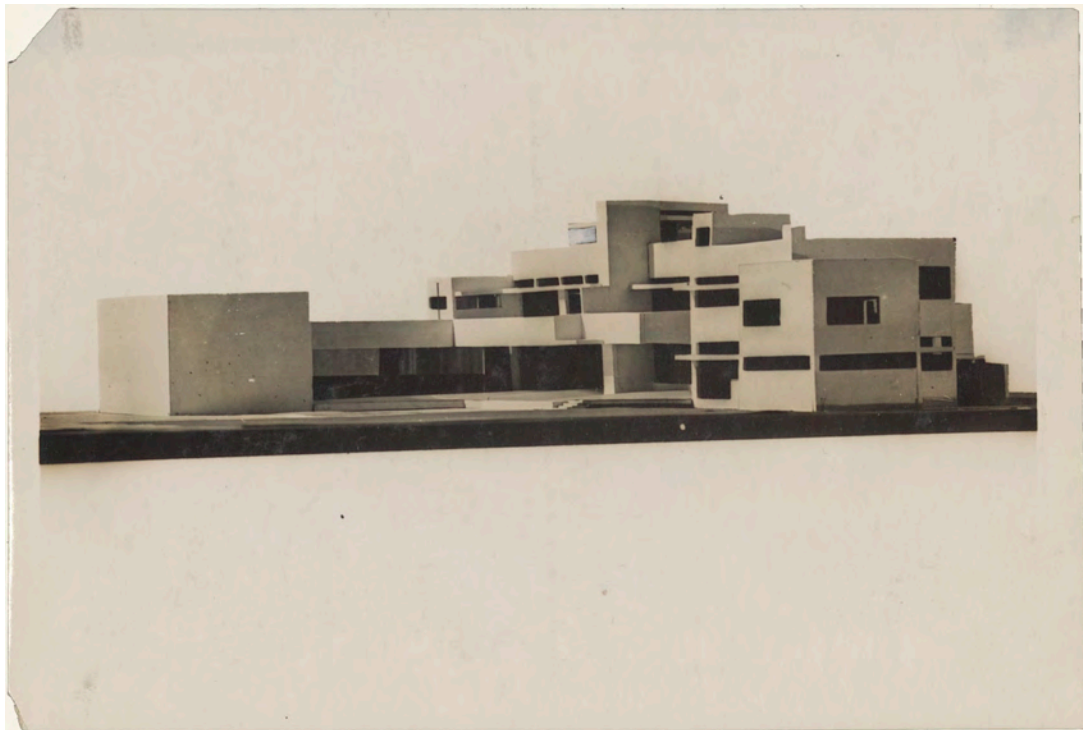


FIG. 18
Model by Gerrit Rietveld
of *Hotel Particulier*, the
result of the plans for the
cultural center for Léonce
Rosenberg: Photo RKD,
0408/1280.

Two weeks ahead of Van Doesburg's arrival in Paris, Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* had appeared⁴⁸. In his publications, Van Doesburg responded to this book only indirectly, in ridiculing Oud's review of it in *Bouwkundig Weekblad*: "In no. 9 the architect J.J.P. Oud on 'Vers une architecture' by Corbusier-Saugnier. Finds the opportunity to defend a rural standard architecture [...], on the basis of pen scratches, impressionistic drawings of picturesque Corbusier interiors, as we saw them for 20 years with the same spiral staircase and the same number of columns in 'The Studio' (now 'L'Esprit Nouveau'). The ideological part of Corbusier's book [...] lags behind what architects like 't Hoff, Wils, Oud himself and other collaborators proclaimed in 'De Stijl' (1917-1918)"⁴⁹. In turn, in the same year, Le Corbusier rejected in strong terms the geometric-abstract art of the De Stijl movement in the essay 'L'angle droit', written with Ozenfant and published in *L'Esprit Nouveau* in November 1923: "intention d'apurement excellente à la base, mais vocabulaire limité à cette unique proposition: 'carré, carré rouge, carré bleu, carré jaune, carré blanc, carré noir, petit carré blanc, grand carré blanc, petit, moyen, etc.'"⁵⁰. But, as mentioned, Van Doesburg's publications such as *Vers une construction collective* and 'Tot een beeldende architectuur' indeed showed an implied reaction to Le Corbusier ideas.

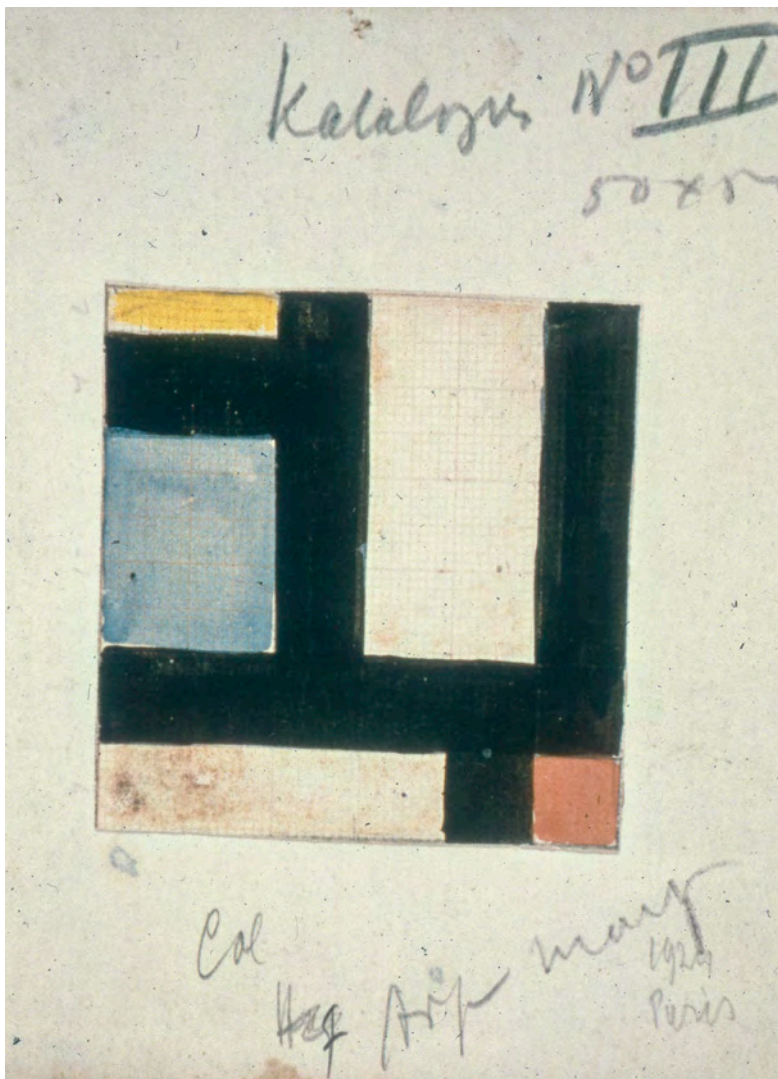


FIG. 19
Study for *Contra-composition IV*, 1924, pen and gouache on paper, 6 x 6 cm, on cardboard 11.5 x 12 cm: Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, KM 118.733.

The De Stijl exhibition at L'Effort Moderne

After his arrival in Paris, Van Doesburg set to work feverishly to have enough exhibits available for the exhibition 'Les Architectes du Groupe "de Styl"', which was to be shown at L'Effort Moderne from October 15 to November 15, 1923. (Fig. 20) By now he cherished theories about architecture in abundance, but he had hardly ventured into practice, apart from a few color designs for buildings by others.

'De betekenis van de kleur in binnen- en buitenarchitectuur' which Van Doesburg published in May 1923 undoubtedly predates Van Doesburg's arrival in Paris, but in August the Dutch architectural journal *Architectura* published his 'Voorwaarden tot een nieuwe architectuur' [Conditions for a new architecture] which bears the date "Paris, 7 July 1923"⁵¹. In this article Van Doesburg pointed out – in line with what he had already asserted extensively elsewhere – “two totally different conceptions of art”: the decorative and the neo-plastic, constructive. The first conception of art belonged to the past, the second to the present and was characterized by “décentralization”. As though he had an entire architectural oeuvre to his credit already, he reproached fellow artists such as Lissitzky: “Those who have intellectually understood this demand of our time mean to think they can bridge the great tension by using the word ‘problem’ to describe their equally arbitrary and speculative products. Who does not automatically in this case think of the Russians, who, although they have not yet constructed a chair in reality, have their mouths and exhibitions full of constructive problems. They state that art is no longer about artistic composition, but much more about problematic construction”. Van Doesburg thought that fashionable nonsense: “Construction is the consequence of composition. The elementary architect begins by composing the functional spaces and the various materials. If he sees that this composition satisfies the functional and aesthetic demands, then he first searches for the most economical way to summarize, to construct the various materials. At this stage



FIG. 20
Overview of the first room of the exhibition 'Les Architectes du Groupe "de Styl"' at gallery L'Effort Moderne, fall 1923. On the table the model of *Hôtel Particulier*; in the corner to the right, the model of *Maison d'Artiste*: Photo Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, EEST 3.360.

everything becomes material to him"⁵². At the end of his article, he announced a sequel. He seems to have kept that promise a year later, in May 1924, with the article cited earlier, 'Tot een beeldende architectuur'.

In late March, early April 1923, plans for the Rosenberg House seemed to be gaining momentum. Van Doesburg wrote to Van Eesteren: "Write by return letter to Rietveld [...] concerning the Rosenberg plan. It must be started immediately! Tell him that you must keep in touch with him and with me in order to make the first draft of the model. If it is not begun now it will be too late. I won't hear anything more from Wils. He won't start it anyway. So let us tackle it"⁵³. Not much was left of a collective tour de force by the four original men. Around that time, Van Doesburg wrote in a letter to Van Eesteren: "Perhaps – in order to make something very distinctive – it is still better that only those work with each other who understand each other completely. And aren't that Rietveld and both of us? It is possible that we will bring about something that is again more advanced than what Wils did in practice – however well it was"⁵⁴. (Fig. 21)

After the jumble of words about architecture and its significance in relation to other arts from the previous years, Van Doesburg tried to turn his theoretical ideas about architecture for the Rosenberg exhibition he was to curate in reality. In his color designs for Oud in Rotterdam and those for Wils in Alkmaar, he was obliged to navigate within limits indicated by them. He had had no say over the architecture as such. In the interior of De Boer's traditional houses in Drachten, he appropriated a more comprehensive role. His interventions here approached his ideal that only through color the "balance of architectural proportions" became visible. (Fig. 22) (Fig. 23)

For the Rosenberg exhibition, Van Doesburg received help from Van Eesteren: "I am working here together with a young architect, Van Eesteren [...] who, after his acquaintance with me in Weimar, has become completely 'Stijl'".



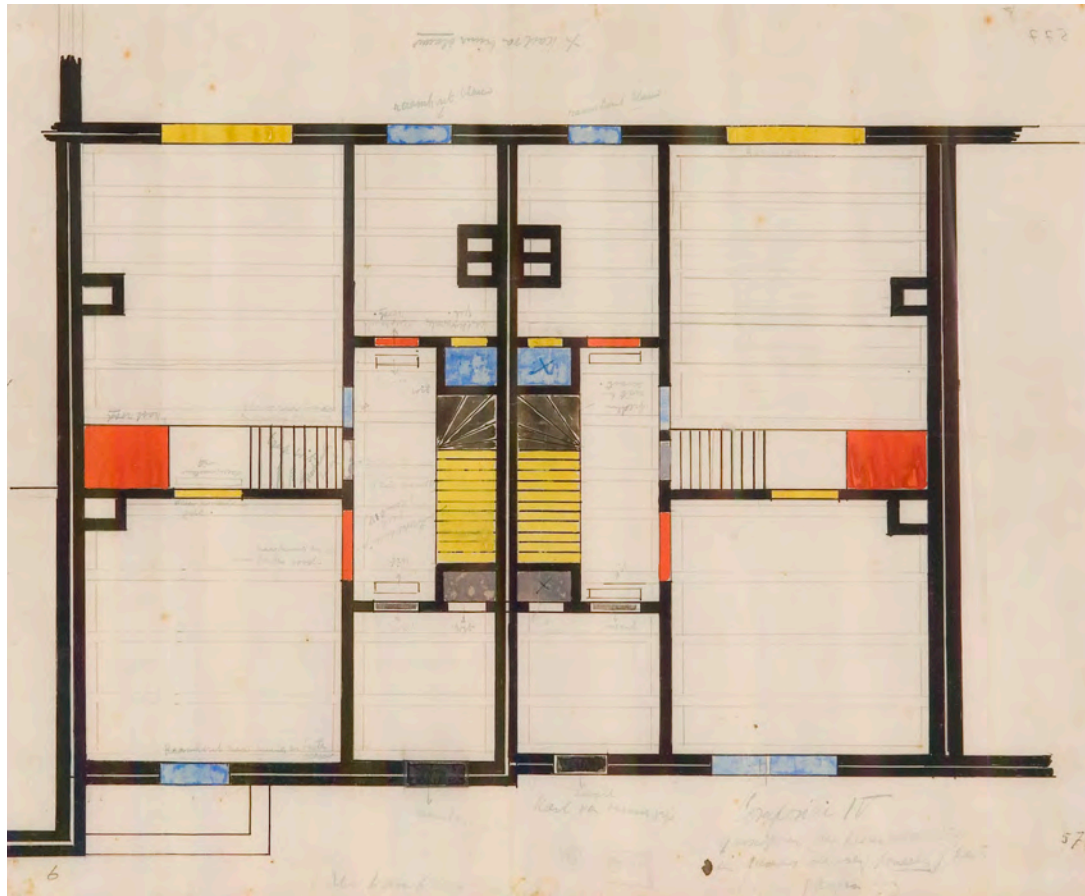
FIG. 21
Housing block by Jan Wils, Papaverhof, The Hague, circa 1921: Photo courtesy Marcel Theunissen.

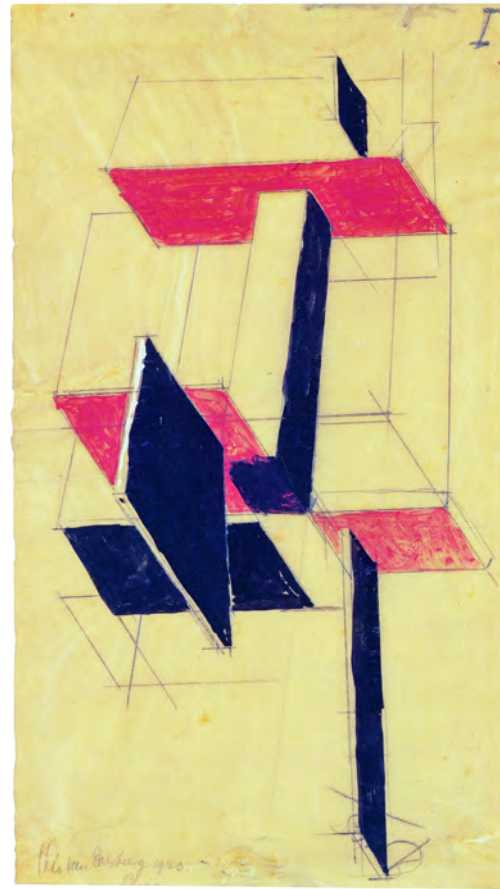
FIG. 22

Color design for the upper floor of the housing block in Drachten, early September 1921, pencil, East Indian ink and gouache on transparent paper, 24.5 x 33 cm: Museum Dr8888, Drachten, 577.

FIG. 23

Situation after restoration of the house Torenstraat no. 3 in Drachten, 2018: Photo Museum Dr8888, Drachten.





[...] Too bad he is still somewhat young and therefore 'playful'. He does not work concentrated enough. I have to urge him all the time"⁵⁵. (Fig. 24)

Besides the cultural center for Rosenberg, which was anonymized as *Hôtel Particulier* at the exhibition in L'Effort Moderne, and the two other designs they planned to show there, Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren worked together on several more projects during this period. In late 1922/early 1923, still in Weimar, Van Eesteren asked Van Doesburg for help with a design for a university hall in Amsterdam (OC 701, 1923). In Paris, Van Doesburg made the color designs for this hall and also for House Van Zessen, which Van Eesteren built in his native Alblasserdam near Rotterdam (OC 689, 1923). In that house, as in his design in Drachten for the State Agricultural College, Van Doesburg chose a diagonal relationship of colors, making the house seem to float. Earlier, in Jan Wils's De Lange House, he had already allowed a black band to run around the entire house, which he interrupted each time with red areas "so that the house is thereby awakened from its stability"⁵⁶. This deconstructivism would remain an important element in Van Doesburg's views on architecture, in which, as mentioned above, he wanted painting to 'dissolve' architecture.

Through collaboration with Van Eesteren which started off symbiotic, Van Doesburg would further develop his ideas about architecture, although he lacked the practical skills to give shape to his ideas. For that, he needed Van Eesteren. Such a division of labor was quite usual: Gropius did the same with Adolf Meyer, for example, and Le Corbusier with Pierre Jeanneret. Van Doesburg himself did not experience his limited technical knowledge as

FIG. 24
Van Doesburg (right) and Cornelis van Eesteren in Van Doesburg's studio at 51ter rue Moulin Vert in Paris, 1923. On the pedestal the model of *Maison Particuliere*, 1923; hanging on the wall Van Doesburg's color design for the university hall of Van Eesteren: Photo RKD, 0408/1573.

FIG. 25
Construction de l'espace-temps IV, 1923, pencil, ink and gouache on transparent paper, 42.5 x 22 cm: Harvard Art Museums, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge (MA).



an limitation. When Van Eesteren and he later quarreled over the authorship of their designs, he even postulated: "I have of course seen all this very well and have always seen your 'architectural' training more or less as an obstacle to arriving at pure architectural neo-plasticism"⁵⁷.

Van Doesburg's designs for Van Eesteren's university hall point to not only work such as the *Constructions de l'espace-temps* and the *Contra-constructions* that would emerge in his visual work from this time on (e.g. OC 707–709), but also *Maison d'Artiste*, *Maison Particulière* and *Hôtel Particulier* (OC 702.I–III, 1923), all of which Van Eesteren and he would exhibit in maquette form at Rosenberg's L'Effort Moderne, and later at the conversion of the Aubette restaurant-dancing in Strasbourg. (Fig. 25) (Fig. 26)

The exhibition at Rosenberg included five rooms on the first floor, with works by Van Doesburg, Van Eesteren, Huszár, Oud, Rietveld, Wils, Mies van der Rohe and Willem van Leusden⁵⁸. The exhibition was explicitly dedicated to the De Stijl group; thus Mies van der Rohe's participation can be called surprising. Mies, like Van Doesburg, earlier that year, had been involved in founding the magazine *G: Material zur Elementaren Gestaltung*. From then Van Doesburg was, in the words of Mies' biographer, his "closest intellectual comrade" – a somewhat exaggerated characterization of their relationship⁵⁹. Possibly Van Doesburg was trying to give the exhibition an international flavor with the participation of Mies.

Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren's designs for the exhibition were no longer concerned with the physical integration of architecture and other arts, as before, but with the development of an entirely new spatial concept, and with a centrifugal arrangement of colored surfaces. On some of the design drawings, the color planes appear to float in space, detached from the building structure. In contrast, on others, only wall surfaces are drawn, making the building appear to have exploded and to be fixed in its completely detached state⁶⁰. The individual spaces in the design had become separate elements that are seemingly hung from a vertical, rectangular column. Van Doesburg was not interested in realizing his design at that point, as the necessary technology did not yet exist. He considered *Maison d'Artiste* more as a visual experiment in a free space, with no indication whatsoever of time or place, having previously announced an open architecture like this in his 1921 essay 'De beteekenis der mechanische aesthetiek': "Any plane that delimits a space has a continuing spatial effect, while an organically closed form is conquered as a result"⁶¹. (Fig. 27) (Fig. 28) A year later, Van Doesburg would expand upon this topic with a number of "tesseractic"

FIG. 26
Color design for the university hall of Van Eesteren in perspective, towards the staircase, July/October 1923, pencil, gouache and collage on paper, 62 x 144 cm: Nieuwe Instituut, EEST 3.168-a.

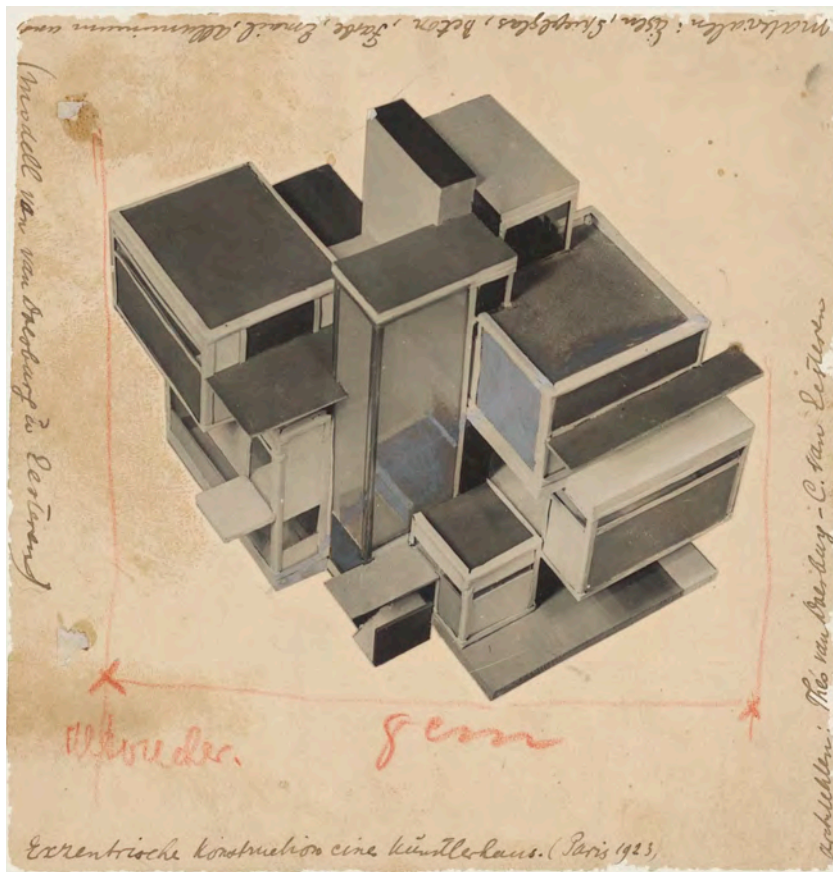
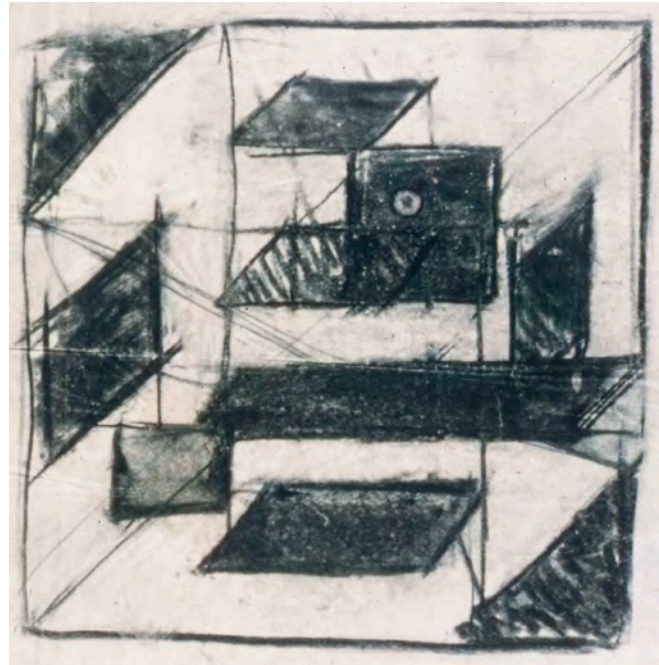
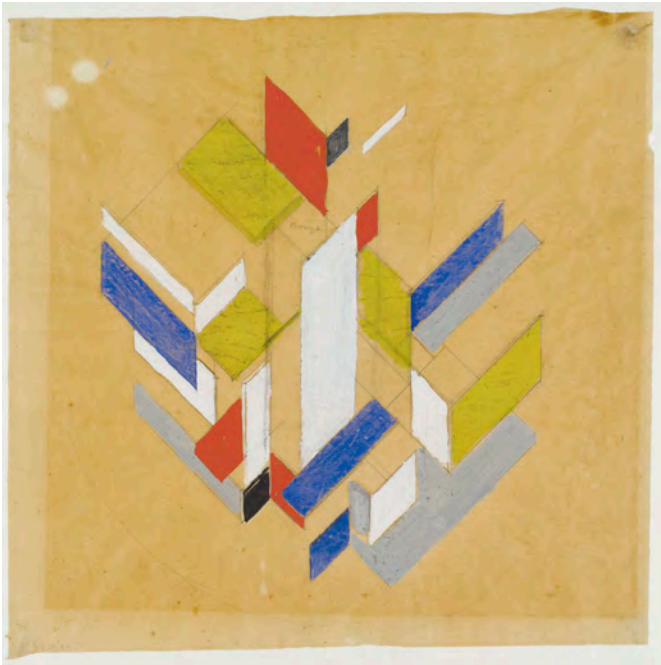


FIG. 27
Model of *Maison d'Artiste*,
August/October 1923,
copper, wood, mica, card
and glass (according to a
letter to Antony Kok dated 8
October 1923), lost: Photo
RKD, 0408/1286.

studies. He saw these hypercubes, for which he had taken inspiration from the nineteenth-century mathematician Howard Hinton, as a useful scheme for the new architecture. “As opposed to symmetry, the new architecture proposes a balanced relationship of unequal parts, i.e. of parts which are different in position, size, proportion and location because of their functional difference in character. The equivalence of these parts is caused by the balance of inequality and not equality. Also, the new architecture has granted equal value to the ‘front’, ‘back’, ‘right’, [‘left’,] yes, if possible, also the ‘top’ and ‘bottom,” Van Doesburg stated in his ‘Tot een beeldende architectuur’⁶². ‘Flat’ painting had been negated by the new architecture. Henceforth, relationships were expressed in time and space⁶³. (Fig. 29)

During the exhibition at L’Effort Moderne, *Vers une construction collective (Manifeste V du Groupe ‘De Stijl’)* was distributed in typewritten form. A printed version on a loose leaf did not appear until early the following year, when the exhibition was repeated elsewhere in Paris. The title of the manifesto was clearly intended as a tease against *Vers une architecture*. The typed pamphlet was signed by Van Doesburg and Van Eesteren – and thus by none of the other architects whose work had been exhibited at Rosenberg – on the later printed version, a picture of the maquette of *Hôtel Particulier* created by Rietveld was placed vertically on the left side and Rietveld’s name is now also mentioned. (Fig. 30) The text was published in *De Stijl* the following year with some changes and an introductory text⁶⁴. Van Doesburg’s *Classique – baroque – moderne* of 1921 (but written the year after the founding of *De Stijl*) was also conceived as an explanatory brochure to the exhibition. Rosenberg had the intention to include a summary of Van Doesburg’s booklet in a magazine yet to be founded, “un des plus lumineux exposés des trois efforts humaine dans l’art,” as he praised it in a letter to Van Doesburg⁶⁵.



The exhibition at L'Effort Moderne as a turning point

The exhibition at Rosenberg's gallery became a *succès d'estime*. Shortly after the exhibition ended, it was incorporated in its entirety into the exhibition 'L'Architecture et les Arts qui s'y Rattachent', organized by Mallet-Stevens, at the Paris École Spéciale d'Architecture from 22 March–22 April 1924. And then from 12–31 March 1926, most of the exhibition was on display in Nancy at the 'Architecture Internationale' exhibition designed by architect André Lurçat. A model of the Rietveld-Schröder House, completed in 1924, was added in Nancy. Van Doesburg saw this design as an application "of our last principles" that he developed in *Maison d'Artiste*, *Maison Particulière* and *Hôtel Particulier*⁶⁶.

Le Corbusier, Eileen Gray, Guévrékian, Léger, André Lurçat and Robert Mallet-Stevens had attended the opening at Rosenberg's, though not all were equally enamored with what was on display⁶⁷. Whether any of them spoke to Van Doesburg on that occasion is not known.

Influenced by both the De Stijl architecture on display and the work of Le Corbusier, Léger painted a series of 'peintures murales' that were meant to connect with architecture. And Le Corbusier, influenced by the Rosenberg exhibition, applied color in, for example, the interior of the La Roche-Jeanneret Houses (1923-25), which he had originally assigned an all-white interior⁶⁸. The color on the exterior of the houses in the Quartiers Modernes Frugès in Pessac (1924-26) also betrays this influence. But where Le Corbusier applied soft, pastel-like colors, the De Stijl architects chose hard, primary colors.

On the occasion of the Rosenberg exhibition, Le Corbusier published a dialogue between him and Léger in the December issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*⁶⁹. Le Corbusier disagreed with Léger's contention that color on the exterior affected the unity of architecture and believed that the views of the De Stijl movement deserved the utmost attention. But unlike the 'dynamic' way of applying color by Le Corbusier, the 'neoplastic' way in which Van Doesburg and colleagues such as Vilmos Huszár and Gerrit Rietveld applied color did deliberately affect architecture (the terms are by Alberto Sartoris)⁷⁰. But not only the color itself was important, so was the location of the color areas. Commenting on his projects in Drachten, Van Doesburg advocated "harmony as a balanced relationship of

FIG. 28

Constra-construction, August/October 1923, pencil, gouache and crayon on transparent paper, 36 x 38 cm: Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, EESTp20.

FIG. 29

Tesseracti study, probably 1924/25, pencil and charcoal on transparent paper, 49.5 x 35.5 cm: Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, KM 119.596.

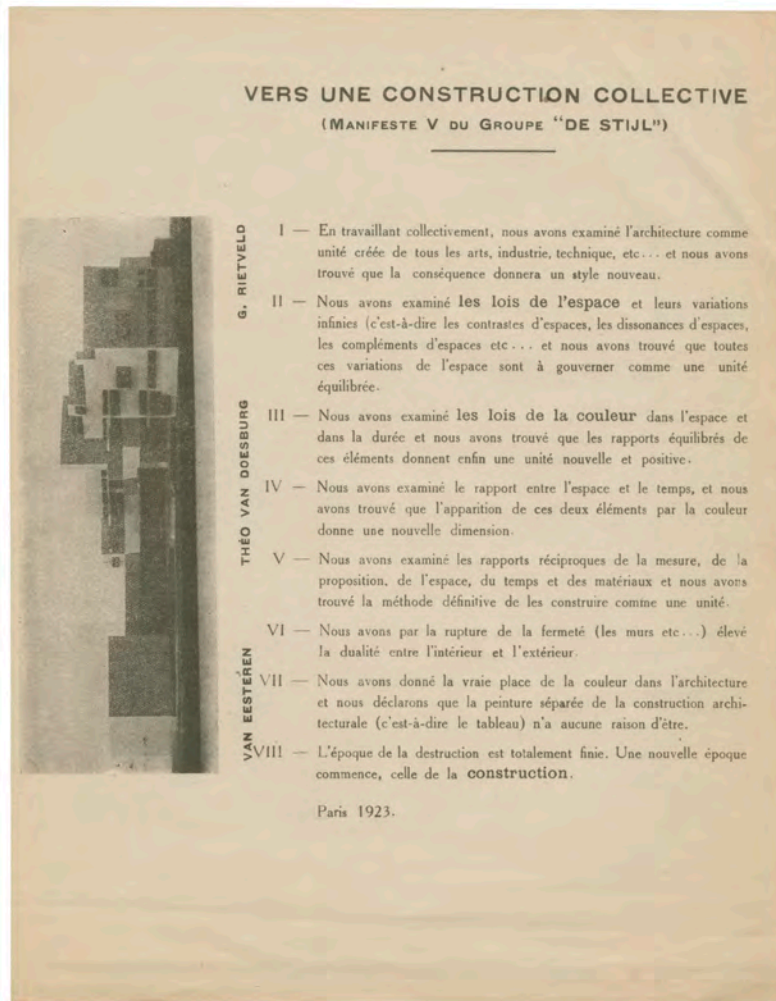


FIG. 30

Vers une construction collective, 1924: Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, EEST 3.360..

contrasts": "If I were to paint a dominating horizontal building I would work deliberately and exclusively with vertical colors. I divide equal colors e.g. above instead of beside each other. [...] Technically I call this 'working toward or in the direction of the square.' The square, namely, is the ideal of universal balance, since the duality, horizontal and vertical are equivalent"⁷¹.

In his extensive review of the exhibition at École Spéciale d'Architecture, Le Corbusier mentioned the De Stijl movement only once in passing, but otherwise paid no attention at all to their views⁷². Whether Van Doesburg reacted to this is conjecture, but he himself, in his review of this exhibition, cited "the still predominant aestheticism" as the greatest danger to French architecture. According to him, the emphasis on art made it "impossible for modern architects [...] to carry through a pure, i.e. elementary and functional application of architectural means". However, he did see the work of Le Corbusier shown at that exhibition as a favorable exception. He found his Besnus House (1922-23) in Vaucresson to have a "beautiful, open and orderly floor plan" and in his view it was "built without preconceived aesthetic effect," in contrast to Mallet-Stevens' Noailles House (1923-28) in Hyères, which was then still under construction⁷³. The design for a 'flower room' for this very Noailles House proves that Van Doesburg was sometimes willing to set aside his rigid views (OC 742, 1924-24). (Fig. 31)

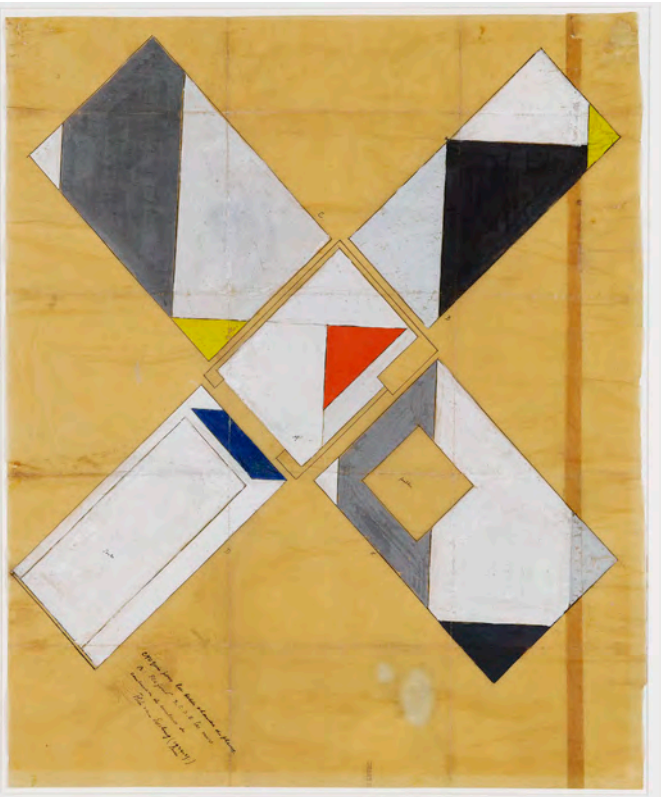
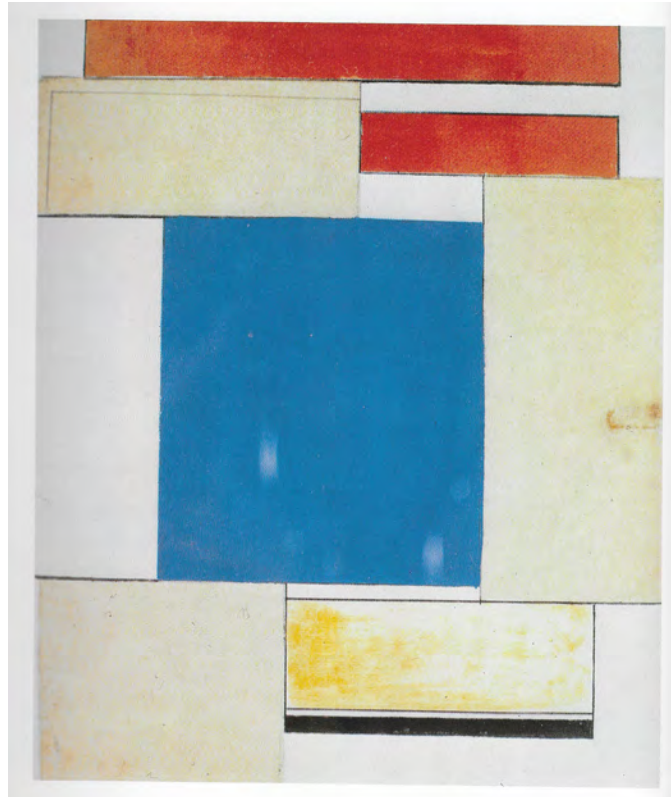


FIG. 31
Color design for flower room in the Robert Mallet-Stevens' built Noailles House in Hyères, 1924/25, pencil, ink and gouache on transparent paper, 55 x 61.5 cm: Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

FIG. 32
Design for the cover of *L'Architecture Vivante*, probably 1925, gouache and collage on paper, 29 x 23.5, present location unknown, from: Adriaan Venema, *Nederlandse schilders in Parijs* (Baarn: Het Wereldvenster, 1980), 113.



The Rosenberg exhibition and its two reprises did not bring Van Doesburg the lasting recognition he had hoped for, but in the major survey of history of the De Stijl movement that Van Doesburg published at the end of 1927, he boasts about the Paris exhibition, referring to a retrospective of his work that had been held in Weimar afterwards:

“With the exception of the models, the same exhibition (connected with van Doesburg’s development exhibition) is being held at the Städtische Museum in Weimar, giving the Bauhaus again ample opportunity to expand its field of development and to make studies for the Bauhaus-Siedlung. Remarkable is even the adoption of the architectural representation, as schematic, systematic, contra-constructive and all-sided axonometric-perspectival, which [...] was adopted by Bauhaus which is hostile to De Stijl”⁷⁴.

For Van Doesburg, the exhibition at Rosenberg felt like a turning point. Strengthened by such designs as *Maison d’Artiste*, he mentioned in 1924 it a task of the modern painter to organize color not in a flat, two-dimensional, but “in the new field: the four-dimensional space of time” in order to deconstruct architecture. He later claimed that it was he who “gave that new architecture in Paris the punch (in 1923 with my Rosenberg exp.)”⁷⁶.

He must have thought for a moment in late 1923 that he had gained wings, but he was soon confronted with the fact that not all of his peers were equally enthusiastic. Rietveld would later write: “Now they are flinging color planes and cubes about too rashly for my taste”⁷⁷. And Mondrian also sputtered against it. Regarding *Maison d’Artiste*, he told an interviewer at the end of 1924: “What I cannot appreciate at all, however, is the fourth dimension. [...] Furthermore, they want to express not only space but also time in architecture (temporal imagery) and express both relationships through color. Who can make sense of this?”⁷⁸.

De Stijl issue of *L'Architecture Vivante*

Not only was the Rosenberg exhibition repeated at Mallet-Stevens' architecture institute, it was followed up by publicity. During a lecture Berlage gave at the Sorbonne in late November 1923, Van Eesteren met Jean Badovici, the editor of *L'Architecture Vivante*, which had just been started by publisher Albert Morancé. Together, Badovici and Van Eesteren came up with the idea of devoting an issue of Morancé's magazine to the De Stijl movement. Not surprisingly, Van Doesburg took complete ownership of the initiative and the assembly.

(Fig. 32) (Fig. 33) However, he choked on the scope of the project and had initially mistakenly assumed that the issue would be devoted exclusively to the work of Van Eesteren and him. The lavish and partly color-illustrated issue would not appear until the end of 1925 after heated discussions and numerous misunderstandings. It contained, in addition to a large number of images shown at Rosenberg, texts by Badovici, Van Doesburg and Mondrian. In *De Stijl*, Van Doesburg acidly noted that the issue had been compiled "entirely outside his interference"⁷⁹. Nevertheless, in this way many of his designs came to the attention of his French colleagues.



FIG. 33
Front of the prospectus for
L'Architecture Vivante, 1925.
RKD, 0408/916.

Missed confrontation

In Van Doesburg's relationship to Le Corbusier and his work, the exhibition devoted to international architecture, held at the Bauhaus from 15 Augustus–30 September 1923, also plays an indirect role. Le Corbusier was allowed to shine there with his *Ville contemporaine de 3 millions d'habitants* (1922), but to his dismay Van Doesburg was not present⁸⁰. (Fig. 34) About 30 architects participated from Germany, the United States, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The Dutch contribution to the exhibition at the Bauhaus was largely put together by Oud⁸¹. But apparently Van Doesburg did not fit the bill or Oud excluded him, although Gropius would afterwards depict *Hôtel Particulier* in his *Internationale Architektur* (1925) that more or less summarized the results of the Bauhaus exhibition.

A second opportunity for a confrontation between Van Doesburg's ideas and those of Le Corbusier could have been the 'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes' held in Paris from April to October 1925. As early as July 1924, Van Doesburg wrote to Van Eesteren that he wanted to show a joint De Stijl presentation at that exhibition⁸². He proposed potentially building there *Hôtel Particulier* in large scale and color, "a thing that smashes everything"⁸³. A few months later, his original proposal had changed completely. Possibly as a result of the Rosenberg exhibition, Van Doesburg had been given the idea by Tristan Tzara of a city with cantilevered houses attached to columns, connected by walkways and with traffic on the ground floor⁸⁴. This 'Traffic City' (OC 844, 1924-29) can also be seen as a counter-proposal to the plans that Le Corbusier had made for Paris. Van Doesburg wanted to develop the idea of such a *Traffic City* for the upcoming Art Déco exhibition. Possibly such a

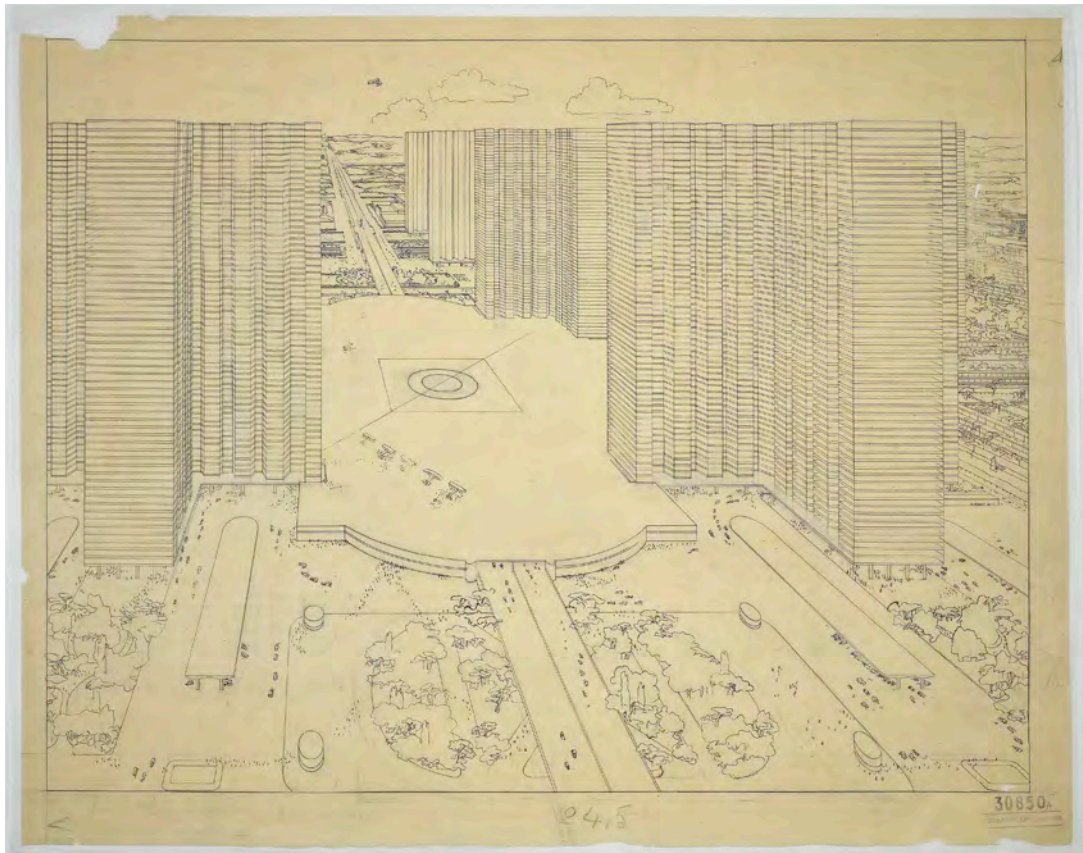


FIG. 34
Le Corbusier, *Ville contemporaine pour 3 millions d'habitants*, 1922, ink on tracing paper, 55 x 72 cm: FLC 30850A.

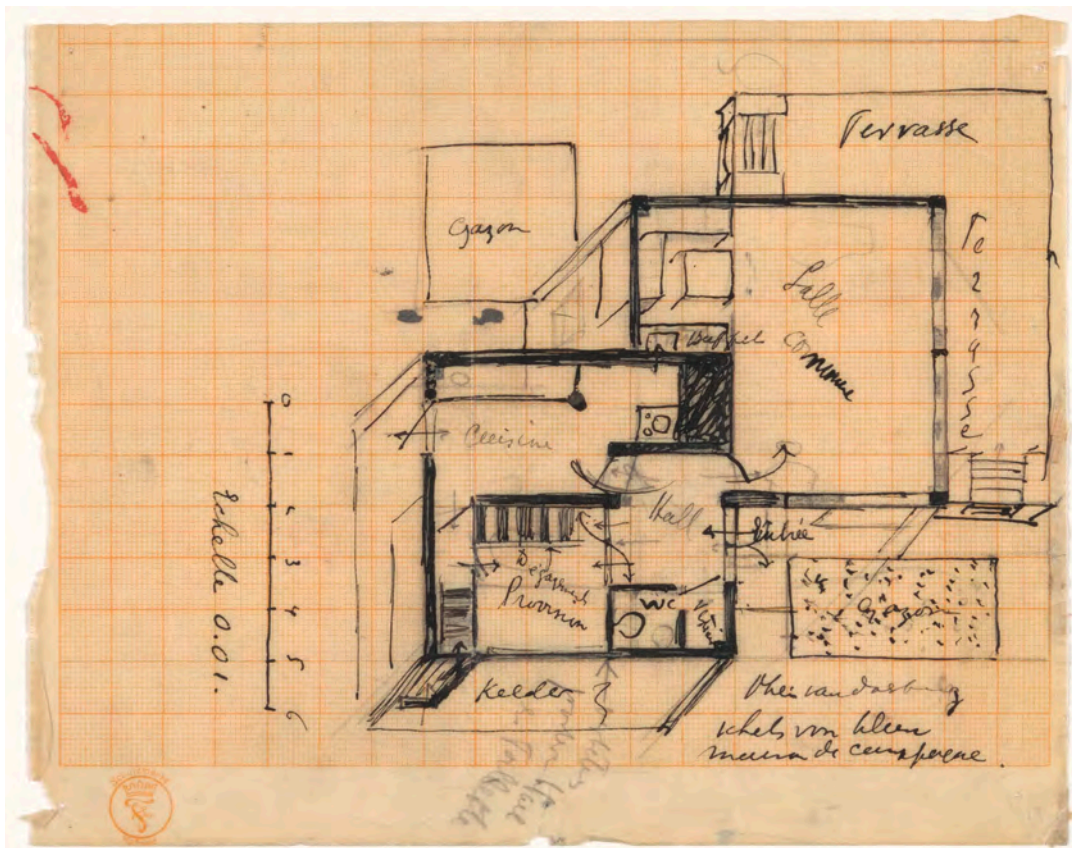
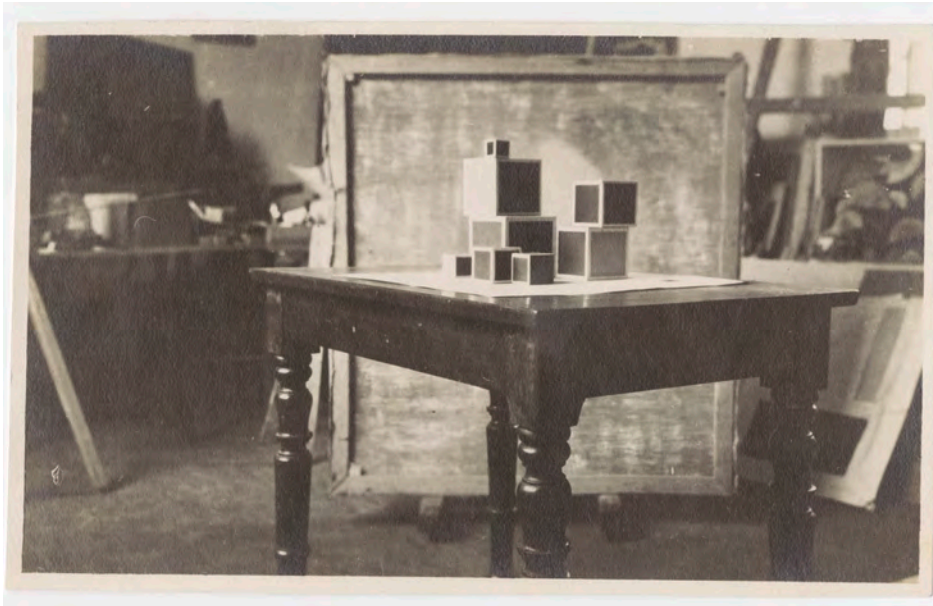


FIG. 35
Building bloc game which Karl Peter Röhl made during the Stijl course in Weimar, 1922, whereabouts unknown: Photo Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, EEST 10.1413-1.

FIG. 36
Construction élémentaire avec tous les moyens architecturaux, late July 1923, size unknown, lost: Photo Central Museum, Utrecht, AB9105.

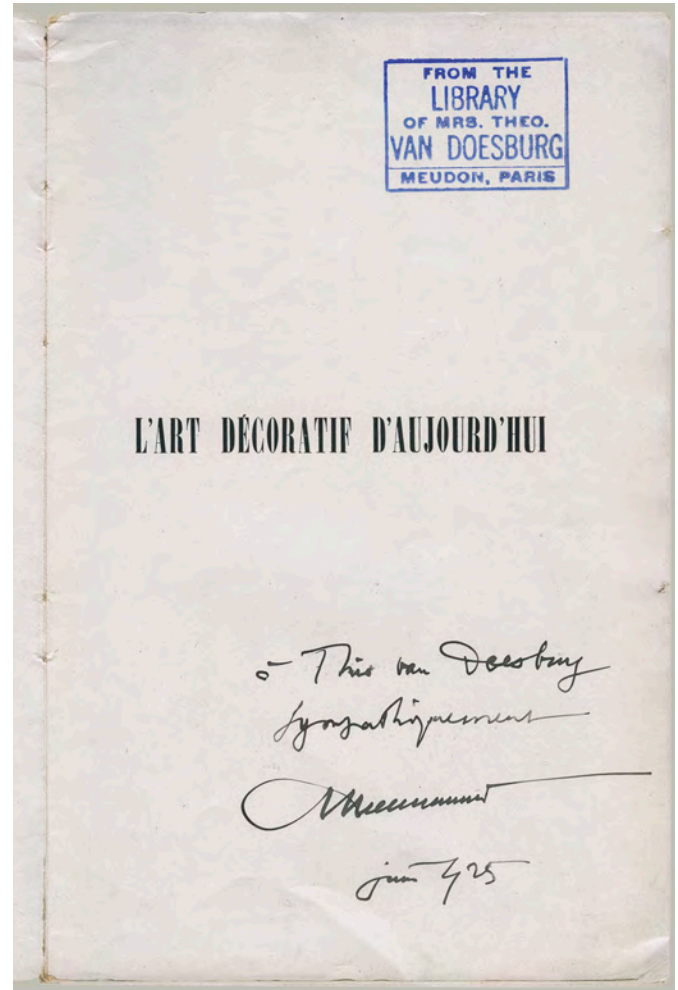
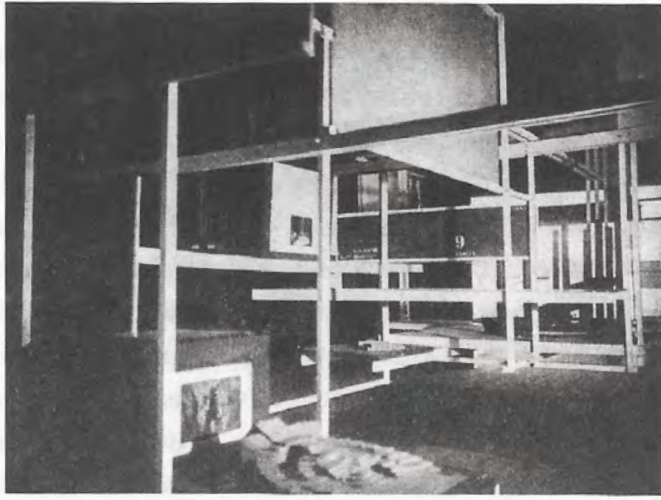
FIG. 37
Ground-floor plan with springing line of the cellar in perspective of a house for Mr. and Mrs. P. Grootars-Scholte, circa August 1924, pencil and East Indian ink on transparent graph paper, 16 x 20 cm: Nieuwe Instituut, EEST 3.364.

FIG. 38
 Left to right: the critic
 Benedikt Dolbin, Theo
 van Doesburg, Friedrich
 Kiesler, the Futurist
 Enrico Prampolini at the
 'Internationale Ausstellung
 neuer Theatertechnik',
 Vienna, October 1924:
 Photo RKD, 0408/1581.



design was already playing through his mind in Weimar, when he made the drawings in which he applied a modular system which were mentioned before. Judging from designs by his pupil Karl Peter Röhl, an object with stacked blocks was also in question then, just as Van Doesburg wanted to make of his *Traffic City*⁸⁵. (Fig. 35) One could also consider *Construction élémentaire avec tous les moyens architecturaux* (OC 703, 1923) as a preliminary study for *Traffic City*, built with remnants of the maquette of *Maison Particulier*⁸⁶. (Fig. 36)

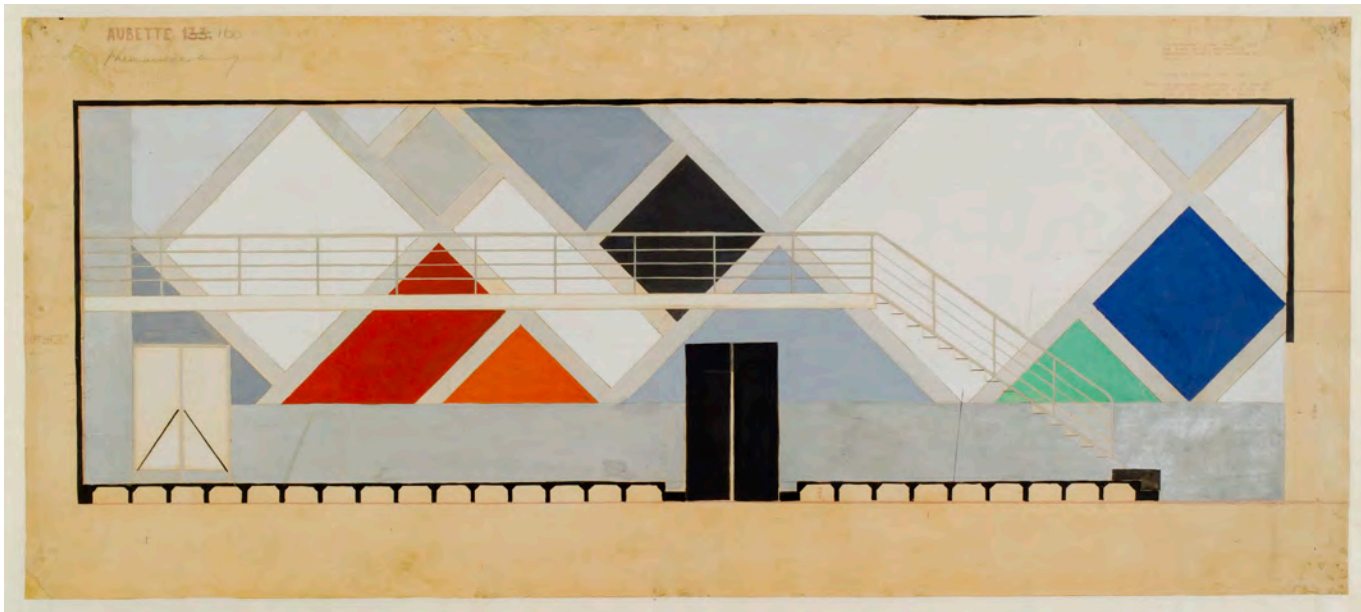
Van Doesburg was certainly not the only one toying with the idea of a city of high-rise buildings. Contemporaries such as Hilberseimer, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Auguste Perret, Bauhaus student Farkas Molnár, and the Dutch architect Jan Duiker also had distinct thoughts on the subject. Van Doesburg's idea of placing the high-rise building on pillars, to allow space for traffic set his concept apart from similar plans by others. Although Van Doesburg devoted a number of articles to Italian Futurist and Rationalist architecture during this period, he is likely to have found his inspiration not in Futurism but in the utopian plans for a *Wolkenbügel* (1923–25) by El Lissitzky, who also put high-rise buildings on pillars. Lissitzky's cantilevered dwellings attached to a central column are reminiscent in turn of the spaces in *Maison d'Artiste*, which are likewise fixed to a vertical core. The designs of both Van Doesburg and Lissitzky defy gravity.



In the run-up to the Art Déco exhibition, Van Doesburg wrote to Van Eesteren about this *Traffic City*: “I shall begin to work out the sketches better. It could be a giant design. Very large and in color with traffic equipment and everything. By sawing uniform blocks which I color, we can have a beautiful big model made for very little money. The model consists of colored blocks of wood. At the exhibition we’ll do the construction”⁸⁷. He also had the idea of making a model of a house that the Groutars-Scholte couple asked him to build for them in Meudon (OC 731, Summer 1924). (Fig. 37) Van Doesburg wanted to make a kind of ‘type-standard’, which people could order during the exhibition. With this house, which showed quite a few formalist features, especially in the floor plan, he positioned himself between Gropius and Le Corbusier and perhaps wanted to display himself as the architect who had settled the debate about standardization⁸⁸. Auguste Perret was consulted and was graciously willing to take a look at Van Doesburg’s draft for this house, but to Van Doesburg’s indignation he considered it beneath his dignity to become involved in its construction. The house remained unbuilt, even though Van Doesburg envisioned wide vistas of an entrepreneur who wanted to exploit the design for such a house for his benefit⁸⁹. His plans for the Art Déco exhibition, however, were thwarted by the selection committee of the Dutch entry, which, besides Berlage, consisted largely of Amsterdam School adherents and did not want a separate De Stijl presentation.

FIG. 39
Friedrich Kiesler, *Raumstadt* [City in Space], ‘Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes’, Paris, 1925: Photo Friedrich Kiesler Stiftung, Vienna.

FIG. 40
Copy with dedication of Le Corbusier, *L’Art décorative d’aujourd’hui*, 1925: RKD, ARC/Does/box XVII.



The reason was obvious. Van Doesburg had recently rejected the ‘Schmuckarchitektur’ of the Amsterdam School in his lecture ‘Die Entwicklung der moderne Architektur in Holland’, delivered in the fall of 1924 in Vienna, Brno, Prague and later in Berlin⁹⁰.

Van Doesburg probably had a hidden intention in recreating *Traffic City*. In October 1924, Friedrich Kiesler organized the ‘Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik’ in Vienna. Van Doesburg, who had been invited to deliver his lecture ‘Die Entwicklung der modernen Architektur’ at that exhibition, saw Kiesler’s *Raum Bühne there*. (Fig. 38) Kiesler, whom Van Doesburg had met earlier in Berlin, became an advocate of Van Doesburg’s views. Van Doesburg’s ‘Tot een beeldende architectuur’ had impressed him in particular⁹¹. Kiesler’s design for a *Raumstadt* was acclaimed in Paris. Van Doesburg probably wanted to outdo him with *Traffic City*. (Fig. 39) He allegedly said that Kiesler had achieved with his *Raumstadt* what he himself still only dreamed of⁹². To the painter Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, Van Doesburg wrote jubilantly: “Kiesler and I, we have tried very hard to create the Atmosfere, whereby a contra-demonstration will only be possible. [...] We have also won the criticism for our cause”⁹³. It is a somewhat curious appropriation. Since, as mentioned above, De Stijl as a group was excluded from the Dutch section of the Paris exhibition, so for that reason alone, nothing came of the plan to build *Traffic City* there, Van Doesburg’s ideas could thus not be confronted directly with Kiesler’s, nor with Le Corbusier’s – such as his *Plan Voisin* (1925), which he exhibited in the pavilion of L’Esprit Nouveau, and which provided for the demolition of the center of Paris, to be replaced by sixty-story cruciform towers. Apparently they did meet on this occasion, for there is a copy of *L’art décoratif d’aujourd’hui* (1925) in Van Doesburg’s library with a dedication⁹⁴. (Fig. 40)

Aubette

The year after the Art Déco exhibition, Hans and Sophie Arp-Taeuber engaged Van Doesburg in the internal renovation of café-restaurant Aubette in the center of Strasbourg (OC 803, 1926-28)⁹⁵. (Fig. 41) (Fig. 42) He made an attempt to enhance the spatial experience, and thereby negate architecture for the spaces assigned to him with his designs. His designs built on on the color designs he made for Van Eesteren’s university hall. Like many of Van Doesburg’s collaborations, this project ended in a quarrelsome atmosphere, not at least because he called Taeuber’s work “thinly plagiarized from my work” and stated that her work had only decorative value⁹⁶. “I have tried hard to understand Doesburg’s theories, he claims his compositions have nothing to do with decoration at all, they are purely spatial. They are partly very beautiful, but I still believe that he has a personal theory,” she wrote in turn⁹⁷.

FIG. 41
Final color design for wall with gallery for the Cinema-Dance hall, February/October 1927, pencil, gouache and East Indian ink on blueprint, 45 x 93.5 cm: Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, DOESAB5145.



Van Doesburg House in Meudon

Van Doesburg saw his development within architecture as a perfectly logical trail, but the outside world saw it differently. Although, despite he lacked almost any practical experience, Mies van der Rohe placed him on the Gros list of architects to be considered for building one or more houses in the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, which accompanied the exhibition 'Die Wohnung' held by the Deutscher Werkbund from 23 July 23–9 October 9 1927 as a demonstration housing estate. Van Doesburg's name still appeared on the list through October 1925, but turned out to have been cancelled for the final selection in April 1926⁹⁸. However, the designs for *Hôtel Particulier* and *Maison Particulière* would be shown at the accompanying exhibition⁹⁹. In a bold attempt to emphasize his influence, Van Doesburg claimed in a review of the Werkbund exhibition in *Het Bouwbedrijf*: "In fact, as everybody will remember, the aim to achieve a 'Gesamtarbeit' formed the basis of the modern art movement in Holland, which around 1916 propagated its ideas in the modest periodical *De Stijl* and took up the defense for a collective rendering as opposed to an individualistic one. Then, in the midst of the war, no trace of this zeal was to be discerned in other countries, and this is understandable when we realize that this new tendency postulated an international orientation"¹⁰⁰.

For quite some time Van Doesburg thought about turning his hitherto largely abstract architectural ideas into tangible form. Only in 1926 did those plans seem to become concrete when his financial possibilities were increased somewhat due to an inheritance that fell to his wife. He initially conceived the plan to build a double house for Hans

FIG. 42
Van Doesburg in his workspace at the Aubette, 1927. Seated probably the young architect Denis Honegger, who assisted with the renovation: Photo RKD, 0408/1326.

FIG. 43
View of the hallway and the music room from the library in Van Doesburg's house in Meudon. The hinged walls partly close off both these rooms. On the right side the entrance to the studio. Studio: Photo RKD, 0408/1392.

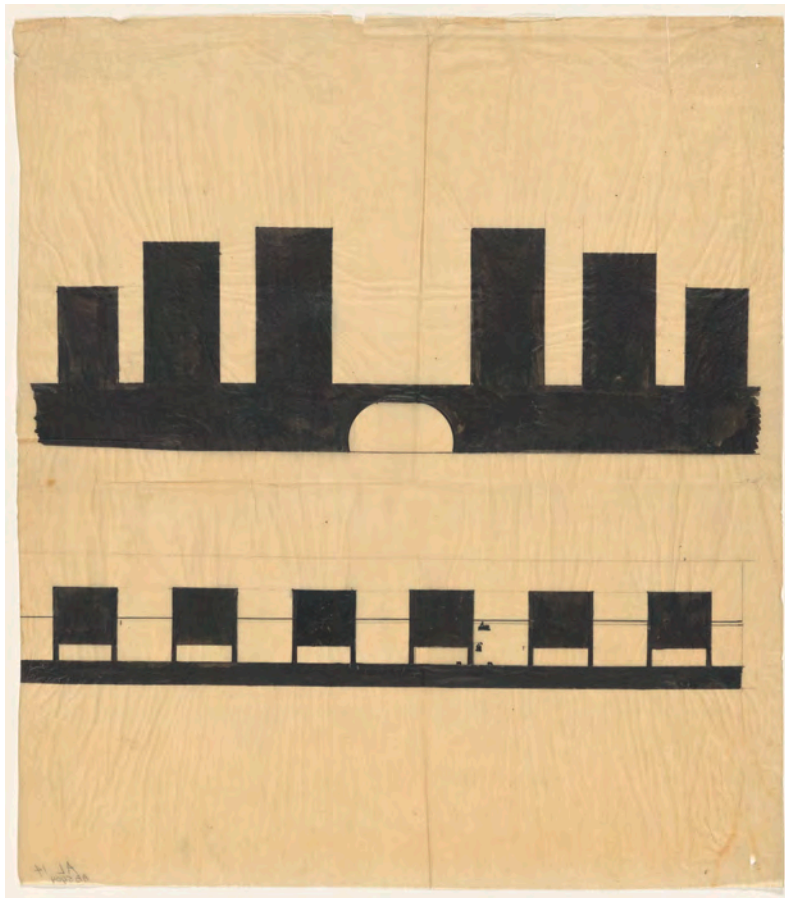
FIG. 44
Studio of Van Doesburg's
house in Meudon: Photo
RKD, 0408/1393.



and Sophie Arp-Taeuber and himself in the Parisian suburb of Clamart (OC 790, 1926-27). When that plan failed, he designed a home of his own in nearby Meudon (OC 828, 1927-30), which, however, was a major step back from the “open and active form” of the *Maison d'Artiste* to a more “closed and passive form”¹⁰¹. This house was obviously inspired by Le Corbusier's Citrohan House of 1922 to which Van Doesburg had devoted attention in *Het Bouwbedrijf* three years later¹⁰². For his articles on French architecture in *Het Bouwbedrijf*, Van Doesburg asked Le Corbusier in person for illustration material. The latter politely but coolly replied that the requested material was ready at the janitor's office in the rue de Sèvres. He did promise to send Van Doesburg a copy of *Urbanisme* as soon as it arrived from the printer. However, when Van Doesburg approached Le Corbusier's office, the requested photographs were not there¹⁰³.

Van Doesburg's design for his own house in Meudon was not an improvement and does not have the same spatial quality as Le Corbusier's Citrohan House. This becomes clear, for example, if you compare the way Le Corbusier placed the stairs to the way it was done in Van Doesburg's house. Compared to the *Maison d'Artiste*, with its spaces of different heights grouped around a central stairwell, the Van Doesburg House in Meudon is a step backwards. Van Doesburg's architectural views are only very partially reflected in it. One might even ask oneself whether its correct (possible) to consider the house a 'Laboratory of Modern' (as one benevolent observer called it)¹⁰⁴.

Van Doesburg must have realized that he did not possess the necessary knowledge of the trade. For that reason, for his own house he sought help from the young, newly graduated Dutch architect Abraham Elzas, who had gained experience as a draftsman for Le Corbusier and Perret. Van Doesburg even hoped his house would become a kind of Bauhaus, something for which the house did not lend itself at all¹⁰⁵. Van Doesburg's death in March 1931



would prevent the execution of this unrealistic plan. The introverted house is certainly not an experiment that could have served as a prototype, although Van Doesburg himself undoubtedly saw it differently. Only two hinged walls, allowing the opposing music room and library on the second floor to be made into one space, are a finding reminiscent of *Maison d'Artiste*. Although Rietveld applied them on a larger scale in 1924 in the Rietveld-Schröder House, Van Doesburg himself had already argued in 1923 that a building should be open: "The whole consists of one space, which is partitioned according to the functional requirements". According to him, this division could take place with movable partition surfaces¹⁰⁶. (Fig. 43) (Fig. 44)

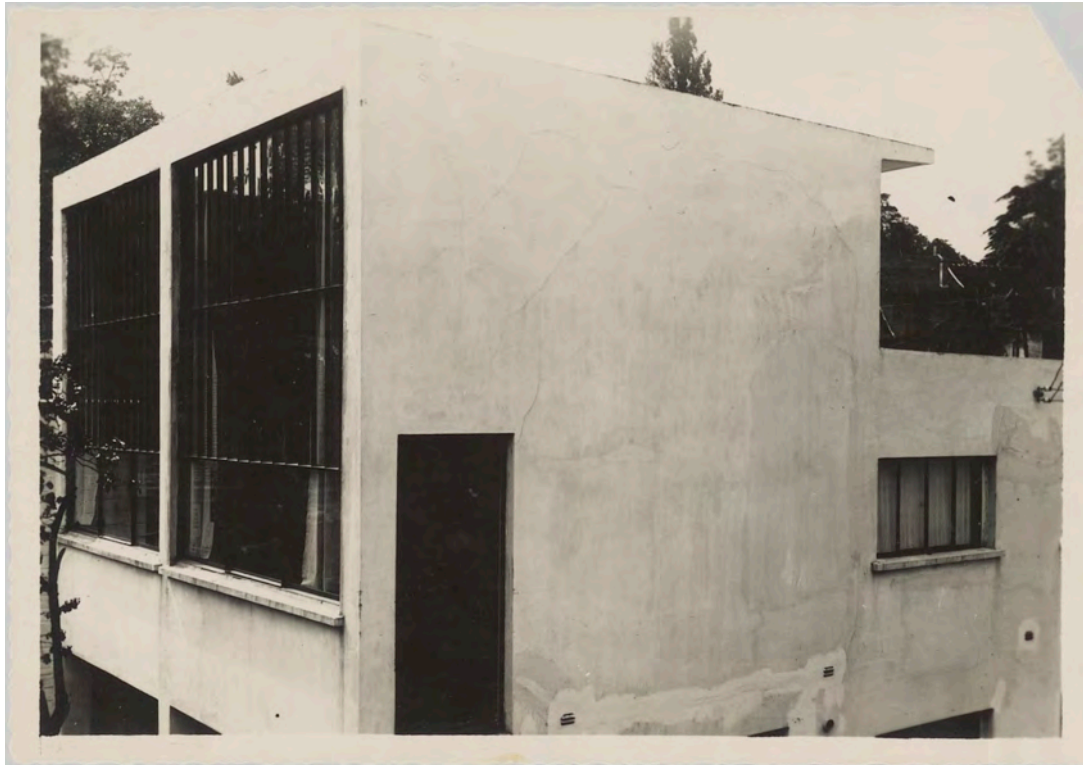
Once again Traffic City

The design of the house in Meudon was just completed, when Van Doesburg, with the help of Elzas, reverted to his plan for a *Traffic City* around July 1929. The timing probably was related to the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), which had been founded shortly before. In CIAM, Le Corbusier played a prominent role. Van Doesburg was not involved in any way. The central topic at the first CIAM congress was urban planning. Le Corbusier's previously launched Plan Voisin also clearly played in the background in Van Doesburg's mind. With his own plans of a *Traffic City*, he was elaborating on what Le Corbusier envisioned, a city as a traffic system. (Fig. 45) He wrote he found Le Corbusier's urban planning theories promising, but had nevertheless reproached him, in response to the plans unfolded in his *Urbanisme* (1925), for not having arrived at an essential solution. Van Doesburg now wanted to do better¹⁰⁷.

FIG. 45
A 'Frontal City' (upper view) versus a *Traffic City*, pencil and East Indian ink on transparent paper, 46 x 40 cm: Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, DOESAB5404.

FIG. 46
Van Doesburg at the top of the stairs in front of his house in Meudon, 1930: Photo RKD, 0408/1398.

FIG. 47
Rear view of Van Doesburg's
house in Meudon, 1930:
Photo RKD, 0408/1391.



In his series of articles on European architectural innovation in *Het Bouwbedrijf* in April 1927, Van Doesburg offered a reflection on the *Città Nuova* by Italian futurist Antonio Sant'Elia: "Russian 'constructivists' are even dreaming about 'air cities' and proclaim [...] that the progressing technique will open the possibility of realizing such air cities. The air cities, though, are too reminiscent of castles in the air to be taken seriously with respect to architecture," Van Doesburg wrote at the time, citing Lissitzky and others¹⁰⁸. Now, however, he himself seemed to be indulging in a flight of fancy.

With an article entitled 'Verkehrsstadt' published in 1929¹⁰⁹, an unpublished typescript entitled 'Die Stadt ohne Strassen' from April 1930, and the lecture 'L'esprit fondamental de l'architecture contemporaine' he delivered in Madrid in May of that year, Van Doesburg brought his visionary idea to attention¹¹⁰. Although he mentioned Le Corbusier, Hilberseimer, Mies van der Rohe, Stam, Van Eesteren and Oud in 'Verkehrsstadt' as architects who were also concerned with this problem, he antedated his interest in the subject for the Madrid audience: "As I have explained in my writings since 1923, the problem of architecture is primarily one of urban planning, and is science rather than art"¹¹¹. In his view, technical developments now offered the possibility of actually building a *Traffic City*. His residential towers were about 40 meters high and hung from pillars in which elevators, pipes and wiring ran. Architecturally, his plans were hardly developed. He saw the building primarily as a structural problem. He latched on to his *Maison d'Artiste*, as he wrote that this "free pillar system" allowed the internal structure of the dwellings to be treated completely independent of the floors, windows and walls¹¹². Van Doesburg's utopian urban planning ideas were never tested in practice. Illness prevented any further elaboration of his plans.

All those great ideas, but in the end only one house was built. And even this was a partial failure. Le Corbusier – so much more practical – left Van Doesburg miles behind. No wonder that the opposing images of *Maison d'Artiste* and the Weissenhofsiedlung house managed to convince almost no one of Van Doesburg's supremacy.

His friends, meanwhile, kept him at bay. In 1927, the *Internationale Revue i10* was founded in the Netherlands. At Mondrian's suggestion, Oud had been assigned responsibility for architecture at *i10*. In addition to Van Eesteren, Mondrian had also proposed Mallet-Stevens as a collaborator¹³. Adding insult to injury, Mondrian had also urged editor Arthur Lehning to recruit Le Corbusier as a collaborator, the architect whose dominant international position the competitive Van Doesburg regarded with constant envy. That Oud prevented Le Corbusier's cooperation can hardly have been of any comfort to Van Doesburg¹⁴.

But the deathblow to his pursuit of a place in the Valhalla of architecture was delivered by Sigfried Giedion, editor of the magazine *Der Cicerone*, in which Van Doesburg had been allowed to expound his views on the relationship between painting and architecture shortly before¹⁵. In his *Bauen in Frankreich* (1928), Giedion confronted not *Maison d'Artiste* but Henny House (1914-19) by Van Doesburg's former De Stijl comrade Van 't Hoff with Le Corbusier's Dom-INO system (1914-15)¹⁶. A similar setting, but with the intention of positioning his CIAM colleague Le Corbusier as the main innovator.

With the episode of *L'Architecture Vivante* devoted in part to the De Stijl architects, his work at the Aubette and his house in Meudon, Van Doesburg did not manage to secure a place in the architectural world. His own house showed he was still too attached to his De Stijl past on the one hand – which is especially evident in the front facade that is firmly on the ground – and, on the other he sought a connection with modern architects such as Le Corbusier, which is evident in the rear facade¹⁷. (Fig. 46) (Fig. 47) But he did manage to exert influence by continuing to act as a disruptive force. The 1923 *Maison d'Artiste* nevertheless remains his most original contribution to a discipline that he had wanted to destroy from within with all his might.

Auteur

Sjoerd van Faassen is a cultural historian who studied Dutch literature and language in Leiden. He was head of Collections at the Museum of Dutch Literature and is at the moment associated researcher at RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, both in The Hague. Recently he published 'De Stijl & Futurism' in *Futurism & Europe: The aesthetics of a new world* (exh. cat. Kröller-Müller Museum / Yale University Press). He was co-editor of *Theo van Doesburg: Oeuvre Catalogue* and published the biography *Ik sta helemaal alleen: Theo van Doesburg 1883 -1931* [I'm all alone: Theo van Doesburg 1883–1931] (with Hans Renders). Together with Herman van Bergeijk he edited the correspondence of Van Doesburg with architects C.R. de Boer (*De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op* [The color dissolves the architectural space]) and Cornelis van Eesteren (*Onze pénétratie was sterker als jij in je laatste brief vermoedt* [Our penetration was stronger than you suspect in your last letter]).

Herman van Bergeijk is an architectural historian who studied in Groningen and Venice. In 1995 he obtained his doctorate with a study on the work of W.M. Dudok. Since then he has worked as a freelance historian for a long time and has taught at universities in several European countries, the United States and China. From 1997 he was an associate professor at TU Delft. The last years he has been working as a professor of architectural history in Harbin, China. He published monographs on W.M. Dudok, Jan Duiker, A.J. Kropholler and Jan Wils. Together with Sjoerd van Faassen he published recently 'Ornament in een woningbouwcomplex van J.J.P. Oud. Dorps- en grotestadsarchitectuur in Hoek van Holland (1924-27)' [Ornament in a housing complex by J.J.P. Oud: Village and metropolitan architecture in Hoek van Holland].

Notes

1 "Wat de architectuur aangaat kan men van een moderne architectuur tot en na 1923 spreken". 'Data en Feiten (betreffende de invloedsoontwikkeling van 'De Stijl' in 't Buitenland) die voor zich spreken' [Data and Facts (concerning the evolution of the influence of 'De Stijl' abroad) that speak for themselves], *De Stijl* no. 79/84 ([December] 1927): 56.

2 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland: De architectuurtentoonstelling "Die Wohnung" te Stuttgart' [Architectural innovations abroad: The architecture exhibition 'Die Wohnung' in Stuttgart], *Het Bouwbedrijf* 4, no. 24 (25 November 1927), quoted from Theo van Doesburg, *On European Architecture: Complete Essays from Het Bouwbedrijf 1924–1931*, transl. Charlotte I. Loeb and Arthur L. Loeb (Basel etc.: Birkhäuser, 1990), 170.

3 For the relationship between Van Doesburg and Le Corbusier, see also: Allan Doig, 'Theo van Doesburg en Le Corbusier: Rivaliteit, uitwisseling en ontwikkeling', *Wonen-TA/BK* (1982), no. 15-16 (August): 29-36; Robert Mens, Bart Lootsma and Jos Bosman, *Le Corbusier en Nederland* (Utrecht: Kwadraat, 1985), 18-22; and Bruno Reichlin, 'Le Corbusier vs De Stijl', in *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*, ed. Yve-Alain Bois and Bruno Reichlin (Liège-Bruxelles: Mardaga, 1985), 91-108.

4 OC refers to Els Hoek et al. (eds), *Theo van Doesburg: Oeuvre Catalogue* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum / Otterlo: Kröller-Müller Museum, 2000). All of Van Doesburg's architectural designs are exhaustively described in Evert van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg: Painter and Architect* (The Hague: SDU Publishers, 1988).

- 5 *Vers une construction collective* accompanied as a flyer in typewritten form the exhibition 'Les Architectes du Groupe "de Stijl"' that was on view at Léonce Rosenberg's L'Effort Moderne gallery in Paris from 15 October–15 November 1923, and in printed form the exhibition 'L'Architecture et les Arts qui s'y Rattachent', organized by Mallet-Stevens, which was held at the École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris from 22 March–30 April 1924. The manifesto was also published in *De Stijl* 6, no. 6-7 ([August] 1924): 89-92 and in *Bulletin de L'Effort Moderne* no. 9 (November 1924): 15-16. English translation in Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 147-49.
- 6 'Tot een beeldende architectuur' [Towards plastic architecture], *De Stijl* 6, no. 6-7 ([August] 1924): 78-83. English translation in Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg*, 142-47.
- 7 'De Stijl overal absolute leiding': *De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en Antony Kok*, ed. Alied Ottevanger (Bussum: THOTH, 2008), 205-6, letter Theo van Doesburg to Antony Kok, 9 September 1917.
- 8 Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, WIJD 86, letter Jan Wils to H.Th. Wijdeveld, 30 December 1968.
- 9 "Ik ben niet slechts verantwoordig schuldig voor mijzelf, maar ook voor de zaak waarvoor wij allen vechten. Bij de vorige blokken heb ik wijzigingen toegelaten, ofschoon daardoor een schakel uit de keten mijner architectuur-schilderkunstige ontwikkeling werd gerukt. [...] Maar gezien het feit dat ik Van Doesburg ben, heb ik, neem ik het recht je toe te roepen: NEEN - NEEN - NEEN. Entweder so - oder nichts". *Fondation Custodia*, Paris (henceforth FC), 1972-A.563, letter Van Doesburg to Oud, 3 November 1921.
- 10 "[...] dat de begrippen die reeds vanaf 1917 in 'De Stijl' over de architectuur werden ontwikkeld door J.J.P. Oud, Robt. van 't Hoff, v. Doesburg e.a. nu ook in Frankrijk [...] zich beginnen baan te breken". *De Stijl* 4, no. 2 (February 1921): 29-31.
- 11 *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 41, no. 50 (11 December 1920): 278-80, no. 51 (18 December 1920), 281-85, and 42, no. 2 (8 January 1921), 8-10. The first episode was preceded by the paragraph on 'L'esthétique mécanique' from the introductory text of *L'Esprit Nouveau*; the second and third a quotation from 'Trois rappels à MM les architectes' in *L'Esprit Nouveau* no. 1 (October 1920) and no. 2 (November 1920), respectively.
- 12 See Sjoerd van Faassen and Hans Renders, *Ik sta helemaal alleen. Theo van Doesburg 1883-1931* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2022), 222-31.
- 13 Herman van Bergeijk and Sjoerd van Faassen, 'Ornament in een woningbouwcomplex van J.J.P. Oud. Dorps- en grotestadsarchitectuur in Hoek van Holland (1924-27)', *Rode Haring* no. 8 (May 2023): 38-67.
- 14 Hans Richter, 'Begegnungen in Berlin', in *Avantgarde Osteuropa 1910-1930*, ed. Eberhard Roters (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1967), 15.
- 15 El Lissitzky, *Proun und Wolkenbügel: Schriften, Briefe, Dokumente*, ed. Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers and Jen Lissitzky (Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1977), 125, letter El Lissitzky to Oud, 30 June 1924.
- 16 RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, The Hague (henceforth: RKD), Archive of Theo and Nelly van Doesburg, 0408/1092, A. Ozenfant, Radio lecture at the opening of 'Theo van Doesburg: Retrospective Exhibition', Art of this Century Gallery, New York, May 26, 1947. Françoise Ducros, Amédée Ozenfant (Paris: Éditions Cercle d'Art, 2002), 229 (note 216) gives 1920 as the date of this encounter.
- 17 RKD, 0408/387-90. The study has survived only fragmentarily. German and Dutch versions exist in addition to a French-language version.
- 18 RKD, 0408/178, letter Léonce Rosenberg to Van Doesburg, 11 September 1922.
- 19 "'Der Wille zum Stil'" (Neugestaltung von Leben, Kunst und Technik) [2]' ['The Will to Style' (Redesign of life, art and technology)], *De Stijl* 5, no. 3 (March 1922), 39.
- 20 *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 44, no. 21 (26 May 1923): 232-34. English translation in Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg*, 137-40.
- 21 *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 45, no. 20 (17 May 1924): 200-4.
- 22 "Wat ik wil is, zoals ik dan ook schreef, heel moeilijk direct uit te voeren. [...] Daarom werk ik ook niet met van Doesburg samen [...] die wél de mogelijkheid van directe uitvoering schijnt te zien". FC, 1972-A.407, letter Piet Mondrian to Oud, 2 September 1923.
- 23 "De nieuwe architectuur betreft de kleur organisch in zich en wel als direct uitdrukkingselement harer verhoudingen in tijd en ruimte. Zonder kleur zijn deze verhoudingen [...] niet zichtbaar".
- 24 On this at length the introduction to *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op: De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en architect C.R. de Boer, 1920-1929*, ed. Sjoerd van Faassen and Herman van Bergeijk (Haarlem: Eigenbouwer, 2019). For a confrontation of Le Corbusier's views with those of Van Doesburg: Jan de Heer, *The Architectonic Color: Polychromy in the Purist Architecture of Le Corbusier* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2009).
- 25 Marguerite Tuijn, *Mon cher ami... Lieber Does... Theo van Doesburg en de praktijk van de internationale avant-garde [...]* (diss. Amsterdam, 2003), 293, letter Van Doesburg to Enrico Prampolini, 1 March 1921.
- 26 RKD, 0408/50, letter Van Doesburg to Paul Dermée, 5 May 1920.
- 27 "De dichter Paul Dermée formeert een internationale kunstbeweging, die een revue zal uitgeven waarvan de tekst en de vele reproducties een duidelijk beeld zullen geven van de internationale moderne esthetiek. [...] De redacteur Paul Dermée heeft zich met de redactie van 'De Stijl' in verbinding gesteld om een wederzijdsche samenwerking mogelijk te maken". *De Stijl* 3, no. 9 (July 1920): 78.
- 28 "Dit wordt een internationaal tijdschrift, alleen van de moderne meesters op elk gebied. 't Is een groote beweging, die op vaste basis werken gaat. Door 'De Stijl' denken ze dat Holland een paradijs is voor modernismen". FC, 1972-A.618, letter Van Doesburg to Oud, circa end of April 1920.
- 29 "Ja 'L'Esprit Nouveau' is nu al aan het verwateren. [...] Zodoende hebben ze mijn artikel over 'L'Art Collective' ook niet opgenomen. Alles verwaterd – behalve 'De Stijl', die steeds konsekwenter en strijdbaarder wordt". FC, 1972-A.580, letter Van Doesburg to Oud, circa end of February 1921.
- 30 RKD, 0408/16, 50-51, concept letter Van Doesburg to Thorvald Hellesen, 28 September 1921.
- 31 *De Stijl overal absolute leiding*, 329, letter Van Doesburg to Kok, 24 June 1921.
- 32 See Roberto Gabetti and Carlo Olmo, *Le Corbusier e 'L'Esprit Nouveau'* (Torino: Einaudi, 1975), 258-60.
- 33 *De kleur lost de architectonische ruimte op*, 109, letter Van Doesburg to C.R. de Boer, circa 25 August 1921.

34 'De architect J.J.P. Oud. Voorganger der "kubisten" in de bouwkunst?' [The architect J.J.P. Old. Predecessor of the 'Cubists' in architecture?], *De Bouwwereld* 21, no. 30 (26 July 1922): 229.

35 Van Doesburg depicted the *Fundamental of the Art of Painting* in his *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1925), Figure 2. Instead of the original *Fundamental of Architecture* from early 1922 (674.III), however, he depicted there as Figure 3 an 'architectural analysis' of *Maison Particulière* from the second half of 1923 (702.IIv).

36 Ozenfant & Jeanneret, *La peinture moderne* (Paris: Crès, 1925), 153. The illustration there is shown 90° rotated. Also relative to the illustration in Van Doesburg's 'Zur elementaren Gestaltung' in *G: Material zur elementaren Gestaltung* no. 1 (July 1923) from which they apparently derived it, the illustration in *L'Esprit Nouveau* is shown rotated, in this case 180°.

37 'Pédagogie', *L'Esprit Nouveau* no. 19 (December 1923), unpag.

38 On Van Doesburg's stay in Paris, see also: Yve-Alain Bois, 'De Stijl in Paris', in *Het Nieuwe Bouwen: Neo-Plasticism in Architecture*, ed. Cees Boekraad et al. (Delft: Delft University Press / The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1983), 101-27; *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*; Nicolette Gast, 'De blik naar het zuiden: De Stijl in België en Frankrijk', in *De vervolgiaren van De Stijl 1922-1932*, ed. Carel Blotkamp (Amsterdam-Antwerpen: Veen, 1996), 153-94; Van Faassen, *Ik sta helemaal alleen*, 411-560.

39 *De Stijl overal absolute leiding*, 317, letter Van Doesburg to Kok, 24 February 1921.

40 Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, EEST 10.1055, Cornelis van Eesteren, diary 1922/1926, 10 January and 28-31 March 1923.

41 RKD, 0408/178, letter Léonce Rosenberg to Van Doesburg, 30 September 1922.

42 *De Stijl overal absolute leiding*, 429, 475, letters Van Doesburg to Kok, 30 May 1923 and early August 1924; RKD, Archive of Til Brugman, 0067/28, letter Van Doesburg to Til Brugman, 17 May 1923.

43 "Es gibt nur wenige Leute die (wie Man Ray) 'konstruktief' arbeiten". Karl-Peter Röhl, 'Theo van Doesburg und meine Beziehungen zum Styl', in *Karl Peter Röhl. Bauhausjahre* (Köln: Galerie Gmurzynska, 1990), 22, letter Van Doesburg to Röhl, 5 May 1923.

44 'Fernand Léger et le cubisme', *Sélection: Cahier 5, Fernand Léger* (1929): 20-21.

45 "[...] van de natuurlijk-plastische ervaring (de drie-ruimtelijke) zeer verschilt en daarom niet uit een vast oogpunt (perspectiefisch) gedacht moet worden". *De Stijl* 2, no. 12 (Oktober 1919): 144.

46 *De Stijl* 5, no. 9 (September [= November] 1922): 138-39.

47 *De Stijl* 4, no. 2 (February 1921): 29-22.

48 Friendly communication Arnaud Dercelles, e-mail May 18, 2023.

49 "In no. 9 schrijft den architect J.J.P. Oud over 'Vers une architecture' van Corbusier-Saugnier. Vindt hierbij gelegenheid [...] een landelijke standaard-architectuur te verdedigen, aan de hand van pennekrasjes, impressionistische tekeningetjes van pittoreske Corbusierinterieurs, zoals we die voor 20 jaar met hetzelfde wenteltrapje en hetzelfde aantal zuiltjes in 'The Studio' (thans 'L'Esprit Nouveau') bewonderden. Het ideologisch gedeelte van Corbusier's boek [...] staat ten achter bij wat architecten als 't Hoff, Wils, Oud zelf en andere medewerkers in 'De Stijl' (1917-1918) verkondigden". 'Alphabetische informatie. Tijdschriften - boeken - artikelen enz.' [Alphabetical information. Magazines - books - articles etc.], *De Stijl* 6, no. 8 (September 1925): 109.

50 Quoted from *La peinture moderne*, 152.

51 *Architectura* 27, no. 27 (11 August 1923): 163-65.

52 "Constructie is de consequentie van compositie. De elementaire architect vangt aan, de functioneele ruimten en de verschillende materialen samen te stellen, te componeeren, Ziet hij, dat deze compositie beantwoordt aan de functioneele en esthetische eischen, dan eerst zoekt hij de meest oeconomische wijze om de verschillende materialen samen te vatten, te construeeren. In dit stadium wordt hem alles tot materiaal". 'Voorwaarden tot een nieuwe architectuur', 163-64.

53 "Schrijf omgaand aan Rietveld [...] betreffende het plan Rosenberg. Er moet direct aan begonnen worden! Schrijf hem dat jij met hem en met mij in verbinding moeten blijven om de eerste opzet van het model te maken. Als er nu niet mede begonnen wordt is het te laat. Van Wils hoor ik niets meer. Die begint er toch niet aan. Laten wij dus aanpakken". Onze pénétratie was sterker als jij in je laatste brief vermoedt: De briefwisseling tussen Theo van Doesburg en Cornelis van Eesteren, 1922-1931, eds. Sjoerd van Faassen and Herman van Bergeijk (Den Haag: Rode Haring, 2022), 112, letter Van Doesburg to Van Eesteren, late March 1923.

54 "Misschien is het - om iets heel apart te maken - toch beter dat alleen zij met elkaar werken die elkaar volkomen begrijpen. En zijn dat niet Rietveld en wij beiden? Het is mogelijk dat wij iets tot stand brengen dat weer een stuk verder ligt, dan wat Wils in de praktijk - hoe goed ook - deed". Onze pénétratie was sterker, 111, letter Van Doesburg to Van Eesteren, presumably March 1923.

55 "Ik werk hier samen met een jonge architect, Van Eesteren [...] die na zijn kennismaking met mij in Weimar, geheel 'Stijl' geworden is. [...] Jammer dat hij nog wat jong en daarom 'speelsch' is. Hij werkt niet geconcentreerd genoeg. Ik moet hem steeds aansporen". Thijs Rinsema, *Brieven over kunst, De Stijl, het leven en de dood: De correspondentie tussen Theo van Doesburg en de broers Rinsema van 1915-1931* (Bornmeer: Gorredijk, 2017), 355, letter Van Doesburg to Evert Rinsema, 24 June 1923.

56 "[...] zoodat het huis hierdoor uit zijn stabiliteit gewekt wordt". *De Stijl overal absolute leiding*, 205-6, letter Van Doesburg to Kok, 9 September 1917.

57 "Ik heb dat natuurlijk allemaal bliksemgoed gezien en jouw 'architectonische' opleiding altijd min of meer als een hinderpaal om tot zuivere architectonische beelding te komen, gezien". Onze pénétratie was sterker, 186, letter Van Doesburg to Van Eesteren, 12 August 1924.

58 See for a reconstruction: *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*, 139-70. In the large hall on the first floor, work by Georges Braque, József Csáky, Albert Gleizes, Juan Gris, Auguste Herbin, Irène Lagui, Henri Laurens, Fernand Léger, Jean Metzinger, Pablo Picasso, Gino Severini, Leopold Survage en Georges Valmier was shown during the same period. See *Correspondances Fernand Léger-Léonce Rosenberg 1917-1937*, ed. Christian Derouet (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1996), 119 (lettre 174, note 1)

59 Franz Schulze and Edward Windhorst, *Mies van der Rohe: A critical biography* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 77.

60 For some aspects of this design see: *Maison d'Artiste: Unfinished De Stijl icon*, ed. Dolf Broekhuizen (Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers, 2016) and Hans Janssen, 'The 2017 reconstruction of Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren's 1923 model of Maison d'Artiste', in *Dutch Connections: Essays on international relationship in architectural history in honour of Herman van Bergeijk*, ed. Sjoerd van Faassen et al. (Delft: TU Delft Open, 2020), 165-93.

61 "Elk vlak dat een ruimte begrenst, heeft een continuerende ruimtewerking, terwijl een organisch gesloten vorm daardoor

overwonnen is". 'De beteekenis der mechanische esthetiek voor de architectuur en andere vakken', *Bouwkundig Weekblad* 42, no. 28 (9 July 1921): 183.

62 "Tegenover de symmetrie, stelt de nieuwe architectuur de evenwichtige verhouding van ongelijke deelen, d.w.z. van deelen, welke door hun functioneel karakterverschil, in stand, maat, proportie en ligging verschillend zijn. De gelijkwaardigheid dezer deelen, wordt veroorzaakt door het evenwicht der ongelijkwaardigheid en niet door gelijkheid. Ook heeft de nieuwe architectuur het 'voor', 'achter', 'rechts', ['links'], ja zoo mogelijk ook het 'boven' en 'onder' gelijkwaardig gemaakt". 'Tot een beeldende architectuur', 81. De verwijzing naar Hinton komt alleen voor in de eerdere publicatie van dit essay in *Bouwkundig Weekblad*.

63 See also Deborah Ascher Barnstone, *The Color of Modernism: Paints, Pigments, and the Transformation of Modern Architecture in 1920s Germany* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 80.

64 'Vers une construction collective', [followed by] '— + = P_x', *De Stijl*, no. 6-7 ([August] 1924): 89-92; *Bulletin de L'Effort Moderne* no. 9 (November 1924): 15-16. When published in *De Stijl*, the subtitle 'Manifeste V du Groupe "De Stijl"' was omitted.

65 RKD, 0408/178, letter Rosenberg to Van Doesburg, 30 September 1923. This *Bulletin de L'Effort Moderne* would not begin publication until January 1924..

66 RKD, 0408/55, letter Van Doesburg to César Domela, 27 augustus 1925. See also 'Data en Feiten', 56.

67 Yves-Alain Bois and Nancy Troy, 'De Stijl et l'architecture à Paris', in *De Stijl et l'architecture en France*, 51-55, 173.

68 Carol S. Eiel, *L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918–1925* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art / New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 57. See also Tim Benton, *The Painter Le Corbusier: Eileen Gray's Villa E 1027 and Le Cabanon* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2023), 37-45.

69 'Salon d'Automne (Architecture): Déduction consécutives troublantes', *L'Esprit Nouveau* no. 19 (December 1923), unpag.

70 About this, see at length: William W. Braham, *Modern Color / Modern Architecture: Amédée Ozenfant and the Genealogy of Color in Modern Architecture* (London-New York: Routledge, 2019), 62-65.

71 "Indien ikeen domineerende horizontale bouw zou beschilderen, werk ik juist uitsluitend met verticale kleuren. Ik deel de gelijke kleuren b.v. boven in plaats van naast elkaâr in. [...] Technisch noem ik dit 'werken naar of in de richting van het kwadraat.' Het kwadraat nl. is het ideaal van het universele evenwicht, daar de tweeheid, horizontaal en verticaal gelijkwaardig zijn." Rinsema, *Brieven over kleur*, 329, letter of Van Doesburg to Evert Rinsema, 20 August 1922.

72 'L'Exposition de l'École Spéciale d'Architecture', *L'Esprit Nouveau* no. 23 (May 1924), unpag.

73 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Fransche architectuur [2]' [Innovation attempts in French architecture], *Het Bouwbedrijf* 1, no. 6 (December 1924), quoted from *On European Architecture*, 147.

74 "De modellen uitgezonderd, wordt dezelfde expositie (verbonden aan de ontwikkelingstentoonstelling van van Doesburg) in het Städtische Museum te Weimar gehouden, waardoor het Bauhaus weer volop gelegenheid krijgt zijn ontwikkelingsveld uit te breiden en studies te maken voor de Bauhaus-Siedlung. Merkwaardig is zelfs het adopteeren der architecturale voorstellingswijze, als schematisch, planmatig, contra-constructief en alzijdig axonometrisch-perspectiefisch,

hetgeen [...] ingang vond bij het aan den Stijl vijandige Bauhaus". 'Data en Feiten', 56-57.

75 'Tot een beeldende architectuur', 82.

76 "[...] die die nieuwe architectuur in Parijs den stoot gaf (in 1923 met mijn Rosenberg exp.)". Rinsema, *Brieven over kunst*, 390, letter Van Doesburg to Evert Rinsema, 15 November 1928.

77 "Nu gooien ze me te hard met kleurvlakken en kuben". Marijke Küper, 'Gerrit Rietveld', in Carel Blotkamp et al., *De Stijl: The formative years 1917–1922*, transl. by Charlotte I. Loeb and Arthur L. Loeb (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986, 277, letter Rietveld to A.M. Hammacher, 15 June 1925.

78 "Wat ik echter heelemaal niet kan waardeeren is de vierde dimensie. [...] Verder willen zij niet alleen de ruimte, maar ook den tijd in de bouwkunst uitdrukken (tijdruimtelijk beeldingsaspect) en beider verhouding door de kleur uitdrukken. Wie kan daar 'n touw aan vastknoopen?'. [W.F.A. Röell], 'Bezoek bij Mondriaan. Het Neo-plasticisme in Schilderkunst, Bouwkunst, Muziek, Litteratuur', *Het Vaderland* 17 October 1924.

79 *De Stijl* 6, no. 12 ([February 1926]), 139; RKD 0408/20, letter Van Doesburg to Jean Badovici, 15 December 1925.

80 See Herman van Bergeijk, 'A lot of noise on a Rather Empty Drum: The German Bauhaus and Dutch Architects', in *Netherlands - Bauhaus: Pioneers of a New World*, eds. Mienke Simon Thomas and Yvonne Brentjens (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2019), 74-82.

81 Herman van Bergeijk, "'Ein grosser Vorsprung gegenüber Deutschland": Die niederländischen Architekten auf der Bauhausausstellung von 1923 in Weimar', *RIHA Journal* 0064 (January 2013), www.riha-journal.org/articles/2013-jan-mar.

82 *Onze pénétratie was sterker*, 175, letter Van Doesburg to Van Eesteren, 24 July 1924.

83 *Onze pénétratie was sterker*, 152, letter Van Doesburg to Van Eesteren, shortly after 5 April 1924.

84 The plan is not mentioned in the correspondence between Van Doesburg and Tzara. Van Doesburg's statements in this regard in his correspondence with Van Eesteren are therefore the only source.

85 *Karel Peter Röhl in Weimar 1912-1926*, ed. Michael Siebenbrodt and Constance Hofstaetter (Weimar: Karl Peter Röhl Stiftung, 1997), 61.

86 See Van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg: Painter and architect*, XXVII.

87 "Ik zal beginnen de schetsen beter uit te werken. Het zou een reuze ontwerp kunnen worden. Heel groot en in kleur met verkeersmiddelen en alles er bij. Door uniforme blokken te laten zagen die ik kleur, kunnen we een prachtig groot model voor weinig geld laten maken. Het model bestaat uit gekleurde blokken hout. Dit bouwen we dan op de expositie op". *Onze pénétratie was sterker*, 187, letter Van Doesburg to Van Eesteren, 12 August 1924.

88 See Winfried Nerdinger, 'Standard und Typ: Le Corbusier und Deutschland', in Stanilaus von Moos (ed), *L'Esprit Nouveau: Le Corbusier und die Industrie 1920–1925* (Zürich/Berlin: Ernst und Sohn, 1987), 44-53.

89 *Onze pénétratie was sterker*, 188, letter Van Doesburg to Cornelis van Eesteren, 12 August 1924.

90 'Die neue Architektur und ihre Folgen', *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* 9, no. 12 (December 1925): 502-18. A highly

condensed version appeared under the title 'L'évolution de l'architecture moderne en Hollande' in *L'Architecture Vivante* 3, no. 9 (Fall/Winter 1925): 14-20.

91 See Laura McGuire, 'Influence and elaboration: Frederick Kiesler and Theo van Doesburg', in Peter Bogner and Gerd Zilner (eds.), *Frederick Kiesler: Face tot Face with the Avant-Garde: Essays on Network and Impact* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2019), 154-6.

92 Bruno Reichlin, 'The City in Space', in *Frederick Kiesler: Artiste-architecte* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1996), 11.

93 "Kiesler und ich, wir haben uns sehr darum bemüht, die Atmosphäre zu schaffen, wodurch eine Kontra-Demonstration nur möglich sein wird. [...] Auch der Kritik haben wir für unsere Sache gewonnen". Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Dieter Helms (Nürnberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 1997), vol. 2, 235, letter Van Doesburg to Vordemberge-Gildewart, 2 June 1925.

94 RKD, ARC/Does/box XVII.

95 See extensively about this renovation: Emmanuel Guigon, Hans van der Werf and Mariet Willinge (eds.), *L'Aubette ou la couleur dans l'architecture: Une oeuvre de Hans Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Theo van Doesburg* (Strasbourg: Musée de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2006).

96 RKD, 0408/12, diary 26 April 1928.

97 "Ich habe mir Mühe gegeben, Doesburgs Theorien zu verstehen, er behauptet seine Kompositionen hätten gar nichts mit Dekoration zu tun, sie seien rein Raumgestaltend. Sie sind zum Teil sehr schön, aber ich glaube doch dass er sich eine persönliche Theorie zurecht macht". *Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Briefe (II), 1917-1928*, ed. Medea Hoch, Walburga Krupp and Sigrid Schade (Wädenswil: Nimbus, 2021), 687, letter of Sophie Taeuber-Arp to Louise Maass, 20 January 1928.

98 Richard Pommer and Christian F. Otto, *Weissenhof 1927 and the Modern Movement in Architecture* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 45-55.

99 Karin Kirsch et al., *Neues Bauen International 1927/2002* (Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 2002), 88.

100 "Zoals trouwens zich ieder zal herinneren, vormde het streven om tot een 'Gesamtarbeit' te komen den grondslag der moderne kunstbeweging in Holland, welke omstreeks 1916, in het bescheiden tijdschriftje *De Stijl* haar ideeën propageerde en een collectieve beelding tegenover een individualistische verdedigde. Toen, midden in de oorlog, was er in andere landen geen spoor van dit streven te bekennen en dit laat zich ook wel begrijpen wanneer men bedenkt, dat deze nieuwe tendenz een internationale oriëntatie vooropstelde". 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland: De architectuurtentoonstelling "Die Wohnung" te Stuttgart' [Architectural innovations abroad: The architecture exhibition 'Die Wohnung' in Stuttgart], quoted from *On European Architecture*, 164.

101 Allan Doig, *Theo van Doesburg: Painting into architecture, theory into practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 205.

102 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Fransche architectuur [4]', *Het Bouwbedrijf* 2, no. 3 (March 1925). English translation in *On European Architecture*, 39-40.

103 FLC, R3-6-22, letter of Le Corbusier to Van Doesburg, 11 December 1924; FLC A1-10-37, letter Van Doesburg to Le Corbusier, undated. The January 1925 installment of Van Doesburg's article included design drawings of *Ville*

contemporaine de 3 millions d'habitants and *Maison Citrohan*, and the Besnus, Ozenfant and La Roche-Jeaneret Houses. See also RKD, 0408/2064.

104 Matthias Noell, *Im Laboratorium der Moderne: Das Atelierwohnhaus von Theo van Doesburg in Meudon - Architektur zwischen Abstraktion und Rhetorik* (Zürich: gta Verlag, 2011).

105 *De Stijl overal absolute leiding*, 534, letter Van Doesburg to Kok, 23 January 1930.

106 "Het geheel bestaat uit één ruimte, welke naar de functioneële eischen wordt ingedeeld". 'Tot een beeldende architectuur', 80.

107 'Vernieuwingspogingen in de Fransche architectuur [1]' and [3], respectively, *Het Bouwbedrijf* 1, no. 4 (October 1924) and 2, no. 1 (January 1925). English translation in *On European Architecture*, 15-24, 31-39.

108 "Russische 'constructivisten' droomen zelfs van 'luchsteden' en verkondigen [...] dat de voortschrijdende techniek zulke luchsteden realiseerbaar zal maken. Deze 'luchsteden' ruiken echter te veel naar 'luchtkasteelen' om ze, uit architectonisch oogpunt, ernstig te kunnen opnemen". 'Architectuurvernieuwingen in het buitenland: Frankrijk, Duitsland, Oostenrijk, Tsjecho-Slowakije, Italië, Zwitserland, Rusland, Polen [5]' [Architectural innovations abroad: France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, Poland], *Het Bouwbedrijf* 4, no. 9 (29 April 1927), quoted from *On European Architecture*, 147.

109 'Die Verkehrsstadt' [Traffic City], *Architektur der Gegenwart* [1], no. 3 (1929): 4-10.

110 RKD 0408/369 and 416, respectively.

111 "Zoals ik al in sinds 1923 in mijn geschriften heb uitgelegd, is het probleem van de architectuur er vooral een van stedenbouwkundige aard, en is het eerder wetenschap dan kunst".

112 'Die Verkehrsstadt', 5. In this article, he depicted designs by Hilberseimer, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, among others.

113 Letters Mondrian to Oud, 22 May and 27 December 1926 [FC 1972-A.426, 429].

114 Toke van Helmond, 'Un journal est un monsieur. Arthur Lehning en zijn internationale revue i10', in *i10 sporen van avant-garde*, ed. Toke van Helmond (Heerlen: Abp, 1994), 17. For Le Corbusier's collaboration: Bois, 'De Stijl et l'architecture à Paris', 52.

115 "Über des Verhältnis von malerischer und architektonischer Gestaltung. (Mit einer Einführung zur Stijlbewegung, Holland)" [On the relationship between pictorial and architectural design. (With an introduction to the Stijl movement, Holland)], *Der Cicerone* 19, no. 18 (2 September 1927): 564-70.

116 Sigfried Giedion, *Building in France, Building in Iron, Building in Ferroconcrete*, transl. J. Duncan Berry (Santa Barbara: The Getty Centre for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 168. Giedion wrongly assumed that the Henny House was built in concrete, but the walls are made of brick and plastered evenly white; only the skeleton is made of concrete. See *Robert van 't Hoff: Architect of a New Society*, ed. Dolf Broekhuizen (NAI Publishers: Rotterdam, 2010), 71.

117 See also Matthias Noell, "'Choisir entre l'individu et le standard". Das Künstlerhaus bei Gropius, Le Corbusier, Van Doesburg, Bill', in *Das Bauhaus und Frankreich / Le Bauhaus et la France 1919-1940*, ed. Isabelle Ewig et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 365-76.