

Universalmuseum Joanneum Press

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Biography El Lissitzky

El Lissitzky was an architect, painter, graphic artist, interior designer and theoretician. He was born in Pochinok (Russia) and spent his childhood and youth in Smolensk. In 1909 he applied to the University of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg but was rejected. From 1909 to 1914 he then studied architecture and engineering at the Technical University of Darmstadt. He returned to Russia in 1914. From 1915 to 1916 he studied at the Technical University of Riga, which was relocated to Moscow. In 1917 he took part in the exhibition *World of Art* in Petrograd.

In 1918 El Lissitzky became a member of the Department of Fine Arts in Moscow and in 1919 Professor at the University of Fine Arts in Vitebsk, where Kasimir Malevich also taught. Lissitzky was very close to Malevich throughout his life, both in the private and professional spheres. In 1922 the *First Russian Art House Exhibition Berlin* took place, with Lissitzky participating. Together with Ilya Ehrenburg, El Lissitzky published the art magazine *Vesc - Gegenstand - Objet* in the same year.

In 1922 El Lissitzky met the art historian Sophie Küppers, whom he married in 1927. In 1925 he returned to Russia, where he taught at the Moscow Art Institute *VhHUTEMAS*. In 1928 he was appointed artistic head of design of the Soviet pavilion of the international press exhibition *Pressa* in Cologne. In 1931 he became the head artist-architect of the permanent building exhibition in Moscow's *Gorky Cultural Park*. In 1932 he began to work as a book artist for the magazine *USSR under Construction*.

El Lissitzky died of tuberculosis in Schodnia in 1941.