

**[manuscript 45a[1]]**

[Holtzman Deposit, Box 2 no.45a]

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[*verwijzingssteken:*] ✕ I felt ⟨there must be an other → painting has to take a new⟩ way to /  
express the beauty of nature.)

1

Born in Holland 1872, ⟨+ at⟩ Amersfoort. I /  
⟨- Did⟩ early ⟨+ did⟩ painting, conducted by ⟨- his⟩ /  
my father (amateur) and ⟨+ my⟩ uncle (painter) /  
⟨+ and⟩ became diplome⟨d → s⟩ ⟨+ for school and highschool⟩ ⟨d → D⟩rawing Teaching. / ⟨-  
Came⟩ Then ⟨+ came⟩ to Amsterdams Art academie /  
⟨+ and⟩ worked there 3 years. ⟨+ Afterwards⟩ I continued to be /  
realist. ⟨+ [*verwijzingssteken:*] ¶⟩ ⟨+ pag 1a⟩ ⟨- But⟩ After ⟨+ ⟨- several⟩ ⟨- many⟩ years ⟨+ my ¬  
work⟩ devia- /  
ted more and more from ⟨+ the⟩ natural aspect /  
of reality. This by experience, ⟨+ inconsciously.⟩ I knew /  
not much of modern movements which /  
were coming (Van Gogh, Impressionism)  
[*verwijzingssteken:*] ⊙ First I changed the natural color in /  
pure colors. I felt ⟨color natural → natural color⟩ is not /  
the same on canvas as in reality. [*verwijzingssteken:*] ✕  
That time (about 1810) I came in Paris /  
I did like very much Matisse ⟨+ Van Dongen and others⟩ but soon ⟨- af- /  
terwards I became conscious that natural⟩ ⟨+I preferred the Cubists, especially Picasso and ¬  
Leger.⟩  
⟨- form ought to be transformed more /  
definitively. Propice for my evolution /  
was ⟨- ⟨+ that⟩ I saw ⟨- ⟨+[xx]⟩ work of the Cubistes.⟩ I found /  
their way ⟨+ ⟨that → which⟩ the Cubists took⟩ the most light amid ⟨modern → the then living⟩ /  
abstraction⟨+ s⟩ (Kandinsky, Futurisme, etc) /  
and was ⟨+ for⟩ a time influenced by ⟨it → them. But ///

*[achterzijde pagina 1]*

*[verwijzingsteken:]* Ⓞ Van Dongen, the Vauves) what I /  
knew of them, I admired. But I /  
had to find out for my self the /  
way. ///

(1a

[*verwijzingssteken:*] ∇ I preferred to paint landscapes, houses /  
etc. by gray ⟨weather dampy → dampy weather⟩ or ⟨+by⟩ very /  
strong sunlight when the atmosphere /  
by its density abolish⟨- e⟩s the particularitys /  
of ⟨forms → things⟩ and the great lines accentue /  
them selves. I ⟨dessined → sketched⟩ by moonlight, /  
cows lying down on the flat meadows, /  
houses with their dead windows then : /  
But not as romantish : I saw with realistic /  
eyes. ⟨+[*verwijzingssteken:*] ✕⟩ I did like to paint flowers, not en- /  
sembles but one flower ⟨- in all the beauty /  
of at ones⟩ ⟨+ as picture⟩. But I was pushed by my environ- /  
ment to paint ⟨every → also⟩ things in ⟨- their⟩ ordinary /  
⟨apparition → vision⟩. ⟨+[*verwijzingssteken:*] ↑⟩ -- so I made a lot of bad ⟨- things⟩ /  
works. However, bij //  
[*verwijzingssteken:*] ↑ ⟨+ to make⟩ even portrets with likeness -- //  
⟨- I preferred di By⟩ doing ⟨+ also different⟩ ⟨- diffe⟩ jobs, tea- /  
ching, ⟨industrial paintings → commercial drawing⟩ etc. these were /  
not too ⟨- much⟩ many. //  
⟨- I felt inclination for other environment /  
and circumstances brought me ⟨- that⟩ in /  
Paris. //

[*verwijzingssteken:*] ✕ I hated particular movement (people /  
in action, etc.) ///

[*verwijzingssteken*:] Γ thus without -- as far as possible -- /

<- by> veiling by subjective feelings /

and conceptions which <they → it> evoke. <- A [xx]> <+ v.v.><sup>1</sup> //

<- slowly> <+ more and more>. I came <to find → conscious that> Cubism <+ is> not consequent /  
in abstraction, what I felt necessary to express /

<- the things reality truly plastically> <+ the greatest force and the deepest beauty of reality – ∇  
and of men. /

<+ I felt <- reality> to this reality must be established truly plastically, this) /

means like it is, <+[*verwijzingssteken*:] Γ > <We → In Art we> have not to express <- the) /  
things <- (particular forms and colors) but /

<+ pure> reality. The things are changeable in con- /  
stant reality. Reduction of natural form /

<+and color> to the elements of form <rectangular geo-> <+ and primary colors> /

<- metrical forms. I found> <+ is> necessary. <- This) /

not to <- express> <- <+ establish <- creates>> <these → new> forms <- but to have> <+ and ∇  
colors but just to) /

<- pure means to express reality> <+ be more able to abolish them, creating in this way more ∇  
unity.) //

<- [xxx] <- <+ [xxx]> <- <+ [xxx] [xxx] reality [xxx] <- <+ [xxx] expressed only) /

<+ Can, in Plastic Art, <+ expressed> reality only by equilibrium of) /

<- by> dynamic movement of form and color, /

<- and found that Only) pure means <[xxx] → can> do /

this in the strongest way. <- Because [xxx] > <- <+ [xxx] reality>> <+ Can, in Plastic Art, this) / <[xxx]  
→ movement> <- in painting> <+ [xxx] only> <[xxx] → can be> <expressed → established> ∇

by contrastes <+ (oppositions)> of the expressive means, rela- /

tionship <+ then> becomes <[xxx] → the> principal occu- /

pation <+of the artist). <- I found: The) <<+ is the> right angle. <- <+ s) The only /

constant relationship → the only constant relationship is the right angle). By the propor- /

tions of dimension <- [xxx] to make> the /

constant <is → must be brought to> movement : <+ made> living. //

I realized all this <- being back <+not before> I was back> <- in Holland during) ///

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<sup>1</sup> Voir au verso = z.o.z.

*[achterzijde pagina 2]*

**v.v.** But it took long before I experien- /  
ced that it is the particular form /  
and natural color that evokes or /  
subjectivity. <– [xxx][xxx]> ///

I had been in previous resourch ⟨- for⟩ these /  
years in Paris. [*verwijzing:*] **pag a.b.c.** //

⟨- the last war.⟩ [*verwijzingsteken:*] ⊥ ⟨+ a⟩ very small group of  
artists and architects

⟨With → In that time⟩ Theo van Doesburg, a⟨- n⟩ Dutch pain- /  
ter ⟨[xxx] → and wryter was in⟩ ⟨+ analogue resourche⟩ ⟨- a exploraid in some architects. ⊖  
⟨+ We⟩ for- /  
med ⟨De → the⟩ Stijl Groep which had a great /  
influence all over Europe by publishing /  
the review “⟨Th → D⟩e Stijl”, directed by van Doesburg. ⟨+ [*verwijzingsteken:*] **A**⟩  
⟨- After the war coming back⟩ ⟨i → I⟩n Paris I deve- /  
lopped my work, ⟨+ exhibited there and abroad (Europe and America)⟩ ⟨- there⟩ until 1838 when I /  
⟨went to → came in⟩ London. Here I ⟨+ continued and⟩ stayed until this /  
war ⟨- me⟩ brought ⟨+ me⟩ - Oct. 40 - in New York. /  
⟨Now → Continuing also here, now⟩ I am learning more and more the /  
compositions of rectangular planes and /  
use colored lines to the same purpose. //

End. [*verwijzingsteken:*] **(I)** //

[*verwijzingsteken:*] ¶ as pure as possible //

⟨- My painting is pure “painting”: not sym- /  
bolic nor philosophical. I only try /  
to express ⟨+ [*verwijzingsteken:*] ¶⟩ Life-Energie : not daily /  
life. But all is relative: in art intui- /  
tion can do much, but we keep always /  
our subjectivity.⟩ //

From ⟨1814 → that time⟩ until here I have ⟨- tryed to⟩ /  
express⟨+ed⟩ my ideas ⟨about art → but⟩ ⟨in several /  
European reviews ⟨[xxx][xxx][xxx] → not only⟩ in the “Stijl” → not only in the “Stijl” but in ⊖  
several European reviews). //

(pag 4) ///

[achterzijde pagina 3]

[verwijzingssteken:] **A** ⟨- In that time⟩ ⟨w → W⟩e had the idea that /  
an collective ⟨- new⟩ art was possible. /  
But especially I hoped to open the /  
⟨the public eyes ⟨+ of⟩ → eyes of the public⟩ for pure plastic art /  
and ⟨+ tried⟩ to show it its consequences. /  
⟨+ Modern⟩ architecture and industrie ⟨show → revail⟩ /  
our influence. But painting and /  
sculpture little. These arts seem /  
⟨- to⟩ fear⟨+ ing⟩ to fall in decoration. //  
There is no reason for ⟨that → this⟩ more then/  
in ⟨- other⟩ all other art ⟨+ -expressions⟩ : ⟨- also⟩ ⟨that → those also⟩ be- /  
come decoration when the depth /  
of expression is lacking. ⟨- Another /  
raison that⟩ In painting and sculpture /  
one fears ⟨+ also⟩ to cop⟨y → ie⟩. ⟨- But⟩ ⟨- Perhaps⟩ ⟨+ Of course all is⟩ /  
⟨- it is⟩ more obvious in strai⟨[xx] → ght⟩ line-art, /  
but in all art the expressive means /  
are commonly used. The personality /  
⟨is → shown⟩ not by the⟨+ se⟩ ⟨- expressive⟩ means, but /  
by the use of them. //  
In spite of all now already there are /  
artists who develop our work to an art /  
⟨- that will be⟩ still more ⟨- ⟨+ [xx]⟩ real. ⟨+ [verwijzingssteken:] **B**⟩ ///

[pagina a]

a)

<- I> <- <+ after> <+ Having> made and exposed at the Salon des Indé- /  
pendants abstractions of trees, plants, hou- /  
ses, I came <+ for a visit> <in Holland back → back in Holland> just before /  
<<+ of> the last war <+ the> outburst → the outburst of the last war> and stayed there <+ un>till /  
the end of that war. I <continue → developped> my abstractions /  
<- of> of church facades, trees, seas. More and more /  
I exclude<+ d> all curved lines and came, in the /  
end, to make compositions of verticals and ho- /  
rizontals <- lines> <+ forming crosses, but composed them>, loose one from the other. //  
Seeing the sea, <- with> sky and stars, I represen- /  
ted this <str → thr>ough a multiplicity of crosses. /  
I was impressed by the greatness of nature /  
and tried to express expansion, rest, unity. /  
For this raison <+ perhaps> a<+ n> art critic <+ called> one of those pic- /  
tures <- as> "Christmas". But I felt that I /  
still worked as impressionist and expressed /  
a particular feeling, <- Thus> not reality as it /  
is. I was concious that never we can be /  
plainly "objective" but felt that one <could → can> /  
be less and less subjective <+ so that this is no more dominant.> <- But> I was con- /  
cious also that <+ the expansion which nature shows is also limitation : <- the>> <- reality ∩  
shows> the two opposite /  
forces which I had <- paint> expressed by ver- /  
tical and horizontal position of the straight /  
line <- is the grou base of all plastic a [xxx] /  
are the essential expression> existent and <- all> /  
dominant <+ all>; <+ [xxx]> <- <+ [xxx] of life> Their reciproque action con- /  
stitute "life". ///

[pagina b]

b)

I felt that the equilibrium of ⟨realitys → an certain natural / aspect⟩ depends of the equivalence ⟨– of in the expression⟩ / of these oppositions. I felt the tragic / created by ⟨+ their⟩ unéquivalence. I saw ⟨it → tragic⟩ seeing / a wide horizon or a high cathedral. ⟨+ [verwijzingsteken:] ⊙ ⟩ / ⟨– So I kept ⟨– on⟩ my verticals and horizontals. / But⟩ ⟨a → A⟩n other point I became concious of : / reality is form and space. Nature ⟨seems → ⟨⟨– to⟩ shows⟩ / formes in space. ⟨– In reality ⟨– ⟨+ But⟩ all is space.⟩ ⟨+ There is [xxx] difference between ¬ form and space.⟩ / ⟨– For also ⟨– ⟨+ [xx]⟩ form is ⟨– ⟨+ limited⟩ space. But for it is / concreet by its determination. In nature⟩ / ⟨+ ⟨– In⟩ Really, all is space, form as well what we see as ⟨+ empty⟩ space. ⟨Nature is unity, ¬ ⟨+ only⟩ appearing ⟨[xx] → in⟩ oppositions → only appearing in oppositions, nature is unity⟩ / Space is vague. To create unity, Art has / ⟨+ ⟨– art⟩ [xxx] follow not natures aspect but what nature really is.⟩ ⟨+ [verwijzingsteken:] ⊥ ⟩ to determine space as well as form, ⟨+ [verwijzingsteken:] ⊙ ⟩ ⟨– I had⟩ ⟨u → U⟩ntil here ⟨+ I had⟩ not determined space. / ⟨+ In my pictures⟩ ⟨s → S⟩pace was still as a “background”. // First I began to determine forms : crosses / becoms rectangles. ⟨I made ⟨f → F⟩irst ⟨– a long ⟨+ time⟩⟩ → First I made⟩ / ⟨–time⟩ compositions of rectangles in ⟨–still⟩ ⟨+[verwijzingsteken:] ✕ ⟩ / not quit pure color. They w⟨– h⟩ere still [xx] / on a background, ⟨+ loose from the other. Then⟩ I felt the lack of unity, / closed the rectangles to gather. Space / became ⟨with → white⟩, black or gray, form color, / red, blue, ⟨or → and⟩ yellow. Closing the rectan- / gles together was, in other words, ⟨make → continue⟩ / ⟨– long all over the picture⟩ ⟨+ [verwijzingsteken:] V⟩ the ⟨– line⟩ verticals / and horizontals of my former ⟨[xxx] → periode⟩. ⟨+[verwijzingsteken:] M⟩ //

[verwijzingsteken:] ⊥ Art has //

[verwijzingsteken:] V ⟨+all⟩ over the picture, ⟨– ⟨+ painting all⟩ ///

[achterzijde pagina b]

[verwijzingsteken:] ✕ : form is ⟨determined → limited⟩ space, ⟨– It is⟩ /  
concrete ⟨+ only⟩ by its determination. [verwijzingsteken:] ⊣ //

[verwijzingsteken:] ⊙ , then to create the equivalence /  
of these two factors, /  
all this I realised during ⟨+ and through⟩ my /  
work. ///

[pagina c]

⟨- In this way I [xxx]⟩ ⟨+ [verwijzingssteken:] **N**⟩ ⟨- became conscient of⟩ ⟨+ I am convinced ¬  
⟨- [xx]⟩⟩ /  
⟨- the thruth⟩ that ⟨+ in modern time this⟩ ⟨- the equivalence of form /  
and space⟩ has to be ⟨expressed → done⟩ in a more /  
real way than it was done ⟨+ in Art up to now.⟩ ⟨- hitherto⟩ Feeling /  
the spirit of modern time, the ⟨+ plastic⟩ action ⟨becomes → is⟩ /  
that what emo⟨tion → ve⟩. ⟨- ⟨+ And⟩ ⟨+ But⟩ Art has to create the /  
equivalence of ⟨+ this⟩ action ⟨- by the equivalence of /  
form and space⟩ //  
The thruth that ⟨+ in Art to this⟩ the abolish⟨ism → ment⟩ of the /  
particular form is necessary ⟨- to feel /  
express strongly Art ⟨- ⟨+its⟩ content⟩ became also /  
clear to me by my plastic experiences. //

[verwijzingssteken:] **N** Consequence in the establishment /  
of equivalence I felt necessa- /  
ry to create a clear expres- /  
sion of equilibrium ⟨+ and⟩ a strong /  
expression of dynamic move- /  
ment : life. ///

[pagina 4]

⟨+ When ⟨+ later⟩ ⟨D → th⟩e Stijl a little deviated from my personal /  
⟨+ conceptions,⟩ I ⟨- have⟩ published ⟨+ being after the War back in Paris,⟩ / 4  
a booklet : “Le /  
Neo-Plasticisme”. I called th⟨is → e⟩ / (4  
consequence of ⟨+ Plastic⟩ Art ⟨+ which was founded⟩ “Neo⟨- Plasticisme⟩ /  
⟨- as⟩ (New) Plastic : ⟨- A Plastic with pure⟩ ⟨+ the expressive⟩ /  
means ⟨+ were new and relationship was differently established⟩ ⟨- It is proche to Architecture as /  
⟨- Art.⟩ ⟨-It⟩ ⟨- ⟨+ [xx]⟩ ⟨+ [verwijzing:] pag M | -W neo-Plasticism [verwijzingsteken:] ✕⟩ brings ¬  
sculpture more or less /  
to ⟨+ this⟩ architecture. It revails it self in /  
music : ⟨+ much in the⟩ the Boogie-Woogie, ⟨- is an⟩ /  
quit unaware of Neo-plasticism, ⟨- [xx]⟩ /  
is homogene with it. [verwijzingsteken:] P //  
Neo-plasticism is not a personal con- /  
ception but a consequence grown out of /  
all art, modern or old. It is open to /  
every body : therefor a called it an /  
“ism”. //

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[verwijzingsteken:] ✕ is proche to architecture ⟨as-art-⟩ and /  
can complete it by its pure /  
relationship and color. It //

[verwijzingsteken:] P Progress ⟨- of⟩ in Technics ⟨- revails⟩ has /  
created an industrie showing ⟨- much /  
what is homogene⟩ paralel ⟨+ but⟩ of course /  
less consequent [xx] conceptions. Thus /  
Neo-Plasticisme is not a personal /  
Conception ///

[pagina M]

⟨+ Evidently, “rectangles” manifest /  
them selves. They must be⟩ //  
⟨+ as in⟩ ⟨- In⟩ all ⟨+ Plastic⟩ Art particular forms, ⟨are in a work /  
are to be neutralized by the composition. ⟨+ Just⟩ Art with /  
⟨[xxx][xxx][xxx] → the elements⟩ ⟨+ of⟩ form⟨- s⟩ ⟨+only⟩ can do this /  
more consequently. ⟨- However, it⟩ /  
⟨- It seems that in my Art rectangles are used, /  
but they⟩ ⟨+ Really the rectangles⟩ ⟨- they⟩ are ⟨more → a⟩ consequence ⟨they → and not⟩ ¬  
purpose ⟨- ,⟩ /  
their determining lines continuent ⟨+ and ⟨- of⟩ are formed ⟨+only by⟩ [xxx] crossing of ¬  
vert. and hor. ⟨+ [verwijzingssteken:] **X**⟩ ⟨- them self /  
form and rectangle [xxx] the other⟩ ⟨- ⟨+They are bound together [verwijzingssteken:] **X**⟩ However, /  
especially the color⟨-ed⟩ planes manifest them /  
selves as rectangles. Perhaps it is therefore /  
that I came, ⟨- first⟩ to exclude the gray planes /  
⟨- and to⟩ painting in white and little color, ⟨and → [verwijzingssteken:] **N**⟩ ⟨- then⟩ /  
to colored lines. In any case the use of these /  
is grown out of the feeling that ⟨- ⟨+ the color and⟩ the reciproque /  
action ⟨- of⟩ ⟨+ the color and of⟩ the limiting lines of the rectangles  
has to create the dynamic movement that /  
express “life”. //

⟨- that⟩ so the rectangles //

⟨- Another reason that the rectangular pla- /  
nes not manifest them as rectangles is that⟩ //  
⟨- ⟨+ They establish not form⟩ ⟨+ [verwijzingssteken:] **Z**⟩ rectangles only → only rectangles⟩ appear ¬  
and not other forms ⟨- .⟩ /  
with them : ⟨- So⟩ there is no contrast ⟨- [xxx]⟩ /  
⟨+ that makes particular⟩ form. ⟨+ [verwijzingssteken:] **X**⟩ They don't established ⟨+limited⟩ form ¬  
because ⟨+ [verwijzingssteken:] **Z**⟩ ⟨- the⟩ //

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[verwijzingssteken:] **W** For so far as there ⟨+ more or less⟩ pure means are used in /  
Art of the Past (Byz. etc) ⟨- then⟩ it was quit in /  
an other way : the particular form manifest /  
itself ⟨- more⟩ and the composition is different /  
symmetry or repetition ⟨- are⟩ is not excluded. ///

*[achterzijde pagina M]*

*[verwijzingsteken:]* **N** accentuating more and more /  
the limit-lines of the planes. /  
But in this way establishing /  
too much black, I came ///

[pagina I]

I) <- [xx]> <+ [verwijzingssteken:] X In this world, by subjective vision, no- /  
body can be happy. <+ **VV**<sup>2</sup>> //  
    <+ Art and life show us <- <+ that>> //  
My conviction is that humanity now, after age- /  
long culture, <- only> <- <+ [xxx]>, can <really → accelerate its> progress <by → through> /  
<+ the <- possession of acquisitions of> resource of a more true> /  
<- a clear> vision of reality. Science has done /  
much <- <+ to found this vision> <+ to help in this,> but <+ plastic> Art can do perhaps more ⊃  
<for → because> it /  
penetrated deeper in <us → our> <- whole> personality. //  
Reality seems to be tragic by non-equi- /  
libre and confusion of its <- <+ different and> <+ changeable> appearance, but /  
<it is → is it> <- this> not. Our subjective vision and <+ determined> /  
position <- in time> <+ does us> suffer<- s> <+ from> <t → T>ragic <- of course and> ⊃  
<- <+ which> /  
<- that> exist <- only> <+ only> in time. <- [xx]> <But reality → Notwithstanding all> /  
<- is free from tragic : equilibrium.> <+ this, for us, human beings, time is very much. ⊃  
<+ [verwijzingssteken:] X> //  
<- Then> <- <+ its> establishment <- <+ in Art> of a clear <- living> equi- /  
librium must be <+ <- the> true> “living” Art, <+ this is> Art <+ not only> for the /  
present <and → but also for the> futur. //

-----  
Tragic, <+ this is> oppression <+ or suffering> by (trough) the unequi- /  
valence of the opposit<es → ions> in life, is what /  
kills <- li> human life. [verwijzingssteken:] **W** //

----- <+ **VV**> -----  
<If → As> tragic exist in time, beauty /  
exist also <+ in [- xxx] this world>. Is, in time, tragic not to /  
abolish, it is to oppose by beauty. //  
Realitys aspect shows tragic but beauty /  
at the same time. //  
Art has the mission to express beauty ///

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<sup>2</sup> Voir au verso = z.o.z.

*[achterzijde pagina I]*

*[verwijzingssteken:]* **W** The aspect of reality reveals /  
tragic and human life is /  
tragic. But in accordance /  
with Einstein theories (abolish- /  
ment of time and of subjective /  
vision) Plastic Art showing /  
its equilibrium, shows /  
that reality, real "life", is /  
free from tragic. Then its ///