

Born in Holland 1872, ⟨+ at⟩ Amersfoort. I early /
did painting, conducted by my father (ama- /
teur) and my uncle (painter) and became di- /
plomes for school and high school ⟨+drawing⟩ teaching. /
Then came to Amsterdams Art Academie /
and worked there three years. Afterwards /
I continued to be realist. I preferred to paint /
landscaps, houses, etc. by gray dam- /
py weather or by very strong sunlight when /
the atmosphere ⟨+ ([x])⟩ by its dencity the particular- /
ritys of things and the great lines accentue /
them selves. I ⟨- [xx]⟩ sketched by moonlight - /
cows lying down or staying imanuable /
on Dutchs flat meadows. [verwijzingsteken:] ✕ I hated parti- /
cular movement, (people in action etc) /
I did like to paint flowers, not ensembles /
but one flower ⟨- at ones⟩ as picture. But I /
was pushed by my environment to paint /
also things in ordinary vision, to make /
even portrets with likeness - so I made a /
lot of bad works. However, by doing also //

[verwijzingsteken:] ✕ houses with their dead windows then. /
But not as romantist: I saw with realiste /
eyes. ///

differend jobs, teaching, commercial /
 <- painting [xxx] drawing, etc., these were /
 not too many. //
 After several years my work deviated more /
 and more from <+ the> natural aspect of reality. /
 This by experience, unconsciously. I knew /
 not much of modern movements which /
 were coming (van Gogh, Impressionism) /
 <- First> Van Dongen, the Vauves) What I /
 knew of them, I admired. But I had to /
 find out for my self the way. //
 First I changed the natural color in pure /
 colors. I felt the natural color is not the /
 same on canvas as in reality. I felt /
 <- [xxxx] [xxxx] painting has to take a <- other> <+ new> /
 way to express the beauty of nature. //
 That time (about 1810) I came in Paris. /
 I did like very much Matisse, Van Dongen, and
 others, but soon I prefered the Cubists, espec- /
 ally Picasso and Leger. I found the way <- [xx]> which /
 the Cubists took the most right amid the then /
 living abstractions (Kandinsky, Futurism, etc.) /
 and was for a time influenced by them. But /
 more and more I became conscious that Cubism /
 is not consequent in abstraction, what I felt /
 necessary to express the greatest force and dee- ///

pest beauty of reality - and of men. /
 I felt to this reality must be established /
truly plastically, this means like it is, /
 thus without - as far as possible - veiling /
 by subjective feelings and conceptions /
 which it evoke. But it took long before I /
 experienced that it is the particular form and /
 natural color that evokes or subjectivity. /
 We have not to express ⟨+ the⟩ things but pure /
reality. The things are changeable in constant /
 reality. Reduction of natural form and co- /
 lor to the elements of form and primery color /
 is necessary. ⟨- The⟩ Not to ⟨- create⟩ ⟨+ establish⟩ new forms and /
 colors, but just to be more able to abolish /
 them, ⟨- to create and⟩ ⟨+ creating⟩ in this way more unity. /
 Can, in Plastic Art, reality only be expressed by /
 equilibrium of dynamic movement of form /
 and color, pure means can do this in the stron- /
 gest way. Can, in Plastic Art, this movement /
 only be established by contrastes (oppositions) /
 of the expressive means, relationship then /
 becomes ⟨+ the⟩ principal ⟨- op⟩ occupation of the artist. /
 The only constant relationship is the right /
 angle. By the proportions of dimension the /
 constant must be brought to movement : /
 made living. ///

I realized all this not before I had been /
 in previous resourch ~~for~~ three years in /
 Paris. //

Having made and exposed at the „Salon des Indépen- /
 dants” abstractions of tries, houses, plants, I ca- /
 me for a visit back in Holland just before the /
 outburst of the last war and stayed there untill /
 the end of that war. I <- [xxxxx]> <+ developped> my abstractions /
 of church-facades, tries, houses, seas. More /
 and more I excluded all curved lines and ca- /
 me, in the end, to make compositions of verticals /
 and horizontals, <- [xxxx]> forming <- [x]> cross<+ es>, but /
 <loose one from the other I composed them → I composed them loose one from the other.> /
 Seeing the sea <- with>, sky and stars, I represen- /
 ted this through a multiplicity of crosses. /
 I was impressed by the greatness of nature /
 and tried to express expansion, rest, unity. /
 For this reason perhaps an art critic called /
 one of those pictures “Christmas” - But I felt /
 that I still worked as impressionnist and /
 expressed <- [xx]> <+ no> a particular feeling, <- expression> /
 not reality as it is. I was concious that never /
 we can be plainly “objective” but felt that /
 one can be less and less subjective : so /
 that this <+ is> no more ~~is~~ predominant. I was /
 <conscious that also → also concious that> the expansion which ///

nature nature shows, is also limitation : the /
 two opposit(ions → e) forces which I had expressed /
 by verticals and horizontals existent and /
 dominant all. Their reciproque action con- /
 stitutes “life”. I felt that the equilibrium of /
 an certain natural aspect depends of the equi- /
valence of these oppositions. I felt the tragic /
 created by their unequivalence. I saw tragic /
 seeing a wide horizon or a (cathedral high → high cathedral). /
 An other point I became conscious of: reality /
 is form and space. Nature shows formes in space. /
 There is difference between form an space. (– But /
 all is space. Form is limited space) Really, /
all is space : form as well as that what we /
 see as empty space. To create unity, art has /
 to follow not nature’s aspect, but what nature /
 really is. Appearing in oppositions, nature is /
 unity : form is limited space, concreet (– by) /
 only by its determination. Art has to deter- /
mine space as well as form, then (+ to) create /
the equivalence of these two factors. //
 All this I realized during [*verwijzingsteken*] L my work. /
 In my pictures space was still as a “back- /
 ground”. First I began to determine forms : /
 crosses became rectangles. First I made /
 compositions of rectangles in not quit pure //
 [*verwijzingsteken*] L and through ///

color. They were still as on a background, /
 loose one from the other. Then I felt the lack /
 of unity : closed the rectangles to gather. Space /
 became white, black, <+ or> gray ; form color : /
 red, blue, and yellow. Closing to gather the /
 rectangles, was, in other words, continue <+ all over the picture> the /
 verticals and horizontals of my former perio- /
 de. (pag. 6a) //

Consequence in the establishment of equiva- /
 lence I felt necessary to create a clear expres- /
 sion of equilibrium and a strong expression /
 of dynamic movement : life. //

I am convinced that in modern time this has /
 to be done in a more real way than it was /
 done in Art up to now. Feeling <+ [xxxx]> the spirit /
 of modern time, the plastic „action <- becomes /
 [xx] [xx]> is that what <- emotion> emove. But /
 Art has to create the equivalence of this /
 action. //

The thruth that <+ in Art> to this the abolishment /
 of the particular form is necessary became /
 also clear to me by my plastic experiences. //

In that time, Theo van Doesburg, <- was> a Duch /
 painter and writer, was in analogic<+ cal> resourch. /
 We formed a very small group of artist and ///

Evidently “rectangles” manifest them /
 selves. They must ⟨− be⟩, as in all Art particu- /
 lar forms, ⟨+ be⟩ neutralised by the composition. /
 Just Art with elements of form only can /
 do this more consequently. //

Really the rectangles are ⟨+ a⟩ consequence and /
 not purpose. Their determining lines conti- /
 nuent, so the rectangles are formed only by /
 crossing of verticals and horizontals. They /
 dont establish limited form because “rectan- /
 gles” only appear and not other forms with /
 them : there is no contrast that makes ⟨− form⟩ /
 particular form. //

However, especially the color-planes, ma- /
 nifest them selves as rectangles. Perhaps /
 it is therefore that I came, ⟨− first⟩ to exclude /
 the gray planes ⟨− [xxx]⟩ painting in white /
 and little color, [*verwijzingsteken:*] ⟨− 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 dyna- /
 mic movement which expresses “life”. //

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

architects : the Stijlgroep which had a /
 great influence all over Europe by publis- /
 hing the review “De Stijl”, directed by van /
 Doesburg. We had the idea that an collective /
 Art was possible. But especially I hoped to o- /
 pen the ⟨- [xx]⟩ eyes of the public for pure plastic art /
 and ⟨- to sh⟩ tried to show it its consequences. /
 Modern architecture and industrie ⟨- shows⟩ /
 revail our influence. But painting and sculp- /
 ture little. These arts seem⟨- s⟩ ⟨- to⟩ fear⟨+ ing⟩ to fall /
 in decoration. There is no reason for this more /
 than in all other art-expressions : those also /
 become decoration when the depth of expres- /
 sion is lacking. In painting and sculpture /
 one fears also to copie. Of course all is mo- /
 re obvious in straight-line Art, but in all /
 art the expressive means are commenly used. /
 The personality is shown not by these means, /
 but by the use of them. //
 In spite of all now already there are artists /
 who develop our work to an art still more /
real. //
 From that time I have expressed my ideas /
 not only in ⟨- the⟩ “De Stijl” but in several /
 Europien reviews. //
 When ⟨“De Stijl” later → later “De Stijl”⟩ a little deviated from ///

my personal ⟨- id⟩ conception, I published, /
 being after the war back in Paris, a booklet : /
 “Le Neo-Plasticisme”. [*verwijzingsteken:*] ¶ I called the conse- /
 quence of Plastic Art, which was founded : Neo /
 (New) Plastic : ⟨+ the⟩ expressive means were /
 new and relationship was differend⟨+ly⟩ establish- /
 hed. For so far as there more or less pure /
 means are used in Art of the Past (Byz. art /
 etc.) it was quit in an other way : the parti- /
 cular form ⟨- was⟩ manifest it self and the /
 composition is differend : symmetrie and /
 repetition is not excluded. //

Neo-Plasticism ⟨- brings sculpture more /
 or less to⟩ is proche to architecture-as-Art /
 and can complete it by its pure relationship /
 and color. It brings sculpture more or /
 less to this architecture. It revails it- /
 self in music : much in the “Boogie-Woo- /
 gie - quit unaware of Neo-Plasticism - /
 is homogene with it. //

Progress in Technics has created an indus- /
 trie showing paralel but of course less con- /
 sequent conceptions. Thus Neo-Plasticism /
 is not a personal conception but a conse- //

[*verwijzingsteken:*] ¶ Like in De Stijl, ///

quence grown out of all Art, mo- /
dern and old. It is open to every-bo- /
dy : therefor a called it an 'ism'. //

In Paris I developped my work, exhibited /
<+ there and> abroad (in Europe and America) until /
1838 when I came in London. Here I con- /
tinued and stayed until this war brought /
me (Oct.40) in New York. Continuing /
also here, I am leaving more and more /
the compositions of rectangular planes /
and use colored lines to the same pur- /
pose. //

April 41 - - Piet Mondrian. //

Supplement pag.10. ///

[*verwijzingssteken:*] × Tragic, this is oppression or suffering /
 by (through) the unequivalence of the oppo- /
 sitions in ⟨- [x]⟩ life, is what kills human life. //

 My conviction is that humanity now, after age- /
 long culture, can accelerate its progress through /
 the ⟨- [xx]⟩ resourch of a ⟨- clear a⟩ more true vision of /
 reality. Science has done much that is helpfull /
 to this, but Plastic Art can do perhaps more /
 because it penetrates deeper our personality. /
 Reali seems to be tragic by non-equi⟨- valence⟩ /
 libre and confusion of its appearence, but is it /
 not. Our subjective vision and ⟨- position⟩ deter- /
 mined position does us suffer from tragic. //

Tragic exist only in time. ⟨- [xxx]⟩ [*verwijzingssteken:*] ⊥ The ⟨- [xxxx]⟩ /
 ⟨- [xxx]⟩ aspect of reality ⟨- [xx][xxx]⟩ ⟨+ revails⟩ tragic and hu- /
 man life is tragic. But in accordance /
 with Einstein theories (abolishment of time /
 and of subjective vision) Plastic Art ⟨⟨showing → shows⟩ /
 that “reality”, real “life”, is free from tra- /
 gics ⟨- for it is equal Plastic Art⟩ showing /
 its equilibrium → showing its equilibrium shows that “reality”, real “life”, is free from tragics.⟩ ¬
 Then ⟨- the⟩ ⟨+ its⟩ establishment /
 of a clear equilibrium must be ⟨- [xx]⟩ true /
 “living” Art, this is Art not only for the /
 present but also for the futur. //

 [*verwijzingssteken:*] ⊥ Notwithstanding this, for us, human beings, /
 time is very much. ∅ In this world, ⟨- [xxx]⟩ /
 ⟨- [xxxx]⟩, by subjective vision, nobody can be happy. /
 [*verwijzingssteken:*] × ///