

[publicatie]

[in: Richard Kostelanetz. *Moholy-Nagy* (Documentary Monographs in Modern Art), New York 1974: 176-177]

Datering:

De brief wordt in het boek van Kostelanetz (1974) gedateerd op '1939'.

De brief wordt in het boek van H&J (1986) gedateerd '6 June 1939'; deze datering is niet juist, Mondriaan heeft op 5 juni 1939 een andere brief geschreven.

De eerste zinnen van de gepubliceerde brief geven aan dat het nog geen twee jaar is na het verschijnen van 'Circle'; 'Circle' verschijnt in juli 1937.

“Certainly, you can bring my quotation that I sent you into your book; only, I promised Mr. Faber of 'Circle' the copyright for two years. But this fragment does not matter, I think. Always you can ask him.”

Het citaat van PM staat op p. 32 van het boek van Moholy-Nagy *The New Vision*.

The New Vision werd het eerst gepubliceerd in 1938 (herdrukken: 1939, 1946, 1947).

Correspondentie met Richard Kostelanetz en Hattula Moholy-Nagy levert alleen een Mondriaan brief op van 5 juni 1939, die een andere tekst heeft.

De brief van Moholy-Nagy aan Mondriaan is aangetroffen in Mondriaans nalatenschap.¹ Deze brief is gedateerd op 24 augustus 1938 en begint met de woorden: 'My dear Mondrian: I thank you very much for your letter of August 7th. I feel that this letter with its wisdom and wonderful enthusiasm is a valuable document.' In dit fragment bedankt Moholy-Nagy Mondriaan niet alleen voor zijn brief van 7 augustus 1938, maar typeert hij vervolgens deze brief als 'this letter with its wisdom and wonderful enthusiasm'. Op grond van deze typering is aangenomen, dat het hier gaat om de brief die is afgedrukt in het boek van Kostelanetz, want in deze brief schetst Mondriaan namelijk vol verve zijn visie op het kunstonderwijs en hoe hij daaraan een constructieve bijdrage zou kunnen leveren. Om die reden krijgt de gepubliceerde brief de datering '7 augustus 1938' toegekend.

Letter to Moholy-Nagy *Piet Mondrian*

Dear Moholy,

Many thanks for your letter. Certainly, you can bring my quotation that I sent you into your book; only, I promised Mr. Faber of 'Circle' the copyright for two years. But this fragment does not matter, I think. Always you can ask him.

'New Vision' is a nice title. Really, we must have a 'new vision,' otherwise all effort is useless to future new life.

I am very glad you do like my statement that I published in 'Circle.' However, I think it will be good to explain to you my ideas more clearly. Perhaps this is superfluous, but I don't know if you see my relation to architecture and industry. I see by your letters that you are thinking that I could do good work at the Bauhaus in the future. But why did you not think of me firstly? I am, among the different artists, perhaps the most free from 'art' and the most near to the 'reality' and its esthetic construction; the most near to architecture and industry. I have studied the most consequently that what only create reality's true beauty, that is *pure relations of planes, lines and colors*.

¹ Archief Piet Mondriaan, RKD, Den Haag (inv.nr. 0740.019). De brief is getypt op briefpapier van 'the New Bauhaus - American School of Design'.

Good relations comes first under discussion is it not?

Future life - more real, more pure - needs more real, more pure esthetic construction. This construction is the research for pure constructive elements and pure relations of them.

The research for good *forms* was the work in the past: the research for good *relations* is the gleam of the present. It is true, good forms create good relations, but *the way how to create them* is different. Relations must come first. This is very important in teaching. The difference is (in language teaching) like as between old school teaching and Berlitz school.

Nice architecture and nice objects must be created: not nice forms. Nice drawings are useless. That is why I see the usefulness of an artist at the Bauhaus only in this way that he is able to teach *how to make more perfect the material constructions*. A 'painter' and a 'sculptor' are of no use at the Bauhaus: well their capability to teach all about forms, colors and their relations.

'Art' must be forgotten: beauty must be realized.

The material realizations: this is what is under discussion.

I think you have always well understood all this. But - at the old Bauhaus - Kandinsky and Klee ... have taught in the way to maintain the separation of art and reality (architecture and industry) architecture and all what belongs to it, furniture, utilitarian objects, machines etc., is what most occupy us. Pictures, sculptures decoration are of no use in new life and are an obstacle to realize it now in the present. Because I am sure that you feel most of this above as I do feel it, I do not understand that you have spoken to Mr. Sweeney, as he told me, not only about me, but also about Arp to have at the Bauhaus. Arp is a great artist, but nothing for our future environment. At that time you did not know perhaps his latest work.

Archipenko is a sculptor also, but Helion told me that he does not teach his 'art' but develops the sense for good forms and composition of them. I think this is very good. And I am sure that Helion shall work for color and form in the same good way.

By this fact I have seen that you are creating a 'new' Bauhaus.

I heard from Helion also that you intended to create a workshop for architecture and were looking for an architect. Why should you not go a new way and take an engineer with an esthetic collaborator. This latest must be an artist, but an artist *free from 'art.'* But all this is perhaps not possible now. You know that better as I do. Best greetings to you and your wife, yours

(Signed) Piet Mondrian