

[facsimile publication]

[in: 'Piet Mondrian, The Earlier Years'. *The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum*, New York, n.p.]

[Text from a letter with annex to James J. Sweeney, gedateerd: 'may 24 [1943]'.]

[brief:]

353 East 56 St. //

may 24 //

[rechterbovenboek diagonaal ondersteboven:]

I think the destructive element /
is too much neglected in art. //

Dear Mr. Sweeney, //

To complete our conversation, the /
following could be useful to your work. //

You know that the intention of Cubism /
– in any case in the beginning – was /
to express volume. The three-di- /
mensional space (natural) remained thus /
established. [verwijzingssteken:] ✕ This was opposed to /
my conception of abstraction which is /
that this space just has to be destroyed /
ed. In consequence I came to destroy /
volume using the plane. Then the /
problem was to destroy the plane /
also. This I did by means of lines /
cutting the planes. But still the /
plane remained too much intact. //

So I came to make only lines and /
brought the color in these. Now the /
only problem is to destroy these /
lines also through ⟨+ mutual⟩ opposition. //

Perhaps I express myself not clear in this /
but it can ⟨– give you⟩ explain you why I left /
the cubist influence. Best wishes from /

Mondrian. //

[linkermarge verticaal:]

[verwijzingssteken:] ✕ It shows again that Cubism “au fond” remained natural /
and was only an abstraction but not abstract. ///

[bijlage; tweede bladzijde]

Period fig C. was necessary /
to approche concreet structure //

[schets C]

In A color is vague. /
In B there is only black /
 and white. /
This brings too far from reality. /
In ⟨+ C. and⟩ latest picture colors are /
primary: concreet. ///

[bijlage; derde bladzijde]

Many appreciate in my /
former work ⟨+ just⟩ what I did /
not want to express but /
established by uncapacity /
to express what I wanted: /
dynamic movement in /
equilibrium. /
Continious struggle for this
brought me nearer. //

In his later works Doesburg tried /
to destroy static expression by /
diagonal position of his lines. /

[figure]

But in this way /
the feeling of physic /
equilibrium which /
is necessary to enjoy /
a work of art is lost. /
Relationship with architecture, of vertical and horizontal position, /
is broken. //

⟨+ The picture⟩ Hung in this /
position, /

[figure]

only the limitation of /
the picture is in lines of 45^0 , not the /
picture. The advantage is the longer lines in /
this way produced. ///

[bijlage; vierde bladzijde:]

Important to discern two /
sorts of equilibrium: /
1 static balance. /
2 dynamic equilibrium. /

For this reason it is under- /
standable that some oppose /
against equilibrium in art, /
some others defend it. //

The great struggle for artists /
is to annihilate static equi- /
librium in the way of conti- /
nious opposition of the /
means of expression. //

It is always in human's na- /
ture to love static balance. /
This ⟨of course balance → balance of course⟩ is /
necessary to existence in /
time. //

But vitality in the ⟨+ continual⟩ succession /
of time destroys always this /
balance. //

⟨+ Abstract⟩ Art is ⟨+ a concrete⟩ expression of this vitality.///
