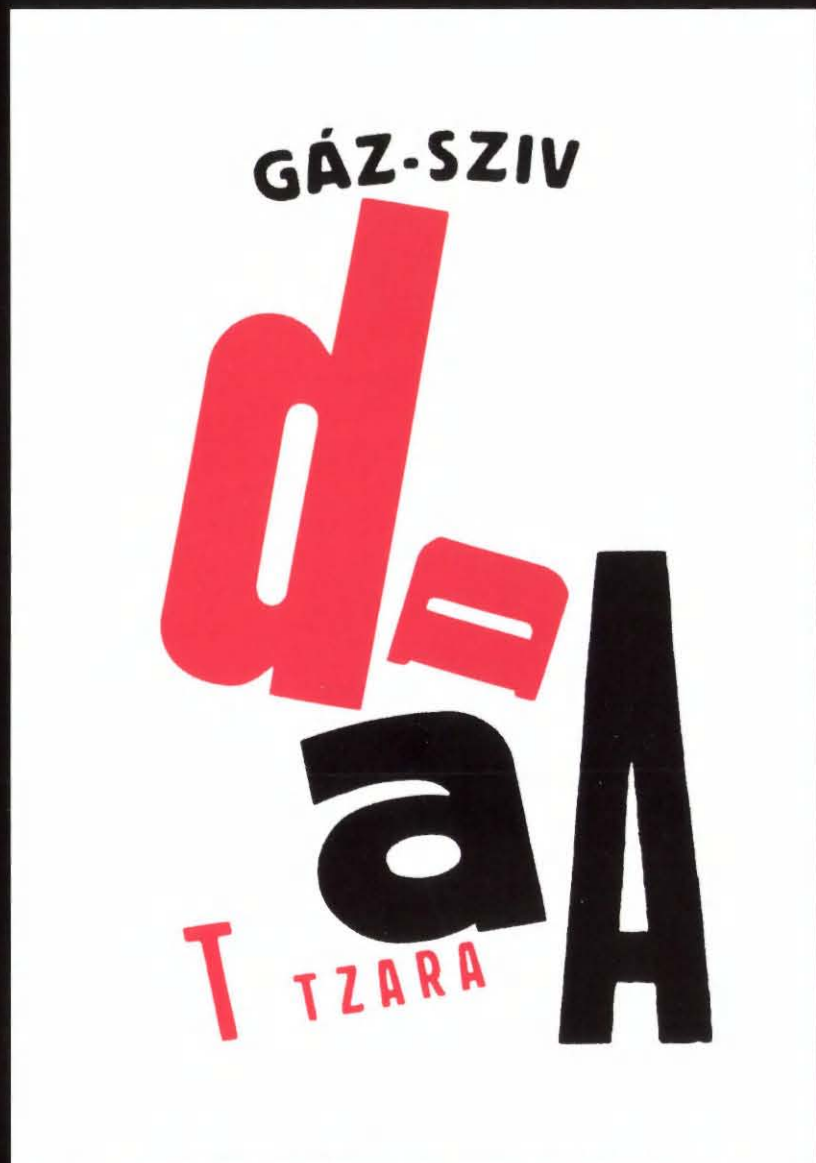
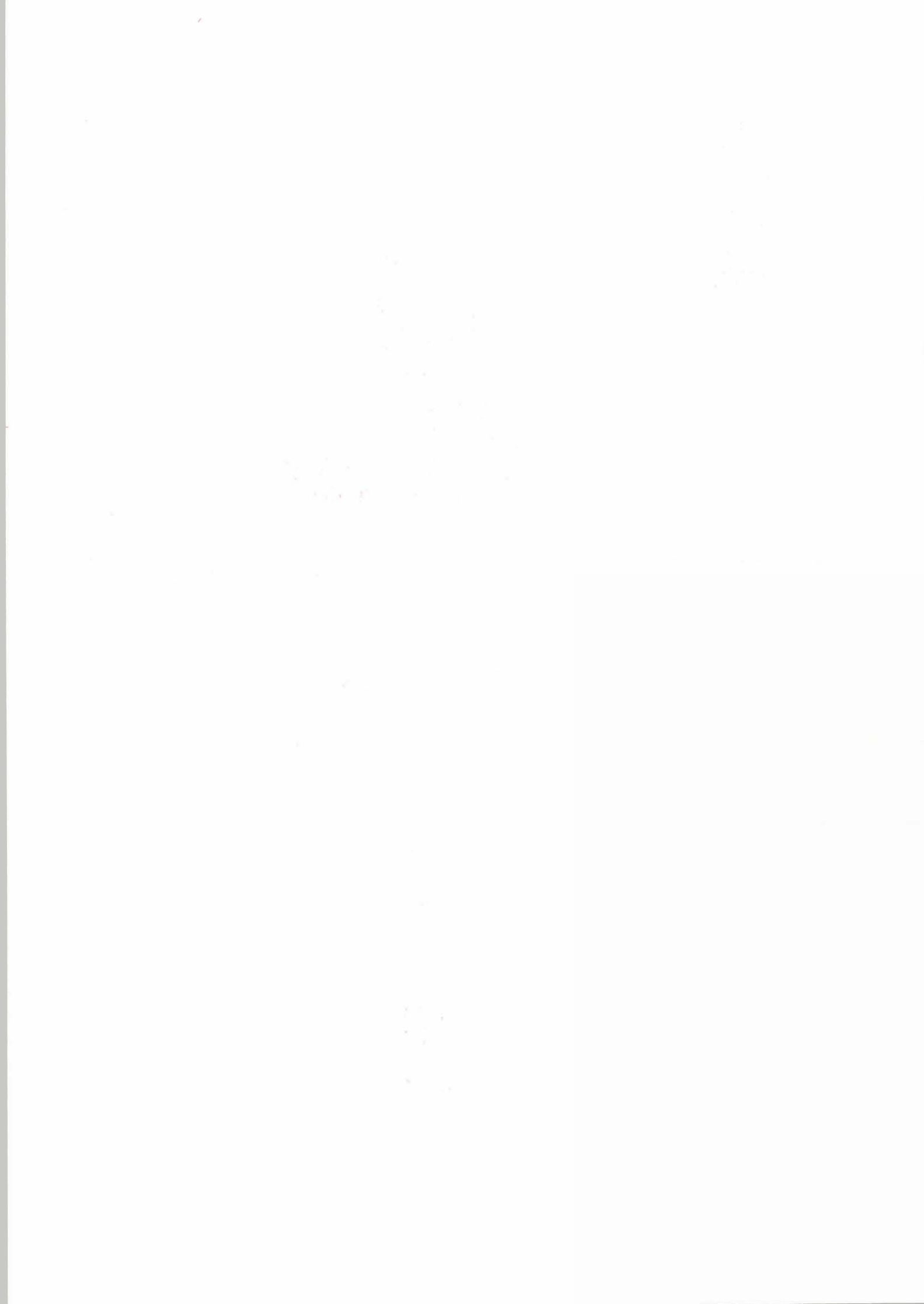


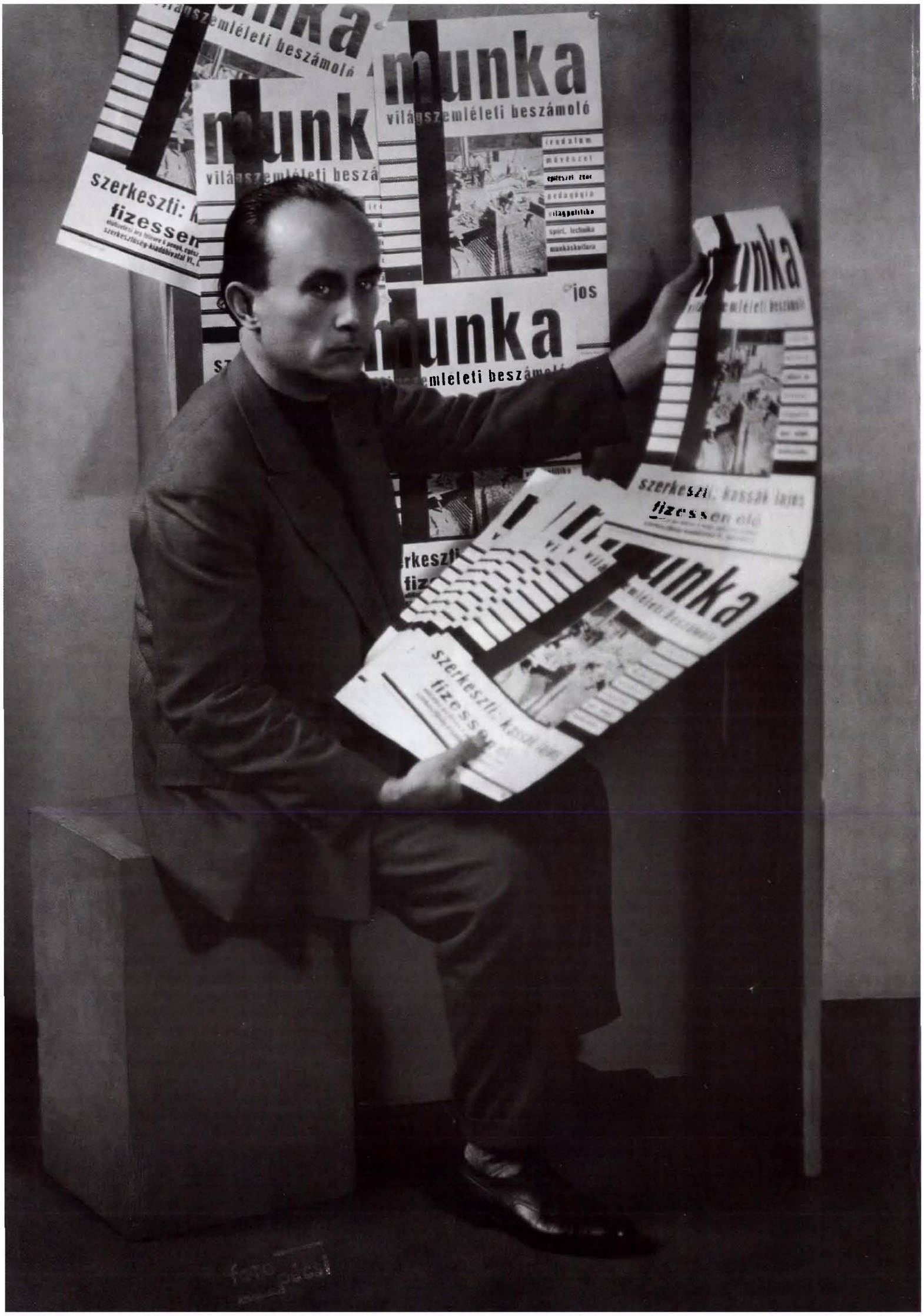
LAJOS KASSÁK



THE
ADVERTISEMENT
AND
MODERN
TYPOGRAPHY



**LAJOS KASSÁK · THE ADVERTISEMENT AND MODERN TYPOGRAPHY
WRITINGS AND DESIGNS**



Munka

világszemléleti beszámoló

Munka

világszemléleti beszámoló

szerkeszti: Kossák Lajos
fizessen elő

Munka

világszemléleti beszámoló

1953. június 10.

szerkeszti: Kossák Lajos
fizessen elő

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fizessen elő

FOTO: ...

LAJOS KASSÁK

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ADVERTISEMENT
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MODERN TYPOGRAPHY**

EDITED BY

FERENC CSAPLÁR

KASSÁK MUSEUM BUDAPEST 1999



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THE POSTER AND NEW PAINTING

Let us first of all uphold the old truth that the concepts of the artist and the man are indivisible, and when criticising a work of art an objective result can only be achieved by seeing the "two lives" as one. But in professing this view, we apparently take a deterministic position, we are ready to regard all the voices and colours of life as a predetermined process under perpetual influences – which is equivalent to a theory of total subjection. We maintain that since man is a physical and a highly social being he is perpetually subject to the influences of the external world, but – and it is at this point that we depart from orthodox determinism – his intellectual superiority to all things enables him to ward off at least fifty percent of these influences, to improve the mode of life enforced upon him by making it more conscious and more independent. This is true of man as an intellectual factor, and all the more true of the artist as a human maximum.

It is from this vantage point that we view new painting.

As opposed to the movement that culminated recently and brought forth the banner of impressionism victoriously, we wish to take a different, more solid route, a totally different direction. Instead of the naive gazes of the impressionists, it is the probing and selective vision of twentieth-century man divested of culture – of all conventional principles and sentimental emotions – that has to come. If the charming truth of the artist as a harp on which life plays its whimsical little songs was held up to our times, then let the harsh truth now prevail that life is only the crude, subjugated material of the artist's creative genius.

The model before the eyes of the painter is not a theme to be represented but material evoking forms for the creative will!

Material thus can only be a springboard to be tread on by the imagination of the artist; it is only a balancing of the intensive brain-work that perpetually attempts to break free of its milieu, even if that milieu be the contemporary world. It is not the usual gifted or talented artists that we have in mind here but the genius *per se*, who is always borne to be a *vates*, a towering individual at the head of the masses.

New painting therefore starts out from *natura* – but this new art can never be: *naturalism* (not even in its Giottoian sense, where nature is genuinely a god, as compared to the similarly naturalist Jordaens), because its aim is not to approach nature as closely as possible but to swing away from it as far as possible, more precisely, to swing beyond it.

Pure naturalism is no more than liberal contemplation, while the true artist is a subversive, revolutionary temperament set against the standard precepts of all times!

I, having somewhat opened my eyes to outward nature already, have no need of any artistic product that wangles the literal formalities of a landscape or a body on to the canvas. (This is naturalism.) This might be a bearable piece of decoration on a wall or a keepsake of the copycat abilities of a friend: but the artist's aim points far beyond this. Moreover, he cannot be satisfied with the role of the chronicler either. All the more so today when we can almost exactly copy the events of the world by much simpler, technical means (motion pictures). In summary, new painting, painting modern in our view, will be borne beyond naturalism, beyond impressionism (though incorporating their undeniable values).

It is a well known fact that the absolute value left to us by the painting of former centuries is primarily the treatment of a theme – the representational power of the artist. The social value of the wherefore of a theme is always temporary, and what makes the painting critically appraisable for posterity is the how of the realisation... And it is at this point that we conceive of the causal encounter of posters and new painting.

Like the salesman, who had until recently been chased away by dogs but has now gained a respectable role in our social life, the poster, which had been excluded from the "holy domain" of the arts, has now attained a genuinely vivid role affecting all the material aspects of our lives.

The good poster provides an almost infallible gauge of our commercial, industrial, political and artistic life. Any better enterprise will give birth to its advocate in the image of a poster, which then will be in charge of promoting the goods instead of thousands of human mouths, with its colours and figures it will scream into all seeing eyes, it will fight for the interests of its master day and night.

A good poster need not (and does not) even represent the article offered, it works only with its suggestive powers – to *force out* the result.

The good poster is always born in the sign of radicalism (its master constantly attempting to break through a silted mass or an inimical current), and it therefore jumps on to the stage not as a mere explaining member of a crowd but as a sole and absolute power. By nature, it is always agitative, but is never really confined within bounds. Since the good poster is not only a business medium, but a readily enjoyable and appraisable artistic product too, just as much as a landscape or a portrait is. Without forsaking its genuine function, it can contain all the values of former painting, furthermore, it can more easily enrich painting with new values than any "artistically" produced picture.

I know not whether the latest schools (futurism, cubism, expressionism, simultanism) have realised the immense creative potential and innumerable artistic possibilities in the poster, but their quest, even in this fractured manner of theirs, seems to gravitate toward this free and self-willed style of the poster.

There has never been a generation of painters so much troubled by technical difficulties as ours – determinism and the individual's will to freedom.

This revolutionary bustle is only novel in its measure and its coming from many directions; as a matter of fact, such simultaneous outbursts did take place in the past evolutionary development of art. And they were never without reason – nor are they now. They have always been the forerunners, at worst organic requisites, of great social reforms. And if they were present in the Christian centuries, in the period of serfdom, then they have to be doubly present in our freely competing age burning with social problems and a desire to save the world. Philosophy, politics and technology have accomplished their revolutionary forward movement, and painting cannot lag behind in a foregone age, it cannot, even if twice as many masters belonging to the past were present.

Painters of today have different things to say, thus their means of expression must also be different.

The plain, detailed manner of the classics depicting religious themes will not do for the current subject-matter, in fact, it is out of tune with it.

We are living the century of technology and sociology in the huge metropolises. Mystical delving into the godhead has been superseded by burning, more immediate issues, the apotheosis of calm village idylls have been driven out of us by the insatiable greed of our modern psychic structure to live for the moment. Instead of patriarchal acquiescence, we dizzy in gales of troubles, and whoever works in this century and wishes to capture its character must be modern in nerve, in blood, in work.

It is futurists, expressionists and other "lunatics" that are like this today; they fight for a conscious way out from under the influences of their age, as opposed to the "sane" who lean ladders against classicisms thoroughly dead. Our century is a chaotic mixture of a society to be settled, and in this sense they are the primitives of a classical painting to be (not to be confused with backboneless neo-primitives or Henri Rousseau, who might well be an ingenious autodidact, but has no bearing whatsoever on new painting). It is only in the Africans and in the classical primitives of the twelfth century that we find counterparts to today's quests.

Like the ancient primitives, we live amongst the divine babblers (though in a more cultivated, complicated form).

The vicissitudes of the world befalling man cannot bear forms made into aesthetic law; and man toils only to find the existing means of expression lacking for his messages evoked from a burning life. This is why the lay public sees senseless chaos, and this is why the questers often fall into an excess of manner. But this in no way diminishes their truth.

They are fighters, prophets and men within their own artistic circles, just as poster artists are.

With their pictures, they want to thrust a purifying force into their age, their works are signposts for a parturient century. Their paintings are not meant for decorating walls, but always for presenting question and exclamation marks to the sensible crowd. (With this we do not submit to the schools mentioned, they are only stairs toward the grand whole, and it is only through their conscious union that genuine value will be created.)

The new painter is an ethical individual, full of faith and desire for union!

His paintings are weapons for his fight!

He does not bother much about aesthetics; nuances are never important, only the essence is (in both theme and realisation), which in its essential grandiosity is always a lively and offensive union.

New painting is produced under the aegis of monumentality and the revision of reason, and, all in all, serves a more gratifying aim than that of today!

Like that of the poster, its character is individual demonstration and free force!

We have been cured of the emerald seas, creamy birches and "sanely" seen wax shins.

We know we exist, and our existence accepts existence even in art.

We wish with all our desire that a painting – like a poster, this magnificent supplement to the modern city – should fill our rooms with a life that is exterior to us and overwhelm all industrial objects, and that paintings should compete with each other – like posters do on bill-boards with their obstinate and world-subverting gusto – in today's stuffy and stolid exhibition rooms!

MA (TODAY), VOL. I, NO. 1, NOVEMBER 1916, PP. 2–3.

Advertisement: "Propagate New Art" / Ma 1–2 (Vienna 1925): back cover, 310x310 mm



PROPAGÁLJÁTOK

UJ

AZ



MŰVÉSZETET

MA

Internacionális aktivista művészeti folyóirat ■ Szerkesztő: **Kassák Lajos**
■ Felelősszerkesztő: **Hermann Suske** ■ Szerkesztőség és kiadóhivatal:
Wien, XIII. Bezirk, Amalienstrasse 26. I. 11 ■ Megjelenés dátuma 1925
Január 15 ■ Előfizetési ár: **EGY ÉVRE: 120.000 osztrák kor., 60 c. K,**
120 dinár, 300 lei ■ **ENNEK A SZÁMNAK AZ ÁRA: 15.000 osztrák korona,**
7 szokol, 20 dinár, 40 lei, 1 arany-márka ■ IX. évfolyam, 8-9. szám
A lapban megjelenő cikkekért a szerző felel. Kiadó: **Kassák Lajos**

Druck: „Elbenühlf“, Wien, IX., Berggasse 31.

“BEAUTIFUL” AND “UGLY” BOOKS

The cult of “beautiful books” is said to be a characteristic obsession, if not a main one, of young artists. Strict party people, who unconditionally deem new artistic aspirations as “decadent outgrowths” of a decaying society, define it as another antisocial characteristic of new art. They, like bad tradesmen with their vision mechanically focused on one point, are of the opinion that the how of publishing a book is only a side issue, what really matters is its content and the size of the public it reaches by being cheap. For, in the eyes of those that want to spread “mass-culture” at all costs, a book remains a book even though it is printed on rag paper and stitched together with horrid wires; in other words, the only function a book has is to instruct the people. So, when these party men talk of books as objects, they only stress their cheapness as goods, and forget that their cheapness does not necessarily imply their anti-aesthetic and anti-hygienic quality. They also forget that we live in a capitalist society, and therefore cheap and “ugly” books, typically more shabby than garter-belts and tram-tickets, are slapped not only because they can be bought by larger and larger masses, but because the publisher can thus make larger and larger profits as a result of investing the least amount of capital and time. A “beautiful” book therefore cannot be “antisocial” for its beauty, and an “ugly” book is not necessarily a phenomenon of social responsibility in any age, nor is it a reliable measure of the cultural voracity of the masses. On the contrary, the ugly book is a necessary outcome of ethically and aesthetically decaying ages, and it is therefore an antisocial phenomenon, just as mass-housing is antisocial. True enough, even in an “ugly” book, we can read the most serious literature without losing its intellectual content, and it is also true that one lacking normal housing can rest after his daily labours in a warren; but we also know that a night’s rest means not only a relaxation of our muscles, but also a gathering of new strength, and we also know that we read not only to broaden our intellectual horizons, but also to gain experiences, to enrich ourselves emotionally, to become more sensitive and determined. And a warren, like an “ugly” book, does not only have an invigorating and instructing effect, but also a demoralising one. A book appears as an external form, a mediating vessel of certain meaning, of a “theme” determined by certain experiences and will. If we acknowledge that certain meanings can only appear without fault in certain genres (poems, plays, short-stories, etc.). we also have to acknowledge that certain genres can only achieve their full effect in certain forms, in vessels, in book forms, fashioned in line with their character. Simply put, a book should not be fancily “beautiful” or cheaply “ugly”, it should be characteristic in its outward appearance, as all things that attempt to affect us are. For a thing can only affect us, people instinctively averse to newspapers (and this is even more true of the large masses), if it constitutes an indivisible unity of its internal and external aspects. And a book, as a mediating form of a literary work, can only achieve its full effect, if its outward appearance technically and aesthetically covers and supports the emphasis on the inner content. Would it have been a mere coincidence that all ages up to now, in

fact, all literary movements, had created their own particular type of book in order to emphasise themselves? We very well know that, as a rule, different types of books were developed for scholarly works and different ones for belletristic works in the course of time; we very well know how different the book and typographical forms of classicism, the Baroque and the Biedermeier were. As a group of men with a clarified world-view leave the marks of their creative will on economic and political life, so they also re-create the inherited artistic values of their age, and thus also shape the book forms that are in line with their age, ideas and feelings.

All products of an age are characteristic of that age. Our age is a transitory one; man has lost his civic perceptivity, but has not yet found his social balance. We are living the moment in politics, science, technology, and the arts. We have overthrown the truths of science, which were thought to have been absolute, but have not yet laid down new laws. We have nothing “positive”, for the opposite of what we conceive of today will be taken for granted and will be obvious tomorrow. We have no ready programme for anything, nor have we any coherent tactic for anything, and this is why we have nothing but daring attempts. But we should at least take care not to be one-sided in these, our, attempts. The world is constructed of millions of parts, and if one wishes to improve on this jarring machinery, he has to complete his task to the full: the politician in politics, the technician in technology, the artist in art. The mediating form of a writer artist is a book, and, in order to fully present himself, he has to create the new book as his instrument.

There has hardly been any attempt at this on today’s Hungarian market.

The book, as an organiser of our cultural and aesthetic life (we do have such a life, even though we might profess ever so loudly that we are collective beings), has completely lost its character in our likeness. Today, even those professionals who had once conceived of a book as a characteristic social product speak of it as something “beautiful” or “ugly” in itself. Our only publisher and printer, Kner of Gyoma, who had been brought up on German and English book making technology, has lost his conscious and purposeful way that he had set out on during the war. His library editions of the works of Béla Balázs, which typographically modulated the mood of these writings, were the sensation on the new Hungarian market. These, together with the “book-designs” by Falus for Nyugat editions, were the tokens of future possibilities. But, alas, even Kner did not fulfil his promise on the fate of Hungarian book producers. Then came the counter-revolution, the “new Hungarian Renaissance”, and instead of creating a book-type that represents our will to live, our age, Kner began to stylise books. His recent work, the Hungarian Classics series, does not even come close to his first books in force and pioneering will. The new style has become mere stylisation. Some might take these books as beautiful *l’art pour l’art* things, but they will never be characteristic and type creating products of our progressive age. It is in this sense that the “beautiful” book and this search for the beautiful has brought about, on the one hand, vest-pocket editions of the Bible, and, on the

other, vest-pocket editions of Marx. Not to mention the cheap “ugly” books meant for mass consumption that were published in opposition to this by short-sighted party people and old-hat publishers, making great profits for the latter. And was there anyone concerned about books, as cultural objects, at home or in exile?

Here we are, after three years of emigration, and we have neither an established party, nor a free school based on serious foundations, and we have not fashioned a new book type that would represent our world-view to “militant émigrés”.

And those who did put out something in this field were unfortunately the so-called “mad activists”. But they have at least tried to dress their work in clothes tailored for themselves, and this they did here in Vienna, where they are more broke than ever at home. And all those are wrong who say

that these works were not understood and served no other purpose than satisfy their makers’ leisure. No greater effect was achieved by either the so-called “ugly” émigré books for the masses or the so-called “beautiful” ones, not to mention the erotic “specialities” hidden between fancy covers. Or if they did, all the worse for the Hungarian reading public.

The quest of young artists for a new book type and a new typography is as much a phenomenon of the times as their whole art is. And what they have produced is inimical to the “beautiful” books meant for the parlours and to the “ugly” books meant for the masses, because it just aims to be a tool supporting and mediating the message of the writer. All it aims to be is a characteristic book.

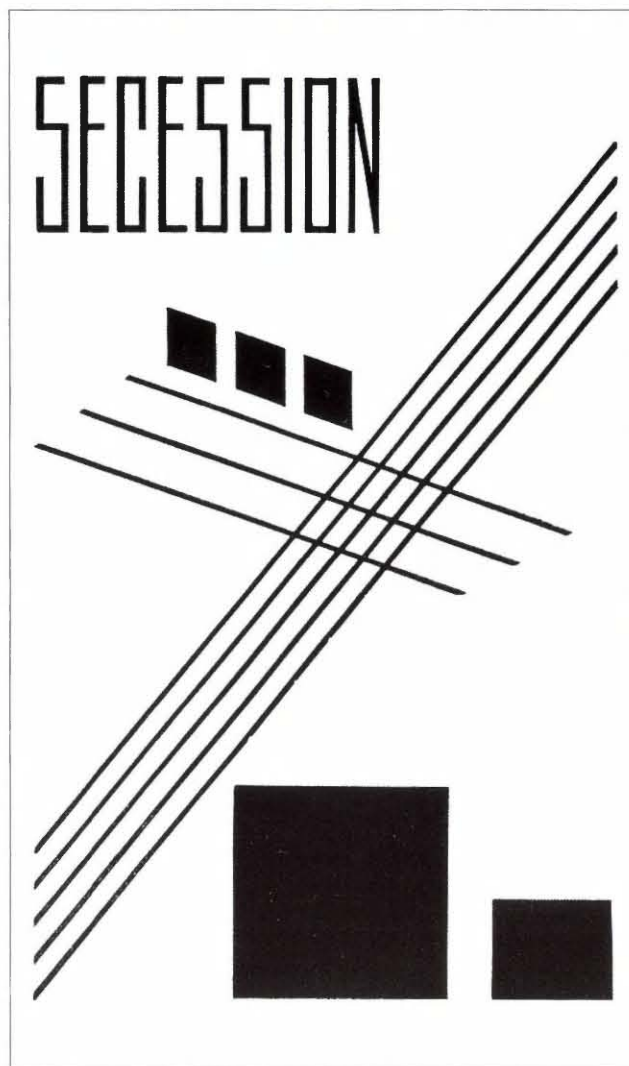
*BÉCSI MAGYAR ÚJSÁG (VIENNA HUNGARIAN NEWS),
AUGUST 25, 1922, PP. 5–6.*



2x2 1 (Vienna 1922)
Cover, 310x240 mm

OF BOOKS

Books are not the enforced warrens of words, sentences or other artistic work. There are badly produced books, just as there are badly written poems – or vice versa. Producing a good book, making conscious use of the paper, the typographical organisation representing the content of the text, the sewing or the binding, the characteristic shaping of the inner content and the outer form – are all serious creative tasks. We understand a book through our optical and tactile senses; these two aspects are thus fundamental to the production of books. Let it be understood that, on the one hand, there are books with good poetic, scholarly, technical, etc. content, and, on the other, there are books as such, as objects, as pieces of skilled production. When talking of books without the definition of the text, which is only a partial element of the whole, we mean an object constructed of different materials. A good book is a work of art that is a material object. Its characteristics – that of the pure type – are economy, durability, easy producibility, emphasis on parts meant to rouse public attention, in short, the perspicuity of inner content and outer form. There were times when books, in opposition to their function, served the acquisitive passion of magnates and the aestheticism of respectable citizens – in our time, a book is a necessary commodity, and therefore its character should be determined by utilitarian generality, not by individual aesthetics. We have no need of charmingly beautiful books, it is cheap, durable and convenient ones that we need. We are men of comfort and speed. For us a book is not a lifeless knick-knack but an active partner in our lives, an important element of our daily needs. But we like food easily digestible, clothes tailored comfortable, a home airy and luminous – it is understandable that we expect the same of books, that our hands might touch them with a good feeling, that our eyes might capture the published material easily and with least loss. We may all have had the experience that, say, a poem, good in itself, is made totally repugnant by the publisher's saving on paper or the printer's ineptitude; or, at the other extreme, one is vexed by publications of amateur snobbery: the Bible or Marx in vest-pockets. We must protest against such trash produced by barbarian niggardliness or aesthetic puerility and against priggish kitsch, but we cannot prescribe for ourselves any formal criterion. The merit of a book, its quality as a material object, is always determined by the material used for printing. Its success, if we disregard the influence of external factors (lack of skill and ill-conceived material interest), depends on the right or wrong typography. It is the typography of a book that we see as dominating, it is the one that conveys the communicated content to our senses and brains. It is therefore highly important that the typography of a book should be objective, easily graspable and effective in its whole appearance as measured to the conveyed material. Apart from stingy publishers and careless writers, "modern" graphic artists have also efficiently contributed to the slovenliness of books. These neat-handed and shallow-minded individuals think of the white pages and even the spaces between the passages in a book as material purely for decoration, and fill them with their individual tricks and decorative doodles. They could not care less that needless



Secession 2 (New York – Berlin 1922)
Cover, 230x140 mm

"decoration" spoils the individual character of a book; and thereby they have disastrously influenced not only public tastes but the whole development of the publishing industry. In magazines of graphic art we can readily observe that typesetters, obsessed by some pseudo-expressionism in spite of their skill, hazard their potential and fall into a formalism totally contrary to the material of the printing press. Fashioning the type of book that represents our times is undoubtedly put in the hands of the young generation of printers. We can hardly expect any measurable result until they realise that, instead of their individual dabbling in art, they have to return to the given material of serial production, direct expression and, in general, the economical laws of creation.

TISZTASÁG KÖNYVE (THE BOOK OF PURITY), 1926,
pp. 13–14.

THE ADVERTISEMENT

Snobbish aesthetes loathe advertisements, and so do sociologists moving around in the fields of science and business. The aesthete degrades them as profane formality, the sociologist sees in them the destruction and compromise of commerce and, in general, of democratic forms of life. It is easy to disprove these two positions, which are arrived at from different directions, but are essentially the same.

I. The beautiful in itself is an empty fiction, because the beautiful is not a primary phenomenon, it is only a secondary one. It is only present as a consequence, as an attribute, of something. If a fact or an object is perfect in itself, if it serves its purpose, it will undeniably be beautiful too. Thus the beautiful, as a human attribute, is inevitably concomitant with all organic and organised entities. The advertisement, as a human product, also contains the criteria of the beautiful or the ugly. Its aesthetic anathematisation is thus not a critical position but irresponsible and importunate snobbery.

II. A good advertisement is beautiful from an aesthetic point-of-view, and is necessary from a social point-of-view. The advertisement was called to life by commerce, and commerce is an outcome of humankind's ever more discriminating demands on life. Naturally, should one express his opinion on the average European advertisement, he can easily state that this and this advertisement is tasteless and antisocial. But this is just as much true of today's free market capitalism. Nonetheless, this should in no way imply the denial of commerce once and for all, but it should imply basing commerce on more socially responsible foundations. True enough, Russia today puts out far more extensive cultural and economic propaganda than she did under the tsars. Russia did not abolish the advertisement, she only liberated it from the claws of selfish private interest, reshaping this formerly antisocial force into propaganda working on behalf of the community. Thus it was reborn not only in a moral sense, but in artistic significance as well.

The Russian advertisement, often like the American one, has distanced itself from individual graphic art, after discovering its own particular character, it has become simple, economical and demonstrative.

In this sense, a good advertisement is an active social factor in our lives, and we appraise it with the adjective effective, not with the adjective beautiful. Though the materials through which its essence is expressed are colour, sound and form, just as in the case of the subjective arts, on the whole it even severs itself from industrial art. It is not a lyrical composition, nor is it a decorative surface. This is why, for instance, a well-made poster may provide, among other things, aesthetic pleasure to the viewer, while an artistically successful painting can never immediately strike us to bethink ourselves, it can never evoke from us the hunger for the new, the sensational. The public in an art gallery enjoys the passive aestheticism of subjective art, but if we look at a

bill-board, it is the competition of posters that dominates in our eyes, not their juxtaposition.

The good advertisement, be it optical (poster, fly-bill, brochure, or luminous writing projected into the night) or acoustic (the scream of a siren, the shrill of a bell), steps on to the stage with the raiding tempo of a conqueror, with the legion of marketed goods lining up behind. It is a power complex standing between production and consumption, not a servile mediator of something exterior to itself.

Sociology and psychology are fundamental to the good advertisement.

Nuances of mood or illustrative loquacity are contrary to the essence of advertising, they impede immediate effect and convincing suggestion. The good advertisement is not analytical and definitive, it is synthesising: it unifies time, content and material. It is this elemental simplicity and purity of a good advertisement that stops us for a moment now and then in a clamorous and motley street, that takes us into a store never heard of before, that makes us open an unknown book by an unknown author, that wakes us from mundane listlessness, lowly blindness and deafness, with its elemental colours and dynamic formal articulation, it makes us inquisitive and determined.

The advertisement is one of the most characteristic expressions of the level and economic circulation of our age. The neon signs of a metropolis, the sky-line advertisements, the shop windows, the conspicuous characters and harsh exclamation marks on a glass pillar in a boulevard have more to say, and do so more objectively, than any garrulous and reactionarily blunt-witted Baedeker; a typographically well-made brochure of a department-store, with its clear-cut and easily identifiable types, with the dark and light spatial divisions of its paper surface, as a calm and simple object, is far more demand arousing and dependable than any individual artistry; the unexpected shriek of a horn will for ever fix in our memories the automobile yard or the cinema, in front of which we heard this "senseless" but strikingly simple and suggestive sound.

The type of advertisement characteristic of our times, the attributes of which are more and more the harmony of elements, marked simplicity and technically easy producibility, comes into being not with aesthetic aims but in the name of objective power and moves in the direction of human progress.

Creating an advertisement is an applied art, an advertisement artist is a social creator.

PÁSMO, VOL. II, NO. 6-7 (1926); *KORUNK (OUR TIMES)*, 1926, 4, PP. 299-300; *TISZTASÁG KÖNYVE (THE BOOK OF PURITY)*, BUDAPEST, 1926, PP. 82-84; *KUNST UND VOLK*, 1930, 8 (SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE ART OF THE BOOK), PP. 237-238; *DAS WERK*, 1926, 7, PP. 228.

ON THE ROAD TO ELEMENTARY TYPOGRAPHY

We can easily demonstrate, on the basis of our life experience as well as through scholarship, that the World War caused not only material but immense intellectual damage. It butchered enlisted men by the hundreds of thousands, but, by other means and in other forms, it destroyed hundreds of thousands of those who for some reason or other managed to stay away from the fighting *per se*. Only a relatively small number managed to survive the five years of the War without physical or intellectual injury. And this general shock has had to bring about general changes in all the manifestations of life in civic society. After the terrors of military drill came the terrors of civic chaos. Then followed the political revolutions, economic crashes and the free-trade booms intent on swallowing everything. The world seemed to have reached a state of complete collapse in both physical health and intellectual culture. But life means to outlive the pessimistic philosophers, and we have reached a new stage of possibilities. Political agitators, economic organisers and makers of advertisements have appeared amongst us. Of these three types, we shall primarily dwell on the makers of advertisements and the theoretical and practical significance of their work in what follows.

The time for booms is over.

All thinking tradesmen should know that it is again quality that determines the value of goods produced and that in order to place goods in their shops easily they have to make use of an indispensable element: the honestly designed and consciously handled advertisement. The function of an honestly designed and consciously targeted advertisement is to inform the consumer of goods brought to the market and to inspire confidence in the buying public. This is no easy task. The advertising manoeuvres of boom-trade have depended upon the illiteracy and good will of the buying public, and it will probably take a good deal of time until the public see advertisements not as a form of deception but as an indispensable means to serve the common interests of both the buyer and seller.

One of the most urgent tasks of the society of tradesmen is to cleanse the concept of advertising of a disagreeable connotation, and to have their circulars, brochures and posters prepared so as to truthfully foster a good business reputation. The good tradesman should know that the modern advertisement is not there to attempt to convince individual members of the public to buy something once but to call the general attention of the public at large to the goodness, practicality and affordability of a certain article. Therefore, the solution to the problem of modern advertising is engrossment in psychology, business ethics and first-rate skill on the part of the maker and user of an advertisement.

Were we to make a statistical survey of the quantity and quality of the various trade and professional journals, we would find that works on making an advertisement and on the practical methods of advertising come third after publications on technology and architecture. These works show a hundred aspects of this seemingly extremely simple technical issue. Today it is not only the representatives of commerce, but also critics of aesthetics and sociologists working in academia and business that acknowledge the artistic

potential in and the social necessity of advertising. There is no longer any doubt that a good advertisement is aesthetically beautiful and socially indispensable. Advertising was called to life by commerce, and commerce is an outcome of humankind's ever more discriminating demands on life. If one wishes to pass strict judgement on the average European advertisement, one can without reserve state that a certain advertisement is on the whole tasteless and generally antisocial. But this criticism may as well be applied to capitalist commerce based on free competition. We should not conclude, however, that commerce should be rejected once and for all; it should simply be based on a socially more responsible footing.

Undoubtedly, today's Russia, for instance, puts out far more propaganda with regard to culture and the economy than she did under the tsars. The formation of this state, which strives toward larger units and a more collective form of organisation, has not abolished advertising, she has only freed it from the claws of private interests bent on booms, making this formerly antisocial force into propaganda that serves the interests of the community. Thus the new Russian poster, much like its American counterpart, has greatly distanced itself from individual graphic art. Russian advertisement designers were among the first to realise the demonstrative character and agitative effect of advertising. And this realisation led to the general simplicity, objectivity and economy of Russian posters and works of typography.

In Europe, it was primarily German industry and commerce that realised the modernity of the re-evaluated concept of advertising, the trend in that field toward artistic development and the devices used in making advertisements. This fast and consciously directed development in German advertising is probably connected with the great progress, technical aptitude and rationalisation efforts of German industry. Having lost the War, Germany quickly realised that the fastest and surest way to regain her political and economic significance was to economise on her production and raise the quality of the goods she produced. Her production is based on scientific considerations, and so are her attempts to gain market positions for her products. Her apparently indestructible instinct to survive and the conscious stress on this instinct is what governs the development of German advertising. An elementary art of advertising has been created for products made with care out of good materials, one with boundless opportunities to develop; advertisements made in this way are in many cases more like social propaganda than a mere hawking of goods that thrives on a buying public that is uninformed and naive in its good will.

It is easy to ascertain the effect of German advertising art upon European advertising, and sociologists and aestheticians, as well as the lay public in general, will have to realise that good advertising is an active factor in our lives, an indispensable mediator between producer and consumer and that we judge its appearance using the word effective, not the word beautiful. Though the materials through which its essence is expressed are colour, sound and form, just as in the case of the subjective arts, on the whole it severs itself

even from industrial art. It is not a lyrical composition, nor is it a decorative surface. This is why, for instance, a well-made poster may provide one with aesthetic pleasure, among other things, while an artistically successful painting can never immediately strike us to change our minds about something, it can never evoke in us the hunger for the new or the sensational. Visitors to an art gallery enjoy the passive aestheticism of subjective art, but if we look at posters on an advertising pillar, it is not the fact that the posters are next to each other but the fact that they are in competition that dominates in our eyes.

A good advertisement, be it visual (poster, fly-bill, brochure, or luminous writing projected into the night) or acoustic (the scream of a siren, or the ringing of a bell), steps on to the stage with the raiding tempo of a conqueror, with the legion of marketed goods lining up behind. It is not a servile mediator of something exterior to itself but a power complex standing between production and consumption.

Sociology and psychology are fundamental to a good advertisement.

Nuances of mood or illustrative loquacity are contrary to the essence of advertising, they impede a direct effect and a convincing suggestion. A good advertisement is not analytical and definitive, it synthesises: it unites time, content and material. It is this elementary simplicity and purity of a good advertisement that stops us for a moment now and then in a clamorous and motley street, that takes us into a store never heard of before, that makes us open an unknown book by an unknown author, that wakes us from mundane listlessness, lowly blindness and deafness, with its elementary colours and dynamic articulation of form, it makes us inquisitive and determined.

The advertisement is one of the most characteristic expressions of the current state of our economy and our society. The neon signs of a big city, the advertisements that line the roofs, the shop windows, the conspicuous characters and harsh exclamation marks on a glass pillar in a boulevard have more to say, and do so more objectively, than any garrulous and reactionary and dull-witted Baedeker; as a calm and simple object, a typographically well-made brochure from a department store with its clear-cut and easily identifiable type and with the dark and light spatial divisions of its paper surface, is much more effective at creating demand and inspiring confidence than any individual artistry; the unexpected shriek of a horn will forever fix in our memories the automobile yard or the cinema, in front of which we heard this "senseless" but strikingly simple and evocative sound.

The type of advertisement characteristic of our times, the attributes of which are more and more a harmony of elements, marked simplicity and the ease with which it is reproduced, comes into being not through aesthetic aims but in the name of objective power and moves in the direction of human progress.

Advertising is an applied art, an advertising artist is a social creator.

If we wish to survey the state of Hungarian advertising art with a critical eye as well as the direction it is taking, we

shall unfortunately find that only minor elements are comparable to the theoretical and practical considerations discussed above. The majority of those who make advertisements work with an industrial artist's training and a purely individualist approach, and the printers who work in the typographical area of advertisement making, seem also to assert their artistic ambitions rather than strive for an objective development of the printing industry or for the materiality of their typesetting solutions. I am grateful to the editor of *Magyar Grafika (Hungarian Graphic Art)* for offering me the chance to publish a selection of my designs in supplement and this article on my theoretical and practical observations. The theoretical concerns of my advertisement designs will be clear from my article, and it will also be clear that I take responsibility for my work—which I have always done with a purpose in mind—and that I am prepared to argue for it should anyone care to take issue over my designs or the theoretical observations in my article. Many printers and many of my colleagues will probably not share my views. Others might argue against my drawing a sharp dividing line between industrial art and the art of advertising, and still others might object to the letterheads I have published as typesetting specimens. Others might deem the effort I have outlined as constricted, dogmatic and one-dimensional, they might be afraid that I do not consider enough options, and might protest against the dulling and industrial uniformity of the whole craft. If such critical positions are taken, I can, ab ovo, state that they will arise not out of a sense of professional improvement but out of a misplaced conception and a misinterpretation of creative art. Because, as I have already said, creating advertisements is not primarily an art, and one of the basic mistakes Hungarian designers make is that instead of striving for the artistic shaping of the given material they struggle for pictorialness and self-enclosed creative art in both poster making and typography. Ninety-five per cent of posters seem to be intended as impressionist paintings, and even typeset letterheads and business cards stress pictorialness. Most creators of advertisements think of their task not as the elementary formation of the given text but as the decoration of the surface of the paper. Though there is an essential difference between the starting point and the final creation of a picture. A picture is perfect if it constitutes a self-enclosed, indivisible unit, while a poster, in contrast, is nearest to perfection when it is capable of making, with the most active force and the most effective form, an object not present real and when its creation proves not its own aesthetic uniqueness but the goodness, cheapness and unquestionable necessity of the article it advertises.

I do not wish to further deliberate on this issue within the confines of this article. I have summarised my opinion on the creation of advertisements, and, by mentioning certain problematic questions, I have tried to spark a more in-depth discussion of the subject matter. If a debate were to ensue, I myself would gladly discuss certain issues in greater depth and professional detail.

MAGYAR GRAFIKA (HUNGARIAN GRAPHIC ART), MAY-JUNE 1928, PP. 144–148.

THE ADVERTISEMENT AND MODERN TYPOGRAPHY

In order to maintain the unobstructed production of modern industry, which is based on advanced technology and the rational organisation of work, we must observe various laws of social justice and co-ordinate commerce properly. An industry which produces without consideration for social organisation and commerce as a mediator will easily and periodically surely crash. The balanced state of society primarily depends on a rational solution to the question of production and consumption. Better said, the pace of industrial output should be determined by consumer needs. In order to ensure that the market does not remain empty or that factories do not over-produce, those who organise production must establish organic co-operation with commerce as a mediator, which is acquainted with the demands, economic status and cultural standards of consumers. In order to work freely and without embarrassing surprises on the market, commerce requires well-manufactured quality goods made of good raw materials, and, conversely, in order to turn out cheap, high-quality goods, producers need open-minded tradesmen who understand the quality of goods and serve the interests of the buying public. It is therefore a question of what ways and means are available to commerce as the mediator to best fulfil its obligations to individuals and society.

The astute tradesman realised long ago that, if he wanted to be an active factor in our lives, he would not only have to scrupulously serve the buyers turning up in his shop, but also to advertise in a well-organised, rational and ongoing manner.

In the past decade, European commerce has at last taken notice of the American pace. Producers have begun to rationalise their shops, and commerce has begun to make use of the greatest means of influencing the consumer: the modern advertisement. Advertisements appear in hundreds and hundreds of forms before the consumer, and displays published in papers and magazines are among the most important types of advertisement. According to the latest American statistics, eighty per cent of the buying public read advertisements in the papers, trust them and allow themselves to be influenced by them. In Europe, advertisements cannot claim such a powerful effect, nor are European production and consumer markets so consciously organised. The European tradesman still looks down upon the world with haughty elegance; he still has not realised the significance of the paradoxical truth that goods are not bought but sold.

The majority of European tradesmen are only prepared to start an advertising campaign when their businesses are on the brink of bankruptcy, and it is only natural that in this last moment they spend vast sums of money on campaigns that were not thought out and yield little. Even though it is undoubtedly true that advertising, carefully planned and implemented and created with an honest desire that business should be done, brings newer and newer circles of buyers into the market.

But tradesmen must be aware of the psychology of the buying public and must make up their advertisements so as to be sober and objective and thus generally inspire confidence.

Unfortunately, however, the backwardness of European advertising is caused not only by the lack of principle in tradesmen but also by the ineptitude on the part of the creators of advertisements. The tradesman advertising his goods, the designer of street posters and the printer type-setting newspaper displays have to be clear about the content and formal essence of advertising.

The good, modern advertisement must:

- 1) be cheap and easy to reproduce;
- 2) be factual, truthful, and convincing; and
- 3) not praise the article, but qualify and familiarise the public with it.

In the case of posters, pictorial stylisation must be given up; in newspaper advertisements, type-setters' pseudo-artistic efforts and bravura tricks with characters should be excluded. If typesetters want to contribute constructively to the shaping of advertisements, they must liberate themselves from the various influences of the fine arts, they must concentrate on the given object and its texture. For making advertisements is not a creative but a formative activity. It comes into being for the sake of practical applicability, not for the sake of art. The type used should be surprising and effective, not decorously beautiful. An advertisement over-decorated with festoons and other graphic flourishes distracts from the object advertised. It might appeal to one's sense of beauty, but it will hardly call attention to the cheapness, quality and indispensability of the article, which was the *raison d'être* of the advertisement in the first place. Just think of the so-called expressionist advertisements which were all the rage not too long ago, with their whimsically scattered characters and crooked rules. The type-setter might well have given vent to his "artistic" ambitions, but the buyer often as not could not make heads or tails of these "works of art", and had no idea what they were supposed to advertise. Who has the patience to figure out these individualistic games of type-setters? The buying public will, by their very nature, never make concessions in either financial questions or issues of taste. To a certain degree, the producer and the tradesman always stand in opposition to them. The tradesman must therefore give up his individual posturing, remove his masks, and fill his advertisements with purity and directness. And the makers of advertisements must naturally work with such considerations in mind. The advertisement must set out to conquer the market; it must be decisive in form and content and be quick and elementary in effect.

After America, it was Germany that most realised the fundamental requirements of making advertisements. The work of German advertisement designers ought to receive the greatest possible attention from our craftsmen. The Germans, as always, direct the development of advertising on the basis of scientific observations. Their flourishing industry and commerce clearly demonstrate that they have built on solid foundations and conducted their experiments in the right direction. In textual composition they try as far as possible to confine themselves to slogans and interjections, in their formal expression they remain within the limits of the capabilities of the printing press. They work with straight

rules and simple Doric type. Their designs are based on the laws of equilibrium, not symmetry. Their modern decorative materials are simple geometric diagrams, and these insets are meant to achieve not an artistically decorative but an effect of being spotted. One of their most beautiful such supplemental designs is the Blickfang series.

One can, however, even with this basic material, despoil advertisements by dabbling in art and turn them into kitsch, as with festoons and flourishes. One would be grossly mistaken to think that the unthinking use of these geometrical figures is enough to shape an elementary typography. We now find modern typographical efforts even in Hungary, and we often observe that the Blickfang is used as a decorative element in these works. And it is understandable that certain decision-makers object to the use of this material and tell the type-setter to throw away the completed work because they think it looks more like a merger of blacks than a pure product of the printing press. This is primarily a conservative

bias speaking in such managers, but there is often undeniable truth in their objections and criticisms. The incorrect use of compact geometrical forms makes for slipshod and dishevelled advertisements, which primarily offend one's aesthetic sensibilities. It is this lack of aesthetic clarity that makes those who commission advertisements uncertain about the economic and cultural significance of modern typography.

But this is all part of the difficulties of a new beginning.

If our designers and type-setters grasp and sense the essence of elementary typography, it will be easy to demonstrate to decision-makers, those who commission advertisements, and the buying public that the modern advertisement is not only cheap and technically easy to produce but is also one of the most effective mediators between production and the consumer markets.

REKLÁMÉLET (ADVERTISING), AUGUST 1928, PP. 1-3.

ECCE HOMO

MEG JELENT

MEG JELENT

500

HERCZ GYÖRGY UJ VERSEI

KASSÁK SZINES METSZETEIVEL

SZÁMOZOTT ÉS ALÁIRT PÉLDÁNYBAN

Advertisement, Ma 3-4 (1924)
265x185 mm

COMMENTS ON THE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN OF HUNGARIAN WEEK

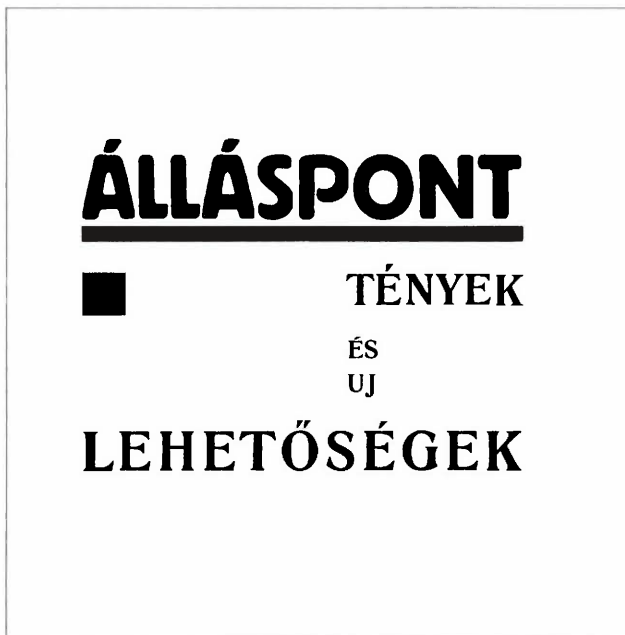
Not so long ago we read about British Week, then German Week, and at last this “fashion wave” reached us too, and we stood face-to-face with our own national campaign called Hungarian Week. We put the phrase fashion wave in inverted commas to show that these different national weeks are not borne of mere fad, but are conscious experiments in national policy. However, the country’s industrial potential being insignificant compared to that of the rest of the world (the country is too small and its population is predominantly peasant), Hungarian Week did not seem to serve the same purpose. For if the publicity and advertising of this week had been taken seriously, would all the ghastly posters have been bought, printed and put up, and would the tradesmen have decorated their shops with all that mindless pomp and packed their shop windows possibly with fine goods but certainly also as though we were all going bankrupt and so our only hope had been the sale of these things?

All nations have the right to promote their own goods at least within the boundaries of their own country, and well they should because appropriate advertising fosters consumers’ confidence and inclination to buy and thereby increases production and decreases unemployment, the latter itself boosting buying power. It is therefore quite appropriate from the point-of-view of national policy, or better, national economic policy, for the various countries to organise such national weeks. If, however, this national week which claims to be in the interest of the country’s industry and commerce is inadequately organised, all citizens involved in production or consumption should protest.

Not having been present at British or German week, we have no grounds to form an opinion of them. Hungarian Week, however, we did have the occasion to see, and we can very well say that it looked more like a close-out sale than a display of what a civilised country has produced. We saw no sign of culture being used in promotion, though the walls were all pasted over with posters and the shops packed with goods.

But we should not forget that this week was meant to demonstrate and represent Hungarian industry and commerce, in other words, the level the country has reached, and we can assert without any fear of contradiction that we have never seen on the streets of Budapest so many thoroughly ugly posters as during this same Hungarian Week, and we have never seen our shop windows so run-down in quality, as during this Hungarian Week.

If we have any industry of any value whatsoever, how is it possible that our production is promoted so poorly? If we had not known the indisputable qualities of Hungarian workers, if we had not known from reports and direct experience that Hungarian emigrant workers represent a strong labour force acknowledged throughout the world, we would have thought that Hungary being an agrarian country with a worthless labour force is unable to put out quality goods. But Hungarian workers can doubtless stand the competition with any other foreign labour force, and thus the only remaining explanation is that the owners and managers of Hungarian



Lajos Kassák, *Álláspont (Viewpoint)* (Vienna: Ma, 1924)
Title page, 155x155 mm

industry, as a result of either haughty indolence or a lack of knowledge of modern production methods, did not realise the significance of Hungarian Week. Or is there anyone who thinks that the advertising of Hungarian Week can be taken seriously in the way the British, Germans or Russians would inform and influence their public? Hungarian Week seemed more like an accidentally organised fair than a demonstration displaying the quantity and quality of national output. The whole event was to similar foreign experiments as is that piece of equipment that directs traffic at the crossing of, say, Rákóczi út and Körút is to a similar device on the Viennese Ring. Both pieces of equipment are connected to an electrical supply, but there is one small difference: while the one in Vienna rings a bell, turns a light on and unequivocally shows the right of way with the pressing of a button, the one in Budapest has to be poked to work with a rod, and even then it hardly winks a green or a red eye to the pent-up crowd. A committee had visited Vienna to study Viennese traffic management, and having thoroughly examined the far from devilish implement, they had it fixed up at home apparently so that it would have to be goaded to work with a truncheon, recalling the heyday of village lamp lighting far more than the method and form of Viennese traffic lights. I brought up this instance of clumsiness to illustrate the impression created by the walls, advertisement pillars and shop windows of Budapest during Hungarian Week. It was only the ostentatious name („electric policeman”) and the distant formality of the foreign traffic lights that reached us, and the same is true of Hungarian Week. Traffic lights are a result of the big city, just as such national display weeks

were initiated by great industrial nations, but not only to sell a greater than usual quantity of domestically produced goods to domestic consumers but also to maintain the quality of their own products in the face of competing nations' goods, and, in doing so, draw public attention to it and raise consumer confidence.

The slogan of British Week was "British goods are better than foreign ones", meaning they are more economical and sensible to buy. In Hungary they said: "Buy domestically produced goods because we have a lot of people unemployed, and if you don't support us, our poor industry will become even poorer." The consumer in every nation is first and foremost a consumer, and only secondarily a British, German or Hungarian patriot. So when a tradesman appeals to the

patriotism of the buying public instead of offering them better and cheaper goods or at least ones similar to those they can buy elsewhere, he is most certainly being inept. Surely if someone bought 1 ounce of x out of patriotism during Hungarian Week, he also bought a pound of British or German y. Because he too noticed that the advertising during Hungarian Week did not mean the beginnings of the organisation of Hungarian production and consumption. The whole event did not signify anything more for him than the poor advertising of a weekly sale. If he did buy something, he was surely convinced that with his deed he was bringing a sacrifice to the altar of the fatherland.

REKLÁMÉLET, NOVEMBER 1928, PP. 3-5.



Shop display at the Mentor bookshop at No. 17 Andrásy út in Budapest with copies of *Tisztaság könyve (The Book of Purity)* by Lajos Kassák and advertising materials for the book designed by Kassák, June 1926. The shop display was designed by Béla Kádár. Photograph by Árpád Szélpál

THE STREET AND THE ADVERTISEMENT

If one returns to Pest after a longer sojourn in, say, Berlin or Vienna, the first thing that strikes one is the external image of the city. One need not even make a critical examination to immediately see the obvious architectonic, aesthetic and hygienic differences between the latter cities and Budapest. The world famous skyline of Budapest can only be seen with its panoramic features from a bridge across the Danube at night, otherwise the whole city is run-down, chaotic and drab. The buildings, which are not really old, are shabby, or else, over-decorated like a parvenu (which is another form of being shabby), the streets are continually dug up, giving the observer the impression of inept and disorganised management, the pavements are filled with wastepaper and fruit peels, advertisement pillars are not conspicuously colourful, they are cheap and gaudy, shop windows are jam-packed, poorly measured, and, with their mess or over-complicated decoration, impose upon the passers-by.

This external image of the city is probably determined by the inner disorder of the life of the city's inhabitants. But we should not deviate from our subject matter.

A serious factor in the aesthetic image of city streets is the advertisement pillars and shop windows along the streets. Though we are forced to criticise these two factors harshly, we must say that the 10 to 15 posters fashioned according to a modern vision and produced with good printing technology that were posted in the streets of Budapest in the past year can bravely compete with those posted in Vienna or Berlin; furthermore, if we consider the ratio of industrial and commercial volume and of poster production in the three cities, we shall find that Budapest takes the lead among them in both ratio and modernity. Measuring them by the standards of art criticism, these Hungarian posters certainly represent the high quality of European poster art, but the streets of Budapest, as a milieu, cause them to lose their colour, smother their formal composition, and thus whatever qualities the individual artist may have, their ability to convince and inform is weakened. All phenomena are connected with the circumstances around them, and these phenomena are either supported or suppressed by those circumstances. In the clean and well-kept streets of Vienna, a good poster is placed as though on a grandstand by its colours and forms, while in Hungary, it is only the professionals that take note of such quality posters. The large amount of lumber and the disorganised dumping of posters next to each other hide even the most exquisite value before the lay public. After seeing the illuminated advertisement pillars of Vienna, one would think of the quasi-illuminated pillars of Budapest, which are supposed to serve the same purpose, as lamentably poor, as a squandering of money to no avail, as profanely simple, their colours kitsch. What is regarded as an honourable means of fostering industry and commerce in Vienna and an almost indispensable element of the aesthetics of the streets, is hardly more than Balkan gaudiness in Hungary. It can be stated that these two extreme approaches dominate the field of advertising, just as they do many other areas of life. The public will not understand, so why bother about changes, and if we do something, well, let us show we are no beggars. Naturally,



Shop display at the Mentor bookshop designed by Kassák, 1928

both approaches imply a misunderstanding of the function of advertising and therefore a useless squandering of money. While advertising is supposed to mean attentive and dependable information for the buying public and business rationale to the producer and the tradesman.

The advertisement is a significant mediating factor between producer and consumer.

And the shop window is also such a factor. But generally speaking, the same criticism holds true for shop windows as well. A few luxurious shops in the city centre are the exception, just as a few posters are the exception in the deluge of lamentable posters. There is one thing to be kept in mind when discussing such matters of public interest, if one wants the general public to make use of his critical remarks. If, for instance, an artistic exhibition is at stake and the critic finds one picture, which by way of its aesthetic

quality, colour and form, rises above the standard reached in the former year, then he can bravely state that artistic expression has developed. In the case of the applied arts, however, there are several important factors beyond the primary creator, and the work is not an expression of itself, as it is in the case of the fine arts, for it must serve external ideas and complex interests. An artistically beautiful poster is not necessarily a good poster, just as a shop window packed with goods or "artistically decorated" is not necessarily a good shop window. Moreover, it is just these two approaches that sully shop windows from an aesthetic point-of-view, and that, instead of augmenting, impair, sometimes even thwart, the inclination of the public to buy.

The function of a shop window, standing between the shop and the public, would be to mediate between the buyer and the seller. It so often happens that someone walking along a street without thinking of buying certain articles or without any special need for them, seeing a nicely, or better, a well arranged shop window, momentarily forgets his financial troubles, takes a liking to the goods displayed and is, as it were, lured into the shop.

But only a well arranged shop window is capable of functioning in this mediating role. It happens much too often that someone goes out to do some shopping only to find that the look of shop windows actually puts him off his original intention.

If we try to look for the psychological reasons behind this second possibility, generally, we shall find them in shop windows being over-crowded with goods and being "artistically decorated". Goods in an over-crowded shop window become trumpery, and it seems that, with over-decoration, the tradesman wants only to mask the poor quality of his goods. Constant suspicion is part and parcel of the psychology of the buyer, and he thus unconsciously flees all shops where he suspects some ploy. The buyer's instinctive excessive suspicion of the producer or seller is naturally often unfounded. It is hardly probable that the owner of a badly arranged shop window wants to cheat or fool his customers or even rob them. But it is certain that a tradesman who shows his customers a shop window dumped with goods and over-decorated is not a master of his trade. Such tradesmen do not perceive, in fact, they misperceive, the frame of mind and thinking of buyers, and are not clear about the aesthetic and textural significance of their goods. They do not know that flashy colours dumped together result in tasteless freakishness, and that goods heaped up give one the impression of a close-out sale. The point of a shop window is not to represent all goods on sale in the shop. But a well-placed article or a well-composed range of colours points to value in the window-shopper's eyes, and actually thrill him into wishing to acquire the article displayed or even

a better one. A good shop window touches a buyer and captures his imagination; it inspires in him a longing which he can only satisfy in the shop.

All good tradesmen must therefore take care not to frighten the buying public away with their zeal, their senseless and confused dumping of goods and kitsch-like decoration of articles in shop windows.

The functional shop window is aesthetically simple and economical in the quantity of goods.

Unfortunately, most of our tradesmen have not yet realised these simple laws, or even if some of them have, they dare not observe them on account of the competition with their neighbours. One of our big department stores, for instance, had its shop windows arranged in genuinely good taste and acceptable by the most progressive foreign standards for about half a year after its opening. This was all the more remarkable and welcome because such a department store sells, as is well known, medium quality, what are called mass-produced articles. Unlike the shop windows of other department stores, those of this one could bravely compete with the shop windows of any city centre. The image created by this Budapest department store was like any created by the large department stores in the great cities of the world. And we cannot believe that the management or the advertising manager of the store found that its outstandingly well-arranged shop windows had a negative effect on turnover; nonetheless, in a short while, these shop windows were despoiled, instead of simply displaying the articles, the space meant for displaying goods was decorated with stylised paintings, and the whole thing was turned into artistic kitsch. A painter was employed beside the window-dresser, and the elegance of the store was transformed into a cheap, showy cyclorama.

But it is not this one instance we wish to talk about; we could pick out any number of similar cases. There are shop windows imitating deserts, oases or mountain ranges covered by snow as the far as the eye can see. In the midst of this the tradesman, blessed with artistic taste and zeal, wishes to sell confectionery, women's clothing, toothbrushes or shoe laces.

I began this article by mentioning the aesthetics of the streets, and moved on to the tradesman who misconceives what his own interests are. The beginning and the end are only seemingly unrelated. The mess in the streets of Pest can be connected to the same human mentality and inadvertence, as the disregard and mess of shop windows and advertisement pillars can. And we must again, though sadly, say that our initiatives lag miles behind foreign ones, and our achievements seem to pale in comparison rather than shine.

REKLAMÉLET, MAY 1929, PP. 1-4.

THE PHOTOMONTAGE

It was about a decade ago that photomontages began to appear. Not as a representation of an artistic aspiration. Not as an expression of a new, consciously constructed theory-based art. They were just the opposite. They protested against all artistic aspirations: they were meant to subvert both the ideal and the material. We know the anti-literary campaigns led by Dadaists in fools' caps, with pipe and drum in hand, and it was out of this nihilist spirit that the photomontage was born. It appeared in the name of destruction, and it did not intend to represent a new, constructive spirit, as the public and a number of artists working in montage thought.

From another perspective, however, people think of the montage as being brought to life by the commercial cunning of the heads of advertising agencies. But the first montages actually had nothing to do with advertising art as it is understood today. They started out in the name of negation; and we know that advertising art is an applied art; it is meant to speak with the flourish of trumpets. Its calling is to vaunt and praise. Eight or ten years ago the advertising executives would not even have talked to an "artist" offering them montages as a serious means of promoting a product. Tradesmen might have caught something of the destructive spirit of the montage, but it is more probable that their "artistic sensibilities" protested against the textural purity and objectivity of the montage. A conservative tradesman wants an "artistic" advertisement. If he spends money on it, let the advertisement be as beautiful and airy in spirit as a Raphael is. Nonetheless, the montage developed further. It was no longer satisfied with the analysis and the mocking of phenomena. As a result of both its material and its productive tendencies, it brought forth the positive meaning of its essence. It liberated itself from its dependent position, and appeared as an autonomous value. It was not yet a type of advertising art, but its clear image and aesthetic clarity called the attention of modern commerce to it. The montage necessarily marched into the field of advertisement simultaneously with the rapid development of technology and the diffusion of quality goods. The largest and most distinguished firms used the montage to carry out a good proportion of their advertising. And we have no doubt as to its aesthetic and propagative significance as opposed to individual graphic art. The montage began its triumphant march with business cards and brochures, and we even see them now on the advertisement pillars along the boulevards. This complete conquest of advertising is only hindered by the difficulties in producing montage in certain sizes. Special technical processes are necessary to make montage posters, and outmoded printing machinery cannot cope with that. But this is certainly a minor difficulty that little impedes the necessary acknowledgement of the montage. Furthermore, the development of the montage is far from exhausted, and to whatever extent it has been employed in advertising, it has not become the sole instrument of advertising. It is developing in two directions. Its ability to display things clearly has been monopolised by advertising, while its purely artistic significance is now being expanded by cinema. Cinema can only further its ability to synthesise by incorporating the montage.



Sportcikkek (Sports Articles), Photomontage 1926

It was the Russians who discovered the cinematic significance of the montage, and they were the ones to extract the greatest value from it. Among European films, it was Ruttmann's *The Symphony of the City* that employed montage as a synthesising form of cinematic art.

The montage, as we have thus seen, both as an autonomous art and as an applied art has, after only a few years of experimentation, found a way to develop freely in the fields of everyday life as well to develop as an art form aspiring to the highest ideals.

Within the boundaries of this short article, we are primarily interested in the power of the montage to inform and influence us. All the more so because we can see those phenomena in the advertising success of the montage which, if not taken seriously and not corrected, might lead to its devaluation and discrediting. By now, making a montage is an enjoyable activity, even easy, if one thinks of it as pasting photos or parts of photos beside and over each other. The majority of montage makers, unfortunately, see no better aim before them. They are given a flat surface and various photographs, and lacking anything better to do, they try to paste these photos on a clean and patient surface. At best, they compose the whole thing as painters do their pictures. We must, however, be clear about something: painting a picture and combining photographic material into

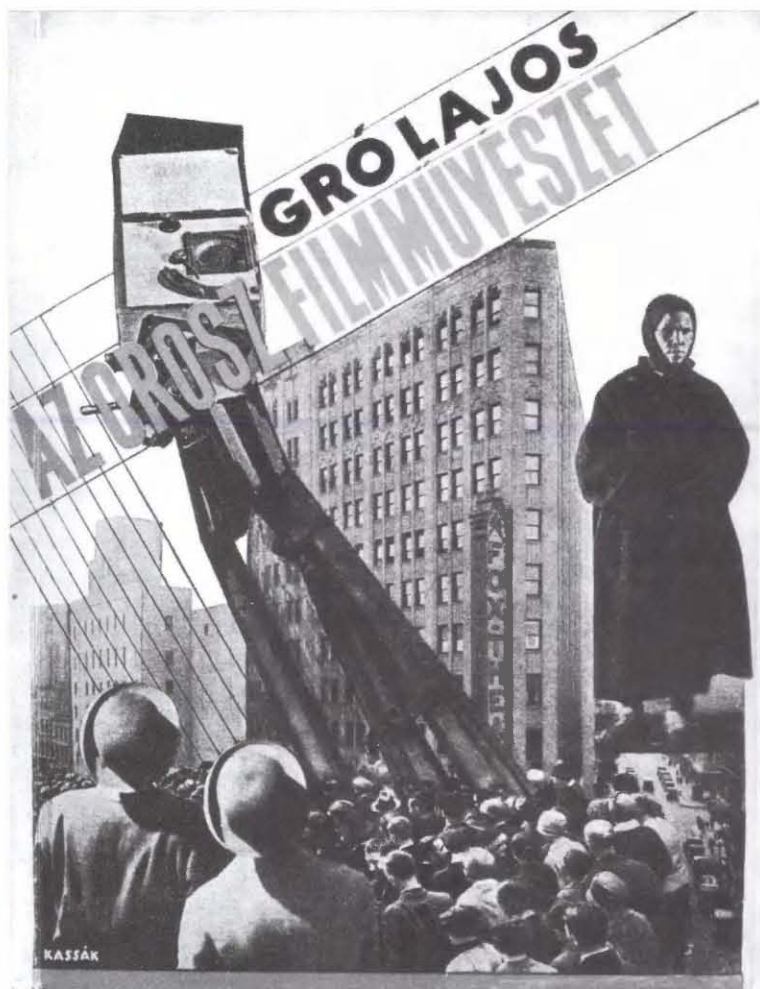
a new and significant whole by selecting, dimming and highlighting are altogether different. The artist attempts, through colour, sound and form, to manifest, to express some inner feeling, some experience not yet had, some suppressed desire, or an idea that cannot be realised in everyday life. Each kind of artistic material demands a different language of form; all artists have to observe the laws of their materials. The photographs before the montage maker are nothing other than materials. But the material of the painter and the material of the montage maker essentially differ. The essence of the painter's material is colour and form, while the essence of the montage maker's material is threefold: colour, form and the rational. In contrast to the former, this is partly an advantage and partly a handicap. A good montage can obviously be made only by a person who is aware of the special nature of his material and who, by way of his human capacity and skill, is capable of mastering, shaping and harmonising this material to express the values of the creative process. Rationality in the material of the montage is equivalent in significance to the raw material in the work of an architect. This is a great binding force, but it is also a necessary supporting pillar of this creative form. Most montage makers are not clear about the nature of their material, and their work is often no more than a senseless game or a gaudy mixture of ineffective commonplaces. Both results are contrary to the original aim of the montage. In the course

of its development, the montage has not forsaken its tententious aspirations, its stress on tendencies of rationality illustrated by motifs of rationality. A painter may aspire to abstraction or the absolutely artistic, but a montage maker must, due to the very nature of his material, also undertake rational solutions in his work since it is this threefold material content (colour, form and the rational) that places the montage ahead of any bravura by a painter or graphic artist in advertising.

In writing about photomontages, we must also mention the relationship between its photographic and type material. The primary material of a montage is the photographic, and type merely plays a supplementary and secondary role. It is theoretically impossible to define what kind of type we ought to use consistently. Practice has proved we can use either positive or negative, either coloured or black. This is to be determined in each case by the stable or dynamic, light or dark nature of the montage. We can however lay down a general rule: the form of the type must be of a calm, neutral form in comparison to the montage.

I have attempted to put together a meaningful definition of the montage. For a detailed discussion of this rich and multifaceted topic, an extended, analytical study would be needed.

REKLÁMÉLET, MAY 1930, PP. 7-8.



Lajos Gró, *Az orosz filmművészet (Russian Cinema)* (Budapest: Munka, 1931), cover, 197x145 mm

THE ART OF BOOK DESIGN AND ADVERTISING: AN EXHIBITION

The first exhibition of the Society of Hungarian Book and Advertisement Artists opened on 12 April. Though there is hardly anyone among the exhibitors who was unfamiliar to most educated Hungarians from some other area of graphic art, we must see this exhibition as a new and grand debut for all its participants. The artists, appearing thus as a group, have entered a new relationship with one another, as though a noble competition were taking place between them before the public eye. The lay viewer and the advertising businessman need not share the opinion, the possible bias, of the "professional" critic. If one is capable of seeing and looks at the exhibition, he will, even from his lay position, discover values that represent serious achievements not only by Hungarian, but also by European standards. This is highly significant, and, in view of our general economic and political condition, it gives us reason to rejoice.

Around thirty book and advertisement artists are participating in the exhibition. Clearly, they have displayed the best of their work, thus the exhibition, with all its virtues and faults, is representative of Hungarian art. The artists exhibiting do not belong to any one school, they each have a message, and they are able to convey it through the formal language of art and their individual characteristics. These various formal endeavours do not discompose the purity of the arrangement, and individual qualities ensure the general standard. The large material presented is—by any measure—surely beyond mediocrity, and certain works by individual participants are among the most beautiful works of modern advertisement art. Among the materials displayed, posters dominate, overwhelming the space with their sizes and elementary colours. From a critical standpoint, the work of Sándor Bortnyik and Róbert Berény should be lauded.

Róbert Berény had already been a reputed painter when he appeared to the public with his posters. And he arrived, as it were, with his very first step. He brought new colour to the streets of Pest, a pure and cheerful humour, and it is probably this very cheer that brought him such quick success. He is a radically modern artist, but he makes no use of the easy tricks of modernity. He works with elementary colours, his forms are exceedingly simple, and his message is always enriched by an epic element. He wishes his posters not only to create an effect optically, but also to influence the mood of the observer and to go all the way to intellectual motivation. Obviously, Berény not only constructs and paints but also works as a psychologist when creating posters. His expressive capacities are witnessed by his generally flawless ability to transmit and synthesise this rich inner range in his posters, otherwise created by simple means and in accordance with the laws of the plane. Despite his painter's attitude, he never falls into pictorialness, and however epic in quality, his posters never become superfluous in detail. He gives character to the task he is undertaking with one or two resolute forms and one or two elementary colours. This can only be achieved by an intuitive artist. And Berény is an intuitive artist of a superior critical culture.



Department store brochure, 1926

Compared to Berény, Sándor Bortnyik starts out from a quite different position and moves in a completely different direction. He is no painter by nature. His best posters place him more in the domain of applied arts than picturesque-ness. It is this approach that accounts for the stiffness of his compositions and the cold, outward value of his colours. For Berény, the base of the plane is only one constitutive element of the poster as a whole, while for Bortnyik, the plane appears as a surface to be built on, nay decorated. He constructs his colours and forms not from within the plane going outwards, but actually seems to inhabit the plane with his messages; most of his work therefore creates the impression of neither depth nor inner closure. His colours are no more than colours, his forms are no more than forms; the intuitive driving force, the evocative power, of the creative artist, is lacking in them. This is not to depreciate Bortnyik, I am only attempting to define the character of his individuality and the place of his work on the occasion of the exhibition. Bortnyik is usually thought of as a Hungarian representative of Bauhaus. His "modern" critics, when they intend to say something very good about him, tell us, feigning great expertise, that he works in the Bauhaus style. But he undeniably stands closer to the dry and monumental positioning of Gebrauchsgraphik. In the effective distribution of spots

and the arrangement of outward forms, he certainly learned a lot from Bauhaus, but this is hardly the essence of his work. His craftsmanship and his static evenness are his greatest merits.

The third poster artist to experiment in modern directions is Albert Kner, whose work, like that of Bortnyik, is little expressive of experience, his messages in the formal language of posters are not succinct but reticent. Even his best work attests to his education in the applied arts. The plane as facility bogs down his imagination, forces his artistic abilities to employ tricks borrowed from the applied arts. This same priority impedes his development in book designs and other areas of typography.

The rest of the poster artists follow older endeavours. But as we have said earlier, they all transcend the average. Lajos Csabai-Ékes, József Gróf, Ernő Jeges, Gyula Kaesz, and Gusztáv Végh are well-known and highly praiseworthy representatives of an advertising art that is progressing with great speed.

József Pécsi has displayed photo-posters at the exhibition. As a graphic artist striving for a pictorial effect, he stands at the very forefront of our photographers. The American, Russian and other photographic experiments generally striving toward objectivity have gone far beyond toned-down pictorialness, and thus yesterday's masters of the salon are overnight either no longer considered part of things or, sensing and growing aware of new possibilities in photography, have joined the progressive movements. Pécsi's exhibits are objective, sharply focused and carefully worked out. But in spite of their great craftsmanship they are not quite photo-posters. The compositions themselves are somewhat haphazard or start out from mistaken conceptions. The subject matter is itself given first-rate accentuation, but it lacks a unified effect, even the photographs of objects lose their evocative powers in this badly constructed aggregate. As far as poster composition and that of forms and lines is concerned, it is only the sheet entitled *Tungstram* that indicates full completion. Pécsi ought to work according to the rules manifest here. His present posters have no do rallying effect; nonetheless, measured by the standards of German illustrated magazines, his photographs are carefully elaborated and aesthetically perfect works.

In the field of book design, Dezső Fáy, Álmos Jaschik, Lajos Kozma, Imre Kner, László Reiter, and Gusztáv Végh have exhibited interesting material that represent serious

standards. None of them pioneers new lines of development, but their products in their ways and artistic significance are valuable works. This group of gentlemen stand for the European standard with regard to the art of book design, their graphics point beyond illustration in the everyday sense of the word; and Imre Kner's expertise in typography and his printing achievements clearly place him in the forefront of the craft in Hungary. Here we must also mention Erzsébet Kner, the great craftswoman of book-binding. Her exhibits bear witness to texture and to precise and aesthetic elaboration. She never mistakes the task of a book-binder for that of a decorator, she never takes books for gimcrackery; she knows that books are utilitarian, and therefore need thorough fashioning. All her exhibits are the products of very fine craftsmanship with no sign of individualistic dabbling in art.

Modern cover design and photo-montage are represented at the exhibition by László Moholy-Nagy, Farkas Molnár and this writer. Unfortunately, the former two have displayed far too few of their works, and thus the lay viewer can hardly be convinced of the true abilities of these two outstanding artists. The organisers ought to have taken better care to have sufficient numbers of their works presented.

The author of this review has displayed about fifty of his works at the exhibition: posters, covers and photo-montages. I ought not to write about myself for this would not be "in keeping with earlier practice". All I wish to say is that some of these exhibits I find good enough by my own evaluation. One characteristic of my works is that among advertisements they represent social propaganda.

Apart from recognised artists, we should also mention the pupils of certain masters among whom there are a number of hopefully promising talents capable of further development. I would especially emphasise Bortnyik's school.

In summary, we are happy to welcome the introductory exhibition of book designers and advertisement artists. We should rejoice at this quantitatively and qualitatively valuable production from both an artistic and a social point-of-view. Not all has been swamped, not all has gone rotten under the pressures of reaction and asphalt cynicism. Under the desperate surface, there are brisk forces shooting up; it is only a matter of time that these forces of new optimism and new conviction take on a destructive and constructive role in the arts as well as in politics and economics.

SZÁZADUNK (OUR CENTURY), MAY 1930, PP. 291-294.

Advertisement, *Munka* 4 (Budapest 1929), 262x185 mm

szomoruság piacán

cimmal megjelenik januárban zelk zoltán
verseskönyve. a fedőlapot kassák lajos tervezi

előfizetési ára: 2 pengő
amatörpéldány: 5 pengő
előfizetni lehet a „munka” kiadóhivatalában

ADVERTISING AND ART

(Contribution to the debate organised by the Society of the Friends of Nyugat [The West] on 21 January 1931.)

The difference between advertising and propaganda, in my opinion, is that while the advertisement praises a product of a business venture, propaganda attempts to bring public awareness to something in the public interest. An advertisement raises an article above another, propaganda displays the examples of culture.

As we cannot speak of prostitution, so too we have no right to speak of a holy art.

Man today lives in society, in an industrial and commercial society. It is only natural for the contemporary writer not to write only of abstract things but also to raise mundane issues, such as the themes of industry and commerce.

Nonetheless, I cannot imagine how literature could involve itself in advertising.

An artist cannot influence the public, but, by way of a formal problem, he can call attention to the existence of an article. In this respect, therefore, we can only speak of an optical effect. A poster is related to a manufactured article, but this relationship is quite different from how literature discusses the same article.

I myself, for example, am prepared to go to a factory and I am ready to have a look at everything, from the management offices down to the shop floors. There I would see and write not only of what machines are produced in the factory, I would also publicise my impressions, I would also write of the kind of wages workers get, the kind of work they do, and

also of what goes on in the management offices in the mean time. If such a report were published in a newspaper as a kind of publicity, I would certainly be prepared to write it. But if it were not published it would certainly be a kind of prostitution on my part to do work in advertising since the writer writes about what is seen as important according to his inner convictions. And in the factory, he is interested not only in the product, but in the producer, the man as well, and, in fact, primarily in the man.

Books also need to be advertised, but not in the way this is done today. For what happens today is that bad books are promoted with good advertisements in the interests of business, and if there is no interest involved, a good book will never be advertised. Let there be good reviews first, then advertising might follow.

When we edify and enlighten the public on how they are related to the surrounding society, we are involved in a superior kind of propaganda from a human point-of-view. And if this is so, advertising or propaganda cannot be regarded as desirable or undesirable and socially incorrect from a national or an individual point-of-view, because participation in such propaganda is compulsory for the whole of literature and each writer.

NYUGAT, 1 FEBRUARY 1931, PP. 153-154.

COMMENTS ON A POSTER EXHIBITION

More than fifteen years ago, in an article called "Streets and Advertisements", I wrote that the advertisement pillars of Budapest were packed with posters, but these coloured spots lacked elementary force so much that, with their importunate formalities, they either outraged the public in the streets or caused even the most watchful eye to listlessly overlook them....

The streets of the destroyed city are again full of posters wishing to serve not so much business advertising but social propaganda. Unfortunately, as the advertising manoeuvres of business had made an irresolute and haphazard impression, so today we can at best call the urge to express social propaganda in posters and textual notices no more than good-willed fumbling. No doubt, we must make use of all possible means, including street propaganda, in the interest of reconstructing the city. The managers of these necessary activities are probably well aware of the significance of their task; nonetheless, they are unable to reach the desired goals toward which they apparently strive. There are many causes for this failure. One of them, for example, is the intellectual fatigue of the inhabitants of the city; it would be extremely difficult to arouse interest in these masses even with the most timely and appropriate methods—further obstacles in this respect are the not always purposeful conceptions and

the lack of creativity in poster designers. What is more, the papers print the sort of critical remarks that stultify the more daring experiments by our artists in the eyes of passers-by. What these writers do not realise is that they expose themselves as critics to those poster designers who are somewhat conscious of their obligations and conscientiously experiment with better and better methods. As a rule, these irresponsible hacks and mean punsters have attacked those very poster-like notices that were best and that most effectively fulfilled their role in the papers. It is therefore no wonder that our graphic artists who follow proper directions and are internationally significant do not take part in this area of necessary social work.

The propaganda department of the Social Democratic Party, wishing to lessen these anomalies, organised a poster competition and publicly exhibited the material that was assembled. The idea was a good one, but the standard of the material displayed can hardly be called satisfying. The achievements of the majority of the participants manifest no more than affectionate naiveté, in both colour and form; their posters fail to point beyond the limits of hard work. It is rather sad that our accomplished artists have so demonstratively kept away from this noble competition, and it is equally disappointing that the youths participating have as yet not

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presented any truly pregnant message or shown any breakthrough in form. Among the large number of exhibits there are a few more significant experiments of which only a composition by Zoltán Tamássi should be stressed. His message is succinctly clear, his means of expression are direct and strive for a basic effect. Without any stressed pathos, he is clear and outspoken. He does not intend to solve the problems of the world with one single cry but is capable of calling one's attention to the essence. Apart from asserting his pictorial

aesthetic, he divides and articulates the plane economically, and his composition meets the requirements of the modern concept of posters from the point-of-view of both craftsmanship and propaganda needs. He was awarded the first prize by the organisers of the exhibition, a decision we can only agree with, and hopefully this recognition will stimulate this seriously talented graphic artist to further development.

JULY 1945

HAYSTACK

[An excerpt]

Last night I took a walk on the Ring alone. My wife being away in Pará, I often venture out of the flat. I am driven by restlessness, and I can more or less satisfy my curiosity. No matter how much I seem to live withdrawn, I cannot extricate myself from the muddle of the world. Not that I revel in it, but that's a story for another day.

I take a look at the shop windows; once I had dealt with the matter not only theoretically, but practically too. An appealing shop window is as much part of a decent sales policy, as a tasteful and appetising garnish is part of a good cuisine. The gaudy dumping of motley things is mere window-dressing, a parade of our lack of taste, nothing but shabby matting.

A swatch of fabric will never catch our eye if it is heaped together with ten bolts of cloth, but it will if seen in the proximity of a swatch of another fabric, of another colour, if the

option to compare is provided, if it can be appreciated with respect to something else. And what is the point of having bottles in butcher's shop windows with labels that promise cooking oil on them but with nothing inside? The empty shelves of another butcher's shop are decorated with honey cakes. There are shop windows where wooden salamis and paper fish turn window-shoppers' stomachs, and there are ones where goods are so much covered by dust that the place resembles a deserted mine.

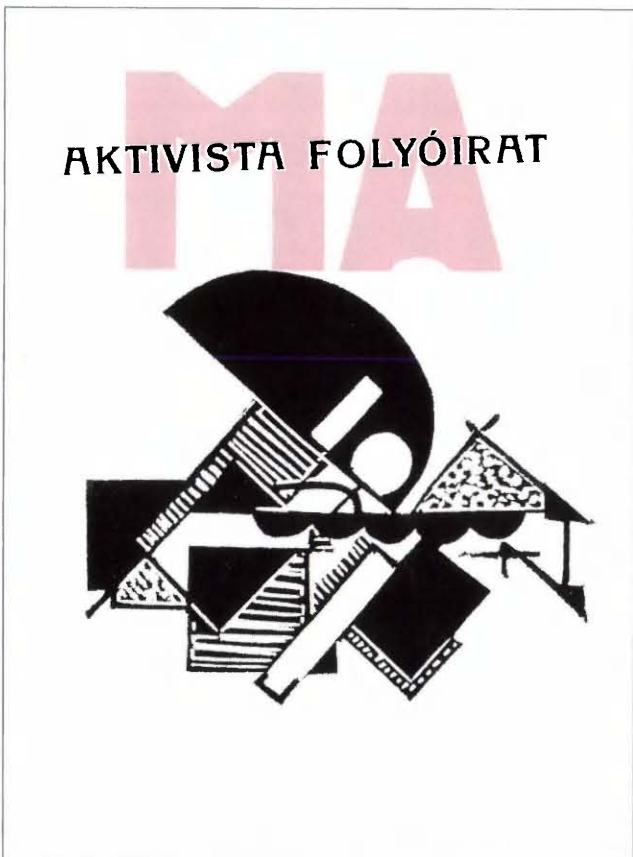
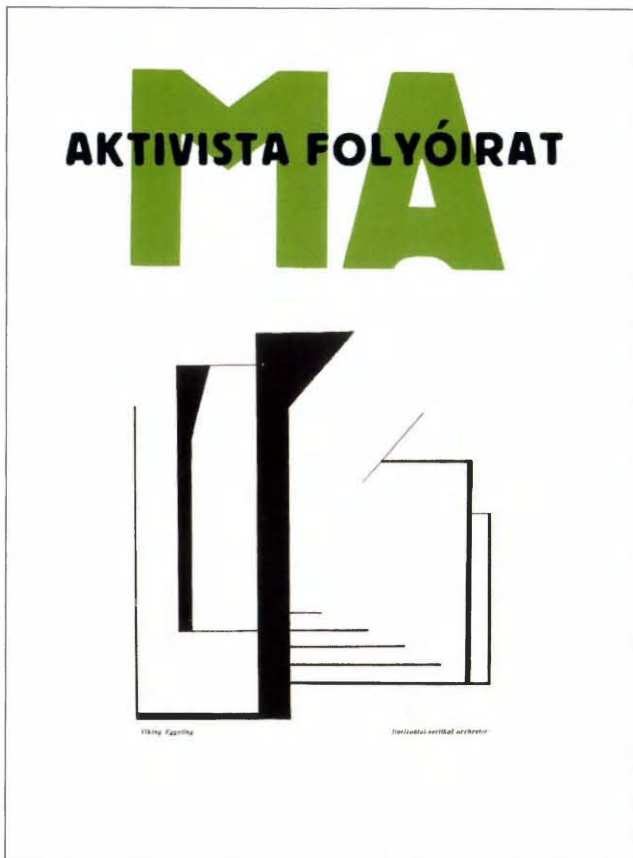
This kind of poverty is more foul than misery.

It is not that we are poor but that we dislike washing and combing. Our clothes are stained by stew and jam, our streets are rummaged, our goods bawl and dole under glass.

A bazaar-like world palatable to none.

1955





On page 25: Typography. *Ma* 5-6 (1922): 29, 306x230 mm
Ma 5, 8, 1 (1921), 3 (1922) Cover with drawing of Lajos Kassák, Viking Eggeling, Lajos Kassák and Ivan Puni, 306x230 mm

A MA 4. wieni előadástétele 1922 Május 28-án este 8 órakor a Konzerthaus kistermében. A legújabb irodalom, zene, tánc és énekművészet reprezentatív képviselőivel és előadóival. Jegyek K 300–1200-ig a MA kiadóhivatalában. Lányinál (L. Kärntnerstraße 44) és a Konzerthaus pénztáránál.

ÚJ KIADVÁNYAINK

KUDLÁK LAJOS: 12 Lithografia (4 színezett és 8 egyszínű) Megjelent 100 amatőrszámban: ára 4000 oszt. korona, 50 cseh korona, 60 dinár, 70 lei, 400 magy. korona, 150 márka, 1 dollár, 20 lira, 8 sv. korona, 10 sv. frank stb.

FORBÁTH IMRE: Versek Ára: 900 oszt. korona, 15 cseh korona, 20 dinár, 25 lei, 80 magyar korona, 30 márka, $\frac{1}{2}$ dollár, 5 lira, 1 sv. korona, 1 sv. frank. Ebből a könyvből 25 amatőr pd. is készül különleges kivitelben. Ára: 1200 oszt. korona, 20 cseh korona.

BARTA SÁNDOR: Mese a trombitakezü diákról (összegyűjtött mesék 1919–22) Ára: 900 oszt. korona, 15 cseh korona, 20 dinár, 25 lei, 80 magy. korona, 25 márka, $\frac{1}{2}$ dollár, 5 lira, 1 sv. korona, 1 sv. frank. Ebből a könyvből 30 számszott, amatőrpéldány is készül. ára 1200 oszt. korona, 20 cseh korona, 25 dinár stb.

A MA új levelezőlapsorozata:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Építészeti | Az egész sorozat ára 500 oszt. korona, |
| 2. Gépplasztika | 50 magy. korona, 15 cseh korona, 18 dinár, |
| 3. Kassák | 30 márka, 30 lei, 6 lira, 2 sv. frank, |
| 4. Lissitzky | 5 fr. frank, 2 sv. Korona, $\frac{1}{2}$ dollár. |
| 5. Man Rey | Egyes levelezőlap ára: 80 oszt. korona, |
| 6. Moholy Nagy | 10 magy. korona, 2 cseh korona, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ dinár, |
| 7. J. Van Doesburg | 4 márka. |
| 8. V. Tatlin | |

MEGRENDELHETŐ A MA KIADÓHIVATALÁBAN WIEN, XIII.,
AMALIENSTRASSE 26. **15 szokol**
15 dinár.

Előfizetési díj:

egy évre:	fél évre:
3000 K.	1500 K.
75 szokol	40 szokol
40 dinár	20 dinár
75 lei	40 l.
75 márka	40 inárka
20 sv. korona	10 sv. korona
4 dollár	2 dollár
20 lira	10 lira
20 frank	10 frank
8 sv. frank	4 sv. frank

Egyes szám ára:

300 K., 7 szokol, 10 lei, 10 márka, 1 es fél sv. korona, 25 cent, 2 lira, 2 frank

A MA amatőr számainak előfizetési ára:

(megjelentek 30 példányban.)

egy évre:	fél évre:
5000 K.	2500 K.
100 szokol	50 szokol
100 márka	50 márka
90 dinár	30 dinár
50 lira	25 lira
100 lei	50 lei
10 dollár	5 dollár

Az amatőrpéldányok egyes számonként nem kaphatók!

A MA pártoló tagsági ára:

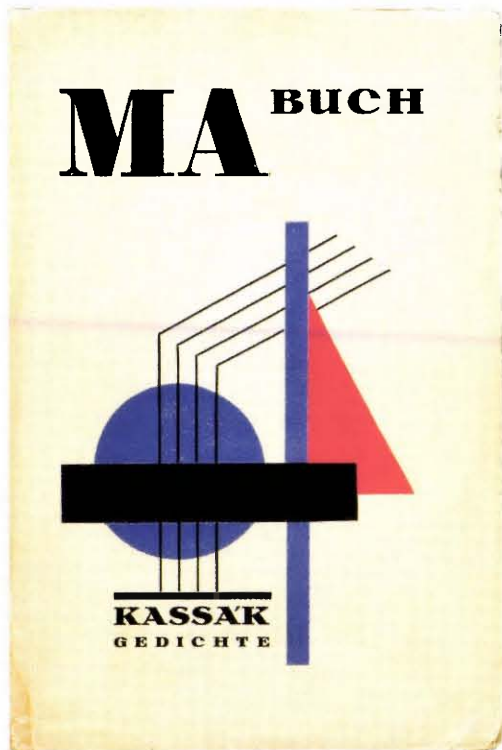
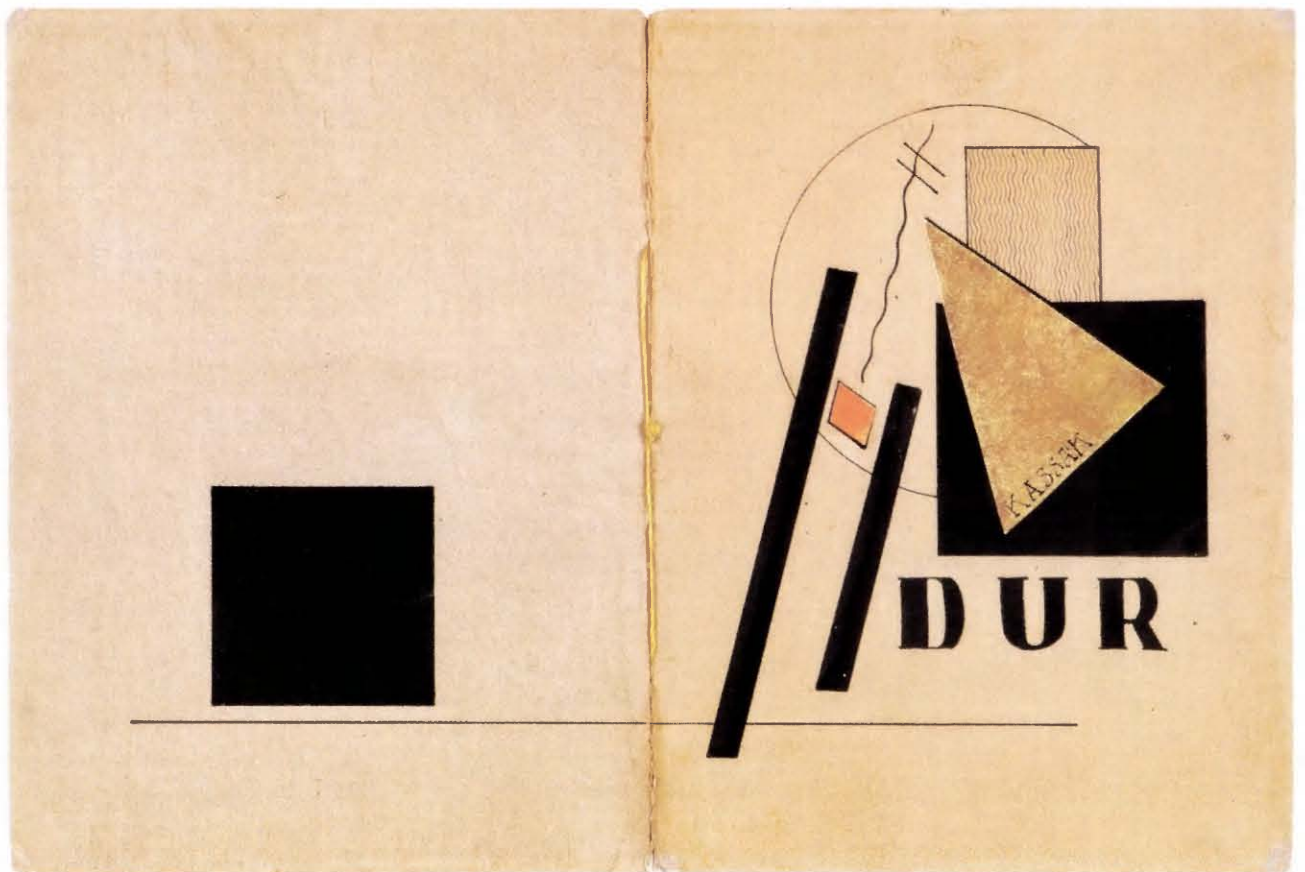
Pártolói díj egy évre: 5000 o. k., 150 szokol, 120 dinár, 100 lei, 150 márka, 80 lira, 70 frank, 30 svájci frank, 10 dollár, 20 sv. kor.

A felsorolt könyvek csakis készpénzfizetés ellenében rendelhetők meg a MA kiadóhivatalában, Wien, XIII., Amalienstraße 26

„Ma” havonta egyszer megjelenő, aktivista művészeti és társadalmi folyóirat. Szerkeszti: Kassák Lajos. Helyettes szerkesztők: Barta Sándor. Felelős szerkesztő: Joseph Kalmer. Szerkesztőség és kiadóhivatal: Wien, XIII., Amalienstraße 26/11. Németországi képviselőnk: Moholy-Nagy László, Berlin W 35, Lützowstrasse 73. Atelier. Csehországi képviselőnk: Kudlák Lajos, Luceneč, Massarikova u. 11. Szlovákiai képviselőnk: Mácza János, Kossice Massarikova u. 25.

VII. évf. 5–6. szám. Megjelenés dátuma 1922 Május 1. A lap minden cikkéért a szerző felel.

Druck. „Elbemühl” Wien, IX., Berggasse 81. —



Lajos Kassák, *DUR folder* (Vienna: Ma, 1922), cover, 335x250 mm

Lajos Kassák, *Ma Buch* (Berlin: Ma, 1923), cover, 240x160 mm

Lajos Kassák, *Ma – Asszonyomnakk (Ma – For My Lady)* (Vienna: Ma, 1921), cover, 280x210 mm

János Mácza, *Teljes színpad (Full Stage)* (Vienna: Ma, 1921) cover, 276x215 mm

Sándor Barta, *Tisztelt hullaház (Dear Mortuary)* (Vienna: Ma, 1921), cover, 280x215 mm

Erzsi Újvári, *Prózák (Prose)* (Vienna: Ma, 1921), cover, 280x215 mm



De Styl Weimar		2x2		ÇA IRA Bruxelles		UT Novisad	
DER STURM Berlin			Wien		L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU		
BROOM Berlin		MECANO Weimar		LA VIE DES		Paris	
DER GEGNER Berlin		DIE AKTION Berlin		LETTRES ET DES ARTS Paris		CLARTE Paris	
				ZENIT Zagreb			

MA

Internacionális aktivista művészeti folyóirat ■ Szerkesztő: Kassák Lajos ■ Fellelősszerkesztő: Josef Kalmer ■ Szerkesztőség és kiadóhivatal: Wien, XIII. Bez. Amalienstrasse 26. I. 11 ■ Megjelenés dátuma 1922 október 15 ■ Előfizetési ár: EGY ÉVRE: 35.000 osztrák kor., 70 szokol, 100 dinár, 200 lel, 300 márka ■ EGYES SZÁM ÁRA: 3000 osztrák korona, 7 szokol, 10 dinár, 20 lel, 50 márka ■ VIII. évfolyam, 1. szám ■ A lapban megjelenő cikkekért a szerző felel.

Druckerei „Elbemühl“, Wien, IX., Berggasse 31.

Wien 1922 – VIII évfolyam – 1 szám

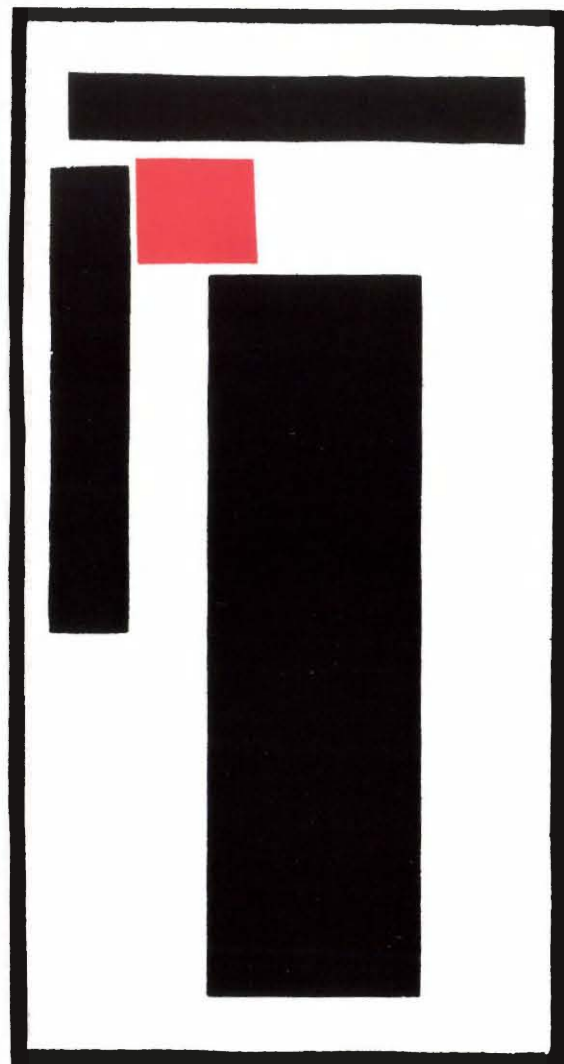
Ma

**AKTIVISTA
FOLYÓIRAT**

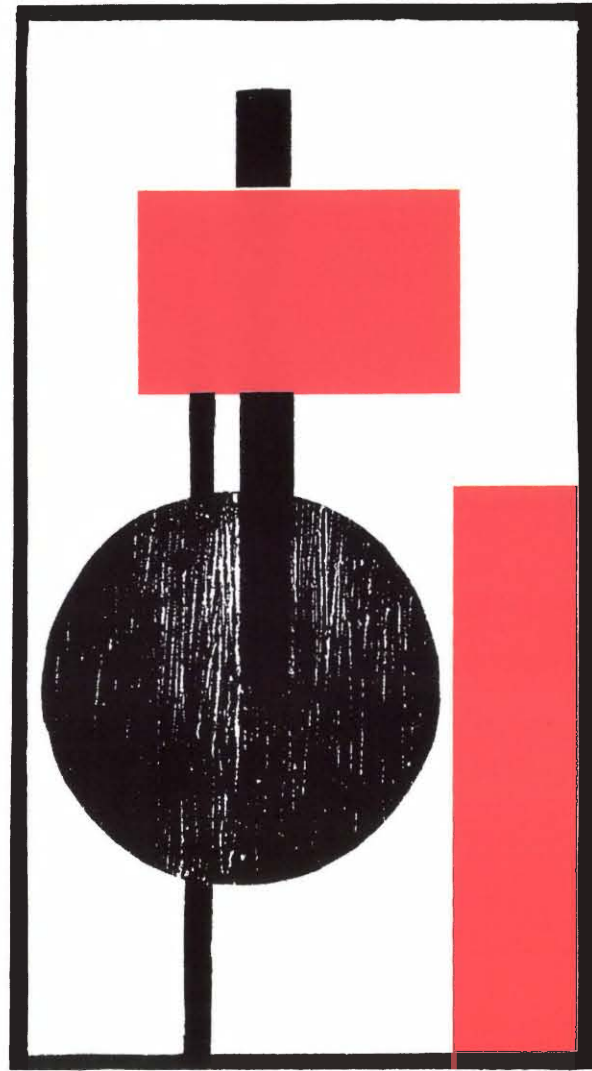
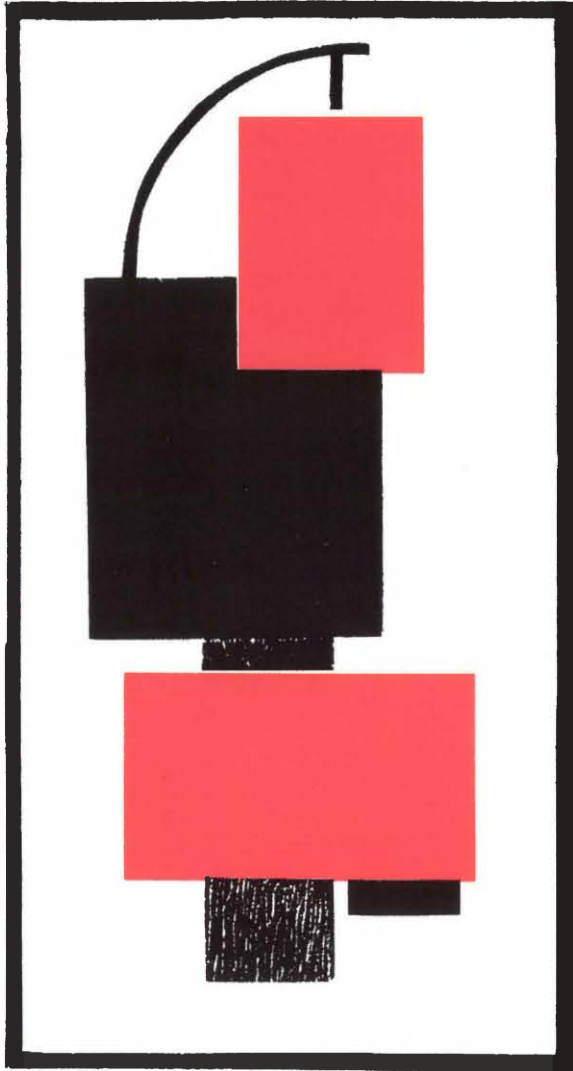
BILDARCHITEKTUR

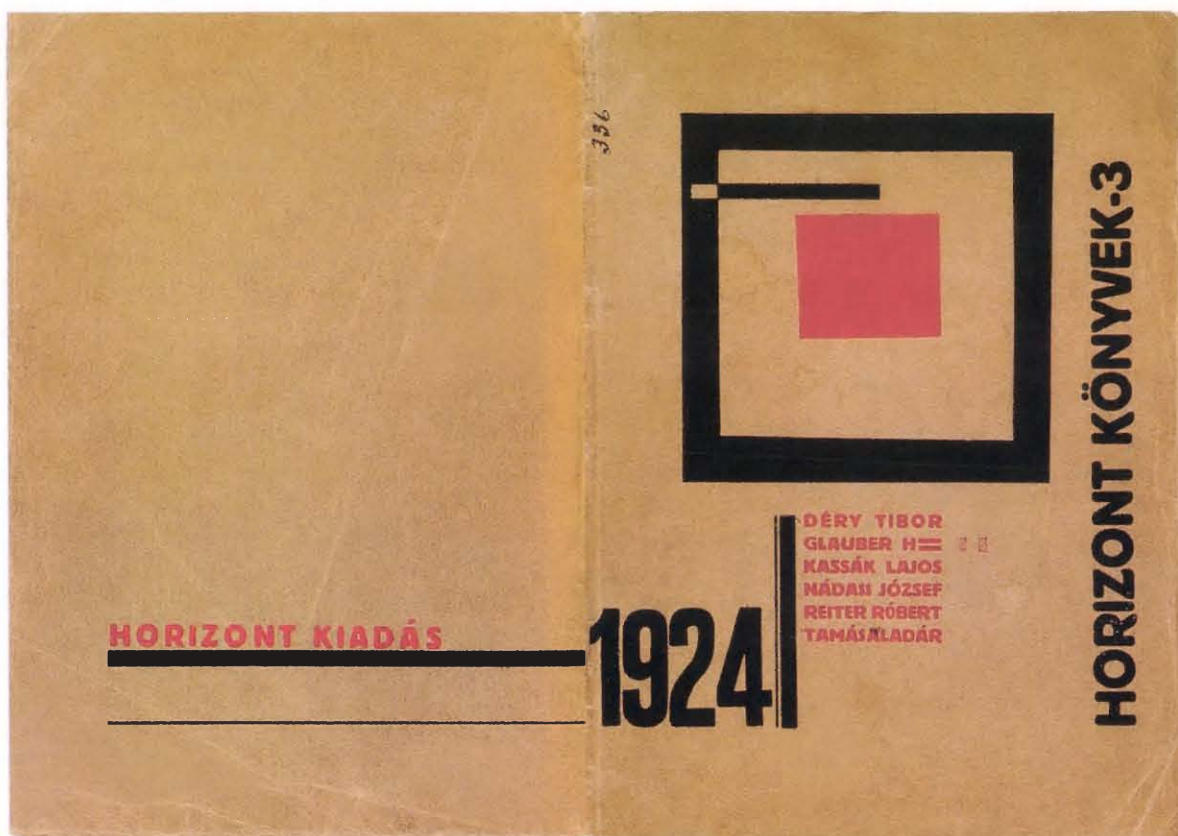
Bewegung ist Leben. Die ewige Bewegung des Lebens ist mit der ewigen Neuerzeugung und Erhaltung des Gleichgewichtes gleichbedeutend. Denn das ewig bewegliche Leben bedeutet letzten Endes nicht die Mannigfaltigkeit der Bewegung, sondern den Zustand einer aus der konstruktiven Bewegung der Weltkräfte sich ergebenden, immer neuen, mithin unendlichen Stabilität. Jede lebendige Konstruktion oder Organisation, deren innere Kraftbewegungen aus welchen Gründen auch immer stillstehen, fällt tot zusammen, verliert ihre dominante Gegenwart, ihr Symbolsein. Wir sehen also, daß der Exponent des Lebens die Bewegung, die Gesamtheit der Bewegung aber die Stabilität, das universale Leben ist. Auch der Mensch verdankt sein Dasein der Kraft der Bewegung; er wurde lebensfähig, mit beweglichen Kräften erfüllt, mitten unter die sich außer ihm bewegenden Kräfte als ebenfalls bewegliche Kraft versetzt. Und wir sehen im Organismus des Menschen den unaufhörlichen Kampf der physischen und psychischen Kräfte um den „normalen Zustand“, um das das Leben bedeutende Gleichgewicht, wie wir auch den Kampf der Revolutionen und Konterrevolutionen um das soziale Gleichgewicht sehen. Unser Zeitalter ist eine Periode der losgelösten und irren Bewegungen. Der Mensch unseres Zeitalters ist der verzweifelte Mensch. Die Kunst des heutigen Menschen ist die dynamische Kunst. Sie ist eine Bewegung, die zuweilen als Reaktion der Gegenbewegung, zuweilen als Bewegung um sich selbst willen auftritt. Diese Phase der Kunst wurde als Erfüllen des Lebens durch den Futurismus eingeleitet, fand ihre Fortsetzung mit gesteigerten ästhetischen Ansprüchen im Suprematismus und lebte zuletzt als aggressiv angreifende, ja eroberungslüsterne Kraft im Proun fort. In all diesen künstlerischen Bestrebungen ist noch alles um der Bewegung willen da, ihre Farben- und Formgesetze bedeuten die Gesetze der Bewegung, die Bewegung als Element des Schaffens und nicht das Schaffen selbst. Statt Synthese Analyse. Aber Kunst ist Schaffen, sie ist Synthese der konstruktiven Bewegungen, ein neues Gleichgewicht in der großen Lebensdynamik als Dokument dessen, daß wir mit unserem Willen und Sicherheitsgefühl zur Erzeugung eines neuen stabilen Punktes da sind. Auf die Suche nach diesem stabilen Punkte zog der Kubismus aus. Er verlor sich in seinen kompositionellen Doktrinen, schuf aber die Grundlage des plastischen Bewußtseins und des architektonischen Gefühls des neuen Menschen. Während also der Futurismus die Bewegung als ernährendes Element des Lebens entdeckte und das Proun die Konstruktivität der Bewegung fand, deutete der Kubismus auf die Möglichkeit der Stabilität, auf die neue Architektur hin. Auf die auf konstruktiver Basis beruhende Architektur, als synthetische Möglichkeit des künstlerischen Suchens unserer Tage. Der Kampf um die neue konstruktive Architektur schlug zwei Wege ein: im Raume und auf der Fläche. Erstere ist Baukunst, das zweite Bildarchitektur. Der Suprematismus setzte in der Malerei „den letzten Punkt über den Buchstaben I“. Und die Bildarchitektur versucht, mit der Schwungkraft des Proun ihre ersten Schritte nach der Architektur als der einzigen, stofflich und geistig konstruktiv-kollektiven Kunst. Die Kraft der Bildarchitektur, sowie des Lebens selbst wird durch die Bewegung gegeben, sie selbst aber stellt bereits das Ergebnis der Bewegung, die Stabilität, dar. Und deshalb sehe ich in der Bildarchitektur fortan nicht die in den suchenden Künsten vorherrschenden Stoff-, Form- und Farbenprobleme, sondern den Anfang einer neuen synthetischen Kunst. Die Bildarchitektur gehört zu den ersten Dokumenten dessen, daß der sich in Kämpfen aufreibende Mensch von heute sein Sicherheitsgefühl wiedererlangte und seiner in Farben und Formen objektivierten Weltanschauung im Wege der primitiven Kunst zum erstenmal auf die Beine helfen will.

Ludwig Kassák



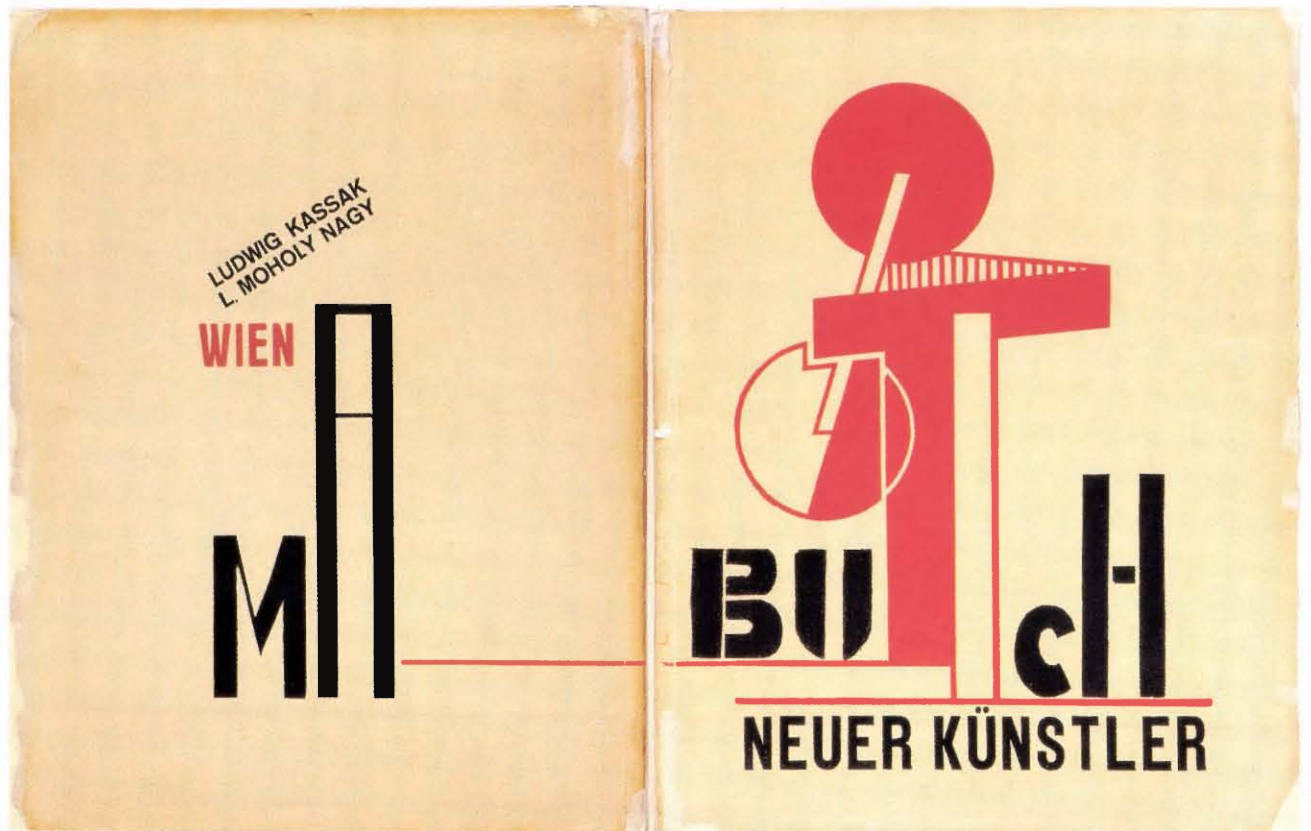
Kassák: Bildarchitekturen (3)





1924. Tibor Déry, Henrik Glauber, Lajos Kassák, József Nádass, Róbert Reiter and Aladár Tamás: *An Anthology* (Vienna: Ma, 1924), cover, 250x178 mm
Ma Bildarchitektur! 1921, cover design, China ink, collage on card, 270x207 mm, Kassák Museum
 Lajos Kassák. *Ma Bildarchitektur!* (Vienna: Ma, 1921), cover, 285x220 mm





Ludwig Kassák–László Moholy-Nagy.
Buch neuer Künstler (The Book of New Artists)
(Vienna: Ma, 1922), cover, 310x240 mm
Ma 2-3 (1922), 4 (1923), 5, 8-9 (1924),
cover, 310x310 mm

Wien 1922 = VIII évfolyam = 2-3 szám

25

Künnelvi leányemem gabonát vasat és emberi dajkálók
...
szellemi kezdet
...
szellemi kezdet
...
szellemi kezdet

26

Látták a kocsikat amint beleléptek geblékbe hogy végre azok is
...
szellemi kezdet
...
szellemi kezdet

27

Az asszonyok fogai tele vannak villamokkal
...
szellemi kezdet
...
szellemi kezdet

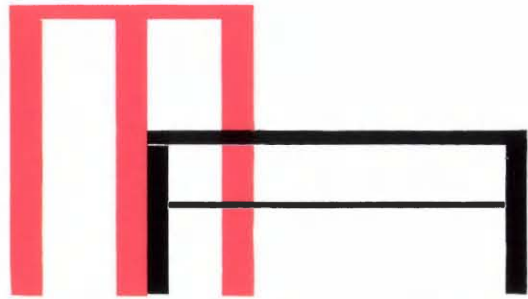
AKTIVISTA-FOLYÓIRAT



WIEN 1924
IX. ÉV. 5. SZÁM
SZERKESZTI
KASSÁK LAJOS

Wien 1923 = VIII évfolyam = 4 szám

AKTIVISTA - FOLYÓIRAT



Az ítélet hegyén

...
szellemi kezdet
...
szellemi kezdet

Összetört idő vallomása

...
szellemi kezdet
...
szellemi kezdet

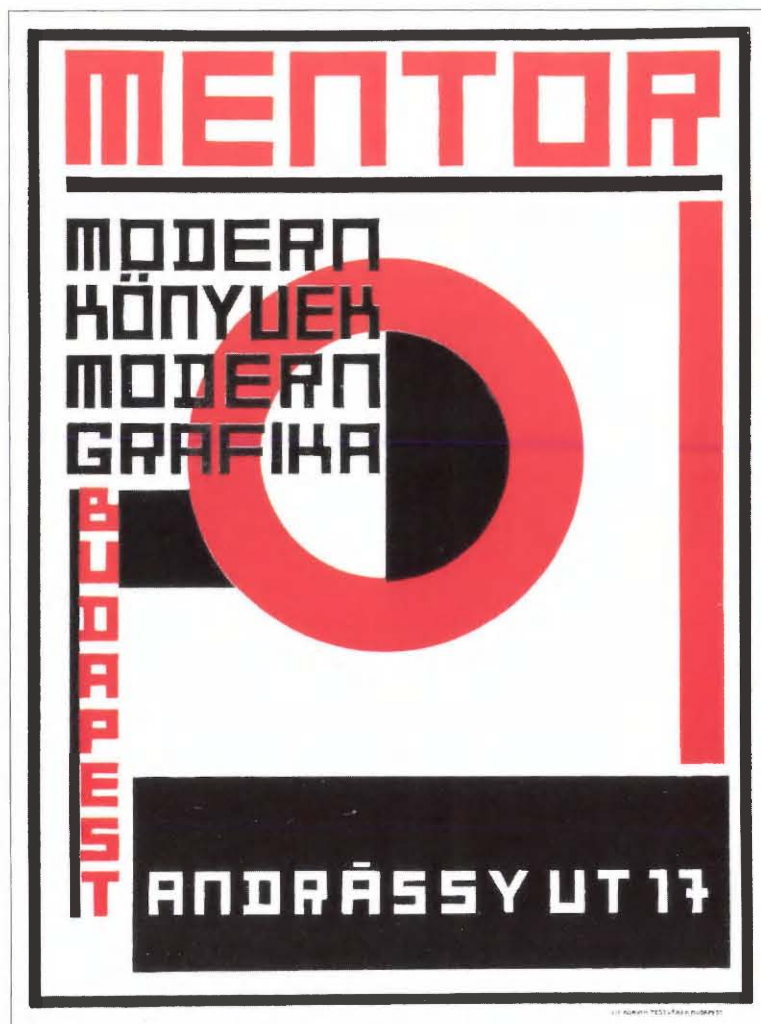
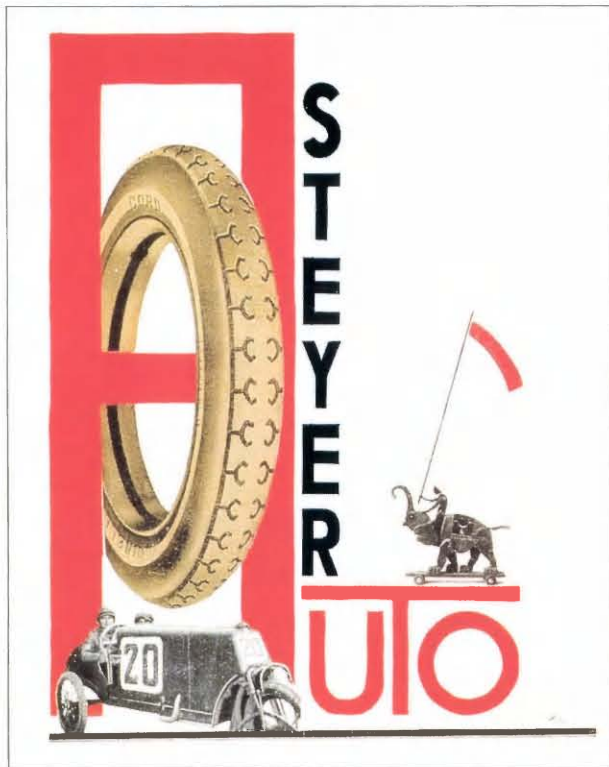
MUSIK UND THEATER NUMMER KÜLÖN SZÁM
MUSIQUE ET THEATRE
N. ALTMAN — A. VESNIN — L. KASSÁK — STEPANOVA — F. T. MARINETTI —
STEPANOVA — KAMARDIONKO — H. WALDEN — K. SCHWITTERS — G. CADEN —
F. LÉGER — EL. LISSITZKY — EL. LISSITZKY — EL. LISSITZKY — A. TAIROFF —
F. LÉGER — F. LÉGER — H. SUSCHNY — MOHOLY NAGY — CO-OP — CO-OP — CO-
OP — G. GROSZ — M. CHAGALL — E. PRAMPOLINI — P. PICASSO — STUCKEN.
SCHMIDT — G. TELTSCHER — JOSEF NÁDASS — G. TELTSCHER — GÜNTER
HIRSCHEL-PROTSCH — JOSEF M. HAUER — E. PRAMPOLINI — JOSEF M. HAUER



György Hercz, *Ecce homo*
 (Vienna: Írók Könyvkiadóvállalata, 1924),
 title page, 245x172 mm
Elbemühl Buch- und Steindruckerei,
 1923, poster design,
 China ink on paper, 290x220 mm



Ma 1 (1923), cover: "To create, organise and appropriate", 310x310 mm



Steyer Auto, 1926, poster design, collage on paper, 295x210mm, Carl László Collection, Budapest
 Tolo Porzellanwaren, 1926, leaflet, 300x220 mm
 Mentor, 1926, poster, 250x190 mm



MAGYAR HIRLAP

HÉTKÖZNAP

1000K

VASÁRNAP

2000K

EGY HÓNAPRA

30^o KORONA

KIADÓHIVATAL

ANDRÁSSY-ÚT 47

**TISZTASÁG
KÖNYVE**

**KASSÁK
KASSÁK
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KASSÁK**

**A GYÜJTŐVEKET KÉR-
RETIK AZ ALÁBBI CIM-
RE VISSZAKÜLDENI:**

**SIMON J. BUDAPEST
V. SZIGET UTCA 16. I. 14**

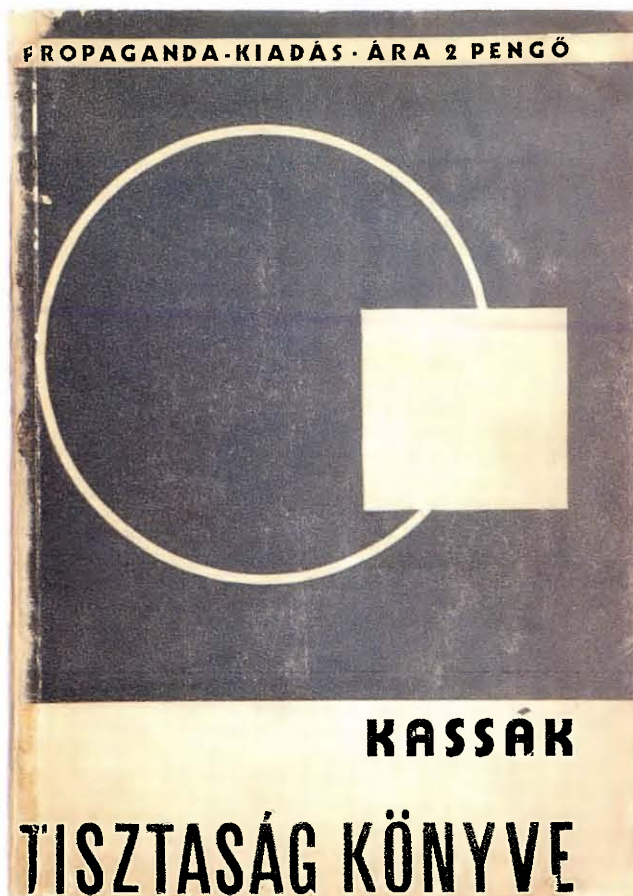
**KASSÁK LAJOS
ANTOLÓGIÁJA**

A SZERZŐ KÖNYVEI

<p>ÉLETSIRATAS ISTEN BÁRÁNYKÁI MISILLÓ KIRÁLYSÁGA EGY SZEGÉNY LÉLEK . . . ÉPOS WAGNER MASZKJÁBA KALABRESZ TRAGEDIÁS FIGURÁK NYILT LEVÉL MÁGLYÁK ÉNEKELNEK</p>	<p>VIL ÁGANYÁM NOVELÁS KÖNYV VERSEK ÁLLÁSPONT ÚJ VERSEK KÉPESKÖNYVEK ÚJ MŰESZEK KÖNYVE ÚJ KÖLTŐK ANTOLÓGIÁJA I ÚJ KÖLTŐK ANTOLÓGIÁJA II</p>
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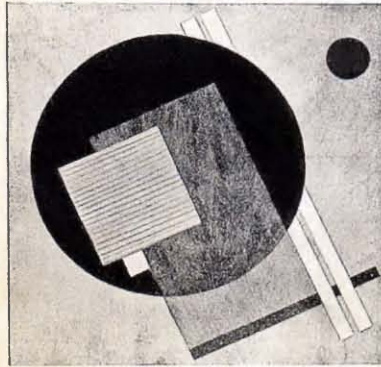


9956 - Kreutz J. és Társa. Budapest



Lajos Kassák, *The Book of Purity* (Budapest: Horizont, 1926)
 Subscription sheet, 245x344 mm
 Cover, 245x172 mm
 Cover, 245x172 mm
 Title page, 245x172 mm

KASSÁK LAJOS



**TISZTASÁG
KÖNYVE**

1926
KASSÁK

Az új művészet az új emberé. Mi egy új kor kezdetén új típusú kezdő emberek vagyunk. A művészet, mint önmagáért való SZEP nem érdekkel bennünket. Nem könnyű kezű cizellőlők, hanem nyugodtan feltaláló művészek. Nem a szűk, hanem a tágabb művészet határait keressük. Tisztaság új leltárunk alkotásainknak, mint önmagunk magunk. Tisztaság új leltárunk alkotásainknak. Ezen kívül pedig még, új formába állásának tárgyi és etikai értelme. Ezen kívül pedig nincs mérték, mellyel hozzánk és munkáinkhoz közeledni lehetne.

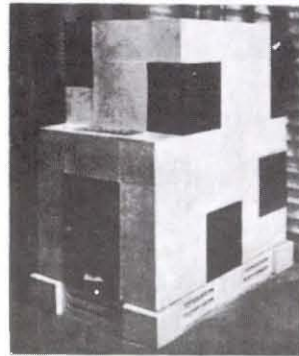
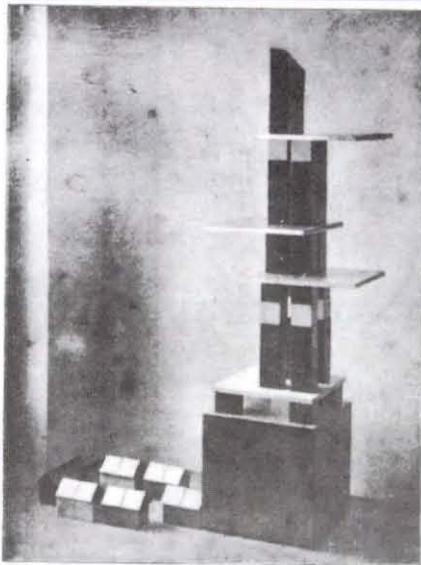
KASSÁK LAJOS 1926

MÁJUS

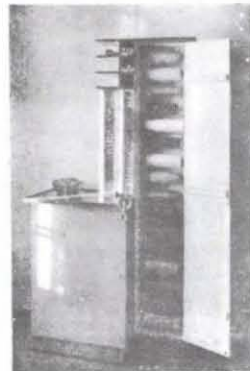
TISZTASÁG KÖNYVE

MA

KÜLÖNSZÁM - SONDERNUMMER:



8



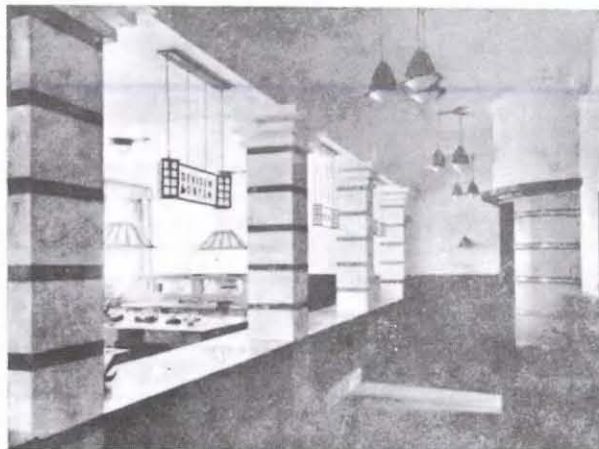
9

MA

internacionális aktivista művészeti folyóirat ■ Szerkeszti: Kassák Lajos ■ Felelősszerkesztő: Hans Süssny ■ Szerkesztőség és kiadóhivatal: Wien, XIII. Bez. Amalienstrasse 26. I. 11. ■ Megjelenés dátuma 1925. június 15. ■ Előfizetési ár: Egy évre: 120.000 osztrák kor., 60 szokol, 120 dinár, 300 lei. ■ Ezen szám ára: 15.000 osztrák korona, 7 szokol, 20 dinár, 40 lei, 1 arany-márka ■ X. évfolyam, 3-4 szám ■ A lapban megjelenő cikkeket a szerző felel.



7



10

Ma 3-4 (1925): back cover, 306x230 mm

Dokumentum (Editor: Lajos Kassák) January, March, April, May 1927, cover, 250x175 mm

DOKUMENTUM



W. BAUMEISTER

Művészeti és társadalmi beszámoló
Berichte über Leben und Kunst
Bilan de la vie sociale et artistique
Megjelenik 1927 január - Ára 1.60 P

Szerkeszti: Kassák Lajos Budapest Sziget u. 16. i. 14



MŰVÉSZETI ÉS TÁRSADALMI BESZÁMOLÓ

BERICHTE ÜBER LEBEN UND NEUE KUNST

BILAN DE LA VIE SOCIALE ET ARTISTIQUE

SZERK: KASSÁK LAJOS
BUDAPEST 1927 IV. HÓ
EGYES SZÁM 2 PENGŐ

DOKUMENTUM

ÉPÍTEM

az életemet mint egy házat. A művész foglalkozása, hogy a maga életét és minden ember existenciáját a legkéleltesebb kifejezésben a legpozitívabb és szűkebbre vigye fel, anélkül, hogy csökkentsen azt. A művészeknek szolgálni kell. A világ a világ jelenségei elrendezettsége, melyet folytonos és áttekinthetővé kell. A legelősebb szabadság így születik meg a legteljesebb odaadásból. A művészi alkotás: ház, gép, asztal, pénzintézet, pulthoz, szervezkedés, fényreklám, vagy festmény, egy-egy tőlük, melyek várta, ez egyben a jogosságuk is. Az absztrakt műalkotás azt a jelenséget illeszti be a konkrétumok világába, amely hanyzra látszott a jelenségek összességéből, azt a jelenséget, amelyet a művész — az öntudatos és figyelő ember — ismereni akar és amikélelti várakozó mélységet. A művész

DOKUMENTUM

az életemet mint egy házat. A művész foglalkozása, hogy a maga életét és minden ember existenciáját a legkéleltesebb kifejezésben a legpozitívabb és szűkebbre vigye fel, anélkül, hogy csökkentsen azt. A művészeknek szolgálni kell. A világ a világ jelenségei elrendezettsége, melyet folytonos és áttekinthetővé kell. A legelősebb szabadság így születik meg a legteljesebb odaadásból. A művészi alkotás: ház, gép, asztal, pénzintézet, pulthoz, szervezkedés, fényreklám, vagy festmény, egy-egy tőlük, melyek várta, ez egyben a jogosságuk is. Az absztrakt műalkotás azt a jelenséget illeszti be a konkrétumok világába, amely hanyzra látszott a jelenségek összességéből, azt a jelenséget, amelyet a művész — az öntudatos és figyelő ember — ismereni akar és amikélelti várakozó mélységet. A művész

MŰVÉSZETI ÉS TÁRSADALMI BESZÁMOLÓ

BERICHTE ÜBER LEBEN UND NEUE KUNST

BILAN DE LA VIE SOCIALE ET ARTISTIQUE

SZERKESZTI: KASSÁK LAJOS,
BUDAPESTEN
1927 MÁRCIUSBAN

DOKUMENTUM



DOKUMENTUM

MŰVÉSZETI ÉS TÁRSADALMI BESZÁMOLÓ

BERICHTE ÜBER LEBEN UND NEUE KUNST

BILAN DE LA VIE SOCIALE ET ARTISTIQUE

SZERK: KASSÁK LAJOS
BUDAPEST 1927 V. HÓ
EGYES SZÁM 2 PENGŐ

SONDERBEILAGE

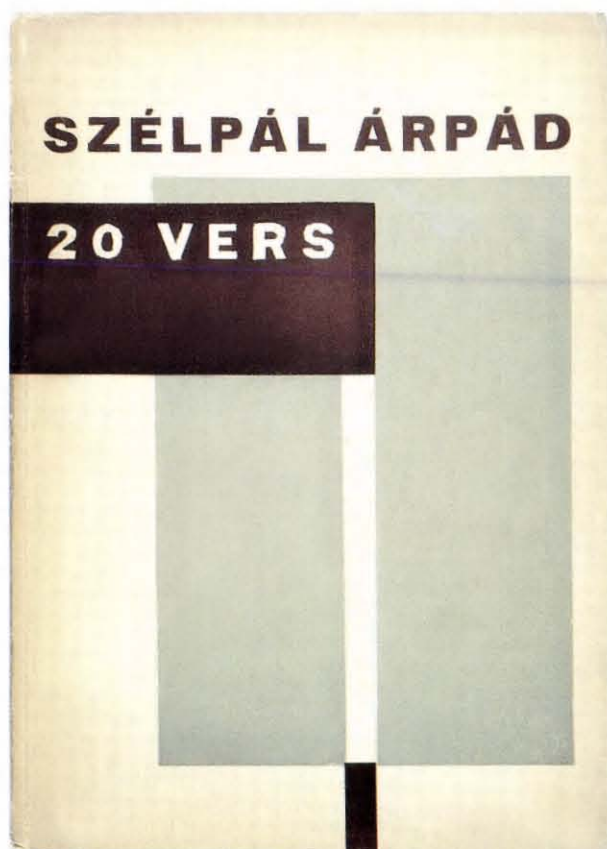
DIE ARBEITEN

DER GRUPPE

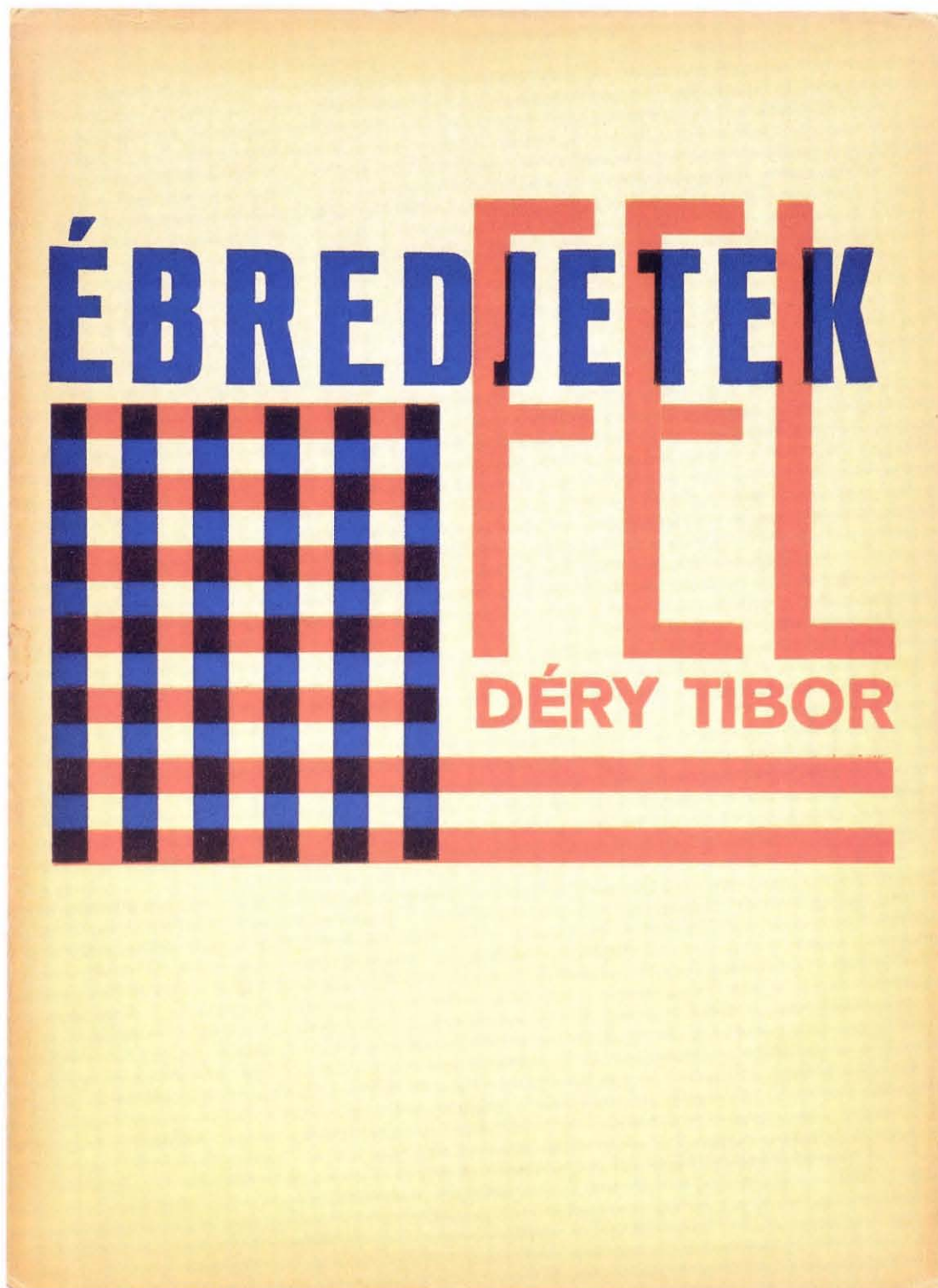
„DAS JUNGE

SCHLESISCHEN“

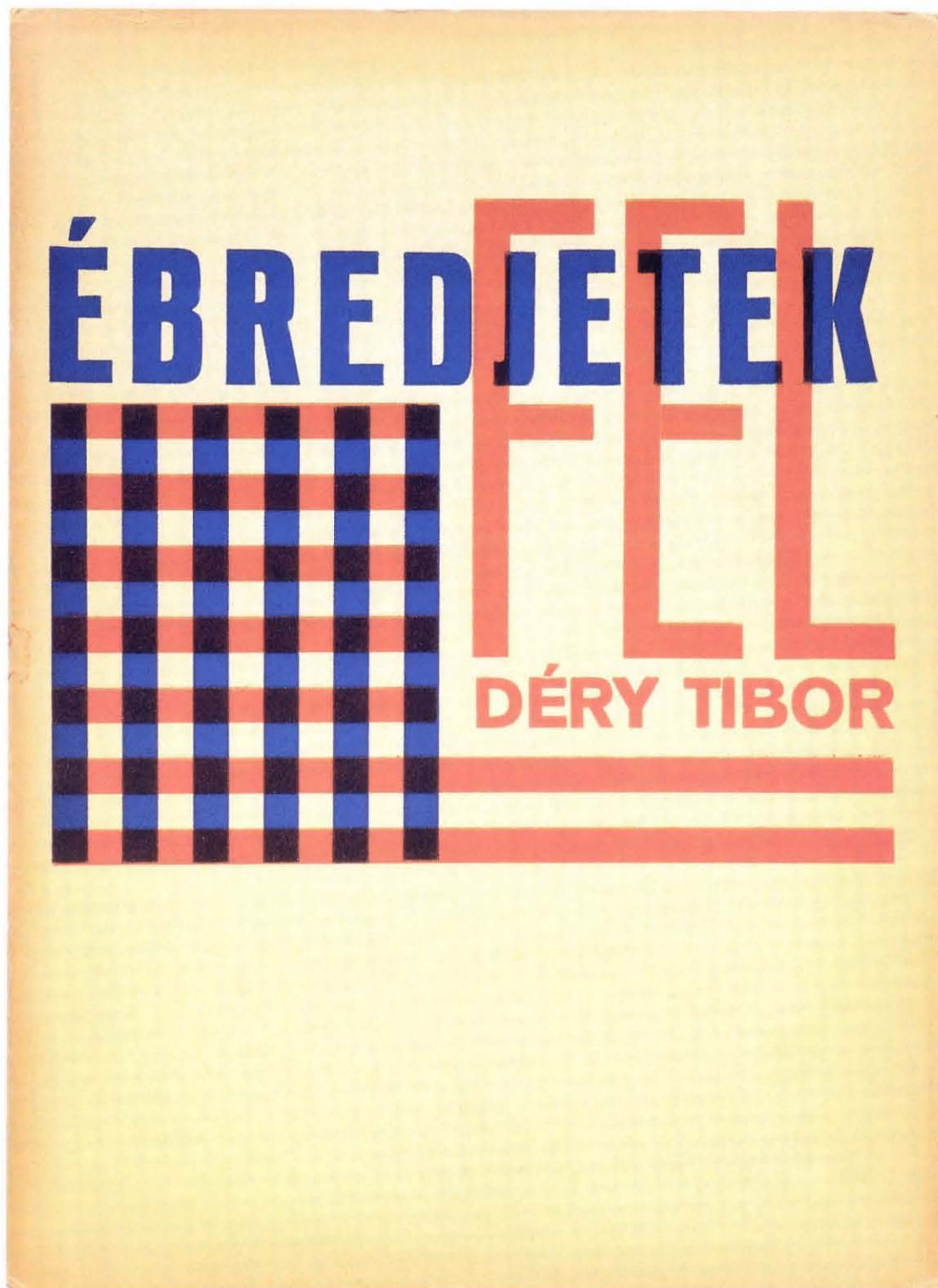
DOKUMENTUM



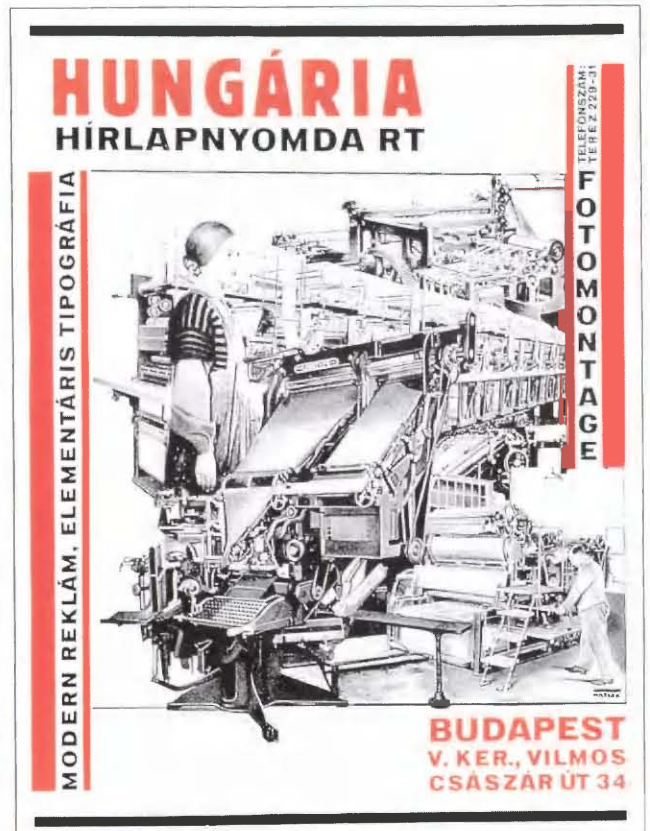
Endre Gáspár, *Kassák Lajos az ember és a munkája* (*Kassák: The Man and His Work*) (Vienna: Verlag Julius Fischer, 1924), cover, 245x172 mm
Árpád Szélpál, *20 vers* (*20 Poems*) (Budapest: 1927), cover, 245x175 mm



Tibor Déry, *Ébredjetek fel (Wake Up)* (Budapest: Génius, 1929), cover. 275x201 mm



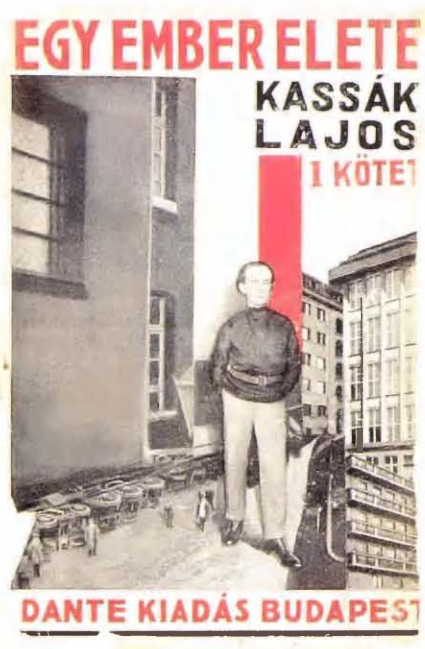
Tibor Déry, *Ébredjetek fel (Wake Up)* (Budapest: Génius, 1929), cover. 275x201 mm

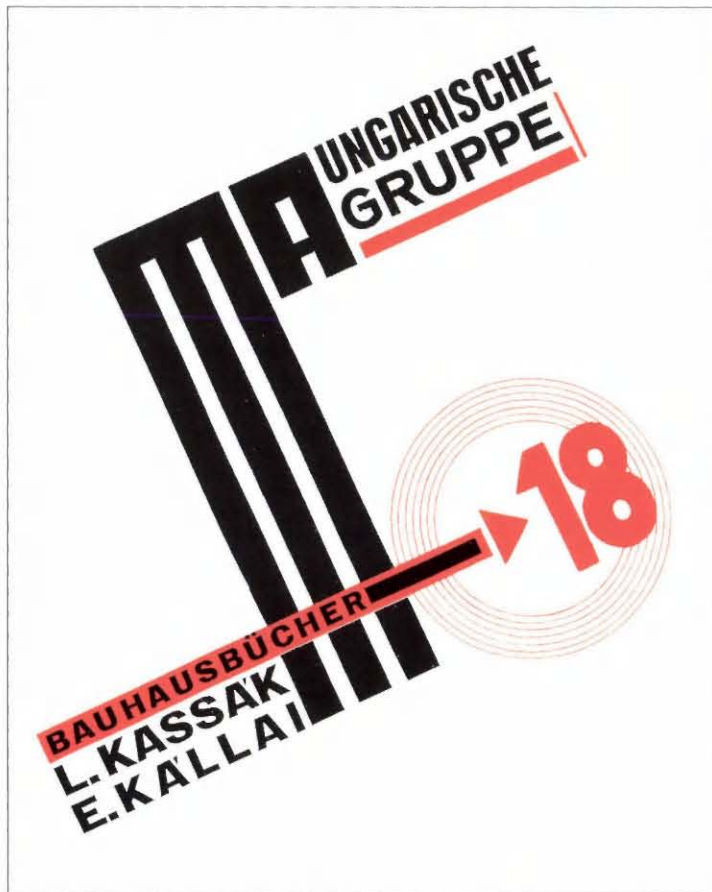
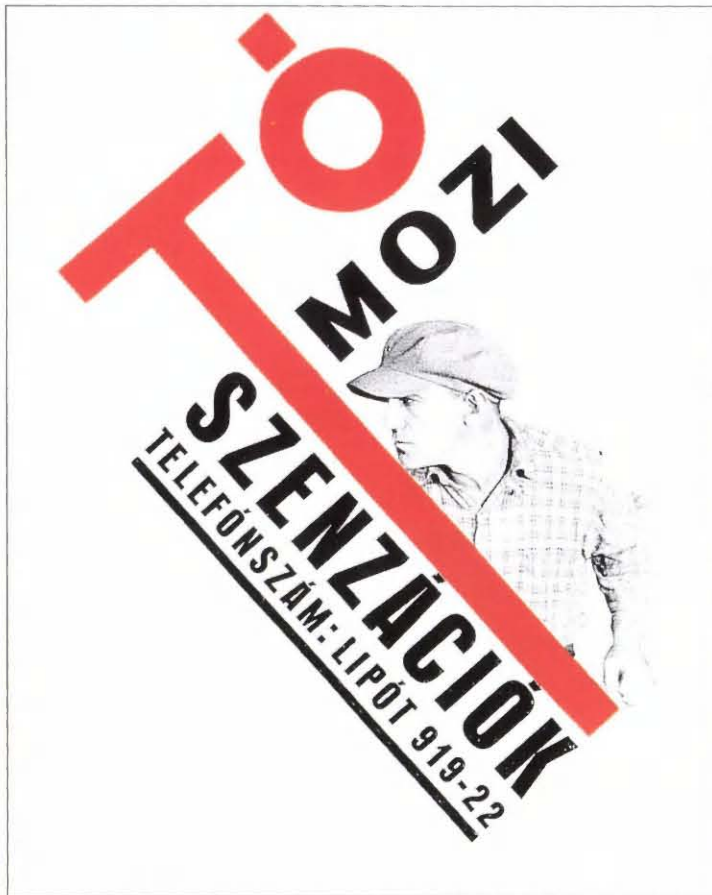


*Budapesti Állatkert (Budapest Zoo), 1926-1928, poster, 300x220 mm
 Hungária Hirlapnyomda Rt. (Hungaria Newspaper Printers), 1926-1928, leaflet, 300x220 mm
 Dunlop, 1926-1928, leaflet, 220x300 mm*



Magyar Grafika (Hungarian Graphic Art) 5-6 (1928); cover. 320x240 mm
 Lajos Kassák, *Egy ember élete* (*The Life of A Man*) Budapest: Dante. 1927) cover, 190x125 mm
 Lajos Kassák, *Megnőttek és elindulnak* (*Grown and Starting*) (Budapest: Pantheon, 1931) cover, 190x123 mm





Tó mozi (Tó Cinema), 1926, poster, 300x220 mm
Lajos Kassák and Ernő Kállai, *Ma Ungarische Gruppe*, 1926, cover design, 300x220 mm



Tibor Déry, *Énekelnek és meghalnak* (*The Sing and Die*) (Budapest: Géníus, 1928), cover, 252x180 mm

DOKUMENTUM

SZERKESZTI: KASSÁK LAJOS

INTERNACIONÁLIS MŰVÉSZETI
ÉS TÁRSADALMI BESZÁMOLÓ
MEGJELENIK ÉVENTE TIZSZER
SZERK. KIADÓHIVATAL
BUDAPEST V. SZIGET-U. 16

An die STÄDTISCHE KUNSTHALLE, Mannheim.

Ich erlaube Ihnen an Frau H. Rothschild gerichteten Brief mit Beleg für
einigen Wagen 18 Stück meiner Original-Arbeiten, in zwei Paketen. In den
Paketen beigelegter Liste sind zwei Zeitschriften-Titelblätter beigefügt,
die ich hier nachsende: Nr. 8. Dokumentum Titelblatt /rot/ und Nr. 9. Dokumentum
Titelblatt /okker/.

Sämtliche Arbeiten sind Originale, können aber vervielfältigt werden. Text
inhaltlich und sprachlich verändert werden. Ich nehme ähnliche Arbeiten dieser
Art an.

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sich ohne Verkaufsprovision, wollen Sie bitte die übliche Provision berechnen.

Ihre gefl. Mitteilung erbeten zeichne ich

hochachtungsvoll

Ludwig Kassák

Herrn.

Früh zum Eintrag

TELEFONSZÁM: JÓZSEF 403-97 • SÜRGÖNYCÍM: FILARTE BUDAPEST

M K V

MŰVÉSZFILM KÖLCSÖNZŐ VÁLLALAT

DR. HOROVITZ ERNŐ ÉS TÁRSA, BUDAPEST VII, RÁKÓCZI ÚT 40

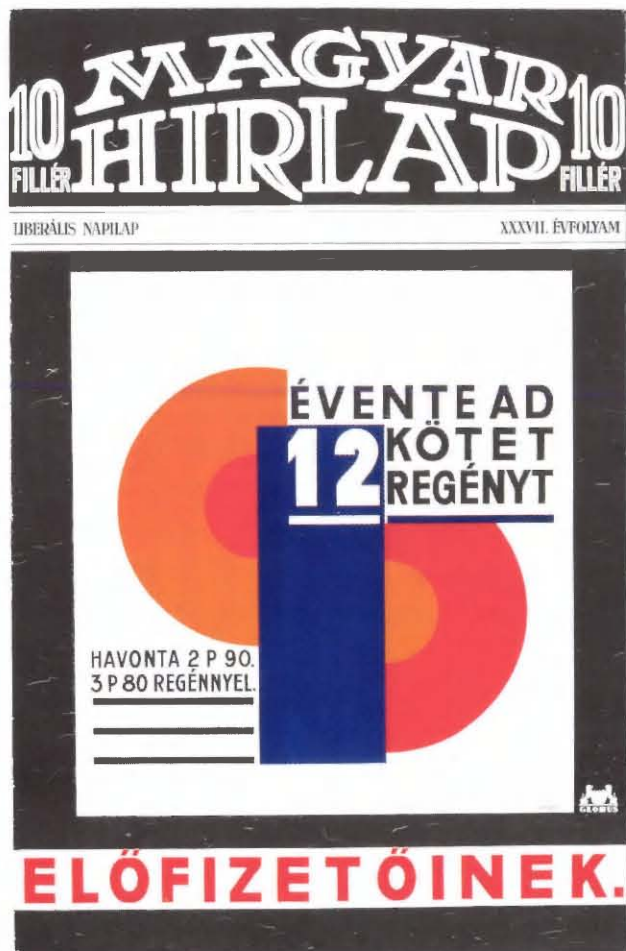
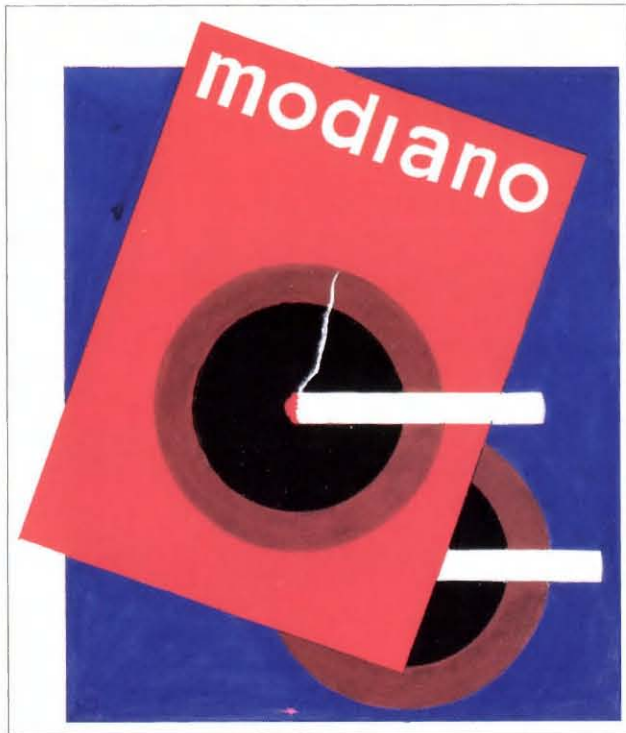
BRUST DÁVID
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ALAPÍTÁSI ÉV 1873

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GYÁR
HAZAI CERNAGYAR
R. T. FŐRAKTÁRA

nádass józsef



budapest IV, múzeum körút 29



Modiano, 1928, poster design, water-colour on paper, 320x235 mm, Carl László Collection
 Harang szappan kitűnő (Harang Soap Is Best), 1928, poster, 294x213 mm
 Magyar Hírlap (Hungarian News), 1928, poster, 940x610 mm, Hungarian National Library

A «NYUGAT» ÁRA EGÉSZ ÉVRE 40 P.

A «NYUGAT»

ADY

BRONZPLAKETJÉT

BECK Ö.FÜLÖP MŰVE

**INGYEN ADJA
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A PLAKET ÁRA BOLTBAN 30 P.

**GRAFIKAI INTÉZET
A.T. BUDAPEST**

KASSÁK

A Nyugat (The West). 1928, poster, 940x610 mm, Hungarian National Library

AZ ÚJ MAGYAR REGÉNY

MEGJELENTEK:

1

KASSÁK: NAPOK

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LOVÁSZY: IRISZ

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JARNÓ: BÖRTÖN

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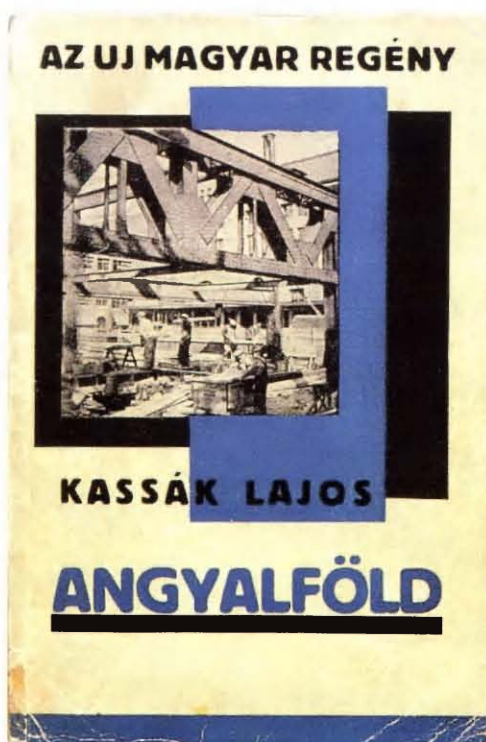
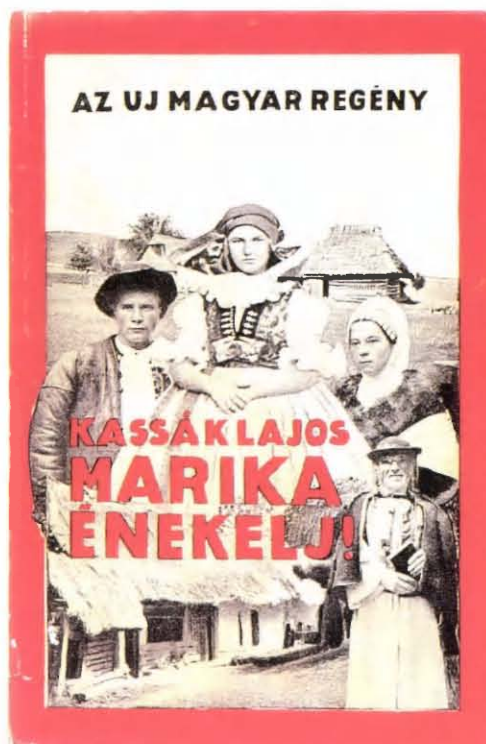
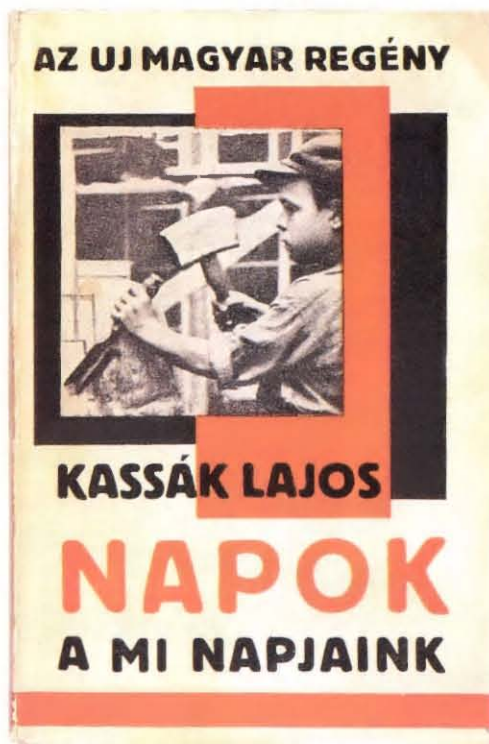
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KASSÁK

PANTHEON ÚJ SOROZATA

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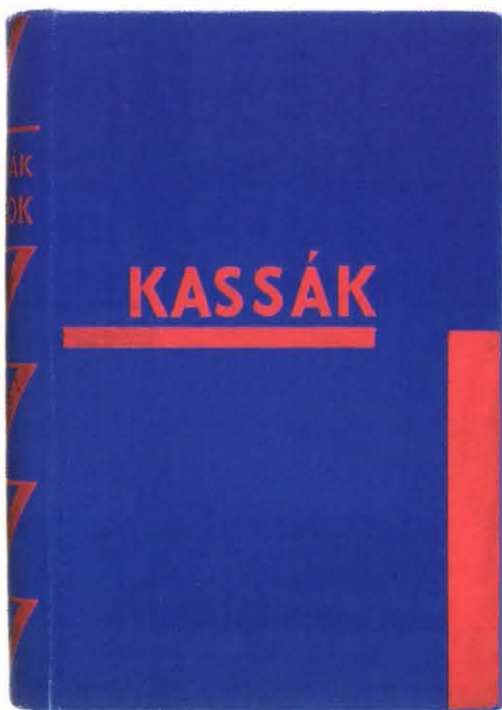
Az új magyar regény (The New Hungarian Novel), 1928, poster, 478x315 mm, Haags Gemeentemuseum



Lajos Kassák, *Napok, a mi napjaink* (*Some Days, These Days*) (Budapest: Pantheon, 1928), cover, 195x125 mm
 Lajos Kassák, *Marika, énekelj!* (*Marika, Sing!*) (Budapest: Pantheon, 1929), back cover, 195x125 mm
 Lajos Kassák, *Marika, énekelj!* cover, 195x125 mm
 Lajos Kassák, *Angyalföld* (*Land of the Angels*) (Budapest: Pantheon, 1929), cover, 195x125 mm

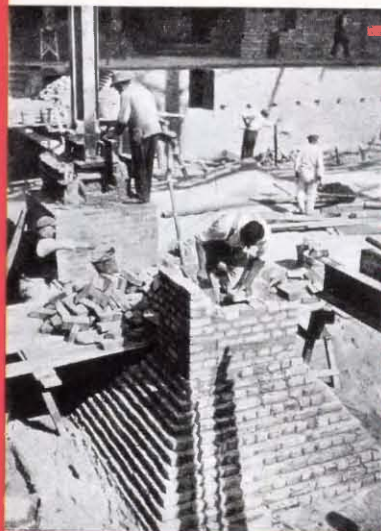


Pál Forgó, *Új építészet (The New Architecture)* (Budapest: Vállalkozók Lapja, 1928), cover, binding, 316x235 mm
Lajos Kassák, *Megnőttek és elindultak (Grown and Starting)* (Budapest: Pantheon, 1931), binding, 195x125 mm



munka

világszemléleti beszámoló



irodalom

művészet

építészet, zene

pedagógia

világpolitika

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munkáskultúra

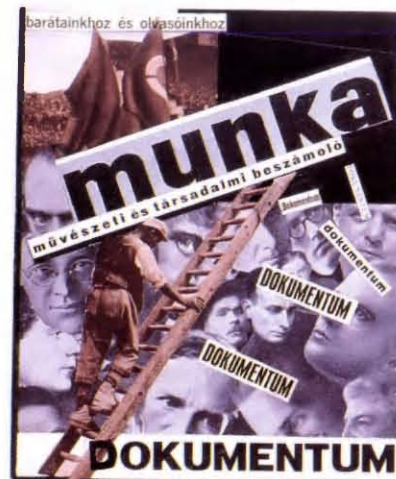
szerkeszti: kassák lajos

fizessen elő

előfizetési ára félévre 6 pengő, egész évre 12 pengő
szerkesztőség-kiadóhivatal VI., Lehel-utca 6

kassák lajos

Hungária Hírlapnyomda Rt. – Feltöltő: Schmidték Géza





Munka (Work), 1928, poster, 470x308 mm, Haags Gemeentemuseum
Munka – Dokumentum, 1928, collage on paper, 219x178 mm, Kassák Museum
Munka (Editor: Lajos Kassák), 1 (1928), cover, 262x185 mm



Lajos Kassák. *Szerelem szerelem (Love)* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1962), cover, 318x240 mm

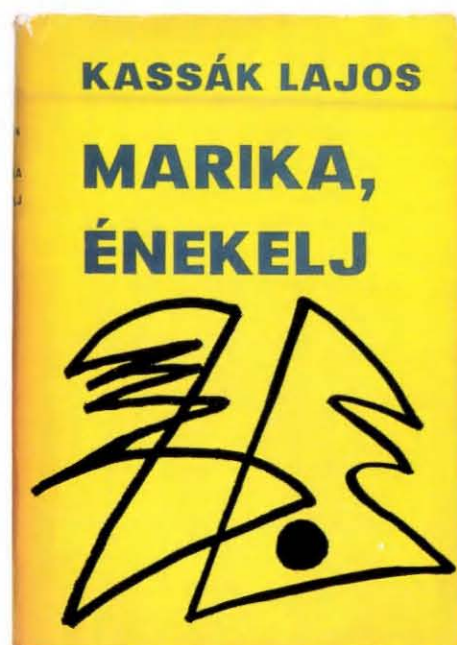
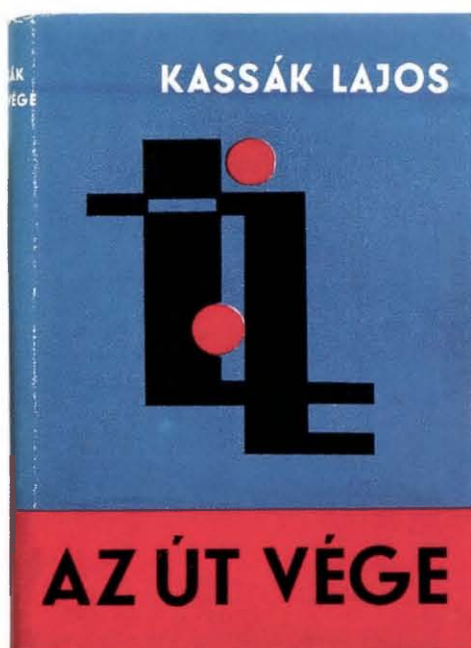
Lajos Kassák. *Az út vége (The End of the Road)* (Budapest: Magvető, 1963), cover, 188x125 mm

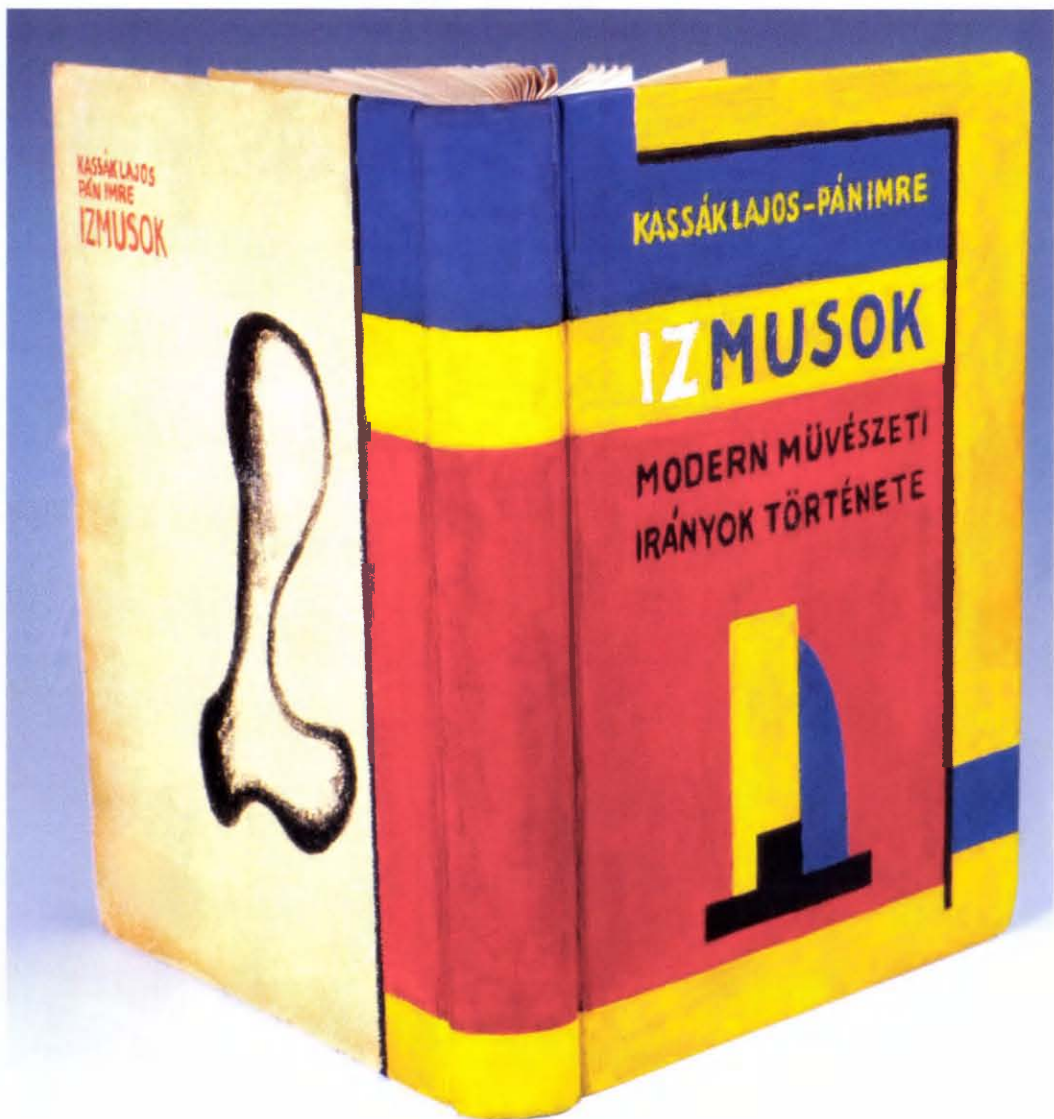
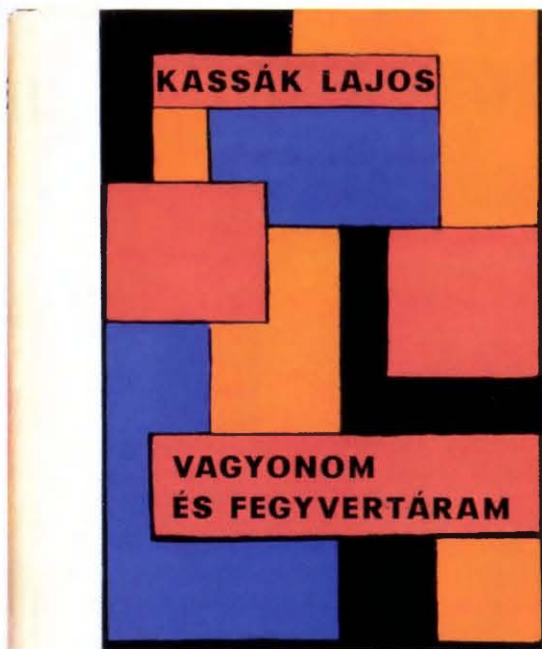
Lajos Kassák. *Marika, Sing!* (Budapest: Magvető, 1961), cover, 192x125 mm

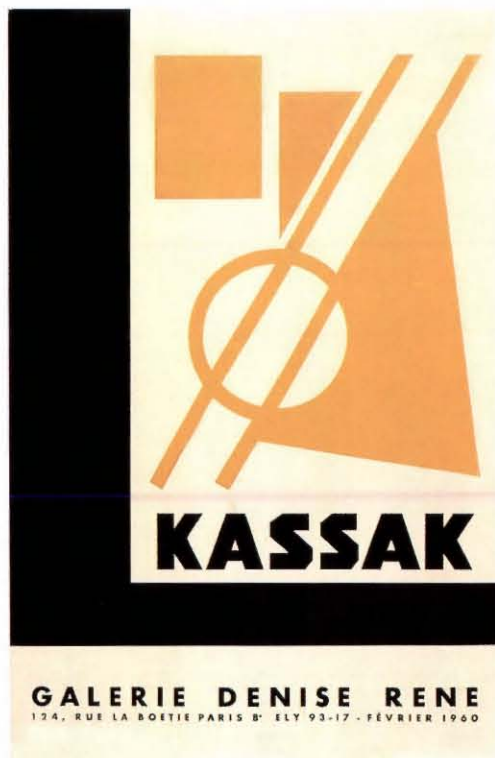
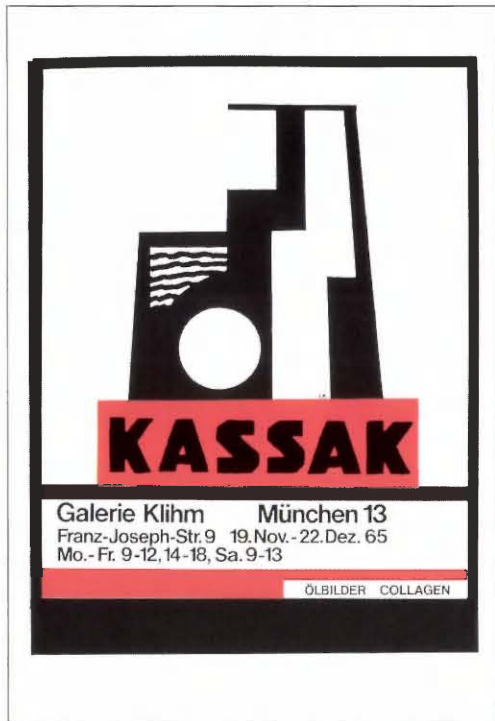
Lajos Kassák. *Misillő királysága (Misillő's Kingdom)* (Budapest: Magvető, 1961), cover, 192x125 mm

Lajos Kassák. *Vagyonom és fegyvertáram (My Fortune and My Arsenal)* (Budapest: Magvető, 1963), cover, 195x165 mm

Lajos Kassák and Imre Pán. *Izmosok. A modern művészeti irányok története (Ismus, the History of Modern Artistic Trends)*, 1958, binding design, 245x180 mm, Kassák Museum







Kassák. Galerie Klihm, München. 1965, poster, 610x430 mm, Kassák Museum
 Kassák. Galerie Denise René, Paris, 1960, poster, 610x395 mm, Kassák Museum
 Kassák képarchitektura kiállítása (Kassák's Exhibit of Pictorial Architectures),
 Budapest, 1967, poster, 680x475 mm, Kassák Museum

KASSÁK THE BOOK AND ADVERTISEMENT ARTIST

Issues of the art of book design and advertising occupied Kassák from the beginning of his career. As early as when he was readying the publication of his first two volumes, he sought to arouse interest in them even with their outward forms. To design their covers, he asked two real, reputedly eccentric masters of contemporary Hungarian graphic art, Béla Uitz and Lajos Gulácsy. His choice of participants in the shaping of the external image of his collection of short stories entitled *Életsíratás* (*Lamenting Life*; 1912) and his volume of plays entitled *Isten báránykái* (*God's Little Lambs*; 1914) may be regarded as the first manifestations of the future book and advertisement artist.

The eye-catching effect of the two remarkable covers was a result of both the graphics and the titles, the latter being Kassák's invention. His often quoted statement from that time, "The cover is more than significant," also acknowledges that a writer seeking to arouse public interest needs to take special care when choosing a title. He employed unusual means to achieve an eye-catching effect in devising the title of his volume of verse published in 1915: *Éposz Wagner maszkjában* (*An Epic in Wagner's Mask*). We know from Kassák's autobiography and correspondence how much thought and conscious deliberation he put into creating the titles of his first two magazines. *A Tett* (*The Act*), the title of the anti-militarist literary and arts journal launched in the autumn of 1915, perfectly expressed the aspirations of the Hungarian avant-garde movement he organised; it alluded to its German sister movement, and recognised through the psychology of advertising that one can make an impact, arouse interest and successfully participate in the marketplace of ideas and goods by deviating from the ordinary.

It was due to the large-scale expansion of sales-oriented and political posters in Hungary and their role in the social struggles of the 1910s and in the war years that Kassák, in discussing the relationship between posters and the new painting, formulated his programme² of a new, revolutionary art in his new journal, *Ma* (*Today*), which was established in the autumn of 1916 after *A Tett* had been banned. For this new style of painting, he enumerated the following requirements: abandonment of "contemplation" and "aestheticism"; "radicalism"; "a subversive, revolutionary temperament"; "a world-subverting gusto"; "evocative power"; "agitative" character; "a free and self-willed style"; and the acceptance of the role of the "fighter and prophet", all of which he considered capacities already present in modern poster art. He also set down principles for good posters and advertisements, as he recognised that "the good poster is not only a business medium but an artistic product as well, one that can be readily enjoyed and evaluated, much like a landscape or portrait".

The position taken by Kassák was significant in the history of art. At least half a decade ahead of his foreign contemporaries, the leader of the Hungarian avant-garde proposed the thesis that the possibility of establishing a mass art is inherent in applied and advertisement art.³ The fact that he conceived of advertisements and posters as the

embodiments of a new creative force and a new link to reality is witnessed not only by his work as an art theorist but also by his poem „Hirdetőoszloppal” (“With an Advertising Pillar”). This artistic statement, which was inspired by big city advertisements and posters, appeared in the opening poem of his volume of verse published as 1918 and thus signalled that he as the poet had come to idealise the poster-poem, which he considered literature in the guise of an advertisement.⁴

As editor of *Ma*, he made quite an impact with his advertisement-like covers by using individually designed variations on the title, which gave the impression of monumentality through their proportions; a thick black rule especially emphasising the titles; and various artistic reproductions. These reproductions, which represented individual varieties of Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism, fundamentally deviated from what was considered standard in painting, graphic arts and sculpture at the time. It was novel at the time even for foreign avant-garde publications for him to place manuscript scores on the cover of *Ma*'s Bartók issue, which came out on 1 February 1918. The covers of the *Special World View Issues* of the journal which appeared after autumn 1918, with their format, their openly agitative pictorial material, their propagandistic titles and texts, might well be regarded as political posters.

In the final moments of the Commune, Kassák, as theorist, movement organiser and magazine editor, played an important role in inducing the artists associated with *Ma* – Bertalan Pór, Róbert Berény, Béla Uitz, József Nemes Lampérth, and János Kmetty – to embrace direct political agitation. Their powerful posters, which were created by way of a partly distorting, partly abstract vision of form, became the focus of a debate on the relationship between art and the masses and on the evaluation of the work of the Hungarian Activists. The social democratic magazine, *Az Ember* (*Man*), attacked the poster artists associated with *Ma* for having ignored the principle of plain understanding. Kassák defended the poster artists of the *Ma* circle by referring to the Russian Futurists and their propaganda work.⁵



Kassák's work as publisher, editor and theorist, his activities as the poster censor of the People's Commissariat on Public Education in the first weeks of the Commune, and his discussions and debates⁶ with the designers of sales-oriented and political posters were a prelude to his work in almost all areas of the arts of book design and advertising on which he embarked in 1920. From March 1921, not only did he shape *Ma* as editor, but as typographer, he designed the cover, the pages and advertisements for each issue. He also made the cover designs for the book series published by *Ma* from 1921, contributing to much of the typography of the pages as well. Around 1920, he produced a series of newspaper collages which can be regarded as works of both fine art and fine advertising. His drawn or mounted compositions of

types and texts and his picture-poems of the period formed part of his work as a typographer. From 1924, he designed advertisement kiosks and accepted commissions from companies to design posters, handouts, brochures, letterheads, and packaging materials. He created ever newer book covers for publishers and fellow writers. He prepared a whole series of advertising materials for his Vienna and Budapest journals and their various ventures. Occasionally, he even took to arranging shop windows. He also sought to popularise his ideas on the art of book design and advertising in Hungarian and foreign-language publications.⁷

A heightened interest in the art of book design and advertising and a shift from so-called free art to applied graphic arts, was a tendency among avant-garde artists, especially Constructivists, throughout Europe at the time. The starting point of this change was the recognition that if an artist wanted to participate in political and social reforms, he would have to take up practical tasks. Thus he would not only facilitate the spreading of more modern tastes and the realisation of a new awareness of our surroundings but also secure his own livelihood. In the autumn of 1921, twenty-five Russian artists signed a manifesto declaring that they would stop creating panel paintings and would fully devote themselves to art related to industrial production.⁸ Among the Constructivists living in Germany, László Péri, after a short stint working in the fine arts, became a proponent of Productionism, which stressed the importance of creating utility ware and declared the primacy of industrial design. Max Burchartz, not long after having created his first geometric compositions, gave up painting, and together with Sándor Bortnyik and Alfréd Forbát established an advertising agency in Weimar, and two years later, in 1924, he set up a firm called "werbebau" with Johannes Canis in Bochum.⁹ Willi Baumeister and Cesar Damela-Nieuwenhuis also founded their advertising agency.¹⁰ Similar changes took place in the work of Henryk Berlewi, Walter Dexel, Hans Leistikow, László Moholy-Nagy, Oskar Nerlinger, Karl Peter Röhl, Kurt Schwitters, and others; artists who had achieved fame with their work in the fine arts now appeared before the public as specialists in advertising and typography. Vilmos Huszár and Theo van Doesburg had already started their work in advertising graphics at the end of the 1910s.¹¹

For both reasons of livelihood and his views on the social role of art, Kassák's work as a designer of books and advertisements evolved. *Ma*, having been wrenched from its vernacular environment after the revolutions, was badly in need of more effective advertising and publicity in order to recruit readers in Vienna and throughout Europe. Kassák needed the income from commissions for advertising graphics in order to start and run his magazines and publishing ventures. He was, of course, also well aware of the fact that advertisements not only popularised goods and services, but, by their aesthetic effect, shaped tastes and minds. He believed that what abstract, geometric panel paintings could not achieve in creating a demand for the ideals of a new social system – balance and harmony, order and organisation, social justice and higher living standards – could very well be done through masses of books, magazines and advertisements which employed the formal elements of Constructivism and reached everyone. He thought of an advertising artist as a "social creator", as someone who, by was laying the groundwork for a new world.

The idea of the necessity of shaping the environment and producing utility ware is present in Kassák's manifesto "Constructivism"; in fact, it was the final conclusion to his argument on the historical mission of the -ism.¹² A few months later, in his article „Válasz és sokféle álláspont”¹³ ("A Response and Viewpoints Aplenty"), he brought up the idea that shaping the environment and producing utility ware would demonstrate and create a demand for a better way of life; they would be "psychological agitation" in the interests of the historical goals of the working class.



The 15 March 1921 issue of *Ma* appeared with a new element on the cover – the title *Ma* and the subtitle *Activist Journal* printed on top of each other – which to this day is considered an original innovation of Kassák the typographer's by the literature, but, in fact, it had come from the cover of *De Stijl* designed by Theo van Doesburg. The contention that it was borrowed is also borne out by the dates. It was on the cover of the 1 January 1921 issue of *De Stijl* that Doesburg used the emblem consisting of the letters NB printed in red and horizontally crossed by the title of the journal printed in black. The big red letters NB stood for the phrase *Nieuwe Beelding* (A New Shaping), which expressed the artistic trend of the journal. With this new title, Doesburg wished to proclaim the journal's shift towards internationalism.¹⁴ Kassák might be said to have followed suit in about two and a half months, with the difference being that the two large red letters were his journal's title and the inscription expressing the trend of his magazine ran across the title on a much smaller scale and printed in black. Like Doesburg, Kassák the typographer also wished to draw attention to changes: the new title design decorated the special issues of the magazine, each of which displayed the work of a Hungarian, German, French, Russian, and Swiss artist, and thereby signified the intensification of its international orientation.

Kassák gave up on using the idea borrowed from Doesburg beginning with the very issue that introduced the work of that Dutch artist.¹⁵ He achieved the eye-catching effect of the cover by setting the characters of the title *Ma* in different typefaces and sizes, in fact, deviating from convention by making the second character the larger one. This led to a whole series of typographical games on the covers of issues that followed, which had been anticipated by a composition entitled "Typography" reproduced in the May 1922 issue of the magazine.¹⁶ This ensemble of red and black, upper- and lowercase, Latin and Gothic typefaces, words, numbers, parts of words, and typographical symbols, giving the impression of free movement and independence from one another, is part of a series of pieces that function both as works of art and as cover designs for books. The individual pieces of the series represent stages of the transition from Futurism and Dadaism to Constructivism, from exploiting the aesthetic possibilities in the chaotic and the accidental to the employment of the principle of rationality. Some of them invoke Marinetti's world of "free words". There was another borrowing which also suggested the relationship to the Italian movement. The title and textual parts in French of the letter composition "Walls-Noise"¹⁷ drew on the text of Carlo di Carra's manifesto, "La peinture des sons,

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 38 Frau im Sessel / 1920
 39 Frauen / 1920

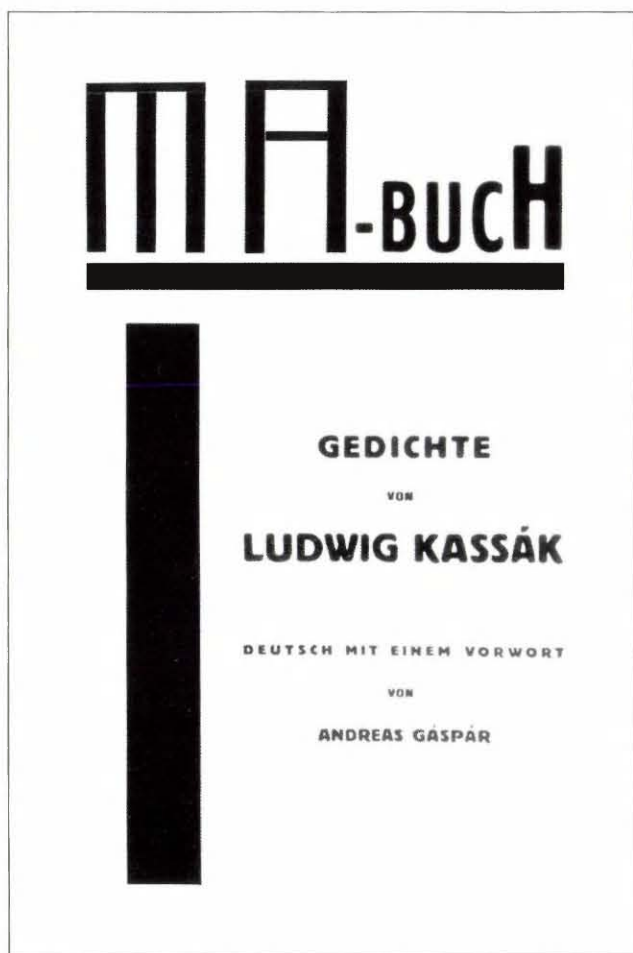
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 37 Stilleben / 1920
 38 Frau im Sessel / 1920
 39 Frauen / 1920

Sie emu...
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 33 Stilleben / 1920
 34 Stilleben / 1920
 35 Stilleben / 1920
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 37 Stilleben / 1920
 38 Frau im Sessel / 1920
 39 Frauen / 1920

des bruits et des odeurs". The typographical composition made out of the letters of the word Dada for the cover of the Hungarian translation of Tristan Tzara's play *Gas-Heart* has been the most often reproduced emblem of the -ism ever since.¹⁸ The basic geometric shapes can be seen as the organising principles for various picture-poems and figures made up of letters, words and texts on book cover designs. This also characterises the newspaper collages, which are closely tied to Kurt Schwitters' *merz* paintings. In some of these collages and compositions created with letters and words, a process that could be called transfunctionalisation can readily be seen. These works give the impression of being works of art, but each one, captioned with a title, becomes an advertising graphic. One of these collages was given the title *Ma* and another the title *Bécsi Magyar Újság* (*Vienna Hungarian News*).¹⁹

The title on the cover of the 1 February 1923 issue of *Ma* can also be traced back to the typographical work of Doesburg. Evidenced in the first title on the cover of *De Stijl* in 1917, Vilmos Huszár had sought to employ characters wholly constructed of rectangles, i.e. of only horizontals and verticals, so as to have even the characters express the ideals of Constructivism as well as to suggest the characteristics of the Dutch variety of the movement. It would be Doesburg who designed the whole typeface based on this

◀ *Falak (Walls)*, 1920, ink, collage on paper, 148x107 mm, Kunsthalle, Nürnberg
Ma-Buch. Gedichte von Ludwig Kassák (Berlin: Der Sturm, 1923)
 Title page, 240x160 mm



principle in 1919.²⁰ He then created a whole series of advertising graphics with this set of type, for instance the cover of the magazine *Klei* (1919), the poster *Section d'or* (1920), the cover design for the book *Klassiek-barok-modern* (1920).²¹ With Doesburg moving to Weimar, his typeface with all lines of the same width and based on the square and the rectangle, thus representing an absolute version of geometric abstraction, also had an impact on Bauhaus circles, and appeared in Egon Engelin's poster design *Kölner Messe*,²² and in many prints at the Bauhaus exhibition held in August-September 1923: Fritz Schleifer's poster, Joost Schmidt's handout and Paul Häber's post card.²³

It was half a year before the Bauhaus exhibition that Kassák had designed his own characters M and A using right angles. Their figures resembling buildings, or the structural frames of buildings, give the impression of a Constructivist graphic. The characters M and A constructed at right angles appear again on the cover of the 15 September 1923 issue of his journal, and again and again, in varying proportions and widths, on the covers of further issues.²⁴ That Kassák cherished this typeface and thought of it as a typographical realisation of Constructivism is also demonstrated by the fact that he used them for the graphic representation of his magazine and movement in such important works as the title page of the German translation of his volume of poems entitled *Ma-Buch*, the cover of the book *Ma – Ungarische Gruppe* published in the Bauhaus-Bücher series, and the poster, invitation card and programme for the *Ma* evening held in Vienna on 8 May 1926.²⁵ He also used it in advertising the Mentor book shop in Budapest, which sought to spread works by avant-garde writers and artists,²⁶ or when he designed the cover of the *Magyar Grafika* (*Hungarian Graphic Arts*) issue that displayed his work in typography and advertising graphics.²⁷

It was presumably from the cover of *Ma* that the types designed with right angles found their way on to several non-Hungarian avant-garde publications; for example on to the cover of the catalogue for the 1924 Vienna theatre technology exhibition designed by Friedrich Kiesler²⁸ as well as on to the cover of the last three issues of the Tokyo avant-garde journal *Mavo* edited by Tomoyosi Murayama.²⁹ This latter case is rather special because only the first syllable of the word *Mavo* is designed with right angles; in other words, it is the typographical emblem of Kassák's Vienna journal *Ma* that appears in the title of the Japanese journal.

Traces of the intellectual relationship to Dutch Constructivism can be found in certain advertisements of Kassák's as well. On the back covers of the 15 October 1922, the 15 September 1923 and the 1 July 1924 issues of *Ma*, there appeared a typographical scheme – a rectangular plane divided into smaller squares by horizontal and vertical lines, with the titles of avant-garde sister magazines in these "windows" created by the rectangular division – which recalls similar elements and structural characteristics in the works of Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg and Vilmos Huszár.

Kassák, working as a Constructivist typographer, made use of the possibilities inherent in advertising not only to promote books, but also to propagate ideas. It was thus that he produced his typographical composition with the line "Destroy in order to build, and build in order to triumph" to sum up the views on art and politics he held in the 1920s. In this composition, which appeared in the 25 October 1922



Konstruktive Kunst. The poster for *Ma*'s Vienna Evening on 8 May 1926. 616x499 mm, Kassák Museum

issue of *Ma*, it was not only the layout, the typographical arrangement of the text, that was the visual expression of the idea but also the system of geometric figures made up of rules. The cover page of the 15 September 1923 issue may be regarded as an advertisement, the propagation of a political programme through text and graphic elements; the graphic composition, which consisted of the large black characters of the magazine title, a red square and the text "To create, organise and appropriate" was bordered by a monumental red exclamation mark on the right and by the subtitle *Activist Journal* below the rule underneath. As a result of the ingenious construction, the word *Ma* functioned not only as a magazine title, but also as a word calling attention to timely tasks.

This strident, poster-like cover, or advertisement used as a cover, launched the series of works in Kassák's advertising graphic arts oeuvre whose principal element was a red square. This was the geometric figure which, as a result of

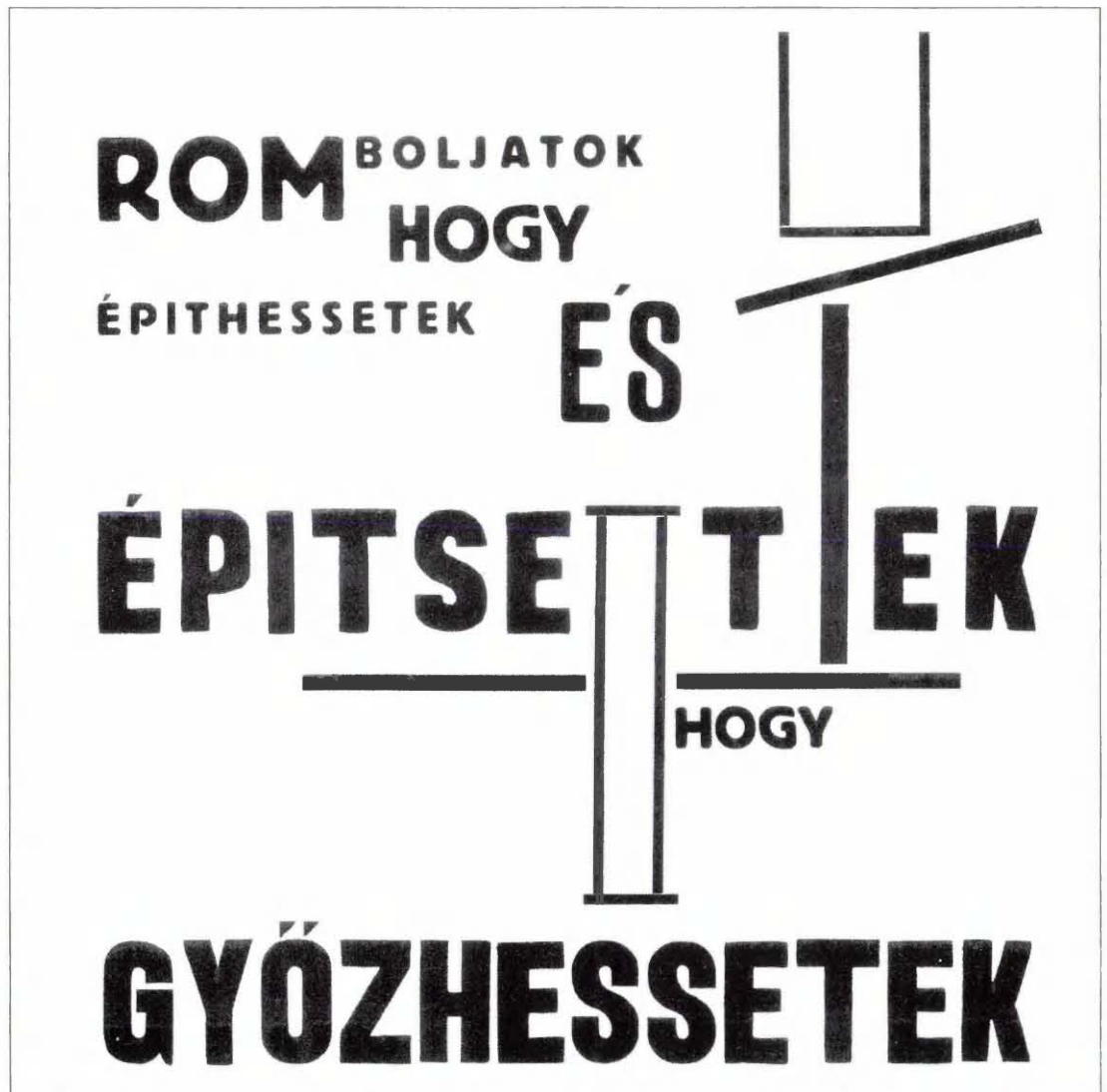
the artistic and theoretical work of Malevich, could be regarded as the formal equivalent of a revolutionary world view and new world structure as well as the symbol of creative power as of the end of the 1910s. Kassák further expressed his attraction to this early form of Supremacism by publishing his magazine in a square format as of October 1922. He often liked to use the square in cover designs when promoting his own work. He published his lino cuts in a folder on the green cover of which he printed a black square within a black border.³⁰ He also used this arrangement on the cover of his political pamphlet entitled *Álláspont, Tények és új lehetőségek (Viewpoint: Fact and New Possibilities)*.³¹ The eye-catching graphic figure on the cover of his volume of poems entitled *1924* was a red square framed in black.³² The cover of the 1924 *DÜR* folder had the same combination as the lino cut folder had had earlier: a portion of the black square was covered by a geometric element in another colour, as if breaking into or out of its field.³³

Another graphic element used to arouse interest was the circle, another fundamental shape in Supremacism. It appeared as a circular contour on the cover of a volume of poems called *Ma – asszonyomnak (Today: For My Lady)* and published in 1921;³⁴ circles as plane figures with black, red or blue surfaces were placed on his sales-oriented posters and book covers in the second half of the 1920s. Kassák often employed combinations of squares and circles. One variant of this was a red square enclosed in a black circle on the cover of the 15 April 1924 issue of *Ma*. The two plane figures appeared on the leaflet *Tolo Porzellanwaren*, a special edition of *Tisztaság könyve (The Book of Purity)*, and the large-scale poster made for the literary magazine *Nyugat (The West)*.³⁵

The pursuit of arousing interest and intensifying effect was also manifest in his textual arrangement. Kassák employed vertical or diagonal type-setting and the changing of typefaces or type sizes within sentences in some of his poems written as early as the 1920s. In his typographical composition beginning with "Destroy...", he achieved a mobilising effect by increasing the sizes of characters phrase by phrase. On the cover of the 15 September 1923 issue of

Ma, he created a visibly agitative effect by dividing lines and words and changing typeface in such a way that the word "Create" set vertically also functioned as an element joining the parts of the composition. The vertically set text on the cover of the volume entitled *1924* had a similar function.

Another characteristic of Kassák's graphic art in advertising which could be tied to Constructivism was the frequent use of rules, beams and columns. Their role was to arrange the various elements of a composition, to highlight certain elements of disclosure, information, and to create structures within which graphic figures or texts could be placed. An example of the latter is the cover of the 15 September 1924 special issue of *Ma* on theatre and music where the horizontal and vertical rules form a structure filling the whole makeup. A structure created by rules joins the texts and the graphic on the cover of *Tisztaság könyve*. It was by way of construing structures out of rules that Kassák was able to have chapter headings appear as full-page compositions. One could compile a series of the cover designs made in 1927-28 whose graphic elements were constituted of various systems of horizontal and vertical rules.³⁶ The Constructivist cross, horizontal and vertical lines or rules intersecting



Typographical composition: "Destroy in order to build, and build in order to triumph", *Ma* 1 (1922), 310x310 mm



Az idő nyertett akkor azaz papagályosan kinyitotta a szárnyait mondom széttárt vörös kapu * szeretőmmel kinek fekete gyémántok voltak befalazva az arcába s 3 gyereket cepelt a kétségbeesésében * a gyárkémények alatt ültünk * tudtuk holnap a görbe vonalak * ho zsupp ho zsupp * azt mondta elmész KASIKÁM és én elszáradok a pódiumokon s nádler ur mázsolmányaiában * nyilván * nyilván * az uristen megfélemedezik a szépasszonyokról * már jött is a félkrisztus faszobrász * fiatal volt és gyalázatosan igazságszagu * holnap tul leszünk a magyar határon * hát igen hm igen * nyilván nyilván * a város rohant mellettünk * ideoda forgott és néha fölágaskodott * láttam az apám kajla szalmakalapját amint uszkál a hóüveg fölött a patikától a szentháromság-szoborig és vissza * valamikor azt hitte az öreg 21 éves koromban káplán leszek az érsekújvári plébánián * de éppen 10 esztendővel előbb sporni ur lakatosműhelyében ettem a füstöt * az öreg már csak nagyon ritkán járt közénk haza * később az én szépen elgondolt jövőmet is beitta és kipisálta a sörrrel * szerelmes lett egy öreg takarítónőbe * kihullott a haja s csak a cigányokkal barátkozott * 1907 április 25 * Párisba készültem gyalog a faszobrásszal * a kisváros ült a pocsolyában és harmonikázott * leveszem rólad a szárnyaimat ó szent kristóf te sohse leszel az apád fia * egy részeg ember krokodilkörmöket sirt az „Arany Oroszlán” szálló falának

Lajos Kassák.
*A ló meghal
 és a madarak
 kiröpülnek*
*(The Horse Dies
 and the Birds
 Fly Away).*
 2x2 1 (1922):
 40, title page,
 310x240 mm

each other, was placed on the letterheads advertising the journals *365* and *Dokumentum*. Columns serve not only as decoration, as creating structure and perspicuity of information but also as eye-catching devices. It is the column that arrests the eye on the first *Magyar Hírlap* (*Hungarian News*) poster, on some of the advertisements in *Dokumentum* and on the covers of the first issues of the journal *Munka*.³⁷

A further characteristic of Kassák's graphic art in advertising was the frequent combination of the colours red and

black, which can be traced back as far as Gutenberg in the history of typography and was also the most often used colour pairing in avant-garde typography, since it was particularly suited to intensify effect as a result of the specific capacities of red, it being the colour with the greatest visibility. Since the revolutions, however, red had political connotations as well. In this respect, it is sufficient to refer to the images of Kassák's poems written in 1919 and the red caption of the issues of *Ma* that came out at the same time.



Ma, 1921, collage on paper

Apart from technical considerations, the red and black colours on the cover of *Ma* may well be thought to signify political commitment.

The simultaneous use of square and circle, larger and smaller elements, horizontal and vertical structures, printed and empty surfaces, and red and black within one single composition brought about a whole series of conflicting images. The asymmetric structures of the compositions also expressed an attempt to create tension. The final aim of the composed disquiet radiating from these works was again meant to intensify the effect.

The mutual presence of harmony and tension can be observed in Kassák's designs for advertisement kiosks.³⁸ In the case of his first-known kiosk, which can be dated to 1924, there were contrasts between the tall hoarding-like walls, the cubical newsstand and the letter-box, between the colouring and placement of the advertisement walls, and between the captions on the advertisement walls as a result of the horizontal and vertical direction of the type-setting. Harmony and tension, quiet and commotion are simultaneously present on the advertisement kiosk designs printed in *Tisztaság könyve*, too.

The characteristics of Kassák's graphic art in advertising after 1921 are related to, and in fact contribute to, a process of international renewal. It is tied in several ways to the art created in the workshops of Weimar Bauhaus circles and the avant-garde groups in Berlin, Hanover and The Hague, as well as Russian Constructivists. When Jan Tschichold characterised the hopes of the Constructivist movements in the graphic arts in advertising in his "Elementare Typographie" ("Elementary Typography")³⁹ published in 1925, his analysis fit Kassák's works point by point.

Kassák's work in advertising is indeed closest to his "pictorial architectures". They are in fact "functionalised pieces of pictorial architecture", that is, abstract geometric works that have become examples of graphic art in advertising as a result of the informative texts built into them.⁴⁰ Kassák usually carried out tasks of applied graphics as an artist: he made his advertisement graphics by starting out from forms and schemes he had invented as a painter of panel paintings and as a graphic artist, sometimes using them with no or minor modifications. He designed, for instance, the cover page of the July 1922 issue of *Secession* by reproducing a piece published in the pictorial architecture folder brought out in late 1921. The eye-catching element on the cover of the volume 1924 was the pictorial architecture that had been printed in the 15 November 1923 issue of *Ma*. The cover designed for Tibor Déry's volume of poetry *Énekelnek és meghalnak* (*They Sing and Die*) can be traced back to two earlier works of art: to a collage made up of a circle and slightly diagonal rules and to a painting with the very same structure.⁴¹ The advertisement graphic has the same base structures as pictorial architecture: one is characterised by the horizontal and vertical arrangement of elements and the other by the use of the slightly tilted, not wholly diagonal, central axis.⁴² Some of the line, rule and beam structures designed to carry out specific graphic tasks in advertising may be regarded as works of abstract geometry, particular varieties of pictorial architecture. This is exemplified not only by the several versions of the title of the *Ma* magazine, but also the first word in the title of *Új művészek könyve* (*The Book of New Artists*) designed on principles of cliché lettering,⁴³ by the letter A representing a monumental edifice on the poster design entitled *Steyer Auto*,⁴⁴ and by the letter T placed as the axis of the composition on the cover of the leaflet *Tó mozi* (*Tó Cinema*).⁴⁵

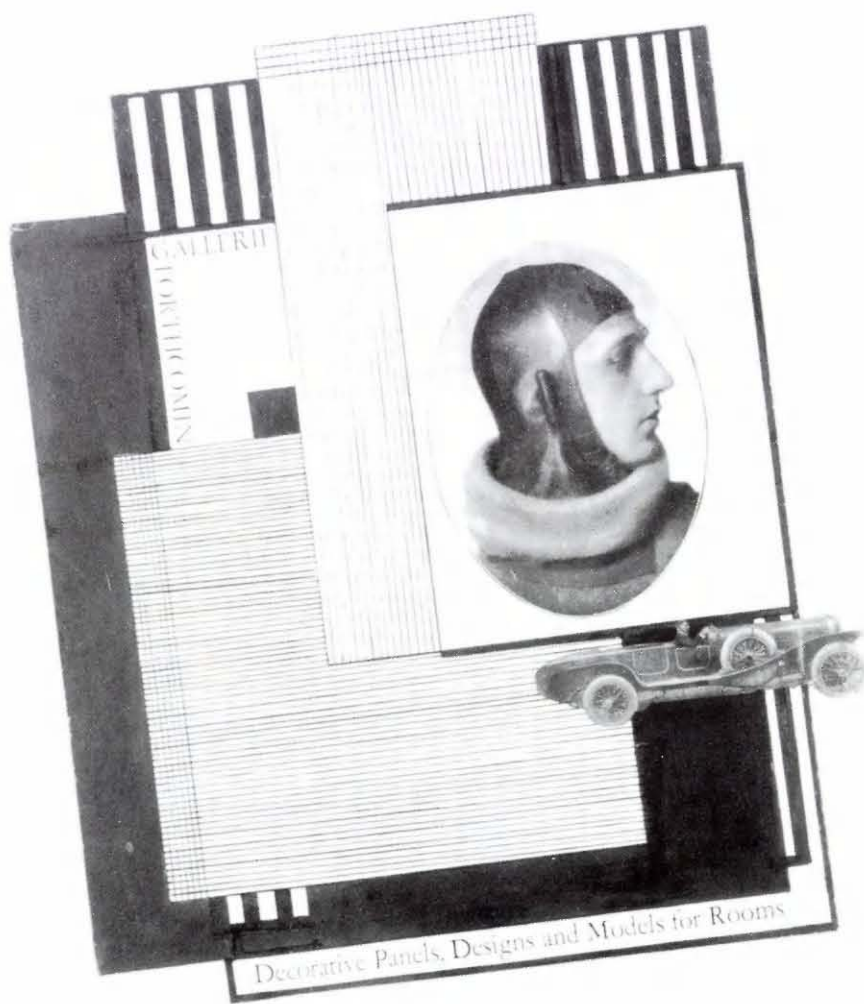
The endeavour to achieve artistic effect can also be observed on the pages of publications designed by Kassák. An excellent example of this is the compilation "Bildarchitektur" in the 15 October 1922 issue of *Ma*. A full column of text with its heading, set vertically on the upper left-hand side of the column and printed red so as to give the impression of a red rule, and the pictorial architecture printed in black and red within each of the three columns of the facing page all together combine into a new composition. Other issues of *Ma* provide plenty of examples for the arrangement of columns and illustration material on facing pages that gives the impression of geometric structures and of schemes of pictorial architecture. The frequent use of rules, beams and the geometric figures which fill out the surface also demonstrates the endeavour to create structures. The way Kassák printed his long poem „A ló meghal és a madarak kiröpülnek” ("The Horse Dies and the Birds Fly Away") in the first and only issue of the magazine 2X2 was rather special.⁴⁶ The typographical-graphic composition made up of the text of the title associates the ideas of a horse and a bird, of dying and flying away. The text of the poem itself associates the idea of ceaseless wandering, since "it appears not in verse lines but in the full width of the make-up of the printed page; it creates dense pages, where lines are separated only at various intervals by black asterisks placed at the end of lines, and the clear beading of slim antiques is severed by dark gems at irregular space intervals."⁴⁷ The facing pages of György Hercz's [Hernádi's] vol-

ume of poetry, *Ecce Homo*, printed in early 1924, which were decorated with black and red geometric figures and geometrically shaped headings, may be considered the "extreme" version of typography attempting an artistic effect.⁴⁸

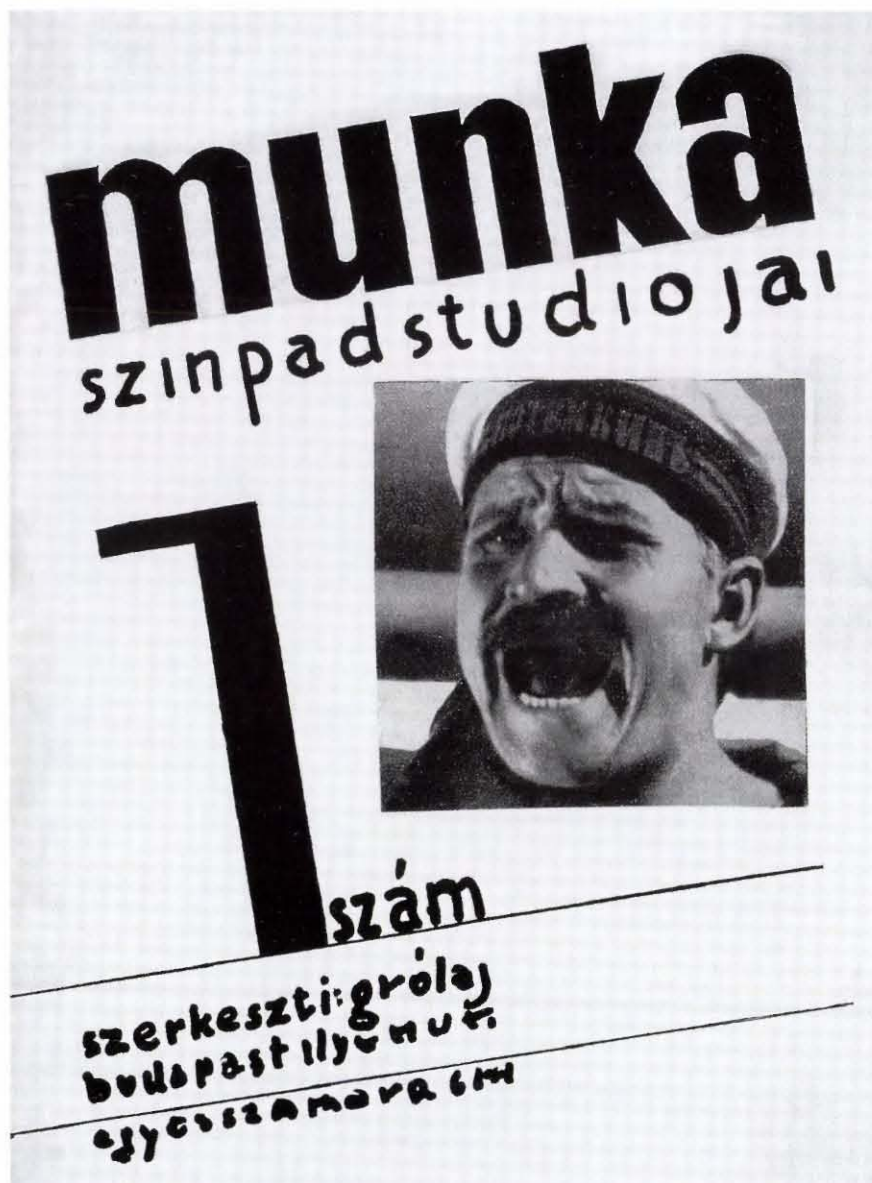


In the second half of the 1920s, Kassák's typographical style became more economical and more restrained. This can be most clearly observed in the graphic form of his journals, *Dokumentum* (*Document*) and *Munka* (*Labour*), which he started in Budapest. Continuing the practice he had followed in type-setting *Ma*, Kassák designed a new cover for each issue but used the same title all the time. Nor did he change the header on the title page. He differentiated the issues of *Munka* not with new cover graphics but with a different colour besides the black. While every column of the 1927 issues of *Dokumentum* was topped by a rule, the only similar typographical figure in *Munka* was below the left-hand side of the columns of odd pages, which together with the conjoining magazine title formed the only decorative element.

Another sign of composure, economising on typography, was the use of only lowercase type in titles. The exclusive use of lowercase type gained currency in avant-garde typography in the wake of Jan Tschichold's works and the theses he propounded in his article "Elementare Typographie", which was published in *Typographische Mitteilungen* in 1925, as well as the theoretical and practical work of László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer, who were both involved in Bauhaus. The most effective medium of the innovation proved to be the magazine that was started by the Bauhaus group after its move to Dessau, the issues of which were typeset by Moholy-Nagy. It was no mere coincidence that Kassák published Tschichold's "Elementare Typographie" as soon as he could, indeed, in the very first issue of *Dokumentum* in December 1926 and that Herbert Bayer's essay, ("The Tools of Typography and Propaganda"),⁴⁹ was in the first number of *Munka*, which came out in September 1928. Kassák's interest is also shown by the fact that he published a review of Tschichold's book entitled *Die neue Typographie*, which had come out in June 1928, as early as the January 1929 issue of *Munka*.⁵⁰



Gallerie Forthcomin[g], the 1920's
collage on paper, 360x260 mm
Galerie Gmurzynska, Köln



Munka Szinpadstúdiója
(Stage-studio of the Munka), 1932
 China ink, collage on paper, 213x155 mm
 Kassák Museum

That Kassák had already made use of lowercase typesetting in the early 1920s is attested to by „A ló meghal és a madarak kiröpülnek” (“The Horse Dies and the Birds Fly Away”) and those parts of the numbered poems which have no uppercase characters. In *Munka*, Kassák type-set not only the titles in lowercase, but also the tables of contents and the advertisements on the left-hand sides of the covers. In the typographical shaping of the pages, Kassák followed avant-garde typography by using the decoration consisting of the rule and the magazine title, by having rules separate texts within columns, and also by setting headings in uppercase, bold, sans serif types. However, unlike the Bauhaus practice after 1925, he set columnar texts in antique type. He had already proceeded in this direction in designing *Ma*, *Új művészek könyve*, *Tisztaság könyve*, and *Dokumentum*. In the early 1920s, he had already realised what Tschichold was only to notice later, that the grotesque (i.e. sans serif) types so much cherished by Constructivist and especially Bauhaus typographers were excellent for titles but were tiring to the eye in longer sittings and did not meet the de-

mands of readability.⁵¹ The issues of *Munka* represent a process of classicisation with regard to avant-garde typography; its innovations were brought into being for the sake of expedience and task-conformity, they adhere to the principles of functionality and practicality regarded as central in Constructivism.



From the mid-1920s, the eye-catching element in Kassák's advertisement graphics was often the photograph or the photomontage. The juxtaposition of elements different in character and origin as technical device and creative method was present in his work from the early 1920s. In this respect, his photographic and montage advertisements may be regarded as continuations of his typo- and newspaper collages. Continuity was also present in intention as well: his wish to arouse interest and to provoke had also been characteristic of the collages inspired by Dadaism and Constructivism. This was now supplemented by the recognition that suggesting associations, or using a “visual quotation” sug-

gesting the characteristics of the advertised object, might be an effective method of advertising. The photograph with its objectivity, exactness, and capacity to record almost anything promised to be particularly apt for this purpose. Thus, it lent itself to combination with geometric elements into compositions. This conjoining, this encounter between the concrete and the abstract, produced a novel tension that intensified effect.

The photograph had become a regular part of Kassák's work as early as 1922. While editing *Új művészek könyve* and arranging the photographs of buildings and machines as well as the reproductions of works of art collected by Moholy-Nagy, Kassák realised the capacity of the photograph to suggest industrial civilisation, metropolitan life, the world of city outskirts and factories, and to illustrate ideas and aspirations, and he also recognised the possibilities inherent in the conjoining of a photograph and a work of fine art.⁵² His new regard for the photograph was signalled not only by the anthology but also by the fact that Kassák published a part of the photographic material in the 1 May 1922 issue of *Ma* and that almost all later issues of the magazine contained photos of machines and buildings in order to illustrate the aspirations of Constructivism. The transformation in his views was hastened not only by the photographic renewal which had begun after 1920 – in the work of Moholy-Nagy and that of German and Russian avant-gardists in this area – but also the fact that, as a prose writer, he sought more and more to record the realities of everyday life from the end of 1923; it was during the Christmas of this year that he began to write his autobiography entitled *Egy ember élete* (*The Life of A Man*), and upon his return from exile, he wrote a whole series of novels portraying the age. In 1927, Ernő Kállai's article, "Painting and Photography", published in the Amsterdam avant-garde magazine *i 10*, led to a debate, to which Kassák also contributed: he summed up his years of experience by characterising photography "as representative of a new period in civilisation": "The eye of a painter is subjective, the lens of a camera has an objective effect. In an age that strives for collectivity and structural austerity, this objective mode of vision and the anti-psychic nature of the camera make photography necessarily superior to representational painting."⁵³

Photographs or montages first appeared in structures of pictorial architecture.⁵⁴ Kassák himself never took photographs. It was from among shots made by others that he selected the cutting that would suit the object and aim of an advertisement or, placed in a composition, be the substantive centre of a book cover or poster. The relationship between Kassák's literary aspirations and those of graphic arts in advertising is shown by the fact that he put photographs on the covers of the novels in a series called "The New Hungarian Novel", which sought to reveal everyday Hungarian reality and the social problems of the times; he thought these photographs would suggest the world of the novels.

It was no coincidence that Kassák made his first montage for the first three volumes of his autobiography printed in 1927, which was a rich portrayal of both individual and community destiny, an expression of both a literary and a political programme.⁵⁵ The multi-dimensional literary work necessitated the application of a montage technique based on the principles of Simultaneism – the juxtaposition of the expressive elements of photographs taken in different

places and at different times. Kassák's full-length photograph is thus removed from a group shot, which was taken at the *Ma* evening on 22 March 1925 and is placed at the centre of a montage invoking the world of a metropolis, factories and tenement houses, where another element is a red rule, a reference to political commitment, which runs upwards from behind Kassák's figure to connect the montage with the title printed in red and black. On the montage advertising "Hungária Hírlapnyomda" ("Hungária Newspaper Printers"), the parts of shots of machinery taken from different angles, as a result of changing perspectives, suggest the dynamism of the work process.⁵⁶

Kassák's montage art is related to that of Russian and German avant-gardists with respect to various characteristics of his choice of theme and motif and his creation of structure. It may be regarded as a sign of his special interest in and respect for Russian montage art that he produced a montage for the cover of Lajos Gró's *Az orosz filmművészet* (*Russian Cinema*).⁵⁷ As early as 1930, as the editor of *Munka*, he had called attention to the satirical montages of John Heartfield in connection with the appearance of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*.⁵⁸ The first Hungarian publication of a Heartfield montage was also prepared by Kassák. In 1933, a series entitled "A Munka könyvtára" ("The Munka Library") published Hans Jäger's *Mi a hitlerizmus?* (*What is Hitlerism?*).⁵⁹ Kassák designed its cover by adapting Heartfield's montage *Krieg und Leichen – die letzte Hoffnung der Reichen* (*War and Corpses – The Last Hope of the Rich*). Kassák modified Heartfield's work in accordance with the timeliness of the book itself. He changed the medal of honour hanging around the neck of the hyena into a swastika, mounted drawings of swastika

Hans Jäger, *Mi a hitlerizmus? (What is Hitlerism?)* (Budapest: Munka, 1932) Cover, 153x120 mm

munka
könyvtára
munka
könyvtára
munka
könyvtára
munka
könyvtára

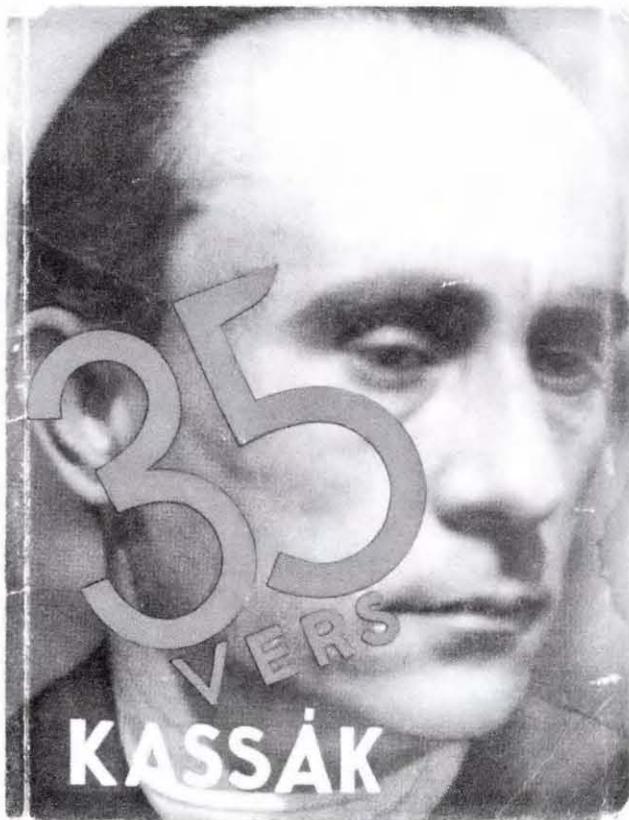


„minden hatalmat hitler adolf kezébe!”

h. jäger:

mi a hitlerizmus

jelölőszó, a vezetők, az organizáció, rohamcsapatok és testőrség, a propaganda, a párt szociális összetétele, burzsoázia, proletariátus, iljuság



Lajos Kassák, *35 vers (35 Poems)* (Budapest: Munka, 1931)
Cover, 192x145 mm

flags on to the background, and, instead of the original inscription, he placed the following slogan under the composition: "All Power to Adolf Hitler!"

This cover design is not only an example of the intellectual link with German montage art but also reflects the fact that political and social propaganda was part and parcel of Kassák's concept of advertising and typography. In the early 1920s, this propaganda had aimed at mobilising for a radical transformation of society, the establishment of a new order to replace the old one. In the second half of the 1920s, upon his return home from exile, Kassák, the advertisement and book designer, sought to work toward common pursuits in the context of the consolidation of the Hungarian political system and economic recovery, such as modernising the Budapest cityscape, developing a business culture, fostering the competitiveness of Hungarian goods, propagating a type of book that is at once available to all and aesthetically pleasing in its typographical form, publicising left-wing cultural organisations and programmes, founding a society for the renewal of the art of book and advertisement design in Hungary, and organising exhibits. With regard to the social utility and necessity of a moral and aesthetic rebirth of advertising, he referred to two examples. One was post-revolutionary Russia: "The formation of this state, which strives toward larger units and a more collective form of organisation, has not abolished advertising, she has only freed it from the claws of private interests bent on booms, making this formerly antisocial force into propaganda that serves the interests of the community. Thus Russian advertising was reborn not only in a moral sense but in artistic significance as well."⁶⁰ And the other example he brought up

was Germany: "Having lost the War, Germany quickly realised that the fastest and surest way to regain her political and economic significance was to economise on her production and raise the quality of the goods she produced. Her production is based on scientific considerations, and so are her attempts to gain market positions for her products. Her apparently indestructible instinct to survive and the conscious stress on this instinct is what governs the development of German advertising. An elementary art of advertising has been created for products made with care out of good materials, one with boundless opportunities to develop; advertisements made in this way are in many cases more like social propaganda than a mere hawking of goods that thrives on a buying public that is uninformed and naive in its good will."⁶¹

With the onset of the Great Depression and the close of economic and political consolidation, the *raison d'être* of the activities in the art of advertising striving to reform conditions was called into question. Social struggles were intensified and the role of political agitation became more important. The first period of Kassák's activities in the art of book design and advertising that lasted from 1921 to 1933 came to an end with his drawing the cover for a planned publication entitled *Munkát, kenyéret!* (*Give Us Work! Give Us Bread!*).⁶²



One of the first signs of the interest in and recognition of Kassák's work in the art of book design and advertising was that Gorham B. Munson, the editor of the New York-based magazine *Secession*, which for a time was being printed in Vienna, asked Kassák to design the cover of its second number. In a departure for the journal and for the industry as a whole, *Secession* actually introduced the designer of the cover of that July 1922 issue. The text informing American readers of the artist ran as follows: "The cover design is by Ludwig Kassák, a Hungarian Communist and refugee in Vienna. He is the editor of *Ma*, a publication in tune with those of the advance guard in France, Russia, Germany and America." Sophie Täuber-Arp was so enthusiastic about *Ma* and *Új művészek könyve* that she designed a "Kassák memorial" in late 1922.⁶³ In the fifth, July 1923 issue of *Secession*, Gorham B. Munson, in praising *Ma*, noted its outward appearance: "I recommend as a counterirritant the Hungarian activist review, *Ma*, edited by Ludwig Kassák. *Ma* excels in experimental typographical composition."⁶⁴ In May 1924, the Berlin Sturm gallery mounted a Kassák exhibit that also displayed a typographical and an advertisement piece. The latter, a plan for a newsstand, familiar to many by the title *The Kiosk* appeared not only in the catalogue of the exhibition but also in the July 1924 issue of the magazine *Der Sturm* – thanks to its editor, Herwarth Walden, whose interest it had piqued.⁶⁵ Jan Tschichold in his special edition of *Typographische Mitteilungen* entitled "Elementare Typographie" listed Kassák's magazine, *Ma*, among those publications "which struggle for a new typography". Ernő Kállai in his *Új magyar festészet (New Hungarian Painting)* published in 1925 declared the typographical works in Kassák's Constructivist oeuvre as the most significant. He also praised the typographical formation of *Ma* and *Új művészek könyve* as outstanding achievements "even by international comparison".⁶⁷

It was probably also due to Kállai's opinion that, before returning from exile, Kassák was planning to appear before the public with an exhibit of his books and posters. The plan could not be realised for lack of finances.⁶⁸ The Mentor book shop at No. 17 Andrásy út, which would have been the scene of the exhibition, devoted a whole shop window to *Tisztaság könyve*. The display was designed by the painter, Béla Kádár. At its centre stood a miniature edifice made of thirty or forty copies of the book, and leaning against it, as an explanation of the book's typographical shaping and a personal manifesto, was the manuscript of Kassák's essay "On Books". The background consisted of a geometrical figure made up of copies of the poster designed by Kassák for the book shop and of the sheets of the book's typeset by Kassák himself. Kassák also produced the posters announcing the publication of the book, and he also planned to have them pasted on hoardings around the city. He, however, had to give up on this spectacular element of the advertising campaign prior to his return for fear of political attacks.⁶⁹

The essay "The Advertisement" printed in the volume was internationally acclaimed almost immediately and became the definitive discussion of the new aspirations of the art of advertising. It had, in fact, been printed before the publication of *Tisztaság könyve* in the Brünn (or Brno, now Czech Republic) *Pásmo* and the Kolozsvár (or Cluj, Romania) *Korunk*.⁷⁰ It became available in translation for German readers through its appearance in the Zurich magazine *Das Werk* in July 1926.⁷¹ And was also reprinted in a special edition of the Viennese *Kunst und Volk* on the art of book design in April 1930.⁷²

In 1927, Kassák participated in a major international exhibit on the art of advertising entitled "Grafische Werbekunst", which was mounted by the Mannheim Städtische Kunsthalle. At the exhibit, open between 7 August and 30 October, Hungarian graphic arts in advertising, apart from works by Kassák, were represented by those of Róbert Berény, Árpád Bardócz, Mihály Bíró, Sándor Bortnyik, and Márton Tuszkay. Kassák sent twenty original pieces to



Lajos Kassák with his advertising-box
Photograph by József Pécsi, 1927

MA
EINLADUNG
 1. AKTIVISTISCHER KUNSTABEND

22.
 MÄRZ 1/2 8 UHR

SCHWARZWALD SAAL, I., REGIERUNGSGASSE 1, HERRENGASSE 10
 KARTENBEILÖWIT, ROTENTURMSTR., LANYI, KÄRNTNERSTR., WÜRTHLE,
 WEIHBURG., HELLER, BAUERNMARKT u. a. d. ABENDKASSE S 150 – 5'—

I. DEUTSCHER PROPAGANDA-ABEND

MITWIRKENDE:
 MIRIAM SCHNABEL-HOEFLICH
 PAUL EMERICH · G. HADANK ·
 MURA ZYPEROWITSCH · LEO
 HALPERN · MAX KUHN · AND.
 NEMETH · HANS SUSCHNY ·

WERKE:
 LUDWIG KASSAK
 ANDREAS GASPAR
 JOSEF NADASS
 ROBERT REITER
 ALADAR TAMAS
 TIBOR DERY
 SANDOR VAJDA
 GEORG HERZ
 HENRIK GLAUBER
 MODERNER TANZ
 MODERNE MUSIK

The programme for *Ma's* Vienna Evening on 22 March 1925, 125x135 mm

Mannheim; four book covers, a department store brochure, four title pages for journals, six small and two large posters, two post cards and one advertisement box. Of these, covers for *Ma – Ungarische Gruppe*, which was published in the Bauhausbücher series, and *Tisztaság könyve*, a brochure entitled *Warenhaus A.G.*, the cover pages of the December 1926 and the March 1927 issues of *Dokumentum*, posters entitled *Tolo Porzellanwaren*, *Z. Marx Tuchplast* and *Mentor*, as well as a box of sweets are known to us either in printed or photographic form. The cover designs for a novel by Jack London, a publication entitled "Mode", and the magazines *Die Technik* and *Das Licht*, posters entitled *Ero Perlenhaus*, *Corvin*, *M.T.E.*, *Színházi Élet (The Theatre)*, and *Fischer Simon*, as well as some post cards could not yet be traced. According to the registration sheet of the Mannheim Kunsthalle the exhibits were available for sale. Certain advertisement graphics might very well have been added to private or public collections even then.

The participation at the Mannheim exhibit may well have prompted Tschichold to reproduce two works by Kassák among the pictorial material illustrating new aspirations in his new book *Die neue Typographie*, which he published in Berlin in 1928.⁷⁴ The "relief" from the title page of *Tisztaság könyve* was meant to illustrate in Tschichold's book that an artist does not imitate nature – he shapes it; the use of colour not always being enough for him, he also fashions the surface of his picture by using wood, metal and paper. The other piece was the cover page of a department store brochure, which had been displayed at Mannheim as well. This advertisement graphic reproduced by Tschichold with the title *Typoposter* also appeared in the Prague magazine *ReD*, edited by Karel Teige.⁷⁵

Kassák's first exhibit in Hungary took place in the Mentor book shop in mid-March 1928. Both advertising graphics and pictorial architectures were on display there. No catalogue was prepared for the exhibit, nor has any list of exhibits come down to us. On the basis of reviews in the press, the following posters may have been on display: *Magyar Hírlap (Hungarian News)*, *Tolo Porzellanwaren*, *Mentor*, *Dunlop*, *Tó Cinema*, *Budapest Zoo*, and *Hungária Hírlap-nyomda Rt.* Having been on display in the streets and at the exhibit, these probably contributed to the change in the Hungarian appreciation of Constructivism in the second half of the 1920s. The *raison d'être* of the -ism in the fine arts was in doubt even among such progressive authors as Ede Iván, Artúr Elek, and Marius Rabinovszky. They did however acknowledge that, through the Constructivist attitude and idiom, a new, up-to-date style of poster had come into being.⁷⁶ Rabinovszky wrote the following of Kassák's posters: "They are rather good. So good that serious capitalist ventures have bought, printed and posted them, and seeing them, the public paid heed to their call."

After the exhibit, Kassák was commissioned by Pantheon Publishers to design the graphics for the New Hungarian Novel series. He not only designed covers, cases, posters, and advertisements, but also did shop window arrangements for the Mentor book shop.⁷⁷ The most impressive part of the shop window arrangement, from the evidence of a photograph taken of it, was a large poster by Kassák, whose graphic design or printed copies have not been found to date. The left-hand wall of the shop window was decorated with copies of the smaller poster advertising the series. Recalling the preparation of the shop window, the poet Zoltán Zelk, a contemporary witness, described an interesting

element of the scene: "As the leading figure of modern artistic movements known throughout Europe stripped off his jacket and got cracking on the shop window in the street, Ernő Os-vát [the famous editor of *Nyugat*] came over from the Korona cafe on the other side of the street, gazed and gazed at the first Constructivist glass window in Hungary, and then said: 'Sir! If anyone wanted to be advertised, he would certainly have had himself photographed in your place.'⁷⁸

Another sign of interest and acknowledgement was that the most important professional forum for the Hungarian printing industry, the bimonthly *Magyar Grafika* devoted its May-June 1928 issue to introducing the work of Kassák in the art of book design and advertising. The editors thought that the best way to introduce Hungarian readers to the aspirations and achievements of Constructivist typography would be to provide them with illustrations of Kassák's theoretical work and advertising graphics. In order to encourage debate, they published Kassák's essay "On the Road to Elementary Typography", which was an enlarged version of the article "The Advertisement" in *Tisztaság könyve*. His theses were then illustrated by the journal's cover page designed by Kassák himself and eleven of his advertising graphics in an inset: *To Mozi, Dunlop, Ma – Ungarische Gruppe, Tolo Porzellanwaren, Budapest Zoo, Hungária Hírlapnyomda Rt., Déry Tibor: Énekelnek és meghalnak, Művészfilmkölcsönző Vállalat (Art Film Rental Company), Brust Dávid and Nádass József*. Of these *Tó Mozi* appeared in the 1929 annual put out by *Commercial Art*, the leading British journal for the graphic arts in advertising. The journal hailed it as being among the finest examples of its genre for

the previous year, placing it among the images in its Photography in Commercial Art section.⁷⁹ The cover Kassák had designed for Déry's collection of poetry appeared again in the November 1931 issue of the Danish journal *De Grafiske Fag* as one of the illustrations for Károly Rosner's piece on the art of book design in Hungary.⁸⁰

Kassák was a founding member of the Society of Hungarian Book and Advertisement Artists.⁸¹ The society founded on 5 May 1928 appeared to the general public with a major exhibit held at the Museum of Applied Arts. Kassák himself displayed some fifty of his works. Since no list of exhibits has come down to us, what of Kassák's material was on display can only be surmised on the basis of photographs taken there and published in *Magyar Grafika*.⁸² The most conspicuous pieces in the collection were Kassák's large posters designed for *Nyugat* and *Magyar Hírlap*. The cover designs for the Hungarian edition of Tristan Tzara's play *Gas-Heart* and for Pál Forgó's book *Új építészet (The New Architecture)*,⁸³ as well as some other works unidentifiable from the photograph were displayed in a showcase arranged as though it were a shop window. Its side wall was covered with two large posters and works reproduced in the May-June 1928 issue of *Magyar Grafika*, small posters advertising the Mentor book shop, *Munka* and the New Hungarian Novel series, as well as political montages, which had been on display at individual exhibits, and advertisements using photographic montage techniques. The last exhibit on the poster wall was a large poster designed for *Virradat (Dawn)*, a journal edited by young left-wing authors. Kassák's professional standing was evidenced by the fact

K O N S T R U K T I V E K U N S T		SAISON 1296/27
P R O G R A M M		
1. EINLEITUNG	HANS SUSCHNY	
2. BELA BARTOK KLAVIERSUITE	DR. ERNST BACHRICH	
3. LUDWIG KASSAK 2 NOVELLEN	HANS RODENBERG	
4. DARIUS MILHAUD SONATE FÜR KLAVIER U. FLÖTE	DR. ERNST BACHRICH FRANZ WANGLER	
P A U S E		
5. GEDICHTE DER SURREALISTEN JOSEF KALMER		
6a. GERTRUD KRAUS – KURT SCHWITTERS TANZDICHTUNGSKOMPOSITION	GERTRUD KRAUS JOLAN KASSAK	
b. KURT SCHWITTERS – GEORG KOVACS DICHTUNGSMUSIKKOMPOSITION	JOLAN KASSAK FRANZ WANGLER	
c. GERTRUD KRAUS 1. GAVOTTE. 2. SHIMMY.	TOTENTÄNZE EINST UND JETZT GERTRUD KRAUS HEDY STEINBERGER FRITZI VORBERGER	
7. HANS SUSCHNY 2 GEDICHTE JOSEF NADASS 2 GEDICHTE LUDWIG KASSAK 2 GEDICHTE	HANS RODENBERG	
GRUPPE MA – ZEITSCHRIFT MA		

The programme for *Ma's* Vienna Evening on 8 May 1926, 182x179 mm

that one of the four texts contained in the publication made for the exhibit, "The Photomontage", was by Kassák.⁸⁴

Another example of his standing at the time is the dispute over his cover designs for *Korunk*. This Kolozsvár journal appeared with pictorial architectures of squares, titles and rules of varying colour on the cover of each issue from January to April 1929. Succumbing to the objections of readers and authors – notably those of Zoltán Fábry – the editors, László Dienes and Gábor Gaál, removed Kassák's composition made up of coloured squares from the cover of the journal, beginning with the May issue.⁸⁵ Fábry had argued that it was a mistake to place an abstract geometric figure on the cover of a journal open to all questions and problems of society.

The *Ring „neue werbegestalter"* (New Advertisement Designers' Circle) initiated by Kurt Schwitters in December 1927 had been counting on the co-operation of Kassák in launching mutual undertakings from the end of 1928. On the proposition of a Dutch member, Paul Schuitema, the group was planning to publish an international journal of advertising in Holland from the spring of 1929. Its foreign editors were to have been Lissitzky in Russia, Schwitters in Germany, Karel Teige in Czechoslovakia, and Kassák in Vienna. Schuitema and Schwitters had thought that Kassák was still living in Vienna at the time. According to Schuitema's concept, each foreign editor, including Kassák, would have edited two issues of the journal annually. Short of money, plans for the magazine never materialised.⁸⁶ However, Kassák participated in the international advertisement graphics exhibition in Berlin in the spring of 1929. As part of the exposition in the halls of the Staatliche Kunstbibliothek, which opened on 20 April 1929, an introductory collection demonstrated the aims and development of avant-garde typography. One of the exhibits was *Új művészek könyve*. According to the intentions of Moholy-Nagy, who arranged the collection, the cover designed by Kassák and the cover pages of an issue of *Veshch* and *Stavba* were meant to illustrate that in avant-garde typography, characters might become independent elements of form and that compositions are characterised by a withdrawal from centred axial structuring.⁸⁷ What Kassák sent from Budapest in response to Schwitters' invitation, and what was in fact included in the collection demonstrating the current state of the new typography, cannot be determined today, as the exhibition prospectus only listed the names and addresses of the participants.⁸⁸ These Berlin exhibits of Kassák were displayed again at the "Der neue Druck – Das schöne Buch" ("The New Printing: The Beautiful Book") exhibit held in the halls of the Magdeburg Ausstellungsgebäude am Adolf-Mittag-See in the same year, as part of a special collection called "Neue Typographie" ("New Typography") arranged by Schwitters and his colleagues.⁸⁹ By way of the exhibitions arranged by the Schwitters-led circle, these works by Kassák were then displayed at the Essen Folkwang Museum in September of the same year, and to the Basel Museum of Applied Arts in March 1930.⁹⁰

Kassák's stature as an advertising graphic artist was also demonstrated by the fact that Schwitters proposed that his fellow artist in Budapest, together with Karel Teige, Johannes Molzahn, Moholy-Nagy, Lissitzky, Theo van Doesburg, and Herbert Bayer, should be elected as regular members of the *Ring "neue werbegestalter"*. In his letter to

the decision-makers, he wrote as follows: "In my opinion, men like Teige, Kassák, Molzahn, Moholy, Lissitzky, Doesburg, and Bayer ought to be members of our society."⁹¹ We know neither what the fate of the proposal was nor the results of the election. A few months later, Kassák participated in a new initiative organised by Schuitema and Schwitters, an international advertising art exhibit at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum which opened on 20 June.⁹² In 1974, the exhibits displayed here were bequeathed to The Hague Gemeentemuseum from the estate of Schuitema.⁹³ This was how two prints, the posters entitled *Új magyar regény* and *Munka*,⁹⁴ from among the material sent to the Amsterdam exhibition were preserved. They are the only surviving copies known.

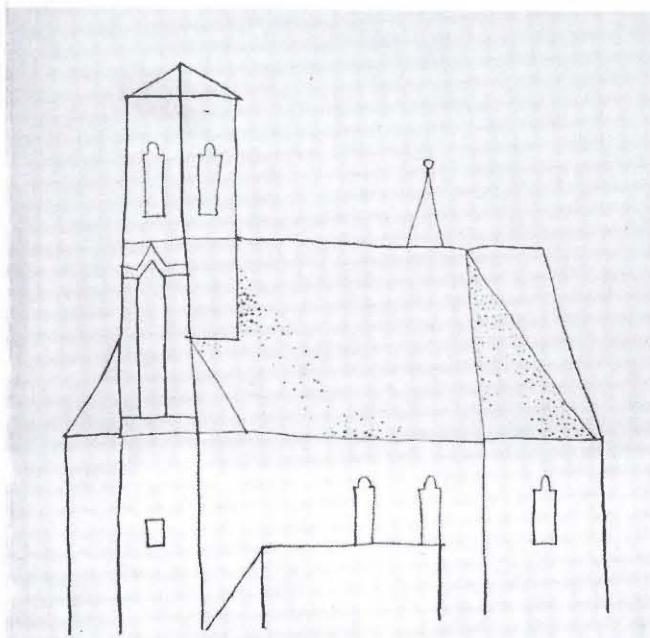
A few weeks after the Amsterdam exhibition, in August, 1931, a number of Kassák's works were displayed at the world exhibit on the art of book design presented at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Reporting on the event, the poet Miklós Radnóti designated Kassák and the other Hungarian participants "the moderns of the Salon".⁹⁵ In a sentence depicting the mood, Radnóti wrote: "Serious and forlorn, Picasso and company listen to the plans of Kassák and his associates in the halls of the Palais des Beaux-Arts."



It was after an interval of almost a decade and a half that Kassák returned to advertising graphics as the typographer of his new journal *Alkotás (Creation)*⁹⁶ and in designing the covers and bindings of his books which appeared again from the mid-1950s. Almost all of these works refer back to one or another characteristic of the avant-garde typography and art of the period after 1920. The fully lowercase title of *Alkotás* and the similarly lowercase title of the book *Kassák irodalma és festészete (Kassák's Writing and Painting)*⁹⁷ recall the titles of *Munka* and the Bauhaus typography with no capitals, even though the title of *Alkotás* did not employ the sans serifs preferred by Bauhaus. The innovation of Rodchenko and Lissitzky, the repetition of a word, as a typographical device that determined the whole composition, had already appeared on the title page of *Tisztaság könyve* and on the cover designed for the May-June 1928 issue of *Magyar Grafika*. Now, after several decades, Kassák designed the cover of *A tölgyfa levelei (Oak Leaves)* using this method.⁹⁸ The covers of the new edition of *Missilló királysága (Missilló's Kingdom)* and *Vagyonom és fegyvertáram (My Fortune and My Arsenal)* with their horizontal and vertical lines forming rectangles in various colours reflect the world of the works of Dutch Constructivists.⁹⁹ This was also evoked by the assemblage of light grey squares enclosed within a black structure on the cover of the new edition of *Munkanélküliek (The Unemployed)*.¹⁰⁰ The geometric composition on the cover of the novel *Egy lélek keresi magát (A Spirit in Search of Itself)* is a late descendant of Kassák's lino cuts of the 1920s.¹⁰¹ With the circle at its centre, a basic form of Supremacism appeared again.

It was a novelty that the covers of the volumes of short stories *Marika énekelj! (Marika, Sing!)* and *Mélyáram (Deep Current)* were decorated with calligraphy,¹⁰² as was the white cover of *Mesterek köszöntése (A Tribute to Masters)*.¹⁰³ The idea that the cover graphic of the volume of poems *Szerelem, szerelem (Ah, Love)* contained both abstract and

alkotás



**A MAGYAR MŰVÉSZETI TANÁCS FOLYÓIRATA
FELELŐS SZERKESZTŐ: KASSÁK LAJOS
1948 JANUÁR-FEBRUÁR. II. ÉVFOLYAM 1-2. SZÁM**

Alkotás (Creation) 1-2 (1948)
Cover, 305x240 mm

realistic figures was used once only and therefore counts as unique.¹⁰⁴ The drawings interspersed within the text of this publication, just like the graphic material of *Költemények, rajzok (Poems and Drawings)*, document the fact that the thematic and formal world of Kassák's post-1948 period as a nature-orientated painter and graphic artist found its way into his art of book design. However, we even have examples of his reviving the Constructivist tradition from the early 1950s. The structure on the title page of the album entitled *Az idő múlásában (As Time Passes)* resembles Mondrian's structures.¹⁰⁵ It is nonetheless this very title page that best demonstrates that Kassák's Constructivism was an independent manifestation. "Kassák's sad, broken colours, his sleazy, free-hand lines, his spot-surfaces like carious walls, the constant mixture of geometry and accident, give a different impression than does anything by Mondrian. These colours evoke the poverty of mass tenements and slums, and also the desire for order, but they evoke the very filth from which, with the purity of crystals, the humane blazes forth."¹⁰⁶

Exhibits at home and abroad, which displayed his early

pictorial architectures and his abstract paintings in oil made after 1958, older and newer collages, occasioned Kassák to design posters again. On the poster for the 1960 Paris exhibit, he placed, as the work of art advertised, the pictorial architecture that had been published in the 15 November 1921 issue of *Ma* and the Bildarchitektur folder. He also evoked his early avant-garde period by dividing the plane of the poster into a white field on the right hand-side and another one proceeding right through the lower side, thus creating an asymmetrical structure. On the poster of the 1965 Munich exhibition, the pairing of black and red, the thick black frame enclosing the composition and the pictorial architecture placed in the upper field also recalled the world of early advertising graphics. His last piece of advertising graphics, the poster designed for the 1967 exhibit, which was organised on the occasion of his 80th birthday at the Budapest Adolf Fényes Gallery, with the precision and, at the same time, the elegance of its structure and figures, as well as the mollifying effect of the brown of its base form upon the black, promises the realisation of a reasonably functioning, yet humane world.

NOTES

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- Lajos Kassák, *Egy ember élete (The Life of A Man)* (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1983), vol. 2, 115. Cited by: Júlia Szabó, "»A címlap fontos« Kassák Lajos kiadványainak címlapjai 1912–1934", in Mariann Gergely, Péter György, Gábor Pataki ed., *Lajos Kassák 1887–1967. Hungarian National Gallery / Petőfi Museum Exhibit* (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 1987), 83.
- Lajos Kassák, "A plakát és az új festészet" ("The Poster and New Painting"), *Ma* 1 (1916): 1–4.
- Heidrun Schröder-Kehler, "Künstler erobern die Warenwelt. Neue Typografie in der Werbegestaltung", in Hubertus Gaßner ed., *Wechselwirkungen. Ungarische Avantgarde in der Weimarer Republik* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1986), 391.
- József Vadas: *Kassák, a konstruktőr (Kassák the Designer)* (Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó, 1979), 60.; Júlia Szabó, *A magyar aktivizmus művészete 1915–1927 (The Art of Hungarian Activism)* (Budapest: Corvina, 1981), 72.
- Hevesy Iván, "Az új plakát", *Ma* 5 (1919): 106–107.; "Az új plakát", *Az ember* 31 (1919): 13–14.; Lajos Sándor, "Nem ilyenek akarjuk látni a proletárt", *Az Ember* 32 (1919): 17–18.; "Alaposan elbántak...", *Az Ember* 33 (1919): 6–7.; Lajos Kassák, "Levél Kun Bélához a művészet nevében", *Ma* 7 (1919): 147–148.; "Uitz", *Az Ember* 35 (1919): 6–8.
- Lajos Kassák, *Egy ember élete* (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1983), vol. 2, 511–512, 516–517.
- Lajos Kassák, "A »szép és csúnya« könyv" ("Beautiful and Ugly Books"), *Bécsi Magyar Újság*, August 25, 1922: 5–6.; Lajos Kassák, "A könyvről" ("Of Books"), in Lajos Kassák, *Tisztaság könyve (The Book of Purity)* (Budapest: Horizont kiadás, 1926), 13–14.; Lajos Kassák, "A reklám" ("The Advertisement"), *Pásmo* 6–7 (1926): 107.; *Korunk* 4 (1926): 299–300, *Tisztaság könyve*, 82–84, *Kunst und Volk* 4 (1930): 237–238, *Das Werk* 7 (1926): 228.; Lajos Kassák, "Útban az elementáris tipográfia felé" ("On the Road to Elementary Typography"), *Magyar Grafika (Hungarian Graphic Art)* 5–6 (1928): 144–148.; Lajos Kassák, "Reklám és modern tipográfia" ("The Advertisement and Modern Typography"), *Reklámélet (Advertising)* 3 (1928): 1–3.; Lajos Kassák, "Néhány megjegyzés a Magyar Hét propagandájához", ("Comments on the Promotional Campaign of Hungarian Week"), *Reklámélet* 6 (1928): 3–5.; Lajos Kassák, "Az utca és a reklám" ("The Street and the Advertisement"), *Reklámélet* 5 (1929): 1–4.; Lajos Kassák, "Fotómontázs" ("The Photomontage"), *Reklámélet* 5 (1930): 7–8.
- Hubertus Gaßner, *A. Rodtschenko. Konstruktion 1920 oder die Kunst, das Leben zu organisieren*, (Frankfurt/M. 1984), 12.
- Heidrun Schröder-Kehler, "Vom Maler zum Reklamefachmann. Neue Typografie in der Werbegestaltung", in *Konstruktivistische Internationale schöpferische Arbeitsgemeinschaft 1922–1927. Utopien für eine europäische Kultur* (Düsseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 1922), 111.
- Perdita Lottner, "Neue Typografie. Ausstellung Berlin 1929. Forderungen der elementaren Gestaltung", in Perdita Lottner ed., *Ring "neue werbegestalter" 1928–1933. Ein Überblick* (Hannover: Sprengel Museum, 1990), 14.
- Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg* (London, 1972), 108–109.; Sjarel Ex and Eis Hoek, *Vilmos Huszár schilder en ontwerper 1884–1960* (Utrecht: Reflex, 1985), 36.
- Ludwig Kassák, *Bildarchitektur* (Wien: Ma Verlag, 1921), 8.; Lajos Kassák, "Képarchitektúra", *Ma* 4 (1922): 54.
- Lajos Kassák, "Válasz és sokfelé álláspont" ("A Response and Viewpoints Aplenty"), *Ma* 8 (1922): 53.



Ludwig Kassák: Kiosk

Kiosk, 1924

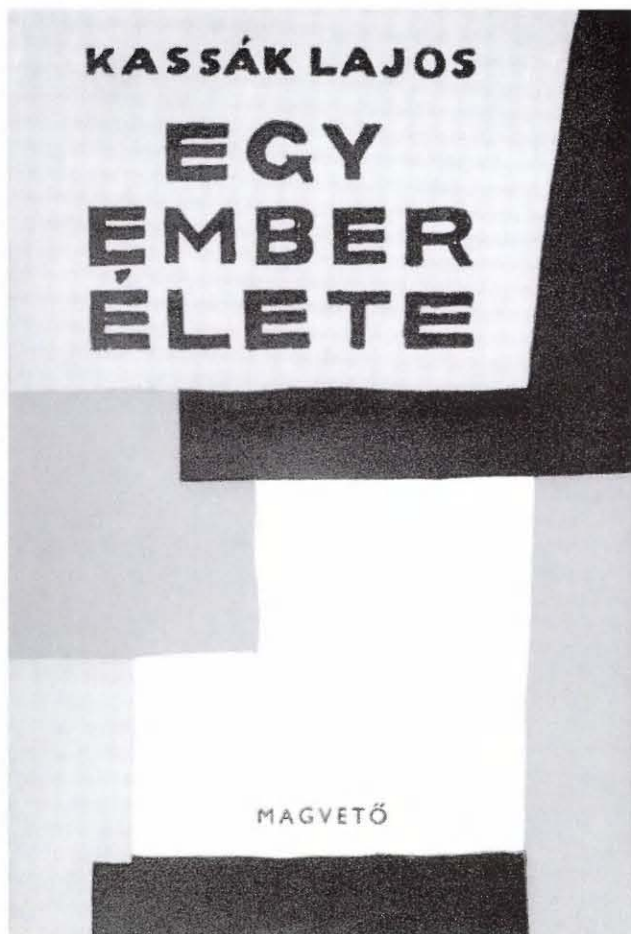
- Carsten-Peter Warncke, *Das Ideal als Kunst. De Stijl 1917–1931* (Köln: 1990), 154.
- Ma* 7 (1922)
- Lajos Kassák, "Tipográfia" ("Typography"), *Ma* 5–6 (1922): 29.
- Lajos Kassák, "Falak" ("Walls"), paper, pen and ink, China-ink and collage. 148x107 mm, Kunsthalle Nürnberg, inv. no. 25a/71
- Tristan Tzara, *Gáz-szív (Gas-heart)*, Endre Gáspár trans. (Wien: Ma, 1922) – Kassák's original cover art composed of letters appeared more recently on the covers of the publications below with no mention made of him as the typographer: Hans Richter, *Dada – Kunst und Antikunst. Der Beitrag zur Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964); *Almanacco Dada. Antologia letteraria-artistica* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1976); William S. Rubin, *Dada* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1978)
- Lajos Kassák, "Ma", 1921, paper and collage, sign, bottom centre: "Kassák". Photograph of a work at the Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM-F-90.7.; Lajos Kassák, "Bécsi Magyar Újság", 1921, paper and collage, *Ma* 1 (1921): 139.
- Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg*, 45.
- Kees Bros, "From De Stijl to a New Typography", in *De Stijl 1917–1931. Visions of Utopia* (New York: 1982), 156.; Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg*, 45.; Lothar Lang, *Konstruktivismus und Buchkunst* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1990), 156.
- Egon Engelin, "Plakatentwurf", 1922, in Wulf Herzogenrath ed., *Bauhaus Utopien* (Köln: Edition Cantz, 1988), 61. This poster design also appeared in *Ma*, 2 (1923): 112.
- Fritz Schleifer, "Plakat der Bauhaus-Ausstellung Weimar 1923", in *Bauhaus Utopien*, 105.; Joost Schmidt, "Bauhaus-Ausstellung Weimar 1923", in Friedrich Friedl, Nicolaus Ott and Bernard Stein ed., *Typographie wann wer wie* (Köln: Köne-mann Verlag, 1988), 48.; Paul Häberer, "Bauhaus-Ausstellung Weimar 1923", Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM-86-H
- Ma* 1 (1923), 5 (1924), 8–9 (1924), 2 (1925), 3–4 (1925)

- 25 *Ma-Buch. Gedichte von Ludwig Kassák*. Deutsch mit einem Vorwort von Andreas Gáspár (Berlin: *Der Sturm*, 1923); Lajos Kassák. "Ma – Ungarische Gruppe". *Magyar Grafika* 5–6 (1928): 161.; Lajos Kassák, "Konstruktive Kunst" (The poster for Ma's Vienna Evening on 8 May 1926), Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM-M-79.2.1.; "Konstruktive Kunst" (The programme for Ma's Vienna Evening on 8 May 1926), Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM 2856.; "Konstruktive Kunst" (The invitation to the Ma Evening on 8 May 1926), Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM-lev. 1457.
- 26 Lajos Kassák, "Mentor" (Poster), 1926, Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM
- 27 *Magyar Grafika* 5–6 (1928): cover
- 28 Friedrich Kiesler, "Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theater-technik", in Lothar Lang, *Konstruktivismus und Buchkunst*, 82.
- 29 Marc Dachy, *Journal du mouvement Dada 1915–1923* (Genève: Skira, 1989), 179.
- 30 Ludwig Kassák, *Ma Bildarchitektur* (Wien: Ma Verlag, 1921)
- 31 Lajos Kassák, *Álláspont. Tények és új lehetőségek (Viewpoint: Facts and New Possibilities)* (Wien: Ma, 1924)
- 32 1924. Tibor Déry, Henrik Glauber, Lajos Kassák, József Nádas, Róbert Reiter and Aladár Tamás: *An Antology* (Wien: Ma, 1924)
- 33 Lajos Kassák, "DUR folder", 1924, paper, ink and collage, Szombathely Gallery, inv. no. G.86.82.1.
- 34 Lajos Kassák, *1 Ma – Asszonyomnak (1 Today: For My Lady)* (Wien: Ma, 1921)
- 35 Lajos Kassák, "Tolo Porzellanwaren", *Magyar Grafika* 5–6 (1928): 163.; Lajos Kassák, *Tisztaság könyve* (Budapest: Horizont, 1926); Lajos Kassák, "Nyugat will give bronze plaques to its subscribers", 1928, Hungarian National Library, inv. no. 111.
- 36 Tibor Déry, *Ébredjétek fel (Wake Up)* (Budapest: Génius, 1929); József Nádas, *Megy körben az arc (Face-go-round)* (Budapest: Dokumentum, 1927); Károly Kristóf, *Mestercsapás (Masterstroke)* (Budapest: Dokumentum, 1927)
- 37 Lajos Kassák, "Magyar Hírlap" ("Hungarian News") 1924, poster, Hungarian National Library, inv. no. 89/1924.; *Dokumentum. Művészeti és társadalmi beszámoló (Document. Report on Art and Society)*, edited by Lajos Kassák, March 1927: back cover; April 1927: cover; *Munka. Művészeti és társadalmi beszámoló (Work. Report on Art and Society)*, edited by Lajos Kassák in Budapest, 1–10 (1928–1929)
- 38 Lajos Kassák, "Kiosk", *Der Sturm* 2 (1924): 73.; Lajos Kassák, "Reklámkiosk", in *Tisztaság könyve* (Budapest: Horizont,

Advertising Kiosk, before 1926



REKLAM-KIOSK



Lajos Kassák, *Egy ember élete* (*The Life of a Man*) (Budapest: Magvető, 1957), cover, 192x125 mm

- 1926) – Heidrun Schröder-Kehler contends that “the earliest design for the advertisement kiosk was Kassák’s. It is nevertheless attributed to Rodchenko; in 1920, Kassák got hold of a photograph of his 1919 design for a newsstand. Heidrun Schröder-Kehler, “Die Künstler erobern die Warenwelt”, 395. A photograph of Rodchenko’s newsstand design, taken and signed by the artist, is part of the permanent collection of the Kassák Museum.
- 39 Iwan Tschichold, “Elementare Typographie”, in Iwan Tschichold ed., *Typographische Mitteilungen. Sonderheft “elementare typographie”* (Leipzig: Bildungsverband der Deutschen Buchdrucker, Oktober 1925): 198, 200.
- 40 Heidrun Schröder-Kehler, “Künstler erobern die Warenwelt”, 391–392, 396.
- 41 Lajos Kassák, “Twinting”, 1921, paper and collage, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Lajos Kassák, “Dynamic construction”, 1922–1924, cardboard, canvas, tempera paint and collage, 248x214 mm, Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM-M-89.3.1.
- 42 Krisztina Passuth, *Tranzit* (Budapest: Új Művészet, 1996), 65.
- 43 Lajos Kassák and László Moholy-Nagy, *Új művészek könyve* (*The Book of New Artists*) (Wien: Ma, 1922)
- 44 Lajos Kassák, “Steyer Auto”, 1926, paper and Collage, 295x210 mm, the Károly László collection
- 45 Lajos Kassák, “Tó mozi” (“Tó Cinema”), 1926. *Magyar Grafika* 5–6 (1928): 157.
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- 50 Sándor Herzog, “Jan Tschichold: Die neue Typographie”, *Munka* 4 (1929): 126–127.
- 51 Cited by: Tibor Szántó, *A betű. A betűtörténet és a korszerű betűművészet rövid áttekintése* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1965), vol. 1, 122.
- 52 Krisztina Passuth, *Moholy-Nagy* (Budapest: Corvina, 1982), 35.
- 53 Ludwig Kassák, “Malerei und Fotografie” [Manuscript], Kassák Museum, inv. no. KM-an. 90. His commentary, which had been published in the Amsterdam journal *i 10* in 1927, appeared in the following article: Lajos Kassák, “Budapest’s Second International Photography Exhibit”, *Századunk* 9 (1927): 527.
- 54 Júlia Szabó, “A címlap fontos”, 93.
- 55 Lajos Kassák, *Egy ember élete* vol. 1–3 (Budapest: Pantheon, 1927)
- 56 Lajos Kassák, “Hungária Hírlapnyomda R.T.” [Leaflet], 1926–1928, *Magyar Grafika* 5–6 (1928): 167.
- 57 Lajos Gró, *Az orosz filmművészet* (*Russian Cinema*) (Budapest: Munka, 1931)
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- 59 Hans Jäger, *Mi a hitlerizmus? (What is Hitlerism?)* (Budapest: Munka, 1932)
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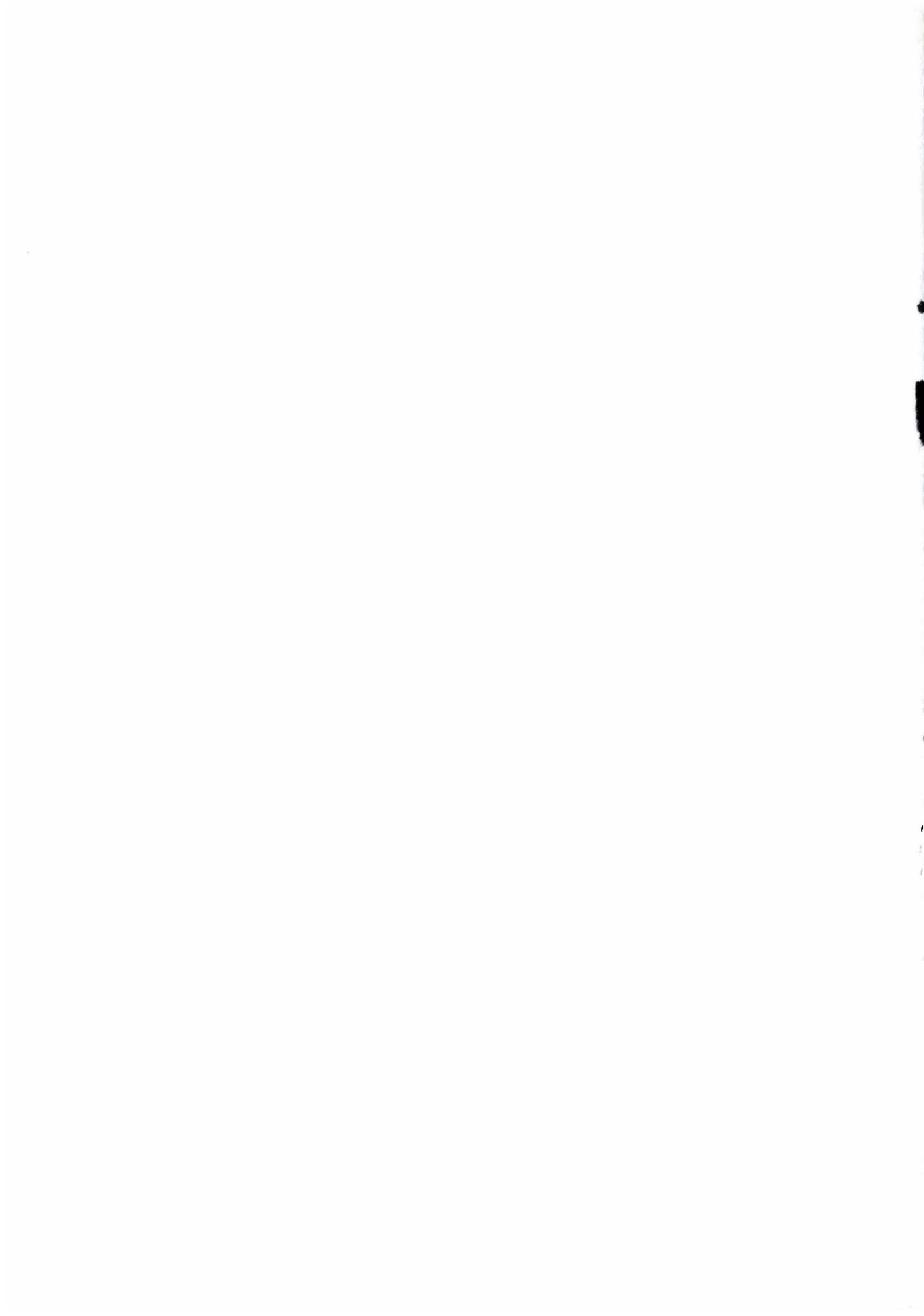
Lajos Kassák, *Munkanélküliek (The Unemployed)* (Budapest: Magvető, 1957) Cover, 192x125 mm

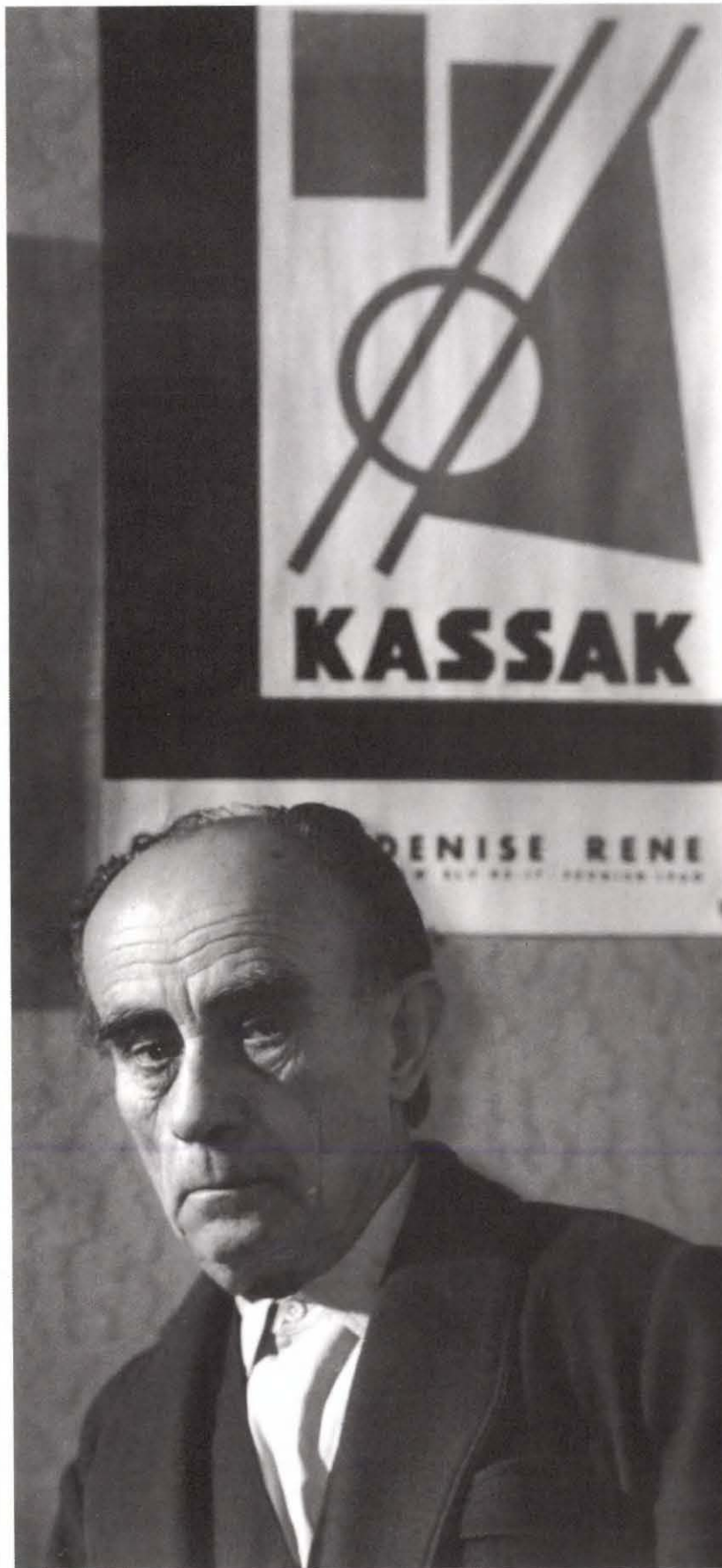
- unter Umständen Kunst sein", 129. The exhibitors were: Willi Baumeister, Herbert Bayer, Max Burchartz, Walter Dexel, Lajos Kassák, Hans Leistikow, Robert Michel, László Moholy-Nagy, Johannes Molzahn, Paul Schuitema, Kurt Schwitters, Georg Trump, Jan Tschichold, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, Piet Zwart, A. M. Cassandre, Walter Cyliax, John Heartfield, Fritz Lewy, Oskar Nerlinger, Wilhelm Poetter, Karel Teige, Wilhelm Wüstermann. – Kurt Schwitters, "Der Ring »neue werbegestalter«. Neue Werbegrafik", in "Typografie kann unter Umständen Kunst sein", 130. Exhibiting their work: Willi Baumeister, Max Burchartz, Walter Dexel, Cesar Domela, Hans Leistikow, Robert Michel, Paul Schuitema, Kurt Schwitters, Georg Trump, Jan Tschichold, Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart, Piet Zwart, Walter Cyliax, Lajos Kassák, Johannes Molzahn, Karel Teige.
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