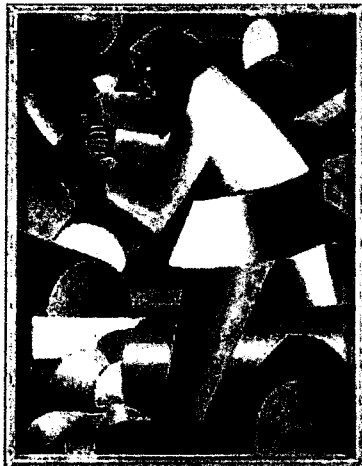


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Rare Glimpse of the Elusive Kazimir Malevich

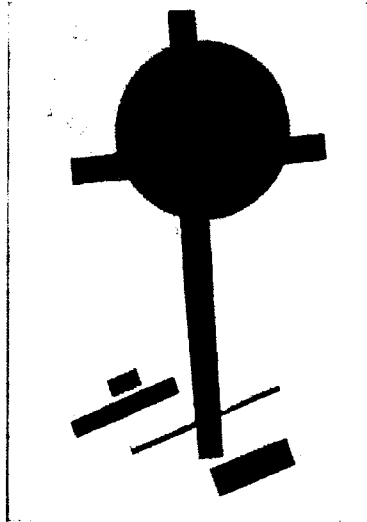
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November 5, 2013



Collection Stedelijk Museum
Amsterdam

Kazimir Malevich's "The Woodcutter," from 1912, is a part of the show at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.



Collection Stedelijk Museum
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Malevich's "Mystic Suprematism (red cross on black circle)," from 1920-1922.

collected this kind of work in Russia while it was forbidden art. Abstract art was not allowed to be

AMSTERDAM — Radical art, revolution, celebrity, suppression, arrest, obscurity and rediscovery — the life of the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich traced a dramatic arc. But for most art lovers, he is remembered for a single black square.

In 1915, Malevich painted a black square on a square canvas against a white background. He called it the "zero of form," representing a simultaneous end point of figurative painting and the beginning of a new pictorial vocabulary.

Presented that year in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) at the "Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 0.10," it changed the course of art, and influenced such disparate genres as Dada, Surrealism and Minimalism. He called it "Suprematism," art based on "pure artistic feeling."

Now the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, which already owns 24 Malevich paintings — more than any other museum outside of Russia — has brought together two of the world's most important collections of Malevich works. "Kazimir Malevich and the Russian Avant-Garde," which runs through Feb. 2, is the most comprehensive retrospective of the painter in 20 years.

"There is hardly any artist in the world who hasn't thought about that black square," said Achim Borchardt-Hume, the head of exhibitions at Tate Modern in London. "He's one of those artists who exercises an enormous pull on the imagination of other artists, but there are very few people who have actually seen his works."

That's because most of Malevich's paintings have never made it outside of Russia, and many of his works on paper, which are now thought to be crucial to understanding his development, have been in a private collection that has not been exhibited. The works included in the Stedelijk show are drawn from the George Costakis collection of Russian avant-garde paintings from the Museum of Contemporary Art, in Thessaloniki, Greece, as well as the Khardzhiev Collection, an unmatched trove of archival materials preserved by the Russian art critic Nikolai Khardzhiev.

Mr. Khardzhiev's collection includes the largest assemblage of Malevich works on paper anywhere. "These were two pioneers in collecting this form of art in Russia," said Bart Rutten, the curator of the Stedelijk exhibition. "What is particularly interesting is that they