Futurist Primitivism: Between the Folk, the Naïve and the Exotic

Deadline: May 15, 2021

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Since its inception in 2011, the International Yearbook of Futurism Studies has published articles on Futurism and its influence in Italy, Russia and beyond. We are currently seeking proposals for essays that consider Futurism's engagement with Modernist Primitivism before and after World War I. Although Futurism is best known for its modernolatria, or interest in technology and urban life, individuals affiliated with this movement engaged with Primitivism in Italy and other parts of the world. For instance, Futurist Primitivism responded to and shaped Italian colonialism in Africa, especially after the invasion of Libya and the Abyssinian war. Marinetti himself was born in Egypt, and his exploration of Otherness included not only the representation of Africans and Arabs, but also collaborating with 'primitives' closer to home, such as peasant poets from Southern Italy. Native primitivism was therefore not only intimately related to the Southern question, but also to the national heritage, e.g. the Trecento painters of the Sienese School.

This interest in the Primitive, whether in light of exotic or non-European works of art, the evocation of savagery and violence, or the reliance on vernacular solutions were taken up by intellectuals in Europe and elsewhere. In other countries, Primitivism allowed artists and intellectuals to adapt the Italian movement, reflect regional concerns and represent indigenous groups as well as other sorts of internal Others.

This volume of the International Yearbook of Futurism Studies seeks to explore Futurist Primitivism as a broad phenomenon, an anti-classical impulse that questioned modernity while proposing new ways of building local, regional, national and individual aesthetics and identities.

We suggest the following topics but are open to other subjects:

-Futurism, non-Western art and colonialism
-Futurism and Orientalism
-The appropriation of folk art, regional dialects and other vernacular aesthetics
-Futurism, indigenous populations and the internal Other
-Futurists as barbarians, primitives and spontaneous creators

-Tensions between regional and national efforts
-Intersections with the art created by outsiders: naïve artists, the mentally ill and children

Proposal format: Title, abstract of no more than 500 words, and a short bio (100 words), submitted to aguirre81@gmail.com by May 15, 2021.

Essays should have an average length of 8,000 words and include 3-4 figures.

These are the deadlines:

Notification of acceptance of abstract: June 30, 2021

Draft essays received: March 2023

Final version of essay: March 2024

Publication date: May 2025

Reference:
CFP: Futurist Primitivism: Between the Folk, the Naïve and the Exotic. In: ArtHist.net, Feb 18, 2021 (accessed Nov 25, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/33435>.