

Kazimir Malevich

K. Malevich

Winter Landscape

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Winter Landscape

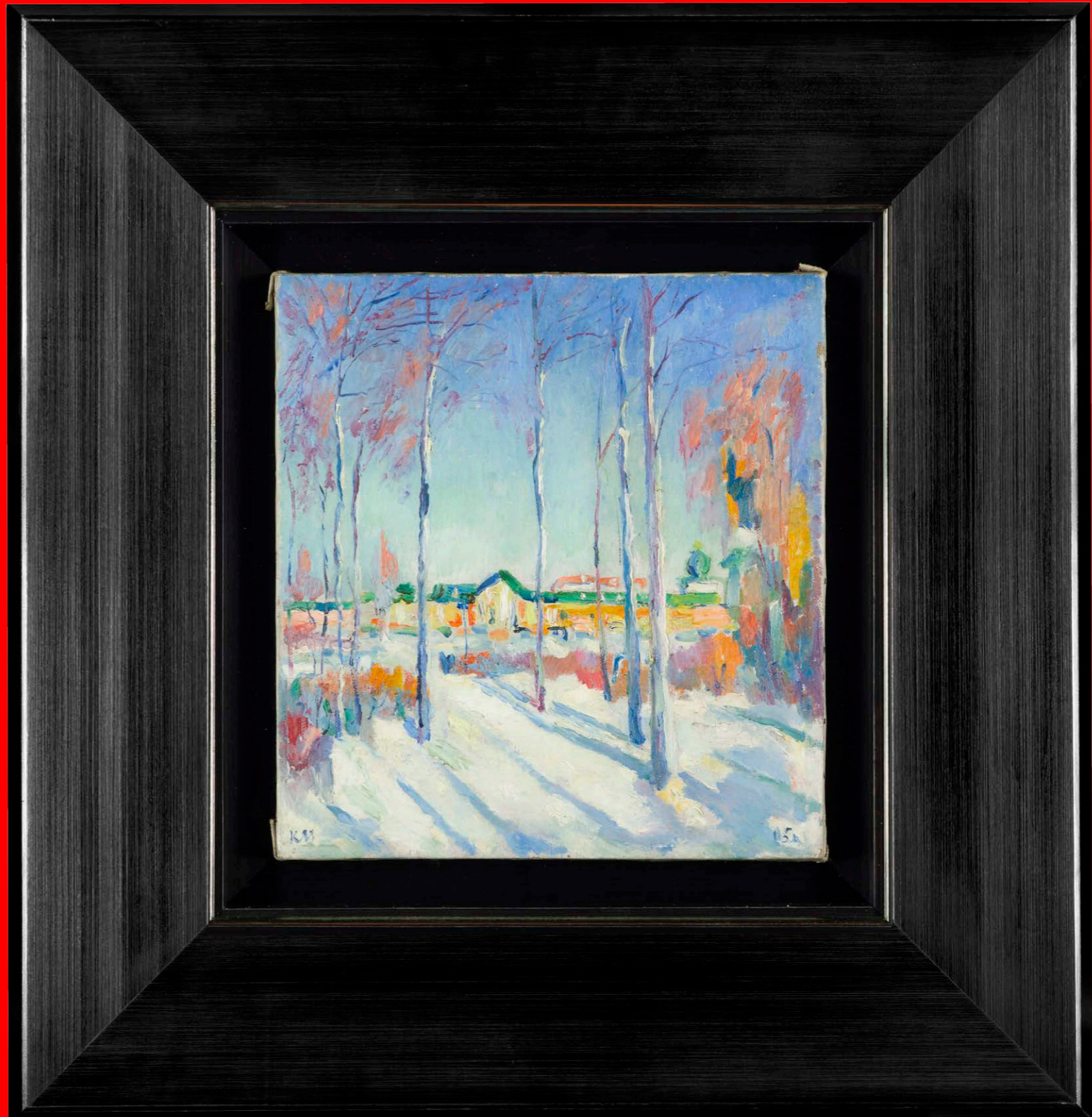
Intro

Kazimir Malevich
Kiev 1879–1935 Leningrad

Winter Landscape

Oil on canvas 36.8 by 34.5 cm
Signed with the monogram “KM” (lower left)
and inscribed “05r” (lower right). Malevich
dated his impressionist works with earlier
dates more than once
Year: 1929

Moving away from the absolute austerity exemplified by his abstract Black Square, Kazimir Malevich, the originator of the Suprematist movement, returned to figurative painting. Around 1928, Malevich created a series of small-sized landscapes employing impressionist techniques. Some of them were painted in the environs of Nemchinovka, in the Moscow oblast; others were executed in Kiev. That they were mainly summer landscapes serves to re-emphasize the significance and uniqueness of the work presented. Being an art theorist, philosopher, and innovator, Malevich wanted to illustrate how the language of art could continue to develop. Thus these later impressionistic paintings by Malevich can be understood as conceptual studies.



Provenance

“An artist of such high spiritual intelligence as Malevich simply offered up one of his own works. It was a great honour for him to give and for my father to be able to accept this gift”
Leonid Puterman



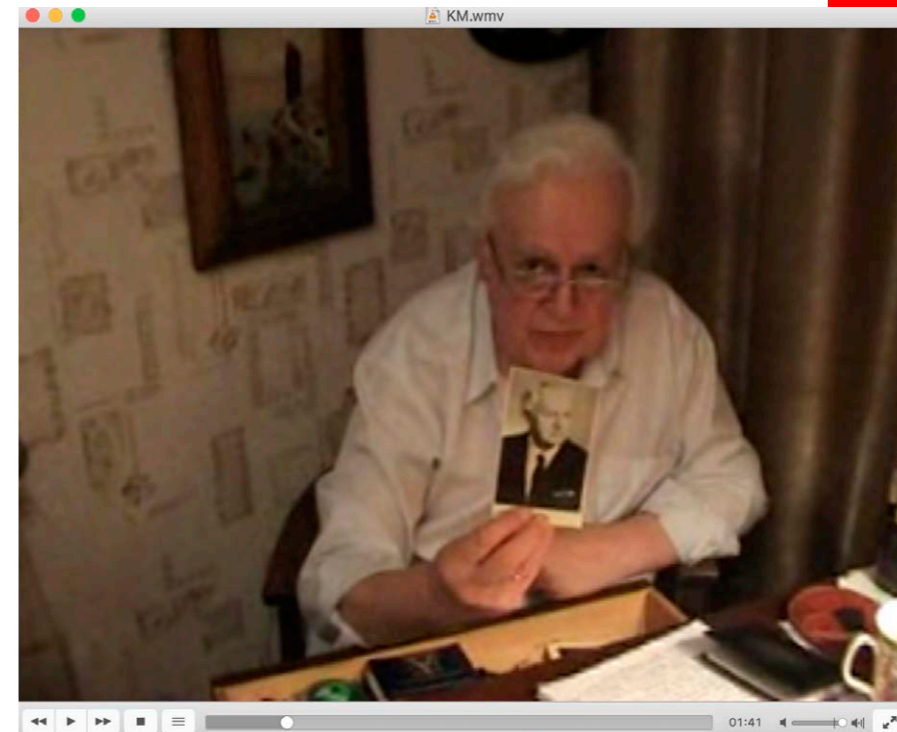
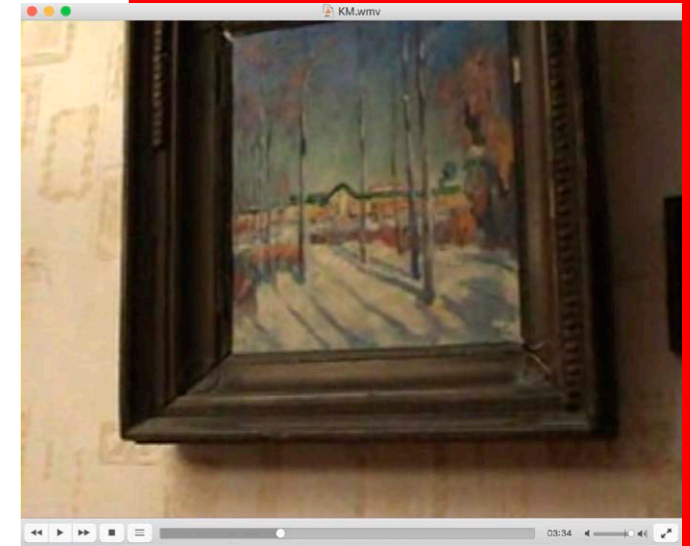
The painting was donated in the early 1930s by the artist to Natan Semenovich Puterman (a brilliant surgeon, urologist and clinician, who treated the artist)

By descent to Leonid Natanovitch Puterman (Academician of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Building Sciences, Professor of the International Academy of Architecture)

Private collection, Europe

Still from a video showing Leonid speaking about his father, Nathan Puterman and the collection of paintings and sculptures offered by different artists (Kazimir Malevich, Nikolay Suetin, Mikhail Dydykin and others), which he received in recognition not only for his skills as a doctor and researcher, but also as a close friend.

In his video address, Leonid also recounts his childhood memories of seeing the artist Kazimir Malevich pay several visits to his home. Later, Puterman's father told him that the picture, painted by Malevich, was offered as a gift to thank the doctor for his assistance in understanding grief and the overall healing process. This would have been sometime around the 1930s. In the years since, the painting did not once leave the Puterman family's apartment in Leningrad (now St Petersburg), managing to avoid damage throughout both World War II and the entire Soviet period. In this time, the picture survived the Siege of Leningrad, the explosion of a shell in a nearby building and an apartment flooding. Even the original frame has been preserved.



Leonid shows a photo of his father, Nathan Puterman from the family archive

Provenance

Konstantin Rozhdestvensky (1906–1997), who was a pupil of Malevich and a Suprematist painter recalls: ‘He was incredibly generous. During the time of his illness, he was observed by Dr Puterman, a charming, not so old man - he was maybe in his late thirties at that time, and they had a good relationship. And Malevich once took a painting off the wall and presented it to him. He actually used to give his works away quite willingly’. (Ksenia Buksha, K. S. Malevich.- M.: Young Guard, 2013).

Born in Tomsk, Konstantin Rozhdestvensky commenced his art studies in his hometown: between 1919 and 1922, he was a student at M.M. Poliakov’s private studio and at the art studio attached to the Tomsk House of Education. His teachers could not fail to notice the boy’s talent, and in September of 1923, he was sent to Petrograd to study. There, he was accepted to study at the Museum of Art Culture, and later at the State Institute for Art Culture (Ginkhuk) before finally, at the age of seventeen, becoming a pupil of Kazimir Malevich.

His time spent studying under the great master left a great impression on the young student – years later, Rozhdestvensky would stress the vital importance of his mentor’s teaching. Guided by Malevich, the young artist learned to understand the logic and laws governing the development of form and to analyse the various aspects of art. The author of many fascinating design projects, Konstantin Ivanovich Rozhdestvensky lived a long and productive life, travelling to many countries with his exhibitions. An outstanding personality, who rubbed shoulders with the likes of Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger, Aristide Maillol, Giorgio De Chirico and other eminent artists, Rozhdestvensky never-

theless felt unfulfilled. His artistic talent and astuteness as an art critic and researcher, which Malevich had noted and nurtured, proved ill-suited to the times in which he lived.

Konstantin Rozhdestvensky.
Self-portrait with a towel on head, 1930



Exhibitions

The Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, 2010

PAM — Salon Point Art Monaco. 12–16 June 2014, Monaco

BRAFA — the Brussels Art Fair. 24 January – 1 February, 2015, Brussels, Belgium

PAM — Salon Point Art Monaco. 22–26 July, 2015, Monaco

Exhibition of Russian avant-garde paintings. Kandinsky and his contemporaries. On the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Wassily Kandinsky. 16 December, 2016 – 31 December, 2017, ‘Art Centre. Moscow’, Moscow, Russia

Bibliography

The Russian Museum’s catalogue, Russian Winter/ Almanac, Palace Editions, Saint Petersburg, 2010, p. 75 (with colour illustration)



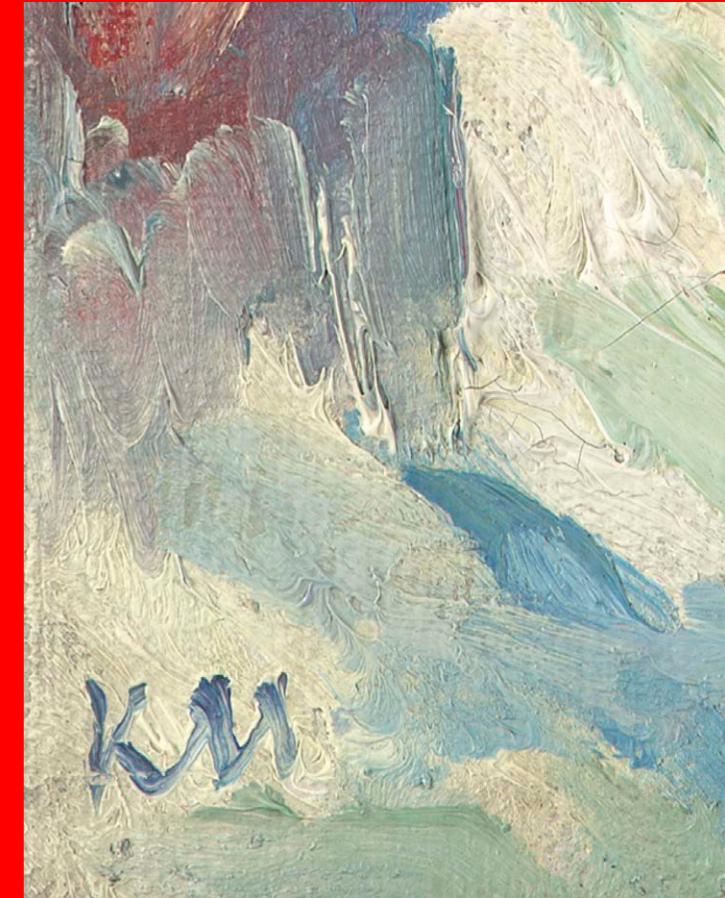
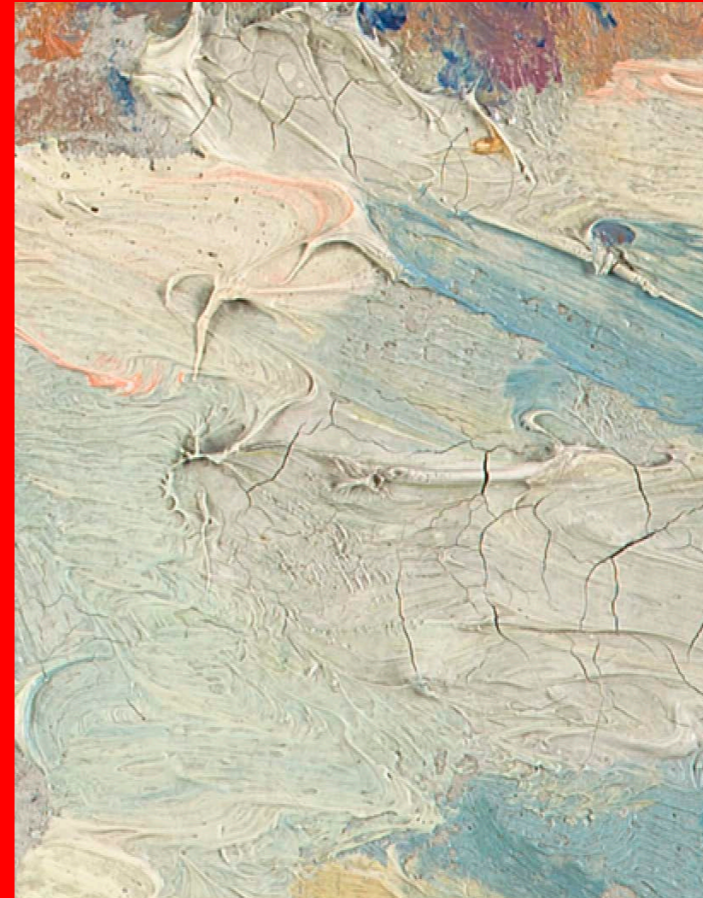
Investigation of the painting

The picture was examined in detail by the Expert Council of the State Russian Museum (Saint Petersburg, Russia), by Ms. Alexandra Shatskikh, Doctor of Art History and researcher on the Russian avant-garde, specialist in Kazimir Malevich and Marc Chagall's vast oeuvre and by the Institute of Precambrian Geology and Geochronology (Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences).



Dr. Alexandra Shatskikh is an art historian and a world authority on the Russian avant-garde. She is the author of numerous books, and more than 250 articles on the art of Marc Chagall, Kazimir Malevich and other great avant-gardists, which have been translated into 13 languages and are included in 981 library collections.

Today, Dr. Alexandra Shatskikh lives in New York City, and as a visiting professor, currently teaches Russian art history at the Universities of South California, Maryland, and Texas (Austin).



Selected Books
by Alexandra Shatskikh



Vitebsk: The Life of Art
Auteur: Aleksandra Shatskikh



Black Square: Malevich and the Origin of Suprematism
Author: Aleksandra Shatskikh
Translator: Marian Schwartz



Kazimir Malevich and the Russian Avant-garde:
Featuring Selections from the Khardziev and Costakis Collections
Auteur: Linda S. Boersma, Bart Rutten, Aleksandra Shatskikh

The authenticity of this painting has been verified using scientific methods:

Colour imaging with a resolution exceeding 1000 dpi;
microscopic analysis of the painted surface and of the signature;
infrared reflectography;
ultraviolet fluorescence;
chemical and radionuclide analysis of the painting layers.

Conclusions

The above observations and the results of the scientific examinations give us a series of positive indications of the painting's natural ageing:

- Natural craquelure
- Coherent material of the signature
- Use of coherent pigments
- Little number of restored areas

Kazimir Malevich biography

“ The transmission of real objects onto a canvas is the art of skillful reproduction, that’s all. And between the art of creating and the art of repeating there is a great difference ” Kazimir Malevich

Russian painter, graphic artist, teacher, art theoretician, philosopher. Founder of the school of Suprematism, the art of geometric abstraction. A major artist of the early twentieth century, one of the leading representatives of the Russian avant-garde.

Kazimir Severinovich Malevich was born in 1878 in Kiev; he started his art education in Kiev Art School (1895-1896), then moved to Moscow and entered the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (1904-1905). Brought up on naturalism, Malevich soon became interested into the development of colour and light, seeking to convey the vibration and movement of air. In less than ten years, the artist passed from Realism through Impressionism, Fauvism, and Futurism, before finally reaching the abstract art of Suprematism. This movement proceeded in parallel with the development of his theoretical studies.

The turning point in Malevich’s career came in 1910. The artist began to focus on a two-dimensional, planar interpretation of both his

subject and the fixed composition. In his works of the period, space and volume are represented by variant colour ratios (Peasants, Head of a Peasant, etc.). Already in these works, the subject is nothing more than an excuse, serving as a canvas on which to perform formal decisions. But soon the artist would completely reject the constraints of his subject, deconstructing each form into its component parts and reimagining them in various combinations taken from different points of view in arbitrary compositions (Cubism of 1911-1912). In these works, Malevich deconstructs his subject into its most basic geometric forms (circle, square, two intersecting planes) and makes them the basis of his abstract cubist constructions. The logical conclusion of this progression was the non-objective art (1913-1918) of the abstract and conditional transfer of ‘pure’ motion and space, subject-free combinations composed of simple geometric forms (Suprematism). Alongside with the study of subject-free Suprematist forms, the artist also worked on the construction of form as it related to colour, creating comparative works in various shades. (1915-1916).

Kazimir Malevich biography

The contrast of viewing two shifted visual impressions of a single form lends the figure a roundness and sense of movement without disturbing the two-dimensionality and immobility of the composition (female figures).

Starting in 1922, the artist began working on the challenge of creating new architectural forms on the basis of his Suprematist theory (the so-called 'Planits' and 'Architectons'). Suprematism was viewed by the artist as a manifestation of the highest form of creative will. With his art he aspired to create a 'space language', to establish the 'world order', the 'laws of the universal structure of the universe'.

From 1919 to 1922, Malevich taught at the New Revolutionary Model National Art School in Vitebsk. In the 1920s, he took part in the set and prop design of Mayakovsky's *Mystery Buff* plays. From 1923 to 1927 he worked as the director of the Leningrad State Institute of Art Culture. He also served as a member of the Association of Modern Architects. In early 1930 the artist's paintings were displayed at exhibitions in Berlin and Vienna.

Kazimir Malevich was a propagandist of his own theory. People found him interesting; he in turn was a skilled speaker who knew how to win people over. Over time, a group of like-minded colleagues known as UNOVIS (Proponents of New Art) formed around him. Malevich's most famous work, *Black Square* (1915), became a kind of pictorial manifesto of Suprematism; today its fame is near-universal. Subsequent works such as *Black Circle* and *Black Cross* served as mystical corollaries to the famous work.

Today, works by Kazimir Malevich are displayed in the collections of many Russian and foreign museums, including the State Russian Museum in Saint Petersburg, the State Tretyakov Gallery and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, which along with the Russian Museum has the most significant collection of works by the master.

Kazimir Malevich
teaching students of UNOVIS, Vitebsk, 1925



From Impressionism to Suprematism



Kazimir Malevich in front of his paintings. 1924

One of the founders and protagonists of abstract art in the early XX century, the charismatic, self-assured Kazimir Malevich continued to make a significant impact on the development of art and design in his later years. He was a constant adherent to the idea of creating new art for the new era and new society, and as well as being an influential educator he had become a true leader of the artistic avant-garde movements in Russia.

As a pedagogue and a conceptual artist, Malevich saw such a need to explain, or even justify, his artistic path, that in 1919, at his first one-man show at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, he added as an epigraph to the exposition the subtitle 'From Impressionism to Suprematism'.

The former he saw as a cornerstone of the modern art movement. There are records of him telling his students, 'I would like to work with you on Impressionism so that it passes from simple knowledge into sensation, becoming a true feeling. People have spent almost 50 years on this work, but we will do it in a year or a half'.

The choice to focus on Impressionism in Malevich's teaching was not at all accidental, rather it reflected the artist's own stylistic progression, one he shared with many of his contemporaries in the Russian avant-garde. This progression can be described as starting from Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, moving through to Neo-Primitivism and later encompassing Cubism and Futurism (and Cubo-Futurism, a typical Russian mixture of the latter two).

Today we know that the famous Suprematist movement first came to light in 1915 at the 0.10. Last Futurist Exhibition, where the Black Square, along with other works was shown. Suprematism was a true turning point in Malevich's oeuvre and in the history of art in general.

"The artist has liberated himself from all ideas, images, notions, all objects arising from them and the entire structure of didactic life. Such is the philosophy of Suprematism, which brings Art out to itself, i.e. to Art as such". With these words, Malevich can be seen to be moving towards the realm of pure abstraction, abandoning the links of form, meaning and any idea of perspective that had accompanied art up to that point, and exploring new ideas on the 'existence of matter' itself.

Opening the door to this new realm had a great impact on Malevich and his followers. One entry from his associate Varvara Stepanova's diary dating from November 1918 reads: '...Malevich has reached the point that maybe there is no need to paint anymore, only preach'.

In the new Suprematist space he created, the activity of a painter was limited and provided not much sense to go on with the traditional "easel" painting, but to go into design and architecture, as we see Malevich himself did from his graphic projects of 1920s and the famous Architects.

Architecton Gota, 1923. Plaster.
The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg



Installation view of 0.10 (Zero-Ten)
The Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting

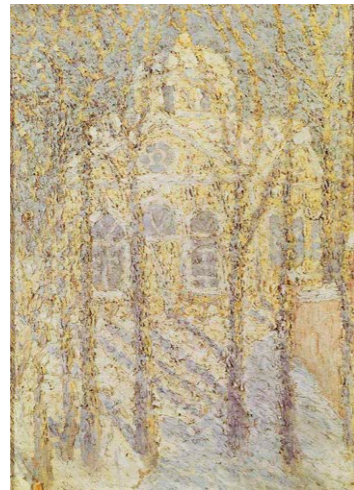
From Impressionism to Suprematism

Malevich became acquainted with the French Impressionists around 1904 on a visit to the private collections of Ivan Morozov and Sergei Schukin, where he was immensely impressed by Claude Monet's Rouen Cathedrals, as well as by the works of Cézanne. Malevich's Impressionist works from 1903-1906 bear this influence: for example *The Church* (1905),

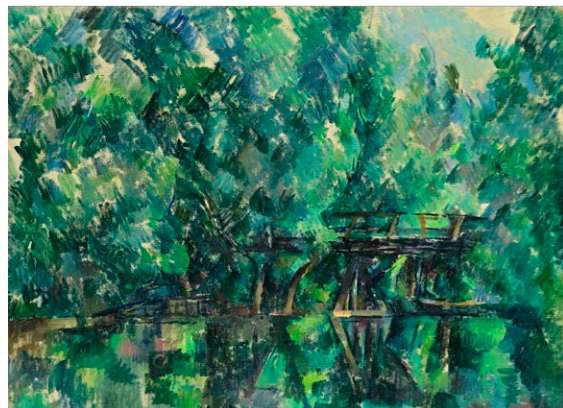
held in an important private collection, or *On the Boulevard* (1903), in The State Russian Museum's collection, as well as other paintings all display the marks of Malevich's fascination with the impressionist style. However, as Dr. Aleksandra Shatskikh mentions in her paper on *Winter Landscape*, Malevich in this early period was still very much a provincial, almost entirely self-taught artist, whose paintings show clear signs of a certain dilettantism, a feature that would no longer be present when he returned to Impressionism in his later years, then as an accomplished, internationally acclaimed painter.



Claude Monet. *Rouen Cathedral, sunset*. 1892-1894. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (from Shchukin's collection)



Kazimir Malevich. *The Church*, 1905. The George Costakis collection (now in the State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece)



Paul Cézanne. *A Bridge over a Pond*, 1898. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (from Morozov's collection)



Kazimir Malevich. *On the Boulevard*. 1903. The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, Russia



Portrait Of Ivan Kliun, 1913
The State Russian Museum,
St Petersburg, Russia

Malevich understood very well the necessity of documenting his artistic path, in order to schematically show his evolution to the purely abstract art of Suprematism. Apparently, his actual path did not seem convincing enough to present to the public or his students, as evidenced by Malevich's tendency to re-date his works, probably starting with the *Perfected Portrait of Ivan Kliun* (changed from 1913 to 1911) for the exposition of 1929. It would seem that Malevich wanted to show his progression towards Suprematism beginning at least two years earlier, not in 1915, as researchers agree, but in 1913, the year of the famous Futurist opera *Victory Over the Sun*, when the initial idea

of the *Black Square* must have first appeared. According to numerous reports and the accounts of his students and friends, Malevich abandoned painting completely in the 1920s. It was only after his first (and only) trip to Western Europe, for an exposition of his works in Berlin in 1927, that he returned once again to the idea of painting. However, as he had left his entire collection in Germany for the exposition, (the works later passed into the collection of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam), this could have been partially a business-necessitated decision - as he needed works to display for his upcoming one-man show in the Tretyakov Gallery in 1929.

From Impressionism to Suprematism

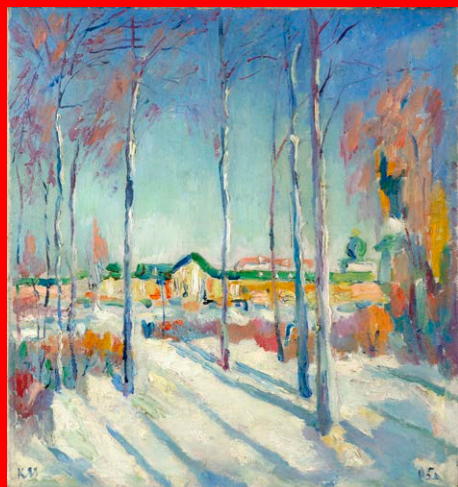
It seems that Malevich took advantage of the need to create new paintings, combining it with his wish to rewrite his own life story in order to create a cleaner, more theoretically favourable version of it. This effort can be seen in the retrospective' works he created in the period between autumn 1927 and 1932. It was shortly before the 1929 exposition that Malevich started painting his late Impressionist works, putting early dates on them (between 1904 and 1906); this continued even after the show had ended.

Malevich's attitude to the Impressionist style a very rational one on one hand, as he used it for his pedagogical needs, intensifying at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s the story of the theory of Impressionism for his students' benefit. From this point of view, this later return to the Impressionism should be considered as something of a lab experiment. Bound to the visual 'language' of the style, Malevich would try to express an artistic idea, showing at once both the benefits and the limitations of the style. These late Impressionist paintings of his were very much of a conceptual nature.

On the other hand, despite Malevich's constant progression towards abstract art, and eventual adoption of a Suprematist style completely freed from the notions of beauty and emotional response, as Dr. Shatskikh points out in her research, Malevich was 'born a painter'. In spite of his history as a cold-blooded theorist, researcher and propagandist, painting was an inescapable passion for the artist, present from his youth straight until the end of his working life, cut short by a heavy illness.



Landscape with yellow house, 1906.
The State Russian Museum,
St Petersburg, Russia



Winter Landscape, 1929.
Private collection



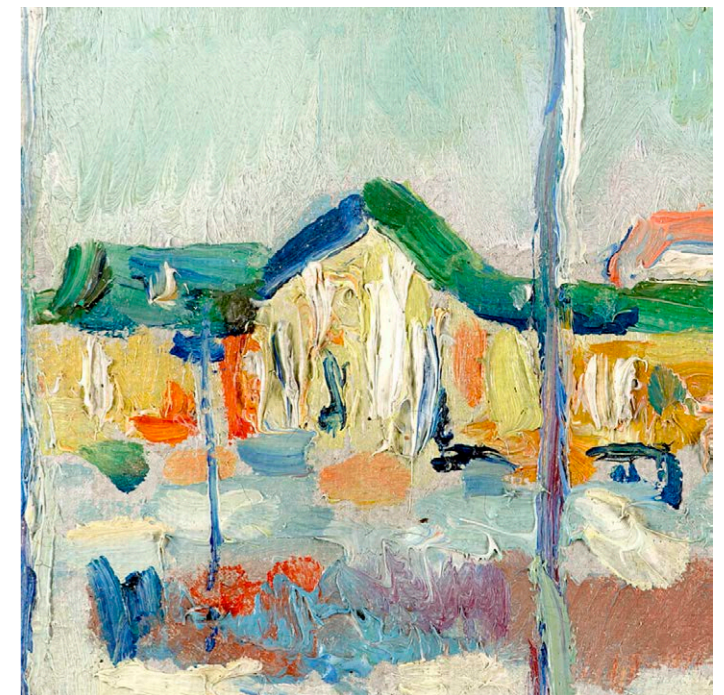
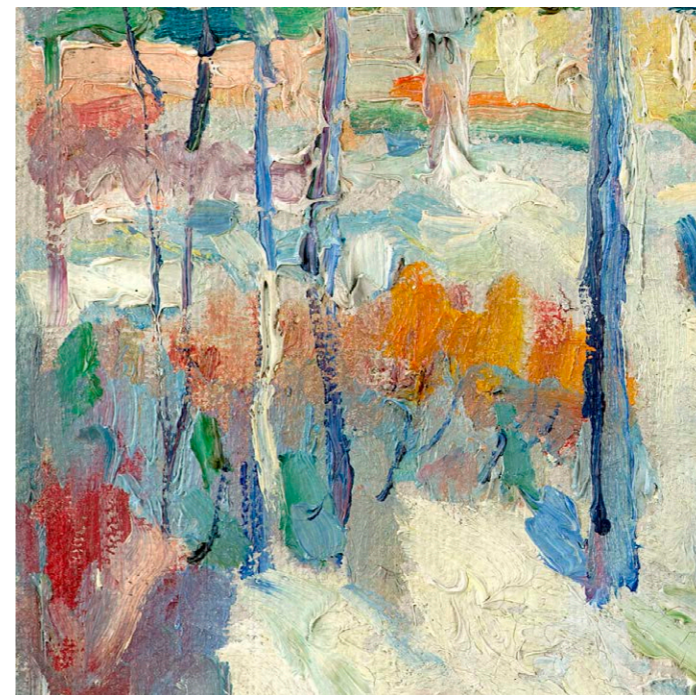
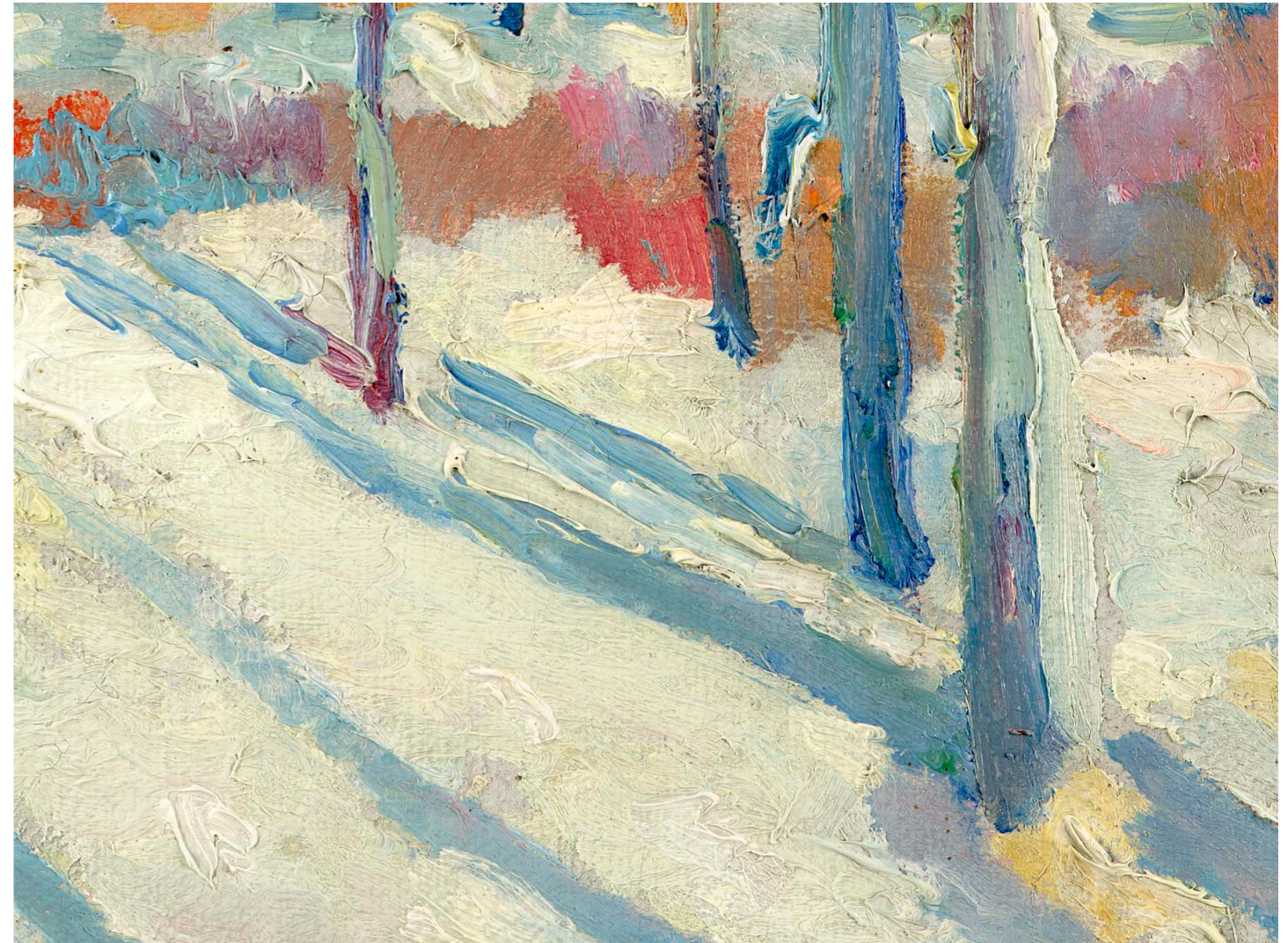
Malevich's bedroom. One of his favorite landscapes in an impressionistic manner "Landscape with yellow house" is on the wall

The largest part of Malevich's late Impressionist works are made up of summer landscapes — summer holidays being the only time when the artist could indulge in his passion of painting. Most of these works are depictions of the views around Nemchinovka, in the Moscow oblast, where the mother of his second wife used to live, or Ukrainian landscapes he painted whilst on holiday with his family.

Two years after the Tretyakov Gallery exhibition, Malevich was arrested. He spent two months in prison. This was the end of the Avant garde in Russia, as all non-Socialist art forms, including both Suprematism and Impressionism were aggressively forced out by the Soviets.

In 1933 Malevich, having made his final artistic statement, fell fatally ill. Hanging above his deathbed was one of his first impressionist pictures, the small sketch 'Landscape with Yellow House'.

Painting fragments



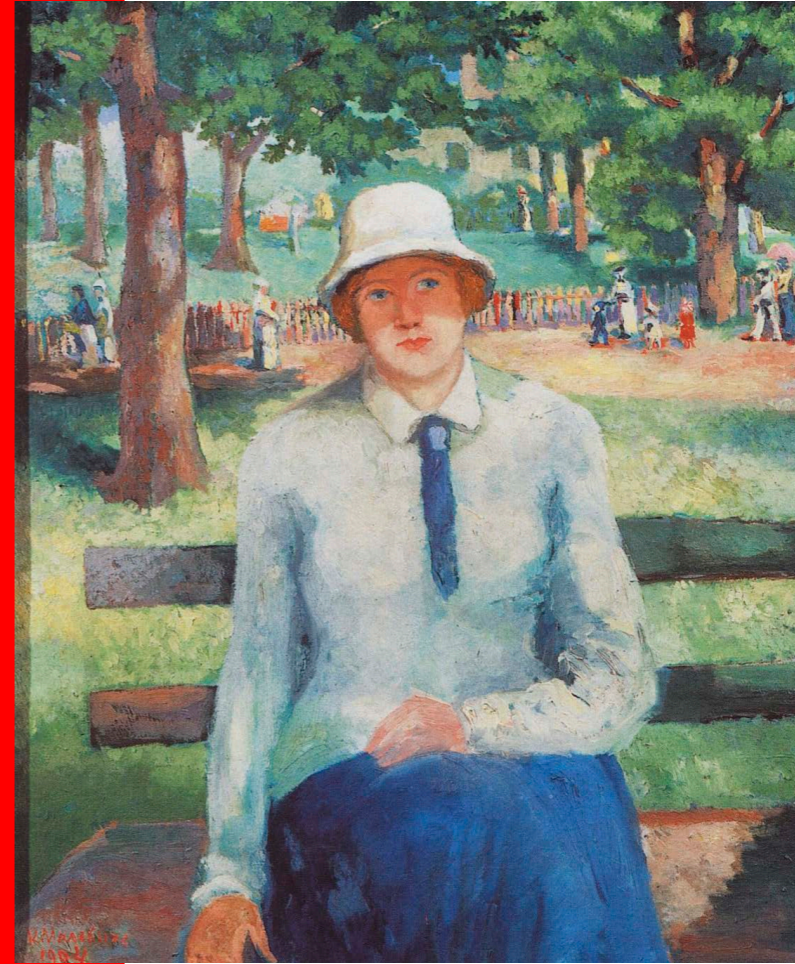
About the Painting

After nearly a ten-year break, Kazimir Malevich had finally returned to painting around 1928. The founder of Suprematism was now once more creating not abstract but figurative works, and along with a cycle of post-suprematist works he now had a collection of landscapes painted from nature using Impressionist methods.

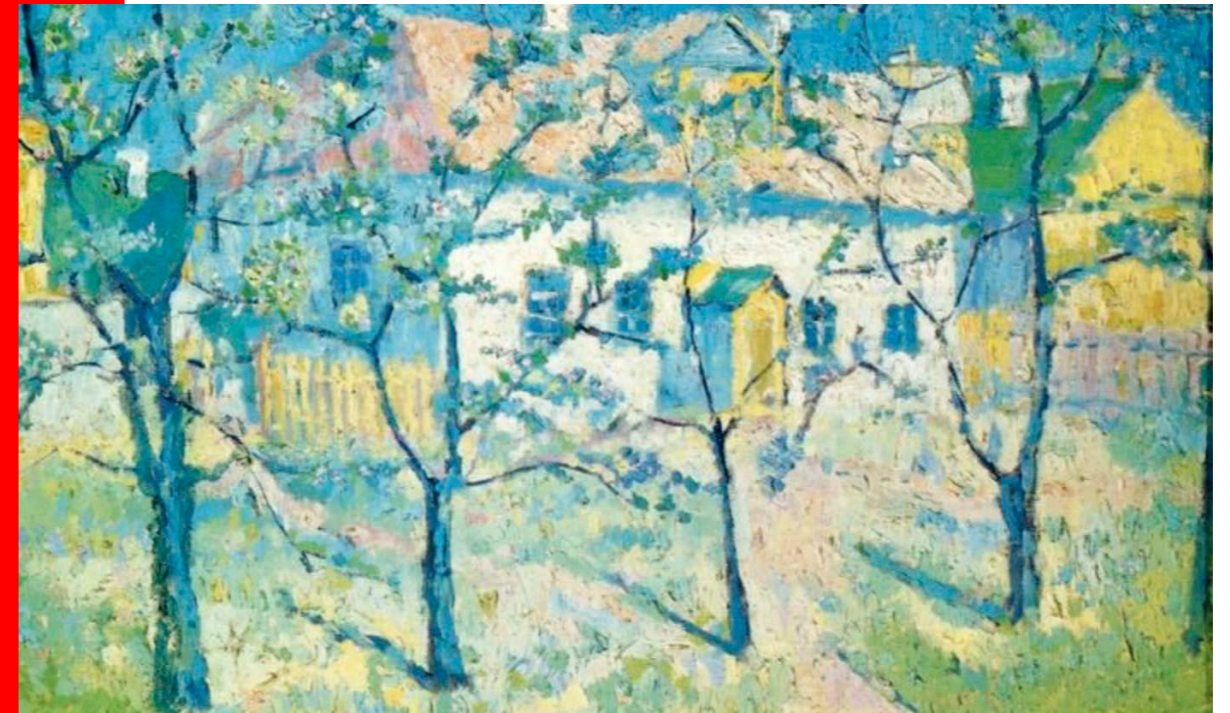
An external incentive for the creation of these works was the preparation of a personal exhibition, timed to coincide with the artist's fiftieth birthday and the thirtieth anniversary of his creative career. The anniversary exhibition opened on November 1, 1929 in the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

From the end of the 1910s, Malevich had defined his path as a progression leading from Impressionism to Suprematism. It was this description that appeared at the artist's first solo exhibition in March of 1920, and his last, in 1929.

By the end of the 1920s, Malevich had created only a few Impressionist early works, and most of these were small sketches. Meanwhile, the most developed composition, *Portrait of a Member of the Artist's Family* (circa 1906), remained in Germany together with the entirety of his Berlin exposition of 1927. It was thus the need to document his Impressionist period with more paintings that motivated the creation of these new, yet pre-dated works in the years 1928-1929.

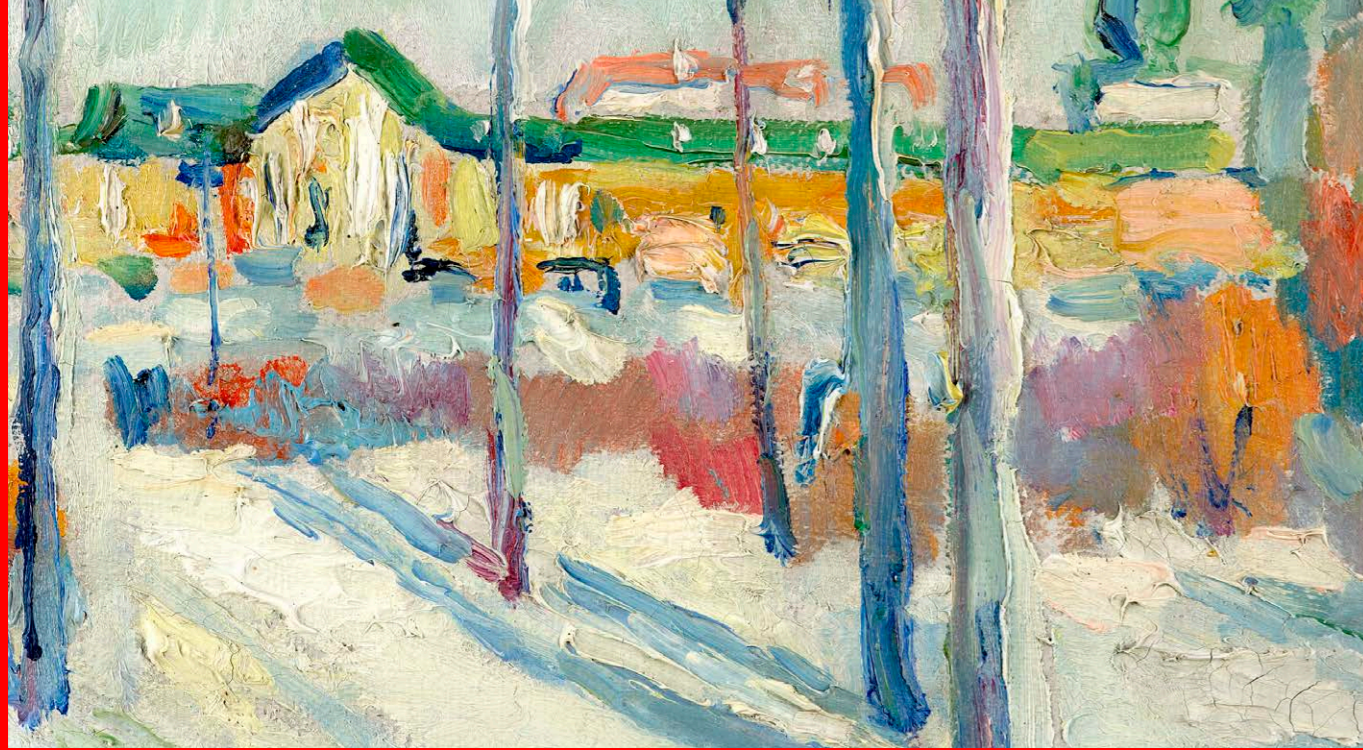


Unemployed Girl, 1904. The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, Russia



Spring - Garden in Blossom. 1904. The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

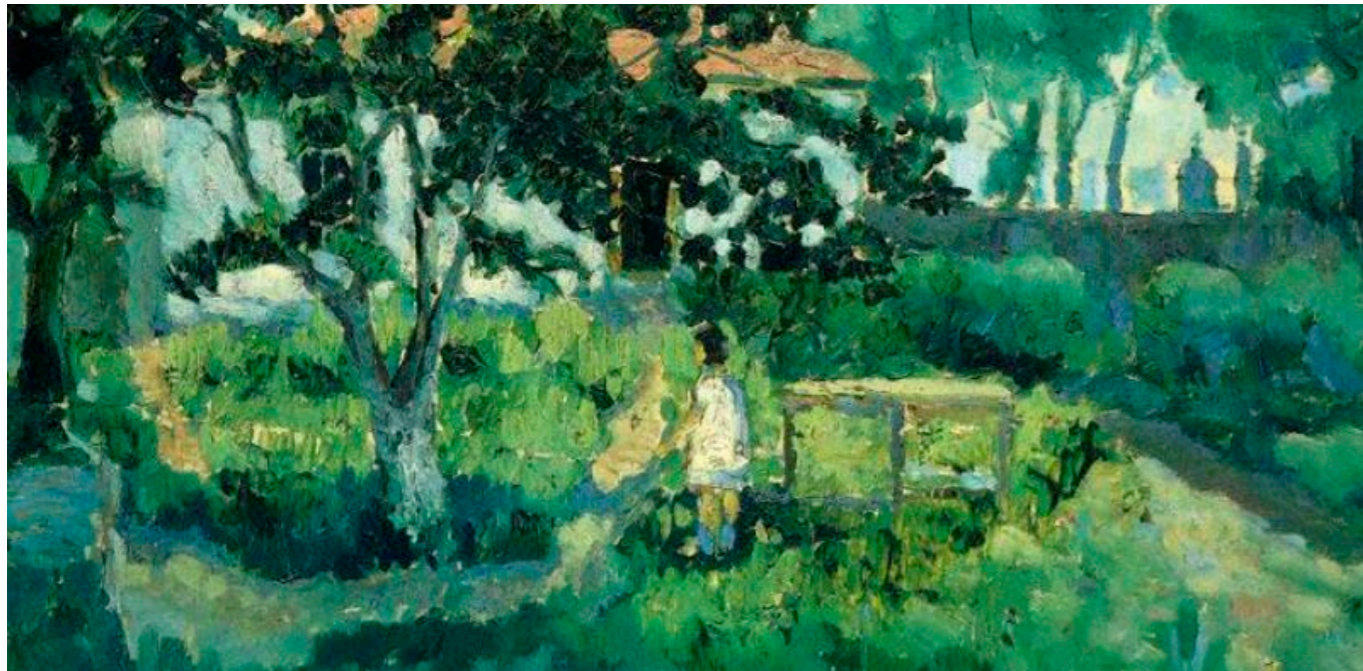
About the Painting



Fragment of the Winter Landscape with other works in an impressionistic manner



Spring, 1929. The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, Russia



Summer landscape, 1928-1929. The State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, Russia



Birkehain 1905. Private collection

About the Painting

In her analysis, Dr. Shatskikh highlights the importance of the landscape, pictured below, describing it as a unique work primarily because it depicts not the usual summer landscape but a winter scene



Kazimir Malevich and his daughter Una



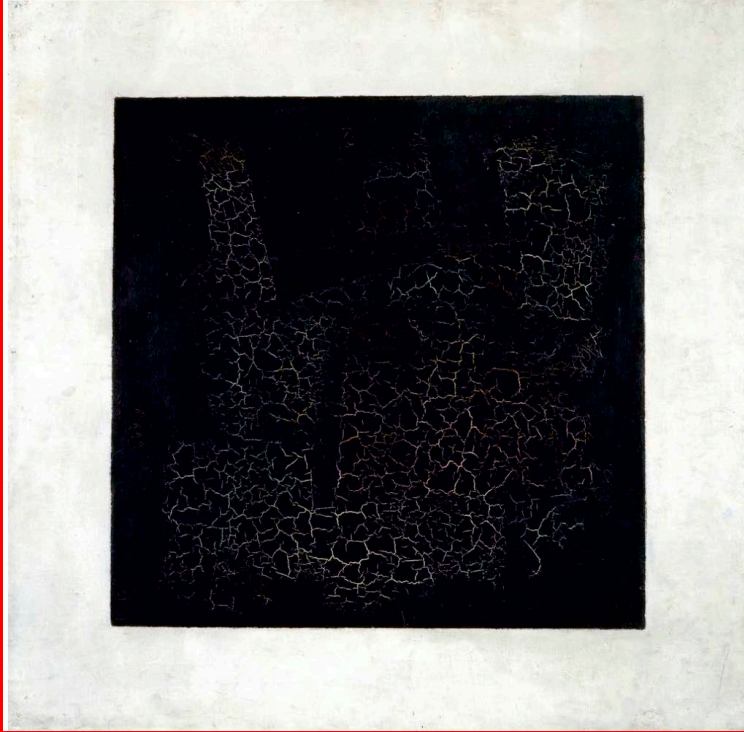
The choice of a winter landscape in general provided relatively more opportunity to demonstrate the rich colours of the Impressionist language. Despite the natural character and improvisational nature of the painting, Winter Landscape contains complex formal features - primarily thanks to the spatial rhythm of the carefully thought-out composition, with its verticals of tree trunks and the diagonals of shadows.

It should be pointed out that this hoax was far from a simple one. Malevich had no external need to mislead anyone, and could never have guessed that his later landscapes would later be regarded as evidence of the 'fracture of the Suprematist' - a return to realism after the absolute abstractionism of the Black Square and other Suprematist compositions. The real development of Malevich began with a period of Impressionism in the first half of the 1900s, and in his final personal exhibition he tried to demonstrate this development visually with the help of works possessing mature features of the style.

A generator of original ideas in the visual arts, Kazimir Malevich was an equally original theoretician. He rightly believed that the path of his contemporary European art, which had sprung from the first experimental steps towards pure abstraction, required analysis and reasoned explanations explaining the ideas behind the ongoing movement. This tradition of analytical-creative processes really began in the art of the French Impressionists, who radically broke with centuries of academic traditions.

Malevich developed the rationale for his process not only theoretically but also practically: with a brush in his hand, he revealed and demonstrated the methods of creating Impressionist canvasses. Later, it was clarified with certainty that this had been another of his pioneering achievements, the meaning of which became clear only decades after his death.

The late Impressionist paintings of Kazimir Malevich, although pre-dated with earlier years, were in fact of a conceptual nature far ahead of their time.



Black Square, 1915, Russian Museum,
St Petersburg, Russia. - Winter Landscape.
1929. Private collection

It was most likely painted in October 1929, in the vicinity of his beloved Nemchinovka. On 21 October, 1929 Malevich travelled to Moscow for the opening of his personal exhibition in the State Tretyakov Gallery, which was held on November 1. He stopped at Nemchinovka, where his daughter from his second marriage, Una, lived with her grandmother (Una's mother, Sofia Mikhailovna Rafalovich, had died of tuberculosis in 1925).

Winter Landscape has a nearly square format, a form which had inspired Malevich, creator of the Black Square, from a young age.