



Varvara Stepanova: The Complete Work

Alexander Lavrentiev

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This book is the first exhaustive work on Varvara Stepanova, one of the most significant visual artists in Russian history. It includes excerpts from Stepanova's diary and a wealth of newly discovered visual material to reveal an artist startling in her accomplishment. Lavrentiev recreates Stepanova's life and work against the complex background of the post-revolutionary period, covering every aspect of her *oeuvre*—graphic design, typography, textile, painting, poetry, set design, drawing, and collage.

In this first extensive study of her life and work, Varvara Stepanova (1894-1958) emerges as a remarkable artist whose versatility, energy, and contribution to the Russian avant-garde matched and in some cases exceeded that of her husband, Alexander Rodchenko.

The book is written and designed by Aleksander Lavrentiev, who is the grandson of Rodchenko and Stepanova and the curator of their archive. Lavrentiev's text is accompanied by excerpts from Stepanova's own diary, with its fresh insights and lively commentary on Soviet art, and a memoir by her daughter. But the real discovery is the 370 illustrations - 45 in color - nearly all of which are published here for the first time, which reveal an artist startling in her accomplishments.

Like Rodchenko, Stepanova was among the founders of Constructivism, a contributor to the famous Moscow $5 \times 5 = 25$ exhibition held in 1921, and significant in shaping Russian's visual culture during the turbulent years following the revolution. Lavrentiev covers every aspect of Stepanova's production against the complex background of the period. The comments in the little oilskin notebook that she kept almost continuously during the 1920s keenly revive the events of the time; the illustrations allow us to discover and enjoy the wide range of Stepanova's talents as expressed in paintings and geometric constructions, sets and costumes, fashion designs, posters, and typography.

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