Student name: Group:

Art movement.....Constructivism, XX, c.
Timeframe.....1915 - 1930
Topic Focus.....The social function of Art

Teaching material: The instructor will provide video materials for educational purposes. ~15'

Background information: Constructivism was the last and most influential modern art movement to flourish in Russia in the 20th century. It evolved just as the Bolsheviks came to power in the October Revolution of 1917 and initially acted as a lightning rod for the hopes and ideas of many of the most progressive Russian artists who supported the goals of the revolution. Borrowing ideas from Cubism, Suprematism, and Futurism, its essence was a completely new approach to object creation, aiming to abolish the traditional artistic concern with composition and replace it with "construction." Constructivism demanded a careful technical analysis of modern materials, and this research was expected to generate ideas for mass production that could serve the aims of a modern, communist society.

Russian Constructivists believed that the way things are constructed, both physically and culturally, plays a vital role in social change. They argued that art and design should focus on practical production and the creation of objects useful for everyday life. Additionally, Russian Constructivism emphasised the idea of collaboration, where the artist and the audience worked together to create artworks. Ultimately, however, the movement failed to transition from the artist's studio to the factory.

Discussion questions: How can design be used to effectively communicate information?
Image: A typography-based work from *The Construction of the Book* by Alexander Rodchenko experiments with the use of different font sizes and orientations to create a dynamic visual hierarchy. How do the design choices in the work contribute to its readability and impact?

Main activity: Constructivists proposed replacing the traditional artistic concern for composition with a focus on construction. Objects were not to be created to express beauty, the artist's vision, or to represent the world, but to conduct a fundamental analysis of artistic materials and forms, which could lead to the design of functional objects. For many Constructivists, this involved an ethic of "truth to materials," the belief that materials should only be used in ways that align with their inherent properties and capabilities, demonstrating their potential applications.

- How did Russian Constructivism influence modern art and design, and what were its key principles and contributions to the artistic and cultural movements of its time?

Group activity: Divide the class into groups of four and address the central question by providing examples.

Relevant texts: *Towards a New Architecture* by Le Corbusier (1923) – Although Le Corbusier was not Russian, his influential book responded to the ideas of the Russian Constructivists and advocated for a new, functional, rational, and accessible architecture for all.
Constructivist Manifesto by Aleksandr Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova (1922) – This manifesto, written by two leading Constructivist artists, outlines the principles of the movement, including the rejection of traditional art and the embrace of mass-produced design.

1. Notes on CONSTRUCTIVISM.

3. Keywords and key artworks

2. Notes on main ideas that support Constructivist design.

4. General summary of the session. Conclusions