Student name: Group:

Art movement.....Neoplasticism. De Stijl (The Style), XX, c.
Timeframe.....1917 – 1931
Topic Focus.....A modern design for all forms of art

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

Background information: During the Great War, the Netherlands maintained neutrality—a stance driven by either principle or pragmatism for a small and vulnerable nation, whose fate ultimately rested in the hands of stronger nations that used it for their own purposes. Artists living in the Netherlands enjoyed a peaceful, conflict-free environment to develop their avant-garde art. Under the energetic leadership of Theo van Doesburg, a new movement emerged. *De Stijl* became the bridge between pre-war Cubism and post-war interpretations or developments of Cubism, linking France, Germany, and Russia within an international art market. While W. Gropius rejected a strong personality like Van Doesburg at the Bauhaus, it was Van Doesburg who spearheaded and disseminated new ideas in art and architecture after the war.

*De Stijl* was a collective of artists, designers, and architects (Mondrian, Rietveld, Huszár, among others), some of whom never met and, due to their diverse practices, never exhibited together. The name *De Stijl* was deliberately chosen by Van Doesburg to make clear that "The Style" of the modern era should encompass architecture. In other words, modern design embraced all forms of art—modernity was *The Style*. Promoting their innovative ideas through their magazine of the same name, the members envisioned nothing less than the ideal fusion of form and function, establishing *De Stijl* as the definitive style.

Discussion questions: Can the combination of form and function be considered a universal language? Think about the design of a uniform or a task lamp, for instance.

Main activity: The Dutch *De Stijl* movement adopted an abstract and reductive aesthetic, focused on basic visual elements such as geometric shapes and primary colours. In part, as a reaction against the decorative excesses of Art Deco, the creators of *De Stijl* envisioned the minimalist quality of their art as a universal visual language suited to the modern era—a time of a new, spiritualised world order.

- What did reducing art to basic geometric shapes and primary colours signify in Neoplasticism?
- Consider how Neoplasticism aimed to create a new visual language that could be universally understood, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers.

Group activity: Divide the class into groups and discuss how the movement emphasised simplicity, objectivity, and universality in art. Questions can encourage reflections on the relationship between art and society, and how Neoplasticism sought to create a new visual culture reflecting the ideals of a modern, new society.

Relevant texts: *Manifesto I* by Theo van Doesburg (1917): The first manifesto of *De Stijl*, written by the founder of the movement. It outlines the basic principles of Neoplasticism and advocates for a new universal language of form and colour.

*De Stijl* magazine (1917–1931): Founded by Theo van Doesburg, this was the official publication of the *De Stijl* movement. It featured essays, artworks, and other contributions from group members.

1. Notes on NEOPLASTICISM.

3. Palabras clave sobre el tema. Artistas y Obras.

2. Notes on artists, groups and actions.

4. Summary and conclusions.