

FUTURISM AND THE SACRED

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This themed issue of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* 11 (2021) aims to explore the relationship between Futurism and different forms of religious and spiritual discourse. Futurism, in its manifold international configurations, engaged in a broad range of discourses concerned with religion and spirituality, both mainstream and unorthodox. Occultism, mysticism, theosophy and various forms of spiritualism have characterized Modernist culture throughout Europe and the Americas. In Italy, the relationship between Futurism and religion was complicated by the enduring influence of the Catholic Church upon social and political life. The relationship between the movement and the Church was notoriously fraught, and anticlericalism quickly became a keyword in the movement's manifestos.

When Futurism expanded its interests to include sacred art and issued a *Manifesto of Futurist Sacred Art* (1931) that called for its “necessary Modernization” through a “complete regeneration through the principles of synthesis, transfiguration, the dynamism of time-space interpenetration, the simultaneity of states of mind and the geometric splendour of the machine aesthetic”, the movement again restated its anticlerical position. Whether one reads this manifesto as a continuation of the research into Futurist spirituality previously expressed in the manifesto *The New Ethical Religion of Speed* (1916) and in Futurist aeropainting, or as an attempt to position the movement in the cultural politics of the Fascist régime, within the historical context of the Lateran Pact with the Catholic Church in 1929, the insistence upon a spiritual dimension of modern art became a defining element of late-Futurism. Many forms of artistic research undertaken in Italy resonated with a broader turn to religion in the international avant-gardes in the period after the First World War.

The aim of this themed issue of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* is to investigate, in a transnational and interdisciplinary manner, the role of religion in Futurist aesthetics – including the avant-garde tradition of iconoclasm and blasphemy – and the ways in which Futurism contributed to an “essential” and “necessary” modernization of sacred art. Topics may include

- * The continued influence and re-interpretation of the Catholic tradition
- * The reconfiguration of Futurism and the sacred in the works of individual artists
- * Anticlericalism and modernization as identifiers of the Futurist movement
- * The Futurist use of symbols and icons from various religious and spiritual traditions
- * The Avant-garde counter-discourse of “new iconoclasm”
- * Futurism and the sacred in the constitution of transnational networks

- * Futurism and spiritualism: an alternative for sacred art?
- * Artistic expressions of spiritual conversion and mourning after World War I
- * Avant-garde versus religious 'interventionism' as forms of cultural politics
- * Censorship of Futurist sacred art

500 words (max.) abstracts together with a short biography should be sent to the two editors by 1 April 2019:

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