

JAMES BUTTERWICK PRESENTS *OLEKSANDR BOHOMAZOV:* *UKRAINIAN RENAISSANCE AT TEFAF*

*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ***

Oleksandr Bohomazov: Ukrainian Renaissance
TEFAF, Maastricht, Netherlands
Stand 709
Saturday June 25 — Thursday June 30, 2022
Preview: Friday June 24, 11am - 7pm



Self-Portrait, 1914-15, Oil on canvas, 33 x 32 cm



Landscape, Caucasus (undulating composition), 1915, Oil on canvas, 41.9 x 40.6 cm

James Butterwick and San Francisco-based gallery Modernism Inc. are delighted to present a survey of work by Ukrainian artist Oleksandr Bohomazov (1880-1930) for this year's edition of TEFAF, commencing 25 June 2022. The exhibition comes at a time of heightened interest in Bohomazov. Following this presentation, his work can be seen in two shows, at the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum, Madrid, in October 2022 and at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, in March 2023.

As with many artists who lived in the former Soviet Union, Bohomazov only came to global attention with the collapse of Communism in the 1990s. Since then, he has had solo exhibitions at the National Museum of Ukrainian Art, Kyiv, Musée d'Art Moderne, Toulouse, France, the State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, and has appeared in group shows focussing on Modernism in Ukraine, notably *Crossroads: Ukrainian Modernism 1910-1930*, staged in New York and Chicago. His work is held in important private and public collections, amongst them MOMA, New York and the Kröller Müller Museum, Netherlands.

Born in 1880, Bohomazov was a pivotal figure in the Ukrainian avant-garde alongside Alexandra Ekster and the progenitor of Suprematism, Kazimir Malevich, with whom he taught at the Kyiv Academy of Arts. In 1920, he was part of the Ukrainian Agitprop Movement with Ekster before forming the Association of Revolutionary Masters of Ukraine in 1925. The art historian Andrei Nakov ranks him amongst the group of artists that includes not only Ekster and Malevich, but also Natalia Goncharova and Lyubov Popova.

The TEFAF presentation, *Oleksandr Bohomazov: Ukrainian Renaissance*, comprises oils and works on paper created between 1908 and 1929, the year before the artist's death from tuberculosis aged fifty. One of the highlights is *Self-Portrait, 1914-1915*, which reveals the influence of the Italian Futurists. Writing in 2019, Nakov said that



Rolling the Logs, 1928-1929, Watercolour on paper, 25 x 30 cm

he considered Bohomazov the 'only true Futurist' outside Moscow. In the painting, with chin tilted, Bohomazov's pinprick eyes peer out interrogatively from oval pince-nez, the angularity of his face accentuated by dashes of paint. Intentional or not, the national colours of Ukraine, yellow and blue, appear in the background.

Also featured are paintings created between 1915-16 whilst Bohomazov was teaching in modern-day Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus, years which saw an experimental shift in his artistic practice. Without the title, *Landscape, Caucasus (undulating composition)*, 1915, would appear to be a work of pure abstraction, the sumptuous swirls transforming the countryside into a surging ocean of pinks, purples and reds.



Kreshchatik [Passers-by], 1914, Charcoal on paper, 18 x 25 cm

His wife, Wanda, whom he met while they were pupils at the Kyiv Academy was his inspiration, and this is reflected in five works. A pen and ink work, *Wanda Monastyrska in front of a New Year Tree*, 1911, was executed eighteen months before they married. At first glance, it appears like a woodcut, but closer inspection reveals a confident hand with pen and brush deployed masterfully, capturing in the sideways set of her eyes a sense of wariness, even perhaps suspicion of her husband-to-be.

Bohomazov produced more than 300 preparatory sketches for his most famous work, *Sawyers*, a triptych created between 1925 and 1929. This had been believed to be two paintings until 2014 when it was discovered the artist intended it to be three. To complete the trio, James Butterwick commissioned the artist Vitaly Maiboroda to paint the third and the only known watercolour of the left-hand section, *Rolling the Logs*, 1928-29, is also featured in this presentation.



Wanda Monastyrska in front of a New Year Tree, 1911, Indian ink & whitener on paper, 15 x 27 cm

James Butterwick and Modernism Inc. will be donating 15 per cent of the profit from the sale of all artworks sold at TEFAF to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is raising money for and distributing humanitarian aid to refugees affected by Russia's war on the country.

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Notes to Editors:

About Oleksandr Bohomazov

Oleksandr Bohomazov (1880-1930) was a Ukrainian painter from the Russian Empire, and later USSR. An artist and theoretician of the avant-garde, he embraced several styles throughout his life, including Cubo-Futurism and Spectralism. In 1914, he wrote a treatise on 'The Art of Painting and the Elements', analysing the interaction between Object, Artist, Picture and Spectator. He was in close contact with artists such as Alexandra Ekster and Vladimir Tatlin, alongside whom he taught at the Kyiv Art Academy from 1922. In 1925 he was a founder of the Association of Revolutionary Masters of Ukraine (ARMU). In 1930 Bohomazov died in Kyiv of the tuberculosis which had affected him for the last decade of his life, leaving the triptych he began in 1925, Sawyers, unfinished.

About Modernism Inc.

Founded in 1979, Modernism, San Francisco, has since presented more than 450 exhibitions, both historical and contemporary, in media ranging from painting to photography, sculpture to performance, by an international roster of artists. It presented the first retrospective of the Russian Avant-Garde in 1980 in the West Coast and staged the first Bay Area gallery exhibition of Andy Warhol in 1982. The following year, Modernism became the first art gallery in America to hold a major solo show of paintings and works on paper by Bohomazov, and has included his work in over 18 important early 20th century avant-garde exhibitions. The gallery regularly publishes books, monographs, catalogues, and fine art editions.

About James Butterwick

James Butterwick began collecting and selling Ukrainian and Russian Art in 1985. During the 1990s he lived in Moscow, becoming the only foreign member of the Russian Society of Private Collectors. In 2015 James became the first dealer in Ukrainian and Russian Art to be invited to exhibit at TEFAF, Maastricht Art Fair, showing a collection of works by Avant Garde painters, including Bohomazov. Following this, James exhibited at TEFAF, New York in 2017.

A fluent Russian speaker, James lectures around the world on issues of authenticity that surround the Ukrainian and Russian Avant Garde. From 2013, he travelled regularly to Ukraine, opening a representative office in Kyiv, headed by Katya Voizanova, in 2018.

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 James Butterwick Gallery

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