Institution versus Individuality: Rethinking Unity in Early Italian Futurism

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INSTITUTION VERSUS INDIVIDUALITY:
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ABSTRACT

In February 1912 the Italian Futurists presented *Les peintres futuristes italiens*, their first international exhibition in Paris, at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune. This event is regarded by scholars as a lynchpin moment for the movement and even the historic avant-garde as a whole. Modern literature on this period of Futurism presents the show as the culmination of a full-movement stylistic shift from Italian Divisionism to Cubism, largely under the guidance of Umberto Boccioni. Scholars have continuously presented Boccioni as the leader of Futurist painting, and his oeuvre is often discussed as the most iconic visual interpretation of the tenets of Futurism. This study serves as an alternate reading of early Futurist painting. Using three of the five founding Futurist painters as case studies I argue against traditional scholarship’s appraisal of both the exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune and Umberto Boccioni. Although I recognize that the exhibition marks a major turning point for the movement, I do not support the notion that it was the culmination of a total shift from Divisionism to Cubism. Boccioni’s Futurism was neither the only vision of Futurist painting developed during this period, nor was it the only version presented at the Bernheim-Jeune. In this thesis I contend that the 1912 show at the Bernheim-Jeune was the occasion for a great moment of diversity and multiplicity within Italian Futurism and that each of the five Futurist painters presented independent artistic visions.

This thesis is organized into three chapters. Each chapter is a case study illustrating a different approach to Futurist painting in 1912. Period documents including manifestos, exhibition reviews, and personal correspondence are crucial to my assessment of the exhibition. My first chapter addresses Umberto Boccioni’s hybridization of Divisionism and Cubism not as the predestined path of Futurism but as one among several possible avenues. Chapter two is devoted to Gino Severini, the painter most closely associated with the French avant-garde and early Cubism. Luigi Russolo is the subject of chapter three. His art challenges the perceived shift from Divisionism to Cubism more than that of any other Futurist painter as the work he submitted to the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune was associated by period critics with German Expressionism and French Symbolism. My study thus challenges traditional assessments of the transformations taking place in Italian Futurist painting in 1912 in favor of a broader sense of the possibilities available to these artists.
INTRODUCTION

Les peintres futuristes italiens in February 1912 at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in Paris was Futurism’s first international presentation as an institution and it irrevocably altered public perception of the movement.¹ This show marks the point at which Futurism made a radical formal turn away from its Italian roots, pushing away the Divisionist technique on which it had been founded and moving instead toward Parisian Cubism.² Until this point, painters associated with Futurism had worked in some version of the Italian Divisionist technique in which they had been trained. The works displayed at the Bernheim-Jeune were the first public presentation of Futurist painting in a non-Divisionist idiom.³

Scholars point to the 1912 exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune as a moment of convergence for the Futurist painters as the group, citing the show as the first presentation of contemporary Italian painting in Cubism’s technical vocabulary. Scholars have presented the exhibition as a major rift in Futurism as, henceforth, Futurist painting became extremely varied.

¹ I have chosen the term “institution” to represent the greater whole of Futurism. I intend this term to encapsulate the Marinettian concept of Futurism as a whole movement (the code by which a unified band of Italian men who, through their radical insight, would live out F. T. Marinetti’s plans to reinvent and rejuvenate Italy.) When Marinetti conceived of Futurism, art, fashion, cooking, music, and the subjects of later manifestos were not immediately included on his agenda. Futurist art (including painting) is only a part of the whole. To that end, Futurist painting itself was not an institution but rather part of the greater entity of Futurism. As I shall explain in this thesis, Futurist painting was hardly collective as its members did not align under a single artistic style, leader, or geographical location. Futurist painting could not be an institution itself, as its five painters could not form a cohesive group.

² My discussion of Futurism is strictly limited to 1910–1912, the formative years of the artistic sub-movement. The key figures in my study are Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, and the following painters: Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo, Carlo Carrà, and Giacomo Balla. My use of the term “Futurism” only applies to the Italian manifestations of this movement. For the purposes of this study I only examine early examples of Futurist painting.

³ Christopher Green and John Musgrove. "Cubism." In Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T020539 (accessed January 8, 2012). For the remainder of this examination, my definition of the term “Cubism” is limited to the state of Cubism in its earliest expressions during the years of 1909 and 1912. My references to “Cubism” only refer to Analytic Cubism, the first manifestation of the style by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris during this period. According to the Oxford Art Online entry “Cubism,” the term was applied in hindsight by the Cubist painter Juan Gris and the dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler between 1915 and 1921. The fundamental technical characteristics of Analytic Cubism are described in the same entry as placing “stress on multiple viewpoints and planar faceting [and] retention of model, landscape or objects as starting-points[.]” The neutral color palettes that are typical for this period of Cubism are also crucial to my overall technical discussion.
as it spread beyond Western Europe. While I concur that Futurism’s new international recognition allowed for wider dissemination of the movement’s ideals and more opportunities for regional diversity, I do not agree that the 1912 exhibition was Futurism’s first stylistic disunion. Instead I suggest the exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune only marked the first international display of multiplicity in Futurist painting, a quality that was pre-existing thanks to the variety of artistic backgrounds and choices of its members. Continued discussion of Futurism’s contemporary institutional qualities over the individuality in the movement has only compounded this misunderstanding.

In the period between May 1911 and February 1912 Futurist painting was comprised of five distinctive personalities: Umberto Boccioni, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, and Carlo Carrà. Although these men were equal participants in the group, modern historians have chosen the work of Boccioni as the most iconic vocabulary of their collective artistic achievements. His version of Futurism is the one that remains most seminal today, despite the diverging visions of Futurism offered by his peers during this period. I argue that, in spite of Boccioni’s subsequent canonization, the work offered by his Futurist peers was no less viable as an alternative in 1912. As my chapters shall illuminate, each of the Futurist painters subscribed to the movement’s theories after having already established careers and personal styles; each of them thus brought different artistic tastes and skills to the emerging movement. I propose that these pre-existing artistic differences among the painters were always present, despite their practicing similar techniques.

Marinetti named the movement himself in 1909 with the publishing of the first Futurist manifesto in *Le Figaro*. That a figure intimately involved in Futurism gave the movement its name is a case very different than a movement such as Cubism, which was named by a critic. The level of investiture for Futurism’s subscribers was innately different than for practitioners of

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Cubism, for example. Futurism was an identity that these artists willingly self-imposed while Cubism was a label objectively associated as an observation by an outsider. Because the Futurists were connected personally and theoretically instead of formally I believe there was more room for individuality in their movement than a singular term allows. The subsequent use of “Futurism” as a blanket term is careless and overly general as it overlooks of the historical developments and stylistic diversity that I endeavor to parse out in this study. I do not suggest eliminating the term, but I believe there is a great need to use it in a more meaningful way. As I shall argue, there is too much variety in Futurist painting to classify all of its characteristics under one label. This line of thought is narrow, unfair to the individual accomplishments of the group’s members, and it promulgates a notion of homogeneity that is inappropriate for discussion of this movement. By drawing attention to the individuality within Futurism instead of eliding it in favor of a unified entity under Boccioni’s leadership I offer a deconstructionist view and a new understanding of Futurism as an historically contingent concept, in this instance the impermanent and fragile union of distinct personalities each offering a slightly different alternative to the Divisionism with which the movement had been closely associated before 1912. This stratification provides a new language for discussing other institutional avant-garde movements, certainly including later iterations of Futurism such as Russian Cubo-Futurism and Vorticism. Additionally there is a need for a more nuanced approach to the discourse of style in relation to the historic avant-garde.

**State of the Problem**

During Futurism’s formative years its painters relied heavily upon the nineteenth-century technique of Divisionism, the Italian version of Neo-Impressionism. This systematic manner of applying paint to canvas sprang from the same scientific and theoretical texts as French Neo-Impressionism and both techniques were grounded in the burgeoning field of perceptual

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5 When talking about investment I believe that the Futurist painters had more at stake in consciously forming a circle than they would have had if a critic had formally categorized them under a singular identity. For example, once the artist signed a manifesto it would be harder for him to divorce himself from such a decision than if a critic had objectively associated him with a certain movement to which that artist was not officially affiliated.

6 Futurism should be used at least with the knowledge that the “–ism” of Futurism is not perfectly equal with that of Cubism.
psychology. Divisionism, however, was not identical to French Pointillism. In fact, the Italian circle of practitioners had little knowledge of the French Pointillistic interpretation of the scientific writings of Michel-Eugène Chevreul and Ogden N. Rood. Despite their shared interest in optical science and psychology, Pointillism and Divisionism may be distinguished from one another in several key aspects. The Divisionists, for example, focused on social causes unique to Italy. The Divisionists employed Christian iconography and mounted their work in such conventional Catholic formats as polyptychs. The movements also had dissimilar stylistic interpretations of Chevreul and Rood. While the French school systematically applied paint by layering dots or square patches, the Italian painters favored a variety of brushstrokes, intermingling dots with dashes and threads. Italian Divisionist painting is characterized by its use of pure color rather than tonal gradations.

The Divisionists, like the Futurists after them, were united by ideology and technical theory but divided in practice. Importantly, the members of both Divisionism and Futurism varied in subject choices and technical execution. Divisionist Futurism was the first style adopted by Marinetti’s Italian cohorts. This style, despite its name, is not the same as Italian Divisionism; it is rather the Futurists’ application of their understanding of the Italian Divisionist technique in conjunction with Futurist artistic theory. Although they employed the Divisionist idiom, Futurist painters were neither officially affiliated with the artistic circle nor interested in

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7 Martha Ward, *Pissaro, Neo-Impressionism, and the Spaces of the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 124–46; Simonetta Fraquelli, “Italian Divisionism and its Legacy,” in *Radical Light: Italy’s Divisionist Painters (1891-1910)* (London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2008), 12–13; José A. Argüelles, *Charles Henry and the Formation of a Psychological Aesthetic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 12–29 and 78–102. Psychophysics, or the relationship between a stimulant and its subsequent perception, is a part of both Neo-Impressionism and Divisionism. At the end of the nineteenth century Charles Henry was sharing his theories on the subject with the French Neo-Impressionists, and although the Italian Divisionists were not aware of his ideas, they were equally concerned with the emotion and physical reactions of their viewers. The Divisionists believed that every image was viewed by the human eye and then altered based on one’s individual perception.

8 Fraquelli, “Italian Divisionism,” 12. Treatises by Chevreul, a French chemist, and Rood, an American physicist, constitute the scientific basis of Neo-Impressionism and Divisionism. Chevreul is responsible for *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs* (1839) and Rood wrote *Modern Chromatics* (1879). The Italian Divisionist painter, art critic, and gallery owner Vittore Grubicy de Dragon brought these texts to Italy from France in the mid-1880s.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 I use “Divisionist Futurism” to further clarify the state of Futurist painting during the period leading up the painters’ incorporation of Cubism in late 1911. I define the term as the Futurist painters’ interpretation of Divisionism. This distinction is not contemporary to the period but I propose it as an alternative to the over-general terms of “Divisionism” and “Futurism.”
key issues concerning Divisionist painting (such as subject matter). Although Balla, for example, instructed Boccioni and Severini in the Divisionist technique their understanding of it was superficial, as Balla had never been formally instructed in it. Severini and Boccioni each took their mentor’s interpretation of Divisionism in different directions in order to develop their own individual understanding of Futurist painting. The Futurist painters also repeatedly affirmed their desire to render in paint the dynamism of motion rather than the indigenous social issues that had interested the Divisionists.

Before Futurism, Divisionism had been praised as the most (if not the only) modern art practiced in Italy, especially in comparison to the contemporary academic circles of the fledgling nation’s major metropolitan areas. Although their compatriots might have greeted their claims to Divisionism with derision, the early Futurist painters nevertheless practiced the systematic separation of pure color through the technical application of dashes, dots, and threads of paint devised by the Italian Divisionists. The Futurists viewed Italian Divisionism as the native,

13 Umbro Apollonio, *Futurist Manifestos* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), 26 and 29. Despite their endorsement of Italian Divisionism in the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” (1910), the Futurists vowed to “sweep the whole field of art clean of all themes and subjects which have been used on the past” in the “Manifesto of Futurist Painters” (1910).

14 Susan Barnes Robinson, *Giacomo Balla: Divisionism and Futurism, 1871–1912* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), 1 and 8. Records show that Balla was almost exclusively self-taught, with the exception of a brief period of night school instruction at the Accademia Albertina in Turin between 1886 and 1889. Hailing from the Piedmont region, Balla continuously looked north for artistic inspiration, especially in response to early twentieth-century Rome’s interest in Pre-Raphaelitism and Academic art. He studied and subsequently attempted to replicate the style of Divisionist artists such as Giovanni Segantini and Gaetano Previati. It is crucial to note that Balla never studied with these men.

15 Boccioni, Severini, and Russolo serve as the respective focuses for each of my three chapters. I will further discuss their individually technical voices in-depth in these sections.

16 Giovanna Ginex, “Divisionism to Futurism: Art and Social Engagement,” in *Radical Light: Italy’s Divisionist Painters (1891-1910)* (London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2008), 37–39; Lara Pucci, “For Eighty Cents! (Per ottanta centesimi!),” in *Radical Light: Italy’s Divisionist Painters (1891-1910)* (London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2008), 150. The Italian Divisionists were famous for their interest in their young nation’s social issues. The period immediately after unification (the Risorgimento) was extremely turbulent marked by upheaval in all aspects of society. The Divisionist dealt with these socio-political and economic issues in their work. Examples include Emilio Longoni’s *The Orator of the Strike (L’oratore dello sciopero;1890-91)* and Angelo Morbelli’s *For Eighty Cents! (Per ottanta centesimi!);1893–95*.

17 Robinson, *Giacomo Balla*, 4–5 and 13; Fraquelli, “Italian Divisionism,” 11; Ginex, “Divisionism to Futurism,” 37. *Fin de siècle* Rome, for example, was extremely entrenched in the Academic tradition. There was also special interest in foreign painters, including the Pre-Raphaelites and other English artists who were in Italy to study Roman countryside. The first Venice Biennale was held in 1895, and this exhibition was heavy in European academic art, too. As for Italian Divisionism’s distinction as the most modern style during this period, this rises from its bright color palette and increased inclusion of light (hallmarks of the movement). These new characteristics offered sharp contrast to contemporary Academic work, which embraced darker tones. As French Impressionism was not present in Italy until 1910, Italian Divisionism presented a new kind of expression for Italy. Additionally, the young nation was in a constant state of flux with many political, social, and economic issues. Italian Divisionism, thus, presented a new artistic voice for a new nation.
modern artistic practice of their time. The technique is mentioned in the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painters” (1910) as a higher-order skill that cannot be “learned and applied at will.” By the publication of the manifestos on Futurist painting, four of the five Futurist painters had visited Paris and had likely been exposed to other contemporary approaches to painting.

Despite their awareness of these other styles, the Futurists purposefully adopted the only “modern art” technique that their countrymen seemed to be aware of in 1910.

The Futurist painters continued to practice Divisionist Futurism through their first show as a group. This exhibition, the Esposizione di Mostra d'Arte Libera, was hosted in the abandoned Padiglione Ricordi factory in Milan during May 1911. The Milan exhibition is a milestone for Futurism as it was the first official show in which these artists advertised themselves under the collective banner of Futurism. The Corriere della sera described the exhibition with the following statement:

If you do not want to cover yourself with shame, giving proof of ignominious intellectual apathy unworthy of the high Futurist destiny of Milan, rush and intoxicate your spirit before . . . the maddest colouristic orgies, the most insane eccentricities, the most macabre fantasies, all the drunken foolishness possible or imaginable.

Only Boccioni, Carrà, and Russolo participated in this event, each presenting his individual

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18 Apollonio, Futurist Manifestos, 29. The whole quote from the manifesto reads, “We conclude that painting cannot exist today without Divisionism. This is no process that can be learned and applied at will. Divisionism, for the modern painter, must be an innate complementariness which we declare to be essential and necessary.”
19 Robinson, Giacomo Balla, 17–18; Ester Coen, Umberto Boccioni (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), xvi; Gino Severini, Life of a Painter, trans. Jennifer Franchina (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 24. Balla visited Paris for the first time in 1900, spending seven months there. While there he visited the Exposition Universelle and was exposed to Impressionism, Art Noveau, Jugendstil and a retrospective of nineteenth-century French art. Carlo Carrà also visited Paris in 1900, working as a decorator at the same Exposition Universelle. In 1906, both Boccioni and Severini went to Paris (separately); Boccioni only visited the French capital for a few months but Severini stayed for most of his life thereafter.
20 Divisionist Futurism was only somewhat successful. It received mixed reviews within Italy and negative reviews from the international art community. Perhaps this “pseudo-Divisionism” (the unsanctioned, superficial use of Divisionism’s technical vocabulary) was unappreciated by those familiar with the Italian Divisionists or French Neo-Impressionists as it was not wholly loyal to either movement. How can a style be new and innovative when it so heavily clings to its predecessor? Did the Futurist painters offend critics by perverting Italy’s only “modern” voice? These are questions that are unanswerable within this study, but they are too important to be overlooked. Thus far in my research I have not encountered primary documents that discuss these specific issues of Divisionist Futurism, but I believe that considering their existence expands the possible discourse on this earliest Futurist technique.
interpretation of the Divisionist technique over the course of three separate rooms. During the exhibition opening, the Futurists painters stood by their work and responded to questions posed by viewers.23

The Esposizione di Mostra d'Arte Libera marked not only the Futurists’ first public appearance as a group but also the movement’s first critical reception. This was an important moment for the young Futurist painters as the exhibition was the very first time that their theories presented in the earlier “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painters” (1910) could be viewed by the public in a material way. Responses to the exhibition were mixed: local reviews were favorable while international opinions were not.24 Ardegno Soffici, a critic sympathetic to modernism who was familiar with the concurrent artistic trends happening outside of Italy (particularly the Parisian avant-garde), offered one of the harshest critiques of all.25 In his review, Soffici expressed discontentment with the Futurists, publicly denouncing them as “pig farmers” whose works were only good to “academic janitors [and] . . . the eyes of the foolish mob.”26 He saw their paintings as unoriginal and in the same light as earlier (and apparently distasteful) models: “And indeed, as can be seen at first glance, you are looking at the annoying illustrator Serafino Macchiati, the spineless romance of Marius Pictor, [and] the pseudo-poetic, pseudo-symbolic deliquesences of Vittore Grubicy[.]”27 Notably, Grubicy, an original practitioner of the Divisionist technique, was the painter responsible for bringing Neo-Impressionism to Italy. Soffici’s review mocked both the Futurist “Technical Manifesto” of 1910 and Marinetti’s 1909 founding manifesto of Futurism and dismissed Futurist painting as “junk” comparable to costume jewelry.28 He wrote of his experience in the Futurist galleries: “[There is] no greater disgust or nausea than [that provided by] the four or five Futurist painters.”29 Ester Coen has argued that, in Soffici’s eyes, Futurism had failed to “liberate itself from the provincialism that

24 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxiv. One negative international review came from Nino Barbantini, the concurrent director of the Museo d’Arte Moderna at the Ca’ Pesaro in Venice. He was unimpressed with the exhibition in general, calling it “useless and meaningless,” although he did specifically praise the works of Boccioni and Carrà.
25 The Ardegno Soffici review entitled “Arte libera e pitture futurista” was printed in La Voce on 22 June 1911.
26 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxiv. Translation by Coen.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid. Author’s translation.
stifled Italian art.” Whatever the reasons for Soffici’s caustic review I want to argue it as a likely catalyst for the 1912 Futurist exhibition in Paris. The critic was keenly aware of transalpine avant-garde trends and he was the first major critic to point out Futurism’s shortcomings in comparison to contemporary international art production.

The Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera was not deemed a failure by all the critics who reviewed it, but I consider the 1911 Milan exhibition to have failed. It is essential that only three of the five Futurist painters exhibited and that each submitted works heavily indebted to Divisionism. They undoubtedly practiced varieties in the Divisionist technique but all of their paintings inarguably belonged to the same family of style, thus presenting the public with only one visual interpretation of Futurism. The critical reviews that followed served as the impetus for the pentagonal radiation of styles presented at the Bernheim-Jeune less than a year later.

In light of the Milan exhibition’s critical failure, the end of summer 1911 saw the Futurists begin to shift their focus beyond the Italian borders and their native Divisionism. They planned a December Paris and, that autumn, F. T. Marinetti sponsored the Italian painters’ trip to Paris where they were exposed to Cubism through visits to salons and studios. Carrà

30 Ouvrard, “Chronology,” 308; Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxiv and xxvi. Coen hypothesizes that his response was in reaction to viewing the Futurist art immediately after the French Cubism with which he was already intimately acquainted. As early as 1900 Ardegno Soffici spent considerable time in Paris. Of the Milanese exhibition, Soffici wrote: “[The paintings] in no way represent a highly personal vision of art. . . No. They are on the contrary stupid and repugnant blusterings by unscrupulous persons who, taking a gloomy view of the world, with no poetic feeling, through the eyes of some thick-skinned American pig farmer, want us to believe they see it flowering and flaming; and they think that by slapping colors madly onto a picture worthy of academic janitors, or by dragging back into the limelight the nasty strings of Divisionism . . . they can put their game across in the eyes of the foolish mob.”

31 The fact that Soffici was an Italian critic may have carried more weight than the opinions of others.

32 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxiv–xxv; Hultén, Futurism & Futurisms, 577. After the Milan exhibition, the Futurists reacted violently to Soffici. In response to his scathing review, Boccioni, Marinetti and Carrà traveled to Florence where they surprised Soffici’s circle at their favorite cafe. After a violent street fight between the two groups and an impromptu conference in the police station about their opposing views, in the end, Soffici and his circle joined the Futurists. By 1914, Soffici had officially affiliated with the Futurists not as a critic, but as a fellow artist. The second generation of Futurist artists largely lived and worked in Florence, too. Despite this small victory, the Futurist painters were under pressure to be successful in 1911.

33 Ouvrard, “Chronology,” 319; Altschuler, Salon to Biennial, 113; Didier Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” in Futurism, ed. Didier Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 27; Mai-Lise Bénédic, “Jean Metzinger: Le Goûter (Femme à la cuillère)” in Futurism, ed. Didier Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 116. A December 1911 show at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in Paris was scheduled, but by October, the Futurists were forced to move it back to February 1912, citing Marinetti’s deployment to Libya as a war correspondent for the Italo-Turkish war. Marinetti funded a Futurist expedition for Boccioni, Russolo and Carrà to join Severini in Paris in order to experience the art world that they would shortly venture into. Carrà recorded the trip to Paris in his memoirs, La mia vita. During this sojourn, the Futurist painters met with the critic Apollinaire and visited the studios of both Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. They visited the gallery of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and attended the Salon d’Automne, where they saw Cubist works such as Jean Metzinger’s Tea Time (Le Goûter; 1911) (also called the “Cubist Mona Lisa”) and Fernand Léger’s Study for Three Portraits (Essai pour trois portraits; 1910–11).
wrote, “Boccioni and I were swiftly persuaded that with this show in Paris we are staking our all; for a flop would have meant kissing our fine aspirations goodbye.” The show was cancelled due to Marinetti’s involvement in the Italo-Turkish war, and the Futurists returned to Italy, continuing to research Cubism with the aim to show in Paris that February as Futurists using the technical vocabulary of Cubism. Severini attests to this shift in attitude in his memoirs after recounting the autumn trip to Paris: “One thing is certain, upon [Boccioni’s] return to Milan he set to work with immense fervor.” Severini continues in his recollection to interpret the motivations of Futurist painting as a whole.

The heart of the matter was that both [Boccioni] and the Futurists, after Paris, had their ups and downs but were working hard and, yet more important, had shifted their sights toward new goals. . . With these new works, far more interesting and up-to-date than our previous efforts, we opened our exhibition in Paris.

Severini does not write that the Futurists went back to Milan to make new Cubist paintings. He remains vague on the exact trajectories of their new artistic output. Regardless, this account confirms that the trip to Paris in autumn 1911 had a large effect on Futurist painting in the months immediately prior to the Bernheim-Jeune presentation.

The February 1912 exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune was understood to be the occasion on which the Futurists would aggressively overthrow the Cubists with their newfound articulation of Cubism. This hostility was made clear to Paris for weeks before the exhibition ever opened. Aside from the Futurists’s autumn visit to the French capital city, a few weeks before the Bernheim-Jeune show Marinetti personally circulated the manifestos on Futurist painting as well as the essay “Les exposants au public” (the latter title is featured in the 1912

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34 Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27.
35 Severini, Life of a Painter, 60; Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxiv; Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 24 and 27. I believe there were several reasons why Futurism chose to emulate Cubism over other contemporary movements. First, it was the newest trend in the Parisian avant-garde, and Paris was essentially the art capital of their age. Severini recalls Cubism as the “general tendency” of the 1910 Salon. One of Futurism’s first tenets concerns spreading Futurism far abroad from Italy. What better place to start than Paris? Second, as illustrated by Soffici’s review, the young Cubists already impressed international critics. Thus, the adoption of Cubism could, potentially, have changed the critical tone of Futurism. Finally, scholars discuss the sisterly qualities of Futurism and Cubism. Despite differences in ideology, the two movements shared Bergsonian theory (after the French philosopher Henri Bergson). Early Cubist theory was riddled with discussions of time, space, and intuition until the Futurists took after Bergson in 1910. This theoretical similarity may have engendered an easier transition to Cubism than to any other contemporary avant-garde style.
36 Severini, Life of a Painter, 86.
37 Ibid., 88.
exhibition catalogue as a direct challenge to Cubism). Ester Coen insightfully describes the moment: “The young Futurists elbowed their way into the Parisian art scene spoiling for a fight. . . No weapon was neglected: rhetoric, dialectic, debate, demonstrations, [and Severini’s] unmatched socks.” The reactions and criticisms springing from this pointed antagonism serve as a critical vehicle throughout my study.

Among the oldest galleries in the Paris, the Bernheim-Jeune is noted for its early promotion of the Barbizon school and Impressionism, as well as for mounting the first Van Gogh exhibition in Paris. Thereafter, the gallery quickly became a commercial home for the avant-garde. Documentation suggests that the gallery adhered to normative Parisian installation practices and photographs of the 1912 exhibition show that the Futurists simply adopted this curatorial standard. The Futurist exhibition consisted of thirty-four paintings mounted singly or, in the case of the smaller canvases, hung in two levels (one above another; fig. 1). The bottom edges of the frames rested just above the room’s wooden wainscoting, slightly below eye level (with the exception of the larger paintings such as Boccioni’s The Laugh and Severini’s The Pan-Pan Dance at the Monico; fig. 2.) The February 1912 exhibition was mounted exclusively with paintings by the Italian Futurist painters, including Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo, and Carlo Carrà (fig. 3); Marinetti curated the exhibition himself, much in the same

39 Ibid., 15; Severini, Life of a Painter, 61; Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xlv; Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 28. The “unmatched socks” refers to a 1910 anecdote about Severini in Paris. As he recounts in his memoirs, “It happened by accident. Getting out of bed one morning in Civray, I put on one red sock and one green one in the dark of the bedroom. I was already on the train back to Paris when, in the daylight, I realized my mistake. I found it amusing and turned it into a joke for eight or ten days, providing my friends with a good laugh. Unfortunately, there was a reporter from the Intransigéant in their midst which explains the subsequent diffusion of the anecdote. There is no truth to the story that Boccioni adopted the innocuous prank, or that he came with me to the Basserie de l’Ermitage to show off his complementary socks too.” Apollinaire offered contemporary criticism also referencing the socks. He used the anecdote to benefit his disapproval of the Futurists’ attitude in Paris after their autumn trip: “I met two Futurist painters: Messrs. Boccioni and Severini. . . These gentlemen wear very comfortable English-cut clothes. Mr. Severini, a Tuscan, is shod in open-toed shoes and his socks are different colors.” This review appeared under Apollinaire’s name in Anecdotiques in November 1911.
40 “La Saga Bernheim-Jeune,” last modified 2011, http://www.bernheim-jeune.com/en/history; Susan Alyson Stein, ed., Van Gogh: A Retrospective (New York: H. L. Levine Associates, 1986), 310. Although it is the not the gallery’s original location, by the time of the Futurists’ show, the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune was located at 15, Rue Richepance. The Bernheim-Jeune hosted a Van Gogh retrospective arranged by Julien Leclercq from 15–31 March 1901. The exhibition was full of Impressionist paintings but several works by Gauguin and Van Gogh were also presented. Leclercq criticized the lack of public acknowledgement of Van Gogh’s work promising, “The present exhibition will allow those who are unaware of Vincent’s work to render him justice.”
way he orchestrated all of the movement’s major public events.\textsuperscript{41}

In 1912, Futurism was new to the French public but modern Italian art was not. Because French Neo-Impressionism shared with Divisionism an understanding of optical science and psychophysics, Parisian apologists for modernism proved receptive to the new Italian idiom.\textsuperscript{42} On several occasions prior to the Futurist exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune, French viewers had also been exposed to paintings by the Italian Divisionists during the height of their popularity. In 1892, for instance, work by Gaetano Previati (1852–1920) was included in the Parisian Salon de la Rose + Croix, and in 1907, thanks to the Société Dante Alighieri, the Italian circle mounted the Salon des Peintres Divisionistes Italiens in the Grandes Serres de l'Alma in the Cours-la-Reine in Paris.\textsuperscript{43} Although the Futurist painters broke from Divisionism in order to incorporate a Cubist vernacular, many of the paintings shown at the Bernheim-Jeune still possess hints of Divisionism. Examples include Severini’s \textit{The Obsessive Dancer} (\textit{La Danseuse obsédante}; 1911; fig. 4) and \textit{The Milliner} (\textit{La modiste}; c. 1910–11; fig. 5) as well as Russolo’s \textit{Memories of a Night} (\textit{Ricordi di una notte}; 1911; fig. 6). Each of these canvases clearly incorporates both Divisionist brushstrokes and color palettes.

Unlike the majority of the Parisian critics and artists who attended the Paris exhibition, I understand the Futurist presentation at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune as a success. In the course of my thesis I argue that Boccioni’s version of Futurism was not the only viable path for the visual culture of the movement and that scholarship has erroneously focused on his art as the best and even only variant of Futurism. What I find successful about the Bernheim-Jeune is that this notion does not stand. After the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera, and in the months leading up the Paris show, the Futurist painters became more independent in each of their artistic expressions. Boccioni, Carrà, and Severini moved away from Divisionism toward Cubism, but each artist did so in individual degrees. Russolo and Balla went in completely different directions from their peers and each other, as Russolo moved toward German Expressionism and Balla was steadfast in his practice of Divisionism. The Bernheim-Jeune was a successful exhibition because, for a brief period, it allowed for five viable identities of Futurist painting to co-exist,

\textsuperscript{41} Altschuler, \textit{Salon to Biennial}, 111. Giacomo Balla submitted a single work to the exhibition but it was not shown. It was, however, listed in the exhibition catalogue by name. There was no reproduction included.
\textsuperscript{42} Fraquelli, “Italian Divisionism,” 12. Paul Signac, one of the founders of French Neo-Impressionism, lived until 1935 and it possible that he even attended the Futurist exhibition in 1912. He continued to paint in this style until his death in 1935.
each with the potential to become the defining “Futurism.” It was not until the critics began dismissing certain works and writing about Boccioni’s success that this variety was lost. It is in the wake of the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition that Boccioni’s painting emerges as the determinate Futurism modern scholarship focuses on today.

State of the Literature

I find that scholarship on Futurism has incorrectly defined the 1912 exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune as a fragmentation within the movement to which all of its adherents respond uniformly and in concert with one another. This misperception has occurred, I believe, because scholars have designated Boccioni as the voice of the whole of Futurist art and also because they have failed to sufficiently explore the extent to which individual personalities within the group gave rise to conflicting notions of what Futurism was and could be. Italian Futurist painting is typically discussed as a unified institution that cleanly shifted from Divisionism to Cubism. This is a view I take to be superficial and problematic as it identifies Futurism as a monolithic development, even during tectonic shifts within the group’s approach to painting. Marinetti’s plan for Futurism as an all-encompassing life movement was certainly cohesive, but I do not agree that the artistic visions offered by his contemporaries were comparably unified. With the exception of monographic studies, the Futurist painters are typically discussed as a whole unit when they might be examined more profitably as semi-autonomous entities operating only roughly and occasionally in tandem with one another. The concept of artistic fragmentation was briefly proposed in early Futurist scholarship, but since then it has been overlooked in favor of other conclusions and methodological approaches. Nobody has yet sought to examine the foundational work of Futurist painters in relation to one another. This sort of inquiry is only present in monographic projects where artistic relationships and influence are applicable (formal examinations of Boccioni’s oeuvre, for example, always discuss Balla as his mentor).

Scholarship on Boccioni is extensive. Maurizio Calvesi and Ester Coen have written the most comprehensive studies of Boccioni’s life and work, producing two landmark studies which

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44 Joshua C. Taylor, *Futurism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), 17. Joshua C. Taylor is perhaps the first scholar to describe the search for a singular Futurist style as “fruitless.” Rather, he wrote about the movement as “not a style but an impulse,” preferring instead to discuss Futurist art as the conglomeration of several styles and individual expressions. Recent scholarship has focused less on this line of inquiry. For example, the 2009 exhibition catalogue *Futurism* (ed., Ottinger) that accompanied the centennial of the movement’s founding overwhelmingly discusses Futurism as a singular entity.
are unrivaled by any monographs devoted to the other Futurist painters. Calvesi and Coen wrote the first monograph together as Boccioni’s *catalogue raisonné* (1983) and the volume was distributed in Italian. Coen’s solo study (1988) was written in English to accompany a major retrospective exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art only a few years later. This level of attention is misleading. Why have Severini, Balla, or the other painters not been handled in this way? Why has Boccioni received preferential treatment over his peers?

As mentioned, Boccioni has been promulgated throughout scholarship has the leader of the Futurist painters, and even the greatest genius among them. I do not agree with these honors although I do recognize his substantial contributions to the fledgling movement. Marinetti himself acknowledged these same participations, and perhaps he is the one to blame for beginning Boccioni’s celebrity. As early as July 1910 Marinetti was writing such positive reviews of the artist as, “In all his exhibited works Boccioni, marvelously endowed with what the Futurists would later call congenital complementarism, went on developing his diligent and victorious choices of a maximum of light and a maximum of pictorial dynamism.”45 This honorific view is that which modern scholars have blindly followed, due in part to Marinetti’s authority as founder of the movement and because these opinions exist in contemporary documents. Perhaps the painter’s agency springs from Marinetti, and modern scholars are then not completely to blame for the mythologization of Boccioni.

If Marinetti is to blame for this origin, then scholars are equally guilty for disseminating the romanticization without a critical eye. An unchecked consensus view of the artist has thus emerged from modern scholarship: He is thus defined as the great leader, trendsetter, and activist of his group, largely independent of his peers. Pontus Hultén (1986) and Ester Coen. (1988) are both guilty of giving Boccioni tremendous power: one essentially labels him as the “other Picasso,” and the second credits him with exceptional qualities of mind and spirit without acknowledging parallel attributes in his peers. Recently these sentiments have been publicized by Christine Poggi (2009). Actively acknowledging the preceding scholarship by Giovanni Lista (1980), she devotes an entire chapter to the Futurist idea of city and utopia and asserts that Boccioni’s *The City Rises* (fig. 16) is the best manifestation of such ideology. She casts him as the leader and innovator of the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera, writing that he “conceived

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45 Coen, *Umberto Boccioni*, xxiii.
of the idea”. Poggi accepts and quotes Lista as the first scholar to associate Boccioni with this task but she does nothing to access the credibility of this claim or offer any evidence of this leadership role beyond a basic bibliographical citation. That these scholars have supported this consensus with so little analysis has led to the gross overgeneralization of Boccioni as the group leader over his Futurist peers. Their words give him exclusivity and agency which is not afforded to Severini, and the others. It is no wonder that his myth has been so canonized and that under him the other Futurist painters have almost lost their individual identities all together.

The 1912 exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune is a significant moment for Futurism and it deserves a more critical study than it has been given thus far. Generally, scholars discuss the exhibition as the stepping-stone for Futurism’s international notoriety and dissemination. Bruce Altshuler (2008) gives the show great agency by placing it as an equal alongside the Première Exposition de la Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes-Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, etc. (The First Impressionist Exhibition of 1874), The Armory Show of 1913 and the Degenerate Art exhibition of 1937 in his survey of defining modernist installations. Giovanni Lista (1986), Ester Coen (1988), and Didier Ottinger (2009) (all preeminent scholars of Futurism) focus much on the antagonistic overtones of the Paris exhibition. They uniformly consider the show as an inflammatory spectacle. These scholars focus more on the romantic hindsight of the exhibition than on its meaning for Futurism in 1912. I argue that the Futurist exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune offers a much wider array of post-Divisionist, painterly possibilities for Futurism than has previously been acknowledged. Each of the participating painters had a vague understanding of Futurism before the exhibition, and certainly none had any conception of what it would become thereafter. The fact that five distinct, co-equal interpretations of one artistic ideology could exist contemporaneously on the international stage is a landmark realization that modern scholars have not fully grasped.

Surveys on Italian Futurism repeatedly emphasize the movement’s stylistic debt to Italian Divisionism and Cubism. Scholars identify these two principal movements as those that Futurism visually quotes the most, although Impressionism, Symbolism, and Art Nouveau are sometimes mentioned as well. Joshua C. Taylor (1961) was the first scholar to assert that

46 Poggi, Inventing Futurism, 103.
Futurism has no single style. He proposed that the artistic philosophy of Italian Futurism was free to be expressed by its individual followers in any technical vocabulary they preferred. The Futurist painters drew from these aforementioned styles but each did so in a different way and, therefore, no single Futurist’s style can be classified as the Futurist style. Unlike scholarship on Surrealism, however, which has persistently avoided claims concerning a group style, scholars of Futurism since Taylor have failed to observe the variety of styles adopted by the group’s adherents and the discourse on individuality in Futurism has thus greatly declined. I am not completely following in Taylor’s line of inquiry in this study, but I am using it as a starting place. I do agree that early Futurism had no single style but I do support his assertion that Futurism had no identifiable style or that it was simply an “impulse.” Instead, I argue that Futurism had not one artistic voice, but many, and that this multiplicity defined the stylistic identity of pre-1912 Futurist painting.

More recently, scholars have addressed Futurist painting as a cog in Marinetti’s propaganda machine. Pontus Hultén (1986), Christine Poggi (2009), and Didier Ottinger (2009) all present the first Futurist painters as a united front working under Marinetti’s orchestration and curation. In this discourse I argue that such claims mean little in relation to technique. Each of these scholars discusses Futurism’s 1911–12 shift from Divisionism to Cubism but they all focus on the group’s transition and in so doing lose sight of individual developments. Balla, Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, and Severini had very different artistic backgrounds prior to their alliance with Futurism so it is reasonable that their individual interpretations of Cubism would also be distinguishable.

Monographs offer the most detailed exploration of individual artistic approaches. Susan Barnes Robinson (1981), for example, suggests that once Balla joined the Futurists he forever remained a member of the group, despite the stylistic changes he introduced after 1910. Similarly, Ester Coen (1988) comprehensively traces Boccioni’s stylistic evolution without arguing that he forfeited his Futurist identity. Each of the Futurist painters began working in

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47 William S. Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 63–64. Illustrative of the common tone in mid-twentieth century avant-garde scholarship, the formative years of Surrealism are discussed by William S. Rubin (1968) in a similar way during the same decade as Taylor’s assertions about Futurism. Rubin discusses both definitions of Surrealism by Guillaume Apollinaire and André Breton, citing known differences in the interpretation of the term “Surrealism” even in its earliest stages. Rubin writes, “At the time of the publication of the manifesto no conception of Surrealist painting existed . . . Art would be a means of expression, an instrument of self-discovery, not an end to be savored.”
Divisionism, but none practiced the same kind. All of these men changed their techniques mid-career but retained their Futurist affiliation. Boccioni and Carrà remained the most closely aligned with the institutional shift from Divisionist Futurism to Cubism, and Severini, though already practicing early Cubist techniques before late 1911, became more Cubist than ever. Balla did not adopt Cubism but began, instead, to render the concept of chronophotography in paint, and Russolo left his painterly career completely as he founded the sub-movement of Futurist music with the publication of “The Art of Noises” (1913).

Précis of Chapters

This thesis consists of three chapters, each focusing on the trajectory of a single Futurist painter from 1910 to 1912: Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini, and Luigi Russolo will be my case studies. In each chapter I examine two works, one from the artist’s early Futurist oeuvre and one created for the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, and I trace the artist’s individual stylistic narrative through the 1912 exhibition in order to show the considerable variation in this group of Futurist painters. Primary documents including letters, manifestos, and catalogue essays play an integral role, in addition to the chosen paintings. In this study I examine public and private documents in conjunction with both Divisionist and Cubist-inspired paintings by three of the Futurist painters. The public texts written by the first Futurists serve to identify their institutional voice. I have chosen three such sources: Marinetti’s “Manifesto of Futurism” from 1909 as well as the 1910 documents “Manifesto of the Futurist Painters” and the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting.” Also crucial to my examination of Italian Futurism in 1911 and 1913 is the period distinction further corroborates my assertions.

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48 This is a point made clear by both Robinson and Coen.
49 Why have I chosen these three artists? Due to the scope of this project I could only pick three case studies, and the three I have chosen offer the most varied interpretations of Futurism during the period of my study. Although I recognize Balla and Carrà as independent versions of Futurism at this time, their paths are not as radically different as those of Severini, Russolo, and Boccioni. I did not choose Giacomo Balla because he barely participated in Futurism until 1913, despite signing the manifestos and calling himself a Futurist. He did not participate at all in the appropriation of Cubism. It is for this reason that the single Divisionist painting Balla submitted to the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition, Street Light (Lampada—studio di luce; 1910–11), was cut from the show by Boccioni on the eve of its Parisian opening. I did not select Carrà as a case study because his individual trajectory closely resembles Boccioni’s blend of Divisionism and Cubism (though it is not exactly the same).
50 Of the objects I examine in this study, only Russolo’s Perfume (Profumo; 1909–10) was shown at the 1911 Milan exhibition. The records of the Milan exhibition are poor and a small number of Futurist paintings are known to have been presented. Severini did not participate, and while Boccioni showed at least The Laugh (La Risata; 1911) and The City Rises (La città che sale; 1910–11), I believe his first version of States of Mind (Stati d’animo; 1911) is the better choice for comparison in my study. I will discuss in my final chapter Guillaume Apollinaire’s observation of variations in stylistic practice in the work of these artists in a February 1912 review. Although my conclusions do not stem from Apollinaire’s insight, his period distinction further corroborates my assertions.
1912 are archival documents. These include letters of correspondence between F.T. Marinetti and his peers, especially Severini, Boccioni, Russolo, other artists, writers and art critics of the era. These personal documents contain the individual voices of the Futurists, sharply contrasting in tone and content with the aforementioned mass-circulated manifestos. With this method I aim to more fully connect the individual artists’ words with their artistic practice.\footnote{Contradictions and inconsistencies abound in Futurism between its members’ words and their actions. The discrepancy between the institution of Futurism and the individuals that comprise it is just one such example. The movement’s early manifestos present the group as a singular entity banded together by the pronoun “we.” With the exception of Marinetti’s 1909 manifesto, the other public statements I will be considering in this study are signed by multiple Futurists as equal supporters, not as independent authors. It is important to note that like the Divisionists before them, the Futurist painters remained a group of individuals following a singular ideology in distinctive ways. Perhaps the exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune was the first large-scale public display of their differences, but it was surely not the first exercise of their individuality. It is this contradiction in Futurism that scholars have not fully explored and it is this conflict that I intend to illuminate.}

My first chapter concerns Umberto Boccioni, the Futurist painter who most fully blends both Divisionism and Cubism in his paintings. According to modern art history, it is his artistic voice that essentially sets the tone for Futurist art until his sudden death in 1916. Boccioni’s version of Futurism is arguably that which is best known today in regard to the very definition of the movement. Boccioni’s mentor Balla taught him the Divisionist technique but, through a long-time friendship with Severini and several sojourns to Paris, Boccioni threw himself into Cubism by the winter 1911. I discuss his two versions of States of Mind (Stati d’animo; both 1911; figs. 7, 8, 9 and 10, 11, 12, respectively) a project conceived as a three-part series with panels devoted to The Farewells (Gli addii; figs. 7 and 10), Those Who Go (Quelli che vanno; figs. 8 and 11), and Those Who Stay (Quelli che restano; figs. 9 and 12). The first of these series (figs. 7, 8, 9) was painted before the Futurists’ autumn trip to Paris and it is clearly indebted to Italian Divisionism. Boccioni’s canvases are composed of dynamic lines of color, respectively shaped to the storyline of each canvas. The lines in Those Who Go (fig. 8), for example, sweep horizontally across the picture plane, suggesting rapid movement, while the lines rendered in Those Who Stay (fig. 9) were applied vertically to both ground the figures and emphasize their permanence of place. The second expression of States of Mind (figs. 10, 11, 12) was completed after Boccioni was exposed to Cubism in Paris in late 1911. As other scholars have observed, these later canvases offer Cubist conventions such as fragmentation and stenciling.\footnote{Coen, \textit{Umberto Boccioni}, 122. Golding (1972) specifically discusses Boccioni’s use of stenciling as “defiantly proclaim[ing] the picture’s true modernity.”} I chose these series for their metamorphic quality, as they are truly the same concept executed by the same individual in
two separate stylistic programs. I agree with previous scholars that Boccioni’s stylistic evolution best agrees with the greater stylistic tides of early Futurism, but in this chapter I argue that, in spite of his symbiotic relationship with the institution of Futurism, Boccioni’s work offered only one among several possibilities for Futurist painting in 1912.

My second chapter addresses Gino Severini, the Italian Futurist living in Paris. Although Severini studied Divisionism with Balla in Rome, he moved to Paris in 1906 and was quickly exposed to the international avant-garde, such as the work of Picasso and his Montmartre peers.\(^5^3\) Divisionism remains an important element in his painting but early Cubism is evident, too, in Severini’s work from these years immediately prior to Futurism (especially in his repeated inclusion of fractured forms). A technical examination of The Obsessive Dancer (La Danseuse obsédante; 1911; fig. 4) reveals that the painting is steeped in Italian Divisionism despite its fractured nature. These fragmented spaces make a virtual quilt of square-shaped Divisionist dashes, mostly in vibrant blues, black, and bright red. Dance is also the theme of the Severini painting that served as the main attraction at the Paris exhibition, The Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico (La Danse du “pan-pan” au Monico; 1909–1911/1959–1960; fig. 13). As in The Obsessive Dancer, the scene at the Monico is fragmented but the Divisionist brushstrokes Severini previously favored have almost entirely disappeared. Severini recreated the lost original in 1959–60 from a postcard and a painted enamel but for the purposes of this examination my formal discussion of this second painting will stem from photographs of the original as captured at the 1912 exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune. Severini’s paintings reflect his own individual artistic background while simultaneously agreeing with the general stylistic practices of Futurism, thus constituting one viable brand of Futurism in 1911 and early 1912.

Luigi Russolo is the subject of my final chapter. Like the other Futurist painters, he began his artistic career practicing Divisionism. Russolo worked in Milan under the famous Italian Divisionist Gaetano Previati and there he developed a quick friendship with Boccioni. The painting Perfume (Profumo; 1909–10; fig. 14) was one of the canvases presented at the 1911 Milan Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera, and it evidences his early Divisionist tendencies. Perfume is ripe with long threads of paint (in the style of Previati) which swirl around a woman who deeply inhales the title stimulant. Russolo’s color palette here is purely Symbolist as this fantastic assemblage is the product of his youth in Milan. Russolo did not adopt the Cubist

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\(^5^3\) Severini, Life of a Painter, 25 and 33.
technique in 1911 after the disastrous reviews of the Milan show. In fact, in 1912 Russolo became the Futurist whose work remained the furthest from Cubism. His work is completely unlike anything by Severini or Boccioni at this time. At the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune exhibition he presented an interpretation of Futurist painting that was rich in Expressionist brushstrokes and Symbolist coloring. His painting *The Revolt* (*La rivolta*; 1911; fig. 15) depicts an anonymous crowd raging across a quiet cityscape. The manic scene is washed in brilliant red and it envelops the cool, dark blues of the town. I have chosen this painting because, for Russolo’s contemporaries, it was more evocative of recent developments in German Expressionism and Russian Rayonism than of Parisian Cubism. It thus offers yet another completely distinct vision of and trajectory for Futurist painting.
CHAPTER ONE
UMBERTO BOCCIONI

When Marinetti began Futurism as a literary movement in 1909 he had not yet planned for a parallel expression in the visual arts. Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916) helped bring this new aspect of the movement to fruition in 1910 when he assembled a small band of painters to subscribe to Marinetti’s ideology and render it in the plastic arts. In addition to producing some of the earliest Futurist paintings, Boccioni was responsible for writing several manifestos over his short career, including the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” (1910), the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture” (1912), and “Futurist Dynamism and French Painting” (1913). He was certainly the most outspoken of the painters, thanks to his Futurist writings and his presence at Futurist events including exhibitions, serate, and demonstrations. This perceived leadership has given scholarship cause to discuss Boccioni as the front-runner of Futurist art and as the first among equals. Consequently, it is Boccioni’s Futurism that is best known today. I do not accept this distinction and in this study I propose to reassess this assignment. Boccioni serves as my first chapter not because his version of Futurism is pre-eminent over the other paths I discuss here or because scholarship would name him as the movement’s seminal figure. There is no part of Boccioni that is more Futurist than any of the other painters in February 1912. Boccioni’s artistic trajectory was only one viable definition of Futurism in the period between 1911 and early 1912, and I am discussing it here as an interpretation equal to that of any of his Futurist peers.

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54 Poggi, Inventing Futurism, 59 and 67; Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi, and Laura Wittman, ed., Futurism: An Anthology (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 67–68. As described by Christine Poggi, Marinetti invented the serata, a Futurist gathering in which “Marinetti and his friends harangued and insulted their audiences with the aim of jolting them out of their stasis and complacency.” The “Manifesto of Futurist Painters” (1910) was premiered by its signers at such an event. Another demonstration occurred in Venice on 8 July 1910 when the Futurists dropped a reported 800,000 copies of Marinetti’s manifesto “Against Passéist Venice” (dated 27 April 1910) on the Piazza San Marco from Venice’s famous St. Mark’s Clock Tower. They were protesting the romance and decadence of “old Venice.” Boccioni was involved in both of these types of events.

55 The first chapter in the 2009 Tate Modern/Centre Pompidou catalogue celebrating Futurism’s centennial is entitled “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism.” In it, Didier Ottinger traces the parallel trajectories of the two movements as they form in separate nations, meet at the Berneheim-Jeune, and disseminate to later movements in Russia, England, and the United States. This chapter focuses on Cubism in Futurism, the type of Futurism Boccioni so heavily promoted in early 1912. I think it is important to observe that this narrative of Futurism is the one that is remembered almost one hundred years later, instead of the one I am pursuing in this thesis. This is the face of Futurism that has been and still is promoted by modern scholars.
Boccioni has been the subject of monographic studies spanning the last five decades by scholars including Joshua C. Taylor (1961), Calvesi (1983), Coen (1988), Verzotti (1989), Golding (1985), and Laura Mottioli Rossi (2004). Thanks to his authorship of the “Manifesto of Futurist Painting” and the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” (both 1910) Boccioni is always credited with starting the Futurist artistic movement, although sometimes Carrà and Russolo are also included in this effort. Ester Coen (1988) and Giovanni Lista (2001), in particular, stress Boccioni’s role as both the face and voice of Futurist painting during the period of my study and beyond. Both authors devote time to the artist as author as well as to his solo public appearances in venues such as his May 1911 lecture at the Circolo Artistico in Rome.56

To date, Ester Coen’s monograph in conjunction with a 1988 Metropolitan Museum retrospective is the most extensive study on the artist. In this publication she continuously gives Boccioni agency as the leader of the group with statements such as “Boccioni so identified himself with the shared faith in ‘rebellion’ that he enthusiastically took on the part of chief agitator for the movement.”57 Her language in general feeds into Marinetti’s perennially romantic manifesto ideals about Futurism by positioning Boccioni as a fighter and as a heroic figured armed to challenge modern art, foreign critics, and even the world stage. Like a critic she continuously deems his paintings successes, too, including the second version of States of Mind (1911) for “transposing his theoretical discussions from the linguistic plane to the plane of imagery.”58 Coen sometimes writes about Boccioni’s actions in the future conditional form, thus lending an epic quality to her description, such as in the assertion, “With the parturition of the Futurist movement the troubled artist would suddenly win greater assurance. He would throw himself into a life outside his narrow world, open himself to the risks of unrestrained emotion.”59

Aside from the documented facts of his involvement as author and lecturer it is this sort of language that is used to discuss his accomplishments, which has held Boccioni in a more celebrated post than his peers.

In this chapter I discuss Boccioni’s hybridization of Divisionism and Cubism as one possible version of Futurism with the knowledge that his way was neither pre-destined to define Futurism nor was it the only potential interpretation of the movement’s ideals during this time.

57 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxii.
58 Ibid., xxvi.
59 Ibid., xliii
Boccioni, in particular, is a complicated subject because he continuously did one thing and said another. Beginning in mid-1911 he spoke out about Futurism’s need to be more progressive, focusing on the success of Parisian Cubism as his model. However, in his own art Boccioni blended new Cubist techniques with his pre-existing Divisionist practice. He did not fully drop Divisionism and he did not completely assume the tenets of Cubism, even though he preached these instructions to the Futurist public. To better illustrate this formal blending I shall examine his two versions of States of Mind (Stati d’animo; both 1911; figs. 7, 8, 9 and 10, 11, 12). Each a series of three canvases, these two sets of the same concept clearly show the transformative effect of Boccioni’s 1911–12 technical shift toward Cubism. Ultimately I shall show Boccioni’s Futurism as the only way for Futurism in 1912 and that modern historians have too willingly discussed it as such.60

Boccioni began pursuing art by the age of sixteen when his family settled in Rome. He first studied at the Scuola Libera del Nudo before discovering Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), an established practitioner of Impressionism, Italian Divisionism, and Symbolism, living and working in the area. In 1901, Boccioni was introduced to Gino Severini and the two began study under Balla.61 Like Balla’s work, Boccioni’s early paintings were portraits and landscapes. Balla trained the young artist in his own Divisionist style, one radically different from the late-nineteenth-century realism that was still preferred in Rome at this time.62 The current art culture of Rome was excited by Academic art, and the Pre-Raphaelites were especially popular.63 Balla, however, was unenthused by these artists and he looked instead to the art of his northern Italian homeland for direction.64 His subsequent blend of Divisionism, Verism, and Impressionism are all reflective of the art he surrounded himself with instead of attending these Academic Roman

60 Boccioni has been the subject of many more studies than any of his fellow Futurist painters. Scholars such as Maurizio Calvesi, Ester Coen, Giorgio Verzotti, Laura Mottioli Rossi, Joshua C. Taylor, and John Golding have published monographs dedicated to the artist. In addition to these focused projects, Boccioni is always a prominent figure in the literature dedicated to Italian Futurism, from the earliest titles to the most recent scholarship available. 61 Ouvrard, “Chronology,” 308; Severini, Life of a Painter, 12–14. Severini’s first encounters with Boccioni are remembered in detail in his memoirs. A section in his first chapter, entitled “Meeting Boccioni” recounts their first outing in Rome: a Sunday afternoon plein air trip to sketch the Ponte Nomentana ending with a swim in the Aniene River and hiking through the Roman countryside. 62 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xvi. 63 Robinson, Giacomo Balla, 4; Severini, Life of a Painter, 16. Severini writes, “The state of Italian painting at that time was one of the muddiest and most injurious imaginable; under such conditions, even a Raphael would have had difficulty painting a good picture.” 64 Robinson, Giacomo Balla, 6.
circles. Balla made his name in Rome on these imported techniques (Divisionism, in particular) and they constituted the painting lessons he gave to the young Boccioni and Severini. Further, Balla is credited with bringing Divisionism to the Roman art world and disseminating it through his students. In his memoirs, Severini uses the word “violent” to describe the Divisionist art created during this period by Balla, Boccioni, and himself, setting their work apart from that which other artists were doing in Rome.

It is important to realize that the formal skills Balla taught Boccioni and Severini were only his interpretations of Divisionism. Balla’s understanding of Divisionism was superficial as he learned the technique from examining Divisionist paintings and not from studying with a trained master. Severini remembers, “Balla, who became our master, introduced us to the modern technique of ‘Divisionism’ without, however, teaching us its fundamental and scientific rules.” This false instruction affected lynchpin moments of Futurist art, especially Boccioni’s primary recruitment of painters who also practiced Divisionism and the subsequent endorsement of Divisionist Futurism as the style of early Futurism. I suggest that the groundwork for these decisions was laid here, in 1901, when Boccioni and Severini began taking art lessons with Balla in Rome.

By 1908, Boccioni had settled in Milan. It was at this time that Boccioni started to shift away from Balla’s teaching in favor of his own artistic explorations. In a 1907 letter to Severini, Boccioni detailed what he viewed as Balla’s artistic shortcomings:

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65 Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 16. Severini was introduced to Balla through Boccioni. In his memoirs, Severini recalls how this introduction came to pass: “Boccioni, who could sniff out anyone with talent, had discovered Giacomo Balla, just back from Paris and brimming with the theories of Impressionism. Balla, who became our master, introduced us to the modern technique of ‘Divisionism.’ Balla used the French painters’ technique of separate and contrasting colors . . . We are extremely fortunate to meet such a man, whose orientation was perhaps decisive to our careers.”


67 Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 17. Severini writes, “As a result of [Balla’s] example and as a reaction to such an environment [that is, the archaic Roman art world], my works and those of Boccioni became steadily more aggressive and violent. We had both made progress.” The word “violent” becomes especially important to the Futurists, as it reoccurs in many of their descriptions of themselves as a group. One of its earliest appearances is in the 1909 manifesto. Because the descriptor I am citing appears in Severini’s autobiography (written from 1948-68) I assume he uses “violent” in an attempt to connect his, Balla’s, and Boccioni’s early work as foreshadowing to the Futurist ideology.


69 Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 16.

70 Coen, *Umberto Boccioni*, xix. In the two years preceding this move, the artist spent time in Paris, Russia, and Poland. He lived with his mother and sister for a brief time in Padua, too, before moving to the industrial metropolis of the north.
[Balla] catches marvelously that chance tone of a leaf, but his feeling rests there, circumscribed, cold, isolated . . . His universe does not throb! The nostalgia for what does not exist, for what perhaps never existed, that will never exist, is not satisfied! . . . That is why he is not great, and why to my mind he is on the wrong path!⁷¹

Boccioni wrote often in his diaries about what was wrong with Balla’s instruction and about the possibilities young painters like himself could (and should) achieve.⁷² He looked forward to something radical.⁷³ “I am fed up with fields and little houses.”⁷⁴ Boccioni’s focus soon turned from studies of life to the studies of light and color science that were so favored by both the Italian Divisionists. Though he was already practicing Divisionism in the manner that Balla introduced to him in Rome, Boccioni came to greatly admire another Divisionist painter’s style besides that of his mentor.⁷⁵ Gaetano Previati (1852–1920), perhaps the most famous Italian Divisionist (a true member of the Divisionist circle), was a champion of the study of light and the author of three important books on painting theory that were especially influential to the young Boccioni.⁷⁶ Each Divisionist painter maintained a decidedly individual artistic voice while practicing the basic tenets of Divisionism (color theory, study of light, etc.), and Previati was no exception. Balla’s painting was extremely different from Previati’s work for two reasons: first, Balla was not truly a Divisionist. Second, the Divisionism that Balla did study was not that of Previati; the Divisionist work of Angelo Morbelli (1853–1919) and Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo (1868–1907) was of greater significance to him.⁷⁷ When Boccioni was introduced to the paintings of Previati he was viewing a new application of the technical vocabulary with which he was most familiar, a happy discovery as he moved to Milan in order to escape Academic culture with the hope of finding something new and radical.

⁷¹ Ibid., xvii.
⁷² Ibid., xvii–xviii.
⁷³ Ibid., xvii.
⁷⁴ Ibid., xviii. This statement was recorded in Boccioni’s diary on 28 March 1907.
⁷⁵ It is important to remember that although the Italian Divisionists had comparable characteristics in their usage of color chromatics, the study of light, and overlapping subject themes, each individual artist was truly an individual. Balla and Previati both practiced Italian Divisionism but they did so in different ways. Balla, for example, favored realism and Previati specialized in the study of light.
⁷⁶ Aurora Scotti Tosini, “Divisionist Painting Techniques,” in Radical Light: Italy’s Divisionist Painters (1891-1910) (London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2008), 30; Ginex, “Divisionism to Futurism,” 43. Previati’s three publications are La tecnica della pittura (1905), I principii scientifici del divisionismo (1906), and Della pittura: Tecnic ed arte (1913). He translated Jean-Georges Vibert’s La science de la peinture in 1892 and wrote the preface to Secco Suardo’s restoration manual. It should also be noted that Previati was living in Milan when Boccioni moved there and the two artists met several times to discuss art.
⁷⁷ Robinson, Giacomo Balla, 9–11.
The event that changed the course of Boccioni’s artistic career happened in either late 1909 or early 1910 when he was introduced to F.T. Marinetti. Until this point, Futurism was solely a literary movement and it is to Boccioni’s credit that Futurist art was born as Marinetti assigned him the task of assembling the first members of his artistic sub-movement. It is no coincidence that each of the first five Futurist painters practiced Divisionism. Boccioni was joined by Luigi Russolo and Carlo Carrà first, and Severini and Balla united the group several months later. With Marinetti’s backing, in April 1910 Boccioni drafted the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” and by February 1911 the document was signed by all of the new Futurist painters. According to this manifesto Futurist art was a follower of Divisionism. I contend this is explained by the fact that Divisionism was the common artistic ideology among the painters and because it was the style considered to be the most modern in Italy in the early twentieth century.

The first version of Boccioni’s States of Mind (Stati d’animo; 1911; figs. 7, 8, 9)

78 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xx. This event is recorded in Carlo Carrà’s autobiography, La mia vita. He reports that he, Boccioni and Luigi Russolo were introduced to Marinetti in Milan. Boccioni recruited Severini (already living in Paris) to Futurism shortly thereafter.

79 Ibid., xxi–xxii; Severini, Life of a Painter, 80–81. In a letter to Severini, Boccioni writes of his task: “But I have to warn you that that signatures must belong to young artists absolutely convinced of the affirmations in the manifesto. They must adhere to it unconditionally and without any intellectual reservations. . . . We need young men (and few such exist) of sure faith and abnegation, highly cultured and active, whose works, while allowing for a certain amount of uncertainty, clearly demonstrate an aspiration to that comprehensive perfection marking the radiant path toward ideals[.]” I firmly believe that Boccioni’s assemblage of the first group of Futurist painters is not grounds for his promotion as the leader of the group.

80 Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 23; Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xx. It is unknown how Carrà and Russolo met Boccioni, but it is known that they were all together when Boccioni reports first meeting Marinetti in either late 1909 or early 1910 in Milan. In his autobiography Carrà writes, “Boccioni, Russolo, and I met Marinetti, who was then living in Via Senato. Who could have supposed that so many things would have come out of that meeting? None of us had the remotest perception of what would happen.” He further describes how the first manifesto of Futurist painting was written: “The next morning, Boccioni, Russolo, and I got together in a café at Porta Vittoria, near where we all lived, and with great enthusiasm we sketched out a plan for our appeal.” Originally, Romolo Romani and Aroldo Bonzagni were in the group, but they quickly left when they did not agree with the first manifesto on Futurist art. Severini and Balla served as their replacements.

81 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xx–xxii. Even at the publication of this manifesto not a single Futurist work of art had been created. This bold statement was only a projection of what the Futurists (mostly Boccioni and Marinetti) envisioned their movement to become. Also, Severini and Balla replaced two other artists who had signed the first version of the manifesto. Little is known of these men as artists. I do not know if they practiced Divisionism or if they were even painters. It is known that they both backed out of any ties with Futurism almost immediately (no later than 11 February 1910 when Severini committed to the manifesto). Perhaps Divisionism was not an original tenet of the Futurist sub-movement and the endorsement of the technique was added after Balla and Severini affiliated. This is an answer that cannot be known at this time. Given his inclusion of both Balla and Severini, regardless of the timeline, I argue that my suggestion of Boccioni’s purposeful search for Divisionist painters is still a valid point.

82 Apollonio, Futurist Manifestos, 29. The whole quote from the manifesto reads, “We conclude that painting cannot exist today without Divisionism. This is no process that can be learned and applied at will. Divisionism, for the modern painter, must be an innate complementariness which we declare to be essential and necessary.”
illustrates Futurism’s Divisionist stylistic practice. The complex project was made up of three equally sized panels: The Farewells (Gli addii; fig. 7), Those Who Go (Quelli che vanno; fig. 8), and Those Who Stay (Quelli che restano; fig. 9). Using the same train station as the setting for all three canvases, each painting depicts the individual experience by three separate groups of people: The Farewells (fig. 7) illustrates the moment just before the train is boarded, Those Who Stay (fig. 9) depicts the people who will remain behind when the train leaves the station, and finally, as the train is pulling away, one can see both the passengers and the passing landscape in Those Who Go (fig. 8). Boccioni’s aims for this series was not to simply depict the activity of a train station, but to render in paint the internal movement of human emotion, an innately Expressionist venture. As Apollinaire recalled in a Mercure de France article dated 16 November 1911, Boccioni told him of the series, “I have painted two pictures, one of which expresses departure and the other arrival. This takes place in a railroad station. Eh bien! to bring out the difference in feelings I have not put into my picture of arrival a single line found in the picture of departure.” Of course, given Apollinaire’s affiliation with the Cubists and the proximity of the article’s date to the Futurist exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, this report should be examined critically. Boccioni’s endeavor as we see it today seems to elide with Divisionist theories of psychophysics and the interest in human emotion and reaction, even though these elements are de-emphasized in the “report” by Boccioni to Apollinaire.

Technically, this series relies upon Divisionist brushstrokes and Symbolist coloring, as

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83 These canvases were painted sometime after the Milan show in May but before the autumn trip to Paris.
84 Regarding the temporal narrative of this series, although there is no proven order to these three canvases, The Farewells depicts a moment chronologically existing before the other two panels. At this point in the narrative no one has left or has been left yet, but saying goodbye is a moment shared by both parties in Those Who Stay and Those Who Go. In the 1912 Galerie Bernheim-Jeune exhibition catalogue they are listed in the following order, with the connecting bracket label États d’âme: The Farewells, Those Who Go, Those Who Stay. This is the closest official order that was ever recorded by Boccioni himself. Today the second version of the series (that shown in 1912 Paris) hangs in the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the same order, left to right. We do not know if this order ever applied to the first version. In the 1961 MoMA show, however, Joshua Taylor arranged the canvas as Those Who Stay, The Farewells, Those Who Go. In 1969 at an exhibition of the Nelson Rockefeller Collection at MoMA the canvases were ordered again in the same way as at the 1912 Galerie Bernheim-Jeune show. While researching in the MoMA archives I found correspondence between one art enthusiast and the museum as to what the order should be. The debate ultimately ended in the Museum’s choosing to hang the paintings in the order in which they may currently be viewed.
85 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, 118.
86 Fraquelli, “Italian Divisionism,” 12.
per the style of pre-Cubist Futurism. The palette evokes both Divisionism’s pure colors and qualities of Symbolism because Boccioni planned the project around human emotion and psychology and he uses color to this effect. In a lecture given on 29 May 1911 at the Circolo Artistico in Rome, Boccioni spoke of his concept of “States of Mind”:

And so if solid bodies give rise to states of mind by means of vibrations of forms, then we will draw these vibrations . . . The colors should not correspond with the objects because these latter are never themselves colored; this higher realism has generated this truth: If objects appear colored more or less according to the emotion that invests them, why not paint the sensation these variations arouse?

This statement, though not directly speaking about the first version of States of Mind, is likely concurrent with some draft of its creation. Upon closer examination of the paintings, each canvas is dominated by a different color. For example, there is blue in Those Who Go (fig. 8), green in Those Who Stay (fig. 9), and a dark gray in The Farewells (fig. 7); these colors are not applied to their subject realistically. Furthermore, the brushstrokes of each canvas correspond to the action in that specific painting’s title. The lines in Those Who Go (fig. 8) move at an angle from the lower left corner, rising toward the right side (referencing the accelerating speed of a departing train), and the lines in Those Who Stay (fig. 9) do the opposite as they firmly root the figures with vertical stripes of color in order to illustrate the fixed nature of those who are left behind on the platform. Fittingly, The Farewells (fig. 7) depicts an in-between moment, one that bridges the other two canvases as the action of saying goodbye precedes the divergent paths of the figures in Those Who Go and Those Who Stay (figs. 8 and 9). This color palette has the most diversity and these lines move in several directions, including long and wavy multi-colored lines which stretch diagonally across the canvas and also short vertical waves in the picture’s upper left corner.

87 Camille Morando, “Umberto Boccioni: Stati d’animo” in Futurism, ed. Didier Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 123; Michael Gibson, trans. and ed., The Symbolists (New York: Abrams, 1988), 170; Robinson, Giacomo Balla, 7–9. Symbolism was a part of Italy’s artistic culture during the same time as Italian Divisionism’s florescence. In the literary sphere, Garbriele D’Annunzio is credited with bringing Symbolism to Italy but artistically it was the work of the Divisionist artists Gaetano Previati, Giovanni Segantini, and Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo who promulgated Symbolism. The work of Segantini and even more so, the paintings by da Volpedo were especially appealing to Balla and no doubt a part of Boccioni and Severini’s subsequent instruction. Boccioni, as mentioned, had much admiration for Gaetano Previati, too. Given this presence of Symbolism in Italy and in Boccioni’s artistic background, I do not think it is a strange observation when viewing Boccioni’s early 1911 States of Mind to recognize Symbolist techniques such as using color to evoke emotion. Boccioni would even publicly discuss color use in this way at a May 1911 lecture at the Circolo Artistico in Rome.


89 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, 118–120.
Hosted at the abandoned Padiglione Ricordi factory in Milan from 30 April to 7 May 1911, the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera marks the first Futurist exhibition and the official presentation of this Divisionist Futurism.\textsuperscript{90} Of the five Futurist painters, only Boccioni, Russolo, and Carrà participated in it.\textsuperscript{91} The exhibition evoked the infant movement’s ideology of modernity through the use of this industrial, alternative exhibition space; Modern scholars recognize Boccioni’s organization of the entire show.\textsuperscript{92} Although the first version of \textit{States of Mind} was not displayed, the exhibition featured over four hundred pieces of local art and Boccioni, Russolo, and Carrà represented the Futurists, each with separate rooms dedicated to their paintings.\textsuperscript{93}

The Milanese exhibition was generally well received with the exception of those critics who were versed in the concurrent international avant-garde, an accomplishment that none of the exhibiting Futurist painters could boast.\textsuperscript{94} These reviews (especially those coming from respected Italian figures in the international art world) offered credibility in a way that could not be overlooked by the Futurists. An examination of chronology reveals that once these opinions were published, the Futurists changed direction from local artistic circle to one with broader aspirations. Nino Barbantini, the director of the Museo d’Arte Moderna at the Ca’ Pesaro in Venice, called the entire exhibition “useless and meaningless” but singled out the work of Boccioni and Carrà as being noteworthy.\textsuperscript{95} He wrote of Boccioni, “In his restless aspiration to test new and daring spaces, to represent original visions in unusual forms evading conventions, he brings a youthfulness and exuberance that cannot fail to arouse warm sympathy in all who

\textsuperscript{90} Ouvrard, “Chronology,” 319.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.; Poggi, \textit{Inventing Futurism}, 103–104; Lista, \textit{Futurism} (1986), 24. The exhibition targeted the masses as an antagonistic statement on the elitism associated with art appreciation and it was conceived as a free show to be held in a former place of labor. Its total profit was donated to unemployed workers as yet another socially and politically-aware gesture. The show was held in cooperation with the Casa del Lavoro and the Università del Popolo in Milan, who, as Poggi describes, were both “devoted to the social assistance and education of the working classes.” Unlike the 1912 exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune, the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera was about more than canvases and in the invitation to the event, the exhibition’s goal was clearly announced. Rather than presenting a “usual” exhibition, Boccioni intended to “demonstrate instead that an artistic sense, held to be the privilege of the few, is innate in human nature, and that the forms with which it manifests itself are the simple exponents of the greater or lesser sensibility of the person who renders them.”
\textsuperscript{92} Poggi, \textit{Inventing Futurism}, 103.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 104. The first version of \textit{States of Mind} was not shown in Milan, as it was not yet completed. Boccioni’s \textit{The City Rises} (Lavoro; 1910), however, was painted around this same time and it also samples the same Italian Divisionism and Symbolist coloring as the first version of \textit{States of Mind}. This painting was a highlight of the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 104-105.
\textsuperscript{95} Coen, \textit{Umberto Boccioni}, xxiv.
consider him openly, without prejudices.\textsuperscript{96} It appears that even at this early date that Boccioni’s voice was recognized for its potential independence. Still, Barbantini remained unimpressed with Boccioni’s use of symbolism.\textsuperscript{97} His criticism continues to focus on Boccioni’s monumental \textit{Work} (\textit{Lavoro}; 1910; fig. 16), a painting that is known today as \textit{The City Rises} (\textit{La città che sale}):

> Among the recent works, an extremely large allegory of labor does not really prove convincing. It is neither very intriguing nor very eloquent because the broad conception . . . lacks clarity and organic cohesion. Perhaps the work was not sufficiently prepared and needed to be worked out in advance at greater depth and length, but even after examining its preparatory studies I am induced to believe that by and large it is not in accord with Boccioni’s character to persist in symbolic painting.\textsuperscript{98}

Barbantini was a friend of Boccioni and had known him as an artist for years. Perhaps he had great aspirations for his friend and was frustrated by Boccioni’s work in comparison to contemporary international art (i.e. Cubism). Another negative review of the exhibition came from Ardegno Soffici, a contributor to the Florentine magazine \textit{La Voce}. Soffici outlined the problem with Futurist painting in 1911 in his critique, publicly highlighting the flaws of the Italian movement in comparison to contemporary international avant-garde trends (most likely referencing the French Cubists with whom he was intimately acquainted and whom he had recently visited in Paris).\textsuperscript{99} He specifically names the Divisionist painter Vittore Grubicy in criticizing the Futurist art shown in Milan. I view this negative citation as a statement of Divisionism as a whole, and Futurism’s incorporation of it. Soffici does not spend much time discussing the Futurists as individuals, but he does name Boccioni and his painting \textit{The Laugh} (\textit{La Risata}; 1911; fig. 17).\textsuperscript{100} Soffici does not describe the painting with any more than the general statement, “Russolo, Boccioni and the other exhibiting Futurists, if any, and whose

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.; Poggi, \textit{Inventing Futurism}, 105-107. Although Boccioni was the most vocal Futurist when it came to splitting from the Divisionist style, in 1911 he defended his brushwork with the statement that “every, even minimal, mark carries within itself the imprint of the individual.”
\textsuperscript{98} Coen, \textit{Umberto Boccioni}, 96; Poggi, \textit{Inventing Futurism}, 105.
\textsuperscript{100} Coen, \textit{Umberto Boccioni}, 107. \textit{The Laugh} (\textit{La Risata}; 1911) was shown at both the May 1911 Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera and the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in February 1912. The painting was, presumably, first rendered in the Divisionist manner but a viewer at the Milan exhibition defaced the canvas. There is no documentation of how or how much the painting was damaged. Sometime in the later part of 1911 Boccioni repainted the canvas to reflect Cubist tendencies and it is this form that was exhibited in Paris.
names escape me, do not represent in any way ‘a very personal vision of art.’”

At the conclusion of the Milan exhibition the Futurists were unhappy with their Italian confinement and, as stated, I believe these reviews to have been of considerable importance to the Futurists in their following actions. Several of the painters had spent time in Paris (the veritable capital of the art world) in the early twentieth century and thanks to the Milan reviews and interaction with artist-friends abroad the Futurists became increasingly aware of successful Parisian trends. Soon after the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera a December 1911 show at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in Paris was scheduled. By October 1911, however, the Futurists were forced to delay it until February 1912. In the meantime, Marinetti funded a Futurist expedition for Boccioni, Russolo and Carrà to join Severini in Paris in order to experience the center of international art culture. During this sojourn the Futurist painters met with the critic Apollinaire and visited the studios of both Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. They visited the gallery of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and attended the Salon d’Automne, where they saw many Cubist works including Jean Metzinger’s Tea Time (Le Goûter; 1911; fig. 18) and Fernand Léger’s Study for Three Portraits (Essai pour trois portraits; 1910–11; fig. 19).

With the December show cancelled the Futurists returned to Italy to start anew. Boccioni and his fellow painters were immersed in Cubism while in Paris and they continued to research the movement in the months leading up to their 1912 debut. The Futurists gained invaluable insight into Cubist art while visiting Paris, but in fact they were already acquainted with the basic principles of the French painters before that trip. It is essential to note that the Futurist painters were aware of Cubism before they ever left Italy for the 1912 Bernheim-Jeune exhibition, but not before they showed at the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera. Severini, of course, had personal

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102 Severini’s knowledge of the Parisian art world was a benefit to the Futurists still living in Italy. Marinetti, Boccioni, and Balla had also spent time in Paris, although not for several years before 1911.
103 Ouvrard, “Chronology,” 319; Severini, Life of a Painter, 85. The exhibition was rescheduled, citing Marinetti’s deployment to Libya as a war correspondent for the Italo-Turkish war and their general unpreparedness.
104 Altschuler, Salon to Biennial, 113. Marinetti funded the autumn trip to Paris.
105 Ibid.
106 Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 24; Green and Musgrove, "Cubism," In Grove Art Online. When discussing Cubism I am referring to Analytic Cubism. The major players in this discussion are of course Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, but also a group known as the “Salon Cubists” (Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, Fernand Léger, and Robert Delauney). Jean Metzinger’s Tea Time (Le Goûter; 1911; fig. 18) is alternatively known as Woman with a Teaspoon (Femme à la cuillère) and the “Cubist Mona Lisa.”
107 Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27. In the summer of 1911, Boccioni wrote to Severini (who was currently living in Paris): “Get all the information you can about the Cubists, and about Braque and Picasso. Go to Kahnweiler’s. And if he’s got photos of recent works (produced after I left), buy one or two. Bring us back all the information you can.”
contact with the Cubists since he had been working in the French capital for years before joining the Italian Futurist painters.\textsuperscript{108} His mid-1911 visit to Milan was enlightening for the Futurist painters due to the first-hand knowledge Severini brought from Paris.\textsuperscript{109} As for the other members of the circle, before Boccioni, Carrà, and Russolo visited Paris in October 1911 they had all read articles written by Soffici on Cubism.\textsuperscript{110} Also, although they first saw Cubist paintings in person while in Paris, reproductions were previously available in Roger Allard’s June 1911 article.\textsuperscript{111} The critical reviews from the Milan exhibition informed the Futurists that the Cubists in Paris were doing something progressive and successful. The Futurists responded accordingly by turning away from their own Divisionist-inspired works. In preparation for the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition Boccioni and the others returned to Italy and created an entirely new set of paintings.

The catalogue from the February 1912 Paris exhibition lists thirty-five paintings, although only thirty-four were actually shown. Boccioni presented ten of these canvases, including the three from his second \textit{States of Mind} (figs. 10, 11, 12).\textsuperscript{112} He wrote the catalogue essay, “Les exposants au public,” an incredibly blatant criticism of the Cubist painters as “masked academicism.”\textsuperscript{113} Boccioni, on behalf of the Futurists, wrote: “[The Cubists] worship the traditionalism of Poussin, of Ingres, of Corot, ageing and petrifying their art with an obstinate attachment to the past, which to our eyes remains totally incomprehensible.” Perhaps this preface was written for the French public as an explanation of what was wrong with their local Cubism, or maybe Boccioni wrote the essay to explain the potential of the new Futurist application of Cubism. I cannot overlook the possibility that if Boccioni wrote from his own, first-hand understanding of Futurism in 1912, surely the same essay would be unrecognizable if written by Russolo or Severini. In defining Boccioni’s new style (that which he proposed for all Futurism at the 1912 exhibition) I find a strong analogy in Balla’s brand of Divisionism. Just as Balla exposed himself to Divisionism and painted it with no formal instruction and no affiliation with

\textsuperscript{108} Hultén, \textit{Futurism & Futurisms}, 570.
\textsuperscript{109} Severini, \textit{Life of a Painter}, 85; Venturi, \textit{Gino Severini}, 12.
\textsuperscript{110} Soffici was already acquainted with the French Cubists when he attended the 1911 Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera.
\textsuperscript{111} Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27. Allard’s article was “Sur quelques peintres,” published in \textit{Les Marches di Sud-Ouest} in June 1911.
\textsuperscript{113} Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 29.
any of the members in its broad circle, the Futurists, too, studied Cubism when they visited Paris in late 1911 and returned to Italy to paint what they understood from the excursion for their exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune. Cubist-inspired Futurism, then, is a superficial, formal adaptation of Cubism and cannot be considered a true disciple.

Boccioni’s dedication to his new stylistic practice is evident not only in his own paintings but also in his behavior during the exhibition. Boccioni excised Balla from the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune by pulling the only piece he submitted because it did not agree with Futurism’s new technical shift. Despite its celebration of technology over nature, Balla’s Electric Light (Lampada—studio di luce; 1910–11; fig. 20) did not successfully meld with Futurism’s brand of Cubism because of its heavy Divisionist style and, obviously, for its total lack of Cubist elements. This attitude pervaded Boccioni’s actions even before the exhibition as he had restarted the States of Mind series from the beginning even though Balla would not concede his early Futurist style. Despite this fervent dedication, Cubist-inspired Futurism was heavily criticized at the 1912 exhibition. Louis Vauxcelles called Boccioni’s art a simple exercise in Cubism: “a plain and simple markdown from Braque and Picasso.” Apollinaire, too, voiced his lack of amazement at Boccioni’s Cubist technique. He wrote the canvases off as being “under the influence of Picasso” and labeled the entire Futurist exhibition a failure; Apollinaire refused to acknowledge the hybrid nature of these works.

Painted expressly for the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition, Boccioni’s second iteration of States of Mind (1911; figs. 10, 11, 12) had the same panel subjects and titles as the first version and was also dedicated to the concept of human emotion. This version was done immediately after Boccioni’s return from Paris and is heavy in Cubist-inspired elements including stenciling,

114 Electric Light was painted well before the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, and perhaps even before the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera. Issues of dating leave this unanswerable. What is important here is that Balla’s Electric Light is strictly and unapologetically Divisionist. He did not paint additional, Cubist-inspired works for the Paris exhibition and he did not alter the painting when Boccioni rejected it.

115 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, 120.

116 Ibid. Apollinaire continued, “The exhibition of the Futurist painters will teach our young painters to be even bolder than they have been so far. Without such boldness the Futurists would never have dared exhibit their still very imperfect efforts.” Boccioni, however, remained unfazed by these negative comments. In a letter to his friend Nino Barbantini dated 12 February 1912, Boccioni wrote “The entire battle [the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition] took its character from my States of Mind which are being talked about in all the artistic and literary centers in Paris. The French are dumbfounded that in a little provincial city like Milan something could be said that leaves them speechless, they being so accustomed to all the most absurd efforts at originality.”
force-lines and the interpenetration of forms (what the Futurists would term “simultaneity”). In this series Boccioni uses the stenciling technique on *The Farewells* (fig. 10) that was also employed by Picasso in contemporary works such as *Ma Jolie* (1911–12; fig. 21). Further, according to the Cubist tradition, the forms within *The Farewells* (fig. 10) are fractured, despite retaining the same mix of direction from its first version. The receding landscape, the parked train with its billowing smokestack and the passengers on the platform in this canvas are no longer rendered with dashes of color—they are rather depicted as twisted, volumized objects. *Those Who Stay* (fig. 12) and *Those Who Go* (fig. 11) retain their respective vertical and horizontal lines, but the people in each canvas, too, are fractured and geometric. The passengers are no longer shadowy figures hidden behind sweeping horizontal lines. Now their faces rise out of the mid-canvas as the speeding train passes a by a city.

For all his campaigning for the new French technique, none of Boccioni’s paintings for the Bernheim-Jeune completely break from his Italian education. I contend that this three-part series is emblematic of these qualities that came to define Boccioni’s brand of Futurism. Accordingly, while *States of Mind II* is very Cubist in its rendition of volumes, there remain obvious shades of Divisionism. The most noticeable incongruence is that Boccioni uses a bright, multi-colored palette in all three of the panels instead of the neutral palettes favored by Picasso and Braque. As in Severini’s *Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico* (fig. 13), Divisionist brushstrokes are embe:dded in Boccioni’s canvases among the Cubist forms. The second version of *The Farewells* (fig. 10), for instance, is full of streaming dashes of pure color that swirl around the Cubist personages in the lower right side of the canvas. Perhaps surprisingly, vestiges of the first version of *States of Mind* (figs. 7, 8, 9) carry over in this second expression as well. Upon close formal examination Divisionist brushstrokes are also found is *The Farewells* (fig. 10), and the previously used color palettes from the first version of *States of Mind* are still present, evoking Boccioni’s Circolo Artistico lecture on color and its relationship to emotion. Green still

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117 Barbara Musetti, “Carlo Carrà: I funerali dell’anarchico Galli” in *Futurism*, ed. Didler Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 140; Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, *Les peintres futuristes italiens*, 8. The 1912 exhibition catalogue essay “The Exhibitors to the Public” spoke of the force-lines in Carlo Carrà’s *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* (I funerali dell’anarchico Galli; 1910–11): “These force-lines must encircle and involve the spectator so that he will in a manner be forced to struggle himself with the persons in the picture.” This element of dynamism is a crucial concept to Futurism. I view this directionality as a dynamic volumization (something different from Cubism). Surely Futurism absorbed the fractured nature of Cubism, and the forms in paintings such as Boccioni’s second *States of Mind* now have volume in a way they previous did not, but Cubist paintings do not have motion in the way that Futurist paintings do.
dominates *Those Who Stay* (fig. 12), and blue is once again the most used color in *Those Who Go* (fig. 11). This continuity of color is not as bold in *The Farewells* (fig. 10), but warm red and orange tones can be found in both canvases.

When Boccioni’s individual style shifted from a Divisionist technique to one incorporating elements of Parisian Cubism, Futurism was perceived by the public to have made the same change. His close proximity to Marinetti paired with his involvement in the artistic sub-movement of Futurism from its first days caused Boccioni to be an inseparable personality within its culture and administration. This bond, already famous in 1912, has been promulgated by modern scholars ever since, and Boccioni’s hybridized Divisionist-Cubist Futurism remains the iconic standard in Futurist painting. In this chapter I have explored this complex relationship, tracing Boccioni’s artistic trajectory from his earliest painting lessons in turn-of-the-century Rome with Balla to the February 1912 exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in Paris. In the remainder of this study I shall show that Boccioni absorbed Cubism at a time when each of his fellow Futurist painters were following their own different and individual artistic ways, and this is the concept which underscores my entire examination. The differences among the first five Futurist painters were always present and they continuously impacted each artist’s stylistic and technical growth from the moment of the Futurist art’s inception. Futurism is not defined by any one of these interpretations. In a meaningful sense of the term, Futurism is truly the sum of its parts, and Boccioni is only one element to be considered.
CHAPTER TWO
GINO SEVERINI

Geography is one major element that distinguishes Gino Severini (1883–1966) from his Futurist peers. Like Balla, Boccioni, and the others, Severini began his artistic career in Italy but he soon left the young nation in order to pursue a life in Paris. While Divisionism was the first artistic technique he practiced, under the influence of the early twentieth-century Parisian environment he moved beyond his Italian roots as he adopted other contemporary techniques around him. Cubism, in fact, became a clear facet of Severini’s artistic voice well before his fellow Futurists in Italy were ever exposed to it. Of all the Futurist painters, his individual artistic voice is most closely identified with Cubism. Severini came to Futurism at the behest of his close friend Boccioni, but only through correspondence from Paris, and his participation in the Italian movement remained limited until the 1912 Bernheim-Jeune exhibition. Although scholars have long associated him with Futurism, the evidence suggests that Severini was only loosely affiliated with the group. Severini’s friendship with Boccioni and his membership with Marinetti in a particular Parisian artistic sphere brought him into the Futurist group albeit reluctantly and perhaps even disingenuously. Despite his early instruction in Italian Divisionism, Severini’s geographical distance and early exposure to Parisian avant-garde culture further altered the way in which he interpreted Futurism’s artistic ideals, especially in the movement’s late 1911 shift from Divisionism to Cubism.

Scholarship on Severini is substantial, but not as extensive as that on Boccioni. Lionello Venturi (1961), Anne Coffin Hanson (1995), Simonetta Fraquelli and Christopher Green (1999), and Daniela Fonti (2001) have all written monographs on the artist. Most recently, Gabriella Belli and Daniela Fonti (2011) were responsible for organizing a landmark exhibition on

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118 Recently, scholars have discussed Severini as a participant in the Parisian milieu over of his traditional assignment to Italian modernism. For the most recent literature on this reconsideration see the 2011 exhibition catalogue: Belli, Gabriella and Daniela Fonti, ed. Gino Severini, 1883-1966: futuriste et néoclassique. Paris: Musée d’Orsay, 2011.
119 Severini, Life of a Painter, 45 and 69. Severini met F.T. Marinetti in Paris in either 1907 or 1908 through mutual connections at the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre. During these years before Futurism, Marinetti was an established member of the Parisian literary circle and by 1909 he was already famous for his introduction of Italian poetry to French audiences. Severini, thus, was aware of Marinetti before his attachment to the artistic sub-movement of Futurism in 1910.
120 As Cubism was already part of his individual painterly voice by this date I believe that this transformation in painting technique was less drastic for Severini than it was for some of his peers.
Severini at the Musée de l’Orangerie that traced the artist’s oeuvre from his Divisionist roots through his Analytic and Synthetic Cubist works to his later practice of Classicism. This text breaks from traditional studies on Italian Futurism that claim Severini as a member of the Italian avant-garde. The fact that the 2011 exhibition was mounted in Paris, Severini’s adopted hometown, and that the catalogue was published in French speak to the new consideration of the artist as a constituent of the Paris artistic community. He is uniformly recognized for being the first Futurist to dabble in Cubism and for spreading the new style to his peers by serving as host and tour guide during their autumn 1911 trip to Paris. By virtue of his early relocation to France, Severini is never discussed as the leader of Futurist painting but instead as a satellite member of the group. The exhibition catalogue by Fraquelli and Green (1999) pointedly says, “...Severini acted as a sort of foreign correspondent for the Futurists back in Italy. He kept them informed of the latest artistic developments in Paris . . . even insisted that they visited the French capital late in 1911.” They continue to insinuate Severini’s hesitance toward Futurism: “These works [exhibited at the Bernheim-Jeune] show Severini grappling with the tenets laid out in the Technical Manifesto . . . in comparison to the other Futurists at the time, he was less subject to sudden changes of direction or hasty assimilation.” This reluctance is an aspect of Severini which is repeated in scholarship, I think largely owing to his geographical separation and to his own expression of isolation in his memoirs, Life of a Painter.

If the adoption of Cubism is the qualification by which scholars have equated Boccioni’s art with Futurism, then I suggest that Severini is the painter who scholars should write about as the principal Futurist. However, this is not the reality of modern Futurism studies. Instead, like Boccioni, Severini presents only one possible interpretation of Futurist painting. Severini’s version, which blends differing proportions of both Divisionism and Cubism than Boccioni and even Carrà, has only recently received great attention. Severini’s Futurist path is a sampling of two visual cultures: a varying mixture of Boccioni’s two endorsed techniques and not a simple transition. By February 1912 Severini’s Futurism is essentially a Cubist version of Futurism, despite retaining subtle hints of the Divisionist technique. His artistic voice offers a divergent path from that of his peers as he most fully adopts Cubism. In this chapter I examine Severini’s

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121 Lista, Futurism (2001), 65; Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xxv; Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27.
123 Ibid.
version of Futurism, beginning with his time in Rome. In tracing his move from Italy to France I follow his adoption of the Cubist aesthetic in relation to his long-distance and somewhat lackadaisical relationship with Futurism.

Severini began his artistic training with Boccioni in Rome under Giacomo Balla in 1901. A Tuscan by birth, Severini moved from Cortona to Rome only two years prior; his first artistic training in the Italian capital was at the Scuola Libera del Nudo. During this period he met Balla through Boccioni and an examination of his work with his Roman mentor reveals that the young Severini practiced Divisionism with an extreme interest in light, both natural and artificial, just as Balla had himself. In his memoirs Severini writes that Balla taught Severini and Boccioni his own understanding of Divisionism, although he was only the practitioner of a technique and had never been properly trained in it. Balla’s quasi-scientific approach to color theory informed Severini’s painting for the remainder of his career.

Severini credits Balla with having exposed both Boccioni and him to French art, especially Impressionist painting. However, in the five years he worked under Balla Severini became disenchanted with Divisionism and even his mentor. Instead he embraced the new French art, especially Neo-Impressionism, and he ultimately moved to Paris in order to gain access to Georges Seurat. In his memoirs Severini revealed an awareness of the similarities

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125 Ibid., 37.
126 Ibid., 38.
128 Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 15. One anecdote from Severini’s memoirs recounts his early color practices: “...[the patron] finally asked me to do his portrait and the result was a sort of fireworks display of reds, greens, blues, and yellows.”
129 Robinson, *Giacomo Balla*, 38–39; Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 38. Severini wrote of Balla’s teaching: “It was an era of Impressionism. Giacomo Balla returned to us from Paris drunken with this art, and with paintings, that in pictorial quality and intention, could sustain comparison with Pissarro or Claude Monet.” Also, “My initial reason for coming to Paris had been to see these works. How many times I blessed Balla for having indicated them to me as the undeniable point of departure for any modern painter, like it or not. In fact, I realize today that those who did not have a good understanding of Impressionism were unable to construct anything solid of genuinely new in modern art.”
130 Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 8; Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 95. In his memoirs, Severini clearly states, “I looked to Seurat as my point of departure and my master.”
131 Robinson, *Giacomo Balla*, 39; Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 35 and 95. Neo-Impressionism and Divisionism are to be considered separate entities. Although the sister-movements are concerned with the same technical theories or subject matters, Severini especially praised Seurat’s Neo-Impressionism for its application of the common bonds between the two movements, especially the “new notions about color contrasts[.]”
between Italian Divisionism and French Neo-Impressionism. It is unclear if he understood how the two movements compared to one another, but in any case, his early appreciation for French art was a factor in his relocating from Italy; despite the boon to his career of Balla’s instruction, Severini left Rome for Paris in 1906.

“The two cities to which I am most deeply attached are Cortona and Paris: by birth the first, intellectually and spiritually to the second.” This opening statement of Severini’s memoirs outlines the artist’s affectionate relationship with his birthplace and his adopted hometown. Rome, the city in which he built his artistic career, is not even mentioned. After leaving the Italian capital, his family, and Balla and Boccioni, Severini arrived in Paris in 1906 with no money, little knowledge of the French language, and a level of self-doubt that threatened his future livelihood as an artist. He lived modestly, referring to himself as a “vagabond of peasant origin, uneducated, and gifted only with a capacity of instinct.” Relatively early in his stay Severini reunited with two young men he knew in Rome, as well as a munificent, elderly French woman.

Thanks to these associations, Severini’s social circle slowly grew to include Amedeo Modigliani and Suzanne Valadon, and Severini essentially became a local figure himself. Through the friendships he made in the Parisian art world Severini soon moved to Montmartre, observing and learning from the anti-academic spirit of its inhabitants. There, artists such as Jacques Villon, Braque, and Picasso, and the critics André Salmon and Apollinaire were his neighbors. During this time he also met Félix Fénéon, who was the current secretary for the

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132 Severini, Life of a Painter, 16. Almost two decades after this introduction and immediately after his description of the first Italian Divisionists (Morelli, da Volpedo, etc.) in his memoirs Severini observes that, “Concurrently in France, and especially in Paris, continuing the work of Seurat or Cézanne . . . a group of worthy artists were busy painting, preparing the way for the period later called Neo- and Post-Impressionism.” He identifies Signac, Bonnard, Matisse and Derain among these numbers.

133 Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xvi.

134 Severini, Life of a Painter, 3.

135 Ibid., 25.

136 Ibid., 26.

137 Ibid., 25–26. These young men were Gino and Alberto Calza-Bini, a “Roman-dialect poet” and an artist-turned-architect, respectively. The woman was Madame Bertaux, a friend from Lyon who often passed through Paris. While the Calza-Bini brothers offered Severini friendship and a social outlet, Madame Bertaux helped him settle by moving him out of a hotel room and by furnishing his new apartment.

138 Ibid., 27 and 31–32. Gino Calza-Bini introduced Severini to a “respectable Parisian resident [and] an elderly painter named Signorini.” He would often host parties at his studio every Saturday and at one such event Severini found himself alongside Gino Calzi and Giacomo Puccini at a séance.
Galerie Bernheim-Jeune and he had his first encounter with F.T. Marinetti.\[139\]

As mentioned, Severini left Italy in search of Seurat. While practicing Divisionism in Rome, he singled out the French Neo-Impressionist as being the painter who “first and most successfully established a balance between subject, composition, and technique,” in addition to admiring his mastery of the “new notions about color contrasts[.].”\[140\] Severini’s feelings did not change when he came to Paris although he quickly realized that with the exception of Léger and Delauney (who shared his sentiments) the local artists preferred the work of Paul Cézanne.\[141\] Cézanne died the year Severini relocated to Paris, but his influence continued to be in evidence.\[142\] Severini, however, was not part of this devoted circle, concentrating instead upon the Divisionist lessons he learned from Balla and the Neo-Impressionist work of Seurat.

*The Obsessive Dancer* (*La Danseuse obsédante*; 1911; fig. 4) is one of the many Divisionist paintings Severini produced on the topic of Paris’s nightclub dancers.\[143\] Here, a raven-haired cabaret dancer sits with a black cat underneath vibrant stage lights. Balla’s instruction pervades the canvas as rays of artificial light stream down in a virtual quilt of unrealistic and pure colored, rectangular dashes of vibrant blues, black, and bright red. Parisian culture pervades the subject. From his earliest days in the city, Severini frequented such clubs as Au Lapin agile, La Mère Adèle, and his favorite, Le Monico.\[144\] Emulating Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, Severini plants himself and his Divisionist practice directly in a pre-existing tradition of Parisian painting.\[145\] Even at this early date Severini’s interest in Cubism is already evident. As is typical of Cubism’s early style, the rays of artificial light, the dancer’s face, and the black cat are completely fractured (despite the fact that those fractured panes of light are filled with Divisionist brushstrokes).\[146\]

\[139\] Ibid., 45; Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 7; Mai-Lise Bénédic, “Gino Severini: La Danse du “pan-pan” au Monico” in *Futurism*, ed. Didler Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 166. Severini met Félix Fénéon in 1907 and this connection was vital in organizing the Futurists’s Paris exhibition, as Fénéon became the artistic director of the Bernheim-Jeune by 1912. Severini met Marinetti in 1907 or 1908, before the concept of Futurism was born.

\[140\] Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 35.

\[141\] Ibid.

\[142\] Ibid.

\[143\] Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, 217; Valentina Cefalù, “Gino Severini: La Danseuse obsédante” in *Futurism*, ed. Didler Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 172. Whether or not Severini was intentionally referencing French Impressionism his focus on the nightclub dancer immediately brings to mind the work of Degas.


\[145\] Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 10.

When Marinetti and Boccioni started the Futurist visual arts movement Boccioni was
given the opportunity to assemble its first generation of painters. Naturally he called upon his
colleagues Balla and Severini in this process. Although he was physically and artistically
removed from the circle of Futurist influence and remained unimpressed with the group’s
ostentatiousness, Severini was sympathetic to Boccioni’s project due to their close friendship.
Owing to his prolonged Parisian residence, Severini’s relationship with Futurism was a distant
one. Instead of being an active member in the Milanese scene Severini served as a satellite
member of the group, keeping his peers abreast of avant-garde developments abroad.

The criticisms following the 1911 Milan exhibition were harsh as they focused on
Futurism failure in its practice of Divisionist Futurism. For a brief period around this time
Severini became financially indebted to Marinetti and he was forced to come to Milan to meet
with the Futurist founder and his fellow painters. By the time he arrived in Italy a Parisian
exhibition of Futurist painting had been scheduled for December, and Severini was anxious to
see the work his new peers had prepared. Severini was immediately disappointed, however,
when he saw that his fellow Futurists were still clinging to the Divisionist technique. He claimed
that both their paintings and their manifestos revealed a complete lack of exposure to modern art:
“I then realized that [Ardegno] Soffici’s severe articles had been based on serious premises,” he
later wrote, “and suddenly I imagined how an exhibit of such paintings would fare in Paris.” Critical reviews of the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera from figures such as Nino Barbantini
and Soffici suggested that Futurism’s stylistic choices were halting the movement’s chances for

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147 Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 80–81; Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 8. Of his recruitment Severini
wrote, “Quite frankly, I have never appreciated that sort of overt display. Moreover, it would have been
inappropriate in Paris, where each artist was free to work as he please and to decide whether or not or where to show
his accomplishments . . . It was probably Futurism that gave rise to the demons of over-advertising and journalistic
demagoguery . . . but, at that point, Boccioni’s enthusiasm and good faith were sincere, and, from all points of view,
admirable.” However, Severini remembers, “But I felt too strong a fraternal bond to Boccioni and was and always
have been ready to embark on adventures, innovations, so I wrote to Boccioni telling him to add my signature to the
famous manifesto. I also told him that I considered Divisionism, to which he was very attached, still and more than
ever my idiom.” It should be noted that Severini had no hand in forming the first generation of Futurist painters,
with the exception of his signature. He was not in Italy between 1909 and 1910, he did not plan he tenets of the
movement, and he did not even see the art of his new peers until a 1911 visit to Italy.
148 Severini did not participate in the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera in Milan during May 1911.
149 Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 84–85; Venturi, *Gino Severini*, 12. In fact, this was the very first time Severini met
either Carlo Carrà or Luigi Russolo.
quote references Soffici’s 22 June 1911 review of the Milan exhibition, “Arte libera e pittura futurista.” Carlo Carrà
echoed this sentiment when he wrote, “Boccioni and I were swiftly persuaded that with this show in Paris [the
December 1911 show] we were staking our all; for a flop would have meant kissing our fine aspirations goodbye.
This is why we decided to go to Paris, to see what the art situation there was like.”
international fame. Instead these critics, enveloped in the international art community, preferred early Cubism, the style that was currently dominating Parisian circles. Thanks to his Parisian residence Severini was already familiar with these technical concepts and he was beginning to incorporate them into paintings such as *The Obsessive Dancer* (fig. 4). Although Severini had not participated in the Milan exhibition he was still affected by its reviews. Futurism’s move away from Divisionism and in the direction to Cubism allowed Severini to freely pursue the artistic environs of his adopted hometown and further form his own version of Futurist painting.

The December show at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune was cancelled thanks to Severini’s epiphany and Marinetti’s simultaneous involvement in the outbreak of the Italo-Turkish war. Meanwhile, the Futurists reassessed their relationship to modern art, especially Cubism. Except for Giacomo Balla, the Futurist painters visited Severini in Paris that September in order to research the Parisian technique and socialize with its most ardent practitioners. The Milanese Futurists stayed with Severini for two weeks and Boccioni remained a week longer in hopes of absorbing as much of the art culture as possible. The painters went to various salons and met several of Severini’s acquaintances, including Picasso. Based upon these experiences, when the Futurists returned to Milan they had a completely new direction.

The relationship between Cubism and Futurism, despite their sisterly nature in consideration of theoretical fundamentals, remained antagonistic. Just as Soffici had critically dismissed the 1911 Futurist show in Milan, French critics were not especially impressed by the presentation at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune. Overall these reviews were mixed and the critical tones were largely determined by artistic affiliation. I contend that these reviews stem from the defensive nature of the critics and from the critics’ negative reaction to the Futurists’ presumptuous attitudes. In regard to my first point those writers who admired early Cubism responded to the Futurists antagonistically. For example, Guillaume Apollinaire, an especially influential Parisian critic, wrote negatively (and often) about the Futurists in several circulations. In his 7 February review for *L’Intransigeant* he wrote: “The young futurist painters can compete with some of our avant-garde artists, but they are still nothing but the awkward pupils of a

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151 Ouvrard, “Chronology,” 319. Marinetti was deployed to Libya as a war correspondent for the Italo-Turkish war.
154 My use of the term “affiliation” is in the political sense. Many of these Parisian critics were attached to specific art movements, such as in the case of Apollinaire’s and Salmon’s relationships with Cubism. This sense of loyalty is certainly a facet of the negative reviews, as it is reasonable that the critics were defending Cubism in the face of the new and potentially popular Futurist movement.
Picasso or a Derain; as for gracefulness, they have no idea it exists.”\(^\text{155}\) André Salmon, a critic also tied to the Cubist circle, posed a response similar to Apollinaire’s. Of Futurism, he wrote, “Opera buffa claiming to be ‘seriosa.’”\(^\text{156}\) Roger Allard, yet another early champion of the Cubists, blamed the Italians for introducing extreme advertising to the avant-garde. He deemed Marinetti’s manifestos, proclamations, and lectures as “Futurist publicity,” declaring that “avant-gardism ends in organizing, to the profit of the most resourceful, a sort of terror in which the sincere inquirer is no longer safe . . . too bad for those who have no stomach for fairground shows and quacks’ displays!”\(^\text{157}\)

Although he lived as a Futurist among Cubists, Severini’s art bridged the gap between the movements until the other Italian Futurists’ personalities became a factor in Parisian society. A major embarrassment for Severini was the way in which Marinetti, Boccioni, and the others reacted to critical reviews of the 1912 exhibition. When the Futurists arrived in Paris in 1912 their attitude and actions led Severini to reconsider his affiliation with the movement.\(^\text{158}\) In recalling this moment, Severini writes that the Futurists were essentially right in attempting to elevate Italy’s approach to painting but that they were doing it all wrong. Boccioni’s description of the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition as the “battlefield” where the Futurists would “array [their] cannons” illustrates the group’s combative nature.\(^\text{159}\) The Futurists were hostile and proud of it. A review from *Gil Blas* dated 16 February 1912 focuses on Marinetti’s offenses, specifically noting the Futurist leader’s verbal engagement with the Cubist painter Albert Gleizes and his fistfight with the American sculptor Elie Nadelman, both occurring at the exhibition.\(^\text{160}\) The review continues to say that while all of this is going on Félix Fénéon, the director at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune during the 1912 show “shields Van Goghs and Gaughins from the general pandemonium.”\(^\text{161}\) Severini called this attitude a “mistake and a lack of tact,” suggesting instead that the Italians come to Paris “to put their best foot forward using the paintings themselves . . .

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\(^\text{156}\) Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 29.


\(^\text{158}\) Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 10.

\(^\text{159}\) Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27. Boccioni wrote in December, “We Futurist painters are working relentlessly to complete our preparations for our show at the Bernheim-Jeune, the battlefield, where in two months, we shall array our cannons.”

\(^\text{160}\) Cohen, *Movement, Manifesto, Melee*, 16.

\(^\text{161}\) Ibid., 16. André Arnyvelde’s review appears in *Gil Blas* on 16 February 1912 under the title “Séance de boxe futuriste.”
and their true personal worth, instead of manifestos, stormy conferences, and spectacular displays."  

Although this statement foreshadows Severini’s later departure from Futurism, it illuminates his tortured relationship with the group since 1910.

The Futurists’ poor behavior in Severini’s adopted hometown (in the presence of his French friends and colleagues) further affirmed his distaste for them. Severini was also disappointed in his fellow painters for touting their Paris exhibition as a “great success.” In fact, Marinetti never actually acknowledged the negative reviews by Apollinaire and company, choosing instead to deny their existence. When the exhibition was over the Futurist painters celebrated the positive reviews. The famous critic Louis Vauxcelles wrote, “So let’s talk about the Cubists again . . . They’re not as ‘tough’ as they were a year ago. Just think! Futurism suddenly arrived and has ousted them.” Gustave Kahn approved of the commonalities with Symbolist and Divisionist practice, specifically appreciating the Futurists’ ability to convincingly render the dynamism of a city using the dynamogenic theories of Charles Henry just as Seurat and Signac had done just a generation before.

Although his overall appraisal of Futurism was critical, Guillaume Apollinaire, too, said kind words about Severini. He even described Severini’s Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico (La Danse du “pan-pan” au Monico; 1909–1911/1959–1960; fig. 13) as “the most important

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162 Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27; Severini, Life of a Painter, 88.
163 Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 5 and 14; Severini, Life of a Painter, 111 and 119. After the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune Severini’s trajectory further broke away from the Futurist institution. In early 1913 he presented a successful solo show at the Malborough Gallery in London. The show opened at midnight on 7 April 1913 and lasted a month and the catalogue included thirty of Severini’s paintings and drawings. In his memoirs, Severini writes that the newspapers of London reproduced his paintings and wrote about his exhibition as a great triumph. It was highly publicized in the Daily Express article, “Get Inside the Picture: Futurism As The Artist Sees It.” This moment marks a severe break from the Marinettian Futurism, but not Futurism as an institution as Severini continues to affiliate with Futurism but he blasphemes by proposing his own brand of Futurism. Severini also broke with Marinetti specifically when he showed at the Marlborough Gallery. This action directly followed Marinetti’s refusal of an invitation for the Futurists to participate in the Armory Show of 1913. In this autobiography, Severini writes of the International Exhibition of Modern Art (the Armory Show), “…Marinetti, for his own purposes, would not hear of having us in the show . . . Today it is clear how grave an error I made in not taking part in that magnificent international exhibition.” Of the 1913 London exhibition: “Soon [after the decline of the Armory invitation] I was offered the possibility of a one-man show in London, and this time, even at the risk of opposing Marinetti and the other Futurists, I had no intention of repeating the mistake of refusal.” After London Severini’s stylistic practices changed several times in opposition to the artistic choices of Boccioni and the others, first moving to Synthetic Cubism and eventually to Classicism.

164 Severini, Life of a Painter, 89. Even at the occasion of Futurism’s 30th anniversary, Carlo Carrà was still celebrating the movement’s Parisian success.

165 Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 28. I find this positive view ironic, as Vauxcelles coined the term “Cubism.”

166 Ibid., 28.
work painted by a Futurist yet.”167 Apollinaire wrote of the transplanted Italian:

The Futurists do, however, include Gino Severini, who seems determined to draw inspiration from realities that are strictly forbidden by the futurists’ declarations. He has thus produced the most living work, in which colors are not blended and therefore produce the illusion of movement; the title of the work is *Pan-Pan at the Monico*.168

As Apollinaire clearly states, this painting was one of the highlights at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune exhibition. Pictures from the exhibition reveal its monumental size and the reported vibrancy of color of the canvas likely ensured ample attention from critics and viewers alike at the 1912 show. Apollinaire’s is an interesting statement because, despite his friendship with Severini, Apollinaire was a champion of Cubism and he detested the Futurist debarkation on Paris.169

*Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico* is another early illustration of Severini’s break from Boccioni’s version of Futurism. Whereas Boccioni’s Futurism blends Italian Divisionism and Cubism, Severini’s Futurism is essentially French with Italian nuances: Cubism factors more into Severini’s painting than Divisionism does, and French culture is his supreme choice of subject matter, but some shades of Divisionist color theory remain. I view *Dance of the “Pan-

167 Apollinaire, *Apollinaire on Art*, 199–200; Bénédic, “La Danse du “pan-pan” au Monico,” 166; Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 83; Anne Coffin Hanson, *Severini futurista: 1912–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 137. Severini had already begun work on this canvas as early as the summer of 1911 (although studies date as early as January 1911) but it did not premiere until the 1912 Paris show. After this exhibition, the Futurists toured their paintings around several European venues. At their Berlin show at the Galerie Der Strum in spring 1912 an art collector named Albert Borchardt bought *The Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico*. The original was lost during World War II but Severini recreated the canvas in 1959-60 from a postcard and a painted enamel. For the purposes of this examination, my formal discussion of the painting will stem from photographs of the original as photographed at the 1912 Galerie Bernheim-Jeune exhibition. The Apollinaire comment comes from his 7 February 1912 “Les peintres futuristes italiens,” published in *L’intransigeant*.


169 Venturi, *Gino Severini*, 15; Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 10; Apollinaire, *Apollinaire on Art*, 200 and 255; Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 28. Apollinaire was not especially fond of Boccioni’s art and it is important that although Apollinaire harshly reviewed the overall exhibition, he found promise in the work of Severini. It is a curious appraisal, considering Apollinaire’s fierce defense of Cubism, but documents suggest that Severini and Apollinaire had established a close friendship in the time that Severini lived in Paris before 1912. For example, Apollinaire served as Severini’s best man in his wedding to Jeanne Fort (the daughter of the poet Paul Fort) in 1913. Severini’s work would have been better known to Apollinaire, too, than the work of his Italian-bound Futurist peers, thanks to Severini’s residence in Paris. Severini’s brand of Cubism combined with his apathy for Futurism may have spared him from inclusion in these negative reviews. After the February exhibition, Apollinaire continued to berate the Futurists in an October 1912 article for *L’Intimédiaire* in which he wrote: “The Futurist artists, supported by the ample funds of the Futurist movement, who headquarters are in Milan, are doing very nicely financially. At the same time, most of the young Cubists, whose art is the most noble and most lofty existing today, are abandoned by all, ridiculed by practically every art critic, and living at best in semi-poverty, at worst in the most abject penury.”
Pan at the Monico as the culmination of these elements of Severini’s art in 1912, which define his artistic voice as an independent, viable path for Futurist painting. For example, the chosen subject of this painting is an exuberant scene of Parisian life, not a celebration of mechanical power, Italian progress, or human violence.\textsuperscript{170} The work is a celebration of French (not Italian) culture and it is produced relying for the most part on a French technical vehicle. It is important to note that, although both Boccioni’s and Severini’s respective versions of Futurism have elements of Divisionism and Cubism, they simply differ in the ratio each artist preferred. A formal examination of Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico reveals that Severini, like Boccioni, does move away from Divisionism in order to incorporate Cubist technique but the degree to which this transition occurs is debatable given his prior knowledge and practice of the Parisian style. In general there is more Cubism in Severini’s paintings from this period than in any works created by Boccioni. Also, although the cabaret subject here echoes that of many earlier works, the technical tradition of Divisionism is no longer a defining formal characteristic. The Divisionist technique Severini previously favored is much less noticeable in The Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico than in The Obsessive Dancer (fig. 4), for example. Instead, Cubism is the most obvious formal element as the inhabitants of the scene (dancers and onlookers at the Monico) are fragmented, like puzzle pieces, and their frenzied motion is emphasized by this fracture.

The texture of Severini’s brushstroke is much more subtle in The Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico than in The Obsessive Dancer (fig. 4) Although the dancer was fragmented, the patches of light that envelop her are filled with meticulously placed, rectangular dashes of color. This practice comes from Divisionism as these strokes were uneven, raised, and obvious. They were not smooth or subtle like those in Neo-Impressionist or even Cubist paintings. In The Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico, however, the texture appears smoother. Some areas are filled with dotted and dashed patterns but they are not evenly spaced. Despite this apparent resignation of his artistic roots, Divisionist ideology remains with Severini, however subtle. As previously asserted, although Severini’s Futurism relies most heavy on Cubism in 1912, I suggest his artistic voice was actually a complex blend of Divisionism and Cubism. In this formalist line of examination, Severini’s color choices cannot be ignored. Instead of being solid blocks of dots and dashes these patches have a pattern of one shade or color rendered on top of a

\textsuperscript{170} Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 10. Dance was Severini’s favorite agent for depicting dynamism.
singular solid color. Notably, Divisionism lingers still in these patterned areas and in the purposeful use of pure color. Severini continues to reference his Italianate roots through these color choices since the Italian Divisionists, as previously described, preferred pure color over the French Neo-Impressionist’s color gradations. Finally, these choices do not agree with the color palettes of Cubist paintings from this period, which were generally more neutral. 171

Despite Severini’s early instruction in the Italian way, his relocation to the French capital exposed him to contemporary developments in the international avant-garde that he could not have known in his homeland. This geographical separation thus engendered Severini’s understanding of Futurism as two branches: the Milanese school and the Montmartre school. In his memoirs he remembers the divergent attitudes of these sister schools. Severini recalls Milanese Futurism (that is, Marinettian Futurism) as drawing from Art Nouveau and Italian Divisionism, but Montmartre Futurism (his preferred affiliation) was indebted to French Neo-Impressionism and Post-Impressionism.172 Perhaps this was yet another way of separating himself from his Italian colleagues. Severini desperately wanted to belong to the Parisian artistic sphere but he was indebted to his Italian culture and connections.173

In this chapter I have presented Severini’s definition of Futurism as an alternative answer to Boccioni’s interpretation of the movement that is so celebrated by modern art history. In 1912 Futurism was still new and trying to find its place in the contemporary avant-garde, and there was no possible way the painters could have known that Boccioni’s art would come to stand for all of their work. At that time, Severini’s Cubist-inspired Futurism had equal potential as Boccioni’s art to offer Futurism a template beyond Italian Divisionism. I will continue this assertion in my final chapter as I explore Luigi Russolo’s Futurist painting. While Divisionism defined the early careers of Severini, Russolo, and Boccioni, and Severini and Boccioni even shared in their transition toward Cubism, Russolo’s trajectory went in a completely different direction. As I shall show, Russolo took cues from sources outside of Italy and France, thus presenting yet another full-fledged version of Futurist painting in 1911 and early 1912.

171 Severini, Life of a Painter, 63.
172 Ibid., 37; Fraquelli, “From Futurism to Classicism,” 10.
173 Marinetti’s influence (socially and monetarily) in Italy and abroad cannot be overlooked. By this period he was socially entrenched in literary and artistic circles abroad and his connections were invaluable.
CHAPTER THREE
LUIGI RUSSOLO

Although Luigi Russolo (1885–1947) is most frequently recognized by scholars for championing Futurist music he was one of the co-founders of the Futurist artistic movement along with Umberto Boccioni and Carlo Carrà in 1910. Russolo made his name in Futurist music and scholarship on his career generally focuses on these contributions. In fact, as a visual artist he has even been dismissed as the least talented of the early Futurist painters. Nevertheless, Russolo proves to be an intriguing figure in Futurism as his small body of painted work presents an artistic voice that neither draws from Cubism nor remains firmly ensconced in Italian Divisionism. As his contemporaries observed, Russolo’s paintings from this period seem more akin to works of a Central or Eastern European pedigree, or in a nineteenth-century Western European idiom. Like Boccioni, Severini, Carrà, and Balla, Russolo came to Futurism in 1910 with a background in Divisionism, and his earliest paintings rehearse this technical vocabulary. In keeping with the majority of the Futurist painters, Russolo broke from Divisionism in mid-1911, but his trajectory from there remained completely distinct from that of his peers.

There is little scholarship devoted exclusively to Russolo, and what does exist focuses on his career as a Futurist composer and musician. His work in that field is canonical in the course of twentieth-century music studies. As for his art, Russolo is much undervalued and under studied. He is always included in survey texts on Futurism but never as extensively as Boccioni or Severini. In fact, Didier Ottinger (2009) hardly mentions Russolo at all in the catalogue celebrating Futurism’s centennial. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that unlike Boccioni, Severini, and Balla there is no monograph on Russolo to date. Modern scholarship that does exist


175 Taylor, *Futurism*, 20 and 25; Severini, *Life of a Painter*, 15. In one of the earliest retrospectives of Italian Futurism, Joshua C. Taylor emphasizes Russolo’s minimal formal training, calling him “the least gifted as a painter” in comparison to Boccioni, Balla, Severini, and Carrà. In his memoirs, Severini even observes him as “the least pictorially gifted of the three [Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo] was Russolo.”

does not credit him with any particularly painterly talent or potential. Joshua C. Taylor (1961) calls the artist “the least gifted as a painter” in comparison to his Futurist peers. When discussing his style, Russolo’s Divisionist and Symbolist roots are noted without fail. Joshua C. Taylor (1961), Giovanni Lista (2001), and Linda Schädler (2008) are only three participants in this trend. In the later portion of this chapter I shall show that in Russolo’s time his painting was also associated with German and Russian Expressionism by the critic Apollinaire. However, this stylistic characteristic is one which modern scholars have almost completely ignored. In Anthony Parton’s monograph on Natalie Goncharova (2010) he writes that she was very influenced by Russolo in her own art but Parton makes no further mention of Russolo as a practitioner of Expressionism. Similarly, John J. White (2000) gives a lengthy discussion of Futurism’s impact on German Expressionism but he does not discuss Expressionism in Futurism. Finally and most recently, Giovanni Lista (2001) misinterprets Russolo’s art entirely when he notes that in later 1911 “Boccioni, Carrà and Russolo had set about to discover Cubism.” As I shall show, Russolo did not, in fact, adopt any aspect of Cubism in late 1911.

This final chapter focuses on Russolo’s vision of Futurist painting between May 1911 and February 1912. Russolo’s approach to Futurism at this time was not correlated to Cubism, and he rejected altogether the interest that Severini and Boccioni showed in it. Whatever sources Russolo may have turned to, his painting was both formally and rhetorically tied to German Expressionism, French and Belgian Symbolism, and Russian Rayonism by contemporary critics. I examine these perspectives extensively within this portion of my study as I outline the independence of Russolo’s version of Futurism from his contemporaries’ Divisionist and Cubist work. In this chapter, as in my others, I will trace Russolo’s version of Futurism from his early artistic practice through the Futurists’ turbulent year of 1911 and to his presentation in Paris during the first weeks of 1912.

Hailing from the Province of Venice, Russolo moved to Milan with his family at the age

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of sixteen. In 1901 he studied at the Accademia di Brera and soon thereafter he began training in restoration, even working on da Vinci’s Last Supper at Santa Maria delle Grazie. During this early period he was introduced to the famous Divisionist artist Gaetano Previati as well as a group of Symbolist poets writing for Poesia. Thus, it is no surprise that the paintings Russolo created during this time were perceived to be rich in both Divisionist and Symbolist traditions. It is important to note that these influences (especially Symbolism) would remain vital for critics responding to Russolo’s Futurist painting, and that they would continue to appear in works by his fellow Futurists. In 1909 he exhibited at the Famiglia Artistica in Milan, and it was there that he first met Boccioni (who had recently moved to Milan). This new relationship only encouraged Russolo’s practice of Divisionism as Boccioni was also indebted to the technique, the study of light, and the work of Previati. By early 1910 Russolo had befriended Carrà and helped to forge the first expression of Futurist art by signing the “Manifesto of Futurist Painting” and the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting.”

The Futurists presented their first official exhibition as a group in Milan at the Padiglione Ricordi factory in the spring of 1911, despite the fact that only Boccioni, Russolo, and Carrà participated. The Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera presented three rooms of Divisionist Futurist painting among 400 other works by members of the local community, including collaborations by untrained workers and children. The reception of the exhibition was generally mixed, but international reviews were decidedly negative. Russolo was not given special notice above Boccioni or Carrà, and only one of his paintings was listed by name

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182 Ibid.
183 Ibid.
184 Greene, “Divisionism’s Symbolist Ascent,” 57. Despite his debt to early Cubism, Severini was also tied to the technical tradition of Divisionism. Balla, of course, only ever practiced Divisionism in relation to Futurism, and Carrà, too, was a follower in his own work. Of course, Symbolist color is an element in both the first and second versions of Boccioni’s States of Mind. Of Symbolism in Futurism, modern scholar Vivien Greene most succinctly describes the relationship: “Divisionism’s [Symbolism] combined with their new painting technique . . . allowed for the emergence of a visual and narrative model capable of communicating abstract concepts, evoking emotional states, and eliciting sensations congruent with Italian modernist philosophies, opening the way to the ‘multicolored, polyphonic tides of revolution’ celebrated by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in his 1909 Futurist Manifesto.”
185 Schädler, “Luigi Russolo,” 161; Coen, Umberto Boccioni, xix.
188 Poggi, Inventing Futurism, 103–104. The Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera was meant to be an annual unjuried exhibition and its profits were to be given to unemployed workers.
(nothing was said of its style or character). Although Boccioni’s art at the Milan exhibition was praised for its potential, the works shown by Russolo and Carrà were not.

The Divisionist canvases Russolo submitted to the Esposizione di Mostra d’Arte Libera owed greatly to the work of Previati. Russolo’s paintings from this period are characterized by long threads of pure colors, allegorical subject matter, and a Symbolist palette, all characteristics of Previati’s work. In *Perfume* (*Profumo*; 1909–10; fig. 14), one of the paintings displayed at the Milan exhibition, the figure of a woman is enveloped in swirling streaks of glowing yellow, chartreuse, and electric blue, which grow darker as they curve around her upper torso, face, and head to merge with her flowing hair. Dark blues, brown, and orange are the major palette of this side of the canvas. The woman is tilting her head back, apparently breathing in the rich yellow and vibrant green flames of perfume that rise from the bottom left corner. Symbolism is found here in both the painting’s form and its fantastic subject: a beautiful woman sensually breathing in a magnificent, nearly tangible perfume, forever caught in a moment of ecstasy. The radiant colors manifest her feelings as they add vibrancy and emotion to the moment. Closer formal examination of *Perfume* reveals Divisionist brushstrokes as Russolo’s main technical vehicle; he applies color to the canvas neither subtly nor as a record of his optical perception. His strokes are painterly and his colors carefully segregated from one another, in accord with the technical writings of Previati and the practice of his new friend Boccioni.

After the poor international reviews of the Milan exhibition, Divisionism fell out of favor among the Futurist painters. Cubism, instead, became their artistic focus and several of them

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189 Soffici, “Arte libera e pitture futurista,” 597. The painting was *Uomo che muore* (*The Dying Man*; 1911).
190 Coen, *Umberto Boccioni*, xxiv. Barbantini thought Boccioni had potential but Soffici did not.
191 Greene, “Divisionism’s Symbolist Ascent,” 47–48. Symbolism was a part of Italian Divisionism at the end of the nineteenth century. Although the Divisionists based their technique on science, Symbolism and its “metaphysical” nature paradoxically became a part of Divisionists culture. Vivien Greene writes of this relationship, “Although the Divisionists practised a technique that remained anchored in science, they saw art as a medium to express the metaphysical that lay beyond the reach of empiricism. Broadly stated, there was a pervasive belief that art could recapture—via artistic intuition, sensibility, and interpretation—a series of values, truths, and mysteries that eluded science.”
192 Tosini, “Divisionist Painting Techniques,” 30; Ginex, “Divisionism to Futurism,” 43. Previati’s three publications are *La tecnica della pittura* (1905), *I principii scientifici del divisionismo* (1906), and *Della pittura. Tecnica ed arte* (1913). He translated Jean-Georges Vibert’s *La science de la peinture* in 1892 and wrote the preface to Secco Suardo’s restoration manual.
traveled to Paris in the autumn of that year in order to learn more about the new movement.\footnote{Taylor, \textit{Futurism}, 46; Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 27. Scholars believe that Russolo visited Severini in Paris along with Boccioni and Carrà in the autumn of 1911 in order to research the new style. However, there is no documentation proving whether he did or did not take this trip. I think that if he did not go to Paris in 1911, that that may help to explain why his subsequent paintings did not reflect Cubist tendencies on any level similar to that of Boccioni, Carrà, or Severini. I am not saying that Russolo could not adopt Cubism because he was ignorant of the movement as there is certainly evidence that he could have known the same amount about Cubism as his Futurist peers before their trip to Paris (thanks to reproductions and articles by critics such as Allard and Soffici).} When the painters returned to Italy in late 1911 Boccioni prepared his second version of \textit{States of Mind} (\textit{Stati d’animo}; 1911; figs. 10, 11, 12) and \textit{Simultaneous Visions} (\textit{Visioni simultanee}; 1911; fig. 22) and Carrà his \textit{Funeral of the Anarchist Galli} (\textit{I funerali dell’anarchico Galli}; 1910–11; fig. 23), canvases extremely rich in Cubist fractures and volumized forms. Russolo, however, created from Paris five new paintings for the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune that possessed none of those qualities. \textit{Memories of a Night} (\textit{Ricordi di una notte}; 1911; fig. 6) and \textit{Tina’s Hair} (\textit{I Capelli di Tina}; 1910–11; fig. 24), for example, are still obviously and purposefully quoting Divisionism’s threads of rich, pure color and Symbolism’s unnatural color palettes. Neither canvas has the slightest shade of Cubism.

The most striking work Russolo submitted to the February 1912 exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune was \textit{The Revolt} (\textit{La rivolta}; 1911; fig. 15). The work appears in a cartoon rendering of the exhibition that was printed in \textit{Gil Blas} (dated 13 February 1912; fig. 25).\footnote{Ottinger, “Cubism + Futurism = Cubofuturism,” 28.} The painting may be the most concrete manifestation of the eleventh Futurist tenet from the manifesto of 1909: “We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multicolored, polyphonic tides of revolution in the modern capitals.”\footnote{Apollonio, \textit{Futurist Manifestos}, 22; Ginex, “Divisionism to Futurism,” 45.} Here Russolo presents a rioting crowd: an emblazoned, red wave of anonymous figures striding forward across a tilted cityscape from a genesis beyond the picture plane. The background is a sleeping city drenched in rich, dark and primary blues that complement the bold, pure yellow and green path that lights the mob’s way. The furious crowd is only foreshadowed by angled bands of more brilliant red. Again, Russolo presents a fantastic interpretation of a plausible narrative. Riots or mobs in Italy were a very visible part of the Italian social landscape at this time and they had been recently depicted in two Divisionist paintings, Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo’s \textit{The Fourth Estate} (\textit{Il Quarto stato}; 1901; fig. 26) and Emilio Longoni’s \textit{The Orator of the Strike}
Carlo Carrà even submitted a painting with the same subject to the Bernheim-Jeune, *The Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* (fig. 23). Carrà’s riot, though fantastically rendered in its own right, depicts a real event, but Russolo’s riot has no specific historical reference point. What distinguishes Russolo’s rendition from the other three depictions of agitating crowds is his bold incorporation of the Symbolist palette.

*The Revolt* manifests the distinction I have drawn between Russolo’s art in 1912 and the other interpretations of Futurism offered at that time. It radically differs from both Severini’s *Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico* (fig. 13) and Boccioni’s second version of *States of Mind* (figs. 10, 11, 12) in that Russolo’s painting is rich in Expressionist brushstrokes and Symbolist coloring and it does not bear a single mark of Cubist brushwork. While he depicts a violent crowd, he does so in a way which none of his fellow painters accomplish. His art does not remain planted solely in the Italian Divisionist tradition and it does not draw from France either formally or culturally as *The Revolt* has neither Divisionist brushstrokes nor Cubist fracture or volumization of form and it is not a cabaret scene. Russolo’s use of Symbolism is excused from the French tradition as well, given his early interaction with Previati and the Italian Divisionist interpretation of Symbolism. Significantly, critics perceived Russolo’s brand of Futurism in 1912 as a discrete and coherent alternative to the work of Boccioni, Severini, Carrà, and Balla.

The most prominent critic to distinguish Russolo’s new work from that of his peers was Apollinaire, an ardent apologist for French Cubism and one of the most outspoken critics of Futurism in Paris. In a 7 February 1912 review published in *L’Intransigeant* Apollinaire decried the Futurist exhibition, which had only opened two days earlier, as unoriginal. “They declare themselves to be ‘absolutely opposed’ to the art of the avant-garde French schools, yet at this point, they are nothing but imitators of those schools.” Although he praised Boccioni as “the most gifted of the Futurist painters” he dismissed his best canvas as derivative of Picasso’s most recent work.

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196 Ginex, “Divisionism to Futurism,” 37–39. An examination of the socio-political and economic issues of Italy during the early twentieth century is beyond the scope of this study, but it is worth noting that these were turbulent times for the young nation. For example, the organization of the Italian states into one entity functioning under a single language, the rapid urbanization and mechanization of Italian cities, and the economic and political reorganization which accompanied unification were all disruptive to the traditional Italian society. For a comprehensive discussion of Italy’s reaction to Unification and its effects during the twentieth century see Salvatore Saladino, *Italy from Unification to 1919: Growth and Decay of an Urban Regime* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970).

197 Apollinaire, *Apollinaire on Art*, 199.

198 Ibid.
Of Russolo, Apollinaire writes: “Russolo is the one least influenced by the young French painters. One must look for his mentors in Munich or in Moscow.”

Only two days later another similar appraisal of the Futurist exhibition at the Bernheim-Jeune appeared in *Le Petit Bleu*. This lengthier critique again credits France with Italy’s recent avant-garde breakthrough in the arts and literature, even calling Marinetti a “gallicized Italian.” Apollinaire repeated his assignment of the Italian Futurist painters to French associates, still separating Russolo from the group. “Russolo seems to be more influenced by the painters of Munich, Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow. Let us hope that he takes good advantage of his current stay in Paris.” Although he is not precise, Apollinaire appears to be tying Russolo’s painting to Central and Eastern European Expressionism instead of Cubism. His references to Munich and Moscow are likely to the contemporary work of Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov under the Der Blaue Reiter banner (beginning in 1911, as well). These Russian painters were included in the *Mir iskusstva* exhibitions of November and December 1911 in Moscow and again in January and February 1912 in St. Petersburg. They both showed in Munich in the Galerie Hans Goltz from February to April 1912 as part of *the Zweite Ausstellung der Redaktion Der Blaue Reiter*. I have no evidence that Apollinaire attended any of these exhibitions, but he may have read newspaper or journal reviews. Regardless, the congruence in the chronology of this event in relation to the reviews addressing Russolo’s influences cannot be ignored. Goncharova and Larionov were working in an Expressionist idiom as seen in paintings such as Goncharova’s *The Woodcutters* (*Holzhauer*; 1911; fig. 28), exhibited at the February 1912 Der Blaue Reiter show in Munich. The painting shares similarly energetic brushstrokes with *The Revolt* (fig. 15) and the same brilliant red can be observed as the dominating hue in both canvases. Rayonism, which shares a primary palette and bold, forceful brushstrokes with *The Revolt* was also emerging at this time.

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199 Ibid., 200.
200 This second review is dated 9 February 1912.
201 Ibid., 201. In this vein, Apollinaire continues: “F.T. Marinetti, a gallicized Italian, wants to change this state of affairs. He wants to awaken Italy from its torpor. He has taken France as his model because France is the leader in the arts and in literature; without telling his compatriots what he is up to, he is presenting them with France as an example. He has found a number of poets, musicians, and painters to follow him.”
202 Ibid., 203.
moment. Although Larionov only officially introduced the movement in 1913 he later documented that he had already published and lectured on it by 1910. Larionov’s *Rayonist Composition: Domination of Red* (1912–13, but dated 1911 on painting; fig. 29) is an early example of this Russian Expressionist style. What I am focusing on here is that Russolo’s contemporaries perceived his approach to painting as Expressionist.

It is beyond the scope of this project to explain how Russolo might have been exposed to Expressionist art, either from Russia or Germany, but what matters here is that critics perceived *The Revolt* to be closely associated with this style of painting and distinct from the varied approaches offered by Russolo’s Futurist peers. That Russolo’s art is identified with non-French sources at a time when Futurism only wanted to emulate the Parisian avant-garde speaks to the problematic public image Russolo’s new work presented. In 1912 Apollinaire appraised the Futurist exhibition with largely the same view I take in this thesis: Severini as Cubist, Russolo with Expressionist leanings, and Boccioni somewhere between Divisionism and Cubism. I find it interesting that Apollinaire singled out Expressionism as Russolo’s artistic voice when the other four paintings he submitted to the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune seem more derived from Divisionism. He also does not speak of Russolo breaking from the group. In fact, Apollinaire mentions Russolo’s Munich and Moscow antecedents alongside Severini’s Cubism as if Russolo’s art is yet another variation of Futurism. To Apollinaire, Boccioni, Severini, Russolo, and Carrà are all equally Futurist.

Apollinaire was not the only international figure to perceive Russolo’s lack of interest in Cubism. In a letter from April/May 1912, Erich Heckel (a founding member of Die Brücke) wrote to compatriot Franz Marc that he had recently spent time with the Futurists and had been able to view several of their paintings. Russolo was included among this group and of his tendencies Heckel observed that “Russolo is similar to a certain Belgian Khnopf or Odilon Redon. A Kandinsky, perhaps left from another exhibit, seems so wonderfully grand in color and

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205 Parton, *Larionov*, 48. Anthony Parton affirms that Larionov’s Rayonism was full-fledged by the October 1912, although its genesis can be seen in his paintings from the summer of that year. Larionov said he was publishing and lecturing on Rayonism as early as 1910 but there is no evidence to confirm any of this. Despite this, Larionov may have been thinking about this idea as early as 1910.

206 Kandinsky’s *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* was first published in late 1911 and the *Der Blaue Reiter Almanac* (edited by Kandinsky and Franz Marc) was published in 1912.

rhythm next to those others.” Unlike Apollinaire, Heckel did not associate the Futurist painter with Expressionism, and indeed he went so far as to qualitatively distinguish it from Kandinsky’s work. Contemporary scholars have recently considered Futurism’s influence on German Expressionism following the exhibition’s presentation in Berlin at the Der Sturm Gallery later in 1912 but there is hardly any literature on Expressionism’s imprint on Futurism.

Heckel’s formal comparison of Russolo to Symbolist painters is understandable, given his friendship with Gaetano Previati at a very early stage in his artistic career. Previati, though affiliated with the Italian Divisionist circle, was one of the Divisionist painters more indebted to Symbolism. In a 1901 interview he complained about his residence in Milan: “In certain moments I feel the need to free myself from this artifice that surrounds us, to isolate feelings, to see before me the true idea of things, the spontaneous development of attitude, of line, of pain. This is why in my art I abandon the present life and I seek to recreate either a vanished or an ideal environment.” Perhaps these sentiments were passed on to the young Russolo, so many of whose paintings are steeped in fantasy, sensuality, and mystery. Unlike the art of his fellow Futurist painters, streetcars, railway stations, and other marks of mechanized modern are not a part of his oeuvre.

Although both Apollinaire and Heckel understood Russolo’s newest work to be distinct from that of his peers, the differences were not the same for each critic. Heckel’s review, though tying Russolo to the French avant-garde, still does not associate him with the Cubist-inspired art that Boccioni and Severini were practicing. Neither Apollinaire nor Heckel mentioned Russolo’s continued investment in Divisionism and neither saw any evidence of Cubism in his art. This

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208 Ibid., 31. Heckel reference to a “Belgian Knopf” is likely Fernand Khnopff, a Belgian symbolist painter. In reviewing paintings by Knopf, I do not see such a similarity as Heckel does. However, I do understand his categorization of Russolo as a symbolist (by his reference to Redon). As discussed, Russolo does make much of Symbolist coloring thanks to his early relationships with Previati and Boccioni.

209 I do not know if Erich Heckel had read the Apollinaire reviews before he visited with the Futurists in April, but it is certainly a possibility. If so, it is beyond the scope of this study to try to determine why, then, that Heckel pushed Russolo away toward the tradition of Symbolism instead of talking about him as a practitioner of Expressionism.

210 White, “Futurism and German Expressionism,” 39; Shulamith Behr, David Fanning, and Douglas Jarman, ed., Expressionism Reassessed (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), ix; Cohen, Movement, Manifesto, Melee, 23–24; Parton, Goncharova, 201. John J. White cites the Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn’s statement that “Futurism as a style, also called Cubism, goes primarily under the name of Expressionism in Germany[,]” but he notes that this association has always been polemic. John Willett says that Expressionism was very receptive to Futurism in the period around 1912. This is due very much to the fact that the Futurist paintings from the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune went directly to the Sackville Gallery in London after the Paris exhibition closing, and after that they stopped in Berlin from 12 April to 31 May 1912. Goncharova is said to have been indebted to Russolo. Her City by Night (1912), for example, is often discussed as a response to Russolo’s Memories of a Night (1911).

211 Greene, “Divisionism’s Symbolist Ascent,” 51.
ambiguity of aesthetic approaches makes it more challenging to connect him to Severini, Boccioni, Carrà, and Balla at this moment. Russolo’s Futurism, according to Apollinaire and Heckel, simply cannot be reconciled with any other version of Futurism available.

That this distinction was being made of Russolo during the period from 1911 to 1912 is extremely important. These documents make it clear that, despite his personal affiliation with the Futurist group and his continued acceptance by Marinetti and the other painters, Russolo’s approach to and practice of Futurism did not resemble any other version of Futurist painting at this time. Perhaps Russolo’s interpretation of Futurist painting was shortly abandoned precisely because of the confusion concerning the status of his painting, its inspiration, and/or its precedence. Whereas Boccioni was first clearly a Divisionist who, in 1912, committed to Cubism, and Severini offered a new form of Cubism, Russolo’s art was harder to pin down. Heckel associated his work with Symbolism at the same time that Apollinaire saw Expressionism in his painting. How could the Futurists rally behind a style that could not fully be defined? Russolo’s newest work found itself precariously perched somewhere in the midst of these competing avant-garde visual cultures. The group had announced in its 1909 “Manifesto of Futurism” and 1910 “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” that Futurist painting was not to adopt any historical form or pre-existing artistic vernacular. Regardless of what his influences were, Russolo’s vision of Futurism in 1911 was in violation of these official decrees in a way that Boccioni’s was not.

So why, then, was Russolo allowed to exhibit at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune when Balla was not? Neither of the artists adopted Cubism in 1911 and both of them submitted paintings to the show that had clear Divisionist tendencies. Perhaps Russolo succeeded by submitting several works where Balla only sent the one, or maybe Balla’s personal relationship with Boccioni was a contributing factor. This answer to this issue is thus far unknowable but in light of the view of Russolo that I have presented in this chapter it is a situation that cannot be ignored. His Futurism

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212 Apollonio, Futurist Manifestos, 22. The first “Futurist Manifesto” (1909) is repeatedly quoted for its statement on museums as cemeteries and so much of the publication deals with eradicating history so that Italy will no longer be a cultural graveyard. “...today, we establish Futurism, because we want to free this land from its smelly gangrene of professors, archaeologists, ciceroni and antiquarians. For too long has Italy been a dealer in second-hand clothes. We mean to free her from the numberless museums that cover her like so many graveyards.” “The Manifesto of Futurist Painters” and “The Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” (both 1910), too, echo revulsion of the past. 213 I have never seen Russolo’s response to any of these reviews, nor have I read his opinions about his artistic career.
was one laden with German Expressionism and early shades of Russian Rayonism, intermingled with qualities of Symbolism and Italian Divisionism. A strictly formal discussion of his art reveals how extremely distinguishable his works were from those of his Futurist peers. Perhaps separating *The Revolt* from another Expressionist canvas would have been difficult for 1912 viewers unaware of Russolo’s Futurist affiliation. At the very least, the versions of Futurism touted by these men vary both from each other and from their fellow painters.
CONCLUSION

In an undated letter addressed to the Florentine Futurists Aldo Palazzeschi, Giovanni Papini, and Ardegno Soffici, Luigi Russolo advocates for the individuality in Futurism that came starkly into view in 1912 that I have demonstrated in this study. In response to an unmentioned publication by the addressees Russolo first thanks them for categorizing him with F.T. Marinetti.\textsuperscript{214} He writes: “If by [‘Marinetti’] you mean the creator of Futurism, Plastic Dynamism, \textit{Musica pluritonale}, Futurist sculpture, the Art of Noise, Futurist architecture, \textit{Parole in libertà}, Futurist synthetic theater and he who has imposed the anti-traditional Italian avant-garde world, then I am proud [to call myself] after Marinetti.”\textsuperscript{215} He warns his compatriots that if they mean, however, to generate ill will amongst their brethren that they would be petty and beyond contempt. Russolo ends with the crucial statement: “\textit{Marinettismo} does not exist; What exists is Marinetti, inventor of the word ‘Futurism,’ genius Futurist poet and untiring organizer of all the forms of Futurism in Italy and throughout the world.”\textsuperscript{216} I read this final statement as Russolo’s assertion that \textit{Marinettismo} is not an appropriate term to encapsulate all the aspects of Futurism which he lists above, much in the same way I have argued that “Futurism” alone cannot fully express all the individual variety present in the visual movement.

In its time, early Futurism was unpredictable and even undefinable. It had the potential to change at the will of Marinetti or any of the Futurist painters according to their personal choices. Multiple visualizations of Futurism could exist simultaneously, too, as I have shown with my three case studies. Futurism, unlike Cubism or even Divisionism, was not an independent, incomparable style and every aspect of the movement’s technique can be traced to another existing artistic circle. This said, the Futurists fiercely defended themselves against such criticism, as they would not align with either the Divisionists or Cubists. Instead they preferred to remain an independent personality even if their artistic approach was not so original. This lack

\textsuperscript{214} Although the letter is undated and Russolo does not name the article he is replying to, given its multiple authors, a likely candidate for the article to which Russolo is responding is “Futurismo e Marinettismo,” published in \textit{Lacerba} on Feb. 14, 1915.

\textsuperscript{215} Letter from Luigi Russolo to Aldo Palazzeschi, Giovanni Papini, and Ardegno Soffici, undated; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti correspondence and papers, 1886-1974, Box 7, Folder 7). Author’s translation; the letter had to have been written prior to 1947, the date of Russolo’s death (and prior to the death of any of the recipients). It was likely written between 1913 and 1915, when the three respondents were publishing the journal \textit{Lacerba}.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
of identity caused confusion among period viewers and critics and continues to elude modern scholarship in its attempt to label and define Futurism as a movement. In their effort to write the narrative of Futurism, scholars have focused on an overriding institutional vision within the movement and they have lost sight of the variety offered by its individual contributors. Due to the critical outcome of the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune Umberto Boccioni has thus been promulgated as the preeminent Futurist artist and his works have consequently been thoroughly conflated with the term “Futurism.”

In opposition to these traditional viewpoints I have examined the work of two other contributing Futurist painters, both of whom offered a differing path to Futurism during its formative years. Focusing on the period between May 1911 and February 1912 as well as the events surrounding the exhibition of Futurist painting at the Parisian Galerie Bernheim-Jeune I have endeavored to illustrate that there was neither a singular definition nor an unequivocal leader of the movement at this point in time. Despite having begun their artistic careers in the vein of Italian Divisionism, Gino Severini, Luigi Russolo, and even Umberto Boccioni represented three divergent but not exclusive interpretations of Futurism. Severini posed a French version of Futurism, steeped deeply in the tendencies of early Cubist painting, while Russolo took his artistic cues from German Expressionism and French Symbolism. Finally, Boccioni presented a hybridization of Italian Divisionism and Cubism. Although I did not include them as case studies, Carlo Carrà and Giacomo Balla also practiced highly individualized forms of Futurist painting: Carrà dabbled in Cubism but not to the same degree as Severini or Boccioni, and Balla never veered from Divisionist technique. While the outset of the exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune witnessed these five equal and viable interpretations of Futurist painting, by the closing of the show Boccioni was the only Futurist deemed independent enough to represent the movement. The Futurists placed a great deal of emphasis on artistic theory, publishing their manifestos before completing any of their paintings. The 1910 “Manifesto of Futurist Painters” and “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting” do not offer a prescription for painting; rather they offer an end state to which Futurist painters should aspire. It is no wonder, then, that when five painters from very different artistic backgrounds formed the fledging sub-movement of Futurist painting that five distinct versions of Futurism were born. Regardless of how modern discussion of Futurism has evolved, in February 1912 these paths were understood to possess equal potential for the future of the movement.
Figure 1: Photograph taken at the Futurist Bernheim-Jeune exhibition. February 1912. Identifiable canvases include Gino Severini’s *Dance of the Pan-Pan at the Monico* (La Danse du “pan-pan” au Monico; 1909–1911/1959–1960) and Luigi Russolo’s *Chioma* (I capelli di Tina; 1910-11).
Figure 2: Photograph of Gino Severini and F.T. Marinetti at the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition. Pictured with three Umberto Boccioni paintings: (left to right) *The Laugh* (*La Risata*; 1911), *Modern Idol* (*Idolo moderno*; 1910–11), and *Simultaneous Visions* (*Visioni simultanee*; 1911).
Figure 3: Photograph of the Futurists at the opening of the 1912 Paris exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune. Pictured here from left to right: Luigi Russolo, Carlo Carrà, F.T. Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni, and Gino Severini.
Figure 4: Gino Severini. *The Obsessive Dancer (La Danseuse obsédante)*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 29 x 21.3 in. (73.5 x 54 cm.). Private collection.
Figure 5: Gino Severini. *The Milliner (La Modiste)*. c. 1910–1911. Oil on canvas. 25.5 x 19 in. (64.8 x 48.3 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.
Figure 6: Luigi Russolo. *Memories of a Night (Ricordi di una notte).* 1911. Oil on canvas. 39.7 x 39.7 in. (100.9 x 100.9 cm.). Collection Barbara Slifka.
Figure 7: Umberto Boccioni. *States of Mind I: The Farewells (Stati d’animo I: Gli addii).* 1911. Oil on canvas. 27.9 x 37.8 in. (71 x 96 cm.). Museo del Novecento, Milan.
Figure 8: Umberto Boccioni. *States of Mind I: Those Who Go (Stati d’animo I: Quelli che vanno)*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 27.9 x 37.6 in. (71 x 95.5 cm.). Museo del Novecento, Milan.
Figure 9: Umberto Boccioni. *States of Mind I: Those Who Stay (Stati d’animo I: Quelli che restano).* 1911. Oil on canvas. 27.9 x 37.8 in. (71 x 96 cm.). Museo del Novecento, Milan.
Figure 10: Umberto Boccioni. *States of Mind II: The Farewells (Stati d’animo II: Gli addii).* 1911. Oil on canvas. 27.8 x 37.9 in. (70.5 x 96.2 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 11: Umberto Boccioni. *States of Mind II: Those Who Go* (*Stati d’animo II: Quelli che vanno*). 1911. Oil on canvas. 27.9 x 37.8 in. (70.8 x 95.9 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 12: Umberto Boccioni. *States of Mind II: Those Who Stay (Stati d’animo II: Quelli che restano).* 1911. Oil on canvas. 27.9 x 37.8 in. (70.8 x 95.9 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 13: Period photograph of Gino Severini’s *Dance of the “Pan-Pan” at the Monico* (La Danse du “pan-pan” au Monico; 1909–1911/1959–1960).
Figure 14: Luigi Russolo. *Perfume (Profumo)*. 1909–10. Oil on canvas. 25.4 x 25.8 in. (64.5 x 65.5 cm.). Museo di Arte Moderna e Comtemporanea di Trento e Rovereto.
Figure 15: Luigi Russolo. *The Revolt (La rivolta)*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 59.4 x 91 in. (150.8 x 230.7 cm.). Collection Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague.
Figure 16: Umberto Boccioni. *The City Rises* (*La città che sale*). 1910-11. Oil on canvas. 78.5 x 118.5 in. (199.3 x 301 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 17: Umberto Boccioni. *The Laugh (La Risata)*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 43.4 x 57 in. (110.2 x 145.4 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 18: Jean Metzinger. *Tea Time (Le Goûter)*. 1911. Oil on board. 29.8 x 27.6 in. (75.9 x 70.2 cm.). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.
Figure 19: Fernand Léger. *Study for Three Portraits (Essai pour trois portraits)*. 1910–11. Oil on canvas. 76.75 x 45.9 in. (194.9 x 116.6 cm.). Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee.
Figure 20: Giacomo Balla. *Electric Light (Lampada—studio di luce).* 1910–11. Oil on canvas. 68.75 x 45.25 in. (174.7 x 114.7 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 21: Pablo Picasso. *Ma Jolie*. 1911-12. Oil on canvas. 39.4 x 25.75 in. (100 x 64.5 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 22: Umberto Boccioni. *Simultaneous Visions (Visioni simultanee)*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 24 x 27.4 in. (60.5 x 69.5 cm.). Von der Heydt-Museum Wuppertal, Wuppertal.
Figure 23: Carlo Carrà. *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli (I funerali dell’anarchico Galli).* 1910-11. Oil on canvas. 78.2 x 31.25 in. (198.7 x 102 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Figure 24: Luigi Russolo. *Tina’s Hair (I Capelli di Tina)*. 1910–11. Oil on canvas. 28 x 19.3 in. (71.5 x 49 cm.). Private Collection.
Figure 25: Cartoon of the Bernheim Jeune exhibition by Max Aghion. “On the Uselessness of Italian Futurist Painters.” *Gil Blas*, 13 February 1912.
Figure 26: Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo. *The Fourth Estate (Il quarto stato)*. c. 1901. Oil on poplar. 115 x 215 in. (293 x 545 cm.). Museo del Novecento, Milan.
Figure 27: Emilio Longoni. *The Orator of the Strike (L’oratore dello sciopero)*. 1890–1. Oil on canvas. 76 x 53 in. (193 x 134 cm.). Private collection.
Figure 28: Natalia Goncharova. *The Woodcutters (Holzhauer)*. 1911. Oil on canvas. 31.5 x 23.6 in. (80 x 60 cm.). Private collection.
Figure 29: Mikhail Larionov. *Rayonist Composition: Domination of Red*. 1910-11. Oil on canvas. 20.75 x 28.5 in. (52.7 x 72.4 cm.). Museum of Modern Art, New York.
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