

# FUTURISM

BY GREGORY SCHUCH

CHALLENGING SOCIETAL NORMS AND SHAPING CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

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Since the early days of graphic design, artistic movements have influenced the ideologies guiding designers. In 1908, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti aimed to revitalize design by challenging conventional design ideas and give rise to his newly created Futurism movement.

**FATHER OF THE FUTURIST**

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# FATHER OF THE FUTURIST MOVE MENT

After a car crash prompted him to swerve away from a cyclist, Marinetti believed modern design should break from comfort and nostalgia seen at the time and embrace a rule-breaking mindset. By the following year, he had published these ideas in his book, the *Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*. Marinetti's manifesto called for celebrating modernity, using war for creative destruction, embracing new technology and machine aesthetics, and championing freedom of expression while rejecting artistic convention. Though a few of the ways the Marinetti sought to change design is similar to some past artistic movements, Marinetti uniquely called for the destruction of museums and libraries, viewing them as a way for outdated ideologies to continue on throughout this period of artistic change. In his rejection of tradition and nostalgia, Marinetti sought to eradicate any place that would allow the past to endure.

# F.T. MARINETTI

Futurism, beginning by Marinetti publishing his manifesto in the French magazine *Le Figaro*, marked a transformative shift in the way one would think about design. It was not only influencing contemporary artistic endeavors but was also laying the beginnings of subsequent movements by challenging designers to defy norms and embrace the evolving spirit of the times.





One of the more famous early works of Futurism published following the manifesto was another work by Marinetti, **Zang Tumb Tumb**, a poem from 1914 describing his accounts of the Battle of Adrianople. The cover that Marinetti designed for this poem showcases skewed display type, coupled with foreshortening and curving subtitle type above and below.

Contrasting the aesthetics of previous works, the cover features no pictorial work; no drawings nor paintings are present to convey to the viewer the intended emotions. Instead, Marinetti prioritized the use of the type and the content of the words to communicate his message in a way easily accessible to the viewer, though continuing the abstract mindset.

These ideas set also extended over to a separate work of Marinetti's, a piece published in 1919, five years following that of **Zang Tumb Tumb**. **Tumultuous Assembly** is an amalgamation of contrasting typefaces and type sizes, deformed type, as well as what seems to be clippings from other typed works. The work reflects that of what Marinetti had described the core features of Futurist work: chaotic, deviating from traditional, normality, and comfortability of the modern design language, as well as being freely expressive in the work through and through. Despite the monochromatic palette featured in the work, it excels in an almost machine aesthetic, capturing the ever-evolving impact of technological advancements made in the early 20th century.

**"CHAOTIC  
DEVIATING FROM THE TRADITION  
NORMALITY, AND COMFORTABILITY  
OF THE MODERN DESIGN  
LANGUAGE."**

**TUMB TUMB**

**ADRIANOPOLI OTTOBRE 1912**

**TUUUMB TUUUMB**  
PAROLE IN LIBERTÀ

EDIZIONI FUTURISTE  
DI "POESIA"  
Corso Venezia, 61 - MILANO  
1913

Although unofficially ending in 1944 following Marinetti's passing, Futurism has demonstrated the lasting effects of its ideologies and aesthetics by influencing and shaping subsequent artistic movements and aesthetic choices throughout the decades since. American designer Paula Scher, born four years following the end of Futurism, has gained recognition for her works that resemble that of Futurist design. Bold colors, dynamic type, and vibrant compositions are facets that are commonly associated with both Scher and Futurist principles. Works like her series of posters for The Public Theater in New York, started in 1995, closely mirror Marinetti's approach by way of composition of type and color. Even past these posters and Scher herself, one can see the movement's influence thorough the early 21st century punk aesthetic, characterized by personal expression, deviating from the norm, and what can be described as the union of both modern and Futurist influence.

While Futurism may not officially recognized as a contemporary artistic movement, the ideas and aesthetics described now over a century ago continues to thrive in today's society. Despite its informal conclusion, the essence of futurism continues to impact contemporary artistic disciplines by focusing on the rejections of normality, bold and personal expression, and dynamism. The efforts and principles set forth by Marinetti and Futurist visionaries alike have and will continue to inspire artists, ensuring that the movement's legacy remains vital and relevant in shaping the evolving landscape of artistic innovation and expression.