



Paul Mansouff (1896–1983)

Abstraction in Colour

Oil on panel

995 × 235 mm

Signed

Artist description:

Paul Mansouff (also known as Pavel Mansurov; 1896–1983) was a Russian-born painter and theoretician associated with the Russian avant-garde and the ideals of Suprematism. Although he worked alongside many of the leading innovators of early twentieth-century Russian art, he developed a highly individual, non-objective visual language centered on the exploration of space, rhythm, and structural relationships.

Born in St. Petersburg, Mansouff studied drawing and design before serving as a technical draftsman during the First World War. After the Russian Revolution, he became involved with the avant-garde artistic community and worked at the Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUK), where he collaborated with figures such as Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin, and Pavel Filonov. These encounters reinforced his

commitment to abstraction while encouraging him to pursue an independent artistic direction.

In 1928 Mansouroff left the Soviet Union and settled in Paris the following year, where he became part of the community of Russian émigré artists. During the 1930s and 1940s he often worked in applied and decorative arts to support himself, while continuing to develop his personal artistic research. He later spent increasing amounts of time in the south of France, eventually settling in Nice, where he died in 1983.

Mansouroff is best known for his elongated abstract compositions and his so-called “Pictural Formulae,” frequently executed on wood or narrow vertical supports. Rejecting narrative or representational subject matter, he sought to create works governed by the internal relationships of line, form, and spatial tension. As he stated, “My works have no subject and are exclusively abstract, and if something can be identified, it is only the result of pure coincidence.”

Although less widely known than some of his contemporaries, Paul Mansouroff is today recognized as an important and distinctive figure within the Russian avant-garde, whose work bridges the experimental ideals of the 1920s with the postwar development of geometric abstraction in Europe.