

# Theo van Doesburg Archive

An indispensable source on microfiche for anyone working on the visual arts and architecture of the period 1914 to 1931



Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst / Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, The Hague  
Van Moorsel Donation

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Theo van Doesburg (1883-1931) was a painter, architect, art theoretician and art critic, typographer, writer, and poet. In 1917 he founded the magazine *De Stijl* (The Style), and was its only editor until his death. More than any other Dutch artist, Van Doesburg took an active part in the varied activities and manifestations of the international avant-garde of his time, on one hand as a producer of works of art, on the other as an untiring propagandist of the new. In this last role he kept up a voluminous correspondence with a great many artists throughout Europe, from Sweden to Italy and from England to Russia, but also from America and Japan. He contributed to international magazines, gave lectures, took part in Dada performances and exhibitions.

In contrast to his friend Piet Mondriaan, who destroyed all the letters he received, Van Doesburg worked from the beginning with the creation of his archive in mind. This archive reflects the richness of contacts of someone who was working at the midpoint of the many artistic renewals which took place in the period from 1914 to 1931: the final phase of cubism, futurism, *De Stijl* or neoplasticism, Dadaism, and the up-and-coming surrealism, constructivism and all other contemporary forms of abstract art as well as new developments in the field of architecture.

Although the archive has suffered from Van Doesburg's frequent house moves, it has had a permanent home since 1930 in the care of the artist's widow Nelly (1899-1975) in the house Van Doesburg designed himself at Meudon near Paris. After Nelly van Doesburg's death, the archive was presented to the Dutch State by her niece, Wies van Moorsel, and placed under the curatorship of the Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst (Netherlands Office for Fine Arts) in The Hague.

The archive is very extensive, but contains the following main items: correspondence with artists and magazine editors (such as Archipenko,

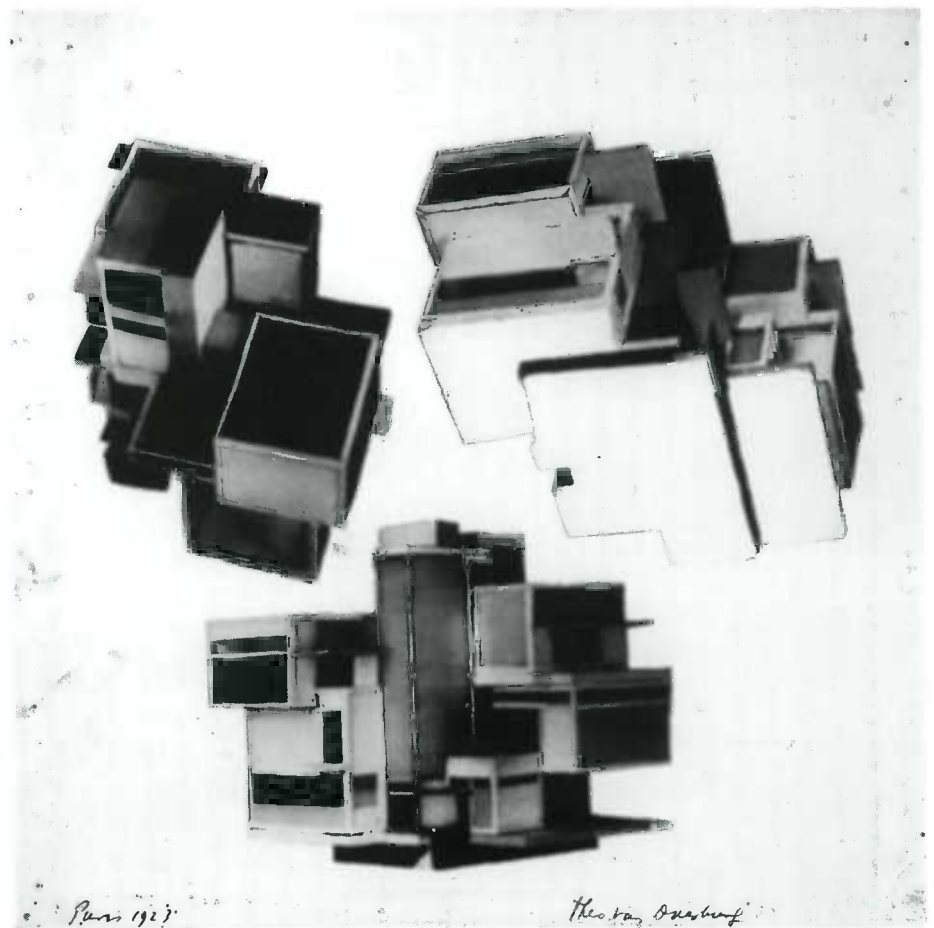
Arp, Van Eesteren, Gropius, Huszar, Van der Leek, Lissitzky, Mondriaan, Oud, Rietveld, Schwitters, Tzara and many, many others); Van Doesburg's published work and many manuscripts, including unpublished manuscripts; the archives of the magazines *De Stijl* and *Mécano*; documentation about and photos of Van Doesburg's work and the exhibitions he took part in; scrap books, notebooks, diaries and personal papers.

In addition, the archive contains some important 'recovered' correspondence from Van Doesburg himself: letters to his friends Kok, Oud and Rinsema.

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*Evert van Straaten*

Model of the 'Maison d'Artiste', 1923. (Archive inventory no. 1286)



## Content of the archive

### Theo van Doesburg's diaries

### Correspondence

With individual persons, institutions, and editors of journals.

### Van Doesburg the speaker

Lectures and correspondence pertaining to lectures given by Theo van Doesburg.

### Van Doesburg the publicist

Manuscripts, typescripts, proofs and published versions of articles on art and architecture and of literary works.

### Van Doesburg as the editor of/contributor to various journals 'De Stijl', 'Mécano', 'Het Getij' and as a member of various artists' societies

### Van Doesburg and 'De Stijl' as the subject of publications and tributes

Manuscripts, typescripts, articles.

### Exhibitions

### Press-cutting albums

### Special themes / projects

### Manuscripts by others

### Miscellaneous personal documents pertaining to both Theo and Nelly van Doesburg

Birth and baptism; Military service; Marriage and divorce; Death; Curricula vitae and oeuvre catalogue; Varia; Management of the archive, library and art collection; Translation project; Miscellaneous subjects.

### Miscellaneous personal documents pertaining exclusively to Nelly van Doesburg

### Photographs

Photographs of Theo and Nelly van Doesburg, friends, and fellow-artists.

Photographs and other illustrations of work by Van Doesburg.

Illustrations of work by fellow-artists.

Designs by Theo van Doesburg for presentations arranged by himself.

Other photographs.

### Filed archives

### Documentation

Architecture; Fine art; Dada; Decorative art; Literature; Music; The Russian revolution; Miscellaneous themes.



Theo van Doesburg's manuscript *Werdegang der neuen Malerei*. (Archive inventory no. 396)

## Printed guide

The detailed printed guide listing 2379 items has been prepared by Bouwe Hijma by order of the Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst (Netherlands Office for Fine Arts) in The Hague.

The item numbers in the guide refer to the numbers filmed below the items on the microfiches. The microfiche numbers on which the various items have been filmed are also mentioned in the guide.

An extensive alphabetical index facilitates the use of the guide.

**The guide comes free with the microfiches.**

### Cover illustration:

Photo portrait of Theo van Doesburg by Lucia Moholy Nagy, (1922?). (Archive inventory chapter 13A)



Photo of Theo and Nelly van Doesburg with a.o. Werner Gräff, Raoul Hausmann, Hans Richter and El Lissitzky. (Archive inventory chapter 13B)

## Price and other information

Number of fiche	441
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	1 : 21
Internal findingaids	Eye-legible headers on each fiche
External finding aids	A detailed printed guide
Storage	The microfiches are supplied in two sturdy plastic binders with dust cover
Order number	O-2127/1

**IDC accepts orders for individual fiches or parts, please ask for quotation.**

## Related IDC project

### AVANT-GARDE AND ARCHITECTURE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1909-1938

**Editor: O. Máčel, Technical University Delft**

Starting in 1918, contacts with The Netherlands (Van Doesburg), Germany (Bauhaus), Russia (Constructivism), and France (Le Corbusier) made Czechoslovakia an equal within the European movement for a new architecture.

Although source material for the study of the Czechoslovak avant-garde and architecture in the period before the Second World War is very difficult to find, IDC succeeded in filming a number of leading periodicals and monographs. This interesting collection gives an excellent picture of developments during this period.

11 titles on 270 microfiche

**Microchures available free on request.**

