A NEW ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAMILIAR THINGS.
De Stijl ('The Style') was the name of a periodical which was first published in 1917. The contributors to the periodical explored the creation of a new visual representation, which expressed their increasingly modern world. The collective style of art, design and architecture which was published became known as De Stijl.

Developments in engineering, technology, schools of psychology and social change were at the heart of De Stijl thought and philosophy. The aim of the movement's founders, Piet Mondrian and Theo Van Doesburg, was to contribute something towards the new sense of beauty. De Stijl was therefore very much influenced by the world at that time. It is often thought that the basic geometric shapes and primary colours of the artworks are not representational of anything.

This is unique. They sought to create a new attitude towards familiar things, in tune with their new world. Rather than be figurative, their artworks and designs looked beyond the surface, studying the energy, movement, form and balance in their surroundings.

This publication is the result of applying the philosophies of De Stijl to our present world. It provides a refreshing interpretation of the beauty of today's surroundings.

1. Mondrian, "Mondrian: The Art of Composition" (1929), London
MANIFESTO

One hundred years ago the artists and designers of De Stijl lived in a world of innovation. Their philosophy and publications interpreted and reflected the new technology and modern thought.

This book explores the application of their philosophy in the here and now, in a time of not dissimilar change and challenge. But rather than reflect on specific artworks and graphic experiments, it examines the influence of De Stijl's philosophy.

The experiments create new ideas and new work. They reflect the evolution of design, interpreted through an influential philosophy of a hundred years ago.
CONTENTS
1 THE SQUARE
2 CAPTURING MOVEMENT IN
   (A) WATER
   (B) AIR
   (C) TRAFFIC
3 THE GRID AS A FRAMEWORK
4 A BORDERLESS CANVAS
5 THE VISUAL EVOLVES
The square by its virtue of being completely balanced was fundamental to De Stijl, representing the world as a unit in a balance of the forces of creation, nature and man.1

"Nature inspires me, provides me with the emotion by which I am moved to create something, but I want to approach the truth as closely as possible abstracting everything until I come to the foundation of things." - Mondrian

2

WATER MOVEMENT

The movement and energy of the environment, such as water, was a design focus in De Stijl. This experiment focuses on the movement of light on the water’s surface and explores the energy and form of the water.

"...I AM NOW WORKING ON A THING WHICH IS A RECONSTRUCTION OF A STARRY SKY, BUT STILL I MAKE IT WITHOUT THE NATURAL GIVEN."  
—PIET MONDRIAN

RECONSTRUCTION OF A STARRY SKY

Abstracting the sky was a focus for Mondrian in 1917. His aim was to recreate the night sky without using the obvious imagery and still show the vivid light of a starry sky. The focus of this experiment is to create a new representation of the sky, showing its vibrancy and energy whilst staying away from natural imagery.

Experiments:
- Join all of the stars together to see the conditions of the Duende.  
- Cross over in the Duende.


— PIET MONDRIAN

Mondrian became interested with the sounds of the modern world, particularly that of the motor cars. This experiment focuses on the grand scale of peak hour traffic in the present day.

"The relationships no longer correspond to an underlying grid. Evolved by the eye they operate efficiently on the visual level." – John Milner

3

The Grid as a Framework

The grid in De Stijl was fundamental to the development of its abstractedness. Initially, the grid employed by the artists and designers was mathematical and educating. However, it developed into a grid formation that was less prescriptive and balanced to the eye.

2. A Pallas, "Novo Dadaism in Oceans West and De Stijl" Routledge London 2003, p.104
AT FIRST
THEY FOLLOWED AN UNDERLYING MATHEMATICAL GRID STRUCTURE.
BASIC FORM & MOVEMENT.
A BORDERLESS CANVAS

The canvas of De Stijl didn’t have borders and the geometric forms painted were not confined to the canvas. The grids and forms continued off the canvas.

“A new rhythm of life is in a state of genesis, a rhythm in which a new aesthetic energy and a new ideal of forms seems to be marked in broad outlines.”

— Theo van Doesburg
REFERENCES


