



David Burliuk

paintings 1907 - 1966

First London Exhibition

15 March - 7 April 1966

PRICES

Grosvenor Gallery

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telegrams

Sevenartz London

The name of David Burliuk has been known to me over thirty five years, but only three years ago did I have the opportunity of meeting him, an 82 year old youngster, still writing poetry, still painting, still travelling! I was the first in the English-speaking world to give due credit to David Burliuk for his role in the life of Mayakovsky, the great Russian poet, who wrote: 'Entered the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. . . . In the school appeared Burliuk. Arrogant appearance, Lorgnette, frock coat . . . I'd affront him. Almost came to blows. . . . David had the anger of a master who had outplaced his contemporaries. I, the fervour of a Socialist, aware of the inevitable doom of the old. Thus was conceived Russian Futurism.

Next day got poem done . . . read my stuff to Burliuk. Said a friend of mine wrote it. David stopped. Looked me up and down, yapped: 'You wrote it yourself! You are a genius!' Became immersed in poetry. That evening quite suddenly I became a poet.

In the morning Burliuk introducing me to someone, trumpeted: 'Don't you know him? My genius friend. Famous poet Mayakovsky.' I tried to stop him. Burliuk adamant. Leaving me, he bellowed: 'Now write or you will make me look a regular fool!'

The exquisite Burliuk, I think of David with unchanging love. Wonderful friend. My real teacher. Burliuk made a poet of me. . . .*

Studying Burliuk's work I saw that he was still a master. Prolific in experiment, working at his easel every day, painting in many styles, his subjects ranging from nostalgic scenes of old Russia to modern America. He is indeed a virtuoso.

Marussia, his wife, is the indefatigable chronicler of the family. For over thirty five years she has published a family organ 'Colour and Rhyme', which is a source book of its times.

Let me briefly recapitulate their history up to their arrival in the United States in 1922. David's father was a farmer, but he also collected books, wrote poetry and prose. David's uncle, Vladimir, was a highly successful novelist, who left a fortune in trust for aged writers.

David was born near Kharkhov on July 22, 1882. At High School his art teacher wrote to his mother: '. . . Your son exhibits a brilliant talent in the art class. I am glad to inform you that your son has a spark of heaven in him and my advice to you is not to neglect it.'

Though his father worked for a reactionary Tsarist-Russian General the family were liberal-minded and it was behind closed doors that David heard read aloud a forbidden brochure 'Siberia and the Exile System' by George Kennan, an American traveller and journalist who described the terrible conditions in the political prisons of Siberia and the ruthlessness and terror which prevailed.

In 1899 he went to the Kazan Art School. One of the artists who studied with him was Brodsky, later to become a protagonist of 'Socialist Realism' in Soviet Russia. David's brother Vladimir and sister Ludmilla also took up painting at the same school. On the advice of the great Russian painter Repin, David decided to go to Munich to see the world outside Russia. His brother joined him and later they studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Here began his activity as a pioneer and organiser of the new forms of art which later became known as Futurism. He also met the Russian poets Khlebnikov and Kamensky. He returned to Russia, famous as a protagonist of new forms. In 1910 Kandinsky and Franz Marc invited him to exhibit in *Der Blaue Reiter* exhibition in Munich, in which also participated Paul Klee, Jawlensky, Goncharova, Picasso, Derain and Delaunay.

The same year he published in St. Petersburg, 'The Bait Box of Judges' with poems and prose by himself and Khlebnikov and Kamensky. In this book David threw a public challenge to the established literary taste and tradition of his times.

Then in 1911 he organised the 'Jack of Diamonds' exhibitions, which included paintings by Konchalovsky, Larionov, Goncharova, Tatlin, Exter, Kaprin, Falk, Malevich, Kandinsky, Matisse, Picasso, and Delaunay. During this period Burliuk travelled with Mayakovsky and Kamensky throughout Russia lecturing on the new art.

In Moscow on March 26, 1912, David married the accomplished pianist Marussia Yelenevski. He had known her as a young neighbour who would watch him paint. Ten years later they met again and he painted her portrait. He has been painting her ever since. Marussia's Salon was the refuge of the revolutionary artists of the day, particularly Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov. In 1913 David published, together with Mayakovsky, the now famous booklet 'A Slap at Public Taste' for which the Moscow Art Academy expelled both of them.

Then came the 1914/18 war, and tragically the talented Vladimir was killed on the Rumanian Front. Then came the Revolution, and Burliuk together with Mayakovsky and the other Futurists accepted the new regime. With the Intervention and Civil War, Burliuk and his family found themselves cut off from Central Russia and they decided to cross Siberia and continue his lectures there. They had to leave everything behind, including some 700 paintings. In June 1919 they reached Vladivostok. Unable to return to Central Russia, stricken with typhoid, short of money and food, Burliuk even then managed to organise exhibitions of modern paintings and lectures. On October 1, 1920 they reached Japan, where he painted and lectured in order to buy a passage to New York, where they safely arrived on September 22, 1922.

There he found himself known in artistic circles and it is worth quoting what Oliver Taylor, the well-known critic, wrote in 1919: 'Whatever may be the ultimate value of the work of the revolutionists in oil, their spirit is more in keeping with the times, their understanding of the times is surer, their acceptance of conditions as they find them is readier, and their creative vision is more fertile than that of their more conservative brethren. Among the honest experimentors is David Burliuk, called by his friends, the Father of Russian Futurism. He is not the most extreme experimenter, but the vigor of his imagination and his power of execution command the respect of all but the most hide-bound conservatives in Moscow. . . .'

These words remained true over forty years, during which time in the land of his origin the conservatives triumphed over the revolutionaries. Many of his canvases are in State collections in the USSR, together with his contemporaries Kandinsky, Malevich and the other Futurists and Constructivists. No doubt soon they will be given proper credit for the pioneering role they played.

Burliuk has had exhibitions throughout the world over the last fifty years. He is very happy that this latest retrospective takes place in England—which sees his art for the first time.

David Burliuk never neglected the 'spark of heaven' that was in him.

Herbert Marshall

DAVID BURLIUK

- 1882 Born Riabushki, near Kharkov
- 1898–1902 Kazan School of Art
- 1903 Visited Munich with brother Vladimir; studied under Azbe
- 1904–5 Paris: studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts under Cormon
- 1907 Moscow: organised 'Stefanos Wreath' exhibition with Larionov, Goncharova, Exter
- 1908 Petersburg: organised 'Link' exhibition – with his brother, Lentulov, Kamensky, Goncharova, Larionov, Exter. Second 'Link' exhibition Kiev
- 1909 Petersburg: organised exhibition with Makovsky, Benois, Dobuzhinsky. Formed circle of 'Modern Russian Poets'. Participated in Izdebsky's 'International Salon' in Odessa, Riga, Kiev, Petersburg
- 1910 Published manifesto *In Defence of the New Art*. 'Triangle' exhibition, including paintings and Mss. of poets. Returned to Odessa and obtained Art School Diploma the following year. Participated in Izdebsky's Second Salon which included Kandinsky.
- 1911 Entered Moscow College of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and met Vladimir Mayakovsky. Founded Futurist Movement in poetry. With brother Vladimir participated in first *Der Blaue Reiter* exhibition, Galerie Thunhauser, Munich, 18 December
- 1911–12 Organised first *Jack of Diamonds* exhibition which included Larionov, Goncharova, Tatlin, Exter, Malevich and Kandinsky and in the following year Matisse, Picasso, Friesz, Delaunay
- 1912 Married Marussia Yelenevski
Burluik's home in Moscow centre of the Futurists
Burluik and Mayakovsky expelled from College
- 1914 Outbreak of War. Vladimir and Nicholas Burluik conscripted, both later killed in action. David Burluik, as head of family, not called up

- 1915–18 Continued Futurist activities
- 1918 Left Moscow for Siberia
- 1920–22 Japan and Pacific Islands
- 1922 Arrived in United States, 22 September
- 1930 Became an American citizen
- 1941 Settled Hampton Bays, Long Island
- 1949–50 Worked in Southern Europe – Capri, Positano and Arles
- 1956 Invited to Moscow for Mayakovsky celebrations
- 1957 Visited Czechoslovakia and Paris
- 1962 Seven months trip round the world
- 1966 First London one-man exhibition, Grosvenor Gallery

Principal Mixed Exhibitions

- 1923 Brooklyn Museum
- 1926 Sesquicentennial, Philadelphia
- 1926 International Exhibition of Modern Art, Brooklyn Museum
- 1963 'Der Blaue Reiter', Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York
- 1954/5 *Famous Artists Born in Russia*, Del Levante Gallery, Rome and Milan

One-man exhibitions since 1924 in New York, Washington, Havana, Brisbane, Paris, Munich, etc

David Burluik is represented in the Hermitage, Leningrad; the Metropolitan Museum; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Guggenheim Museum; the Whitney Museum; the Brooklyn Museum; the Boston Museum; and in public collections in Germany and Japan; as well as in many private collections throughout the United States, in Japan, Australia and Europe



18 Japan and America 1921

			inches			inches
2001	June Roses (1907)	oil on board	9½ × 13½	2500	23 Lenin and Tolstoy	47½ × 79
5002	Village Evening (1907)	oil on canvas	19¼ × 24½		1925/1943 oil on canvas	
300 3400	Ancestor (1908)	oil on canvas	29¼ × 19½	1500	24 Mechanical Man 1926	oil on canvas 60 × 42
150 4150	Fishing from the Eye (1909)	oil on board	8½ × 11½	1500	25 Soviet Women Harvesting 1927	oil on canvas 65 × 53
7005	Marriage Proposition (1909/10)	oil on canvas	37½ × 37½	400	26 Flowers in the Sunset 1930	oil on canvas 29¼ × 19¼
2000 175	Face of the Fields (1910)	oil on canvas	13 × 11½	2500	27 Children of Stalingrad 1930/1944	oil on canvas 60 × 79
4507	Odessa (1910)	oil on canvas	29½ × 23½	150	28 Love and Peace 1931	oil on board 12 × 12
7008	Red Horse (1911)	oil on canvas	32 × 36	275	29 Figures in Landscape 1933	oil on canvas 24 × 18
2500	Sibirskay Flotilia 1911	oil on canvas	17½ × 14½	1750 150	30 Lost (Amelia Earhart) 1937	oil on canvas 13 × 17
NFS	The Death Rider 1911/12	oil on canvas	34 × 34	250	31 Florida 1941	oil on canvas 16 × 20
1400 750	The Burliuk Estate, Tavria (1912)	oil on canvas	36 × 42	150	32 Huitres 1949	oil on board 8¾ × 10½
NFS	The Headless Barber 1912	oil and collage	21 × 24	200	33 Italian Girl 1950	oil on canvas 18 × 13¾
250 13	Evening in the Village 1916	oil on board	20 × 10	275	34 Ocean Flight 1952 (1910)	oil on canvas 17½ × 23½
NFS	Remnants of the Feast 1917	oil on canvas	15¼ × 7	125	35 On the Road 1960	oil on board 7½ × 9½
NFS	Japanese Women planting Rice 1920	oil on canvas	18 × 24	350	36 Lady Godiva 1961 (1922)	oil on board 11½ × 15½
1500 16	The Young Coachman 1920	oil on canvas	20 × 30	300	37 May 1961	oil on canvas 26¼ × 16¼
1500	A Cup of Sake 1921	oil on canvas	19 × 23¾	200	38 Australia 1962	oil on board 8½ × 11½
750	Japan and America 1921	oil on canvas	19½ × 29¼	125	39 Happy Travellers 1962	oil on board 10 × 8
800	Peril of Yokohama 1921	oil on canvas	30 × 36	1800 150	40 Palette de Paris 1964	oil on board 9 × 9½
1400 1250	Labourers 1922	oil on canvas	42¼ × 36	750	41 Czechoslovakia 1964	oil on canvas 38 × 39½
1500 150	Girl and Horse 1923	oil on canvas	12 × 13	750	42 Flowers in the Snow 1965	oil on canvas 29¼ × 19¼
1200 600	New York under Construction 1924	oil on canvas	23½ × 36½	150	43 Russian Tea Party 1966	oil on board 8½ × 11¼
				175	44 Day on the Farm	oil on canvas 12 × 16
				2000	45 Industrial Landscape	oil on canvas 27½ × 33¾

(Dates in brackets refer to a lost original on which the present composition is based)

Ex Car 450

Forthcoming Exhibitions

13 April BRIAN WALL recent sculpture

3 May FLEUR COWLES recent paintings

Always available:

Archipenko	Favorsky	Lissitsky	Graphics:
Ayrton	Feiler	Magritte	Beardsley
Azaz	Fremund	Mesens	Chagall
Baj	Giardelli	Moore	Cheret
Battersby	Goncharova	Mucha	Favorsky
Biasi	Gutfreund	Neizvestny	Hamaguchi
Calder	Hoffmeister	Rabin	Hloznik
Campigli	Janecek	Brian Robins	Janecek
Cascella	Kandinsky	Schener	Kaplan
Chagall	Kinley	Severini	Miro
Chang Dai-Chien	Koenig	Silvestri	Mucha
Chi Pai-shih	Konfar	Sironi	Steinlen
Clough	Kumalo	Skotnes	Artists of the
Dolenev	Larionov	Jack Smith	Leningrad
Evensen	Lies	Souza	Experimental
			Graphics Studio