

for embroidery and appliqué were a laboratory that allowed her to move on to representative easel paintings. Let us note as well that the Verbovka sketches were not only small collages but also easel paintings in gouache and watercolor; in the literature they are all given the title “Painterly Architectonics.”

Liubov Popova possessed just as outstanding a gift and just as strong an artistic will as the other “Amazons” of the Russian avant-garde. We repeat that her evolutionary path through Cubism, Futurism, and Cubo-Futurism to Suprematism was supremely organic.

This same organic quality subsequently characterized her move to Constructivism. Popova’s personal genre, “painterly architectonics,” held the potential for the plastic construction that in the future would be realized in full in her variety of Constructivism.

Malevich sought and found cosmic revelations in art. For Popova, an artist who revered the great “painting work” (later simply “work,” read: “construction”), their parting of ways was inevitable.

The Supremus Society in the First Half of 1917

Left-wing Artists Join Supremus

During his October 1916 visit to Moscow, Malevich intuitively and consciously constructed the situation in which a vitally essential person appeared in the Supremus project.

This person was Nadezhda Andreevna Udaltsova, a painter of remarkable character, a born leader. There had long been a “Cubist circle” around her; it included Liubov Popova, Vera Pestel, and Sofia Karetnikova (1887–early 1930s), talented representatives of the same social circle who had trained in the academies of Paris.

Actually, they had all been on an equal footing, but Udaltsova spent more time and effort than the others on common causes.

The serious, sober-minded artist thirsted for a rational foundation for the “painting act.” It was she who was the author of the text in *Vladimir Yevgrafovich Tatlin* that appeared at “0.10.” Udaltsova’s reminiscences show us incontestably as well that after the creator of counter-reliefs himself, she was the number two person in the Moscow “Tatlin circle.”

Nonetheless, the artist made no attempt to move into real spatial constructions. By fall 1916 her own Cubism was virtually tapped out, but even in Tatlin’s counter-reliefs she saw an impasse: “Apart from his tricks, I cannot be