



# LEF Digital Archive

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The Iconic Art Journal That Defined An Era,  
Now Available Online

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Uncommon Information  
Extraordinary Places

## Introducing the Complete *LEF Digital Archive*

### History of *LEF*

In the wake of the Russian Revolution, the group “Left Front of the Arts” (“Левый фронт искусств”, “Levyi Front Iskusstv”) was formed in Moscow, bringing together creative people of the era -- avant-garde poets, writers, photographers, and filmmakers, including Vladimir Mayakovsky, Osip Brik, and others. The group’s philosophy was to re-examine the ideology of so-called leftist art, abandon individualism, and increase art’s role in building communism. The group considered itself as the only representative of revolutionary art.

In 1923 they founded the journal *LEF* (“ЛЕФ”), which was published until 1925. In 1927, it was succeeded by *Novyi LEF* (“Новый ЛЕФ”) and published until 1928. In total, there were 33 issues, but that short print run inspired entire movements and artists not only in Russia, but throughout the world.

### The Importance of *LEF* Today

The magazine’s pages were truly the battleground where formal experimentation was defended while Socialist Realism ascended. The Soviet era was in its infancy, and people were energized for the possibilities of the future, and these publications reflected the energy of the times. The journals were a forum for intense debate, including manifestos, polemics and critical articles on photography, film, theater, architecture, and design.

***LEF* and *Novyi LEF* promoted the idea of “factography,” or the use of language or art to describe or depict the realities of everyday life in the Soviet Union**

The editors encouraged experimentation with writing, basing it on a similar idea of “factual” writing, dispensing with the “bourgeois” illusion of authorship in favor of nonfiction and first-person, journalistic writing. This is where Sergei Eisenstein’s “The Montage of Attractions,” Isaac Babel’s “Red Cavalry,” Vladimir Mayakovsky’s “About This” were first published. Other contributors included Dziga Vertov, Viktor Shklovsky, Varvara Stepanova, Nikolai Aseev, Boris Kushner, Sergei Tret’iakov, and more.

The journal also championed photography and film as the most suitable forms for postrevolutionary art. The renowned artist and photographer Alexander Rodchenko designed the covers of 24 issues of the journal. Many of his photos with multiple viewpoints, tilted horizons, disorienting perspectives, and abstracted forms served as an alternative model for realism, challenging the grand, monumental style that was quickly dominating official Soviet art.



The iconic importance of *LEF* and *Novyi LEF*, with its visually striking covers and illustrations, has been widely known among art scholars. Those involved in the publication of these journals sought to reconcile the radical aesthetics of the Futurist and Constructivist movements with the social goals of the revolution, shaping experience through art. For this reason, scholars of Soviet art, philosophy, and history will find the content indispensable.

Recognizing the importance of *LEF*, Mouton, the Dutch publisher, published a facsimile edition in 1970. In 2014, East View decided to collect the complete journal set, all 33 issues, and to digitize for its growing collection of digital archives of critical Soviet periodicals.

## The Complete *LEF* Digital Archive, Now Accessible Online

East View has created the first complete digital archive of all 33 issues of the journal. The archive is in full-image, showing the original layout and design of *LEF* from its inception, with searchable text. East View carefully checked each page for image quality and corrected those where the originals were poor in order to improve the results of the digital scan.

The database offers the same great features as our other Universal Database products:

- Cross-search the *LEF* Digital Archive with other East View online resources
- Save, print, or e-mail content
- Use powerful zoom tools to enhance viewing and reading
- Search in Cyrillic or transliteration
- Reference permanent URLs for correct citations
- Access online through IP, organization-wide, through standard web browser and PDF viewing software

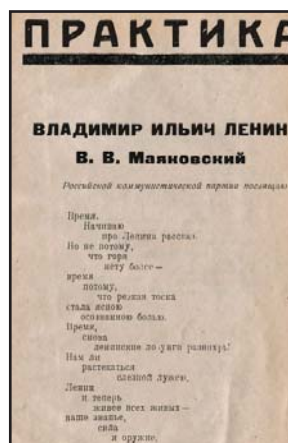
## Ordering Information

Acquire the entire collection, back to 1923, for a one-time cost plus an annual maintenance fee.

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Please contact your East View account representative at [info@eastview.com](mailto:info@eastview.com) to request a trial or learn more.

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