

# UNIVERSAL DYNAMISM MUST BE RENDERED IN PAINTING AS A DYNAMIC SENSATION

**STATES OF MIND: THOSE WHO GO (1911),  
UMBERTO BOCCIONI**



## IN CONTEXT

FOCUS

**Futurism**

BEFORE

**1882** Étienne-Jules Marey develops a way of recording several phases of movement in one photograph.

**1896–1901** Italian painters Giovanni Segantini and Gaetano Previati produce works in a Divisionist style that combines broken color with spiritual and social themes.

AFTER

**1913** In Russia, painter Mikhail Larionov launches the manifesto of Rayonism, a Russian version of Futurism.

**1913** Joseph Stella paints *Battle of Lights, Coney Island, Mardi Gras*, one of the earliest American Futurist works.

**1914** Painter and author Percy Wyndham Lewis publishes the Vorticist manifesto in London, aiming to purge British art and literature of the past.



See also: *Street, Dresden* 290–93 ■ *Accordionist* 294–97 ■ *Bicycle Wheel* 308 ■ *Woman Descending the Staircase* 341

“

We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot.

**Tommaso Marinetti**

”

the ideas of French philosopher Henri Bergson, who emphasized the importance of universal flux, dynamism, change, and intuition. Boccioni painted two versions, the first in the summer of 1911, and the second in the fall of that year, after he had encountered Cubism on a trip to Paris. This second version adopts the fragmented, multiple viewpoints of Cubism while also attempting to portray “states of mind” and present a “synthesis of what is remembered and what is seen.” With its rush of line and color, it encapsulates one of Futurism’s most influential artistic philosophies, which was

declared in the first manifesto by Marinetti: that “Time and Space died yesterday.”

### Triptych of movement

*The Farewells*—the central canvas in the triptych—captures the chaos of departure at a train station. The left-hand canvas, *Those Who Go*, expresses the “loneliness, anguish, and dazed confusion” of departing passengers. Powerful diagonals of black, lavender blue, and green blur the division between foreground and background and suggest the violence of speed taking travelers away from their loved ones. Their heads are seen in fragmented form from a number of different angles at once. Glimpses of houses and landscape flash by at the top of the canvas. The final part of the triptych, *Those Who Stay*, conveys the melancholy of those who have been left behind, “their infinite sadness dragging everything down toward the earth.”

The painting was shown as part of a European tour of Futurist art that took place between 1912 and 1913, which caused predictable uproar in the art establishment.

Futurism’s shock waves quickly spread across Europe, causing ripples in France, Britain, and Russia, and its avant-garde ideas were embraced by the Vorticists and the Rayonists. ■

#### States of Mind: The Farewells

shows clouds of steam, embracing couples, and movement as a train pulls away.



### Umberto Boccioni

Umberto Boccioni was born in Reggio Calabria, Italy, in 1882, but his family moved often because of his father’s work as a civil servant. After graduation, Boccioni studied at Rome’s Academy of Fine Art, and began work as a commercial artist. In Rome, he met Giacomo Balla and Gino Severini, who introduced him to the Divisionist style of painting, in which forms are broken down into small dots of paint—a technique he used in his early works. Following stays in Paris and Russia, Boccioni moved to Milan in 1907, where he became closely involved with the nascent Futurist movement, and contributed greatly to its theories. Like his fellow Futurists, Boccioni welcomed the outbreak of World War I and volunteered for duty. However, he was killed during training in 1916 and never saw combat.

#### Other key works

1910 *The City Rises*

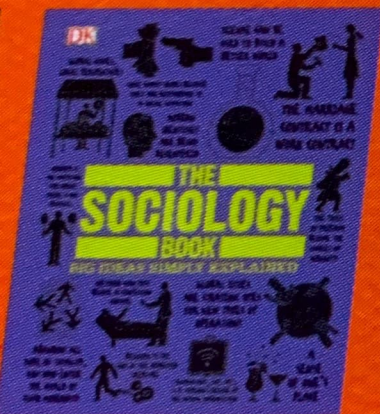
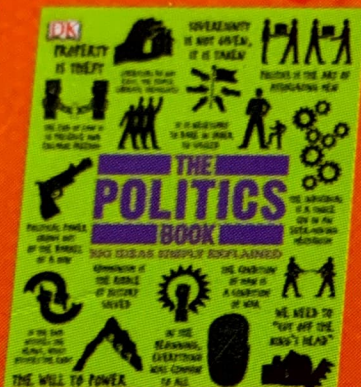
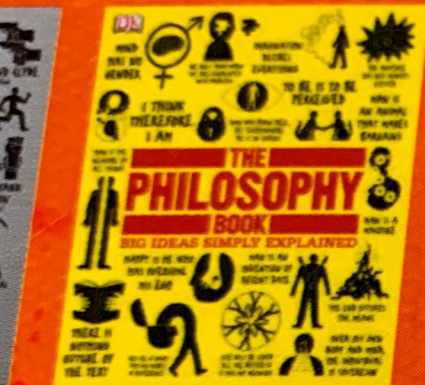
1910 *Dynamism of a Cyclist*

1911 *The Street Enters the House*

1912–13 *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*







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\$25.00 USA

\$32.00 Canada

ISBN 978-1-4654-5337-2

Printed in China



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