

Night Journey 72: *Shelter From the Storm: Kak/Like*

In his costumed self-portrait, Kazimir Malevich symbolically cast himself as the spiritual leader of the new world vision of art he helped to create. With its reliance upon the suggestive impressions created solely by the fundamental elements of art, his reductionist aesthetic helped visual art evolve from a dependence upon representational and figurative narratives to a more direct experience of art through abstraction.

The abstractionists' intent was to expand the visual narrative of art by reducing the means of expression to art's basic elements - line, shape, and color, which form the common foundational language of all visual art. Though it may be expressed differently, all artists speak the same common language in visual art. Artists are not bound by nationality or religion, but by the spiritually nurturing source-language they openly share, to teach and learn from each other and, idealistically, to help bind humanity closer together.

NJ 72 is comprised of two figurative symbols and three basic abstract element symbols. In theosophy, the square and red are symbols for the earthly, the triangle and yellow represent the spiritual, and the circle and blue represent the eternal. Black and white is interpreted as representing duality. The renowned artist and teacher Malevich has been placed in the position of the spiritual visionary, and the figurative symbol, nobody, is placed in the position of an earthly bound learner. Both figures are connected by the eternal elements of art and their common acceptance of the spiritual in art.

“Kak,” which appears in the painting's title, is Russian for the English word “like.” With humans, a bond is not possible without “liking.” The painting is intended to express a communion that's bond is stronger than the artificial separation of nationally imposed barriers.