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Allan Doig

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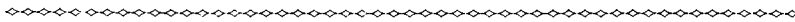
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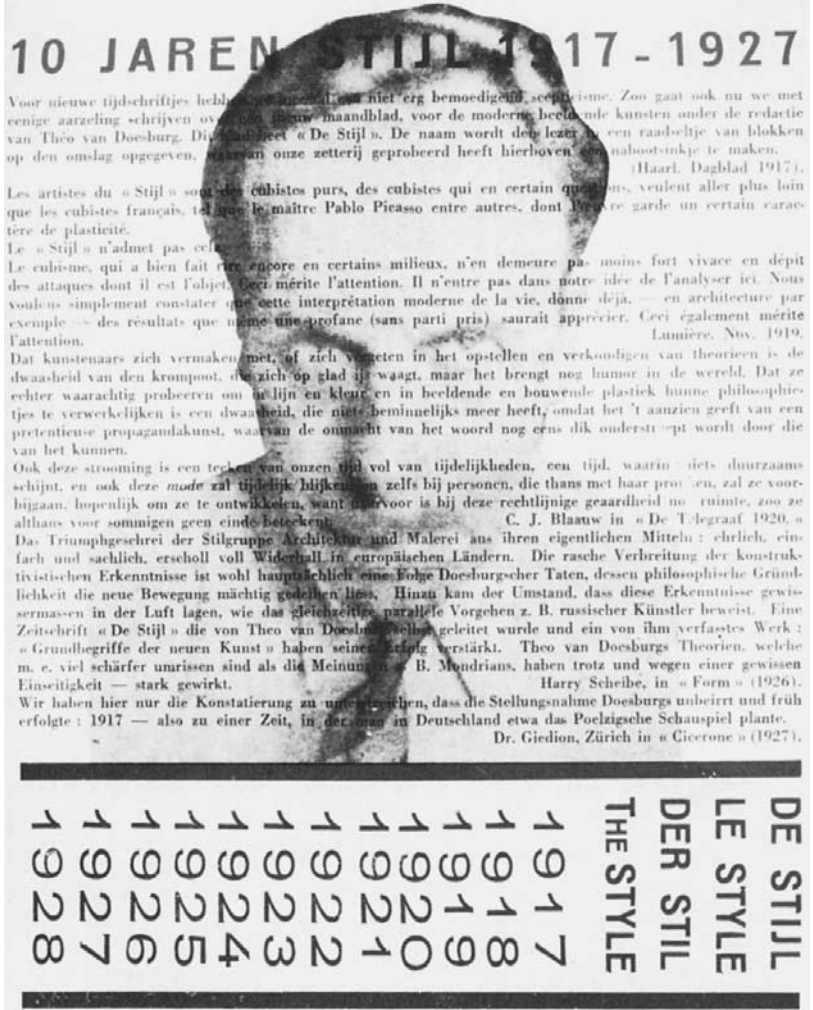
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To my parents

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(Frontispiece) Photograph of Van Doesburg on the cover of the Jubilee issue of *De Stijl*, nos 79-84 (1927)



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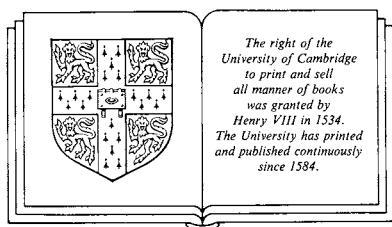
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Preface

Until about 1923 the magazine *De Stijl* was the clearing-house for the theoretical work of the group De Stijl. As the editor, Van Doesburg was the central political figure and guardian of the party line. By 1925, with the departure of Mondrian, the last faithful member, the journal became Van Doesburg's private statement of principles. One of those basic principles, which had been maintained since the foundation of the group, was the fundamental unity of all the arts and the realisation of that unity in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. This principle had led Van Doesburg increasingly towards the practice of architecture, and it is the history of that development that I wish to reconstruct here.

The magazine *De Stijl* was intended to be an international point of contact and thus contained articles in English, French, and German as well as Dutch. The artists of the group had various national backgrounds, Dutch, Belgian, Hungarian, and fringe members who were French, German, and Italian. The public and private correspondence naturally shows varying degrees of competence in these languages, which presents problems with quotations. French and German quotations have been kept in the original, and original orthography and grammar have been retained except where it causes confusion. Some of the idiosyncrasies of language actually contribute greatly to the sense, in Dada-influenced writings, for example. Because it is a lesser-known language, all quotations originally in Dutch have been translated. Unless otherwise footnoted, all those translations are my own.

This book in an earlier life was my doctoral thesis of the same name, submitted in 1981. While being prepared for publication a considerable number of new books and articles appeared, for the most part to mark the centenary, in 1983, of Van Doesburg's birth and I have tried to take account of this material where it affects my argument.

I am greatly indebted to a number of public bodies and individuals for help and encouragement received along the way. The Dutch Ministry of Science and Education provided a scholarship, the Technical University, Delft, a fellowship, and the University of Kent a research grant. Professor Peter King of the Institute of Modern Dutch Studies, Hull, provided endless help and encouragement. Mr Thom Mercuur, Franeker, Friesland, and Mr Dirk Rinsema opened their homes and collections to me, and the late Vicomte de Noailles his villa in Hyères. Joop Joosten

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of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Nederlands Documentatiecentrum voor de Bouwkunst (N.D.B), Amsterdam, Wouter van der Horst, It Bleekerhûs Museum, Drachten, Friesland, the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and the Musée d'Art Modern, Strasbourg, have all been extremely helpful, and above all I wish to thank Jean Leering and Wies Leering-van Moorsel, the heirs of Mrs Nelly van Doesburg. The Van Doesburg Collection and Archive have been bequeathed by the Leerings to the Dutch State and are administered as the Schenking Van Moorsel by the Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, who gave me the opportunity of cataloguing the collection itself. At the R.B.K. Drs Robert de Haas, Evert van Straaten, and Marianne Kentie were all very generous with their help.

Further, the production of the thesis was facilitated by the extremely efficient typing and proof-reading of Dr and Mrs J. T. Grantham and Dr P. J. Ford. Many thanks are also due to William Davies and Margaret Sharman of Cambridge University Press for their patience and meticulous care. For that I am most grateful and wish to stress the fact that any mistakes in the text are entirely my own. I should like to thank Dr Stephen Bann for his support, encouragement, and many helpful suggestions throughout my research. I sincerely hope that the result proves worthy of all this help.

For all these great debts there is still one more, the largest of all, and that is to my wife Belinda. The final transformation of thesis into book was thanks to her.

Canterbury
13 January 1985

ALLAN DOIG