

Dr James Rann**University of Glasgow****Dressing Left: Fashion, Poetry & Revolution
in the Russian Avant-Garde****Monday, 27th January 2020, 5.00pm, ERI, A29**

After exploding onto Russia's literary scene in 1913, the Futurists became famous for experimental modernist poetry, provocative stunts and, latterly, a willingness to conflate their own artistic rebellion with the political revolutions of 1917.

One thread, as yet unpulled, that links these three aspects of Futurist identity was their relationship to costume, clothes and fashion.

This talk will investigate the ways in which key Futurists, like Vladimir Mayakovsky, Velimir Khlebnikov and Aleksei Kruchenykh, used clothes — both in their work and in their lives, both as metaphor and as material — to express their complex identities as poets and their utopian vision for language, culture and humanity itself.



The talk will show what was revolutionary about Futurist fashion not only by locating it in the context of Russian debates about self-identity and temporality, but also by showing its overlaps with and divergences from the clothes discourse of material-minded modernists elsewhere in Europe at its intersection with questions of gender, race and sexuality.

Ultimately, the Futurists dressed not for the job they had — bohemian wordsmiths — but the job they wanted — agents of total eschatological transformation.