



3 tube Hartog Lamp

Gerrit Rietveld

Not on display

Title/Description: 3 tube Hartog Lamp

Artist/Maker: Gerrit Rietveld (Maker)

Born: 1968 c.

Object Type: Furniture, Lamp, Lighting device

Materials: Glass, Wood

Measurements: h. 915 x w. 300 x d. 300 mm

Accession Number: 31222

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: De Bilt, Europe, The Netherlands

School/Style: De Stijl, Modernism

The Hartog Lamp (also called the L 40 Pendant Lamp) was first designed in 1922 by the Dutch furniture designer and architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964), for the consulting room of Dr Hartog. The lamp consists simply of bare tubular light bulbs with a wooden block that is attached at both sides of the tubes suspended from sticks linked to a ceiling plate. This version is composed of three tubular light bulbs, but Rietveld also created versions with four light bulbs. The lamp can be seen as a reflection of some of the ideas that defined the *De Stijl* movement, of which Rietveld was one of the leading exponents from 1919.

Rietveld stripped the traditional forms of a lamp down into simple 'basic' geometric components and put it together again in a new composition that created a new unity, a 'whole' but still accentuating the separate parts. The lamp can be perceived simultaneously both as a complete whole and as assemblage of individual elements. [1] It reflected a view of *De Stijl* which meant an essential ordering of structure in art, furniture, architecture could also function as a sign for an ethical view of society, where the relationship between the individual and collective was important. "The separating out and combining of such elements into new and unusual configurations was a crucial part of the formal vocabulary of *De Stijl*." [2] The simplicity of the lamp also accentuates the possibilities of technology which was important for Rietveld, who investigated new methods of production and new technology in which laid the power of transformation.

The wood fittings were painted in black which created a contrast against the white light bulbs. Black

and white were two of the emblematic tones or colours of the *De Stijl* movement, which also incorporated 'pigment primary' colours – blue, red and yellow – and greys.

The tubular light bulbs were organized vertically and horizontally creating a three-dimensional hanging light sculpture. The use of 'orthogonals' was defining for *De Stijl* and Rietveld examined the interaction of vertical and planes in this lamp in the similar way as he did in other designs and in his architecture. Artists connected to *De Stijl* such as Piet Mondrian also examined the interaction between the same palette of colours and 'orthogonals' extensively.

Therese Wiles, April 2022

[1] Paul Overy. *De Stijl* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 25.

[2] Paul Overy. *De Stijl* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 9.

Further Reading

Colquhoun, Alan. "The Avant-gardes in Holland and Russia" in Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 109-136.

Curtis, William J.R. "Cubism, De Stijl and New Conceptions of Space" in William J.R. Curtis *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (London: Phaidon, 1996), 149-159.

Frampton, Kenneth. "De Stijl: the evolution and dissolution of Neo-Plasticism" in Kenneth Frampton *Modern Architecture – A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 142-148.

Overy, Paul. *De Stijl* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001).

Overy, Paul. "Carpentering the Classic: A Very Peculiar Practice. The Furniture of Gerrit Rietveld" in *Journal of Design History*, 1991, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1991), pp. 135-166
