

Black Square Red Squares Statement

Tom R. Chambers utilizes a transformation tool in GIMP (graphic Arts software) to create "Red Square" configurations/interpretations of Kazimir Malevich's statement - paragraph by paragraph - about Suprematism. The squares intersect, and dance/float about on his "Black Square".

Viewed from afar, the series of images tend to repeat themselves, but upon close inspection, they vary greatly just as each paragraph within the statement holds/conveys different meanings.

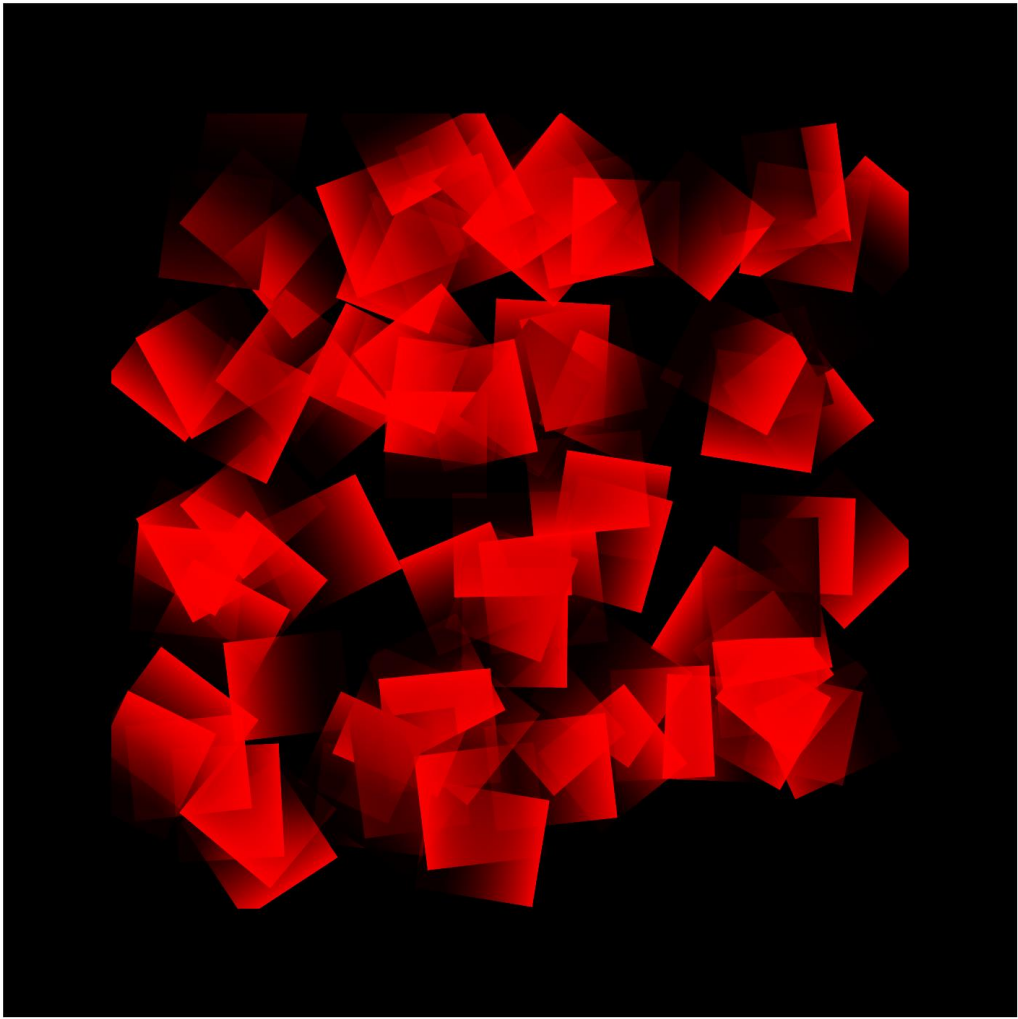
Malevich was a Russian avant-garde artist and art theorist, whose pioneering work and writing had a profound influence on the development of non-objective, or abstract art, in the 20th century. His concept of Suprematism sought to develop a form of expression that moved as far as possible from the world of natural forms (objectivity) and subject matter in order to access "the supremacy of pure feeling" and spirituality. (Wp)

In 1915, Malevich laid down the foundations of Suprematism. He exhibited his first "Black Square" at the Last Futurist Exhibition 0,10 in Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) in 1915. A black square placed against the sun appeared for the first time in the 1913 scenic designs for the Futurist opera, "Victory over the Sun". (Wp)

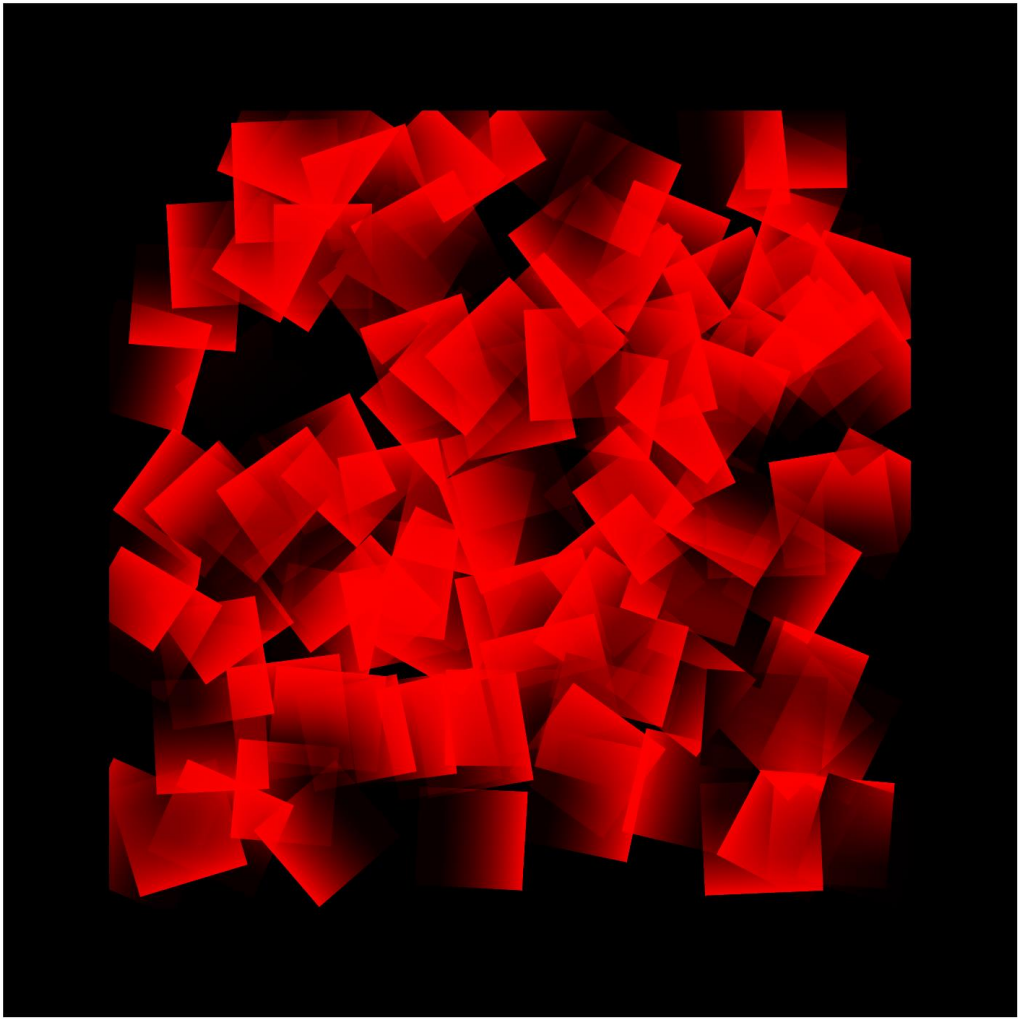
Malevich also created his "Red Square" (originally known as "Painterly Realism of a Peasant Woman in Two Dimensions") in 1915. He saw the painting as a representation of his ability to go further into the unknown of life and his spiritual feelings. (kazimirmalevich.org)

Chambers considers this series of "Black Square" comprising "Red Square"(s) as an abstraction of his statement - Neo-Suprematism.

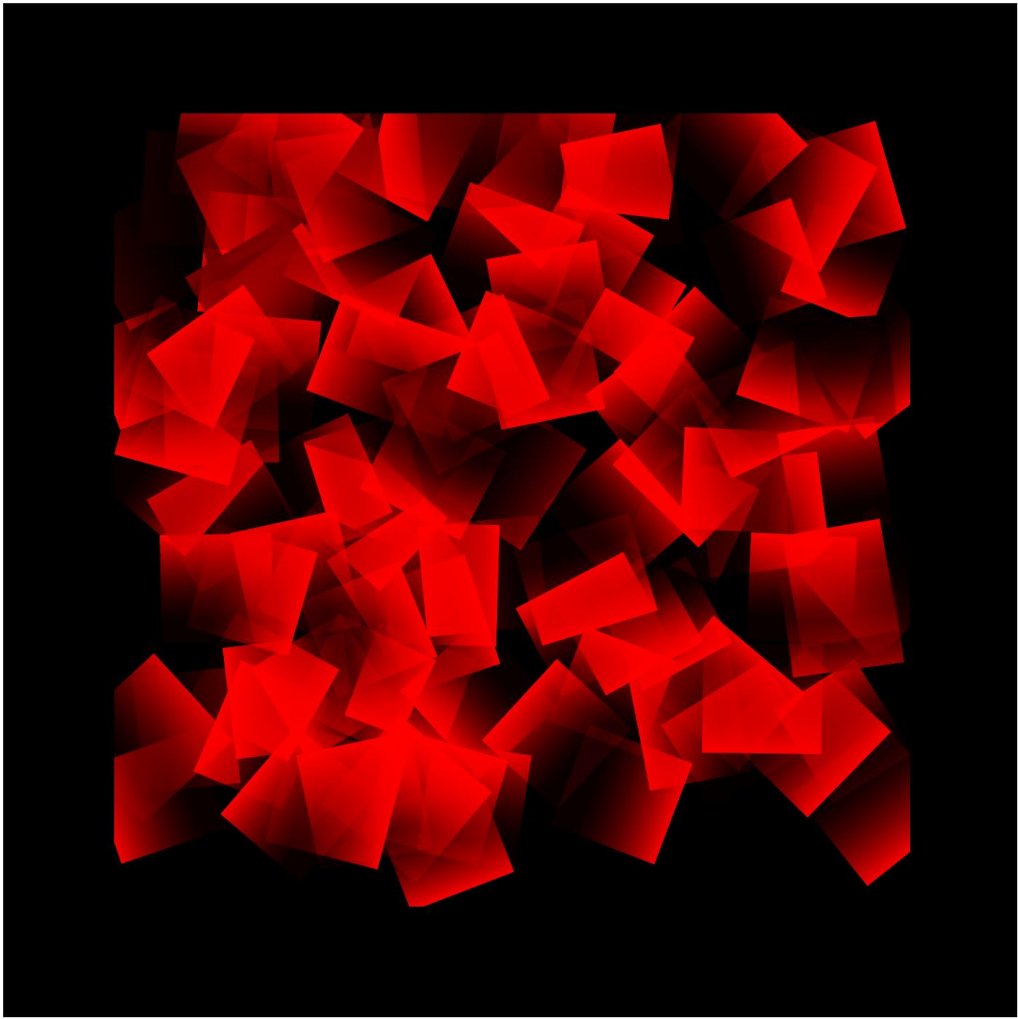
"Under Suprematism I understand the supremacy of pure feeling in creative art. To the Suprematist the visual phenomena of the objective world are, in themselves, meaningless; the significant thing is feeling, as such, quite apart from the environment in which it is called forth. The so called "materialization" of a feeling in the conscious mind really means a materialization of the reflection of that feeling through the medium of some realistic conception. Such a realistic conception is without value in Suprematist art - and not only in Suprematist art, but in art generally, because the enduring, true value of a work of art (to whatever school it may belong) resides solely in the feeling expressed."



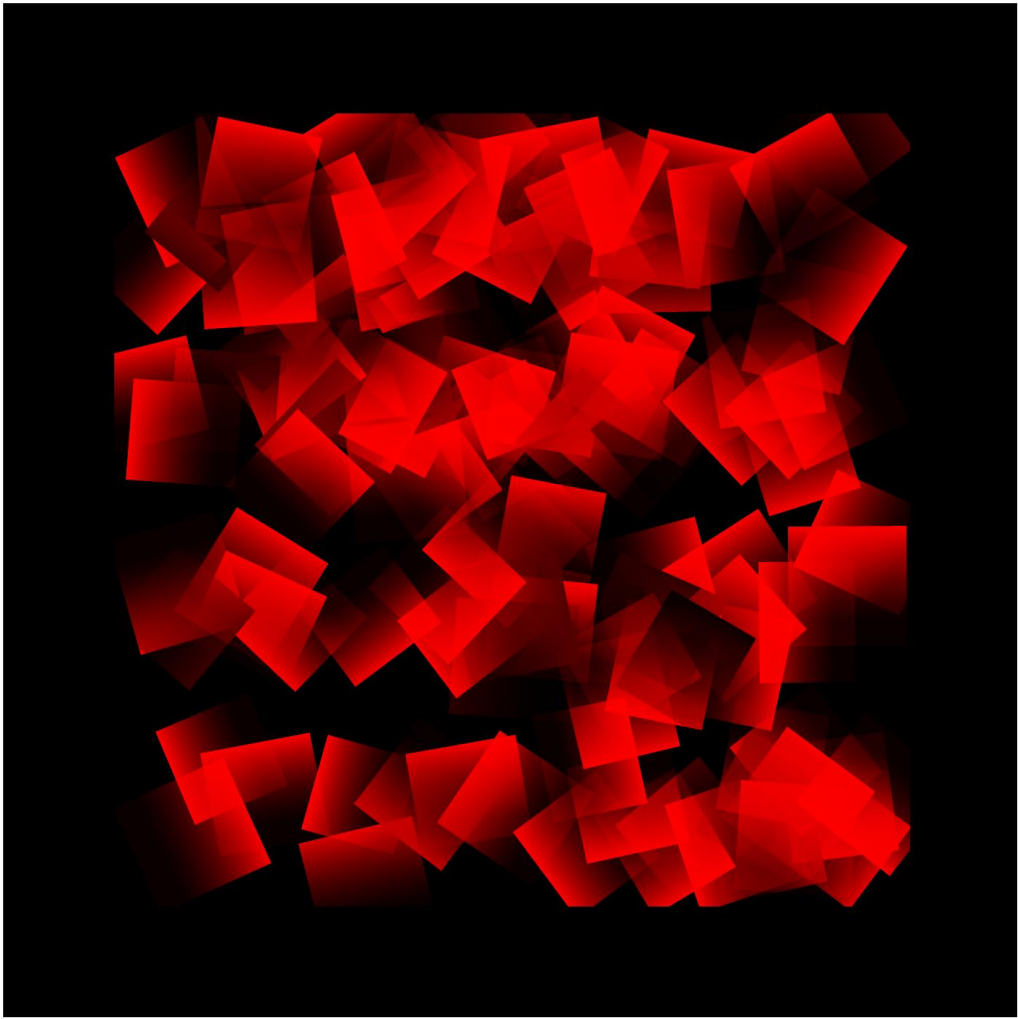
"Academic naturalism, the naturalism of the Impressionists, Cezanneism, Cubism, etc. - all these, in a way - are nothing more than dialectic methods which, as such, in no sense determine the true value of an art work. An objective representation, having objectivity as its aim, is something which, as such, has nothing to do with art, and yet the use of objective forms in an art work does not preclude the possibility of its being of high artistic value."



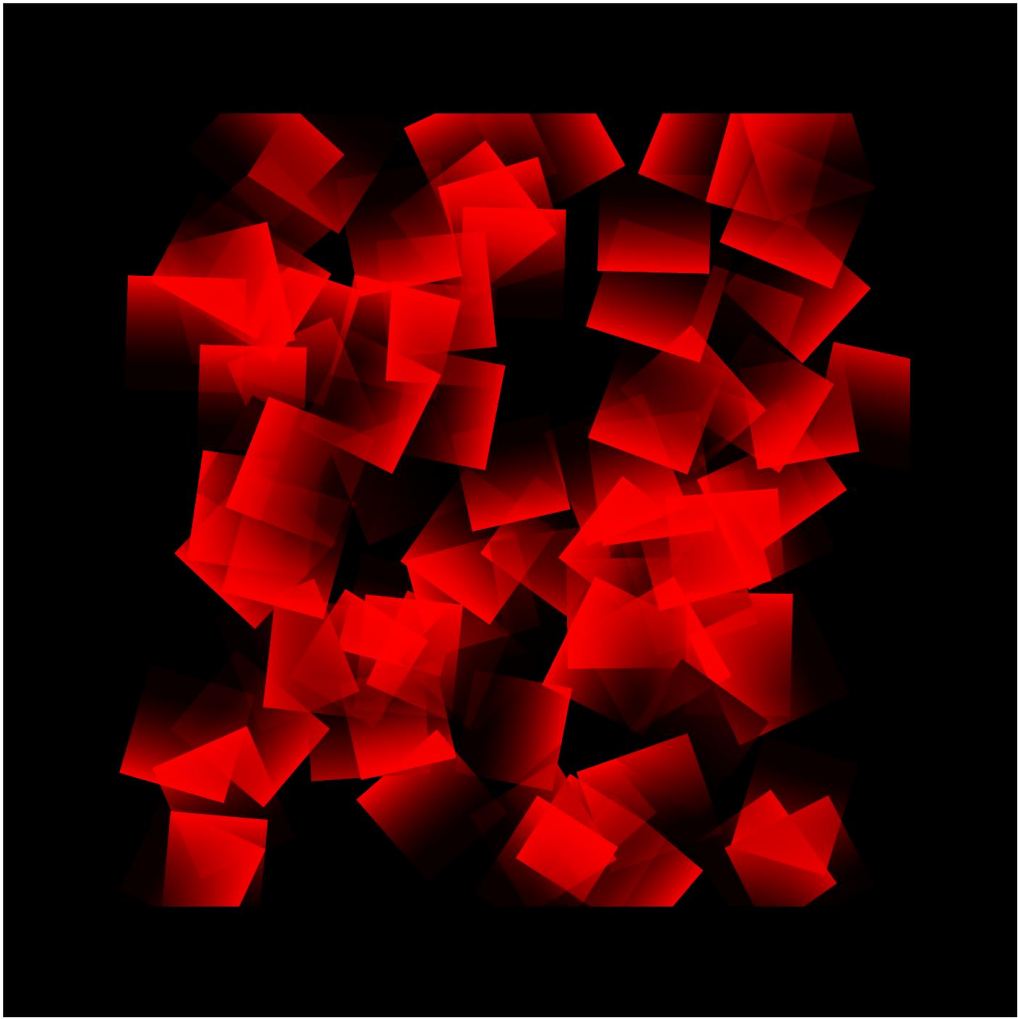
"Hence, to the Suprematist, the appropriate means of representation is always the one which gives fullest possible expression to feeling as such and which ignores the familiar appearance of objects. Objectivity, in itself, is meaningless to him; the concepts of the conscious mind are worthless. Feeling is the determining factor - and thus art arrives at non-objective representation at Suprematism. It reaches a 'desert' in which nothing can be perceived but feeling."



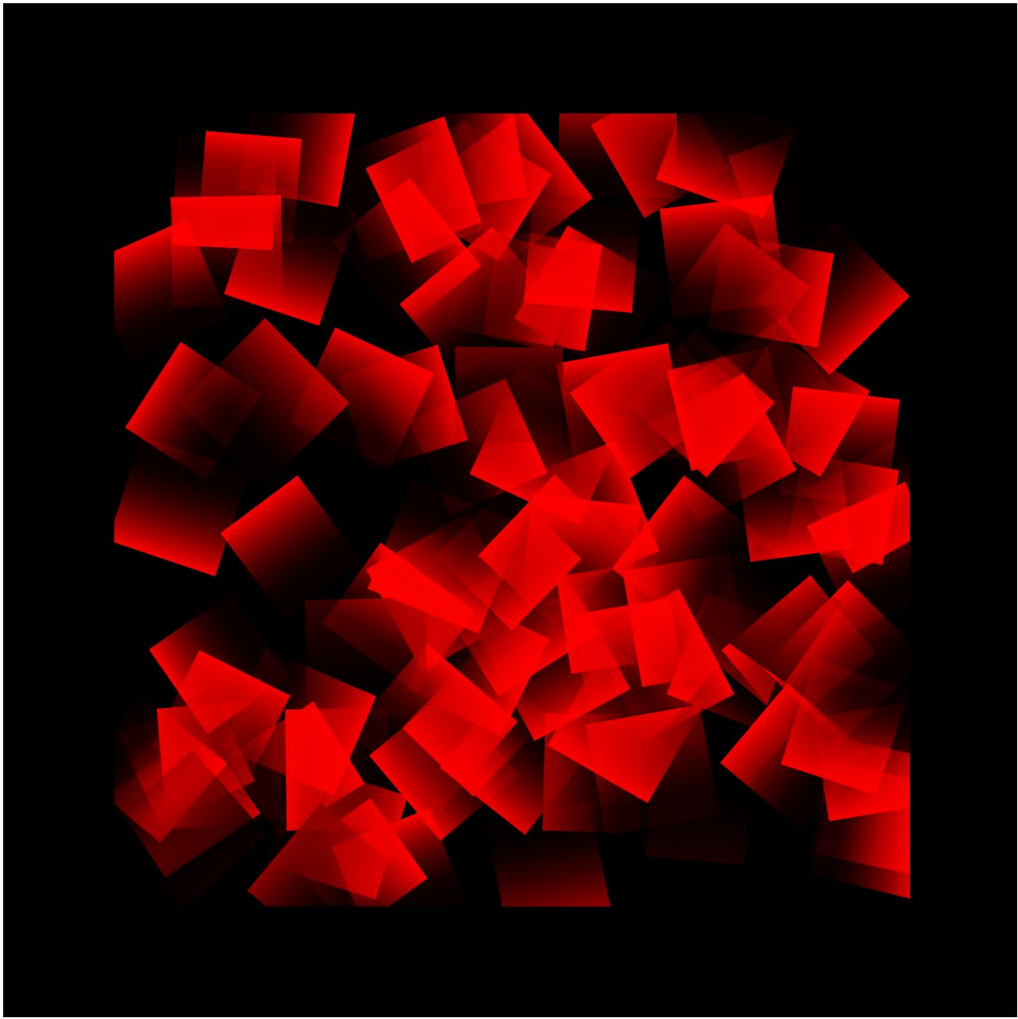
"Everything which determined the objective ideal structure of life and of 'art' ideas, concepts, and images - all this the artist has cast aside in order to heed pure feeling. The art of the past which stood, at least ostensibly, in the service of religion and the state, will take on new life in the pure (unapplied) art of Suprematism, which will build up a new world, the world of feeling - when, in the year 1915, in my desperate attempt to free art from the ballast of objectivity, I took refuge in the square form and exhibited a picture which consisted of nothing more than a black square on a white field, the critics and, along with them, the public sighed - Everything which we loved is lost. We are in a desert. Before us is nothing but a black square on a white background!"



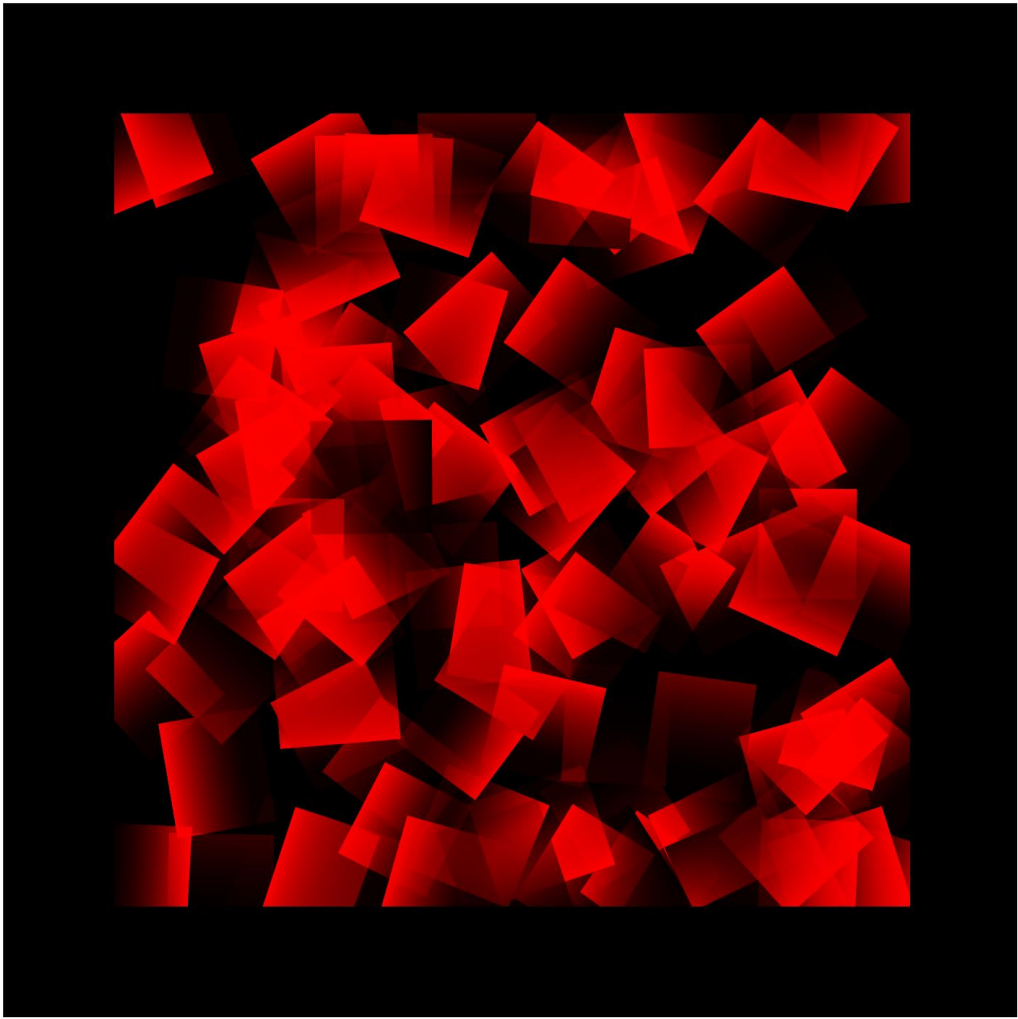
"Withering words were sought to drive off the symbol of the 'desert' so that one might behold on the 'dead square', the beloved likeness of 'reality' ('true objectivity' and a spiritual feeling). The square seemed incomprehensible and dangerous to the critics and the public - and this, of course, was to be expected."



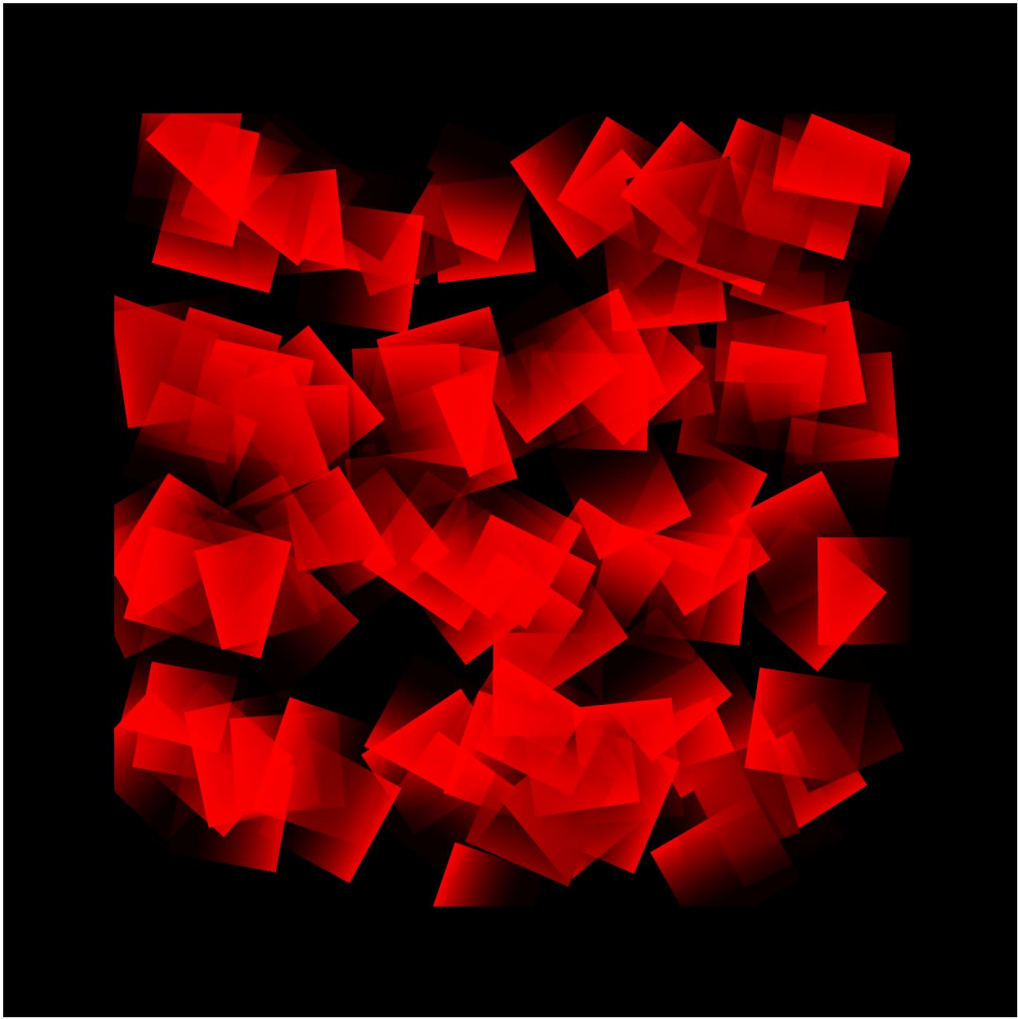
"The ascent to the heights of non-objective art is arduous and painful - but it is nevertheless rewarding. The familiar recedes ever further and further into the background - the contours of the objective world fade more and more, and so it goes, step by step, until finally the world - everything we loved and by which we have lived - becomes lost to sight. No more 'likenesses of reality', no idealistic images, nothing but a desert! But this desert is filled with the spirit of non-objective sensation which pervades everything."



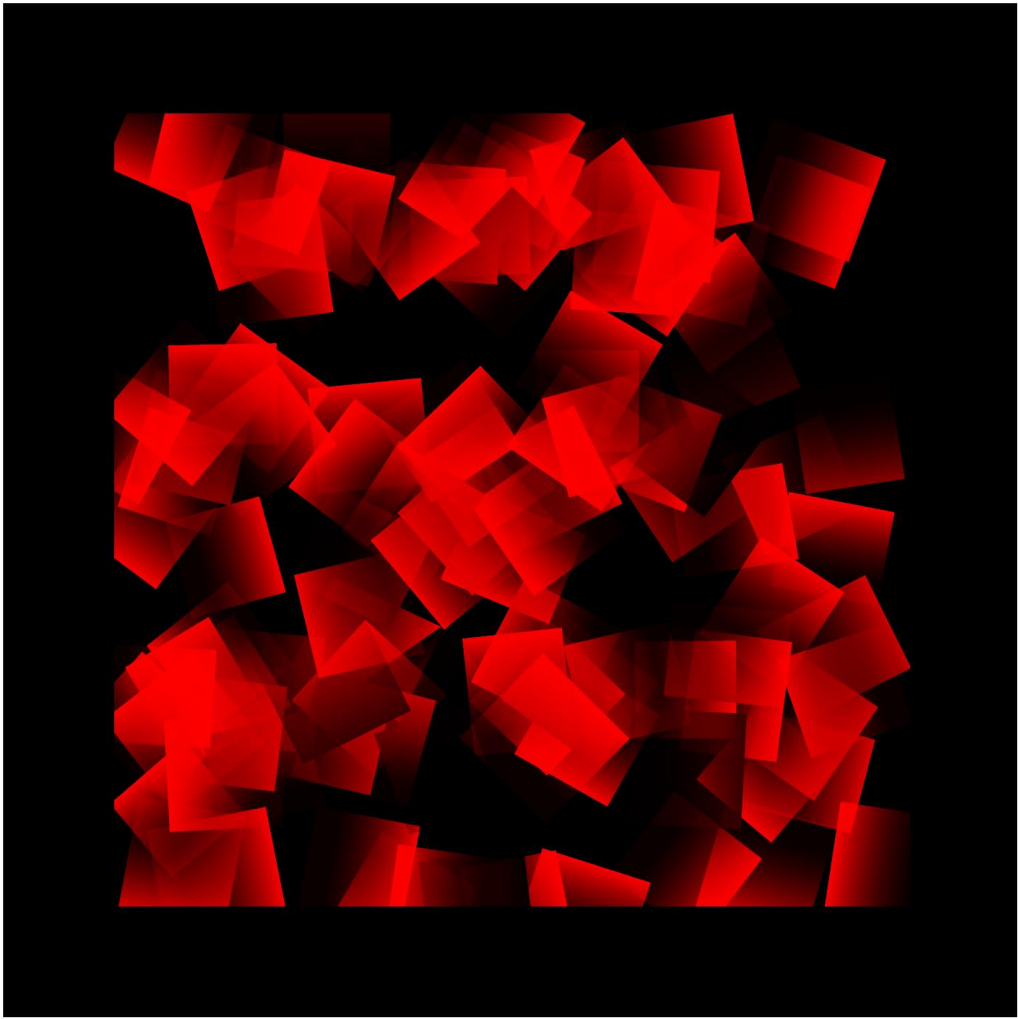
“Even I was gripped by a kind of timidity bordering on fear when it came to leaving ‘the world of will and idea’ in which I had lived and worked and in the reality of which I had believed. But a blissful sense of liberating non-objectivity drew me forth into the ‘desert’ where nothing is real except feeling - and so feeling became the substance of my life. This was no ‘empty square’ which I had exhibited, but rather the feeling of non-objectivity. I realized that the ‘thing’ and the ‘concept’ were substituted for feeling and understood the falsity of the world of will and idea. Is a milk bottle, then, the symbol of milk?”



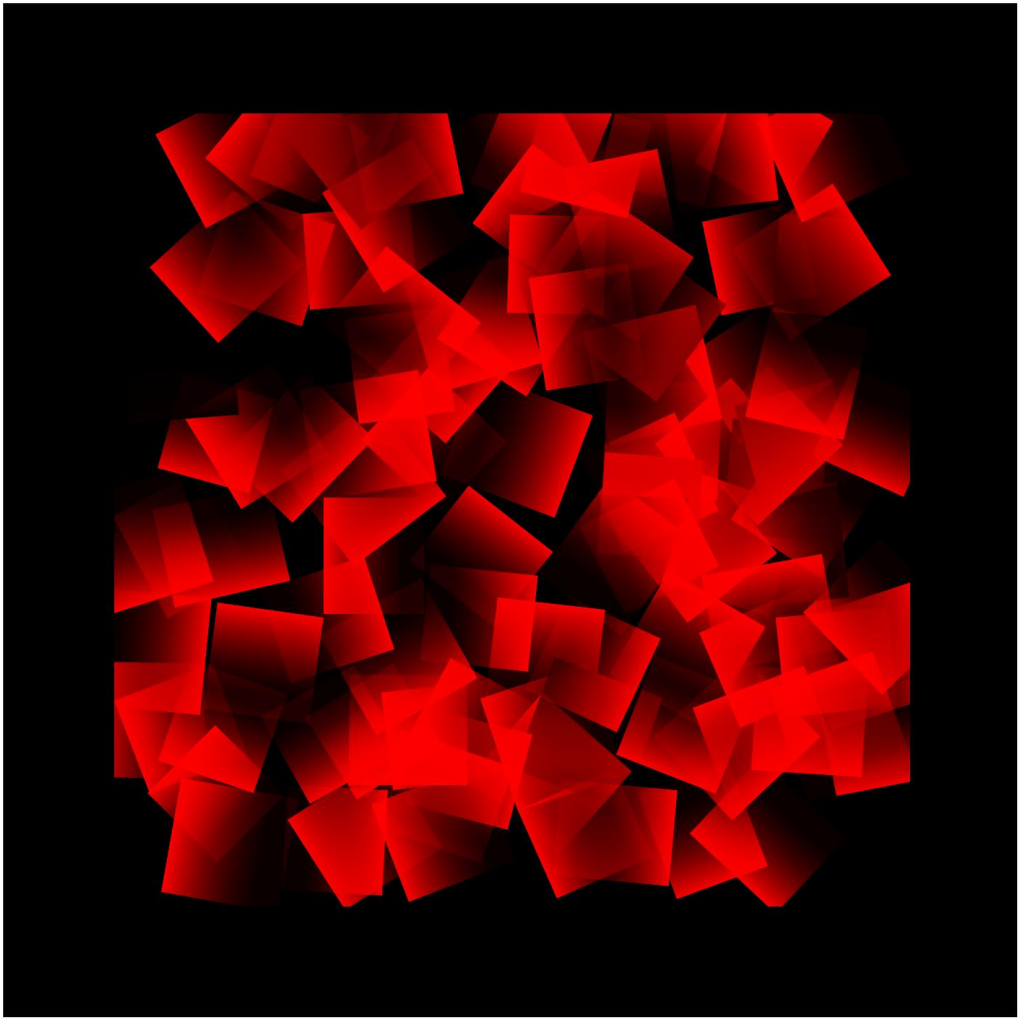
"Suprematism is the rediscovery of pure art which, in the course of time, had become obscured by the accumulation of 'things'. It appears to me that, for the critics and the public, the painting of Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, etc., has become nothing more than a conglomeration of countless 'things' which conceal its true value - the feeling which gave rise to it. The virtuosity of the objective representation is the only thing admired. If it were possible to extract from the works of the great masters the feeling expressed in them the actual artistic value, that is and to hide this away, the public, along with the critics and the art scholars, would never even miss it. So it is not at all strange that my square seemed empty to the public."



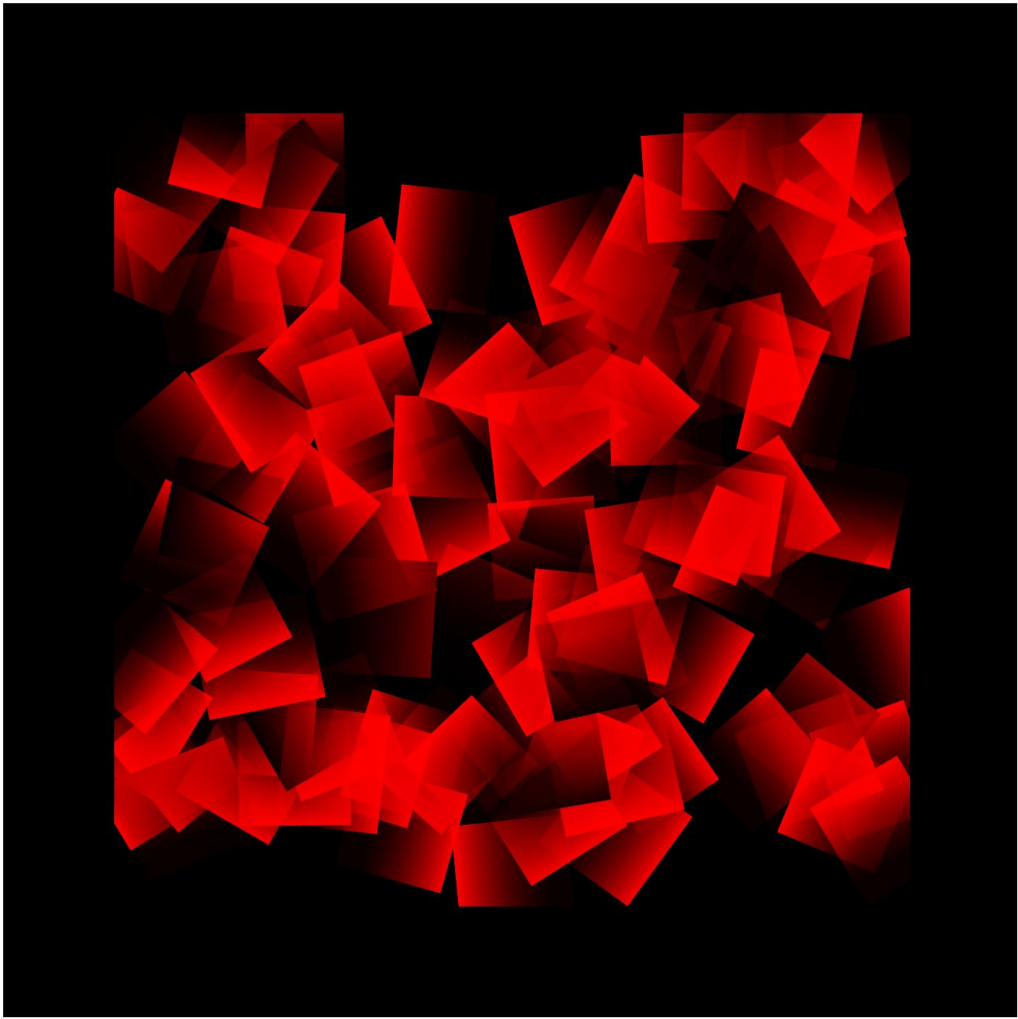
"If one insists on judging an art work on the basis of the virtuosity of the objective representation the verisimilitude of the illusion and thinks he sees in the objective representation itself a symbol of the inducing emotion, he will never partake of the gladdening content of a work of art. The general public is still convinced today that art is bound to perish if it gives up the imitation of 'dearly loved reality', and so it observes with dismay how the hated element of pure feeling abstraction makes more and more headway. Art no longer cares to serve the state and religion, it no longer wishes to illustrate the history of manners, it wants to have nothing further to do with the object, as such, and believes that it can exist, in and for itself, without 'things' (that is, the 'time tested well spring of life')."



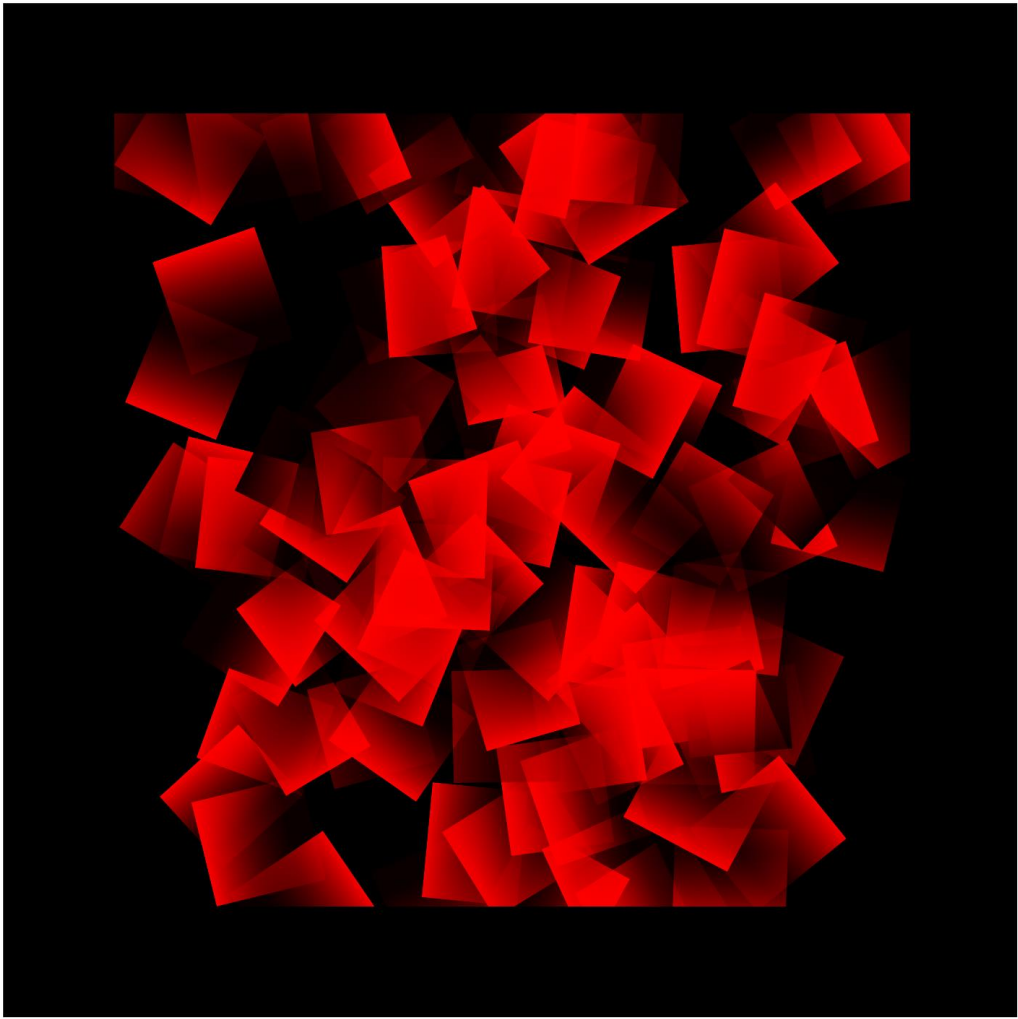
"But the nature and meaning of artistic creation continue to be misunderstood, as does the nature of creative work in general, because feeling, after all, is always and everywhere the one and only source of every creation. The emotions which are kindled in the human being are stronger than the human being himself - they must at all costs find an outlet, they must take on overt form, they must be communicated, or put to work."



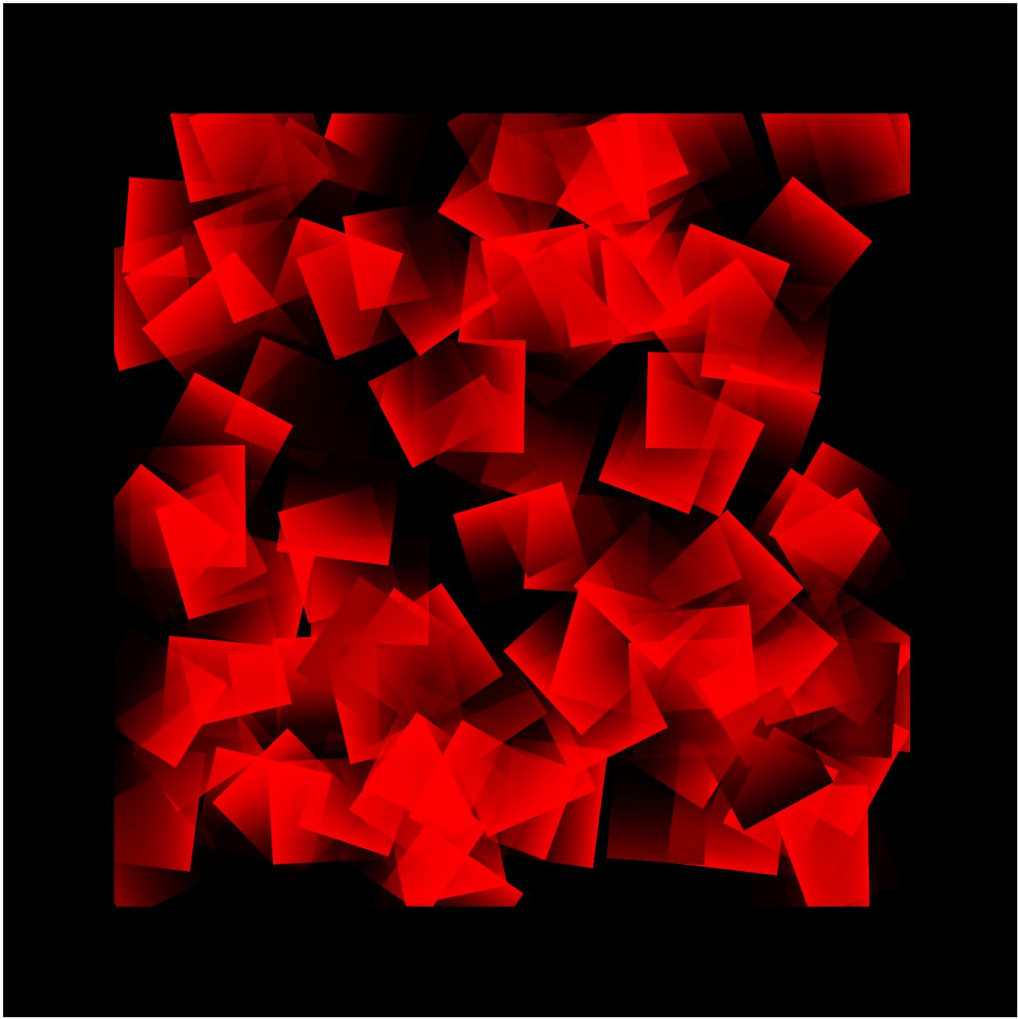
"It was nothing other than a yearning for speed - for flight - which seeking an outward shape, brought about the birth of the airplane. For the airplane was not contrived in order to carry business letters from Berlin to Moscow, but rather in obedience to the irresistible drive of this yearning for speed to take on external form. The 'hungry stomach' and the intellect which serves this must always have the last word, of course, when it comes to determining the origin and purpose of existing values - but that is a subject in itself."



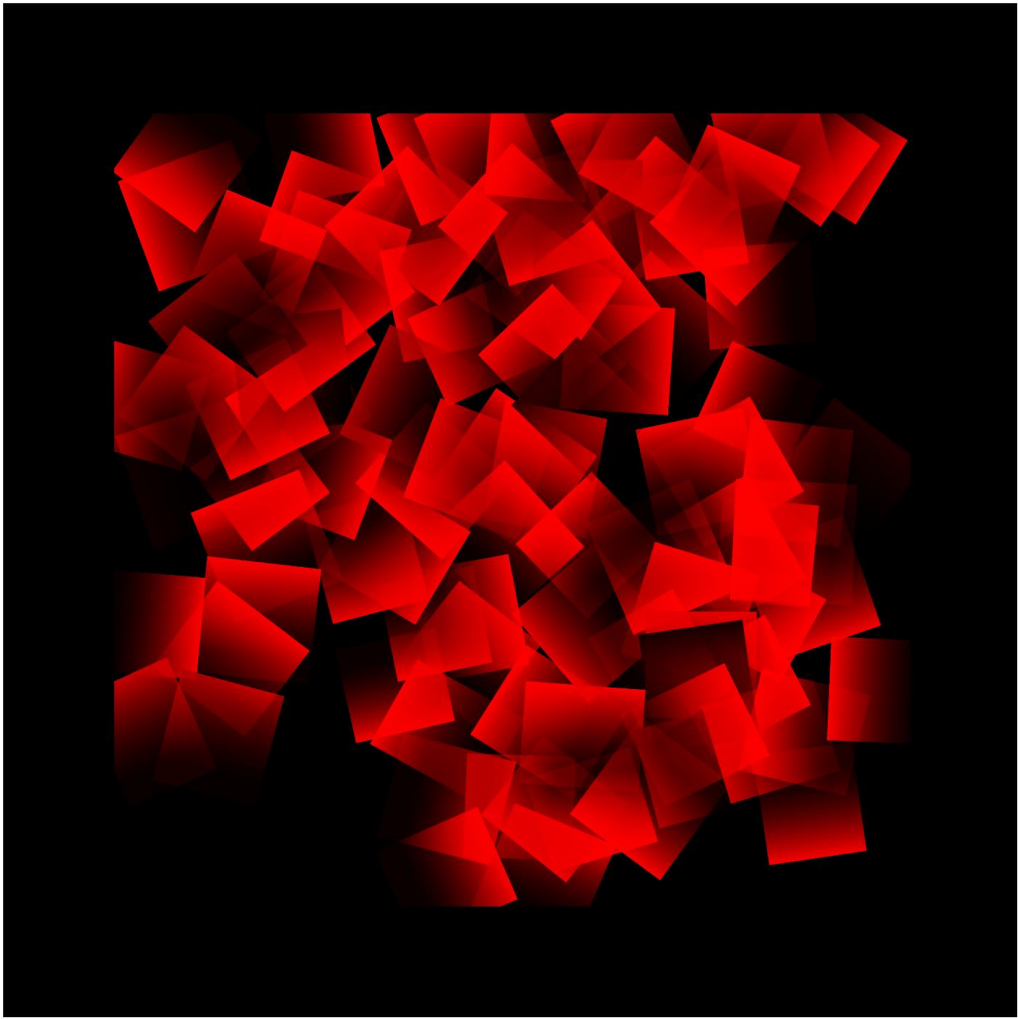
"And the state of affairs is exactly the same in art as in creative technology. In painting (I mean here, naturally, the accepted 'artistic' painting.), one can discover behind a technically correct portrait of Mr. Miller or an ingenious representation of the flower girl at Potsdamer Platz not a trace of the true essence of art, no evidence whatever of feeling. Painting is the dictatorship of a method of representation, the purpose of which is to depict Mr. Miller, his environment, and his ideas."



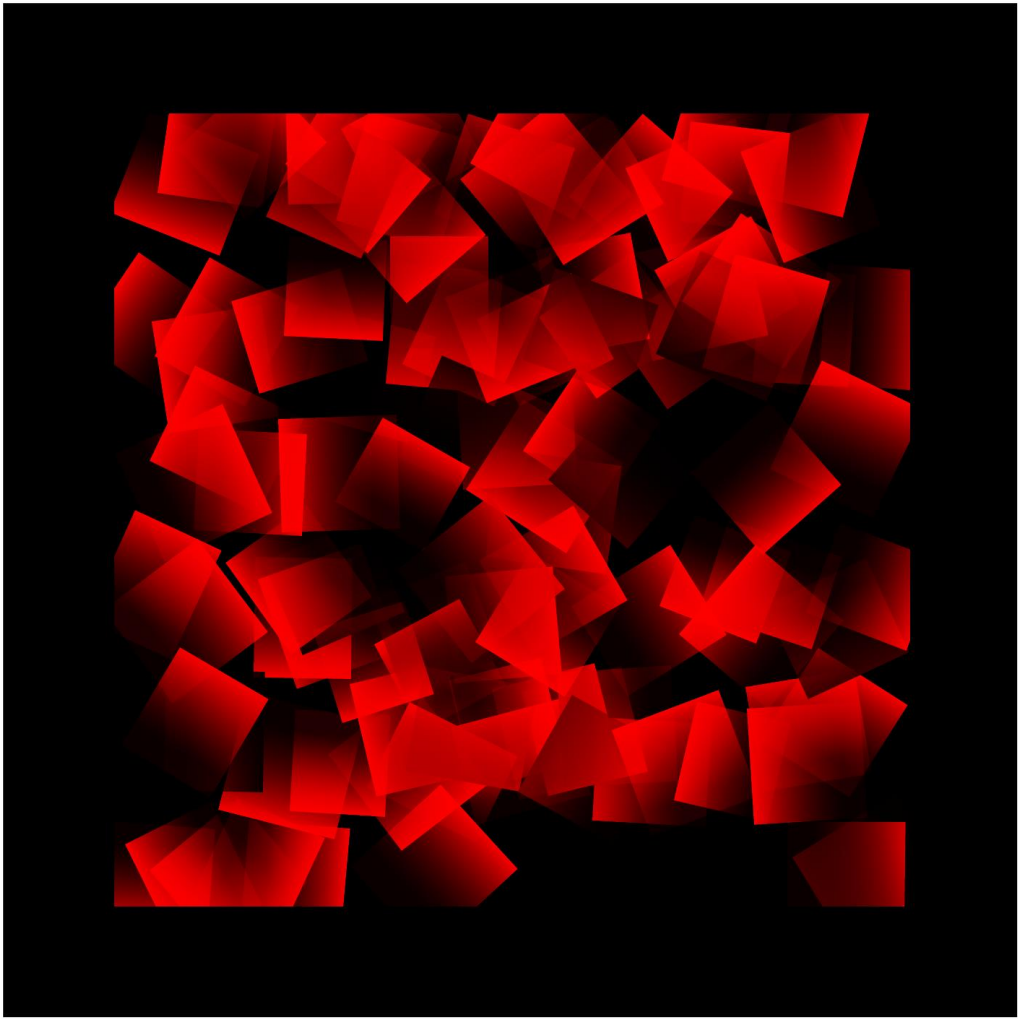
"The black square on the white field was the first form in which non-objective feeling came to be expressed. The square equals feeling, the white field equals the void beyond this feeling. Yet the general public saw in the non-objectivity of the representation the demise of art and failed to grasp the evident fact that feeling had here assumed external form. The Suprematist square and the forms proceeding out of it can be likened to the primitive marks (symbols) of aboriginal man which represented, in their combinations, not ornament but a feeling of rhythm."



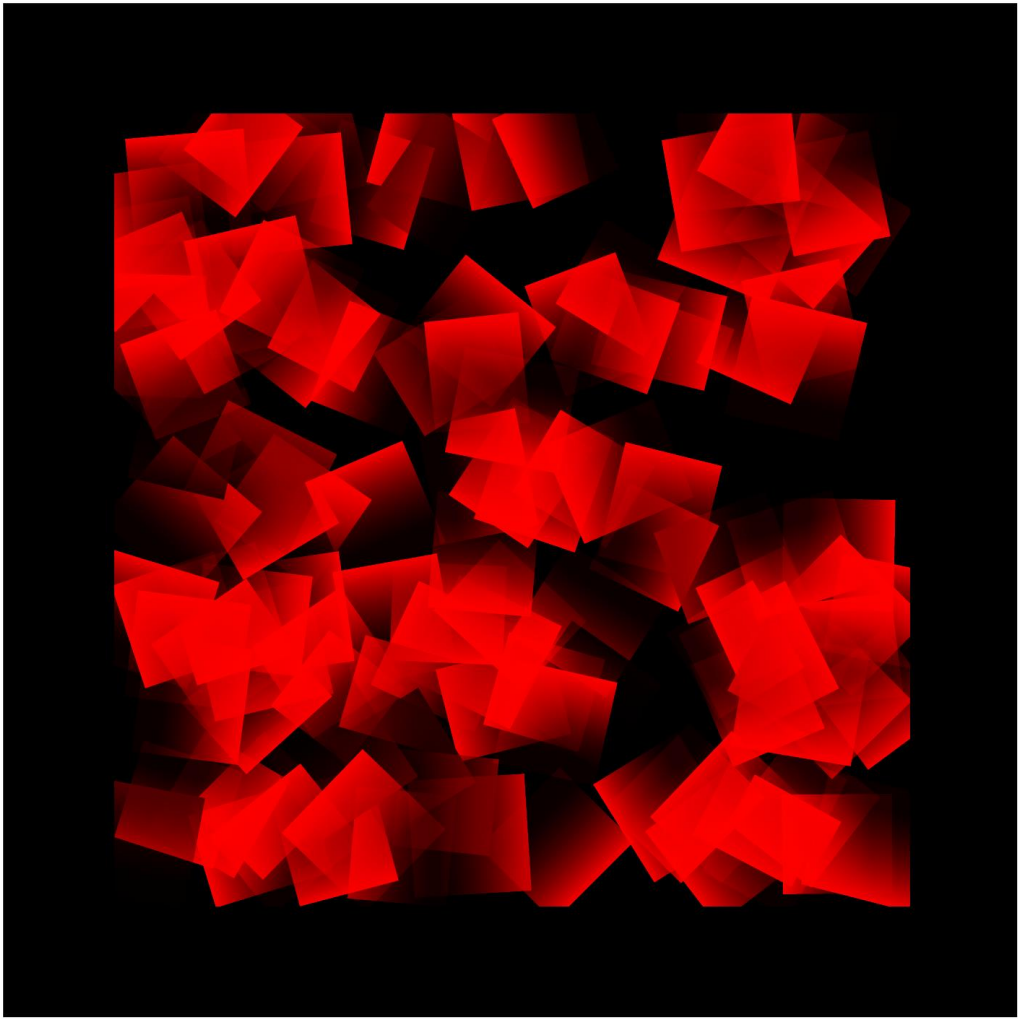
"Suprematism did not bring into being a new world of feeling, but rather, an altogether new and direct form of representation of the world of feeling. The square changes and creates new forms, the elements of which can be classified in one way or another depending upon the feeling which gave rise to them."



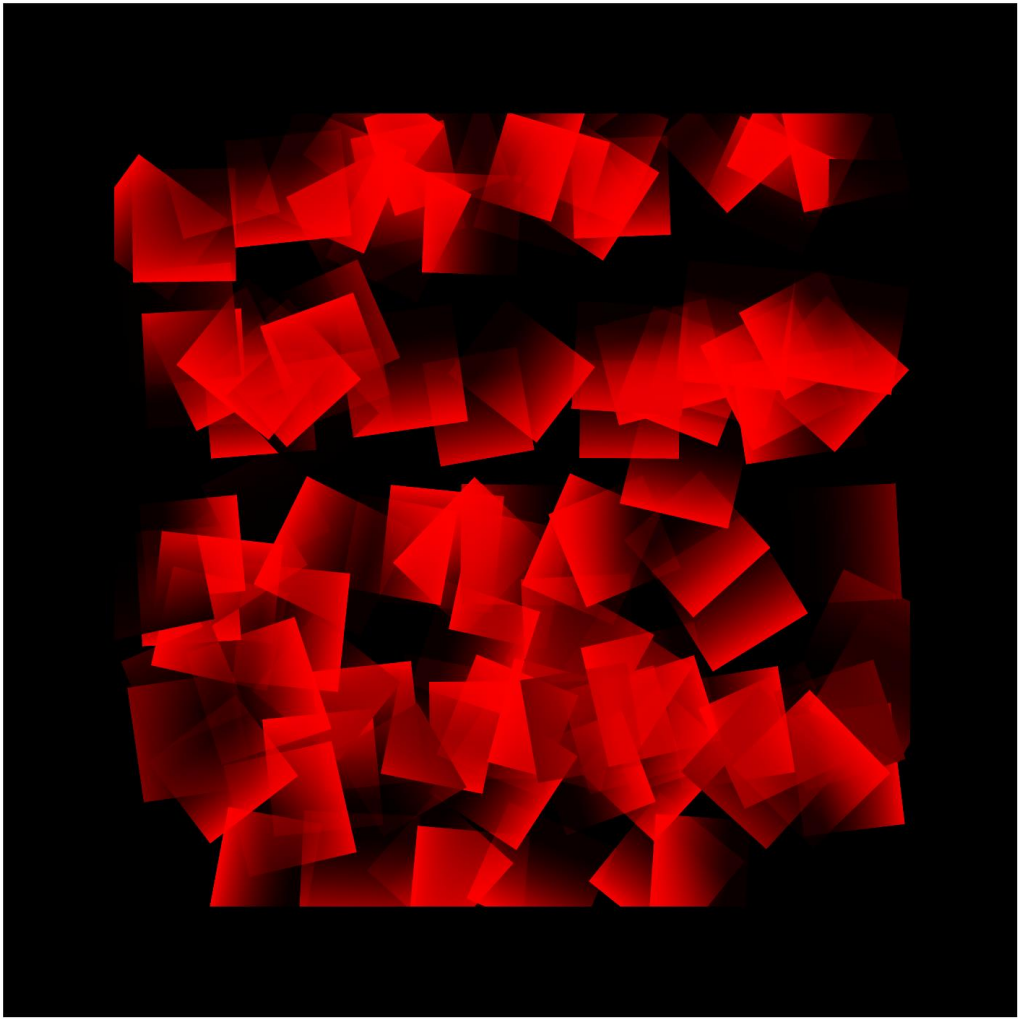
"When we examine an antique column, we are no longer interested in the fitness of its construction to perform its technical task in the building but recognize in it the material expression of a pure feeling. We no longer see in it a structural necessity but view it as a work of art in its own right. 'Practical life', like a homeless vagabond, forces its way into every artistic form and believes itself to be the genesis and reason for existence of this form. But the vagabond doesn't tarry long in one place and once he is gone (when to make an art work serve 'practical purposes' no longer seems practical) the work recovers its full value."



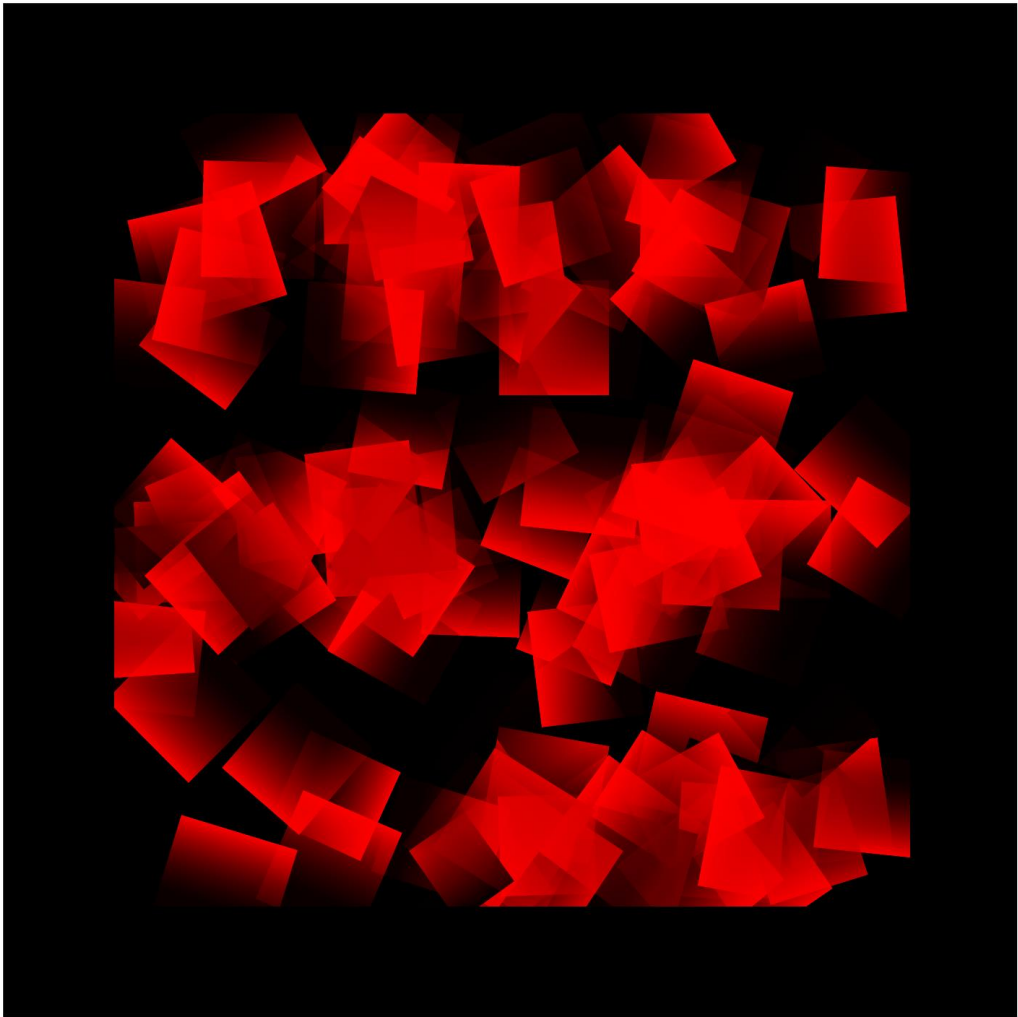
"Antique works of art are kept in museums and carefully guarded, not to preserve them for practical use but in order that their eternal artistry may be enjoyed. The difference between the new, non-objective ('useless') art and the art of the past lies in the fact that the full artistic value of the latter comes to light (becomes recognized) only after life, in search of some new expedient, has forsaken it, whereas the unapplied artistic element of the new art outstrips life and shuts the door on 'practical utility'. And so there the new non-objective art stands the expression of pure feeling, seeking no practical values, no ideas, no promised land."



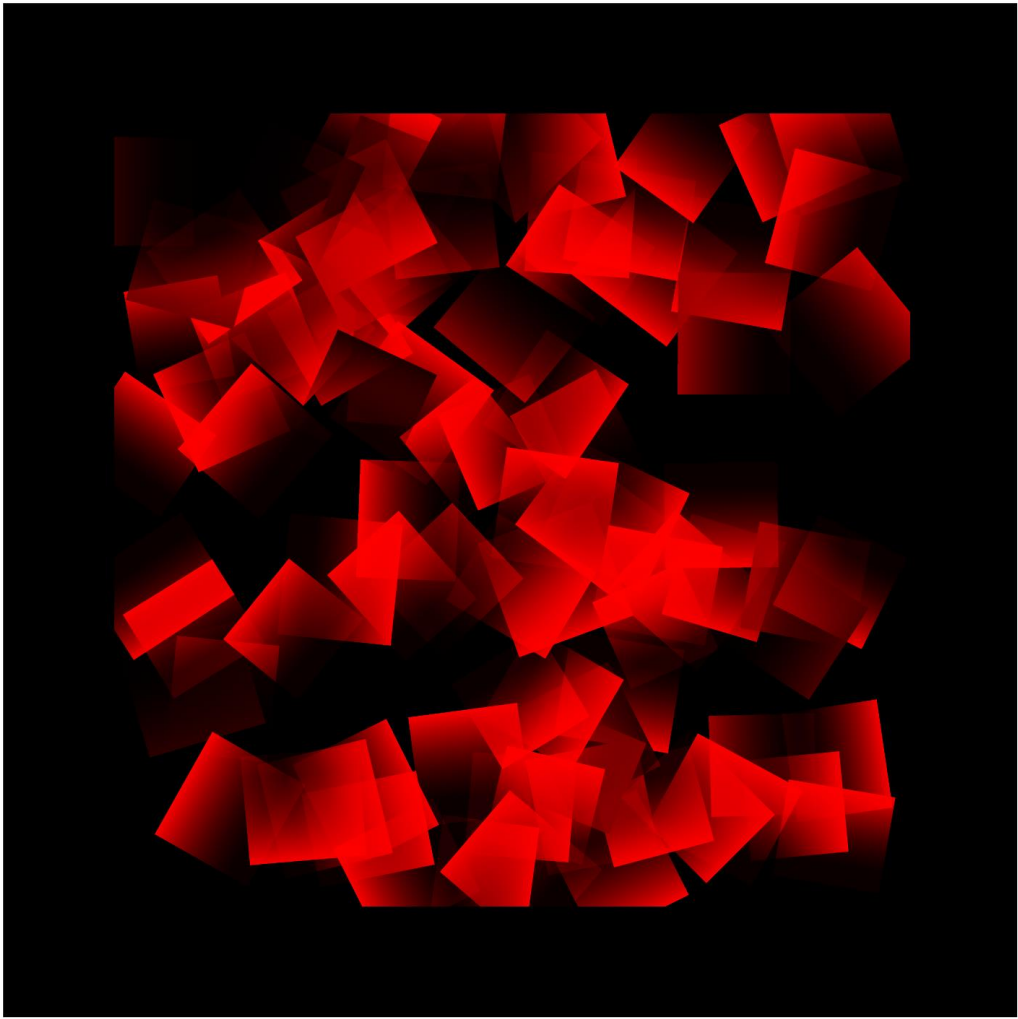
"The Suprematists have deliberately given up objective representation of their surroundings in order to reach the summit of the true 'unmasked' art and from this vantage point to view life through the prism of pure artistic feeling. Nothing in the objective world is as 'secure and unshakeable' as it appears to our conscious minds. We should accept nothing as predetermined as constituted for eternity. Every 'firmly established', familiar thing can be shifted about and brought under a new and, primarily, unfamiliar order. Why then should it not be possible to bring about an artistic order? Our life is a theater piece, in which non-objective feeling is portrayed by objective imagery."



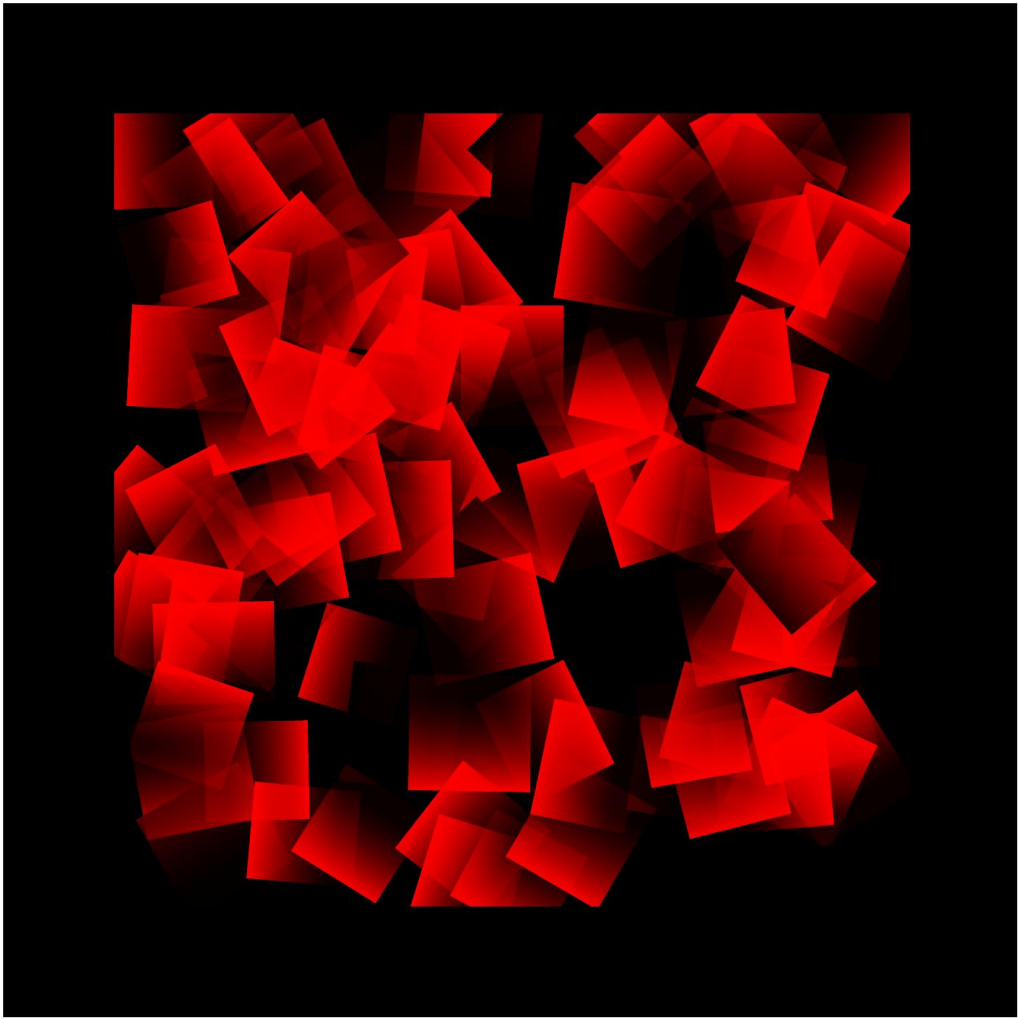
"A bishop is nothing but an actor who seeks with words and gestures, on an appropriately 'dressed' stage, to convey a religious feeling, or rather the reflection of a feeling in religious form. The office clerk, the blacksmith, the soldier, the accountant, the general - these are all characters out of one stage play or another, portrayed by various people, who become so carried away that they confuse the play and their parts in it with life itself. We almost never get to see the actual human face, and if we ask someone who he is, he answers, 'an engineer', 'a farmer', etc., or, in other words, he gives the title of the role played by him in one or another effective drama. The title of the role is also set down next to his full name, and certified in his passport, thus removing any doubt concerning the surprising fact that the owner of the passport is the engineer Ivan and not the painter Kazimir."



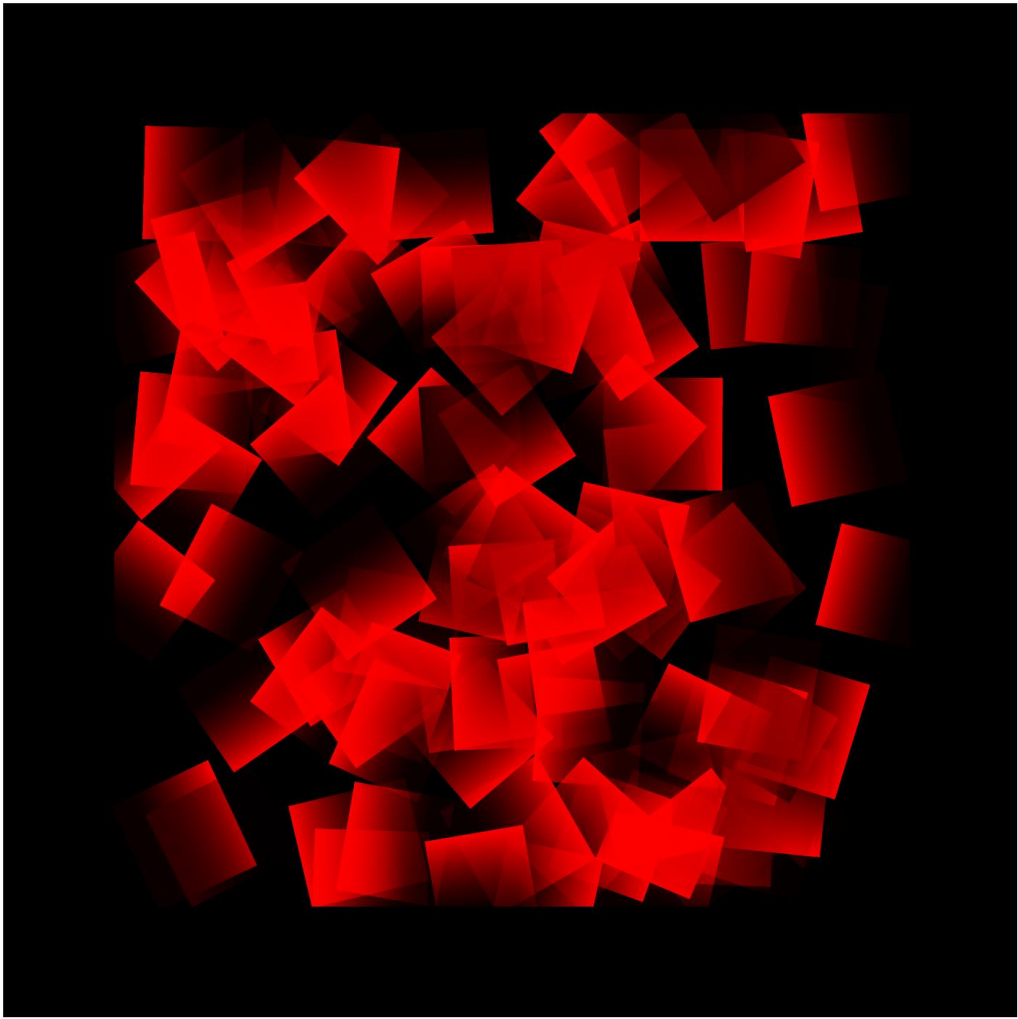
"In the last analysis, what each individual knows about himself is precious little, because the 'actual human face' cannot be discerned behind the mask, which is mistaken for the 'actual face'. The philosophy of Suprematism has every reason to view both the mask and the 'actual face' with skepticism, since it disputes the reality of human faces (human forms) altogether."



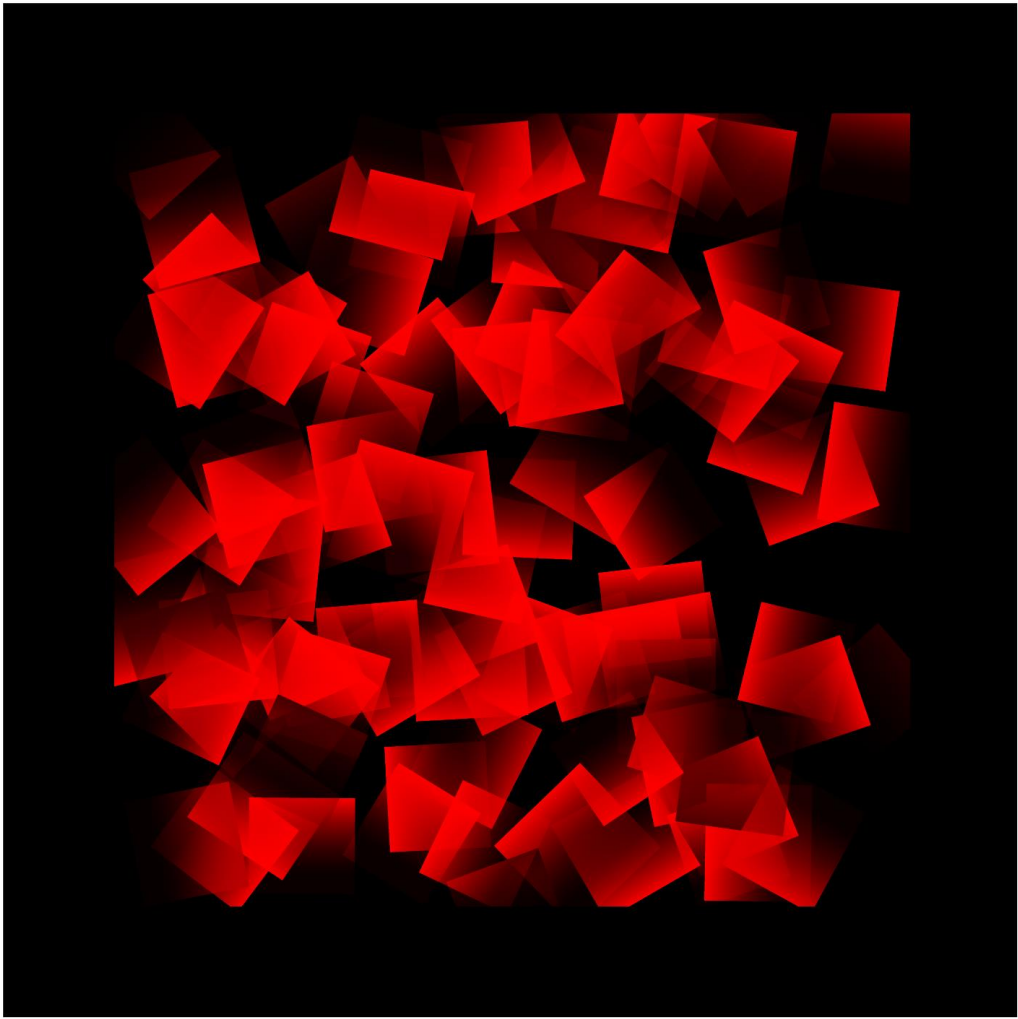
"Artists have always been partial to the use of the human face in their representations, for they have seen in it (the versatile, mobile, expressive mimic) the best vehicle with which to convey their feelings. The Suprematists have nevertheless abandoned the representation of the human face (and of natural objects in general) and have found new symbols with which to render direct feelings (rather than externalized reflections of feelings), for the Suprematist does not observe and does not touch - he feels."



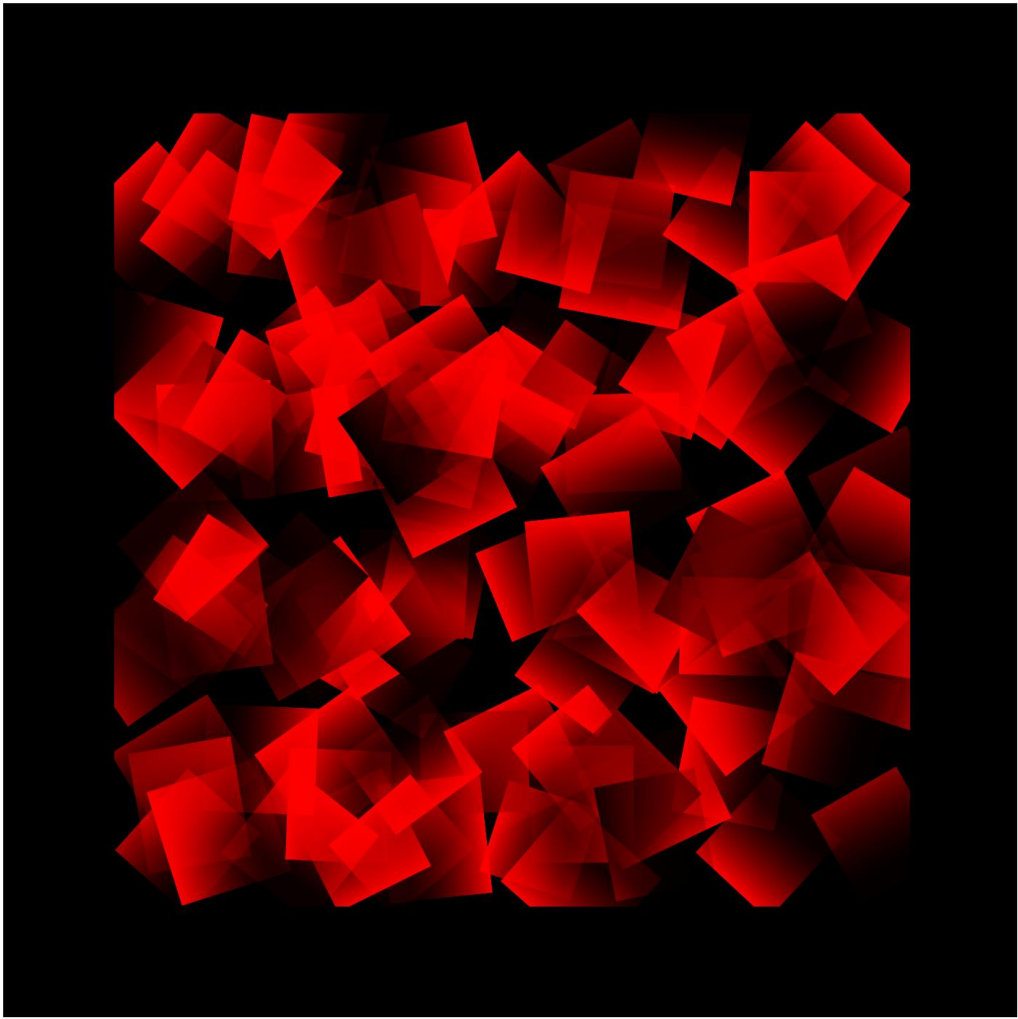
"We have seen how art, at the turn of the century, divested itself of the ballast of religious and political ideas which had been imposed upon it and came into its own attained, that is, the form suited to its intrinsic nature and became, along with the two already mentioned, a third independent and equally valid point of view. The public is still, indeed, as much convinced as ever that the artist creates superfluous, impractical things. It never considers that these superfluous things endure and retain their vitality for thousands of years, whereas necessary, practical things survive only briefly."



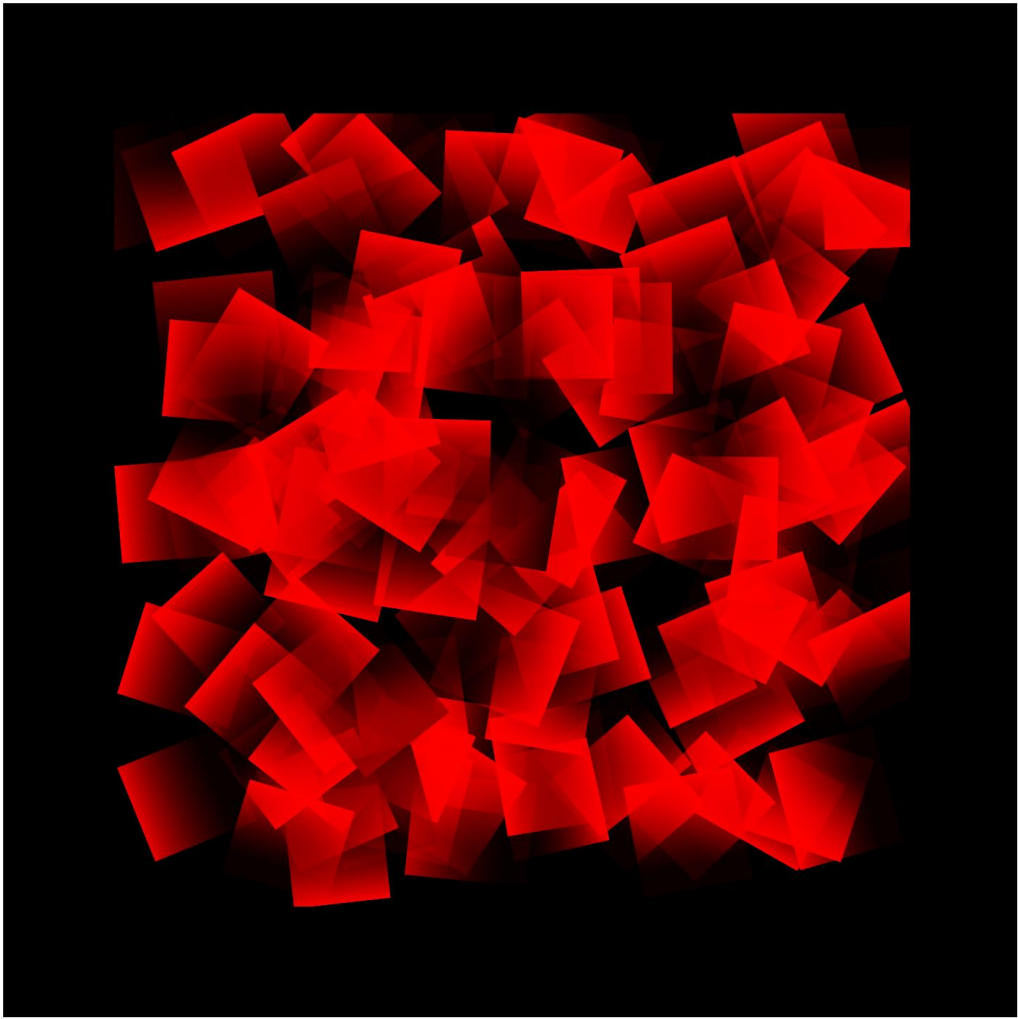
"It does not dawn on the public that it fails to recognize the real, true value of things. This is also the reason for the chronic failure of everything utilitarian. A true, absolute order in human society could only be achieved if mankind were willing to base this order on lasting values. Obviously, then, the artistic factor would have to be accepted in every respect as the decisive one. As long as this is not the case, the uncertainty of a 'provisional order' will obtain, instead of the longed for tranquility of an absolute order, because the provisional order is gauged by current utilitarian understanding, and this measuring stick is variable in the highest degree."



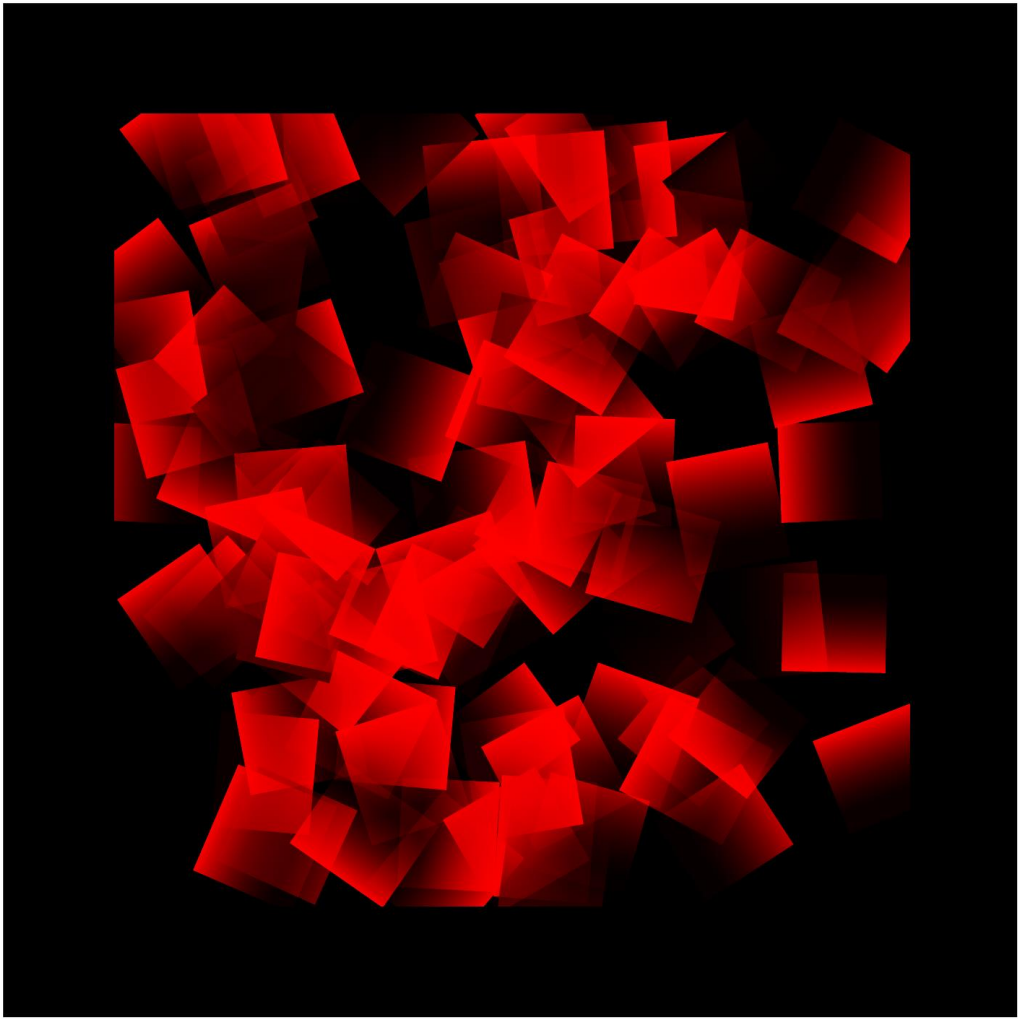
"In the light of this, all art works which, at present, are a part of 'practical life' or to which practical life has laid claim, are in some senses devaluated. Only when they are freed from the encumbrance of practical utility (that is, when they are placed in museums) will their truly artistic, absolute value be recognized. The sensations of sitting, standing, or running are, first and foremost, plastic sensations and they are responsible for the development of corresponding '61 objects of use' and largely determine their form. A chair, bed, and table are not matters of utility but rather, the forms taken by plastic sensations, so the generally held view that all objects of daily use result from practical considerations is based upon false premises."



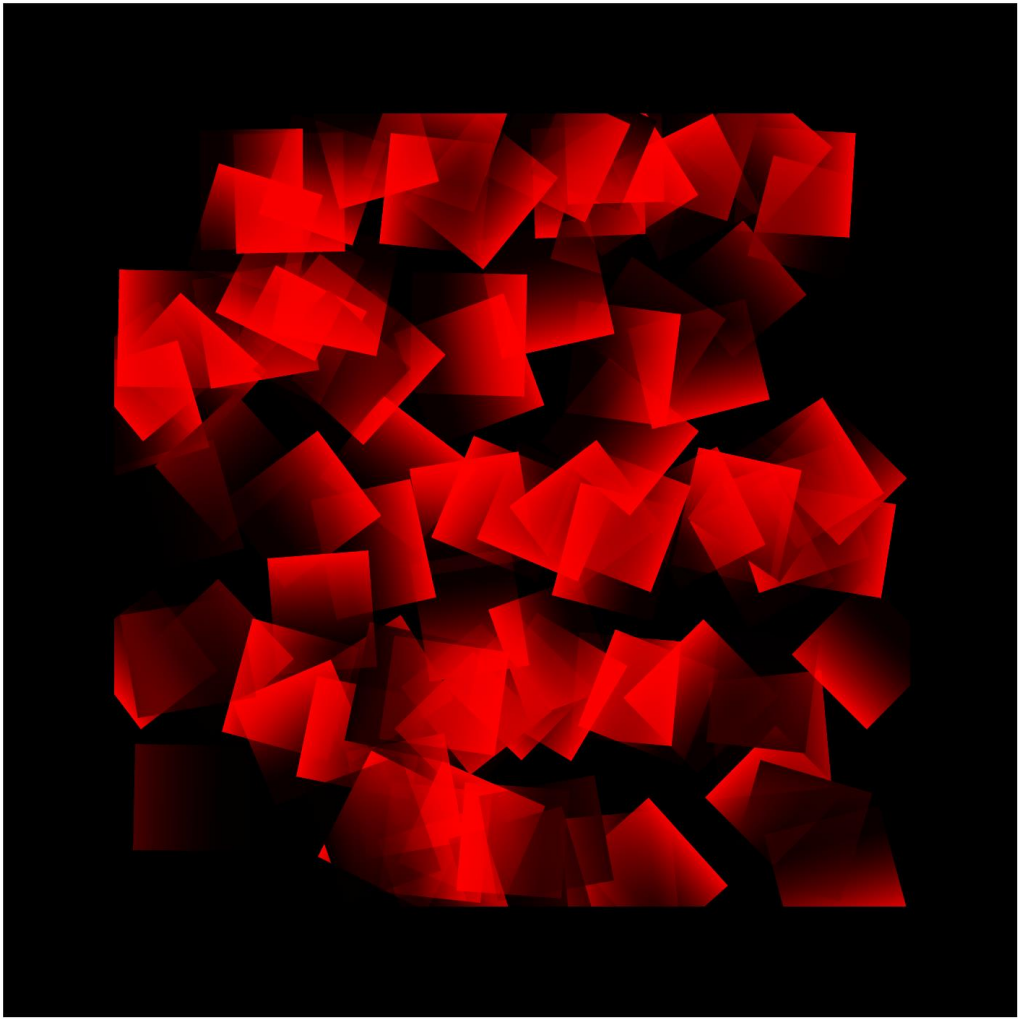
“We have ample opportunity to become convinced that we are never in a position for recognizing any real utility in things and that we shall never succeed in constructing a really practical object. We can evidently only feel the essence of absolute utility, but since a feeling is always non-objective, any attempt to grasp the utility of the objective is Utopian. The endeavor to confine feeling within concepts of the conscious mind or, indeed, to replace it with conscious concepts and to give it concrete, utilitarian form, has resulted in the development of all those useless, ‘practical things’ which become ridiculous in no time at all.”



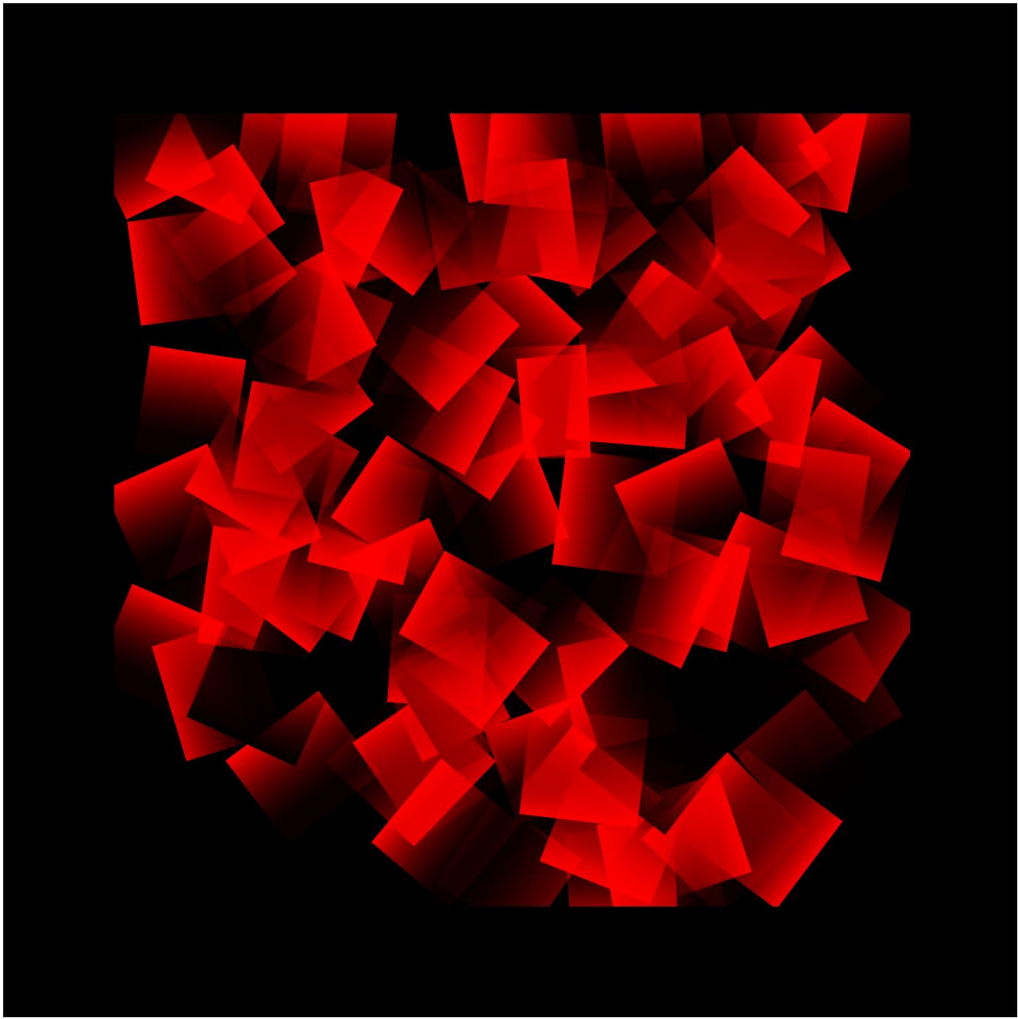
"It cannot be stressed too often that absolute, true values arise only from artistic, subconscious, or superconscious creation. The new art of Suprematism, which has produced new forms and form relationships by giving external expression to pictorial feeling, will become a new architecture. It will transfer these forms from the surface of canvas to space. The Suprematist element, whether in painting or in architecture, is free of every tendency which is social or otherwise materialistic."



"Every social ideal however great and important it may be stems from the sensation of hunger; every art work, regardless of how small and insignificant it may seem originates in pictorial or plastic feeling. It is high time for us to realize that the problems of art lie far apart from those of the stomach or the intellect. Now that art, thanks to Suprematism, has come into its own, that is attained its pure, unapplied form and has recognized the infallibility of non-objective feeling, it is attempting to set up a genuine world order, a new philosophy of life. It recognizes the non-objectivity of the world and is no longer concerned with providing illustrations of the history of manners."



"Non-objective feeling has, in fact, always been the only possible source of art, so that in this respect, Suprematism is contributing nothing new, but nevertheless the art of the past, because of its use of objective subject matter harbored unintentionally a whole series of feelings which were alien to it. But a tree remains a tree even when an owl builds a nest in a hollow of it."



"Suprematism has opened up new possibilities to creative art, since by virtue of the abandonment of so called 'practical consideration', a plastic feeling rendered on canvas can be carried over into space. The artist (the painter) is no longer bound to the canvas (the picture plane) and can transfer his compositions from canvas to space."

