“One has to love what one is doing very much in order to lose one’s clear judgment just at the final moment of achievement – and then it is finished.”  
El Lissitzky

Published to coincide with a joint exhibition which opens in Moscow in November 2017 between the Tretyakov Gallery and the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center - a retrospective panorama of the artist’s legacy - this beautifully illustrated cloth bound book explores the early work of El Lissitzky (1890 – 1941) who is unquestionably one of Russian Modernism’s most notable artists. The subject of numerous monographs and exhibitions, his mature abstract paintings, drawings, photographs, and graphic work can be found in abundance in Western and Eastern public collections.

In his early career, however, his work was more or less exclusively devoted to Jewish subjects, reflecting his religious education and family’s heritage. While a handful of these works are well known and widely published, this fascinating book, *El Lissitzky’s Jewish Period* by Alexander Kantsedikas, one of the world’s leading scholars on the artist, is the first endeavour to look at this phase of his work in its entirety.

Amounting to a veritable catalogue raisonné of 500 plus works, the author has resurrected some of the more obscure but no less fascinating works by Lissitzky in Hebrew and Yiddish. Lavishly illustrated in colour and black and white, the book tracks his evolution from an Expressionist style to one that is increasingly more abstract and non-objective. Lissitzky expressed social activism and the aspiration to solve huge social and political problems through avant-garde art forms. For him the tasks of social and artistic renewal and world restructuring were inseparable.

The book includes rare biographical and photographic material of the artist’s family, as well as little-known correspondence from his father and his relationship with Polina Khentova, who has heretofore been entirely obscured in the artist’s biography, offering greater insight into the artist’s life and work.

Beginning in the mid-1980s Dr. Kantsedikas actively involved himself in the collection and analysis of materials related to the traditional Jewish artistic heritage of the territories of the (former) USSR. In 1994 he published the album Semyon An-Sky: The Jewish Artistic Heritage (Moscow, RA). From 1998 to 2003 he served as compiler and scholarly editor of the bilingual (Russian-English) Masterpieces of Jewish Art series, published in seven volumes in Moscow and Tel Aviv. Devoting much of the last twenty-five years to an intensive study of the work of El Lissitzky, together with his wife, Prof. of Architecture Zoya Yargina, he published the first Russian-language monograph on the artist’s oeuvre, entitled El Lissitzky: A Film of Life, 1890–1941 (7 vols.; Moscow: Novyi Ermitazh – Odin, 2004).

Published by Unicorn in association with the El Lissitzky Foundation and the Kroll Family Trust.

Sales and distribution details by territory are listed in the footnote below.

For media enquiries please contact: Louise Campbell  
Email: louise@unicornpublishing.org  Phone: 07540 892 364  
Twitter: @UnicornPubGroup