

Free State Art Studios
A History of the Svomas Initiative
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ABSTRACT

The Free State Arts Studios (Svomas) was an initiative for arts and design education in Russia during the years after the revolutions of 1917. The revolutionary government closed long standing schools, temporarily, then renewed them with Svomas—a program with free tuition, open admissions, and a philosophy of freedom. Svomas only lasted for two years but was a vast effort, with one branch in Petrograd, two in Moscow, one in Vitebsk, and elsewhere in regional cities. The program was among the first to teach new modern art movements on a large scale, and to integrate them with design and architecture. While painting courses were the most numerous, architecture was taught, and many artists had important architectural ideas that would influence developments in international architecture of the 20th century. The dissertation covers the historical progression of Svomas. It gives an idea of how the school system was created, what it was, then what happened after it ended. Five main sections show something of what the avant-garde was doing during Svomas, they highlight: two faculty led studios, a research group, and two student groups. These sections conclude with teaching philosophies derived from analyzing written statements and the work. There are appended documents to show the thinking of the school, as well as appended imagery to show what they were doing and making.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Inkhuk – *Institut Khudozhestvennoi Kul'tury* (Institute of Artistic Culture).

Narkompros – *Narodnij Kommissariat Prosveshcheniia* (Peoples Commissariat of Education), included a fine arts department called IZO Narkompros.

Obmokhu – *Obschestvo Molodykh Khudoznikov* (Society of Young Artists).

Svomas – *Svobodnye Masterskie* (Free Studios).

Unovis – *Utverditeli Novogo Iskusstva* (Affirmers of New Art).

Vkhutemas – *Vyshchie Khudozhestvennye Tekhnicheskie Masterskie* (Higher Art Technical Studios).

Zhivskulptarkh – *Zhivopis', Skul'ptura, Arkhitektura* (Painting, Sculpture, Architecture; or Paintsculptarch)

THE NAME SVOMAS: Regarding the name of the Svomas school initiative at the center of this dissertation, it is Romanized from Cyrillic fully in four words: *Gosudarstvennye Svobodnye Khudozhestvennye Masterskie* (State Free Art Studios). The four words in the abbreviation were important as founding terms and concepts. In the literature, there are instances when the word order is: *Svobodnye Gosudarstvennye Khudozhestvennye Masterskie* (Free State Art Studios). This carries some connotative differences, but the referent is the same. The abbreviation, Svomas, used consistently in this text, is a conjunction of two words: *Svobodnye Masterskie* (Free Studios). Other abbreviations in the primary sources are: *Gos. Svo. Khud. Mast.* Another variant: *Gos. Sv. Khud. Mas.* There are also connotative differences here, but again the referent is the same. Another initialized abbreviation is: G.S.Kh.M. With respect to the locations of the schools,

Svomas 1 was at the Stroganov School (est. 1825) campus in Moscow, Svomas 2 was at the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (est. 1865) campus also in Moscow. The Petrograd Svomas was in the site of the former Imperial Academy of Arts (est. 1757) and is sometimes initialized by the abbreviation: P.G.S.Kh.M. This dissertation opts for the simpler two syllable form and will use the Svomas abbreviation throughout. There are other variants of the name as well.

Translation of the term “*masterskie*” deserves some clarification, the standard translation is “studios” or “workshops.” The selection of the translation “studios” is due to common practice, which is the most frequent variant found in the sources, “workshops” might be the second most frequent. The Russian term “*masterskie*” has certain connotations that neither of these have. The origin of the word is in Latin “*magister*” or “*magis*” and is similar to the English “mastery” or “masters” used in education, as in master’s degree or master class, but such a word choice would be misleading. Also worth noting, in the conjunction of terms “*svobodnye*” and “*masterskie*” in the word Svomas, there is a resonance (or dissonance) in that they mean “freedom” and “mastery,” essentially.

INTRODUCTION

Free State Arts Studios (Svomas) was a program for design and arts schools initiated in Russia immediately after the 1917 Revolutions. Svomas began in 1918 and lasted for two years in its Petrograd location and two schools in Moscow. There were many more Svomas programs in cities in the provinces, of which Vitebsk, Belarus is most widely documented. Svomas rethought some basic education essential to schools as well as innovating and advancing the program for design and arts education well into the next century. It was founded on an idea of free education-- free in the sense of no cost or tuition, open enrollment, and more liberties were offered to the students than before. The Russian Revolution provided Svomas with aspects of the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, Scientific Revolutions, and its own qualities—leading to a revolution in design and art education and production. The Svomas schools are often characterized in the literature as disorganized, essentially chaotic, even intentionally anarchic. This dissertation looks closely and as clearly as possible through this to bring one of the starting points of modern design education into focus. The more innovative avant-garde studios at Svomas were studied; two faculty led studios, a research group of young architects, and two student groups. Lines of research questioning and ordering by way of chronological sequences led to an arrival at teaching philosophies and theses. Concepts of collectives, synthesis, parity, newness, and utility were among the common ideas taught at the leading Svomas studios. The philosophies have some decisively similar traits, with subtle variations in their combinations that led to teaching and work that contributed significantly to the development of the international modern movement in the 20th century.

The dissertation is the result of philological and historical research on this initiative. Efforts have been made to avoid overcomplication of the study and writing, due to the easily perplexing nature of the topic. While these schools and their achievements have been explored in many places, Svomas merits its own collected study and volume, due to its role in 20th century progress in arts education and especially the discovery of new possibilities in the arts and architecture.

After the background and overview chapters, the main five focal chapters are organized in terms of activities before and during the Svomas initiative—to show the major projects of each group and then conclude with implications for teaching philosophies.

Besides the remaining imagery of the artworks, the types of sources consulted and included are varied forms of communication: transcribed speeches, journal articles, a hand-written manuscript for a student journal, memoirs, press announcements, posters, pedagogical programs, assignments, state decrees—selected to give a sense for the thought process at Svomas.

The translated documents are not by intended to be understood as written by an individual author. For the most part, the avant-garde artists at Svomas considered their work to be collective and collaborative, hence the consideration of many author's ideas and statements, compounded. The documents show there was certainly a degree of competition, at times and coordination at others, with much debate among the various groups. For every position taken there was often opposition. For every thesis there was often antithesis, but also synthesis.

The appended documents give a sense for what those at Svomas were thinking.
The appended images give a sense for what those at Svomas were doing.

At times this project was overwhelming. Because studying Svomas (or the activities of any school for that matter) is effectively tracing murmuration of thousands involved in a vast effort at education. In this, rewards and breakthroughs may come from clear patterns and formations, but also from anomalous instances of what is unexpected in the groups or in individuals.

TIMELINE OVERVIEW

Timelines below denoting events before and after Svomas are arranged by year with two columns for political events, and the events pertaining to design and design education.

The design column includes events central to Svomas students, faculty and administration—the entries are mostly about faculty as they are more widely published.

Timelines below for the time during Svomas are arranged quarterly by seasons of three months. This is to achieve a higher level of detail and resolution for the school’s chronology. While Svomas only lasted a few years, the academic calendar was approximately seasonal, with two main semesters of Autumn and Spring with breaks in the Winter and Summer. The Russian academic calendar starts on 1 September, but the Svomas start date in 1918 in Petrograd was later due to the reorganizations and timing with the anniversary of the October Revolution.

Dates in the texts are as indicated in the sources. There are two calendars, Julian (Old Style) and Gregorian (New Style) that indicate the same day with a difference of 13 ahead for Gregorian. Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1918.

BEFORE SVOMAS (1914-1918)

YEAR	POLITICS	DESIGN
1914	<p>First World War</p> <p>Lunacharsky, Trotsky in Paris</p>	<p>January-February. Marinetti visits Russia, to meet with futurist artists.</p> <p>6 February. Lunacharsky publishes “Young Russia in Paris” articles describing the art scene around <i>La Ruche</i> (The Beehive).</p> <p>March. Tatlin visits Paris and Picasso’s studio. Kamensky publishes “Ferro-Concrete Poems”</p> <p>10 May. Tatlin exhibits counter-reliefs in Russia.</p>

	August, St. Peterburg name changes to Petrograd.	Altman paints cubo-futurist portrait of Anna Akhmatova. Exhibited the next year with the <i>Mir Iskusstva</i> (World of Art) group.
1915	Lenin in Switzerland protesting the war, Lunacharsky moves to Switzerland.	Avant-garde artists begin meeting at “Apartment no. 5” at the Academy of Arts. March. <i>Tramway V</i> exhibition declared the “first Futurist exhibition” although there were more before. December. Malevich shows “Black Square” painting at <i>0.10</i> exhibition called the “last Futurist exhibition” although there were more afterwards.
1916	Completion of the trans-Siberian railway.	<i>Magazin (The Store)</i> exhibition. Benois’s <i>Russian School of Painting</i> published in English. Malevich writes “From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism” May 1916, Khlebnikov writes “Tatlin”, a poem about the artist.
1917	Revolution in February, Tsar abdicates. Lunacharsky returns to Russia. Revolution in October. Bolsheviks take control of government. Civil war follows in Russia.	12 March. Altman and others form a collaborative called <i>Svoboda Iskusstvu</i> (Freedom to Art) and hold founders meeting. June to December. Design and installation at Café Picturesque.

DURING SVOMAS (1918-1920): The time of interest, regarding Svomas, is the winter of 1917-1918 to winter of 1920-1921. One of the most significant historical and political events of this time in Russia was Civil War early 1918-1921 following the revolutions of 1917. Major political changes were taking place in Russia, these have been covered elsewhere. Russia was fighting in the First World War that did not end until November of 1918, and there is abundant coverage of that in other works. This timeline covers Svomas students, faculty, administration, first and foremost.

YEAR	SVOMAS CHRONOLOGY
1917-18 Winter	<p>December 1917. The Stroganov School (est. 1825) and the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. (est. 1865) resolve to suspend classes.</p> <p>30 January 1918. Moscow: Café Picturesque opens, with Yakulov, Udaltsova, Tatlin, Bruni, Meyerhold, Rodchenko and others as collaborators on its decoration.</p> <p>6 February 1918. IZO Narkompros established, with 5 architects on its Arts Board.</p>
1918 Spring	<p>March 1918. Capitol moved from Petrograd to Moscow. Lunacharsky, the head of Narkompros, stays in Petrograd until early 1919.</p> <p>15 March to May 1918. Futurists print and distribute their own decrees to encourage arts. In this time, Mayakovsky works on screenplays and acts in films.</p> <p>11 April 1918. Tatlin joins Moscow Artistic Collegium and Museums Collegium of IZO Narkompros, becoming a leader of the Artistic Collegium until May 1919.</p> <p>12-14 April 1918. Narkompros suspends the Imperial Academy of Arts (est. 1757), and seizes its properties. A “free art school” is planned to replace the Academy. Lenin and his administration begin Plan For Monumental Propaganda. Decrees are issued for public arts initiatives to remove tsarist monuments and to commission new ones.</p>
1918 Summer	<p>June 1918. Students at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture develop a project for a Free Art Academy in Moscow.</p> <p>8 August 1918. Moscow Narkompros writes up program for free studios and later Petrograd approves it.</p> <p>23 August 1918. Chagall sends plans for school and museum to Narkompros and to be published.</p>
1918 Autumn	<p>7 September 1918. Izvestia publishes admission instructions and election instructions for Svomas.</p> <p>1 October 1918. Narkompros announces State Free Art Studios in Moscow. Svomas 1 to replace Stroganov School. Svomas 2 to replace Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture.</p> <p>10 October 1918. Petrograd Svomas opens a year after the October Revolution. Lunacharsky gives a speech at the opening. In the first semester, Autumn 1918, Petrograd Svomas had 664 students enrolled with 27 active studios taught by 16 instructors.</p> <p>November 1918. Petrograd: Altman leads festival installations for Palace Square on the Anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution.</p> <p>7 November 1918. The film <i>Uplotenie (Overcrowding)</i> is premiered in Petrograd, scenario co-written by Lunacharsky.</p> <p>7-8 November 1918. In Vitebsk, Chagall leads a 50,000-participant festival recognizing the Revolution.</p>

	<p>16 November 1918. Chagall announces opening of Vitebsk People's Art School.</p>
1918-19 Winter	<p>Over the 1918-19 school year. Tatlin is in charge of two Moscow Svomas studios. He names his discipline "culture of materials" or "material culture". Traditional studios had higher enrollments than those led by avant-garde professors.</p> <p>7 December 1918. IZO Narkompros in Petrograd begins publishing the journal <i>Art of the Commune</i> (7 December 1918- 13 April 1919).</p> <p>13 December 1918, opening of Moscow Svomas 2.</p> <p>14 December 1918. Tatlin's Petrograd studio announced and described in the press.</p> <p>28 January 1919. First year of Vitebsk People's Art School begins, led by Chagall and patterned after Svomas with noteworthy similarities and differences.</p>
1919 Spring	<p>20 March 1919. Under direction of Gropius, State Bauhaus in Weimar approved by reforming two schools in Germany.</p> <p>April 1919. IZO Narkompros publishes one issue of a journal called <i>Izobrazitel'noe iskusstvo</i> (Fine Art). In the issue, head of IZO Narkompros, Shterenberg writes of the theoretical principles for Svomas.</p> <p>15 April 1919. Fyodor Shekhtel, president of Moscow Architectural Society gives a speech "the Fairytale of the Three Sisters" at the re-opening of the new facilities and architecture division at Svomas 1 (Stroganov School).</p> <p>End of April. Gropius publishes pamphlet <i>Program of the State Bauhaus in Weimar</i>.</p> <p>1 May 1919. Screenings of films Mayakovsky wrote and acted in.</p> <p>May 1919. Lissitzky joins Vitebsk school and leads architecture, graphics and printing.</p> <p>May 1919. Obmokhu exhibition at Moscow Svomas 1, formerly Stroganov School</p>
1919 Summer	<p>At Moscow Svomas 1, a division for synthesizing arts is formed called Paintsculptarch including Ladovsky, Dokuchaev and Krinsky.</p> <p>28 June 1919. Vitebsk student work exhibited, Chashnik, Khidekel student work bought from the exhibition by the school's museum.</p> <p>July-August 1919. Lissitzky publishes articles on his teaching and sets an agenda for architecture and art at the Vitebsk school.</p> <p>Summer 1919, Civil War sends many students to the front.</p>
1919 Autumn	<p>October 1919. On a visit to Moscow, Lissitzky invites Malevich to Vitebsk.</p> <p>5 November 1919, Malevich begins teaching in Vitebsk.</p>

	<p>November 1919. Rodchenko joins Paintsculptarch and designs kiosks among other contributions.</p> <p>Autumn 1919, Senkin, Shapiro and others create a manuscript, <i>Journal of the Free State Art Studios</i>.</p>
1919-20 Winter	<p>Winter 1919-1920, fire in a “Studio Without a Supervisor”</p> <p>14 February 1920. Unovis founded.</p>
1920 Spring	<p>March 1920. Inkhuk formed. From May 1920-December 1920, Inkhuk Section of Monumental art meets often, in an effort at synthesizing artforms including architecture.</p> <p>May 1920. Vitebsk Peoples Art School changes name to Vitebsk Svomas.</p> <p>May 1920. Obmokhu Exhibition at a former Faberge shop in Moscow; which becomes the group’s headquarters.</p> <p>20-25 May 1920. Many of Chagall’s students join Unovis. The group publishes the Unovis Almanac.</p>
1920 Summer	<p>June 1920. Kandinsky presents Inkhuk objectives to the Svomas General Council.</p> <p>5 June 1920. Unovis exhibits work at First All-Russian Conference of Art Teachers and Students.</p> <p>5 June 1920. Chagall leaves Vitebsk. 19 June 1920, Ermolaeva takes lead of Vitebsk Svomas.</p> <p>August 1920. Klutsis (Svomas student of Pevsner) exhibits with Gabo on Tverskoi Boulevard. 5 August 1920. Gabo and Pevsner publish "Realist Manifesto".</p>
1920 Autumn	<p>Late 1920. Ladovsky, Dokuchaev, Krinsky develop "psycho-analytic" teaching method for Vkhutemas.</p> <p>Punin publishes a pamphlet on the Monument to the III International.</p> <p>1 September 1920. Classes begin at Vitebsk Svomas.</p> <p>October 1920. In Paris, the first issue of “L’Esprit Nouveau” is published.</p> <p>2 October – 4 December 1920. Paintsculptarch exhibits in Moscow as part of the Nineteenth State Exhibition.</p> <p>12 October 1920. Narkompros approves Vkhutemas.</p> <p>8 November [25 October]- 1 December 1920. Monument to the III International shown in Mosaics Hall of Petrograd Svomas. The model of the Monument was shipped to Moscow to be shown in the Union House for the Eight Congress of Soviets.</p>

	29 November 1920. Lenin's decree founding Vkhutemas. Leonidov transfers from Svomas in Tver to Vkhutemas in Moscow.
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AFTER SVOMAS (1921-1924): The years just after Svomas brought the avant-garde to a maturity and a high point before the art world in Russia shifted. The influence of Svomas is evident in many reviews, reverberations, and repercussions throughout the early 1920s. The students, faculty and administration continued working as times and the world continued changing. In the first years after Svomas was phased out, faculty began reaching out by exhibiting and publishing abroad especially in Paris and Berlin.

YEAR	POLITICS	DESIGN
1921	The New Economic Policy (NEP) begins. Civil war and years known for "war communism" end.	January 1921, Obmokhu exhibition highlights the term "constructivism." 25 February 1921, Lenin visits Vkhutemas. February 1921, Punin publishes "Tatlin against Cubism". Tatlin leaves his studio as Svomas is reformed back to the Academy of Art in Petrograd. March 1921, student members of Unovis: Chashnik, Khidekel, Suetin, Yudin start as teaching assistants in Vitebsk. May 1921, Obmokhu exhibition. July 1921, Vitebsk Svomas renamed Vitebsk Practical Art Institute. 23 Sept, 1921, Lissitzky lectures on "Prouns" at the Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) December 1921, Kandinsky leaves Russia.
1922		1922, Kandinsky begins teaching at the Bauhaus. March 1922, <i>Veshch</i> first issue is printed in Berlin. Spring 1922, <i>About Two Squares</i> by Lissitzky (the book was started with Unovis c. 1920) published in Berlin.

	December 1922, Soviet Union founded.	25 September 1922, Lissitzky participates in the Dada-Constructivist Congress at the Bauhaus. October 1922, First Russian Arts Exhibition in Berlin.
1923		19 August 1923, All-Russian Agriculture and Craft Exposition opens in Moscow. July 1923, <i>G: Materials for Elemental Form-Creation</i> first issue is published in Berlin.
1924	21 January 1924, Lenin Dies.	8 February 1924, Senkin and Klutskis publish “Studio of the Revolution” in LEF. pp 155-159.

CHAPTER 1

BEFORE SVOMAS

EARLIER MEETINGS: In the four years before the Svomas initiative, the people who would become administrators and faculty were exploring contemporary design and art in Europe and many knew each other before their later appointments. Poets and artists in Russia had explored modern art in parallel and in tangent with artists in Europe, Italian futurism among them. Many were involved in developments in Paris, others focused more on German art and design. Artists in Russia were synthesizing the new unofficial art modes of impressionism, futurism, cubism, dada, expressionism, and creating their own new art of rayonism, cubo-futurism, and suprematism. Mutual interest led visitors to travel back and forth internationally.

January 1914, European art trends of futurism, and cubism were proliferating in Russia. Marinetti visited early in the year; he was photographed with Russian futurists at an event in Petersburg on 4 February 1914. Marinetti also lectured in Moscow, (See Illustration 1) and reception was met with much interest but also controversy.¹ The artists in Russia drew Marinetti to visit and his work (See Illustration 2) resonated with many artists there as well.

At the same time, also early in 1914, other approaches to art and design were being formulated. Kandinsky was lecturing in Cologne. In these talks he posited and

¹ Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, “‘Libroni’ on futurism” held at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library detail Marinetti’s reception in Russia. The *Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines* says his visit was one of two events [that] help sum up the distinctive character of the Russian avant-garde project” Brooker and Thacker, 2013, pg.1237.

warned of three risks learned along his path of abstract art: 1. Stylized form, 2. Ornamental form, 3. Experimental form. Kandinsky also clearly expressed in several negated statements, what he did not wish of his work, such as “I do not want to show the future its true path.” This lecture addresses critical readings and interpretations of his work, as well as some of the other movements of his contemporaries, including futurists.²

Many artists were visiting Paris and were exploring cubism as well, developing a synthesis of these burgeoning new ways of producing art. In Paris a group of artists lived, worked, and gathered at an arts community known as the Beehive (*La Ruche*), they studied at academies such as at the Free Russian Academy, and exhibited work at the Salon of Independents. Before their appointments as Svomas administrators and professors, many of artists who would become Svomas faculty knew each other.

In 1914, an almost 40-year-old Anatoly Lunacharsky wrote a series of articles called “Young Russia in Paris” on some of the artists in the *La Ruche* circle, for the newspaper *Kievskaiia Mysl'* (*Kiev Thinking*). He described the art scene in Paris as a place with “brash innovators, who swear by their clean-shaven French teachers, who produce such an overwhelming din while searching for the true understanding of the acute crisis that the Parisian art world is enduring, at the avant-garde of total “newness” in art.”³ Lunacharsky described the situation for artists in terms of the “avant-garde” and their experimental condition of searching for what was new. These artists formulated an innovative approach to art and how to see and present the world. The avant-garde was

² Kandinsky, *Complete Writings on Art Volume One*, pp.399-400.

³ Lunacharsky, 6 February 1914, “Molodaia Rossiia v Parizhe”.

attracted to the sense of possibility, that there was so much in art that could be found. *La Ruche* could be described as an artist commune and artist colony, and it attracted many notable figures. There were many unofficial academies where artists shared their insights by opening their studios to teaching.

Lunacharsky wrote of David Shterenberg, then in his early 30s, after visiting his studio in 1914, “not only is he a painter, but also a poet. Where this poet is going, we shall see.”⁴ Lunacharsky wrote an article in the “Young Russia in Paris” series on an almost 30-year-old Marc Chagall as well, recognizing in him that “here is a painter, here is a man with an extraordinary cultural sensitivity, who completely controls the recognizability of images with unsurpassed instincts for colorful tone, here is a virtuoso who has mastered everything and delegates everything to the grandiose freedom of his fiction.”⁵ These give a sense for the qualities Lunacharsky regarded highly in the arts in his earlier years. He was certainly impressed by Shterenberg’s and Chagall’s senses of vision and aesthetics. Their trajectories and the limitlessness of the painters’ imaginations appealed to him.

Another young artist Lunacharsky knew who worked in Paris in the 1910s was Nathan Altman, then in his 20s.⁶ He was also involved in the Parisian *La Ruche* scene and had studied and attended Marie Vassilieff’s Free Russian Academy earlier (from

⁴ Lazarev, 1992, p.29, p.150; Lunacharsky, 6 February 1914, “David Shterenberg”.

⁵ Cited in Shatskikh, 2007, p.22; Lunacharsky, 4 March 1914, “Marc Chagall”.

⁶ Gray, 1962, p.219.

1910-1912). Lunacharsky contributed to the school's journal *Helios*, such as his article, "The Father of Art Criticism" in the opening of the first issue.⁷

The small independent studio academies of Paris hosted and educated many of the artists who would soon go on to work at Svomas. In addition to Vassilieff's Free Russian Academy, others avant-garde artists studied in independent academies: Bruni and Puni attended the Julian Academy; Udaltsova and Popova attended the La Palette Academy; and there were frequent visitors in these years such as Ekster, Malevich, Rozanova, Tatlin, Larionov, and Goncharova.⁸ Larionov and Goncharova's reception went well enough that they moved to Paris in 1914 and stayed for the rest of their lives.

In addition to education, there were opportunities for exhibition. The Salon of Independents was actively showing work by avant-garde artists before and up to 1914.⁹

In Paris, Lunacharsky found many inspiring talents that were also drawn to what seemed like the center of a changing art world, the capitol of emerging 20th century modernity in art. They made names for themselves, established their careers, they did this while abroad in the beginning. As the years passed, these artists continued to create and exhibit their work, often together in some way, even while Russia was changing drastically.

⁷ Collegium of Artists at the Russian Academy in Paris. *Helios*. no.1. November 1913.

⁸ Cariani, 1999, pp.395-396.

⁹ At the Salon of Independents, Kandinsky showed 11 works from 1907 to 1912; Chagall showed 6 in 1910; Ekster showed 3 between 1912 and 1914; and Malevich showed 3 in 1914. Cariani, 1999, pp.395-396.

1915-1916 GATHERINGS AT APARTMENT № 5: Artists, designers, and architects in Russia were working diligently to share what they had learned from travel but also making it their own. They perfected their techniques while advancing their views and methodologies. New theories and conceptions of art, design, architecture, and the world for that matter, were being formulated and tested by the avant-garde.

One place where avant-garde art was being rethought through informal gatherings was at Apartment № 5, hosted by Lev Bruni at the Imperial Academy of Arts in Petrograd. They had many notable visitors, some of the names that appeared as guests: Altman, Balmont, Kliun, Lourié, Mandelshtam, Popova, Pestel', Puni, Rozanova, Udaltsova, Tatlin, Tyrsa, and more. Some of the names are known for work in the Silver Age and some for what followed and might be called the Ferro-Concrete Age. A level of critical inquiry, serious discussion, and care concerning art is evident in the scene that met at Apartment № 5. In the years of 1915-1916, the group may have met at the Academy of Arts in Bruni's apartment but were not yet as established in academic positions. As writers, designers, or artists their theories and practices would develop through socializing at such a meeting place.¹⁰

¹⁰ Nikolai Punin wrote an account called "Apartment № 5" intended for a book, it was unpublished in his life, but fragments of the manuscript have been released posthumously (Punin, N.N., Punina, I.N., and Rakitin, V.I. 1994; and Punin, N.N., Zykov, L.A., 2000.) For Translations see Appendix D.

EARLY IN 1917: Artists of all disciplines were forming groups and responding to political events. Many were very active politically. In March, *Pravda* ran an announcement for a meeting and the formation of a society called “Freedom to Art”:

**“To all in the arts:
artists, poets, writers, musicians, actors, architects, sculptors, critics,
archaeologists, and art historians**

A CALL.

Comrade-citizens!

The great Russian Revolution calls you, and all of us to act. Unite. Advocate for the freedom of art. Struggle for the right to self-determination and self-government.

The Revolution creates freedom. Without freedom there is no art. Only in a free democratic republic can democratic art be possible.

Fight for the immediate convening of the Constituent Assembly, that will install a democratic republic.

Reject the ideas imposing shackles on freedom.

Demand the convening of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly of Artists on the basis of universal, equal, direct, private, and proportional election, without gender disparity. The Constituent Assembly of Artists will decide the question of arranging the artistic life of Russia. Convening of the Constituent Assembly of Artists is possible only after peace: the majority of comrades are in the trenches.

Protest against the institutions of the ministry of art or any department, against individual groups taking power until the will of the Constituent Assembly of Artists.

Come to the organizational meeting 11 March at 5 o'clock in the afternoon (Kazanskaia, 33, studio) Sunday, 12 March at 2 o'clock in the afternoon at Mikhailovskii Theater for a meeting of Artists.

The union of artistic, theatrical, musical and poetic societies, exhibitions, publications, journals and papers “Freedom to Art”.¹¹

¹¹ Inquiries about the meeting directed to V.M. Ermolaeva. *Pravda*, no.5, 11 March, 1917, pp.10-11.

1,500 artists protested with them the following day.¹² The goals of the group were far reaching and inclusive in the span of many disciplines. Members or organizers included Altman, Bruni, Punin and more. The group had formative ideas that led to the Free State Arts Studios but the group was short lived under the name “Freedom to Art”.

In Moscow, artists were also combining and collaborating on innovative projects, most noteworthy is the *Café (l’Estrade) “Pittoresque”*. Rodchenko, Tatlin, Yakulov and others participated on the re-design for the space. The space was called the “*Pittoresque*” for about one year and in that time was used by Mayakovsky for poetry, Meyerhold for performance, and by others as well.

Many artists in Russia were making collaborative efforts and statements to hold their ground during the tumultuous 1917, such as Freedom to Art. Some artists who were away returned to Russia, for instance Shterenberg, who in May of 1917 was exhibiting in Paris, then by July 1917 returned to Russia.¹³ Many artists left permanently because of the revolution and the state of their world.

¹² Gurianova, 2012, p.214.

¹³ Lazarev, 1992, p.151.

POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS OF 1917: Immediately prior to the Svomas schools' founding, a year of turmoil and revolution transformed Russia. The capitol of the Russian Empire, Petrograd was dangerous and badly damaged. Supplies and necessities were limited. People wanted help and needed more. In an unexpected turn of events, one of the most conspicuous sites of the Revolution, the former Winter Palace was taken over and used as a headquarters for education, arts, and design administration. These administrators founded Svomas.

Early in 1917 there was unrest in Petrograd during the February 1917 revolution from 7 to 11 March (22 to 26 February). Strikes, protests, demonstrations, discontent went on and continued throughout the year, marked first by the 12 March (27 February) revolution that overthrew the Tsarist government in Petrograd. In the next few days, the Provisional Government took over the Winter Palace. While there, the Palace was guarded by *junkers*, and fortified with defensive barricades.

The summer bore the July Days, with more armed revolts in Petrograd. Then the Provisional Government ordered arrests of Bolshevik leaders, and attempted to stop Bolshevik presses. At this time, 6 August 1917 (24 July). Trotsky and Lunacharsky were arrested and detained by the Provisional Government. Lunacharsky rejoined the Bolshevik party in August and was released in September.

The month of October was in continuous turmoil, John Reed reported: "day after day the Bolshevik orators toured the barracks and factories, violently denouncing "this Government of civil war"¹⁴ he observed how the orators rallied workers, "[...] between

¹⁴ Reed, 1919, p.51.

the gaunt brick walls of a huge unfinished building, ten thousand black-clothed men and women packed around a scaffolding draped in red, people heaped on piles of lumber and bricks, perched high up on shadowy girders, intent and thunder-voiced.”¹⁵

The revolutionary leadership continued to rally against and fight the Provisional Government. Trotsky wrote of the government working in the Winter Palace, that it “had already become a mere shadow of its former self. It had ceased to exist politically. In the course of November 7th (25 October) the Winter Palace was gradually surrounded from all sides by our troops. At one o’clock in the afternoon, in the name of the Military Revolutionary Committee, I announced at the sitting of the Petrograd Soviet that Kerensky’s Government no longer existed.”¹⁶

As of 7 November 1917, after the Provisional Government was removed from power, the center of Petrograd (Palace Square) was militarized and strewn with combatants, barricades, armored cars, along the boulevards were “marching soldiers, as far as the eye could reach. [...] All entrances to the Palace Square were closed by sentries, and a cordon of troops stretched clear across the western end, besieged by an uneasy throng of citizens.”¹⁷ Hazards and danger were real and everywhere as the Palace was weaponized: “Machine-guns were mounted on window-sills, rifles stacked between the mattresses.”¹⁸ That day, the Bolsheviks defeat the cadets or *junkers* that were defending it. They ousted the Provisional Government and took power.

¹⁵ Reed, 1919, p.52.

¹⁶ Trotsky, 1919 p.73.

¹⁷ Reed, 1919, p.91.

¹⁸ Reed, 1919, p.93.

On 8 November 1917 (26 October), new heads of government were appointed by the Bolshevik Central Committee. Lunacharsky, “a slight, student-like figure with the sensitive face of an artist,”¹⁹ became Commissar of Education for the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros).²⁰ A week later on 15 November, Narkompros was headquartered in the former Winter Palace. Reports from Moscow of fighting there, were troubling to many. Lunacharsky considered giving up his post when hearing falsely of a destroyed St. Basil’s Cathedral.²¹

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT OF NARKOMPROS 1918: Responding to fears and reports of damaged properties, valuables, art, and artifacts-- the new Bolshevik government began its art program under the aegis of Narkompros.

Early in the next year, 1918, the Fine Arts Department (IZO Narkompros) was established with Shterenberg as head by the end of January.²² Others that would join, include Altman as head of Petrograd office, artist Rozanova, critics Brik, and Punin.²³ Tatlin was put in charge of IZO Narkompros in Moscow, and this office included Kandinsky, Malevich, Rodchenko and others.²⁴ The department led museums, conservation efforts, public art projects, and commissions of contemporary art. Rodchenko oversaw the Museum Board. IZO Narkompros included 5 architects on its

¹⁹ Reed, 1919, p.52.

²⁰ Fitzpatrick, 1970, p.1.

²¹ Reed, 1919, 220-221; Fitzpatrick, 1970, p.13-4.

²² Lazarev, 1992, p.151; see Murray, 2012, pp.76-77 for a sense of the politics among other artists over Lunacharsky’s choice of Shterenberg for this position.

²³ Gray, 1962, p.220; Bowl, 1971, p.577.

²⁴ Bowl, 1971, p.577.

Arts Board including Shchuko.²⁵ IZO Narkompros would lead 28 art exhibitions from 1918-1920.²⁶

Futurist poets Burluik, Kamensky, and Mayakovsky, began printing and issuing arts decrees and manifesto statements in their *Futurist Gazette* on 15 March 1918. The content alternated between serious and irreverent. They pasted them all around the city, in front of cafes, and even on walls of homes. The *Futurist Gazette* included “Decree №1 on the Democratization of Arts (Fence Literature, and Public Square Painting)”.²⁷ These echoed the effects from Narkompros decrees but provided a sense of a future they wished for. Kamensky (author of “ferro-concrete poems” in 1914) anticipated a time after the revolution had settled when painting and music would be everywhere, where “every town and settlement could be turned into an astounding vision of a picturesque holiday [...]”²⁸ There were some moments of enthusiasm and celebration in despite continued and ongoing hardships. The public did not always react well to the provocative decrees but many artists with futurist and avant-garde tendencies did appreciate the effort, and the repercussions continued throughout the year and further.

During the month of March 1918, The Russian capitol city moved to Moscow, but Lunacharsky stayed in Petrograd for the time. By 28 March, Krupskaya was leading Narkompros as it began working in Moscow at the Ostozhenka 53 location.²⁹

²⁵ Lodder, 1983, p.49.

²⁶ Lodder, 1983, p.49.

²⁷ Digitized by the Museum of Modern Art; Krusanov, 2003, p.318-319.

²⁸ Woroszylski, 1970, 192-194.

²⁹ Fitzpatrick, 1970, p.18.

Lunacharsky considered Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin's wife) to be the “Soul of Narkompros”.³⁰

Many artists knew what they were witnessing, and experiencing was important, and that they would be interpreters of the events around them. Narkompros began offering opportunities to be involved in the present and to imagine a new future.

³⁰ Fitzpatrick, 1970, p.xii.

SUBSEQUENT WAVE OF REFORMS: Once Svomas was founded, many reforms changed the way design and art were produced and taught. Many feared the revolutionaries, that the Bolsheviks would be destructive. After their takeover, they set out to allay these fears by commissioning, collecting new art, and preserving Russian cultural heritage that was now under their control. One enormous initiative about public art, Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda led to many commissions for public art and events. Another initiative concerned museums—art collection and preservation. Importantly, one more aspect of the effort was educational initiatives led by Narkompros and IZO Narkompros which channeled the Bolshevik leadership's ideas and began to teach them in new schools.

Calls for reform and debates on restructuring the Imperial Academy of Arts had been active since well before the 1917 Revolutions. After the new administration took control, the calls and debates over reform heightened, major decisions were made, and actions taken. A decree from the Narkompros on 12 April 1918, abolished the Imperial Academy of Arts as it was previously known. Through 14 April 1918, newspapers announced that Narkompros was suspending the Academy of Arts and acquiring possession of all its properties. A “free art school” was mentioned that would begin in its place.³¹ These decrees were signed by Lenin, Lunacharsky, Stalin and others.³²

One of the students at this time, Sergei Senkin wrote (later in 1923) of this reform movement of April 1918,

³¹ *Pravda* n.72, 14 April 1918.

³² Eastman, 1919, p.41.

“It was absolutely necessary to dismantle the Academy, an ideological symbol of reactionary tsarism. It was still unthinkable to close it permanently due to losses, and jeopardizing training the workforce. It was indispensable to develop working methods that corresponded to the new requirements of the Revolution and to reform the way recruitment at the Academies operated, which implied and required their proletarianization. Finally, the new schools’ objectives had to be linked to production, of which even the best representatives of the former Academy were totally ignorant.”³³

In the same series of orders, decrees and announcements, new public arts initiatives were launched, both to remove tsarist monuments and to commission new ones.³⁴ The program was known as the Plan for Monumental Propaganda.³⁵

Preservation and museum curation projects were launched and from 28 May to 28 June 1918 with a defined program and scope.³⁶ The preservation commissions sparked controversy between classicists and futurists.

After being in office for half a year, Lunacharsky addressed education in a speech on 2 June 1918, Lunacharsky saying Narkompros “has done very little in the field of reforms in popular education, since this problem could be approached intelligently only after the removal of the Commissariat to Moscow.”³⁷ Once Narkompros moved he felt there was much to be done. In the speech he continued, to address critiques of the work they had done so far,

“It has become customary to accuse the new Government of indifference toward the cultural values of the past, and, particularly, of disrupting the schools. Such an accusation is obviously wrong. In so far as the school stands for wrong principles, breeding privileges and a spirit of utilitarianism, and is a servant of the ruling classes, it has been destroyed. Such a school system was an instrument to befog

³³ Quoted in Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1, p.37.

³⁴ *Pravda*, n.72, April 14, 1918.

³⁵ Senkevitch, 1974, p.23.

³⁶ Eastman, 1919, pp.49-55.

³⁷ Eastman, 1919, p.15.

the consciousness of the masses and crippled the children physically and spiritually. The destruction of the old school system, as an integral part of the whole social structure of the past was brought about not by a group of individuals, but by the elemental force of life itself. History had paved the way for such a destruction, and it had become a pressing necessity of the present revolutionary period.”³⁸

Lunacharsky made the point that history is not the past. Many of the era believed in the historical consequences of their own lives, and knew their work was history at the present.³⁹ In the speech, utilitarianism was associated with servitude and was problematic in that it did not enable workers. He brought up many further issues that would guide the founding of new schools,

“The school no longer needs teachers who simply are office holders, teachers appointed from above, teachers detached from the people. Our Commissariat emphasizes this circumstance and suggests the principle of electing teachers by local organs created by the population itself. [paragraph] The school has ceased to be a source of privileges based on other values than intellect and knowledge. The Commissariat, therefore, is taking prompt action to abolish diplomas and certificates conferring all sorts of privileges on persons graduated from various branches of academic training. [paragraph] The old school system was not a channel of education but an instrument for obscuring the mind of the people. The revolution has swept away this school system. Governmental activity has brought new problems before the school. Our Commissariat, as an educational center, is engaged, as a first step, in freeing the school from church influences and encroachments—the separation of the school from the church.”⁴⁰

Lunacharsky expressed an intent to ban religious teaching, make schools “compulsory and accessible to all”, to remove costs making education tuition free, and to consider the school “a labor unit”.⁴¹

³⁸ Eastman, 1919, p.16.

³⁹ For discussion of Bolshevik leadership and their senses of history, see: Wilson, 1940.

⁴⁰ Eastman, 1919, pp.16-17.

⁴¹ Eastman, 1919, p.17.

Similar to the Imperial Academy of Arts in Petrograd, schools in Moscow had storied pasts, that were being reformed drastically. On 12 July 1918, the Moscow Art Society was discontinued along with their patronage of the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. The school's functions, properties, and facilities were set to be directed by Narkompros.⁴²

Despite how reform unnerved many academics, Lunacharsky wrote of need for "complete reform" of universities and an intention to move towards a free form of education.⁴³ The reforms were implemented, and many new schools were founded by decree and their rules were outlined by 2 August 1918.⁴⁴

With the establishment of schools under new directives, and the promise of re-organization as "free schools", the next major step was to write programs, plan and begin teaching.

PLANNING NEW SCHOOLS: On 8 August 1918, The Moscow Arts Collegium wrote a program for the process of selecting faculty in free studios, and later Petrograd Narkompros approves it, and it was sent to press.⁴⁵ In Vitebsk, on 23 August 1918. Chagall sent plans for a school and museum to Narkompros and after approval, published an announcement.⁴⁶

⁴² Eastman, 1919, pp.41-42.

⁴³ Fitzpatrick, 1970, p.75.

⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick, 1970, p.77.

⁴⁵ Krusanov, 2003, pp.88-89.

⁴⁶ Lampe, 2018, p.252.

With both the Stroganov School and the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture under the administration of Narkompros,⁴⁷ instructions for admission, signed by commissar Lunacharsky, Shterenberg and secretary A. Trounine were published on 7 September 1918, in the newspaper *Izvestia*:

1. “All who want can receive a specialized artistic education at the Free State Arts Studios.
2. Age 16 is the minimum age of enrollment. Note: presentation of a diploma not necessary for admission to Free State Arts Studios.
3. Students at the previous art schools are now considered students of the Free State Arts Studios.
4. Requests for admission will be received all year round.”⁴⁸

The plan for the Svomas educational platform was founded on several freedoms: free admission process open to all, free choice of instructors, and cost-free education with no tuition. This was appealing to students for many reasons, the sentiment was akin to rhetoric of freedom and liberty from earlier revolutions.

With these September decrees and directives, Svomas was established in Moscow.⁴⁹ Svomas 1 was planned to begin on the campus of the Stroganov School. Svomas 2 was planned to begin on the campus of the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture.⁵⁰ Publications announcing the schools led to high levels of applications and enrollment.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.175.

⁴⁸ Translated in Gray, 1962, p.221; Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.175.

⁴⁹ Bokov, 2020, p.86.

⁵⁰ Zygaz, 1981, p.51.

⁵¹ Fitzpatrick, 1970 p.77.

OPENING OF PETROGRAD SVOMAS: In October 1918, Svomas was established in Petrograd on the campus of the Academy of Arts. The school opened on 10 October 1918, just one year after the October Revolution. Commissar Lunacharsky gave a speech at the opening, called simply, “*Iskusstvo*” (Art).⁵²

In the speech, art and culture of the proletariat were a starting point, with society and humanity at stake. He described how the role of art and of artists, after the October revolution, had changed substantially along with the changes in ideology. Lunacharsky argued that artists must be part of society and the present and not fall behind or try to be ahead their time. On the artwork as commodity, under socialism, he described the artist as unrestricted from needs to sell their work to survive: "Socialism strives for a point that every valuable worker for society -- especially the worker producing creative value, -- can have perfect freedom from the vagaries of the market."⁵³

While creating Svomas, a school named and founded on freedom, Lunacharsky questioned the ideal of freedom in several critical statements on limitations he perceived. These amount to a dichotomy of individual and society, and the intent of the speech was to prepare the school for collective work. Analogies were made to grand projects that took whole civilizations to complete: the architecture of the city-communes of antiquity and the gothic cathedrals, made by societies rather than by a patronized individual.

Lunacharsky argued that class system has caused factions and conflicts within art methods and a condition lacking unity, then elaborated on this in terms of sides viewing

⁵² Lunacharsky, “*Iskusstvo (Art)*— A Speech Given At the 10 October 1918 Opening of the Petrograd Svomas”; For complete translation see Appendix A.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

the world in terms of "old and new". Nearing closure, one passage encapsulated much of the speech:

"Here in Petrograd, on the campus of the former Academy of Arts, we hope this year will be the first experiment of a kind of freedom for artistic self-determination, collaboration between the older and younger comrades --- collaboration of the highest order, of active and illuminated by the immediate task placing life before the whole artistic world, with no division between old and young, famous and unknown, creation of a really free unrestricted contest, in such a way a soldier could become a field marshal, as always in an epoch of revolution, when every talent can find due respect and place. "⁵⁴

MEETINGS ABOUT ART: In the first few weeks after the opening, a series of four rallies, "Meetings About Art" were held on the Petrograd Svomas campus (former Academy of Arts) and at the Palace of Arts (former Winter Palace). The rallies were publicized and reviewed in the press to generate interest and excitement about the school and its activities. They were on defined topics (1. "Meeting about Art," 2. "The Minority in Art," 3. "Futurists and Artistic Creativity," and 4. "Temple or Factory") with numerous speakers from the administration and faculty (Altman, Brik, Mayakovsky, Puni, Punin, Shterenberg, and more) and audience participation and discussion were encouraged. The meeting organizers encouraged participation and attendance of industrial workers, and military personnel of soldiers, and sailors.⁵⁵

Throughout the meetings, there was a reprimanding attitude towards the pre-reform Academy of Arts—its traditions, canons and dogmas were denounced with an

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Krusanov, 2003, pp.89-90; 175-177.

outline for a plan to improve upon them. One speaker, Punin directly stated at the last meeting:

“The Winter Palace, in which this rally is taking place, does not represent the art of the proletariat. It is the remains of a past culture. The time of collectivism cannot be satisfied by the old. Everything is changing. The old forms of artistic utility must be changed as well.”⁵⁶

In the meetings, the arts were defined in terms of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie represented past problems and the proletariat presented a potential for future change. Within the revolutionary groups the speakers acknowledged a degree of mismatch between the ideologies of futurists and the proletariat, which they argued was a discrepancy that could be resolved.

The fourth meeting, "Temple or Factory" brought alternate metaphors for the conception of art and role of the museum. A history of art was related by the Punin, with the story middle age guilds thriving despite feudalism. Then he told of the rise of monarchy, aristocracy, then the revolution in France which left a situation of class conflict between bourgeoisie and proletarian cultures. Punin noticed the disjunction of design separated from implementation and its issues, saying that workers should have more share in decision making that is allotted to designers. This was due to their understanding through active labor and application of materials. Another speaker, Brik argued that the proletariat needs to do more than replace and become the new bourgeoisie but called upon them to reinvent and improve upon culture.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Mayakovsky spoke as well, and in dire terms called upon artists to make art everywhere, and for it to not be bound to museums:

“We should say that it is not a dead temple of art, where dead works languish, instate the living word, and raw deeds. Art of the present is not that good. All the old motifs and landscapes speak only with the gossip of the rich and bourgeoisie. It is a shame that artists waste their talent on such unnecessary things. Art should be focused not on dead temple-museums – but on the streets, streetcars, the factories, the studios and the workers’ neighborhoods.”⁵⁷

Mayakovsky presented several variants on this idea of a wave of painting throughout cities, and it resonates with a prevalent philosophy of synthesis among arts. The Plan for Monumental Propaganda initiative also offered state funding and support at the time.

Opening events took place in Moscow as well, 13 December 1918, Lunacharsky gave another opening speech at the official opening of Svomas 2 in Moscow.⁵⁸ Ilya Mashkov gave an inauguration speech at the event, as well.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid. This passage is also quoted in Woroszylski, 1970, p.246.

⁵⁸ *Iskusstvo*, n.3, 1 February 1919, p.3.; Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1. p.173.

⁵⁹ Podzemskaia, 2019, p.221.

CHAPTER 2

DURING SVOMAS

INITIATIVE OVERVIEW: In all the Svomas schools, the organizational selection process of the studio courses was of three kinds: 1) student select instructors 2) students have no instructor 3) students are appointed an instructor. Papers presented a round of faculty candidates for students to select. Announcements emphasized the element of contemporary practice and being the brightest leaders in developing vanguard movements in art.⁶⁰ The faculty was often considered in terms of “left” or “right”; “futurist” or “traditional”; “contemporary” or “classical” in their methodologies and approaches to teaching and design. There were centrists as well. The leftists or avant-garde professors at Svomas amounted to fewer on the faculty, yet many held important administrative roles in addition to teaching.⁶¹

Outside of studios there were a wide variety of elective courses in Aesthetics, Philosophy of Art, Theory of Art, History and Criticism of Art, History of Russian Art, History of Antique Mythology, History of French Contemporary Art, Anatomy as well as courses in drawing, texture or faktura, colors and composition, scenography, psychology, logic and philosophy in contemporary art, poetic theory.⁶² In Moscow, Mayakovsky taught a course on poetics. In Petrograd, Lunacharsky taught a course on Sociology of Art.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Iskusstvo* n.1, 5 January, 1919, p.2.

⁶¹ Evsev'ev, 2017, p.41.

⁶² Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 pp.173-174.

⁶³ Evsev'ev, 2017, p.39.

Outside of school there were public design competitions, and students were offered work on commissions for public art.

PERSONNEL AND PEDAGOGIES: Elevating new faculty, and curriculum from scratch for the new studios was a major effort. Many people were involved and even in the most popular discipline, painting, there was a significance to architects and architecture, in the agenda. Towards the end of 1918 Ilya Mashkov listed the “composition of each studio” at Svomas 2, as follows:

1. “A principal master-worker, an architect
2. An assistant to the master-worker, an architect
3. A few technician-instructors (etchers, engravers, foundry workers, etc.)
4. A master-worker-theorist in a science (anatomy, perspective, history of contemporary art, occidental, Russian, philosophy, chemistry, physics, etc.)
5. A team leader with assistants
6. The students (group of seniors, juniors, freshmen)
7. Employees”⁶⁴

In terms of teaching, Kandinsky held an important senior faculty role in addition to administrative duties. A sense of the pedagogical ideas and theories of how to teach at Svomas was elaborated in his “Theses of Teaching.” This was written for the school years 1918-1919 and 1919-1920. The annual drafts were nearly identical, have been preserved, and follow:⁶⁵

“For the study of art, two conditions are necessary:

1. Availability of the internal world of the artist, that is, an inherent internal world from which ideas of works will naturally be born, -- an innate condition.

⁶⁴ Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v1. p.182.

⁶⁵ Podzemskaia, 2019, p.225.

2. Availability of positive objective knowledge, is a prerequisite for implementing ideas in the form of an artistic work, -- a condition, worked out through the experiences of the whole life of the artist.

The second condition begins in school. The artistic form, unavoidable by every given artist, is in turn created from two kinds of knowledge:

1. Knowledge of a few permanent principles of art, a few rules, corresponding to the given time, and knowledge of the properties and strengths of artistic material in general.
2. Personal knowledge, unavoidable for each given artist, and for the most part pertaining to them alone.

This second kind of knowledge, the artist can learn only from themselves, that is, revealing their special forms, and through them the very personality of the artist. The first kind of knowledge is acquired not through the internal self, but from sources lying outside the artist – at first in the conditions of time in school.

Therefore, the task of time in school should be to receive certain knowledge of several common rules of art, knowledge, peculiar to certain kinds of art (painting, sculpture and so on), knowledge of material and techniques. In school generally, whatever forms may be operating (representational or abstract), should proceed along a certain path, should accumulate a reserve of knowledge, acquired in a number of exercises.

1. Exercises in living nature – resting or animate.
2. Exercises in deceased nature.
3. Works by impression.
4. Works by sketching, composition and so on.

For classes in abstract painting, special exercises on abstract forms are beneficial but not mandatory for all participants, only for those who express an interest in this.

The head of a studio should give the students the possibility to work completely freely without any pressure of individual inclination, and therefore their responsibility is to give the students the knowledge which they are searching for at any given moment, independently of individual goals of the head of the studio. Every true artist certainly must find exactly the forms that are necessary for them. And from there it follows:

1. The school can and should facilitate the task of reporting already common knowledge in art, that searching for, without the school, would have spent a lot of time, unproductively.
2. The school should not give some specific, already made form, not their own, and even contrary to their spirit. Such pressure has and always has had the effect of repressing the weaker talent, or, in the best case, the stronger talents lose unnecessary time in their efforts to get rid of bad habits they become accustomed

to, even worse, the views (efforts, from which the school is obliged to release the students).

In this way, the school should, without overbearingly leading the students, but only facilitating them to find their own path, and to develop independence in the aspiring artists. The artist must find their path by themselves, such that they do not require as much effort (efforts, from which the school has no right to release the student).

If the artist tries to avoid these efforts, often connected with sufferings, they will proceed along an already made path that does not relate to them, their work will be stillborn: a lie punishable in art by death. Unparalleled diversity and outwardly contradictory forms of art in our time are an imperative necessity to create all new forms in the future make the danger of falsely chosen path especially threatening: the students can be directed in a way that is diametrically opposite direction from their own true path.

Therefore, identification of the personal inclinations of the students unavoidably starts with the common devices of studying material nature, living or deceased. With time, they will form their own groups of students – with degree of knowledge and inclination – specialized knowledge and their devices.”⁶⁶

Kandinsky’s theses gave a good indication of the pedagogical direction at Svomas, from one of the leading faculty. He taught a group of students but reached many more as his book was sold on Svomas campuses, (See Illustrations 3, and 4). In his “Theses of Teaching” there was an emphasis on student independence with guidance under certain conditions. There was an understanding that each student had a path and direction that should be developed when leading to the advancement of knowledge. Critics of Kandinsky considered his pedagogy and method too individual, and contrary to collective goals. The goals of collective thinkers centered around productivity and advancing proletarian workers in terms of culture.

⁶⁶ An English translation was first published in: Bowlt and Misler, 2002, pp.119-121. It was also translated into French in Khan-Magomedov, 1990, p.196-197. This translation is from the Russian text.

There were courses for training instructors as well, that were held in Petrograd at the former Academy of Arts Svomas campus and led by the pedagogical section of the Narkompros Collegium. Nathan Altman lectured on new art, Baranov-Rossine on simultaneism, Punin on history of art, Karev on painterly culture, Brik on the sociology of art. These were designed to teach senior faculty concepts from the newer movements.⁶⁷

While student applications and attendance numbers were reportedly high at Svomas, advertisements for the schools continued into the year. On 22 February 1919, *Iskusstvo* published an emphatic call to workers in all arts and trades to study at Svomas:

“COMRADS, WORKERS!

The First State Studios of Free Art are open to all who want to work there. The First State Free Art Studios are equipped so that workers learn what is necessary for the creation of art in itself and also in professional sectors related to the plastic arts. The First State Studios of Free Art represent an important asset for the development of artistic industry for the state, which cannot achieve a higher status without the active participation of the workers themselves. Textile workers, cotton printers, mold makers, those who work in glass, porcelain, wood, building painters, theater workers, lithographers, printers, engravers and decorators—in the laboratories of the First State Free Art Studios you can learn everything that is indispensable concerning art and its concrete realization. Acquiring knowledge will permit you to elevate your qualifications in the most noble sense of the word. You will be able to make your artistic forces manifest in your professional work. For the moment the following painting studios and laboratories are equipped and open: textiles, printing; theater sets, props; metals; printing (etching, engraving); sculpture in wood; carpentry; sculpture, fresco and decorative art. The classes take place between 9 am to 9 pm in the studios of the former Stroganov School.”⁶⁸

⁶⁷ “Instruktorskie Kursy” *Iskusstvo Kommuny*. n.3. 22 December 1918. p.4.

⁶⁸ *Iskusstvo* n.4, p.4; also translated into French in Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.179.

By April 1919, the Arts Collegium had clarified the directions and intentions of the reforms in education. They argued for unified scientific-artistic methods that furthered technics, as well as theory and history.

“Before all else, there is marked demand for the creation of well-equipped laboratories, where technology of artistic materials is researched especially and comprehensively. Further, the developing interest in studying theory of art indicates an unavoidable systematic organization of the respective branches of scientific work: aesthetics, psychology, theory of knowledge and so on. Finally, the study of history of the arts requires the creation of new centers, constructed on broad scientific-artistic basis.”⁶⁹

On paper, the Svomas framework was expansive. It provided for training workers in arts and sciences, developments in culture, innovations backed by reasonable combinations of a scientific-artistic agenda, as well as combinations of history and theory allowing for their contemporary progress.

ENROLLMENT AT SVOMAS, 1918-1920

PETROGRAD SVOMAS: In the first semester, Fall 1918, at Petrograd Svomas (Academy of Arts) there were nearly twice the number of applicants than the number of enrolled students, at 762 students by the opening of the school in October. The school had 29 studios. This amounts to over twice the number of students and nearly three times the number of studios than before the reforms.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Altman, Punin, Shterenberg et al. “Deklaratsiia,” *Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo*, 1919 p.84)

⁷⁰ Evsev'ev, 2017, p.39.

MOSCOW SVOMAS 1: By the beginning of January 1919, at Moscow Svomas 1 (Stroganov School) 718 students were registered. There were 30 groups: 14 in painting, 4 in sculpture and 12 in specialized fields. A. Lentulov was delegated to respond to questions of how the school functions.⁷¹

Among the painting faculty candidate options were: Lentulov, Malevich, Morgunov, and Tatlin.

Decorative art faculty were: Yakulov, Lentulov, Mashkov, Rozanova, and Ekster.

Architecture faculty candidate options were: Shchusev, and Fomin.

Some courses on art history were taught by: Benois, and Grabar; some courses on poetics were taught by: Bely, Bryusov, Ivanov, and Mayakovsky. Sociology was taught by Bukharin, and Lunacharsky.⁷²

MOSCOW SVOMAS 2: By the beginning of January 1919, at Moscow Svomas 2 (Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture) 1,200 students were registered. There were 24 groups: 14 in painting, 4 in sculpture, 3 in architecture, 1 in engraving, 1 in photography, and 1 painting studio without a supervisor.⁷³ Ilya Mashkov was delegated to respond to questions of how the school functions. Later in the year he was replaced by critic Osip Brik.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.174.

⁷² Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.178-179.

⁷³ *Iskusstvo*, n.4, 22 February, 1919, p.3; Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.173.

⁷⁴ Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 p.173.

Among the painting faculty candidate options were: A.E Arkhipov, R.R. Falk, W.W.

Kandinsky, P.P. Konchalovskii, P.V. Kuznetsov, K.S. Malevich, S.V. Maliutin, I.I.

Mashkov, A.A. Morgunov, V.V. Rozhdestvenskii, V.E. Tatlin.

Sculpture faculty candidate options were: Arkhipenko, A.S. Golubkina, S.T. Konenkov,

A.T Matveev, S.M. Volnukhin.

Architecture faculty candidate options were: I.V. Rylski, A.V. Shchusev, Solugub, and

I.V. Zholtovsky.⁷⁵

ENROLLMENT IN REGIONAL BRANCHES

In the first January, reports of the Svomas regional branches were as follows:

Svomas in Ryazan had 365 students in 5 groups: 2 painting, 1 sculpture, 1 carpentry, and 1 printing.

Svomas in Voronezh had 140 students in 4 groups.

Svomas in Penza had 197 students in 7 groups: 3 painting, 1 sculpture, 1 engraving, 1 ceramics, and 1 decorative.

Svomas in Kazan had 300 students in 5 groups.

Svomas in Saratov had 383 students in 8 groups: 6 painting, 1 sculpture, and 1 engraving.

Svomas was being developed in more cities: Tver', Tambov, Yaroslavl.⁷⁶

In Vitebsk, Chagall founded a school along the lines of Svomas but it was not implemented fully there until May 1920.

⁷⁵ *Iskusstvo* n.1, 5 January 1919, p.2; Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1 pp.182.

⁷⁶ *Iskusstvo*, n.4, 22 February 1919, p.3

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLLEGIUM

The Collegium of Fine Arts of the Russian Commissariat for Enlightenment included many faculty and programs that included or pertained to Svomas. The following is its administrative schema by 1919 and published in 1920:.

“Central office: Moscow

Branch office: Petersburg

Agencies: in all governed cities

1. Directors: D. Shterenberg, W. Kandinsky, O. Brik.
2. Academic Committees: Reform of the art academies, Free State Art Workshops in Moscow, Petersburg and the Provinces.
3. Art Industry Committees: Art production workshops. Support for folk arts and crafts etc.
4. Russian State Exhibition Bureau. Directors: Strzeminski and V. Kandinsky. Organization of state art exhibitions and mobile exhibitions for the provinces, as well as founding state museums of the new art.
5. Monumental Sculpture Committee: Chairman: B. Korolev.
6. Art Education Committee:
 - a) Lecture bureau.
 - b) Information bureau and management of the “Art Encyclopedia”.
 - c) First Institute for Art Pedagogy. Moscow. Founded 1919.
 - d) State Art Publishing House
7. International Art Bureau: Connection of Russian artists with European artistic life, preparations for the “First International Congress of New Art”. Members: W. Kandinsky, A. Lunacharsky, Sophia Dymshitz-Tolstaia, V. Tatlin, K. Malevich, A. Morgunov, Sergei Poliakov, and others.
8. Financial-Administrative Committee etc.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Umanskij, 1920, p.64.

AVANT-GARDE STUDIO COLLECTIVES: For almost two centuries the Imperial Academy of Arts in Petrograd had established traditions of teaching fine arts in the classical manner. The Academy taught generations of talented students the disciplines of art history and historical styles, analysis of anatomy, naturalism and realism, techniques of carving, architectural design and drafting, all conceivable components that lead to excellence in creating fine arts. The Academy was involved in developing the major movements in the history of Russian art, including religious and historical paintings and nineteenth century realism. The school hosted many important lectures, events, and debates over the years. In Moscow, the Stroganov School, and Moscow School of Painting and Architecture had comparable storied pasts. After Narkompros suspended classes and seized the properties of these three establishments, the administration overlaid them with Free State Arts Studios under new direction. Remnants the schools' traditions persisted in the very architecture and institutional memory that housed Svomas. The new revolutionary artists wanted this to end by opening classical art to everyone, but more so by advancing design and arts into a contemporary era.

ALTMAN: Altman had made a name for himself as a cubo-futurist painter, before he led a Svomas studio and held administrative positions. He had a lot of responsibility and work during the Svomas years and balanced creating, teaching and leadership. His studios began with low enrollment, but he made art for a mass audience that demonstrated the new initiatives with his installations for the 1st Anniversary of the October Revolutions at Palace Square in 1918. The event took place just after Svomas was founded, was an early significant product of Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda and one of the best examples of revolutionary art. Altman encouraged collectivism in his writing, declaring that the work could not be divided in terms of individuals. Collectivism in his work, as with the avant-garde for the most part, presented a tension between exceptionality and commonality. Many of the designs are unquestionably uncommon but fit a *zeitgeist*—and shared traits in a consciousness of his time and culture.

BEFORE SVOMAS: Altman had established connections with other figures in the art world and learned from travel especially from the art world in France. While in his early twenties, in 1910-1912, Altman attended Marie Vassilieff's Russian Academy in Paris, which was also called the Free Russian Academy. Independent academies such as this provided inspiration for the young artists, teaching newer methods and philosophies of art. Lunacharsky had written about Russian artists in Paris in 1914, but dialogs and exchanges in art matters between Russia and points further west in Europe were ongoing. Chagall, Lunacharsky, and Shterenberg had visited or worked at *La Ruche* in Paris in these years, Altman even named a painting *La Ruche* after the iconic place.

Through these experiences and exposures Altman had developed a method of cubo-futurist painting, one peak of this work was his 1914 painting of Anna Akhmatova. The painting was exhibited with *Mir Iskusstva* in 1915, the image was published in the journal *Apollon* in January of the next year.

While back in Russia, in 1915-1916, Altman began teaching in M.D. Bernshtein's studio, Tatlin taught there as well.⁷⁸ Altman's principles for art and artistic pedagogy were to teach students: "not to copy reality, but to create an illusion of believability, transforming it by working not from inspiration but from intuition and consciously taking each step in the process by clearly delineating each task and solving each problem."⁷⁹

For some reason, deliberate or not, Altman had a reputation for absence from teaching at this time, a student reported that while Altman was hired as an instructor, he was known for not being present for his own course at the workshops.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, reviews for Altman's art showed why he was important. Punin wrote of his work in a review of young artists' drawings in the April and May 1916 edition of *Apollon*, placing him "among the best contemporary Russian masters" due to what he considered "the expression of absolute form."⁸¹ Punin proceeded to analyze Altman's portrait of Akhmatova in terms of such form, "The portrait has no source of light, the light only serves the expression of form, in particular – volume and paint. Form in its volume and spatial relations taken independently from the given moment and condition;

⁷⁸ Orlov, 2003, p.50-51.

⁷⁹ Etkind, 1971, p.52.

⁸⁰ Orlov, 2003, p.51.

⁸¹ Punin, 1916, p.1.

to show the body or pose beyond time, in garments, that is in material to show the depth of the body, its capacity, its density”.⁸² A few passages later, Punin takes a more critical view that he sees too much individuality in Altman’s work and not enough connection to the traditions of Russian art.

After the February 1917 Revolution, by 12 March 1917, Altman, Mayakovsky, Meyerhold, Prokofiev, Punin, and others formed a society, “Freedom to Art,” in response to political events and proposals by the Provisional Government. that while holding few meetings, it included ideas and people that would go on to be involved in Svomas.⁸³ The Founders Meeting for the “Freedom to Art” association appealed and protested “undemocratic attempts of certain groups to obtain control of the arts” against Tsarist groups and the commissions for the arts appointed by the Provisional Government.⁸⁴ Mayakovsky made an impassioned speech and concluded with a personal and group motto: “long live the political life of Russia and long live art free from politics!”⁸⁵

Osip Brik wrote an essay that responds directly to the group and some of their activities. He mentioned the group among other emerging groups in the opening and questioned the group’s intentions, comparing with notions centered on people, and a democratic form of folk art.⁸⁶ There were many at work in the arts reckoning with the new issues in politics, what the revolution would mean for democracy and for their work.

⁸² Ibid., p.3.

⁸³ Gurianova, 2012, p.214-216.

⁸⁴ Woroszylski, 1970, pp.175-176.

⁸⁵ Woroszylski, 1970, p.177.

⁸⁶ Brik, “Democratization of Art”, July-August 1917, translated by Natasha Kurchanova 2010.

The title of Brik's article was echoed later in the "Decree #1 On the Democratization of Arts" in Kamensky and Mayakovsky's *Futurist Gazette*.

ALTMAN AS ADMINISTRATOR: After the October Revolution, Altman was involved in policy, commissioning, and worked in governmental graphic design, with a busy and multifaceted career.⁸⁷ After initially planning to travel to San Francisco, Altman was convinced to stay in Petrograd by Shterenberg and Lunacharsky. He was given an office in the Palace of Arts (in the newly repurposed Winter Palace) and was appointed to the artistic administration. In March of 1918 an arts Collegium began to meet there daily as part of IZO Narkompros. Shterenberg presided over the Collegium. Altman was appointed to the Collegium in March 1918, a job he held alongside Brik, Mayakovsky, and Punin. They were considered avant-gardist and leftist in positions of high authority. This group contrasted significantly with their academician counterparts.⁸⁸ The architects on the Collegium and in administrative roles tended towards classicism, while the painters, sculptors, and writers led more forward-looking projects.

On 11 April, Shterenberg and Altman created a parallel Collegium in Moscow which was directed by Tatlin. Members of the Moscow Collegium included Dymshits-Tolstaia, Kandinsky, Malevich, Rozanova, and Udaltsova. This administration included members of many prevailing positions and movements. Altman strayed from the position

⁸⁷ Lozowick, 1926, p.64.

⁸⁸ Bliznakov, 1971, p.29-30.

of the Union of Artists, which had an independent and decisively apolitical resolution accepted on April 7, 1918.

Just days later, Lenin signed his decree on monuments, and many commissions followed.⁸⁹ The decree, “On the Monuments of the Republic” passed by the Soviet of Peoples Commissars on 12 April. Lenin’s Plan for Monumental Propaganda set out to organize public festivals on certain occasions such as May Day and revolutionary anniversaries. Lenin’s plan intended celebrations to intertwine the political agenda and education, as evident in the decrees. The results went to press to instruct people on the program.⁹⁰ The “Declaration on the question of the Academy of Arts” was launched contemporaneously.⁹¹ These two legislative acts would have great consequence for Altman and other artists. They led to widespread reforms of art schools including the Academy of Arts in Petrograd, in the Svomas initiative.

During this time. Altman designed heraldry and emblems for the new government. He entered a sketch for a flag in a competition held in the spring and summer of 1918 and was recognized with a prize. Also in the spring of 1918 he won the top award for his designs for four postage stamps in another competition. His stamp design project was highlighted among the entries in publications. This was the first post-October Revolution postage stamp. His designs showed content of proletarian revolutionary iconography, through a framework of fragmented borders, and windows. Many of the iconographic elements (grain, sickles, machines, factories) as well as the

⁸⁹ Etkind, 1971, p.39-41.

⁹⁰ Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke, 1990, p.12-13; p.39.

⁹¹ Etkind, 1971, p.49.

color schemes (black, red and gold) in these images adhered as standard motifs well beyond the revolutionary phase and into later soviet culture. He was moving from traditional artistic work painting landscapes and portraits into the world of designing graphic emblems for the state.⁹²

At the 10 October 1918 opening of the Petrograd Svomas, Lunacharsky addressed attendees with more information about the program for monuments.

BEGINNING OF SVOMAS, TRANSFORMATION OF URITSKY SQUARE: Altman's lead work for the festival at Uritsky Square demonstrated many of the revolutionary ideas in art and design that had been developing and was, in a way, a form of pedagogy.

The site was a center of attention for the many festivals across Russia on the 1st Anniversary of the October Revolution, due to its location across from the former Winter Palace and seat of government on all sides. Palace Square (renamed Uritsky Square by the Bolsheviks after a head of Petrograd Cheka who was assassinated in 1918) is renowned for its classical architecture and Altman's installation obstructed and stood in contradiction to these surroundings. The festival itself drew many and was a mass gathering as a kind of collective schooling that became a prototype for many events that followed. It exemplifies education and instruction through event planning and activism. Like many works exhibited or performed it is a starting point for teaching that leads to efforts at shared memory and commemoration.

⁹² Etkind, 1971, p.40.

The Plan for Monumental Propaganda required a more realistic yet somehow larger-than-life and ever more grandiose statues. Some of these were unveiled in September of 1918, and many more through February and March of 1919. Altman advised and headed many of the commissions. The Plan for Monumental Propaganda led to a prodigious number of designs over the years, mostly of a temporal nature. The first anniversary festival showed work by a group of nearly 170 artists.⁹³ Shterenberg designed a mural called “Sun of Freedom” for Petrograd (See Illustration 5). In Vitebsk, Chagall coordinated the event and designed murals. In Moscow, the Vesnin Brothers provided red flag decorations for the Kremlin.⁹⁴ There were many more. There were traditional and classical architectural designs for the festival, but Altman’s project characterized the event in a way well suited to the occasion. The revolution included design and avant-garde artists were creating a revolutionary style. Elements of agitation, slogans deliberately clashed with the classicism of Petrograd.⁹⁵ One prominently positioned line from the anthem *the Internationale*, read: “Who was once nothing, will now become everything”.⁹⁶ It was funded by Narkompros, the department of education and was visited by many included many students of all ages (See Illustration 6).

Critical reception of the festivals ranged from trust in the artists to disappointment with their production. A January 1919 critical review of Altman’s work cited it as an “exemplary solution” and was “a correct new principle capable of broad application in

⁹³ Etkind, 1971, p.42.

⁹⁴ Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke, 1990, plate 1.

⁹⁵ Etkind, 1971, p.42.

⁹⁶ Etkind, 1971, p.42, this line is an excerpt from an anthem, *the Internationale*, quoted on his 1918 poster.

the future.” Approaching a teachable, repeatable model, Altman’s work was assessed by the same critic, to be “totally new and contrasting” in the way Altman met the site of classical architecture with an “angular and disturbing” opposition.⁹⁷ The portal openings had precariously balanced geometrical volumes that appear obstructive and decisively in contrast to the classical architecture. Soon after the festivals, Altman published an article “Payment for Labor” in *Art of the Commune*. In it he gives a scenario of how artists would function financially in the new communist economy.⁹⁸ In the same issue of the journal, Punin published an article, “Towards a Summary of the October Celebrations” in which he has some mild praise and more criticism for all the work. Punin’s article described Altman’s project from both positive and negative sides in terms of utility and the revolutionaries’ goals.⁹⁹

In hindsight, Altman wrote of his work for Uritsky Square, questioning the notion of decoration.¹⁰⁰ Altman described the abstract forms of the rostrum at the base of the Alexander Column as “tongues of fire leaping upwards”.¹⁰¹

There were other projects that were noteworthy, In the estimation of one critic, the most important work in the festivals of the 1st anniversary of the October Revolution was Ilya Mashkov’s studio’s work at the Moscow Svomas 2 building on Myasnitskaya Street. One critic expected these mural installations to “go down in the history of Russian

⁹⁷ Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke, 1990, p.82.

⁹⁸ For a translation, see Appendix D.

⁹⁹ For a translation, see Appendix D.

¹⁰⁰ Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke, 1990, p.70-71.

¹⁰¹ Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke, 1990, p.71.

art,” due to the painting school showing its works on the outside surfaces of the building where they were produced.¹⁰²

Compared to projects for the anniversary by architects such as Shchuko, Altman’s work stood out for its non-traditional, agitational, and revolutionary character.¹⁰³ The designs were of vivid and brilliant colors, and unusual forms for streetscapes, and seemed contrary, defiant, and oppositional towards the classical architecture around the square.¹⁰⁴

DURING SVOMAS, ALTMAN AS PROFESSOR: From 1918 to 1920, Altman taught two Svomas studios, one painting and one sculpture studio. Altman had some experience teaching in the studio of M.D. Bernshtein from 1915-1916. Through painting he wanted students to be able to see through the subject of study, to the constructive basis, to the bones and skeletal structure, of what they were looking at. He taught students to look for the interactions of colors and shade independent from tonal modelling, and the underlying content expressed in the formal plasticity of volumes and planes. He taught the use of *faktura* and different reworking of surfaces. Altman’s teaching was described in the memoirs of an artist contemporary Arkady Rylov, “in the studio of Professor Altman, they were taught the planarity of painting without tonal *chiaroscuro* through differentiated *faktura*: they added sand to the paints, for a gritty or even charred surface. They drew each still life deliberately with curved pitchers, plates and pots”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Tolstoy, Bibikova, Cooke, 1990, p.68. Images of this installation have not been yet located.

¹⁰³ Etkind, 1971, p.42.

¹⁰⁴ Etkind, 1971, p.49.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Etkind, 1971, p.52.

At one point early on, (16 September 1918) Altman had 0 votes for his studio.¹⁰⁶ Then he was appointed faculty member rather than elected, but by October 1919 had 30 students.¹⁰⁷ While teaching at Svomas, Altman also had administrative duties that related to his teaching. In his work as an administrator of the Collegium, Altman's work had great impact and the work's breadth was expansive. He headed the First Free State Exhibition at the Palace of Arts in 1919 with 299 artists showing 1829 works.¹⁰⁸ This curation broke new ground in Russia, in terms of scale and in terms of content. Altman was also a lead in creating the Museum of Artistic Culture.¹⁰⁹ Much of the work in different roles combined and amounted to a busy, productive career.

DURING SVOMAS, ALTMAN'S WRITING AND EDITING: Altman's art was published and illustrated pages for journals, he also wrote, and edited for papers while at Svomas. He was on committees that edited *Art of the Commune (Iskusstvo Kommuny, 1918-1919)*. Altman worked on developing lettering and what he called "revolutionary style" of typography for the title block masthead for *Art of the Commune*.¹¹⁰ In addition he was on a commission for publishing Russian literary classics.¹¹¹ The committees that worked on these projects were so active and industrious that accounts indicate they may have been overworked and understaffed, to the point where the editorial committee did

¹⁰⁶ Krusanov, 2003, p.89.

¹⁰⁷ Orlov, 2003, p.68.

¹⁰⁸ Altman and Arbenin, 1919. Etkind, 1971, p.40.

¹⁰⁹ Etkind, 1971, p.40.

¹¹⁰ Lodder and Hellyer 2013, pp.1271-2.

¹¹¹ Etkind, 1971, p.40.

not have a chance to read all articles in the first issue of *Art of the Commune* before it was hurriedly printed.¹¹²

Altman was conscious that his parallel work in Narkompros administration could be construed as bureaucratic, which is not likely to ever be a compliment. His 1918 essay “‘Futurism’ and Proletarian Art” opens with a discussion of this perception.¹¹³ Published in *Art of the Commune* on 15 December 1918-- the essay provides some justification and defense for his work and ideas. His work for the government was criticized in print and he provided his rationale as well as a justification for the futurist movement’s place in art and society. Futurism and collectivism are stressed and inextricable. His definition of collective work is not that “one work of art will be made by many artists, but in the sense that while executed by one creator, the work itself will be constructed on collectivist basis.”¹¹⁴ Altman addresses the recurring matter of intelligibility and the degree to which the art audience or general public has sympathies and acquaintance with the work.¹¹⁵ The essay is also a strong argument for futurist art in terms of the proletariat.

“A futurist picture lives a collective life:
By the same principle on which the proletariat’s whole creation is
constructed.
Try to distinguish an individual’s face in a proletariat procession.
Trying to understand it as individual persons is absurd.
Only in conjunction do they acquire all their strength, all their
meaning.”¹¹⁶

¹¹² Woroszylski, 1970, p.245.

¹¹³ Bowlt, 1988, p.161.

¹¹⁴ Altman, “‘Futurism’ and Proletarian Art”, 1918; Bowlt, 1988, p.163.

¹¹⁵ Altman, “‘Futurism’ and Proletarian Art”, 1918; Bowlt, 1988, p.163.

¹¹⁶ Altman, “‘Futurism’ and Proletarian Art”, 1918; Bowlt, 1988, p.163.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES: With a consideration that most efforts, including education, are done in collective, Altman's art and teaching were about exploration and experimentation in many ways searching for and researching a new language of art.¹¹⁷ Altman taught technological aspects of painting, and visual effects of glass and printed matter, as well as surface faktura of texture and material. In understanding differences in artists of the time, such as Altman, the Supremus group, and Tatlin; prominent theorist and critic, Viktor Shklovsky noted the importance of faktura in Altman's work, and that it was a defining factor therein. Through an emphasis on making, and a certain continuity of creation, Altman "revealed process through faktura, where the whole meaning of the picture is in mapping of planar elements of differing textures."¹¹⁸ All of this revealed underlying construction of volumetric and planar organization, which Svomas students carried on from these lessons.

In addition to experiments in contemporary form, prevailing social ideas were implied, and ideology of his painting was taught. While in his painting studios he questioned still life genre, deconstructed it, his other works, such as "Russia – Labor" and "Petrocommune" had more overt political and ideological content. The furthering of ideas and ideological content by way of art stemmed in part from his work as a professor and administrator at IZO Narkompros.

To summarize, Altman's teaching philosophies were about collective education, faktura and technicality of materials for painting. In all that he accomplished, he showed

¹¹⁷ Etkind, 1971, p.52.

¹¹⁸ Shklovsky, "O Fakture I Kontr-rel'efakh". 1920, p.1.

how a painter, designer or artist could work to serve and advance society in a broad sense and in several roles.

TATLIN: Tatlin was another avant-garde faculty who accomplished a lot in his career leading up to Svomas. While teaching at the new school, his workshop created another focal point of revolutionary art and one of the most discussed works of art in the 20th century –the Monument to the III International. Tatlin and his students created the model for the Monument in his studio at the Petrograd Svomas. The Monument is a synthesis of arts with forms and techniques that bridged or expanded architecture, sculpture, and engineering. The group is shown famously in the process of building the monument. Tatlin taught learning by doing, by working, by constructing, and he held a strong sense of material and realism. The realism taught by Tatlin was more concerned with uncovering nature of materials and construction than their application towards a representational art. His designs foregrounded elements of construction and engineering-- frame and fragment were very important in his work of building armatures and scaffolding for previously inconceivable structures. The industrial character was coordinated with programs for teaching workers in a society of workers.

BEFORE SVOMAS, COUNTER-RELIEFS: Tatlin’s early work developed and evolved in continuum with his later work. Tatlin studied at Moscow School of Painting Sculpture and Architecture c.1904, left then returned in 1910.¹¹⁹ As early as 1911, Tatlin worked with the society “Union of Youth” alongside Larionov and Malevich and many others. Early works such as his counter-reliefs brought him to the avant-garde forefront. Tatlin travelled to Paris, famously visited Picasso’s studio in March 1914, he then showed

¹¹⁹ Lodder, 1983, p.8.

counter-reliefs in Russia beginning 10 May of the same year.¹²⁰ These reliefs were intended by the artist to be a synthesis of painting and sculpture. Tatlin would teach his students to compose work similar to his counter-reliefs (See Illustrations 7, and 8). The original title for the exhibition of counter-reliefs was Exhibition of Synthetostatic Compositions.¹²¹ As Tatlin's reputation grew, Khlebnikov wrote a poem, "Tatlin" in May 1916.¹²²

Tatlin was in Petrograd during the February Revolution in 1917. Later in the year, after the October revolution Tatlin worked for the Narkompros Commission for Protecting Monuments for about two years.¹²³ Also from 1917 on, Tatlin began organized "living art" museums (Museums of Artistic Culture).¹²⁴ Tatlin was also active in Moscow that year, he joined Bruni, Meyerkhhold, Rodchenko, Udaltsova, Yakulov and others as collaborators on the design for the Café Picturesque.¹²⁵

DURING SVOMAS: Tatlin's studio was noticeable to all around, another artist wrote of it much later, from it "came the pounding of hammers, the squeaking of saws, the fracas sounds of ironwork" and also noted the studio's "noise and cheer despite the hunger, cold and anxiety that reigned at the time."¹²⁶ Tatlin traveled back and forth between Petrograd

¹²⁰ Dabrowski, 1992, p.41.

¹²¹ Strigalev, 1990, p.21.

¹²² Zhadova, 1988, p.336.

¹²³ Zhadova, 1988, p.23.

¹²⁴ Zhadova, 1988, p.24.

¹²⁵ Zygas, 1981, p.1.

¹²⁶ Vasilij Komardentov, *Dni Minuvshie*. Moscow, 1972. Reprinted in Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1, pp.181-182.

and Moscow with responsibilities in both cities. After the new year, on 30 January 1918 the Café Picturesque opened in Moscow.¹²⁷

Tatlin gained more administrative positions, on 11 April 1918, Tatlin joined the Moscow Artistic Collegium and Museums Collegium of IZO Narkompros, becoming a leader of the Artistic Collegium until May 1919.¹²⁸

10 October 1918, Petrograd Svomas opened. A few days later, on 15 October, Punin lectured about Svomas and was recounted in an article “Meeting About Art” in *Severnaya Kommuna*. Punin declared in the meeting that at Svomas, “there is no place for any canons and dogmas” which provides a challenge to the more classical and traditionally minded.¹²⁹ While still in Moscow, Tatlin’s work at the time was known and, in a position, to reinvent and challenge those “canons and dogmas”.

At the beginning of the next year, on 1 January 1919, Tatlin was put in charge of the Moscow Svomas painting department.¹³⁰ Through the 1918-19 school year, Tatlin was in charge of two Moscow Svomas studios. While assigned to teach painting, his approach was different method, which he called "culture of materials" or "material culture"—his studio was called Material, Volume and Construction.¹³¹ Through his career, in addition to teaching at Svomas, Tatlin had 3 other positions at IZO Narkompros.¹³²

¹²⁷ Zygas, 1981, p.2.

¹²⁸ Zhadova, 1988, p.46.

¹²⁹ Murray, 2012, p.84.

¹³⁰ Andersen, 1968, p.13.

¹³¹ Zhadova, 1988, p.24.

¹³² Kachurin, 2012, p.19.

As students tended to enroll in more traditional studios rather than those led by left artist professors, Tatlin had 2 enrolled in his Petrograd studio by 16 September 1918.¹³³ Other later tallies yielded highest numbers, within the voting at Svomas, for realist painter Arkhipov with 88 votes and Ilya Mashkov with 78. At the end of 1918, Tatlin's Petrograd studio was announced and described in an article, "A Studio Headed by Tatlin" that emphasized equipment for working with non-traditional materials, "not for clay and marble but for iron, wood and copper."¹³⁴ it would open in Spring and was a studio of "Volume, Materials and Construction". In terms of the student voting, avant-garde faculty did better but still did not fare as well, Malevich had 4 votes and Tatlin had 8 for Moscow Svomas studios for the beginning of 1919.¹³⁵

During 1919, Tatlin was still working in Moscow as well as in Petrograd yet he was thinking internationally. He worked that year on a journal called *International Arts* for which he wrote theses on initiative and invention for its first issue.¹³⁶ On 2 March 1919 the Congress for the III International was held. 9 March 1919, Punin described Tatlin's first envisioning of a major monument and commission of the project by Narkompros.¹³⁷ The proposal was for a monument to culture, intended to be living architecture not a monument to a distinguished person or persons. On 1 May 1919, Pravda published the first issue of the journal, *Communist International*.

¹³³ Krusanov, 2003, p.89.

¹³⁴ Zhadova, 1988, p.338-339; Original text in: "Masterskaia Rukovoditel'ia Tatlina". *Zhizn' Iskusstva*, n.37, 14 December 1918. p.3.

¹³⁵ Lodder, 1983, p.110.

¹³⁶ Zhadova, 1988, p.24; p.237-8.

¹³⁷ Andersen, 1968, p.13; Gough, 2014, p.13.

In winter of the year, 12 December 1919, another Tatlin's studio was announced in an article: "A New Art Teaching Studio". In the article the studio was named slightly differently than before, now it was "Volume, Construction, and Paints".¹³⁸

N. Punin writes a booklet in July called, *Monument to the III International*. The monument was conceived the year before by a creative collective, led by Tatlin. Before the model was constructed in Petrograd, it was in part funded by a 7 September 1920 grant of 700,000 Rubles, from Narkompros.¹³⁹ In October, Shklovsky writes "On Faktura and Counter-Reliefs" describing Tatlin's studio.¹⁴⁰ In it he describes the student's work on counter-reliefs, that there will be a major monument by Tatlin, and builds anticipation that he will write about it once it is unveiled.

8 November [25 October] through 1 December 1920, the Model of the Monument to the III International is completed and shown at Tatlin's studio in the Mosaics Hall of the Petrograd Svomas.¹⁴¹ Tatlin and his team of Shapiro, Meyerson, Vinogradov, Dymshits-Tolstaia were photographed working on it and Punin helped build the model as well.¹⁴² Many banners were hung around the room with slogans visible or partially visible from the photographs: "Long live the III International!", "Engineers-Bridge builders,

¹³⁸ Zhadova, 1988, p.340. Original text in: "Novaia Khudozhestvenno-Uchebnaia Masterskie". *Zhizn' Iskusstvo*. n.316. 12 December 1919. p.2.

¹³⁹ Andersen, 1968, p.13.

¹⁴⁰ Zhadova, 1988, p.341-342. Original text in: "O Fakture I Kontr-rel'efakh". *Zhizn' Iskusstva*. n.587, 20 October 1920, p.1.

¹⁴¹ Zhadova, 1988, p.446.

¹⁴² Gough, 2014, p.14.

make the calculations for invented new forms”, “Metal workers of all countries, manufacture parts for the new form in honor of the III Communist International”¹⁴³

After that exhibition in December 1920, the model of the Monument to the III International is transported and installed by the group in Moscow, at the House of Unions for the Eighth Congress of Soviets.¹⁴⁴

In a statement by the Monument to the III International team, they declared that Tatlin’s earlier work from 1914 precipitated the revolution of 1917.¹⁴⁵

The Monument to the III International has been the subject of much analysis and attention. As an architectural studio project is can be considered in terms of design, architectonics, context, program, client, etc. The design for the fact that it was a paper project, unbuilt architectural model publicized. The architectonics for the underlying geometry, form and their relations to the engineered structure, framework. The context for antecedents, history, commemoration, innovation, in terms of precedents in global art history. The program for redefining the monument, and reconsidering headquarters. The client in terms of Lenin’s Plan for Monumental Propaganda, III International, and the Comintern. Much has been discussed since the Monument to the III International’s appearance in 1920.

¹⁴³ Dimakov, 2021, pp.76-77. In a photograph from the balcony (Illustration 10), the largest banner opposite the windows that covers a two-story wall, shows the initials of the name of the class at Svomas where the exhibition was held: “Studio of Material, Volume, and Construction”.

¹⁴⁴ Andersen, 1968, p.13; Witkovsky and Fore, 2018, p. 79.

¹⁴⁵ Collaborative article “The Work Ahead of Us”, 31 December 1920. Reprinted in Andersen, 1968, p.51; see also Senkevitch, 1974, p. 65. In hindsight, both Tatlin and Malevich thought the same of their earlier avant-garde art, that it led to the October Revolution or that there was some causality, Perloff, 1986, p.32.

The design of the Monument to the III International is remarkable for many reasons, photos of the model, and two side elevations were published, but not plan. As deduced from the available images the plan is a whirling spiral, a motif that was in circulation at the time. In the words of Lunacharsky at the Svomas opening: “We fell into the most tempestuous whirlpool that has ever happened on the course of humanity. The further we go, the stronger the vortex encircles us, and all that is stable dissolves in it, -- including both statues and pictures.”¹⁴⁶ In the words of another poet close to Tatlin: “Whirlwind of raging intelligence, onward! For the goddess’ sake! The people raise their swan-wings, Labor’s blood-red flag!”¹⁴⁷ These contemporary poetic images relate to the Monument’s design as well as other ideas including the founding principle of the Svomas initiative. The spokesman for the project, Punin wrote: “[...] the spiral is the line of movement liberating humanity. The spiral is the ideal expression of liberation; [...]”¹⁴⁸

It is a highly unusual and remarkable design, and as such there are challenges of how to understand and conceptualize the Monument. As with any work of architecture there are many facets to explore-- considerable issues of design, architectonics, context, program, or client. Most mentions will include the fact that it designed and modeled at a school, but there can be more clarity as to the educational role and intent of the project, as it was originally a faculty-led collaborative student project, first designed and modelled at Petrograd Svomas. It was funded by the Commissariat of Education, Narkompros. The

¹⁴⁶ Lunacharsky, *Opening Speech at the Petrograd Svomas*, October 1918. For translation, see Appendix A.

¹⁴⁷ Khlebnikov, “Freedom” (1918, 1922), *Collected Works of Velimir Khlebnikov*, 1997, pp.64-65.

¹⁴⁸ Punin, *Monument to the III International*, July 1920, p.3.

team was photographed constructing it (See Illustration 9) and it was exhibited in their studio, (See Illustration 10) at their school.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES: As part of a department of education (Narkompros) funded project, there is an underlying educational intent of the Monument to the III International.¹⁴⁹ The monument by Tatlin's studio was discussed in many reviews, in Russia and internationally over the next decade, as well as subsequent decades. In the early nineteen twenties it was the poster project for the new Russian variant in modern architecture. As such, for many art critics it was the perfect fit, but for others more concerned with politics, the monument was not quite aligned properly. Socialists expected to see society in art. Communists expected to see portraits of leaders, workers, or masses of people—and the leading artists, such as Tatlin's studio gave them what critics considered abstractions and visions of industrial machines. The sounds of constructivism echoed elsewhere in Europe, in Paris, such as “The new spirit: it is the spirit of construction and synthesis and guided by a clear conception.”¹⁵⁰ In this first line in the first issue of the Parisian journal “L'Esprit Nouveau” resonates with what was happening in Russian art. Yet, the monument was modelled but never constructed.

Even the simplest design can be seen and understood from many perspectives, yielding a complicated sum of readings. The Monument to the III International had so many complications to begin with, and this is evident in the resulting manifold readings.

¹⁴⁹ Lozowick “Tatlin's Monument to the Third International” 1922, p.232.

¹⁵⁰ Dermee, 1920, p.1.

The design of the Monument to the III International is a convolution, a synthesis of many factors, and with so much going on it was drafted carefully, and a remarkable emphasis on model making. Since it was never completed at scale, the architectural design of the Monument can be analyzed through the drawings', and the models' indications of proposed architectonics, context, and program.

Highly important to note, is the process, the educational moment that was captured in the Petrograd Svomas Mosaics Hall, where not only are the students photographed at the end with their professor and the collaboratively designed product, but more remarkably, in the process of assembling it, indicating an emphasis on learning by doing. Physical activity was highlighted by Narkompros commissioner Lunacharsky, whose speeches on self-education show the initiative that was for learning by work, giving the schools they founded a motto, "to live is to work" he continues with "'work' taken as the starting point, of [the] pedagogical system, as the chief subject of our teaching, aiming at the increase of technical knowledge." He stresses education of mind and body through teaching both mental and manual activities. His speech was reinforced by others in the administration, such as Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaya.¹⁵¹ This is evident in the widely reproduced imagery of Tatlin and his studio cohort with hammers, and boards assembling the framework of the model.

Architectonics are integral to the design, and can be studied in terms of geometry, forms, structure, and framework. The spiral of the Monument's plan, while rare in architecture can be found when sought out, as it has been taught to architecture students

¹⁵¹ Lunacharsky, pamphlet c.1919 *Self-Education of the Workers*, pp.5-6

since antiquity through the golden ratio. The truncated forms of the elevations and the basic geometrical interior volumes provide further lessons in math as do the trigonometry of the diagonal framework. Punin writes about the derivations of the forms in the 1920 pamphlet. While lightweight metal frames would be likely to secure the weights involved, load bearing structural calculations would be appropriate and challenging for the students in Tatlin's studio.

The context of the Monument to the III International has been examined in terms of its precedents in architecture and in monumental sculpture. Its innovations and many precedents in art and technological history has been thoroughly detailed.¹⁵² The exact site was not as much a factor in the context in the earliest literature, but more recent visualizations have taken the site into account. Studying the historical context yields lessons in art and architectural history.

The program of the building was firstly a monument, and its task of redefining what a monument is, was described by Tatlin. Its intended program as an operational headquarters for the Comintern, was never fulfilled as the building was never constructed.

Tatlin's monument has also been seen in terms of its clients and commissioners. While student projects may often have a hypothetical client, Lenin and Narkompros head Lunacharsky had some more direct guidance in the Monument to the III International, Lenin through his Plan for Monumental Propaganda, and Lunacharsky through many areas of involvement in arts and education.

¹⁵² Zygas, "Tatlin's Tower Reconsidered," 1976.

As much of the literature covers points concerning design, architectonics, context, program, and client have left the topic of education less explored and open for discussion. The fact that this was essentially a student project at a Svomas school raises the issues of pedagogy and how to teach all that goes into this or any design project. While educational context is mentioned in the literature, it was a major factor in the creation of the monument that deserves additional attention. The topics from which the Monument to the III International has been explored (design, architectonics, context, program, client) are each teaching points. Tatlin studio had a lot of energy—tangible philosophies and methods were developed with a sense of urgency. “Not the old, not the new, but the necessary” was one of the group’s mottos.¹⁵³ They remade the conception of what art was and what an artist could be in the twentieth century. The demands on artists in the early twentieth century were not as much for specialists but for those who could work in many fields of design and expand their boundaries. Tatlin’s faculty work taught by example and included the students in a collective effort. Designers were encouraged to explore synthesis of arts. Physical participation and involvement of learning by doing is evident and taught the students to be active and industrious. Ideas of individual and society are reflected in the contrasts between part and whole, between fragment and monument.

¹⁵³ Printed on a 49.5 x 215 cm banner in 1920. Strigalev, 1990, p.38.

PAINTSCULPTARCH: Many have sought or suggested a theory of the arts that unifies painting, sculpture, and architecture. The example of a unifying theory of Paintsculptarch at the Moscow Svomas in 1919-1920, is a confluence of many ideas at the time brought in from each discipline. While the collective's intent to join the three disciplines is not at all unheard of, the way the group combined the three disciplines proved to be extraordinary. Efforts to realize a commonly held intention can yield drastically different results when other, perhaps, more understated factors are involved. The central question is in comparison to efforts with the same objective, how do we account for such radical departure in Paintsculptarch's results? The group also raises questions as to why choose these three particular art forms? Where does one draw the line, and why not include music, or poetry other disciplines? What about synthesis of arts and sciences in other combinations? The Paintsculptarch research group was mostly consisted of recent graduates from architecture schools with a synthesis in mind that compounded developments in contemporary painting, sculpture, and architecture. They held meetings at the Svomas 2 (Former School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture) campus in Moscow.¹⁵⁴ Their work had an expressionist quality of scribbles and sketches—structures of gravitationally unusual massing—that were developed into architectural drawings with the features of plans, sections, and elevations. There are precedents and parallels in design and the arts, but their work bore many innovations and brought many previously unexpected possibilities into the modern design lexicon.

¹⁵⁴ Note the three primary disciplines in the long-standing school are kept after reforms and reconsidered in a new synthesis.

The commission began with the name Synsculptarch meant to synthesize sculpture and architecture. The cubist sculptor Boris Korolev organized a group of seven recently graduated architects: Dombrovskii, Fidman, Istselenov, Krinsky, Ladovsky, Raikh, Rukhliadev.¹⁵⁵ Mapu, Rodchenko, and Shevchenko joined later in the year.

They created Paintsculptarch, in part, to contribute to the Plan for Monumental Propaganda initiative that was being promoted by state officials. The group’s first project was the “Temple of Communion Among Nations”, other titles of designs with many iterations were: “Communal House”, “Public Building”, “House of Soviets” (Sovdep), and numbered “Architectural Fantasies” during this time.

CHRONOLOGY OF PAINTSCULPTARCH

Spring 1919	Paintsculptarch founded in Moscow. Group meetings were at Svomas 2. ¹⁵⁶
6 May 1919	The group holds its first meeting. Dombrovskii, Istselenov, Korolev, Raikh, Rukhliadev attend.
9 May 1919	Fidman and Ladovsky join the group.
25 June 1919	Krinsky joins the group.
August 1919	Dombrovskii and Rukhliadev stop participating. ¹⁵⁷
November 1919	Mapu, Rodchenko and Shevchenko join.
February 1920	Korolev monument to Bakunin, on a plaza next to Svomas, is disassembled by Moscow city officials for its radical cubist formalism, it was constructed but never made public. ¹⁵⁸ Paintsculptarch ends work.

¹⁵⁵ Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1, p.59

¹⁵⁶ Chepkunova (ed.) *Mysl' Materialna*, 2011, p.17.

¹⁵⁷ Rukhliadov later became the dean of Vkhutemas Architecture Department, Bliznakov, 1980, p.182.

¹⁵⁸ Strigalev, 1992, p.676.

12 May 1920	Institute for Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) founded in Moscow. Similar to Paintsculptarch, Inkhuk was founded on principles of uniting or synthesizing arts. ¹⁵⁹
2 October	Paintsculptarch participates in the Nineteenth State Exhibition.
Autumn 1920	United Studios (Obmas) founded. Obmas was an extension in some ways, a similar initiative to Paintsculptarch with Krinsky, Ladovsky as members.

ANALYSIS OF PAINTSCULPTARCH PRODUCTION: At the time of the project, the early organizer of the group, sculptor Korolev was making monuments to Bakunin, (See Illustration 11), and also to “Freed Labor”, and to Marx in the cubist method. The architects were numerous in the research group and each produced many sketches. Many of the Paintsculptarch designs were often rendered with art techniques of expressive line quality and formal invention but there are many that overlay or refine sketches with standard drafting techniques and conventions. Some were quick sketches some were more slowly constructed.

Through the Svomas years, Krinsky drew 1919 Temple of Communion Among Nations and 1920 Communal House. In these images, Krinsky established a ground plane and some drafting conventions for what would otherwise be cubist geometries floating in space. In a seemingly quick sketch such as Krinsky’s Temple of Communion Among Nations (See Illustration 12), there appears to be cubistic gravity defying forms but a label that says section, the image is rendered with sketchy semblances of architectural

¹⁵⁹ Bliznakov, 1980, p.175.

drawings such as a ground plane, bold poche. Some of the Paintsculptarch images were more slowly constructed drawings, some were more diagrammatic.

Ladovsky designed a Communal House, with unusual balance in the towering spire (See Illustration 13). The ground plane and windows clue the viewer that it could be architecture, but it is otherwise unconventional. Ladovsky drew carefully constructed sections through the jumbles of cubist volumes, with staircases and poche drafting it with recognizable architectural features. The group added cubism with all its variability to the synthesis of arts created imagery with few precedents and combined the arts in a way that was contemporary at the time.

Similar designs were made by Krinsky, with labels that are important for understanding, where in Russian the text says section on the left, façade in the center and plan in the upper right. Without these notations the viewer might not see it as a potential building.

Rodchenko joined the group a little later. He worked on a project called Sovdep, and some more towers with unusual balance (See Illustration 14). Many of the Sovdep variants show a block of building at the base and a giant media sign on a mast buttressed by trusses, some drafted with structural line, others with painted surfaces. As with Krinsky, Rodchenko lays in a ground plane and labels section and plan to what would otherwise be abstract paintings. He also was looking at how to scale up from sculpture to engineering, architectural infrastructure, and planning, designing masts for electrical wires, and transit infrastructure of an airport.

There were mostly architects working on the Paintsculptarch research group at Svomas. And the projects might be parallel to other architectural expressionism such as

that by Mendelsohn or the Glass Chain group. Paintsculptarch made dozens of perspective sketches of exploratory massing concepts with corresponding insides of unusual forms with thickened walls delineated by poche in plan. The group generated folded combinations of serrated edged spaces and fragmented planes to suggest a previously non-existent architecture.

The designs by Paintsculptarch were described by a member Istselenov as “structure freed from the utilitarian character of the latest architecture, a structure in which art would be given a chance to reveal its synthetic oneness.”¹⁶⁰

Analysis of the designs, the imagery made by Paintsculptarch reveals several constraints and variables. The work understandable in terms of velocity and time. As futurists, they sought some quality in their art of speed and dynamic movement, and it evident in a few ways. The time that was spent to create any image is estimable. The sketches are the fastest images, yet they have less steady line quality, the diagrammatic drawings are respectively slower but may have been drafted more carefully while including less detail, and a few are complete and rendered with nearly all the detail as any other architectural drawing. The quality and equipment used by the group was a factor, many have evident brushwork in freehand and others drafted with compasses, triangles, rulers. The dynamic between freehand and drafted images may lend more towards painting or towards architecture in the images. There was also an interplay of content invention and design convention. Conventions of plan, section, and elevation -- orthographic representation was evident. Some images would bewilder the viewer

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Strigalev, 1992, p.676.

without labels, poche, and bold lines. Conventions of buildings, such as stairs, floors, walls, landscape, also helped balance what might lean more towards painted or sculptural forms in the synthesis. This balance

In addition to time and velocity, the designs of Paintsculptarch challenge structural balance and gravity in interesting ways. The techniques required for steady lines give a sense of balance and irregular lines give a sense of imbalance. The forms depicted might give a sense of balance or imbalance as well. The imagery made by Paintsculptarch shows variance in the balance of so many fragmented angles, planes, levers, cantilevers, projections, and extensions.

The choices of content, of program for the architecture is also worth noting. Besides the “Architectural Fantasias” they have political overtones, related to their time such as “Temple of Communion Among Nations”, “Communal House”, “Public Building”, and “House of Soviet Deputies” (Sovdep) yet the forms that comprise the imagery appear to be largely investigations of cubo-futurism in architecture that seemed to be mis-aligned with views of political leadership, especially into the 1920s.

SYNTHESIS PARALLELS AND INFLUENCES: Krinsky reminisced on insufficiency of historical styles after the revolution, and on the influences and inspiration of Cezanne, and parallels with Tatlin, for Paintsculptarch.¹⁶¹ In addition to the strain of abstraction from Cezanne, Krinsky acknowledged the poetics of Aleksandr Blok’s “Kraski i Slova”

¹⁶¹ Krinsky (1967) “Origin of the Emerging Socialist Architecture” reprinted in Barkhin et al, 1975, v.2, pp. 120-123.

[Colors and Words] as another source for Paintsculptarch synthesis and perhaps even synesthesia. In Blok's writing he quotes "painting teaches us to live and see."¹⁶²

While Paintsculptarch was active there were architects holding similar ideas and yielding different results. Fyodor Shekhtel gave a speech at the opening of the architecture school at Svomas 1 (former Stroganov School) called, "Fairytale of the Three Sisters: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture".¹⁶³ Shekhtel was more established in the profession than the recent graduates that created Paintsculptarch and had a different conception of the interrelation of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

Tatlin was much closer to Paintsculptarch, as in his 1919 essay that addresses the Plan for Monumental Propaganda, he wrote "Contemporary monuments, before all else, should respond to a social goal, synthesis of separated arts, as we see now. There is no painting without spatial (and even plastic) understanding of forms, there is no sculpture without architectonic and painterly culture, no architecture without painting and space. An architect, painter and sculptor should take part, in equal measure, on the formulation and implementation of the contemporary monument. Of course, from this it is not that the architect should build a house, a painter should paint it, and a sculptor decorate it. That would not be synthesis at all. The very plan, project of a monument, is not a private matter, and should simultaneously satisfy the architect, the sculptor, and the painter."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Krinsky (1967) "Origin of the Emerging Socialist Architecture" reprinted in Barkhin et al, 1975, v.2, pp. 120-123.

¹⁶³ Reprinted in Barkhin et al, 1975, v.1, pp.14-22.

¹⁶⁴ Tatlin (1919) "On a New Type of Monument" reprinted in Barkhin et al, 1975, v.2, p. 75.

Tatlin's statement highlights the importance but also the challenge of synthesis—the difficulty of working in a way that is satisfying to all.

Tatlin elaborated on some of the technologies applied to his work and that Paintsculptarch designed for theirs as well. “The project [...], founded on synthesis of the hard-fought technical gains of our times, will give the possibility for applying a wealth of new artistic forms and technology. Radio, screen, wiring become elements of the monument, that can be elements of form.”¹⁶⁵

Towards the end of the Paintsculptarch group, another series of meetings started that would lead to many more discussions on synthesis of the arts. The Institute for Artistic Culture (Inkhuk), began on 12 May 1920 in Moscow. Kandinsky and his colleagues intended this new organization to work “for the purpose of studying this synthetic art.”¹⁶⁶ Beyond synthesis and combination of arts, he believed in unifying artists as people, writing, “the international unity of artists will embrace the whole globe and rise to the level of the unification of all mankind.”¹⁶⁷ Synthesis was a common aspiration at the time, and many artists made efforts towards achieving it.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES: The idea of synthesis in painting, sculpture, and architecture is enduring. This is one of the long-standing constants in art history, that falls

¹⁶⁵ Tatlin (1919) “On a New Type of Monument” reprinted in Barkhin et al, 1975, v.2, p. 76.

¹⁶⁶ Kandinsky, “Report to the Pan-Russian Conference, 1920” reprinted in *Kandinsky Complete Writings on Art* (1982), v.1; p.474.

¹⁶⁷ Kandinsky, “Steps Taken By the Department of Fine Arts In the Realm of International Art Politics.” reprinted in *Kandinsky Complete Writings on Art*, 1982, v.1; p.454.

in and out of use and favor over time. Paintsculptarch is an example of design synthesis in 20th century modernism that started introducing major changes to the way these arts are taught and learned. The theories and practices have not been the same since. That this was a research group located in an art school, is worth noting. The members were not all teaching as much at the time, rather they were building experimental and laboratory experiences for later teaching.

Beyond allusions to what was continuous and unified the design arts, Paintsculptarch contributed something variable and exceptional. Space was a newer concept in their work, and they renewed the conception of space. Space was perceived and portrayed in a newer idiom influenced by everchanging sciences and politics. Paintsculptarch in name was a unity of three traditional design arts, they began introducing factors that were innovative and unconventional.

The group has connotations of recent scientific understandings of relativity, space and gravity. Technological progress in inventions and such as in radio, photography, film were included in the research. To stay relevant, there was mandatory political emphasis: at the time and place that meant socialism and collectivism, Marxism and communism. These are evident in the titles and programs for the designs. Artistic changes were introduced into the research formula of Paintsculptarch synthesis, such as the turn of the century superabundance of isms, especially futurism and cubism.

The basic disciplines of painting, sculpture, and architecture were already there and the group innovated by introducing numerous variables into their research. The modes and methods of new arts rather than classical realism accounts for the difference.

Paintsculptarch was an experiment in intentionally undisciplined and expressionistic architecture but led in many respects to a hard form of modernism that was more rational and restrained than it initially suggested.

“We find ourselves in a favorable position, where we do not know too much, but we still study. We need to know antiquity, but not to the point where we smell of naphthalene (mothballs). The Gothic was achieved by crossing knowledge with freedom. We do know some things, but we are free enough to create.”¹⁶⁸

Members of the group, such as Krinsky and Ladovsky would go on to develop rigorous and rational methodologies, with their teaching philosophies informing the next generation of architects at the Vkhutemas.

¹⁶⁸ Ladovsky (1919), “From the Protocols at the Meetings of the Commission for Painting-Sculpture-Architecture Synthesis” in Barkhin et al, 1975, p.343.

UNOVIS: The Unovis student group began at the Vitebsk People's Art School. The People's Art School was run by Marc Chagall, who was appointed by Narkompros to lead several arts programs in Vitebsk. After Malevich was invited to work and teach in Vitebsk, he and Lissitzky helped found and became faculty leaders of the Unovis collective. The group built upon the work of the earlier Supremus group. Unovis's major issues were of old and new art, anarchism and architectonics, dialectics of design arts (painting, sculpture, architecture), leaving a sense that art was leading, and architecture was lagging. While operating out of Vitebsk, the Unovis collective travelled and distributed their manifesto type statements and art extensively. They were concerned with a dialectic of old and new art, prioritizing what they thought of as new—mostly geometrical abstractions. They also looked to architecture as a source of inspiration but also as a discipline that needed updating and intervention. They reduced their color palettes, opted out of gradated shade and tones; abstracted and fit their imagery to orthographic views; drafted edges to carefully straight or measured curved lines. In the work, traces of sketch and representative depiction were left out in favor of finished solid planes that yield bold graphics. In Vitebsk, the People's Art School directed by Chagall was very similar to Svomas and was called Svomas later than elsewhere, and for not as long. The Unovis collective lasted after Svomas was phased out of Moscow and Petrograd schools. Unovis at the Vitebsk Svomas is an example of the activities that the initiative inspired in the regional schools.

BEFORE SVOMAS: In the 1910s, Malevich began gaining attention as an artist when he and his circle illustrate several books of poetry by Krushchenikh, Khlebnikhov and other

avant-garde writers. Artists traveled, gained influence in these years; Chagall spend time early in Paris, meeting many prominent artists at *La Ruche* and in the Parisian art world. Chagall considered his method a “free studio” influenced by the way artists worked in Paris.¹⁶⁹ They were developing their theories with the main difference is in what is alternately called the subject, object, content; its presence or absence and the resulting degree of abstraction. By 1915, Malevich had taken an approach that was as close as possible to subject-less, reducing pictures to basic geometries and painted the iconic, “Black Square”.

Malevich participated in the “0.10” exhibition, which met with variable criticism, The review in the January 1916 edition of *Apollon*, the editor calls the exhibition’s numerical title “illiterate, arithmetical”.¹⁷⁰ Others found inspiration in the geometrical direction Malevich was taking. Malevich published “From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism” that year and the Supremus group gained a following and began publishing their own journal. Also in 1916, was the futurist exhibition “Magazin”, which included Kliun, Malevich, Udaltsova, Ekster, Popova, Rodchenko, and Tatlin.¹⁷¹

In 1917, Chagall was in Petrograd and witnessed the February and October revolutions, before returning to Vitebsk in November.¹⁷² Right after the revolutions, Malevich and Chagall were already prominent artists and began taking positions in

¹⁶⁹ Shatskikh, 2007, p.45.

¹⁷⁰ R-v, A. “Vystavki i Khodozhestvennyye Dela” *Apollon*, 1916, n.1, p.37.

¹⁷¹ Zhadova, 1988, figures 86-8.

¹⁷² Shatskikh, 2007, p.22.

education and administration. In Moscow, on 12 November Malevich became Commissar for the Preservation of Monuments and Antiquities, at the Moscow Kremlin.¹⁷³

While in his new preservation role, Malevich ironically was publishing articles in an anarchist journal. Malevich published “Architecture as a Slap in the Face of Ferro-concrete” in the papers *Anarkhiia* 37 (6 April 1918) and in *Art of the Commune* (7 December 1918). The later edition has some additional statements of interest. The article is in many ways a response to a kind of historical architecture embodied by the Kazanskii Station in Moscow, which he addresses several times by name. The station was advancing under construction at the time of the article. Malevich argued that architecture was the only art form that was dwelling on the past and was not keeping up with the times:

[...] “Futurism painted new landscapes of the contemporary fast changes of things, it expressed on canvases all the dynamism of ferro-concrete life.

In this way, the art of painting moved forward behind contemporary technology of the machine.

Literature has abandoned the bureaucratic service of words, becoming closer to the letter, and vanished into its essence.

Music from the boudoir melody, gentle lilacs came to the pure sound, as such. All art liberated its face from foreign elements, only the art of architecture still bears on its face the acne of our time, on it, warts of the past grow on it without end.

The very best buildings are necessarily supported by Greek columns, like the crutches of a cripple.

Wreaths of acanthus leaves are necessary to crown a building.

A skyscraper with elevators, electronic lamps, telephones etc. will be decorated with Venus, cupids, and various attributes of Grecian times.” [...] ¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Witkovsky and Fore, 2018, p.45.

¹⁷⁴ Malevich, “Architecture as a Slap in the Face of Ferro-Concrete” *Art of the Commune*. no.1, 7 December 1918, p.2.

In Malevich's provocative, sarcastic, absurdist turn of phrase, he insinuates that the past is something to grow out of in maturity, as an architect shows mastery in innovation. In his writing he uses peculiar and absurd metaphors suggesting that architecture should be more contemporary. Malevich writes with a harshness in choices of poetic imagery, and unrelentingly prioritizes newness:

[...] "The avant-gardes of revolutionary destruction walk the whole world of grandeur, life cleans itself of old mildew, and on public squares on the revolutionary fields must be erected appropriate buildings.

We are the high point of the contemporary run, the tsardom of machines, motors, their work on the land and in space.

We tear ourselves from the shackles of landing, our motors go every day through endlessness of space, and we have the aspiration and all that is nonexistent on Earth, will be built in the form of aspirations. Down with the dome, the firmaments enclosing by the cover; the path with steam gusts; the wedge-shaped path driven into the chest of space.

Henceforth, let each creation create the form of departure.

The high spires, flying homes, let them prepare for summer.

From our body doctors-surgeons must excise the fragments of Greek ruins.

Our new architect is on who will castoff Greece and Rome, and with a powerful, new gift will speak the new language of architecture." [...] ¹⁷⁵

While Malevich was a painter, the attention to architecture would last through his career and teaching. Articles and statements such as this provoked architecture to be more inventive and pay attention to new technologies.

In August 1918, Chagall proposed a school and museum to Narkompros. ¹⁷⁶ And by September 1918, Chagall was named (by Narkompros) the head of arts activities in Vitebsk. ¹⁷⁷ Soon after he led the planning of a major event, a 50,000 participant

¹⁷⁵ Malevich, "Architecture as a Slap in the Face of Ferro-Concrete" *Art of the Commune*. no.1, 7 December 1918, p.3.

¹⁷⁶ Lampe, 2018, p.252.

¹⁷⁷ Shatskikh, 2007, p.22.

recognition of the October Revolution in Vitebsk, held on 7-8 November 1918.¹⁷⁸ The school he proposed to Narkompros began enrollment on 11 November 1918, and it was named the Vitebsk People's Art School.¹⁷⁹ The next month, Chagall reported registration of 125 students.¹⁸⁰ And on 28 January 1919, the first year opened at the Vitebsk People's Art School.¹⁸¹

While still teaching in Moscow, Malevich submitted an academic plan to the Soviet of Svomas 2, it shows a concern for teaching the most recent currents in art and the introduction of currents he was working on advancing:

“PROGRAM FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1919-1920

The studio is comprised of two divisions: painting and sculpture. The general tendency of the studio is: Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism as a new realism of the pictorial conception of the world.

Theme 1

Group 1: abstraction of objects, pictorial and sculptural volumes, surface, straight lines, broken lines (preparatory course for cubism).

Theme 2

Group 2: 1) Cezanne, his pictorial conception of the world. 2) the cubist theory and system of constructing forms. 3) pictorial facture. 4) space and form. 5) nature in the cubist system. 6) volume, surface, straight line and broken line in the cubist system. 7) Cubism and nature; statics and dynamics. 8) Pictorial system of color elements, weights of forms and of construction.

Theme 2: sculpture

Construction of forms following the cubist system

Theme 3: Futurism

Group 3: 1) Van Gogh, his dynamism and his conception of the world. 2) Futurism and nature: the city and the countryside. Urban and rural elements as factors influencing the construction of dynamic movements. 3) Theory of futurism. 4) The academy and futurism. 5) Pictorial facture and dynamism. 6) Construction of formal elements according to the system of futurism.

Theme 4: Suprematism

¹⁷⁸ Lampe, 2018, p.252.

¹⁷⁹ Shatskikh, 2007, p.27.

¹⁸⁰ Lampe, 2018, p.226.

¹⁸¹ Lampe, 2018, p.254.

Group 4: 1) Theory of Suprematism. 2) dynamic facture, picture and color. 3) Dynamic construction of forms. 4) Form, space, and time. 5) Color as a bi-dimensional art. 6) Color and the city. 7) Construction of forms according to the system of Suprematism.

PS. The studio needs materials: wood, boards, plywood, cardboard, zinc sheets, linoleum, sheet metal, as well as instruments for joinery. I ask the Soviet as well, for a larger studio, or to enlarge my studio by opening a door to the neighboring studio. This door exists but is sealed. Given this number of students, we need three rooms at a minimum.”¹⁸²

Throughout the year, Malevich was working and teaching in Moscow but published alongside Chagall in *Revoliutsionnoe Iskusstvo* (24 April, 1919). In May 1919, recent graduate of Riga Polytechnic, Lissitzky joined the Vitebsk school and led the programs of architecture, graphics, and printing.¹⁸³

In autumn, Malevich’s students in Moscow produced a manuscript for a journal. (See Illustration 15, and Appendix C).

In the summer, on 28 June 1919, Vitebsk student work was exhibited; that of Ilya Chashnik, and Lazar Khidekel was bought from the exhibition by the school’s museum.¹⁸⁴ An unsigned article (attributed to Lissitzky), “Studios of Graphic Arts, Painting, and Architecture” was published on 31 July 1919 in *Izvestiia* to gain attention and enrollment for the next year.¹⁸⁵ Lissitzky continued to set an agenda for architecture and art at the Vitebsk school with the article “The New Culture”.¹⁸⁶

“We must now find a completely new path of arts education. It must be found in the studio, where master and apprentices, in close communication and hard work together want one and the same—absolutely free of all requests other

¹⁸² Khan-Magomedov, 1990 v.1; p. 197-198.

¹⁸³ Lampe, 2018, p.255.

¹⁸⁴ Lampe, 2018, p.256.

¹⁸⁵ Shatskikh, 2007, p.63.

¹⁸⁶ Lampe, 2018, p.232.

than the force of creative intuition to find form for the tasks they assign themselves.”¹⁸⁷

Lissitzky was in Moscow in October of 1919 and invited Malevich to teach in Vitebsk.¹⁸⁸ Malevich took the position due to issues with the conditions at Svomas in Moscow.¹⁸⁹ He opened his studio in Vitebsk on 5 November 1919.¹⁹⁰ In Moscow, Pevsner taught in Malevich’s absence.

From 8 November to 22 December 1919, the First State Exhibition of Works by Local and Moscow Artists was held in Vitebsk with many of the artists from the school.¹⁹¹ 1919 was a very productive year for Lissitzky, in addition to academic work he designed a cover of a pamphlet for the Vitebsk Committee to Combat Unemployment. He published a Yiddish children’s book *Had Gadya* (The Only Kid). The book combines elements of avant-garde art and folklore from traditional Jewish culture. In December of the year, Lissitzky’s students published a pamphlet by Malevich containing articles “Ustanovlenie A” and “O Novykh Sistemakh V Iskusstve”.¹⁹² The latter includes a schema for teaching cubism, (See Illustration 16). The kinds of statements Malevich was making in 1919 show a belief that cubism and futurism were revolutionary art that set the tone for what happened socially and politically in 1917.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁷ Lissitzky, “Novaia Kul’tura” *Shkola i Revoliutsia*. 16 August 1919.

¹⁸⁸ Lampe, 2018, p.257.

¹⁸⁹ Kachurin, 2013, p.39.

¹⁹⁰ Lampe, 2018, p.257.

¹⁹¹ Lampe, 2018, p.257.

¹⁹² Lampe, 2018, p.258.

¹⁹³ Senkevitch, 1974, p.65.

In the next year, on 14 February 1920 Unovis was founded from a group originally called Molposnovis and Posnovis.¹⁹⁴ Among the Vitebsk faculty that belonged to Unovis, were: Ermolaeva, Kogan, Lissitzky, and Malevich. Ermolaeva taught cubism, Kogan taught “abstraction of objects”. Lissitzky began work on Prouns turning painting to architecture.¹⁹⁵ Among the student members were: Chashnik, Khidekel, Suetin, and Yudin.

Soon after the announcement of the new art group, from 15 February to 1 March 1920, the Second Student Exhibition was held and around 3000 visitors see about 350 artworks.¹⁹⁶

DURING SVOMAS: The Vitebsk People’s Art School under Chagall’s direction was modeled on Svomas in some respects, but it was officially termed such in May of 1920. Around the time of Vitebsk Peoples Art School changing name to Vitebsk Svomas, from 20 to 25 May 1920, many of Chagall’s students join the new group Unovis.¹⁹⁷ They worked on the *Unovis Almanac* at this time.¹⁹⁸

At one point Chagall was dismayed to find a sign reading “Suprematist Academy” at the school. On 5 June 1920, Chagall left Vitebsk.¹⁹⁹ During this time, members of

¹⁹⁴ Rudenstine, 1981, p.23; Goriacheva 2003, p.90.

¹⁹⁵ Senkevitch, 1974, p.316.

¹⁹⁶ Lampe, 2018, p.259.

¹⁹⁷ Lampe, 2018, p.266.

¹⁹⁸ Lampe, 2018, p.260; for a facsimile of the Unovis Almanac with commentary and notation, see Goriacheva, 2003.

¹⁹⁹ Lampe, 2018, p.260.

Unovis were at the First All-Russian Conference of Art Teachers and Students, which also corresponded with their first short exhibition in Moscow at Svomas 1.²⁰⁰

Two weeks after Chagall's departure, on 19 June 1920, Ermolaeva was hired to lead Vitebsk Svomas.²⁰¹ And after the summer, on 1 September 1920, Vitebsk Svomas started classes.²⁰²

On 17 October 1920, Unovis members visited Smolensk and held lectures. Chashnik designed a tilted podium to represent Unovis for a town square in Smolensk, it was printed in a leaflet *Unovis Listok* dated 20 November 1920. It was refined and again published years later as the “Lenin Tribune” by Lissitzky’s studio. The design resonates with similarity to Tatlin’s Monument to the III International due to the moving parts and angled support truss albeit without the spiraling framework and rotating inner volumes.²⁰³

Also in the very productive 1920 for Unovis, Narkompros published Malevich’s *From Cezanne to Suprematism*. The students Chashnik and Khidekel created a journal *Aero*.

In a short artist’s statement penned in Vitebsk on 15 December, Malevich describes updated results of his research with the Supremus group, the plan to transmit the system they had arrived at to the next generation:

[...] “the further development of architectural suprematism, I will entrust in the young architects, in the widest sense of the word, because I see the new systems of architecture in them alone.

I, personally, withdrew into a new realm of thought for myself, as far as I am able, I will state that I see into the infinite space of the human skull.

²⁰⁰ Shatskikh, 2007, p.151.

²⁰¹ Lampe, 2018, p.261.

²⁰² Lampe, 2018, p.262.

²⁰³ Johnson, 2017, p.159.

Long live the unified system of Earth world architecture.

Long live the creative and affirmative of all that is new in the world Unovis.”²⁰⁴

Early in 1921, Kogan, Malevich, and students Chashnik, and Khidekel publish *The Way of Unovis*.²⁰⁵ By March several former students: Chashnik, Khidekel, Suetin, and Yudin began to teach as assistants.²⁰⁶ At the end of 1921, in December, Unovis showed over 200 works at Inkhuk in Moscow.²⁰⁷

UNOVIS PROJECTS: Unovis had a few recurring themes worked on by many of its members: mural or wall painting, train painting, designing podiums for speakers, and book making, in addition to the abstract architectural painting for which they were well known.

Malevich’s 1919 principles of mural painting were made in a handwritten and illustrated page. The system of principles outlined was used to paint a building called the White Barracks in Vitebsk. At the time, the White Barracks housed the Committee for Combatting Unemployment, Lissitzky designed lettering and graphics for the cover for their pamphlet.

After wall painting and murals another programmatic interest was painting trains. Painting trains was an intra-curricular and extra-curricular preoccupation. It was part of a big government programs for design and the arts. Many agit-train cars bore murals of all

²⁰⁴ “Suprematizm 34 Risunka” reprinted in Malevich, 2008, p.59.

²⁰⁵ *Put’ Unovisa*. Vitebsk: Tsentralnii Tvorkom Unovisa, January 1921.

²⁰⁶ Lampe, 2018, p.263.

²⁰⁷ Shatskikh, 1992, p.60.

sorts with a rapidly moving expanse of paint. One purpose of painting them was for political agitation, and distribution of ideas as well as goods. Inside, many carried papers or books or films to distribute to the regions, some even used the train cars as schools. Students in the Unovis group painted and travelled in these train cars, designed with their own collective's imagery (See Illustration 17).

In the graphics studios the group produced images for books and print, with an effort at utility and purpose. In these studios, Tseitlin produced a Svomas card for food rations in 1920 (See Illustration 18).

Another recurring project type was designs for podiums, rostrums, tribunes, or platforms that an orator speaks from. Unovis professors and students designed them in a few iterations in 1920-1921 (See Illustrations 19, and 20). Many aligned Supremus group principles of geometric non-subject abstractions. For Lissitzky's studio, Chashnik drew elevations of an orator platform that includes a canted truss that is more constructivist. An iconic perspective view was published and known as Lenin Podium bearing a large sign at the top that reads "Proletariat" and with "Unovis 1920" written in fine print.

The Unovis group produced and distributed several texts, often hand-written. The faculty and students at Svomas branches were relatively mobile, the publication *The Way of Unovis* has a column from a Unovis field trip to Moscow Svomas from 15 November 1920. In the field trip report, Nina Kogan described many of the studios and praised the independent studio work of Klutskis, and Senkin in Moscow.²⁰⁸ Klutskis's student work had

²⁰⁸ [Kogan, Nina] N.K. "O Moskovskikh Svob. Gosud. Khudozh. Masterskikh." *Put' Unovisa*. Vitebsk: Tsentralnii Tvorkom Unovisa, January 1921. pp.5-6. For translation, see Appendix D.

the bold planar geometry that appealed to the Supremus and Unovis group, especially his “Dynamic City” imagery beginning in 1919 (see Illustration 21). Klutis added photo collage and montage elements, and the motif evolved into his “Electrification of the Whole Country”.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES: Unovis operated under ideas of old and new, knowledge and innovation. The frequent statements against the Academy and academic art, contradict the fact that they were teaching, but set static habitual design into motion. Malevich introduced new movements directly into the curriculum and advanced on those with work under his own direction. Another recurring teaching point was the idea that a painter could be an architect. Could lead, envision, and show architecture.

The emphasis on old and new art met opposition from traditional academics, who many in the group provoked. The dialectic of old and new was reconciled in a way by another avant-garde artist, Stepanova in her graphic “Study the Old but Create Anew” (See Illustration 22).

The Malevich directed Unovis group seemed guided by a principle of new supplanting old; a successive, progressive, even evolutionary type of thinking. This has both benefits and problems. The claim to newness is valid in that they changed many ways art is understood and taught, yet the same is true for many more artists and educators. Debates over modernity and antiquity had already been drawn out and well established by the time of Malevich and Unovis. The Soviet leadership, when paying attention to art, were aware of this. Trotsky described the futility of the futurist dilemma (which applies well to Unovis and more) in making efforts to remove oneself and context

from history and the past.²⁰⁹ It truly is a dilemma as we know how necessary it is to advance knowledge and innovate in a continuous process of renewal.

The Supremus and Unovis stressing of the new and old dichotomy hinges on an idea where one follows another and supplants or supersedes the preceding. The groups successfully wrote and designed their way into the timeline of art history.

There were efforts at synthesis in Unovis, but not exactly as it was in Paintsculptarch, there was more dynamism and almost rivalry between the design arts. The whole range of thesis, antithesis and synthesis was explored. Malevich and his group challenged all the forms of design by exploring them in point and counterpoint. At times Unovis functioned like a political party, and there was not always accord between design disciplines.

Much of the Unovis work was moving towards abstraction, many would move back to the referent and in this process lies the much of the contribution to modernism in the 20th century. When an artist returns from abstraction there is an original essential quality that is brought back. The example of Lissitzky's Proun graphics or graphics in *About Two Squares*, depicts structures, such as towns and bridges, yet with detail removed. As the artist abstracts the subject, recognition is attenuated, and geometry is clearer. When the artist returns to the subject, detail is still absent and the geometry stays clear.

²⁰⁹ See Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, 1922; or quotes elsewhere such as in Perloff, 1986, pp. 32-33.

In comparison with the planar shapes in other studios such as Paintsculptarch or Altman, there is much less curvature of surfaces, more order and rigidity. With Unovis a plane is a plane, for the most part there is no billowing effect. Rectangles are rectangles, triangles are triangles and circles are circles—there is much less composite geometry in the imagery produced by Unovis.

Indeed, at the time, art was leading and architecture was lagging. In painting and sculpture there is always a possibility of realism and accuracy of depiction. Architecture is something else entirely that is not necessarily held to the same mimetic function of mirroring the natural world. Architecture provides habitation, performs certain functions, and can appeal to much more. Academies and institutions, until up to Malevich's era, had encouraged architecture to copy and mimic other forms of architecture, and therein lies the importance of his point. While obviously not the inventor of the square or rectangle, or any other geometry, Malevich insisted that architecture not copy architecture and he reintroduced an essential and basic geometrical starting point. Lissitzky's work aligned with this. Lissitzky made a pedagogical book called *About Two Squares* that was published in Berlin 1922, yet the book began in Vitebsk with Unovis in 1920, (See Illustration 21). That shows the geometrical starting (and ending) points for the group.

OBMOKHU: The Society of Young Artists, (Obmokhu) was a student group founded at the Moscow Svomas. The members were initially students but also would include younger faculty at Svomas and later Vkhutemas. Obmokhu has its origins connected to the Studio Without a Supervisor workshops at Svomas. In addition to the Svomas option of freely selecting faculty, the students were also allowed to select no faculty. Not as much is as known about those classes, their work has not been published as much and a fire in the winter at the end of 1919 devastated what work had been built up. Obmokhu was founded in these more makeshift classes and then evolved into a student led group with faculty participation. This questioned and upended the role of teacher-student as master-apprentice. The group bore a lesson in parallel with the Tatlin group: exploring the scaffolding frameworks of engineering that were instrumental to the Monument to the III International. Other contributions were towards a renewed legitimacy of hardline drawing and constructive approach, and refinement of the collective group work we have seen throughout the avant-garde studios. Their 1921 exhibitions highlighted the term “constructivism” which would, in many ways, characterize the next decade of avant-garde artistic and architectural work. The group lasted after when Svomas was phased out.

BEFORE SVOMAS: The Moscow Svomas based Society of Young Artists (Obmokhu) begs comparison with some of the Svomas faculty members participation in an earlier group in Petrograd the decade before, the Union of Youth (*Soyuz Molodyozhi*). There is nuance in the choice of calling the group a “society” or “union,” but there is certainly

continuity and efforts were comparable and similar. Both were artist collectives, both emphasized youth, and both were leaders in their field. One difference was the turn from painterly quality to fine line. In 1913, Olga Rozanova proclaimed the “Free Art of Painting” in *The Manifesto of the Union of Youth* which had reverberations a few years later in the Svomas philosophy and rhetoric of freedom.²¹⁰ Rozanova continued this theme on the 1917 eve of the Svomas founding, seeking the “liberation of painting”.²¹¹ Many Union of Youth members became faculty at Svomas—such as Altman, Malevich, Tatlin, and Yakulov—where they influenced and taught students that included Obmokhu members.

CHRONOLOGY OF OBMOKHU

Summer 1918	Ioganson, Klutis photographed in Lenin's Model-T. ²¹²
May 1919	Obmokhu exhibition at Moscow Svomas, formerly Stroganov School.
Summer of 1919	Civil War sends students to the front. ²¹³
Winter	Fire in a “Studio Without a Supervisor”
May 1920	Obmokhu Exhibition in a former Faberge shop at Neglinni and Kuznetski Most; which would become Obmokhu's headquarters. ²¹⁴
December 1920	G. Stenberg joins Working Group of Objective Analysis at Inkhuk. ²¹⁵
January 1921	Moscow: “The Constructivists” Exhibition shows work by Medunetsky and Stenberg Brothers ²¹⁶

²¹⁰ Gourianova, 2001, p.68.

²¹¹ Gourianova, 2001, p.68.

²¹² Gough, 2005, p.3.

²¹³ Shastkikh, 1992 p.257

²¹⁴ Zygas, 1981, p.27.

²¹⁵ Gough, 2005, p.34.

²¹⁶ Zygas, 1981, p.28.

18 March 1921	“First Work Group of Constructivists” founded by Gan, Ioganson, Medunetsky, Stenberg Brothers, Rodchenko, Stepanova within Inkhuk. ²¹⁷
22 April 1921	The Objective Analysis Group convened to discuss demonstration drawings, examples by Ladovsky, Babichev, Stepanova, Popova, V. Stenberg, Medunetsky, Rodchenko, ²¹⁸
22 May 1921	Moscow: Obmokhu Exhibition shows “KPS” by Stenberg Brothers, and abstractions by Rodchenko, and “A Study in Balance” by Ioganson, ²¹⁹ at address: 11 Bol'shaia Dmitrovka. ²²⁰ This is what Obmokhu is best known for, the photos have been widely reproduced, the works reconstructed and analyzed.
26 December	Kemeny gives paper at the Inkhuk “Concerning the Constructive Work of the Obmokhu.”

DURING SVOMAS: In a turn of events that certainly hurt the longevity of the Svomas initiative, was that the Russian Civil War sent a wave of students to the front just after its first year of existence, in the summer of 1919.²²¹ Health and sanitation at Svomas was also reportedly not going well. An inspection report from Summer 1919 at Svomas 1 (former Stroganov School), tells of dismal, unhealthy conditions for the students, but that they seemed to work happily.²²² And after that, around the turn from winter 1919 to 1920, the fire in a Studio Without a Supervisor led to the loss of student work that would have revealed much more about Svomas activities and production.²²³ While unsupervised, the students still had access to faculty, lectures, and educational resources. Despite hardships,

²¹⁷ Lodder, 1983, p.83.

²¹⁸ Lodder, 1983, p.83-85.

²¹⁹ Zygas, 1981, p.29.

²²⁰ Gough, 2005, p.9.

²²¹ Shastkikh, 1992, p.257.

²²² According to a Narkompros archive cited in Citti, 1994, p.142.

²²³ Shastkikh, 1992, p.261.

the leaderless workshops and the groups such as Obmokhu made substantial achievements and had far reaching implications.

There are firsthand contemporaneous accounts of a Svomas Studio Without a Supervisor in correspondence from the Russian Civil War front by Svomas student Georgii Shchetinin and his classmate Georgii Echeistov who stayed in Moscow.²²⁴ Echeistov was in the polygraphic track of courses. Echeistov was a member in a Studio Without a Supervisor and sent word of it to Shchetinin. Shchetinin would also write a report on the first year of school at Svomas 1 for the journal *Iskusstvo* (See Appendix D).

There were quite a few members of Obmokhu in the few years of its existence, among them were: the Stenberg brothers, Medunetsky, Ioganson, and Rodchenko joined the group. There was also overlap with Inkhuk, Inkhuk stamped much of the imagery Obmokhu produced.²²⁵

The most noticeable element of Obmokhu production is the framework or wireframe sculpture. Rodchenko had constructed linear elements and combinations into trusses and frameworks earlier with in the Paintsculptarch group and explored these further with Obmokhu. In 1920 he was working on a theory of line, (See Illustration 24), and how to apply it at urban scale, an illustration shows rooftops of buildings with towers and wires connecting building to building. He catalogued “Spatial Constructions” in diagrams that he had constructed from 1918-1921.

²²⁴ Shastkikh, 1992, p.258.

²²⁵ Rudenstine, 1981, pp.110-127.

There are two sequences of exhibitions by Obmokhu. One is descended from accounts in an important 1930 book by Lobanov; and another more recent sequence is derived from exhibition announcements and documents, published by Shatskikh in a 1992 article “A Brief History of Obmokhu”. The difference between the two sequences of exhibitions is that Lobanov counts the 1st as May 1919, 2nd as May 1920, and 3rd as January 1921; and Shatskikh counts the 1st as May 1920, and 2nd as May 1921. The group and its many members exhibited other times and elsewhere as well, but in finding a founding moment these are the important dates. The founding exhibition was at Svomas, either in May of 1919 or May of 1920.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES: The Obmokhu group has interesting implications for education. It was very much in the spirit of Svomas to allow students maximum freedom to explore issues in their work, one might expect this to yield unrestrained products, but the work Obmokhu produced ended up highly structured. There was a less hierarchical balance in the teacher-student roles, that was informed by collective sensibility. The product of the group was challenging architecture by introducing and emphasizing engineered forms. Self-education was emphasized by Narkompros and was at the core of the Obmokhu group.

The emphasis on the role of teacher-student or master-apprentice at Svomas was not exactly new or revolutionary, but the Obmokhu group’s results were. Teacher-student roles are almost a constant in education and master-apprentice roles were derived from an

understanding of how the workshops of Renaissance masters operated.²²⁶ This format for education had been the standard practice of studios running in Paris, Moscow, and elsewhere. The instances at Svomas of the Studio Without a Supervisor, which effectively (or at least in intent) removed the master from the binary, are indeed quite radical and provocative. One can image how a student with an inclination to leadership could thrive and how a class without direction could struggle. In fact, students did have access to faculty for questions and guidance.²²⁷ Some of the student work was compelling and successful and is widely reproduced and discussed.

According to Vladimir Stenberg, there were indeed master-apprentice roles, even with the Svomas philosophy and rhetoric of freedom and the Studio Without a Supervisor option. The Stenberg Brothers and Medunetsky would agitate with posters early on at the Svomas, criticizing the educational system from the inside. An account of one poster was a proclamation against much revered and imitated impressionists who they labelled “titans” of art. The poster expressed the sense of apprentices replicating their masters’ work or of student work within the school being excessively repetitive and copied.²²⁸ Students had access to discussion and meetings were held for debates. Students also exhibited their work with encouragement sometimes but also informally and without permissions in spaces like stairways and lobbies. When applying to sell art, the Stenbergs were emboldened and even while students would identify in their application forms as “artists” rather than “students.”

²²⁶ Shastkikh, 1992, p.258.

²²⁷ Zygas, 1981, p.27.

²²⁸ Law, 1981, p.223.

The poet Mayakovsky lectured and taught poetics at Svomas, he had been a student at the pre-revolutionary Moscow art schools and his presence continued. Mayakovsky's written and especially spoken poetry roused and led the students, and the students sought as powerful a voice through their artworks. While not all artists are as gifted as Mayakovsky in writing and speech, many students realized their poetry resided in artistic media: drafting, making posters, sculptures.²²⁹

As we have seen in most of the studios at Svomas, Obmokhu emphasized collectivism as a societal and classless synthesis of people. The Obmokhu group exhibited with an intentional degree of anonymity as an emphasis on their collective basis.²³⁰ Many of these artists saw painting as overly bound to traditional art and individualism and the new collectivist sensibility was linked instead with architectural or engineered constructive art. The ambition was to reinvent themselves, their schools, and the possibilities of architectural structures—changing the world as a result.

²²⁹ Law, 1981, p.223.

²³⁰ Zygas, 1981, p.27.

CHAPTER 3

AFTER SVOMAS

FINE TUNING: The time after Svomas was a fine tuning, a second wave of reforms around 1920. The two Moscow Svomas campuses were reformed into Vkhutemas, which, compared to Svomas, was more concerned with issues of higher and heightened quality than in a methodology of free design and arts. With overlap in people, places, and ideas, in many ways Vkhutemas consolidated and clarified ideas that were formulated at Svomas. In Petrograd, the Academy of Arts was reestablished and returned to a semblance to its longstanding identity. In Vitebsk, and throughout the regional schools, Svomas was also discontinued, and more reforms were made in art and design education. Kandinsky went on to join the early Bauhaus, Altman did not teach as much after Svomas, Tatlin continued. Krinsky, Ladovsky, and Rodchenko continued teaching and researching as well. The two student groups founded during Svomas: Unovis and Obmokhu kept up production and shined in publications and exhibitions after the Svomas initiative ended. They bridge the gap between Svomas and Vkhutemas-- two educational enterprises of very different nature, during the turn to rationalism and constructivism in modern design. Even though Svomas was phased out, it carried a lasting influence into the next decade and beyond.

ALTMAN AFTER SVOMAS: Towards the end of Svomas Altman turned to political portraiture. He made a *bas-relief* of Narkompros Commissar Lunacharsky.²³¹ and began

²³¹ Etkind, 1971, p.54.

working on portraits of Lenin in April, May, and the first of June in 1920.²³² The Lenin drawings were published in a booklet in 1921.

Altman participated in debates at the Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) that had repercussions well through the 1920s. He presented composition as a whole or unity that cannot be disassembled, this provided support to Stepanova's composition argument.²³³

Altman was the subject of a monograph by B. Arvatov in 1924, and his work was discussed in terms of form and method, volume and space, construction and composition, and conclusions about social impact. The author identified "cardinal findings for clarifying the properties of Altman and his work:

- a) "Altman is an artist that is consciously utilitarian.
- b) His art is an art that ideologically and emotionally acts on form, an art of social impact, rendering it an art with content."²³⁴

Through bold statements on collectivism and belief in shared effort, Altman and other Petrograd-based artist administrators, such as Nikolai Punin and Osip Brik developed a reputation for more of an official state communism than autonomy.

Even though the capitol moved in from Petrograd to Moscow in these years, the Moscow scene attracted many artists that sought and expressed more individualistic creativity and even anarchic forms of creativity.²³⁵ Altman's aesthetic emphasized the collaborative rather than individual creativity as a focus, "only futurist art is constructed on collective bases."²³⁶

²³² Etkind, 1971, p.56.

²³³ Gough, 2005, p.45.

²³⁴ Arvatov, 1924, pp 57-58.

²³⁵ Gourianova, 2014, p.261.

²³⁶ Altman, "'Futurism' and Proletarian Art", 1918; Bowlt, 1988, p.164.

The cubo-futurist surfaces and planes with slight arcs or angles along the edges and billowing aspect, evident at least in his work as early as 1914, recurred in his installation at Palace Square. These forms have been likened to the collaborative sculptures at Café Picturesque,²³⁷ and are also comparable and in the spirit of many works at the time. Altman's installation was a major demonstration of avant-garde potential for defining future paths.

Altman was less anarchical compared to other leading avant-garde artists.²³⁸ Altman's sense of the collective seems to be a unifying idea founded on a societal order.

For Altman, painting was often a question of still life, domesticity, and everyday life, whereas sculpture was monumental, public, and civic.

Altman along with Chagall, Kandinsky and Shterenberg were painters and producers of images, that contrast with the constructions of many students at Svomas, nonetheless they exhibited many works by former Svomas (then Vkhutemas) students in "First Russian Exhibition" in Berlin in 1922.²³⁹

The work of the generation who went through the Svomas questioned the brushstroke of painting that many of their professors had used and often preferred hardline fine-line engineering or architectural drafting. Architecture was changing as well to be less about broad brush ideation and more about accurate drafting of feasible

²³⁷ Zygas, 1981, p.4, pp.8-9.

²³⁸ Gurianova, 2014, shows leading constructivist contributions to anarchist journals including numerous articles by Gan, Malevich, Rodchenko, Tatlin.

²³⁹ See catalogue by Galerie van Diemen, 1922; Gough 2005, p.158.

buildings. Altman and others at Svomas contributed to the development of the accuracy of line in abstract art and architectural visualization at this time.

TATLIN AFTER SVOMAS: In February 1921, Punin published *Tatlin (Against Cubism)*. The booklet was dedicated to the students of the Free State Art Studios.²⁴⁰ Yet also on 2 February 1921, at the end of Svomas, when the Petrograd Svomas was turned back into the Academy of Art, Tatlin had been meeting academic resistance, and he did not keep his Petrograd studio or teach there until 1923.²⁴¹

Later in 1921, in March, new groups were forming and the Productivist group defined its program at the Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk). Tatlin reported on his conception of “material culture”²⁴² at Moscow Inkhuk and returned to Petrograd to found the branch of the Institute there, it was first called the “Museum of Artistic Culture.”

In the years following the Monument to the III International model exhibition, critics began writing about it, worldwide. Accounts of it were published in English, French, German, etc. Poet Ilya Ehrenberg wrote a short article that featured Tatlin’s studio accomplishment, that was published in Paris.²⁴³ It also inspired Ehrenberg to the

²⁴⁰ For excerpts from the text see Zhadova, 1988, p.347-393; for the full text in Russian see Punina, I.N. and Rakitin, V.I. (eds.), 1994, pp.27-41.

²⁴¹ Andersen, 1968, p.14; Clark, 1995, p.154.

²⁴² Senkevitch, 1974, p.139.

²⁴³ Ehrenbourg, Elie. “L’Art Russe d’Aujourd’hui” *L’Amour de l’Art*. 1921 v.2. pp.367-370.

formulate an equation, “the new SCULPTURE=ARCHITECTURE” in a synthesis of arts.²⁴⁴

On 28 June 1922, a collaborator and friend who had honored him in a poem, Khlebnikov died. Then in the next year, in 1923, Tatlin staged Khlebnikov’s poem “Zangezi” at Petrograd Inkhuk.²⁴⁵

PAINTSCULPTARCH AFTER SVOMAS: Krinsky, Ladovsky, Rodchenko kept working and teaching at the Vkhutemas. Ladovsky was known for work developing a “psycho-technical” laboratory at Vkhutemas and for interesting work by students. Rodchenko published frequently in the next decade and his archive has been kept, with many books on his work as a result. Krinsky published a 1934 textbook *Elementy Arkhitekturno-Prostranstvennoj Kompozitsii* or *Elements of Architectural-Spatial Composition*. Others in the Paintsculptarch group had careers in architecture.

UNOVIS AFTER SVOMAS: In Vitebsk, Svomas was made official later and also ended later. By July 1921, Vitebsk Svomas was once again reformed and renamed. The school changed its name to Vitebsk Practical Art Institute and its emphasis shifted away from the freedom of Svomas to a more technical and pragmatic approach.²⁴⁶ The members of Unovis began to move on from Vitebsk. On 23 September 1921, Lissitzky lectured at the

²⁴⁴ Ehrenburg “A Vse-Taki Ona Vertitsia” 1922, p.18. reproduced in Andersen, 1968, p.58. Also in Rowell, 1978, p.107.

²⁴⁵ Andersen, 1968, p.14.

²⁴⁶ Lampe, 2018, p.263.

Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) in Moscow, presenting his “Prouns” series of architectural paintings.²⁴⁷ The next year, in 1922, Unovis ended work in Vitebsk with Malevich moving to Petrograd. Some of his students: Chashnik, Suetin, and others move behind him to Petrograd.²⁴⁸ In Petrograd the group develops a motto of “Suprematism is the new Classicism”.²⁴⁹

OBMOKHU AFTER SVOMAS: Many of the participants in Obmokhu were constructing abstractions in tension and compression, wireframe sculptures, in the Svomas years. All this work led to a major exhibition in May 1921, (see Illustration 25), that happened after Svomas was phased out, but a lot of the work was made during the Svomas years.

This exhibition reinvented exhibition design, at least in the view of Lissitzky who had seen and made his share of inventions.²⁵⁰ The groundbreaking impact of the exhibition was in the 25 sculptures shown and their sense of constructivist structure and space. The photos are very powerful, given that the artworks were not preserved, save one piece by Medunetsky and one by Rodchenko.²⁵¹ While they have been recreated from the photos and accounts, the aura of the photographs is strengthened by the sculptures’ absence.²⁵² Although 11 of these “spatial forms” had been collected in a mass museum

²⁴⁷ For a complete list of lectures and papers see Zygas, 1981, p.31.; and Lodder, 1983, p.93.

²⁴⁸ Rudenstine, 1981, p. 251.

²⁴⁹ Shatskikh, 1992, p.57.

²⁵⁰ Gough, 1998, p.92-3.

²⁵¹ Gough, 1998, p.93.

²⁵² For reconstructions see Nakov, 1975.

push by a state art fund, the fact that the works from the exhibition that had been kept in museums were deliberately “liquidated” by the museum officials around 5 years later.²⁵³

Of the Obmokhu May 1921 exhibition, much of the work has the aesthetic of engineered structures. The wireframe was a significant development of this, such as Klutis’s constructions and Radio Orators, which were drafted just after Svomas and are considered constructivist. The work was not always entirely abstract but led to some applied designs such as these kiosks for screens and radio stands. Much of the work immediately after Svomas became known as constructivism, Aleksei Gan’s treatise *Constructivism* from 1922, enlarged and emboldened concepts for the new movement that had grown out of Svomas: “Tectonics, Factura, Construction”²⁵⁴.

Exhibitions, publications, and conferences on Svomas shared the word about these developments internationally. Lissitzky did a lot in that regard, with appearance at events such as the 1922 Dada Constructivism Congress at the Bauhaus. In 1922, Obmokhu showed their work at the First Russian Art Exhibition in Berlin.

²⁵³ Gough, 1998, p.93.

²⁵⁴ Gan, 1922, p.56.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

“To be precise. All that has been said previously is in relation to a free school, of the type created by the Department, the State Free Art Studios, founded on the principle of free education, with freedom to choose a director, where inside the same scholarly establishment the most diverse groups and artistic currents are free in coexistence.

The Studios are a magnificent cultural achievement. We have placed in them, all our hopes of seeing artistic culture flourish.”²⁵⁵

RESPITE AFTER HARD WORK: The Svomas initiative turned into a moment of lasting enduring influence. One part was the fine tuning of Svomas, Vkhutemas and the fine line between order and chaos.²⁵⁶ Artistic and architectural education at the Free Studios (Svomas) was chaotic yet was a far-reaching moment worth consideration. A more loose and painterly approach was trained into the fine line of architectural drafting as the Svomas initiative winded down and Vkhutemas took the lead in *avant-garde* education.

In the years before Vkhutemas was founded, line was becoming an important element in the conception of space, and this continued through the 20th century in a very telling way. The changes in line quality of major examples of art, design and their explanations in accompanying texts are insights into the development and progression of modern thought. A trend towards fine linework, was exhibited in the works and statements of leading artists in painting and sculpture in dialog with a sense of architectonics and engineering accuracy. The equipment for drawing evermore finely and

²⁵⁵ Brik, Osip. “Our Task” (1919), excerpts in Khan-Magomedov, 1990, v.1, pp.193-194.

²⁵⁶ An earlier draft of this chapter was published with the Vkhutemas 100 conference, Moscow, 2020.

precisely became part of the iconography of the *avant-garde* around the founding of Vkhutemas. Many of the faculty at the school contributed to this essential component of art and design in the development of modernism.²⁵⁷

One logic in art and in understanding art is a reading of movements in terms of fundamental or elemental units for developing the work. Many terms with -ism suffixes are led by prefixes as a start. Pointillism employed the point as a start. Cubism was named because of an appearance of cubic volumes used as a start. Rayonnism took the ray of light as a start. A graphical and geometric logic underlay original understandings, our appreciations, and the ultimate developments of those movements in those terms of focus.

Compare the line quality of rayonnist art with the line quality of constructivist art. Examining rayonnist drawings and paintings easily shows that a measurably thicker and uneven edged (often brushed) linear stroke is a recurring feature, whereas the constructive line most often either was of a more minimal thickness with an unevenness approaching zero in graphic applications. In sculpture or architecture, an appropriate material thickness due to tensile or compressive material strengths was often given as a property to the linework. Between rayonnism and constructivism, brush marks gradually tended towards this trend in sharper and finer lines. In an essay “On Line” of 1919, Wassily Kandinsky recognized point and line as the “big questions” of the time, especially for graphical artists as they “derive the resources for a whole realm of art”²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Line drawing through the history of modern art, both in Russia and internationally, is discussed in the chapter “Surface Tension” pp.25-124 in Butler and de Zegher, 2010.

²⁵⁸ Reprinted in Lindsay and Vergo, 1982, p.425.

During the Svomas years, a chaotic and tumultuous educational situation continued to yield a freer quality of line and edge in much of the exemplary art and design produced there. Brush and easel painting was subtly yet impactfully changing, evolving further around the years 1918-1920. Perhaps more so than usual, art and design were in flux and stability was being intentionally reconsidered. The experiments were more about search and exploration than order and rigorous testing, yet beginnings of those were apparent. Art and architecture were being reconsidered in a way that considered key theories and theses more in terms of synthesis than antithesis. The question of line, raised earlier by Kandinsky was a careful consideration, a honing and fine tuning of linework around the beginning of Vkhutemas. Whether it was a segment between points or the linear edge of a plane, there was a growing need for accurate drawing by instrumental means. The Institute of Artistic Culture commissioned papers, lectures, and debates that led to these developments.²⁵⁹ In one, Rodchenko wrote, “The brush, which had been so indispensable in painting which transmitted the object and its subtleties, became an inadequate and imprecise instrument in the new, non-objective painting and the press, the roller, the drawing-pen, the compasses, etc. replaced it.”²⁶⁰

Many of the sculptural and architectural work around 1920 also displayed the trend in line most commonly through utilization of trusses and frames. Examples range from Tatlin’s Monument to the III International, to Lissitzky’s Lenin Tribune, to the KPS

²⁵⁹ Zygas, 1981, p.33.

²⁶⁰ From a manuscript entitled “Line” for a 1921 Inkhuk lecture, translation by Bowlt in *From Surface to Space*, 1974, p.66. For more information on Rodchenko’s “Linearism” see Lavrent’ev, 1992.

series by the student group Obmokhu, to the innovative set designs for Meyerkhhold productions. With respect to graphics, which could approach or approximate diagrammatically infinite thinness, architectural sculpture was also preoccupied with line but more in terms of linear materials that carried different implications. To construct or design constructions out of linear pieces, these designers needed appropriate dimensional sizing and proportions of woods and metals. They needed to consider the material capacities in loaded structural configurations. They also challenged these capacities and structures in ways that continue to be discussed.

Architects' and engineers' technical drawings had a considerable degree of influence on the artists, in this respect. In turn, the artists' often radical ideas about the world often influenced the architects. Malevich, Popova, Tatlin and others were searching for something to do with architectonics and order vis-a-vis chaos, and as instructors they taught the next generation, with this in mind. While many architects were historicist stylistically and traditionally academic in their pursuits, the *avant-garde* artists reconsidered modes of production with the tools of building. Order and chaos were balanced less by gravity and more by an equilibrium of measured, geometrical lines.

The way to make finer lines, is expedited by mechanical pencils, pens, templates such as triangles, rulers, and compasses-- there were means for production but also became important symbols of artists and designers. The compass became a kind of iconic symbol for changes in the way art was made. The trend towards fine line in art and design after the Svomas to Vkhutemas transition is evident in many works. Iconic and graphic examples by leading artists in the early 1920s include the early Vkhutemas emblem by Alexander Vesnin that represented a whole school with compass and triangles inscribed

in a circle in thin lines. The trend towards line is also evident in representations of artists, such as the depiction of the artist with compass over eye in photomontage “Tatlin at Work” by Lissitzky 1922, and in the caricature of the artist with compass in “Line Constructor Rodchenko” by Stepanova in 1922. Furthermore, there are photographic portraits by Rodchenko of Stepanova with drawing tools at the drafting table, or drafting with a compass. One last example is the upturned hand with compass on the cover for the *Vkhutemas Arkhitektura* booklet published in 1927. These examples show an iconography of the devices used to effectively make lines of a finer quality.

In conclusion, an examination of the art and design currents slightly before and slightly after Vkhutemas’s founding year of 1920, reveals an interest in line, that is visually evident in both the production and written statements by the artists and designers. To test ideas about line, an experiment to quantify line quality would fit this written study. Such an application and experiment would be possible and would be an appropriate way, historically speaking, to think about the time of founding, considering the Vkhutemas interests in the psychotechnical. Afterall, one of Professor Nikolai Ladovsky’s instruments, the *liglazometr* was made to measure linear visual perception.

The fine line between the respective chaos of Svomas and the more ordered systems at Vkhutemas was apparent in the move from the relative freedom of Svomas to later education that strove for a higher level of achievement.

CONSTRUCTION, DECONSTRUCTION, INSTRUCTION: In the years immediately after Svomas, constructivism rose to a major topic in the 1920s. It continued to wax and wane in the historical critical literature, throughout the century. Seeking options beyond

those allowed by more generic modern design, architects re-discovered constructivism in the 1980s and 1990s and along with philosophical and literary deconstruction, made many advancements beyond what was considered possible earlier. Many of the experimental ideas at Svomas were a point of departure for full scale architecture. As more time has passed, deconstruction might have become recessive, and as of 2022, scholars' views of the Svomas years have changed with availability of information. The opportunity to closely study the historical data of that time is now relatively open, lessons have been learned that can be conveyed and taught. For those interested in design and arts education, there is now a path from construction, deconstruction, to instruction.

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APPENDIX A

LUNACHARSKY, “*ISSKUSTVO (ART)*”—A SPEECH GIVEN AT THE 10 OCTOBER

1918 OPENING OF THE PETROGRAD SVOMAS

“When theorists of socialism, often in a dream, often in a more or less substantiable prognosis, talked of the socialist future of humanity, they invariably allotted a highly significant role to art.

Representatives of the proletariat always decisively rejected claims that the socialist system which offers, as a transitional period, the dictatorship of the proletariat – that class which the ruling classes kept far from culture, -- as if this system, in a cultural regard, signifies some kind of decline, that could cause the destruction of those facets of public life that sustain the finest and highest needs of the soul.

Of course, the theorists of socialism did not deny that between art of the proletariat and art of the ruling class there lies a significant limit. The vast majority of these simultaneously rejected and reproached the proletariat for lack of culture and ignorance, to stories of unified human art. I do not want to say this, but the unified human art does not exist. But if someone spoke, for example, of a unified human language, one would be both correct and incorrect! Of course, there exists uniformity of articulate human speech, but this does not change the fact that there are Chinese and French languages, dialects of the twelfth century and dialects of the current century. We see a semblance of this in art. That art exists in humanity as a whole, does not negate the fact that art has long undergone drastic changes and that different societies and among different peoples it has been cast in special forms.

If we compare peoples who are separated from each other by a significant historical distance, that is peoples with heterogeneous social structure, then it is certain the art will also be heterogenous, and socialist society is extremely separate from bourgeois society. In time, it can arise from capitalism in just a day by way of a political upheaval, but the inner essence of bourgeois society and socialist society are vastly distant from one another, by virtue of the arts of these two societies, evidently, they will differ in many ways. And since the ideological forms will always have a certain rigidity, then, reasonably, the political upheaval will not coincide with the same lightning-fast change in ideology.

If art continued going along on its own rails acquiring skills specific to it, no one in the art world could comprehend in 24 hours, 24 days, or months, that the demands of society on professional artists has changed radically.

If they realized this, then quite often the artist would find themselves facing unusual and confusing pathways with a deep sadness about how they cannot function working in those prior forms to which they were accustomed. In this sense, revolutionary upheaval cannot but have a painful effect on the art world, partly because of economics, for the artist in the bourgeois society – and for the time being in ours – is not a freely functioning individual, rather is a seller of their works. With this, the artist, poet, creates spiritual value, and must realize, -- “you cannot sell inspiration, but can sell a manuscript”.²⁶¹

When the market the artist buys and sells in is substantially changed, this understandably harms the artist if they do not know if they can deliver what is required and whether their production is even needed.

²⁶¹ Quote from Pushkin, “Conversation Between a Bookseller and a Poet”

This is how to discuss the question from a point of view that is purely economical. If we see the fate of the arts from another point of view that is more deep and more related to us who are involved in art, -- from the cultural point of view, that we, naturally, will see the same painful experience, as in cultural life supply and demand also exist. The artist, who has the deepest awareness that in the work they have put all that is sacred, can feel their voice crying out into an deserted landscape, can hear no response, with the unknown, *a priori*, who is to blame: is the artist obsolete, the people have moved on and left him behind, derelict, discarded, or on the contrary, a genius artist "ahead of their time"; maybe they are a crank who wanders off into the sands, a branch dried up from straying from the river, -- or maybe, they are so original, that the suffering is not understood at their time and posterity will speak of their works as if they were wonderful pearls of human creation.

We can say in advance that in the epoch of sharp division, when one whole class possessing vast means and command in society to determine the breadth of its spiritual life, departs and dies and when a new class steps up to the front – under these conditions the art world cannot but end up in disarray, surviving an severe storm, that for isolated individuals was accompanied, perhaps, with a certain death.

Since some artists have evaluated the socialist revolution from this point of view, they cannot help but feel animosity towards it. They cannot, at least with consciousness of the injustices of the capitalist system, not think: "It would be better if everything was the same as the olden days. We would not say that the old days were good. But if it changed gradually, without severe convulsions, without fracture, without surprises, if the masses were more cultured, more studious, if how we live was not so strange to them, --? that is when we could happily greet the new system."

But that kind of attitude verges, in the eyes of the revolutionary proletariat, on that which gave cause for the accusations of the great Jean-Paul Marat, who said: "All these people – servants of the rich and, consciously or not, honestly or not, or whatever it may be, they are serving, and also feeding off the handouts from the table of the rich, mourning the demise of the rich."

Meanwhile, these phenomena have nothing to do with art as such. It is only coincidence, all this is highly superficial. All this painful talk of the artist, in fact, for the artist as such, for the artist within the artist, it should not matter.

Take the issue of selling artwork. It is not a norm handed down century after century, rather a misfortune and disgrace created by the class system, that the artist is forced to consider their art from this point of view. On the inside they know most of all that they should be concerned that creativity does not depend on whether the creator has food on the table.

Of course, there exists spiritual supply and demand but this does not mean that the artist should necessarily obey it, maybe they should be able to think through what they are given. The order to paint some predetermined palace or erect a monument to some particular great person, but this is significant only externally; what will be imbedded into the work, what part "soul" of the artist materialized – this depends wholly on the artist, and here he should be maximally free.

Will the new socialist system bring the artist this freedom? Now, I do not want to paint reality with rosy colors. We are enduring a painful transitional moment, a moment of civil war, hunger, economic destruction, which only most recently begins to be lit by the sun of victory. Of course, many more days will pass when we should talk about creation in the throes of the new society, and not about its normal functioning. But normal functioning of the socialist society proposes the maximum freedom for the artist.

Socialism strives for a point that every valuable worker for society -- especially the worker producing creative value, -- can have perfect freedom from the vagaries of the market. Socialism considers each individual person as a value to society, (from both economic and spiritual standpoints, the two views we have so far touched on) as if they were a social organ that should be nourished, as an ear, eye, mouth is in a body; in this way an artist can freely function and unfurl those propensities and gifts, that they have and can serve the gigantic spiritual progress of all humanity.

In concrete terms, any person who is a recognized artist, in the artistic sphere, freely and willingly involved and accepted by their peers there should be some right to sufficient sustenance that can be allowed and without worrying about their material being, able to give themselves to their creativity. This is what we strive for.

As we begin to gain strength, we should studious youths and artists, having finished school and departing on their life path, and also the more mature masters, the masterful artists moving to places with endowed positions in society, which like birds in a tree, say: "sing as your inner voice leads you, do not worry about tomorrow". This is the question we raise, which itself flows out from our socialist plan. The more we implement, the more complete our victory will be, the more complete the victory of the artist over the market, over the buyers, and the more free the fountain of art will flow from the human heart.

But alone, freedom is not enough, freedom itself is a negative concept, or more truly, it contains nothing positive in itself. Even Nietzsche said, "Freedom, freedom -- you say, my brother, but what is the freedom for?" This is completely accurate. I can be free, I might not have my hands and legs bound, I can move left or right, complete do some deed or some misdeeds, -- and it does not mean, that freedom is always something positive; to liberate the insane or people with criminal inclinations -- that is not at all, a good deed.

The new society, the socialist system does not only liberate the artist -- it gives them absolute and specific impulses. If I said, that the artist should be free, then that means that they are free in the metaphysical sense of the word. When we say for instance in pure physical terms, that a given person is free, then from this it does not follow that they can then fly without wings or that they can now easily walk on four legs -- no, physical freedom lies means that a person can act according to the how the organism of their natural system leads them. "The free person" -- does not mean, that they are free to grow four ears, four eyes, their existence as before will be defined by the whole past of the human race, that to the most finite detail forms that which we call humanity kind. People live in a society, in which they interact, make impressions, -- in this, they enter into a peculiar synthesis bringing those tendencies they inherited, resulting in their personality.

The socialist society can give the artist an endlessly greater internal substance, than bourgeoisie society, where they lived until now. This is relative to the extent their character is broad, monumental, spontaneous, eternal, grandiose, -- this goes without saying.

Class society breaks down people into antagonistic groups, and this puts a stamp on the whole spiritual life of people. We do not know, we almost do not sense that in humanity there is more, a more important human collective. We perceive the past of humanity, love its prospects in some form or another, but respond to these or other phenomena happening all around us, in a full sense of the word --like some snail, having around it a hard shell, like a creature that has visual perception through an opaque glass, and sounds -- through a thick barrier. Only socialism can destroy these barriers, breaks down the need for any egoism, unifies people, destroys the home, that we carry on top of ourselves like snails, it makes our minds soft, plastic, receptive to all the wealth of life that is happening around us.

If I say that the monumental and grandiose sense, being close to art opens vast perspectives, then this is not a dream or divination. But more important is that coinciding with this, the artistic collective will be brought to the foreground.

If we take the much paler eras of collectivism, for instance, the city-communes of antiquity or the late middle-ages of Italy, or the societies that erected the gothic cathedrals and halls of central Europe, then you see that the artist an isolated individual, would have retreated into the background: not always easy to find a name, of one among the rest, who could have designed the most grand and wonderful works of human genius. In the course of centuries, nameless brotherhoods created the chief, structural marvels. What had taken place, and what Ruskin sang the praises of, was the denunciation of capitalists lording over artistic individualism, -- this recurs into the near future: we will have artistic collectives, and a whole brotherhood of architects, painters, sculptors, that together will devise a specific plan, fulfill it not in a century -- technical gains are not in vain after all, -- and in years, we will build not only individual buildings that embody human ideals, but, it may be, whole cities, garden-cities, in which we are in great need; these arts collectives will recreate the whole face of the earth in agreement with nature's dictates, and agreeing with the human dream of beauty and harmony.

The damage from the internal upheaval, that in spirit will align with the socialist upheaval, the representatives of its intimate poetry, and intimate art await. And I understand them completely, these quiet sounding artists, all their rustling, all their secrecy, unsaid, personal, untranslatable into any language, the artists of the subtlest nuances, who fear that there will not remain even one alley, where any ray of the bright sun light will shine.

But I think, that regrets of some disappearing features of contemporary exaggeratedly individual art will need, for personal originality, a special "prism of temperament", through which makes the impression, as Zola correctly noted, it will be stronger, by the more differentiated and freer society: by the greater collection of impressions open to our souls, and it will be even harder to level.

In this sense the originality in art of the socialist society will be greater, than anywhere before. But this originality will be clearer, stronger, more direct, and masculine, than that marked with the word "decadence", -- that is "gracefully-fallen", -- will play a smaller

and smaller role. And that is good. Humanity moves towards victory over the sorrows and adversities, that were strangling it, and from the highly interesting but pasty, stingy child that could not express their soul in any other way, than the mystique of the minor key, now you will find a strong, healthy, full of hope and happiness.

Those are thoughts, which should be common to artist even now, if they can forget for a minute about those challenges in life that influence (and of course can not influence) each person, and if they, forget the hardships of being, consider the situation as only an artist can. When you talk with an artist, tell them deeply encouraging, deeply bright relative to those moments in world history, in which we are entering, do not hide from them as before that we are entering a socialist paradise, and to enter we will have to pass through, perhaps, a fairly bitter level of purgatory.

Contemporary art is not unified. As such, different factions, different categories of artists respond to the new societal needs differently.

“The old” and “the new” are stormily and hostilely clashed in the bourgeois world. The young art bitterly complained at the absence of their freedom to develop and at the peculiar gerontocracy, that is the dominance of older people, with purchased positions in society from where they would impose their taste.

In the neurasthenic 20th century we are presented with an uncommonly peculiar phenomenon. From the very beginning of the century the artistic directions have been changing with a colossal speed. Almost every year has brought a new school. The youth, striving to discover “new shores”, very often discard what is considered mastery. In this sense, the artists of the old generation, are right when they say that these stormy quests for novelty, before all else, are negatively impacting the arts.

Painting is dominated by sketchiness. Almost no one works realistically, almost no one is strong in the artisan sides of art, they do not acquire the traditional skills. At times, when art is noticeably fallen, traditions are lost, and barbarism returns, the artists are not saying that we paint and draw now worse than the previous generations; they always believe they are ushering in new taste. But the loss of artisanry marks an era of decline.

The artist of the past generation are right, when they say: the youths are striving for glory and originality. A baby faced young person, with fresh milk on their lips who want to be a master; if they churn out some unheard of thing, that has no rhyme or reason, but is a project from a hastily conceived theory or arrangement of words, that is supposed to be the key to understanding their discoveries they made, -- they will always find two-three young people stupider than themselves, who cannot even combine that which was “discovered”; they flock to the new young “master”, who had not yet had their own students, and makes it easier to play with originality. That is how one of the “newest schools” is formulated.

The market has gradually adapted to this phenomenon. The all-powerful lord over artists, in bourgeois society both an advertising and sales agent for works of art, in the present time understood and sniffed out this side of things and it does not only sell now some of the famous names and fake antique artworks, and loves to promote new names as well. In a mansard somewhere there lives a person, who in the best case somewhat crazed and painfully vain, and in the worst case is a charlatan. And some Parisian or London firm engages them, buys some canvases, promotes them, advertises. The connoisseurs and collectors quickly want to have some pictures of their own, they need this “Ivanov”, they

quote, buy, because of “curiosity” and this high praise in the last decades. This side of the things is evident in the newest art. That no one can deny the accumulation of the newest trends and currents with a huge quantity of any type of schlock.

It would be right to remind the youth, that before creation, before seeking out new pathways, better find solid footing, better to go to a good school of artistic grammar and after that dream of independence and the further development of art.

But unfortunately, these rebukes, that artists of the older generation direct at the youth, should very often be disregarded, because the artistry is also missing in the older artists, who present themselves as the dominant academic group.

Art is declining in all countries. The holy flame is fading out. And of course, “the brown gravy” that the impressionists went against, depressingly copy after copy, epigonism, which led almost all art, the routine art of the bourgeois society of the last decades cannot stand against the young art, no matter how it is unsatisfactory.

From the “youthful” standpoint, correct indications are being dealt out, that “the masters” supposedly following grand traditions, present themselves as almost upholsterers who under command of the rich make valuable decoration for their lives. The portraits of these rich people and the pictures painted for them, lacking any creative inspiration, and the artistic work is turned into handicraft, but of course, not in the high sense of the work that it held before. Who does not know the difference between those canvases, that we see in the museums and actually belong to epochs of genuine flourishing, and the canvases of our times?

From this point of view you could say that actual condition of the arts – is rather depressing. We see in it, seething, yearning, searching – and all in all, there is only one thing even relatively good about it, it is only because there that, where they do not search, there we have no refined mastery, but rather pale, sickly, toothless, boney, deathly remains of a time when there was a real living art.

Of course, between these two poles there is a place for a small sum of excellent masters; leaving at a certain distance, we will see, that in the oases of the woefully deserted stage in the fine arts, that humanity is now going through, there are significant artists, who have a peculiar combination of new searching and old tradition. The situation is unhappy.

There must be a way out.

Before all else it is interesting to raise the question of so called “revolutionary” art.

Those searches we were talking about, exhibit some undoubtedly painful symptoms. But is it not that in them there was a healthy beginning and do they not respond essentially to the revolution that is happening outside the art world, in the realm of societal research?

This question is extremely important and interesting.

The citizens and comrades, who are listening to me here, should not think that when I said here from the harsh and ugly standpoint of the so called innovation in art and about the presence of madness and charlatanism in it, I wanted to say that besides madness and charlatanism there is nothing else in it.

No, there is valuable work, there is real aspiration highly responsive, highly alive part of our artistic personnel (that is the youthful part) of expressing some of their feelings and responding to these with an artistic echo of genuine reality, of the living present day. The typical new “schools” (we will consider impressionism a school of the past, now faded into the background) – the branches of cubism and futurism deserve more considerable

study. Now I am not in the position to devote my time to analyzing them and will limit myself to a general statement, that is unlikely to be disputed: these newest directions are a reflection of the restless life that the 20th century has created.

Fine art is typified as a static art; to depict movement is not easy in painting and especially in sculpture. In the 20th century the very form of painting and sculpture painfully clashed with the human spirit.

The newest artist hurried to make their picture move or run; they tried to compel it to a dynamic life, and then everything applied to the canvas freezes. Hence, the need to create an illusion of motion. That is the internal contradiction in which the newest art movements are now struggling.

In addition to that, is the soul of this crisis that the youth acutely experience, they bring their enthusiasm, and love everything extreme and screaming; they see a new phase in social life that corresponds with storms of military and revolutionary character. This correspondence exists but it needs to be more precisely understood.

Not long ago was talk of daily life and the everyday. Look how it is reflected in the work of Chekhov, in "Solitude" by Maupassant. And now who will talk about how life soured by sedentariness and devoid of thrilling experiences, and events of great impact? We fell into the most tempestuous whirlpool, that has ever happened on the course of humanity. The further we go, the stronger the vortex encircles us, and all that is stable dissolves in it, -- including both statues and pictures. Instead of the previously tranquil features in fine arts there appear the features of immeasurable expressiveness, extreme internal discontent.

But does this mean that the contents of the newest art is connected with the contents of our new life? No, it does not. Otherwise, of course, the revolutionary class, the proletariat would have sensed immediately that they have nothing to gain from artists of the previous generations, even if they have not died physically, and would have fully accepted futurism (if by this name we take to categorize all the new movements). But nothing like this is evident.

If, on the one hand, the revolutionary proletariat had a well-known predilection for old forms it is explainable perhaps by some lack of culture, inability to differentiate between epigonism and falsity, then on the other hand, individual proletariat fascination with the futurist "devices" clearly has a coincidental, superficial character. A real combination of such, so that the proletariat and the progressive proponents would agree: "this meets our needs" -- does not exist.

Meanwhile, the more we observe what is being done in the proletarian theatres and at the exhibitions, we notice that the greatest influence on soviet art are the newest schools. The formal relationship, that is, the search for new forms, predilection for dynamism, and tempestuous movement, a property of any revolution, -- here is how outwardly, both sides are generated. But you cannot overestimate their proximity, which turns out to be illusory under closer inspection. The proletariat has contents. If you ask, what they want, they will express grandiose ideas, signifying an absolute revolution in all of human life. But if you ask the same question to a futurist, they will repeat: "form... form..." thinking the combination of line or color that cannot be named as there is nothing it represents, besides "experiences" in general, -- that it is the picture.

The innovator, infected with the prejudice of bourgeois artistic emptiness (as the contemporary bourgeois has no positive ideals), will say: “literature has no place in painting, the artist should not be tainted by literature, with plot content”. For us these words are monstrous; with consider them a sign that we are dealing with a child who does not comprehend these issues. Any art is poetry, any art is creation, it expresses real feelings and ideas. The more defined these ideas, these feelings are, the more defined and riper the fruit, that the artist expresses in their depiction.

The person who thinks that paint and line are valuable in themselves, is premature, has nothing to fill even the very newest container, or a halfdead person, bearing the container, because they have already lived through and lost the inner contents. Chekhov was right in the deepest way, when he said that the current art had lost “God”, does not know what to teach, that nothing is valued, all devoid of ideas, and in such a context no matter the level of mastery you are not an artist.

Those who do not think in images, those who are not people with deep experiences to fill into images – they are not artists. They can only be “a master” – in the sense that they make some combinations, which might be of some use to other real artists.

There is an intentional absence of content, this theory of “free” combinations of lines, sounds or words without internal contents (and with a ricochet went to the point of disavowing literature, even from... literature) – this are the reasons, truly new people regard futurism as a decrepit thing, as a ultrarefined desert after a bourgeois meal, the fruit of a hollowed out bourgeois culture, providing nightingales’ tongues, because all else would seem insipid and banal.

For the older art there is a much more natural outcome: the more the art is realistic, it doubtlessly has the right to the future, -- and not only the “right”; it can confidently be said that it will be affirmed in the future. Can it be denied, with any theory we hold, that the fact of combining images as nature bestows onto every healthy person, the combination of images imbued with high ideological and sensory content, -- that such an art has the right to exist?

From this point of view, if only what is called the old art with realistic (“slavish” as the “innovators” say) approach relative to nature, was made with new content, it would be received with the most decisive and resounding response. The key to the revival of this art must be in how to revive the living spirit or plot itself, this is something in the past even the realist artists treated frivolously and dismissively; to revive the plot – this is essential for the artist that wields enough of their technique, it is everything. One should not treat the plot diminutively, as something that can be just put on the canvas. The follow the plot – this means to follow the idea that cannot quite be expressed and can torment a person.

The new art does not find itself, as we see, in a very favorable situation in relation to socialism.

In my efforts at creating compromise between the young art, between the talented proponents of this art and the masses of workers I constantly met with a very serious rebuke – rebuke from the angle of masses and the angle of the best, most developed representatives of the working class that negatively shake their heads and say: “no, this does not work”. But this does not mean that the new art as is, with its new devices, deformations, musical interpretations of living phenomena, complete predominance of

art's forms, dictated by the creator of the work, over the form given by nature, -- for this art there can by no means be instilled. As for them they need a plot. Then it will substantially change their character. Here is an example. One of the talented futurists, the poet Mayakovsky, wrote a poem that was called "Mystery-Bouffe." The form of the work was the same as Mayakovsky usually writes, but the content was a quite different. The content of this work was given gigantic experiences of contemporaneity, it was the first in art of recent times to be effectively the phenomena of our lives.

Those are the great internal difficulties, standing before art. With the external difficulties the issue is simpler. Without considering our economical impoverishment, we are heading towards a flowering in the arts.

That which Lenin dictates to us, what we are now doing and must do, -- is any kind of artistic creation on streets, in houses, on the squares of all our cities. The need arose to change the appearance of these cities quickly, to express the new experiences in works of art, to destroy all feelings that are offensive to people, to create the new, in the form of monumental buildings, monumental memorials, -- and this need his enormous. Now we can do only temporary monuments, and we are erecting them and will erect tens more in Moscow, and in Petrograd, and in more cities.

It depends on the artists, every temporary statue cast in plaster and intended to be bronze, when they ask for bronze they will get it.

The wealthier the people become -- and they will become wealthy, -- the more grandiose the framework for artistic creation will become. Just think, how the celebrations of 25 October will be one of the greatest celebrations that the world has ever seen.

Today I was happy to learn that Putilovskii factory, the biggest factory in Petrograd requested the government to support it in the matter of erecting the gigantic Peoples Palace in Petrograd. Putilovskii said: you could give us tens, hundreds of synods and senates, other buildings according to the old pattern, this would not be enough, this would not satisfy our needs; we want to have our place made to order, that fits us and not by standing on the nobility or the bourgeoisie shoulders.

Of course, the government does not turn away in tens of millions, that are needed for this, and of course in the next spring we will start creating the grandiose Peoples Palace; we cannot delay and must proceed with a design competition, with preparations.

This construction of the socialist Peoples Palace here in Petrograd, can and should turn into such a gigantic commission for the Russian artist from the side of the Russian worker, that will last for a good half, to almost all of the talented artists, -- and this starting at such a time when we cannot find a spare piece of bread!

If developments go at the pace they are going, then we will try (concerning the people and the leaders, this is what they are trying to do) to further the marvelous Petrograd of the Tsars with an even more marvelous Petrograd of the workers.

Will there be a corresponding amount of gifts, talents, taste? I hope that the artists gathered here, full of enough confidence to say: only let us work, give us materials, and the talents will not be an issue. This is the spirit of artists, of a great people in a great epoch.

The maximum liberty, maximum internal content, that is dictated by the global historical significance of this experience and moment, the scale of these commissions alone, that are not made by a Maecenas, but by the people, -- and corresponds with this, freedom of

creativity, a free system of all agencies of art. Down with any officialism any controlling hucksters or honored nobility of art! Complete freedom of self-determination for the artistic personality and the artistic collective!

Here are the principles, here are the perspectives that unfold before art.

Here in Petrograd, on the campus of the former Academy of Arts, we hope this year will be the first experiment of such freedom of artistic self-determination, collaboration between the older and younger comrades --- collaboration of the highest order, of active and illuminated by the immediate task placing life before the whole artistic world, with no division between old and young, famous and unknown, creation of a really free unrestricted contest, in such a way a soldier could become a field marshal, as always in an epoch of revolution, when every talent can find due respect and place. Therefore, I think, without denying the painful side of our lives, that the artist who has hot blood flowing in their veins, can only feel joyful and ready to go greet the open expanse of future. In this future there are a lot that is dangerous, undefined, they should only be excited, and courageous in that they are still young – and a person should be young until they are laid into the grave.

They say that the owl of Minerva flies at only night, that art can summarize great events only after they have already happened. According to all the symptoms I observe, this will not be the case with us.

The socialist revolution hungers to pour new wine into new wineskins as quickly as possible. Already we hear at every step from the sides of the farmers and workers their enthused requirements: give them science, give them art, familiarize them with the treasures accumulated until now, create for them that which resonates with their experiences, views, hopes, the sooner they are given real access to these sources of knowledge, to help them adequately, genially, broadly, to unprecedentedly widely express what was created in the soul of people in the course of hundreds of years, that was hidden and only liberated by the revolution, that liberated every individuality. I urge you, there is need in this request, to be cheerful, confident, and hopeful. We find ourselves in a real tsardom of hopes. If this hope resembles a sapling, then it should grow; mustard seed can turn into a great tree, and our land can turn into heaven and deference to human genius, makes great artistic works. And artists, in our time, can have a hand in this.

I consider this small celebration that we are attending, happening in deep agreement with the very soul of the socialist revolution, and in the highest degree of happiness, that on this very day, when I should appear before you and say these words that I said, on this very day I had the pleasure of receiving the delegation from Putilovskii factory with the request: “call upon our artists to create, let the state give them the means, let the great Peoples Palace be erected in Petrograd”.

The Free State Studios, will be the collective master that will build, first of all, the Free Peoples Palace in Petrograd.”²⁶²

²⁶² Lunacharsky, Anatoliy. “Iskusstvo—speech given at the 10 October 1918 opening of the Petrograd Svomas” This translation is from the online text transcribed from *Ob Iskusstve*. Volume 2. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1982.

APPENDIX B

SHTERENBERG, EXCERPTS FROM *IZOBRAZITEL'NOE ISKUSSTVO (FINE ARTS)*,

APRIL 1919

THE NECESSITY OF REORGANIZING ART SCHOOLS

“The first work of selecting collaborators and developing the plan for organization was done in a large part by the Petrograd Collegium which from the first start brought the plan into being. First of all, the Collegium focused its attention on the artistic education of the country. With the number of questions asked, hard work was required, above all the need to address the question of the art school.

Art cannot be forced to be one way or another, measures cannot be taken to cultivate its growth or artificially rouse it to action. Before October 1918, the existing system of artistic education, all artistic upbringing of the country was done almost exclusively by the hand of the official Academy, an institution of deep bureaucracy, torn from the common cultural development of the country, which never used the authority of the best of the Russian art world against the rest. Past examples in Russia and other countries have shown, that reformation of the Academy is impossible. The only rational outcome would be its abolition. Allowing the leadership of generals and ranks would not work in art, so how else to recognize a group of people making all their artistic efforts to adjust to some given template. The example of the West, where all living artistic movements and all living creation went outside the official art, was considered a working revolution, shown that the forms of artistic control should be such that where the government would equally support all movements and trends in matters of the arts. Here is why, from this point of view, the Collegium started to separate the Higher Arts schools from the Academy and move towards the abolition of the Academy. Yet, after the first steps, this truly overdue business would have to be carried out with a large amount of caution, to avoid a sequence of conflicts in the art world, in which people close to the reform could also be pulled in mechanically or by artistic coercion of their own worldviews.

Thoughts on the matter are developed and reasoned in the declaration (see appended: “Declaration of the Department of Fine Arts and Artistic Industry on the Question of the Academy of Arts”), the Collegium brought it to the attention of the Soviet of Peoples Co²⁶³mmissars, and it was well founded in the decree of 12 April 1918. The immediate consequence of this governmental action for the Collegium was the concern for the reformations, at last tearing out the art school from the decrepit dead hands of the official Academy. So, the Collegium got to work on developing new methods and new organizations for art school. The broad principle of free art was made the basis of this work, and the whole time this was kept in mind, that in a country with a dictatorship by workers and peasants, privileged art could not keep the masses from art schools and artistic upbringing by a whole slew of barriers, created mainly by established art education and pedagogical methods.”

²⁶³ *Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo*, no.1, Petrograd-Moscow, April 1919. pp.52.

AWAKENING SELF-MOTIVATION OF PARTICIPANTS

“The extremely interested in the opinions of the artistic youth, about what artistic aspirations they have and what organizations they want to join to secure their futures, now existing freely, the Collegium created a conference for participants of Petersburg youth. After a sequence of sessions, it turns out that there is a small group of artistic youths that stand behind the old forms of the Academy with a hostile disposition against Soviet authority, which they hate and as a part of the whole of the intelligentsia they furiously attacked the worker-peasant government.

The conference, which hosted many students from Moscow and number of Petersburg schools, aside from the above group, worked out a common resolution to many questions of artistic education, central to the further work of the Collegium and served as a starting point for the organization of art schools, then to follow in various cities across the Federal Republic. Concerning the educative plan, the Collegium turned its attention to the development of cultures specific to each field of art, as well as principles of artistic culture that are essential to all artistic training. After that, it was worked out and affirmed in statutes by the Free State Arts Studios (formerly the Academy of Arts), 10 October was the ceremonial opening with the presence of Peoples Commissar Lunacharsky, who said a word about the significance of art for the proletariat. This speech was then published in a separate brochure, in light of its singular importance, since in it the Peoples Commissar for Enlightenment outlined the path to developing artistic movements and explained its relation to state authority.”²⁶⁴

THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE NEW PROGRAM FOR THE FREE STATE

STUDIOS

“We will proceed directly to the organization of societal artistic education. The Collegium set a goal to root out and change the old ways of approaching matters. Until now all the methods, applied in schools, answered to the demands of the dominant old social strata and did not contribute to the organic completeness of the future artist for the perception of the world in terms of pictorial and plastic arts.

In resolving issues of directing the new beginnings in all the arts, the Collegium point of departure and decisive factor for education is: the organ of vision.

A keen and sophisticated eye has been opened and will open even more of the wide world of phenomena in nature, that are closed for most people. Thanks to the inventive capacity, these phenomena can be reflected concretely in works of art. And the works of art will be opened by the highly cultivated eye. From here it is clear, that the main task of artistic education is a more multidimensional development of the organ of sight and,

²⁶⁴ *Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo*, no.1, Petrograd-Moscow, April 1919. pp.52.

along with it, development of observation of the inventive faculty and the cognitive choice of form and of expression of art. Further, in the future school cultivation of new angles of seeing the world will be unavoidable—a painterly-plastic perception.

The conception and perception of the world is revealed, as a world of painterly-plastic phenomena. The Collegium will establish, for education according to this concept, a series of well-defined provisions. On one side, painterly, chromatic education, in which visual sensation, sectioned in such a way to achieve detailed and then even more finely detailed fractions, recognizable only as a series of color sensations. The previous route—the route from black to white, is an unresponsive basic task, and should be done away with.

Alternatively, establishing plastic and geometrical perception, in which the previous understanding of parameters near and far – is changed by the understanding adding large and small surfaces and forms. And finally including kinetic perception, perception of movement and direction.

Understanding, however, not immediately, as if that were undesirable, the importance of assistance for the proletarian worker-peasant masses, who need to master art quickly and effectively through immediate education in schools of exceptionally high quality preconditions. The Collegium accepted the possibility, as a transitional stage, in the State Free Studios to give the possibility to participate in the selection of instructors who were those artists who they consider the most talented and most capable to give them the needed artistic education, provided in every department of the school equality to all the now-existing currents in art.

In this way, all the existing directions in art are secured in this respect, that they will not become suppressed, and instead, the populous masses, in the case of the student youths, will actually decide which ways of teaching and which directions in art will thrive and encourage creativity.

This principle was carried out, in the First Artistic State Studios in Petrograd, and in the First and Second State Artistic Studios in Moscow, and in a whole series of other cities.

The Collegium, together with those that hope that the close acquaintance of those studying with the methods of teaching of different schools in art with quickly lead the student youths out from the terminus into which it was headed until now, and will show them the true way and real methods which will give them the ability to study artistic crafts to then become creators of one unified appropriate method, the essence of which will be: the development of vision, research of materials and elements, revealing the painterly-plastic method of artistic discipline.

Excursions to museums, to exhibitions, discussions and conversations in their specialty, designing decorations and installations of exhibitions of their works, are all part of this plan for educational life. At the studios are all-helping institutions, such as: libraries, museums of works which clearly express painterly culture and convey the understanding of visual surfaces and their construction: organized testing stations for paints and paint equipment studios.

Art that is unbounded and undefined is impossible to learn, only what is possible is—at no cost, the art studios the State Free Studios provide education to those with the desire and need. Only such studios can give pupils drawing training so that like in the Renaissance, when every artist was brought up studying all the studio devices of the

teacher, starting with preparing pigments and ending in work painting pictures. The instructor needs to work together with the students: the tendency towards direction by the instructor in drawing is not needed. It is better not to encourage one or another current or direction in art. It is possible to develop both tendencies, by providing each of them free development.

That was the brief of the program which was outlined for the instructional courses and accepted in the form of a series of theses on the development of aesthetic education in the unified labor school and as a program for school instructors and teachers in the visual arts, satisfying the contemporary demand with the question of the familiarity with the newer methods of teaching. These theses were all accepted by the Department as a program of courses for a school and in their founding were organized as temporarily instructional courses, which functioned in Moscow from August 15th to 1 October 1st of last year. Presently these initiative steps towards an opening of new instructional courses both in Moscow and in Petrograd. And during this time, further work in this realm, not attempted until now and which by the efforts of artists, who are very often unable to express their understanding of education in a popular and programmable form, this work will be a significant step forward. Towards the upcoming conference of the Collegium, there will be a whole series of working presentations and theses for final approval at the conference, the foundations of aesthetic development for the popular masses in the labor schools of the first and second level.

With respect to pedagogical personnel, remaining from the former schools, and needing more help in the new direction, by way of instruction, then towards this end, for preparation of new pedagogues, it is suggested they use all their best artistic efforts in reading research papers, lectures on the question of artistic education and, along with this, to open special courses for instructors. To the foundation of the program these courses are required and factored, included in all artistic works, namely: 1) visual development, 2) retention of this development, 3) material expression, and 4) visual culture.

Visual development is already an act of artistic creation, and therefore needed in consider it carefully in the development in the masses artistic culture. The more we research retaining the development of vision, the more we will learn to see. All this said, the Collegium considers it necessary to provide the student will fully free development, and the role of the instructor should be reduced to only keep track of the methodological discipline in the work. Consider choice of material; we need to give students that which is more familiar, provide introduction with unknown materials without an order of sequence, in contrast with what was done earlier. It is necessary to guide the student towards discovery, in the sense of multidimensional application of each material.”²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ *Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo*, no.1, Petrograd-Moscow, April 1919. pp.53-54.

THE ARCHITECTURE SECTION

“One of the first concerns of the Collegium of the Department of Fine Arts was the concern of artistic architectural construction. Anyone, with little or no familiarity with the artistic flourishing of the past epoch, knows that architecture has not fallen far behind painting and sculpture. The finest monuments, left to us by Greece and Rome, the medieval municipalities, and the epoch of the Renaissance show what a powerful organizational apparatus can give the state for artistic construction. It stands to reason that in every separate epoch, class forces were composed differently by those who organized construction. The role of the state in construction expressed itself certainly in the past so that now, when power was transferred to the worker-peasant government, when equality was given to all citizens, the state construction, construction for all citizens, should be of unprecedented forms and dimensions.

The previous epoch showed us that the bourgeoisie, in most instances, was powerless to do anything.

Rich people with more possibilities than the state to build, have showed that in most instances, they are content to copy older examples. Travel abroad in various places, various sorts of travel led to a boredom where the architecture they commissioned was anything that they fancied and appealed to them from one of their travels. As such, the old examples were repeated and repeated badly. I will spare you the long line of examples, but it is too extensive for the work at hand. I will say that a certain demand led to a certain supply. Artist-architects, studying the best architecture, did not learn the relativity of form and rhythm; and most noticeably, they borrowed this or that form and adapted it often to buildings that had nothing in common with the origins of the borrowed form.

That is why in recent times, and maybe earlier for different reasons, the engineered construction has long overtaken architecture, and has given a whole series of new forms which will be at the basis of building in the future. One can safely affirm that in Europe, now in architectural construction there are not any monuments that would characterize our epoch, the epoch of the machine and factory production. Architects can waste endless efforts and means. They should stay away from Greek columnar orders, as the desire to fit them into locomotives and automobiles, grandiose houses, where they should concentrate on meetings, libraries, dining halls for the wide population and masses, -- all their aspirations will amount to nothing and artistic architecture will become completely cast aside.

But this does not mean that great architectural monuments will not be created. Any artistic creation is born, for the most part, from the development of technology and new needs that implore our existence to be built. One of the monuments, which still in the present day emerged from a slew of common monuments loftily clambering to the sky, is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. While this contraption might not signify positive artistic achievement, it is from long before the war, known then by the best artists that it was an important monument that characterized our epoch, as one of the phenomena that then served the development of the accelerating connections between art and the requirements of life. Already in wartime this tower turned out to be useful, not to mention its artistic

meaning for Paris and its influence on all art of the young artistic forces of the city of arts.

That is why the Collegium turned to the best architectural forces in Petersburg and Moscow, and did not get instantly into close contact with them, but maybe in the future will not tire of them. Architecture in its free condition and thanks to the qualities mentioned above, has already stopped and has not moved forward since. Only the singular requirements of life and the singularly creative popular forces, which motivate and channel it, from one side the pressure of engineering construction and from the other— architecture's condition of inevitable search for a way out of its stalemate, in which it was forced into by the will of the past epoch. The present moment can be characterized only as transitional. The Architectural Section will closely coordinate with the other departments and can explore and search for that new form, which in the given transitional times it should stop. The Collegium is putting all its work to this end. Standardized rules of competition are being developed, in connection with the social living conditions changed by architectural matters. Contact has been established with local Sovdep on current architectural works, in the sense of helping with correct production from a projective standpoint. The decision has been already made in the Section to appropriate buildings for exhibition spaces (adjacent to the Russian Museum). As for questions of artistic industry the Architecture Section has initiated contact with the Section of Architectural Industry for the development of this aspect, which has direct relationships with architecture. The decision has been made to organize studios in Petersburg for: painter-constructors, stonemasons, constructor-carpenters and provide industrial facilities. A plan of work in architectural-construction activity was clarified for the Petrograd area, established with the Commissariat of City Economy and with Museums of the city—firstly, with the goal of practical organization of architectural construction that was now well established in the city, and secondly with questions of theory and preparation. Architectural-construction activity in the regional and state levels is to enter contact with regional state Sovnarkhoz and at present the program of activity is to align with that of the Moscow Section. Professional questions are allowed in the meetings of representatives of the Sections, the Architecture Section, architectural societies, and construction workers.

The participation of the Section in pedagogical work is expressed by way of the reformations of the architectural faculty of G.S.U.Kh.M. (SVOMAS) Studios, in which members of the Section participate as teachers. The reforms mentioned and uniformly carrying out this to other higher learning establishments, as well as creating studios for training constructors, workers, and instructors. In Moscow, construction courses for workers, have been already organized with the goal of improving qualifications of the workers' professional labors. At present, two divisions are functioning: carpentry-furniture and artistic-decorative. We have slated the following for the education and popularization of these: 1) periodic publications with of an informative nature; 2) popular publications, brochures that cover the specialized questions of contemporary architecture; 3) popular publications and brochures with biographies of architects from Russia and other countries; 4) publications of a monographic character, devoted to specific questions and works of specific classic authors. A publishing commission was selected, in Petrograd, to manage these works. It consists of members of the Architecture Section,

representatives of architectural societies, and expert consultants that are knowledgeable on these questions.

Moreover, we have established means of participation by representatives from the Section in artistic works to correct agitational monuments and other works from an architectural standpoint. The monument to the architects Bazhenov is an independent work of the Section. In light of the specific interest of this matter, statues are being worked out on the topic of the competitions held by architectural societies. The Architecture Section took it upon itself to manage competition for the Palace of Labor in the Peterhoff region. Two representatives of the Section were included as members of the competition jury, and one has been asked to take on secretarial work as well. Exhibition of the competition projects was arranged in the facilities of the Department of Fine Arts. The architect Gel'freikh invited older masters to organize an architectural workshop. The task of the workshop is to execute all works which were slated for the Architectural Section by the Collegium. This studio will have decisive influence not only on the technical but also on the scientific research activity of the Architectural Section. At present, in the workshop projects are being developed for the standing a monument to the October Revolution and a sports club in Novosokol'niki as well as the project for the monument to architect Bazhenov.

That is all that is underway and that was completed in the realm of architecture. There is no doubt, that this work, in distant time will grow wider and wider, reaching the city construction apparatuses, and with all that construction is engaged in, will enter contact with the construction engineers to directly unify the arts in proximity and the living connection with those arts of painting and sculpture, which are now in a period of intensified searching. Architecture, having received a lively artistic push and simultaneously—approaching some new form, and also new materials, will take its befitting place which it must take, because our houses, our dwellings and all that is in them should be made by a certain artistic broadly conceived plan. Agreeing on this basic task, a city should have a common plan for the sake of utility, a plan which each home is a part of, which is attentive to the amenities and needs of its inhabitants. The streets and squares are the rooms of the larger city, which should be rightly planned according to the communist restructuring of life.

And this is the way to create the new architecture, the architecture of the communist system, an architecture in which the participation of the great masses will give, perhaps, unseen forms of prosperity for architectural construction.

The results of the work of the Department can be reduced to the following. The Collegium, consisting of artists, brought by the Commissariat of Enlightenment, not only set out on a broad plan of activity, having understood and imagined this plan to be realized in the future, but already now, started working, and carried out a certain upheaval in the realm of teaching, and in the realms of all approaches to artistic life. Proceeding from a correct starting point, that you cannot pour new wine into old wineskins, the Collegium steadily and consistently sought to act by formulating the most favorable conditions for the development of new movements in art, those that emerged on the scene with the release of the renewed proletarian forces and aspirations that the revolution liberated. Having exposed an old fault line, that started at the schools, the

Department aimed to create a new culture in this now clear place, one that corresponds more with the artistic objectives and needs of the new life of the people.

The grand events, that are happening now—the struggle of the working masses against the old system, still not losing ground, the struggle, which will last long internally and externally, due to a culture solidly cobbled together by centuries, and that shadowed the class consciousness of the working masses, --all of this can lead to the objectives and plans, properly put in place by artists that diagnosed the events unfolding now, and will not be understood and will be put aside. The old culture's onslaught against the young proletarian culture is much stronger than all of the transpiring military attempts to take the power of the workers and peasants. These old cultural forces, sadly, are found in us all, and the class consciousness of the proletarian masses have paralyzed them and still led them directly, straight to their goal. Only this consciousness can give understanding and clarity to what needs to be done in this realm, and what really leads to the liberation of us in the realm of culture, like what has already led us to liberation in the material realm.

That is why all the attention of the Department of Fine Arts is focused on the sturdy and unmediated connection with the proletariat of the Soviet Republic, for only collectively with this class it will be possible for further advancement, further searches for new forms, that correspond to the new life of humanity, which thanks to this class must enter a new era.

Head of the Department of Fine Arts

D.P. Shterenberg.

April 1919.

Petersburg – Moscow.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ *Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo*, no.1, Petrograd-Moscow, April 1919. pp.78-81.

APPENDIX C

JOURNAL OF THE FREE STATE ARTS STUDIOS (1919)

JOURNAL

OF THE FREE
STATE
ARTS
STUDIOS



DEPARTMENTS
OF
THE ARTS
POLITICS
TECHNOLOGY
PHILOSOPHY
HISTORY

“Contents of the 1st Issue

Articles

S. Senkin

Build Collectives

I. Kudriashov

I. Zavyalov

T. Shapiro

Drawings

S. Senkin

cover, pgs. 1, 2, 3.

The Journal is issued incrementally as material for the articles accumulates, the material for the articles is written daily, and the material is considered property of the editors from Malevich’s collective studio.

The editorial board is the collective of Malevich Studio along with a commission of the student counsel.”

“From the editors
We publish the first
 Issue of the journal
To spoiled aesthetes
Of different unions, worlds, and ballets
Our journal from the outside may appear
Unattractive, and from the side of content may be boring

 All the worse for them
The first lumps of pancake -outwardly do not give away their special
significance – (but they may be edible)
 Better to harness machines

Second we tried
 To give food for thought
And going forward we will try
 Beware of those sitting inward and moody
 meanwhile
 we wont melt down
 all the copper of lovely brows
 We wont stop.
And to the rest – a heartfelt hello
 The editorial board”
Sergei Senkin

13/x 1919

Build Collectives.

“Several days ago, the understudies sent the Student Council a request to give a sketch outline of the condition of the collectives, with the gathered material the Council offered to take the opportunity to restore the shared condition of the collectives and organize a requirement for them where they were not in place.

The gathered material was so striking in its contents, that the Council decided to change its decision about requiring introductions of new forms of self-direction and to steer its work into another realm – the path of agitation that would raise consciousness of the understudies and how inevitable consequences of the latest arrival to the collective.

Before clarifying the found conditions of the collective, it is better to skip to what has already been clarified – what exactly are our studios? What are the goals and tasks – for who do they exist and even more than that – are maintained by the government. Evidently, studios exist not for learning to drawing or writing in some such manner, governments operate many regional studios that have only this assignment. If we suggest they exist specially for geniuses –gathered from all across Russia, of course. Besides eliciting smiles and laughter – nothing would come of such a proposition. Many say that the studios exist for the completion of artistic education, but this understanding is also rather tenuous: for example, we have seen that fulfillment of an exodus beyond our borders by the academic students would be so complete that such a reason is off course as well.”

“We think our studio should be an advanced laboratory of fine arts with an abstract (non-productivist) character (many will say that up to the present time there is no laboratory, we have not put forth our studios’ goal, with the exception of very insignificant number of understudies who stated their own intentions to this effect.) What to include in the work of the laboratory? We answered – analysis of contemporary directions in art, their improvement and implementation. *) why contemporary? See, if a scientific laboratory conducted experiments on the chemical constitution of water and it showed that water – is the combination of hydrogen and oxygen – it would be too basic; the research should be on calcium and radium. Also, with us there are several among us, who would not analyze Arkhipov’s paintings as only brushstroke bravura would be found, we study water pressure as if by mortar in pestle and an idea flipped painterly culture to the beginning, and that is what we see.

And our only business is to analyze the conception of ideas, to confirm or reject them.

With this position we unavoidably and such results, we see that our work is of the utmost importance, and we have responsibility to perform as heroic means are not required directly: of such means we consider our methodology for organizing as one of our best practices – that is “organization” which in our opinion is organizing our collective.

Now we will look at the basis of our collective on which it is possible to deploy our work to the maximum.

*) here the work and laboratory ends – furthermore a productivist studio utilizes a new idea, a new form in production of indifference as to who will conduct the work – our artists or the professional workers. More about this another time.”

“To conduct unprecedented work, above all we define what we want to do and secondly how to do it – from there arises a plan or program for organizing a collective. Envision such a collective, but does everyone has a common approach everyone to the work? Any work requires the utmost productivity with less wasted effort, and this leads only to the collective. Therefore the collective is the group of understudies organized for conducting outstanding work, where every understudy wants to join the studio; from here anyone with their own program and own agenda is out, as we have shown that is not the rational, hence the first task of the collective is the development of a common program and this work of course will be carried out by the understudies without the masters’ involvement (In the future the collective can invite masters as specialists for the completion of the intended program.)

The success of the work will definitely depend on fortunate economic factors (lighting, heating, housing, dining; and materials such as paints, canvases, paper brushes and so on). This work by the collectives will surely turn out better than otherwise. Besides this, culturally educational life of the understudies will develop normally (libraries, clubs, meetings, debates, publishing opportunities and so on.)

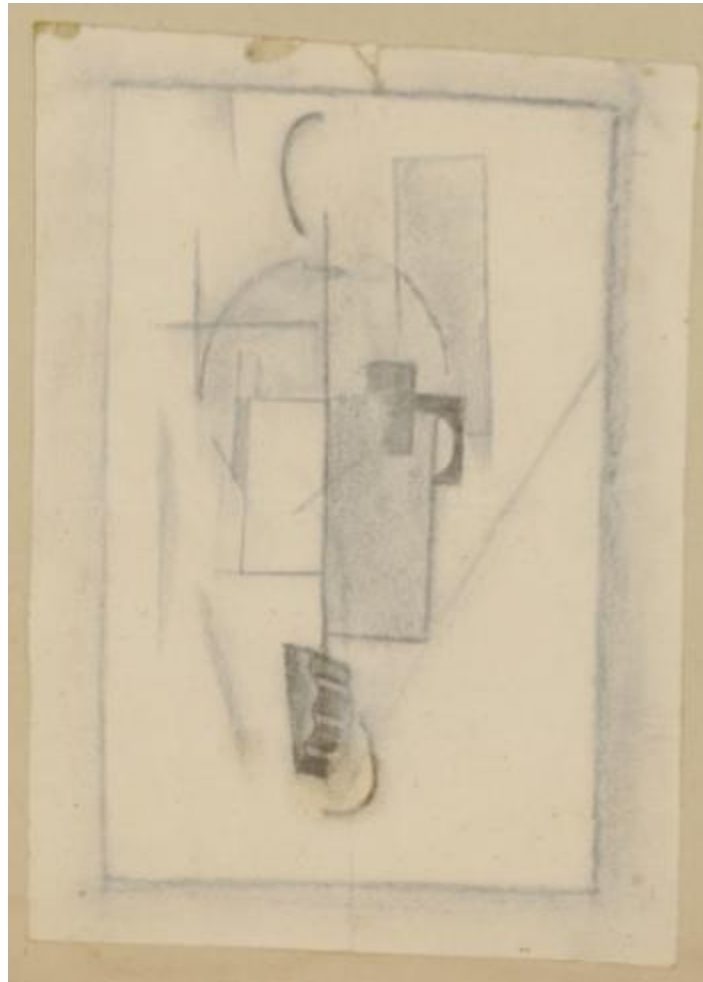
These are several of the founding principles for the organization of the collective and the development of the work; we hope that comrades will attentively consider these foundations and will approach the work organized in such a way - as the consequences of this will accelerate the development of our shared purpose.”

Sergei Senkin.

“We are opening a discussion on the topic of painting - material.

We offer our comrades who were at the meeting of the 1st studios an invitation to speak about the merits of the issues raised without concern for the form or the scope of the presentation:

- a) What is painting? Its elements, significance, and the influence on the path of cultural development.
- b) Influence of material on form
- c) Relations between painting and material
- d) Production or laboratory studios”



Our Tasks.

“(Short report on the activities of the Student Council)

Presuming that in the near future we will give more detailed reports, in each of the related areas, in this brief note we will list the works of the council’s commissions.

It is evident from multiple community gatherings that all the work of the council have met unfavorable conditions; (opposition from the Arts Council and the Department of Fine Arts, etc) especially noticeable after the famous telephonogram #68 the part when the unsuspecting comrades was disposed to go to a terrible camp. The commissions function at the present:

- a) economically, in charge of 1) the dining room: preparing meals, organizing measures to serve the kitchen that feeds countless working understudies 2) facilities: expanding the dormitories, for the hard-at-work comrades, utilitarian use of the studios and premises occupied as a clubhouses 3) fueling: preparing firewood with the strength of the understudies 8 verst (8 km) rows (the first party of 6 people worked 10/x)
- b) librarian work for the purchase of books on new art topics, leaving unused utilitarian books in the studio library. (books about new art topics from comrade Manchinii (c.70) just for those living in the dormitories)
- c) labor communes: in the near future we suggest creating 2 communes which will serve as prototypes for subsequent communities.
- d) communications commission: publishing a journal, designed according to questions and confluence with the 2nd Studios and the 1st (formerly Stroganov), and connections with the regional and provincial art schools.
- e) organizationally: the work of organizing understudies (collective program and implementation of the study plan, organization of exhibitions and all needed steps for putting the program into effect. Here is the checklist of what we are working on, it can be implemented only under one condition – collegial effort of all understudies, without this of course all the work will stay in the realm of conjecture.”

12/x

“Time – movement generating new forms of life. Radio takes us farthest of all machines and allows humanity to develop its form, nullifying the machine. Each form enhances the speed of movement, construction of movement cannot be lent from the accounts of the old forms by virtue of the very movement. A person – is a creator of forms but also can change worldviews. All life creates frontiers against the new inoculated forms. Human needs, as expressed in paints, have changed in agreement with the developments in humanity, so that one form outlived its time and a new painting as a part of life has evolved into Suprematism. The artist – creator of new forms in painting has developed a speed according with the movement of time. Painterly planarity or constructive pictures are in the principle of painting in the present moment, and in dedication to life working on cubism, futurism, and suprematism. These last tendencies were generated by time.

The artist in the center of time !

Down with decoration of life !

Down with copying nature and life !”



KUDRIASHEV: forms of life
drawing: futurist

Painting or Material.

“Painting that is realistic, naturalistic, impressionist, neo-impressionistic is suffering an agony before death.

These trends are dying out from emaciation.

Leviathans occupied with their hasty promotion of their artistic junk.

They are like passengers on a sinking ship, they flee the seething waves of new forms and will not find escape on the heights of the masts of the great masters.

No nourishment.

The youth have thrown out the old art, as a useless ballast, and left on the great road of new prospects and affirmation of their young art.

Best of all, the meeting at the Stroganov School brought forth the topic “Painting or Material””

II

“But the very theme, that was so interesting to us understudies at the meeting, did not play out as anticipated.

We were distracted by the intriguing speeches by the representatives from the Department of Fine Arts, and were leaning on our comrades from the Strogonov School in their struggles with the 2nd G.S.Kh.M.

But about this later. In this article, we wanted to clarify a few points in connection with the suggested topic.

Undoubtedly, we see the dying days of painting-imagery decorated with naked nymphs serving tables, orders of the “typical captivating “types”, with which the bourgeoisie decorated their walls, and then these flirting “marquises and marquesses” decorated the walls of life and even workers’ housing.

In earlier times, it is possible the proletariat valued the dying pictures of the “good-life” for its contrast.”

“The purpose of object-imagery is one of definition- of the consciousness of the physical material path in which some curiosity and speedy intuition is drawn. The degree to which an artist is able to materialize – realize this newly discovered path, is how deeply the artist has an open and free passage as if by a semaphore, yet where they will go in their space of the world, onward to the extent the artists’ task is achieved, and their imagery is that semaphore.

So, we get to the creation of object-imagery. Exactly by such a principle as the creation of objects (table, chair, inkwell).

Of course, for the creation of object-imagery we are free to take and will take any material. With this point, you can erase the last boundary between the labor of an artist and the labor of a worker (house painter, carpenter).

And we will defend the necessity of our work on objects – constructive materials, that do not easily fit already in a utilitarian sense (edible, harvestable).

Because we are convinced that we understand the proletarian masses when we meet them it will be directly and without intermediaries.”

T. Shapiro.

III

“But now social construction has advanced a new line of questioning.

The proletariat is rebuilding its life anew and the thoughtful “old lady - teacher - intellectual” from the Department of Fine Arts hurries and rushes to find people who would decorate apartments, paint plates, design some new trousers and apparel.

You see, this intellectual until now was a slave to the old traditions, she is still on the other side of the revolutionary spirit. She still needs to decorate, wants to lure “flirting marquises”

Perfect – lets first throw out “marquises” and now we shall consider what it means to decorate life.

And does beauty exist?

And how strange would it seem to assert, that there is no such thing as beauty. To answer the question that the reader might have: if beautiful objects have existed up to this point, we should analyze this concept (Beauty).

Lets take an example: a hand.

The example is construction of materials. The significance of which is the performance of definite functions. A hand in this regard often is beautiful.

Keep this in mind – we consider how this beautiful object (a hand) performs its functions.”

IV

“It is always the case, that a beautiful object-hand always performs this properly.
It is fitting.

We can also take the example of an object-bottle.

When new and appropriate, when in our dormitory they are considered beautiful. When they have been used – unusable they turn from beautiful to ugly. There are infinite instances of such examples.

If we deduct some definite conclusion from this, it is that beauty and performance are synonymous concepts. And further, the beauty of an object depend on the degree of perfection both of its construction and the performance of an assigned task – function.

Many cubo-futurists hold this point of view.

Having clarified this situation lets directly address the question of where we should work. In the culture of painting or in the culture of materials.

Our position is such.

The painter Arkhipov decadently believes, “in an elegant brush stroke or image for the baroque pleasure of “life + joy” and we reject this art of “living = drawing”

We know that planarity of canvas, paints, brushes, wood, metal, stucco, and other material better serve the consciousness of object-imagery.”²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Senkin, Sergei (ed.) *Zhurnal Svobodnykh Gosudarstvennykh Khudozhestvennykh Masterskikh*. Paris: Unpublished Manuscript at the Kandinsky Library, Pompidou Center, 1919.

APPENDIX D
MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS

FRAGMENTS FROM “APARTMENT № 5”

[...] “APARTMENT № 5 is a special chapter in our lives, it was necessary to write it. When I began this book I imagined it for myself absolutely clearly, it seemed to me to be already written. But now... I so clearly hear the buzz of that time and in it our individual voices are lost, such that “Apartment № 5” seems a private, personal episode even almost autobiographical; but this is not the place for an autobiography, speaking honestly. When you live in an epoch, like ours, when the business of the half-world becomes to an extent your business, -- you obey the scale.

In 1915 it seemed to me and a lot of us, that in Apartment № 5 life was going more intensively and was fuller than in any other place. We gathered there, shared works and about work, we followed literature: we read articles, heard poems, hurried the lazy, besieged those who went too far, cared for each other, studied art.

[...] We gathered there usually once a week in the evenings: drank tea, ate potatoes with salt; towards the end of 1916 we brought out own sugar and bread. In the apartment there was somehow three floors, a window to the dining room was at human height level; the table at which we sat, was long; the lamp illuminated only the middle of the table; the light from the lamp was yellow and warm, as in childhood, when we remembered it.

[...] In Apartment № 5 many people gathered; not all knew one another, they met, listened with interest to what the Muscovites had to say. Besides us, who were there: Artur Lourié, Altman, Tyrsa, Mandelshtam, Nikolai Bruni, Mitrokhin, Kliuev, Rostislav Voinov, Nik. Balmont, this evening came Puni, Bouslavskaia, Rozanova, Tatlin, Kliun, Udal'tsova, Popova, Pestel', there were also people who were not artists and not writers but involved in art.

We gathered in Bruni's studio, in a large room with a window to the 4th line of Vasilievskii island and the bank of the Neva.

[...] Apartment № 5 was in the De Lamothe campus of the Academy of Arts and belonged to the assistant keeper of the academy museum, K. S. Isakov. L. A. Bruni was his stepson.

[...] In Apartment № 5 “isms” were judged instantly and permanently, no one covered their work with them, mentioned only those that had enough content and were unavoidable: impressionism, futurism, cubism.

[...] Malevich came, and met opposition and felt it quickly; he still walked around Bruni's studio, still was persuasive with that amazing pressure, which hypnotizes, forcing you to listen; he talked like a piercing rapier, putting things into the pointiest perspectives, while putting thought on edge; pressing and bouncing ideas off of the interlocutor, the hand shaking with short, thin and nervously trembling fingers, -- in a word, still behaving himself as the great agitator of suprematism's invention, but we called him like we were all called, the square of suprematism did not hang in Apartment

№ 5, and suprematism – is the late and last generation of cubo-futurism – passing by and placed aside while we go on our direct and unified path through material and quality.

We, perhaps, not thinking at the time clearly enough, what kind of place suprematism would occupy in the new art. But in Malevich himself – in the great agitator, preacher, heresiarch of faith in suprematism – and in all that he said did not overcome futurism, and the craving for invention at the expense of quality, such rationalistic sourdough, that we felt ambivalent: suprematism – it is a stalemate, an emptiness, coated in futurist accomplishments, an emptiness beyond the material, a cold emptiness of rationalism defeated by the world and therefore powerless and raising the square above it.

[...] When Malevich introduced suprematism with the “0,10” exhibition, the new “ism”, no one fell for its newness. The time of futurism elapsed, no one of us wanted to say, to cut the heads off clay dolls on the move. In Bruni’s studio, most often we talked about method; not searching for the new, but for the means to master reality, techniques, that would help make it possible to grasp reality with a death grip, not tormenting it and not being tormented, its convulsions and moans its agonies on canvas. Artists need an accurate eye and trained hand, a hunter’s sense of smell, dexterity and habits; the beast was frightening: no one hesitated or wanted mercy, a miss, an injury. In all that was done then, in all the work and searching there was severity; people were serious and honest. We were all abnormally tired from the approximations of aestheticism and no less, -- of the trotting in the futurist derby, we were looking for art that was strong and simple, simple to the extent that it could be simple in those transitional and shaken up years.

We noticed a divide among us even a while ago, we all went towards that which, conscious of this blindly, eagerly and unwillingly, not hurrying or looking for success, for money, for the past, turning pages of the days and months, with the same sequence as life going on the outside of the window: the life of the city, the fate of the war, above all we considered to belong to us and to be contemporary.

We cherished the contemporary, in any case, none of us wanted to outrace time, none wanted their head in the clouds, -- not seduced by posturing. Art should be understood and loved; if it is good art it should be understood instantly; you can only love what is needed, you would have needed the art that you worked on in Bruni’s studio. And we believed our art was simple, understandable and necessary. We believed in this earlier, in 1915, and believed later at the end of 1916 entering cubism, even leaving into the constructivism of Tatlin, because both these movements were not “isms” but rather were methods. The war took its toll on us, it lay between our lives in Apartment № 5 and “the first futurist battles”, tore away pieces of the past from us, which should have belonged to us, one shortened, another elongated, like a candle shortens and lengthens shadows falling on a wall, and, having switched the world into a new speed, placed a sinister background behind our lives, on which all was simultaneously tragic and insignificant. We were quick to understand, that the surprise device that had found constant use among the first participants in the futurist movement – shocking the bourgeoisie – this device had become harmful and inappropriate in the climate of 1915-1916. It was harmful because it was accustoming people to treat art like a scandal, dropping quality and real meaning of the artistic struggle; it was inappropriate because

the “bourgeoise” was already so shocked by the war-- it was futurists, walking the globe in a bloody sweater of never-ending sunsets, that being shocking even more would be simply stupid. And little by little, we gained an ironic attitude to all that was connected with the first futurist campaign. I already said of Burliuk – this was over quickly but more significantly: Larionov, Goncharova, Lentulov, Malevich, Kamensky, Mayakovsky, we seemed to see from the side, with someone else’s eyes.

Only Tatlin and Khlebnikov stood indestructible: in Tatlin we saw the direct path to mastery of quality, especially quality of material; we lived in Petersburg but the Petersburg, Mir Iskusstva, “graphical” relation to material, it made us feel sick. Tatlin was as necessary to us as bread was.

Soon, events made us generally more aggressive.

In the beginning of 1916, Bruni and Altman, as always, submitted their new works for the routine exhibitions of “Mir Iskusstva”. The jury rejected several of them; at that time, they were refused participation in the exhibition. We had accomplished our long-prepared break with “Mir Iskusstva”. Immediately, we wrote an open letter to Alexander Benois, printed in *Rech’* with his response. This letter and Benois response was one segment of that polemic, spoken about above. The opposing “Mir Iskusstva” strengths gradually were consolidated; our activity was gathering its own known points of support.

By the way, in his response, Benois wrote: “In both artists (ie. Altman and Bruni) personally I was very interested, yes and “Mir Iskusstvo”, on the whole is not against them; on the contrary, until now the most significant works of each have been shown at our exhibitions. But, My God, how is it possible to cite them in the sense they are new prophets, in the sense of the “new path” of painting. The “academic cubism” of Altman and the “academic futurism” of Lev Bruni is flesh of our flesh. It is very talented and intricate art, but where in there is the new worldview and all these discoveries, that Punin notices (the open letter was written and signed by me). It is different with Lentulov, Tatlin, or Malevich. These are the innovators, these are the “new paths” etc.” Benois was right; he gave us a good lesson on revolutionary tactics. The situation was already such that for all who wished to sit between two chairs, there was no sitting – there was a void. It was necessary to decide: either with us or against us. The whole of 1916 went under the banner of sharp and uncontrollable leftward bent.

If it was possible to now restore Bruni’s studio to the same state as it was in at the end of 1916! Canvases, frames, easels were pushed into the corners; “materials” were littered everywhere: iron, tin, glass, wires, cardboard, leather, some kind of putty, lacquers, and varnishes; who where we found the lathe, saws, files, different pliers, drills, pads, sandpapers of all sorts and qualities. On the tables and benches stood completed and incomplete reliefs, swatches of materials and constructions. All this was demonstrated with energy, not snobbism, but with spirited taste that testified to the new passion, ignited in people. In the corner hung Tatlin’s “Corner Counter-relief” by cables Bruni left after the exhibition “Tramway V”. Tatlin himself came from Moscow, I do not remember, summoned not by letter, not by telegram. They waited for him, like waiting for an event that can resolve expectations and allow forward progress, like waiting for a leader...

When he arrived, many of those who only rarely stopped by Apartment № 5, now came to “see Tatlin”. He, in all actuality, brought with him a new taste, new understanding of art, spontaneous will to creation, untamed belief in the future of “constructivism”: this was a person of revolutionary will, incapable of any compromise, was a participant in the “first Moscow battles”. From Paris, where he went as we said then, with a bandura, earning for himself the passage by songs of the blind-bandura players, -- he exported “the last stage of cubism”—spatial painting. Tatlin was one of the few Russian artists deeply drawn in by cubism. His gifts, evidently, surpassed the gifts of all his contemporaries. He possessed a completely special, pure, developed taste. I am certain, that even now no one could rival his sense of quality. Everyone esteemed him at the time, everyone thought expressed by him about art was for us a portal to a new culture, the future. We just had to listen to him, while accustoming our individuality to this enormous machine, energy breathing and blasting the ancient strata of painterly culture, to lay them out anew. “Let the Milky Way be divided into the Milky Way of the inventors and the Milky Way of acquirors”, -- these words of Khlebnikov portray our meeting with Tatlin in 1916. On one side there was him, on the other there was us. We acquired everything we could from him; every one of our new thoughts, that seemed independent, was either a fragment or a broken reflection of one of his thoughts. We imitated not only his work, but as always with meeting truly great people, his manner of speaking, his movements; we walked like him, even the same hand mannerisms. There was no other way. In Tatlin there was not only creative strength, that caused a tension under its pressure, but in everything that appeared to conduct this strength, in his “appearance” there was a special selection of qualities, that are commonly defined by the word “charm”. Every epoch has its *arbiter elegantiarum*; in the epoch of industrial cubism this term is applicable to Tatlin.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ In a manuscript unpublished in his lifetime, (*Art and Revolution*), critic Nikolai Punin wrote this passage called “Apartment № 5” about the avant-garde artists in Petrograd. Fragments of the memoirs are in Punina, and Rakhitin, 1994, pp.8-12, where “Apartment № 5” is placed before Punin’s 1916 letters. More fragments are included in a collection of his journals and letters (Punin, *Mir Svetel Liubov’iu*, 2000, pp.105-108), in which “Apartment № 5” is placed chronologically before his 1917 journal entries. The exact date the text was written is unclear but it takes place in the years just before the 1917 revolution. Punin reminisced on the need to create art with mastery, rigorous method, and reality—perhaps one that emerged out of the recent movements of futurism and cubism but was even more substantial. He looked to Tatlin for the most leadership in this effort.

PAYMENT FOR LABOR

“The painful question of our artistic life is the question of payment for artistic labor. Especially bitter in the recent days, in connection with the grand works to celebrate the October Revolution. Could or should it have been a flat rate for the labor, or should it have been an assessment applied individually. Defenders of the latter, are completely alien to the principles of soviet work, they love to crumble before creativity, which they say cannot be uniformly evaluated, and therefore there cannot be a flat rate. What is permissible in the evaluation of physical labor, they say, is inapplicable to spiritual labor, the higher form in their opinion. And hiding behind not provided account of “creativity” try to avoid public control.

But what was natural in the terms of capitalistic economy, is absurd in the Labor Commune. Labor, as the basis of the commune’s way of life, is equivalent in any field where it is applied. Work behind a machine is as unavoidable and as honorable as writing books, making pictures or carving in stone. And if that is so, then the value of labor can be seen as a single norm, changing only with dependance on qualifications, more or less. Labor pays. Creativity cannot be evaluated. Talent and general origins are not subject to special payment. And if the artist, not in words, but in deeds, wants to enter a common working family, then say: our creativity, our talents belong to all, and our labor is payable, as labor of any qualified worker.

Nathan Altman.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Altman, Nathan. “Plata za Trud” *Iskusstvo Kommuny*. no.1, 7 December 1918, p.1.

TOWARDS A SUMMARY OF THE OCTOBER CELEBRATIONS

“In our time there is nothing that is not important. The smallest movement and most insignificant word has historical meaning. To do something now close to, “how it suits you” is unacceptable.

Every conscious, accountable worker must remember, that in the period of such a stress, that we know now, it is necessary to hit the target, as each miss is tantamount to defeat.

Meanwhile, often even people who understand well the contemporary situation, do not make the effort to listen closely to the voice of the time, and, with inertia sometime, roll along the beaten path. And this is especially characteristic in the realm that interests us—in art.

The year of the October Revolution was commemorated by celebration; celebration that in general, in people’s opinion that stood close to the matter, succeeded; the general program was close to being carried out. To talk of completion, I will not; maybe actually it corresponded to the task, but that is not the point. Not the point because in our time it cannot be required that all is completed according to plan. Much more importantly, that the very plan, the task is correct, that is corresponded in accurate proportions of interests and requirements. And from this point of view, many say they were not in favor of the October celebrations.

I will not dwell on the details of the matter—I will only point out something that was completely obvious.

Before all else the October celebrations turned out, less different than all that, in its time satisfied the bourgeoisie of the world. The same cloth decorated streets, wooden arches, garlands, electric and even simply illuminated lanterns, somehow stupidly reminiscent of the notorious “Tsarist Days” with ornamental gaslights and stars. Unfortunate, really, that the proletariat does not have enough of its own specific taste, borrowing from the old world its methods of celebration. Obviously it is not so. It was this way because the organizers did not consider the idea of celebration and made what was entrusted unto them closer to, “what suits them”. At the core of their plan they put an alien and dead idea of “decoration”. They found it necessary to decorate the old town and the old, par excellence, “bourgeois streets”. The question is, is it true that we in our new worldview, inherently have an aspiration, in any way, to decorate like the bourgeoisie. Up to now, in the relation to the latter we knew only one method of action – destruction. This method should have been carried out on the day of the October anniversary.

True, one of our artists was close to approaching this idea. Uritsky Square, to an extent, was destroyed not only by the fact the wooden forms are blown up by pure forms but also by the fact that at the foot of the column it was broken by a series of new planes. This was only hinted at and more or less, in a naïve way, in a mockup, applied by only one (of course “futurist”) artist in a limited scale. To blow up, to destroy, to wipe from the face of the earth the old art forms—the new artist, proletarian artist, the new man, can only dream of this. And the October celebrations could have been enough reason for that.

I know that I will meet objections: utopia. I do not argue. The issue is not, however, to think in terms of feasibility, especially for us artists, rather it is to think correctly. Let us not complete what we planned, instead we gave the true direction to

human thought on this issue. If it is impossible to destroy, then build mockups that pretend destruction, but no matter what do not decorate. Do not decorate because decoration is needed by no one. Not to me, to all who have eyes and healthy minds, it was offensive to see such a quantity of ruined fabric, often with shoddy placards; you see in our time, when we all need pants and dresses, this looks like hanging bread outside for amusement. There is very little that is amusing about this. If we assume, that the proletariat must commemorate the anniversary of their revolution with a celebration, that celebration must be serious and active. Parading like the bourgeoisie past dismantled bourgeois houses does not befit the proletariat. In our view, a deep and childlike pure heartedness held back the proletariat masses from protesting against such celebration. There will be a time, when all this tinsel will be impossible, when the proletariat will have their own word about their own art. We are not mistaken; they are really not needed all these painted rags, wet, faded, tattered; these days were not joyful; the decoration of the streets spoke to how many in our soviet circles, many of us make do with “approximate” and unnecessary work. This is not forgivable. History will not forgive this. In our time there is nothing that is not important. N.P.”²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Punin, Nikolai. “K Itogam Oktiabr’skikh Torzhestv.” *Iskusstvo Kommuny*. 7 December 1918, no.1., p.2.

STATE ARTS STUDIOS

[...]

“In the process of developing the life of people, art serves as one of the main components of that working laboratory, through which continuous threads weave the basis of life common to all people, (both domestic-economic, and spiritual-political sides of it).

The masses are the head producer in this working laboratory and with the goal of improving manufactured value, --should combine the whole process of their creation.

Until now, art was outside people. Overworked by economic slavery, -- the people could not share in art and deprived of “vital forces” served the property of privileged intellectuals of the bourgeois class, which quickly turned art into an idle amusement for “lords”.

Living artistic creation of a country, having been run down could not find a way to apply its strengths.

The mighty revolutionary upsurge in thought and action of the moment, --lit smoldering sparks of young creativity and art beings to keenly drawn in to the labor of the masses.

When the masses implement art into their labor, then doubtlessly, they will share in the creation, but first it is necessary to create those conditions, which would allow for the merging of art with the life of the masses closely together.

Not long ago, the old so called “arts schools” were powerless to generate collective creations, stuck in their ways and slavery to “academicism”.

Rending the arts schools from the masses was saddening-alienating.

Having killed off creativity and turned art into “routine classicism”, they created a spirit of tedious weakness, from which the young artistic forces left and developed outside the walls of these arts “institutions”.

Therefore, a deep-rooted reorganization of arts education is unavoidable, -- replacing the old building with a one of iron and concrete.

At the moment, giving “maximum” possibility and complete freedom in application of creative forces to the matter of building new artistic life, --puts artists, consciously recognizing the ideological significance of the moment, --to exhibit all the power of their creativity with the aim of awakening the artistic ambitions of the masses.

As through labor the work produces a product, as through the wakening of art they will share in the creativity.

Towards this end, the Department of Fine Arts has proceeded to organize the Free State Arts Studios.

As much as the organization of the above-mentioned studios is necessary, not only for the “red” capitols, but for the gray provinces, --needless to say; it is quickly confirmed by such a demand—the roaring howl of the previously hidden creative strength of the working youths.

The main feature of the Free State Arts Studios is the autonomy of every studio.

All art endeavors, expressed and collective, conscious of the aspiration to experience true art are given their deserved place in the studios.

The head of the studios is free from any program, --the best program serves the high-level mastery of the artist themselves, with this contact painterly culture becomes a multi-faceted crystallization for the students.

No kind of subordination is felt in art here, no institution, no government should have any influence on art, even people creating it should not dominate over it, rather they should explore it and find its depths. Art is free.

The complete self-motivation, space with sincere feelings that awaken and guide through art of a person that is the basis of the new studios.

Creating the ideal conditions for the development of artistic talents in the masses—this is the essence of the reform of artistic education, taken on by the Department of Fine Arts.

The workers' lessons in the studios are divided into two concepts: 1) art in general, culminating in the awakening of artistic creativity; the duration of which can take 3 years. 2) a concept that is a continuation of the first and serves those who are entirely dedicated to their own art.

With numerous requests and appeals to open the arts studios in distant, remote places, --the Department of Fine Arts is attentively responding with the organization of studios. Until now despite the short existence of the Department—the studios already organized in many cities, but life demands an incredible amplification of intensity of great initiative in organization of the studios.

In conclusion, in carrying out the tasks put forward by the proletarian revolution, we must address the young forces of those studying and the heads of the studios, as the lead builders of artistic life of the country, broadly with an appeal: pour “maximum” energy and strength into the hard work before you in organization Free State Arts Studios, -- remember: the future of art is the creation of the revolutionary present.”²⁷¹

²⁷¹ [Unsigned] *Iskusstvo*, n.2., 15 January 1919, p.4.

1st YEAR OF STATE ARTS STUDIOS' WORK (History of the reform of the Stroganov School)

“Even before the war, and especially in the war years the members of the Stroganov-Artistic-Industrial School and the people who graduated from it dreamed of its reform. Staging educational affairs at the Stroganov School, as at all arts institutions was below any criticism. All the attention was paid, not on the creation of original art corresponding to the times, but on the blind imitation and compilation of obsolete and lost to our time “Russian style” as it is called without any formal sense. As a result of such staging, we can point to the fact that all the time the Stroganov School has existed it did not graduation not one transformative artist in applied and decorative arts. If there are talented artists, the names of which are connected with the Stroganov School (for example: Boris Grigor’ev, Vladimir Mayakovsky, F. F. Fedorovskii, Iv. S. Fedotov), then one from them takes a completely different path with nothing in common with applied arts, the others—which having an external connection to it but essentially owe it all to their own talent and self-education apart from the Stroganov School and contrary to its spirit.

When the political revolution happened, the best of the artists also believed in a revolution in the arts. Specifically, in the Stroganov School the revolution began “from below”: students suffocating in factory utility, began a “purge” among the management of the school. It stands to reason that it is naive to assume that having thrown the director overboard, the school would thrive, finally with a renewed life. But none the less this was the first step towards the independence of students given wings in the struggle for the reform of the school.

The first year in the life of the school after the revolution brought nearly nothing, besides confusion among scholastics and teachers frightened by the revolution and a bewildered idleness of the students. But in the end of the academic year, in April 1918, in Peterburg a conference was convened for arts students, resolved in the goal of reworking the founding conditions for the new arts school. In the presidium of the conference were representatives from the Stroganov School (chairman G. Shchetinin and secretary Matr. Solodovnikova), who were elected by the conference to the organizing committee by the convening All-Russian Congress of Students in the Arts. This gave them the opportunity to proceed concretely towards the reform of the Stroganov School, from the framework worked out by the conference. At this time (Summer 1918) in the Department of Fine Arts of Narkompros, a commission was formed for reforming the arts schools of Moscow (the School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture; and the Stroganov School), which included students from the Stroganov School.

In September the Peoples Commissar for Enlightenment A. Lunacharsky issued a decree on renaming the Stroganov School and the School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture to State Free Arts Studios along with instructions on electing leading faculty. In connection with this decree and the work of the commission for reforming the Stroganov School two students of the new studios, Sapegin and Shchetinin had the support of the Department of Fine Arts to initiate the reform of the school.

Brave, and guided by hand, the reform was everyday more and more complete, without exception thanks to the impassioned support of all the students who carried out

all the meetings as on from the general meetings unanimously a full trust in the activities of the initiative group and provided it with full freedom to adopt all measures to consolidate to develop the reform. This support gave new strength to the initiative group and still fortified them in the correctness of the course taken. In this time the initiative group had a great popularity in the art world and its activities, from one side, served the honor and approval of Narkompros's A. V. Lunacharsky and from the other side was an "eyesore" for all its secret and overt enemies and rivals. In this time, the founding and active members of the group were joined by those absent until then in Moscow, secretary of the conference M. Solodovnikova and took upon herself the economic management of the studios. The first issue, at the fore of the initiative group was the issue of electing new faculty for the studios. The vast majority of the student cadre at the Stroganov School were completely unfamiliar with not only the new forms in contemporary art, but with art in general (oddly enough) knew completely nothing. This was reasonable if we take into account that authentic living art was deliberately banished from the walls of the Stroganov School, as "charlatanism".

In light of this, the students, as a mass, could not understand the movements in contemporary artistic life; in one of the general meetings they proposed that the initiative group compile a list of leading artists of all contemporary directions in art, which was fulfilled by the group; at one of the following general meetings all unanimously agreed and accepted all candidates noted by the initiative group. From the new leaders selected by the students, the initiative group deemed a great help in the implementing and deepening the reform, for their moral support, and practical advice: S. A. Noakovskoi, F. F. Fedorovskii, A. V. Grishchenko and G. B. Yakulov.

Soon after, artistic-pedagogical and administrative-economic councils were created, to which went representatives of all studio groups; normal work, in this was, began and the initiative group, like a temporary organ of the revolutionary construction, was annulled. In this time, after long and heroic efforts of the initiative group, Tsentrplenezh, which occupied the whole new studio building finally left it, and it became possible to begin equipping the studios, in correspondence with the spirit of the reforms. This equipment and non-stop self-organization naturally was reflected in the productivity of the studios, not letting them freely reveal all their potential. Particularly difficult was to equip the special decorative studios, in because of almost complete lack of appropriate means, in light of this, the work in these studios was particularly delayed and could not go to the level of work the easily organized and easily equipped generally governed studios.

And with all this, despite all the obstacles, produced by the nationwide economic devastation, the work in the studios was so bright and tangible, that it significantly exceeded the work of the Stroganov School even in times of peace. And if you notice, that the head of the Stroganov School continually drove art in its true form from the walls of the school, and that "strogachi" completely never took oil paints into their hands, and that in this way, had to start literally work from "A to Z", -- the result of this school year is clear with enthusiasm and rising, which the reform invoked from the students in all matters and its bright newness.

Non-stop rallies on different topics of art and life, lectures, conversations, disputes, gatherings on topical questions, poetry evenings (V. Mayakovsky and V.

Kamensky) and competitions, -- all the time awakening students and unifying them in common thirst for work.

Students at this time represented an organized, cohesive, friendly mass, nervously grasping everything new and powerful, and responsive to all the themes of the day. (Especially bright were the responses to affronts to the contemporary forms of art, raised by ignorant critics of some of the papers, -- and avoidance of the work in decorating the Free Studios of Moscow for May 1st, for "futurism"; the resolution of this last meeting, proposed by the communists of the workshops, was timely published in "Izvestia V. Ts. I. K." and printed below.)

Recently there have been some troubles in the studios, caused by the actions of "leaders" in groups of the lower employees of the studios, causing a new rise among students and starting to freeze the life of the studios. In sum the students decided temporarily to take the life and economy of the studios into their own hands, and selecting from themselves an executive committee, which was joined by new active apprentices, stepping in for the first fighters for reform, like, for example, the chair of the Ispolkom V. Belyaev and members: V. Mochalov, N. Glushkov, Struleva and others. With this school year, the first year of existence of the new free studios ended.

At present, the 1st State Free Studios has: 12 painting studios, 3 sculpture, and 3 architecture. Besides these, they are equipped with 8 special decorative studios: 1) decorative-architectural, 2) textile (weaving, printed, carpet-tapestry and artistic-embroidery), 4) metals (embossing, mounting, electroplating, enamel, engraving, filigree and so on), 5) print (lithography, etching, engraving). 6) theatre-decoration (layout, costume), 7) decorative-painting (fresco, wall decorating, signage) 8) ceramics (porcelain, ceramics, glass). Besides these studios, auxiliaries have opened: forming, painting, testing station for paints and a chemical laboratory. The artist-managers of the studios consists of: S. I. Maliutin, F. O. Maliavin, N. P. Uliyanov, Boris Grigoriev, I. S. Fedotov, F. F. Fedorovskii, K. A. Korovin, N. V. Kuznetsov, V. V. Rozhdestvenskii, A. V. Lentulov, A. V. Grishchenko, A. V. Shechenko, K. S. Malevich, O. V. Rozanova, N. A. Udaltsova, I. V. Kliun, A. A. Morgunov, V. E. Tatlin, Georgii Yakulov and more. Sculptors: N. A. Andreev, B. I. Bromiski, V. A. Babichev and V. A. Vatakhim and the architects: L. A. Vesnin, S. G. Chernyshev and F. O. Shekhtel'.

The following lecture courses were read in the studios: aesthetics—P. A. Griftsov, philosophy of art—I. A. Aksenov, callistica theory of art—A. K. Toporkov, history of art—A. V. Nazarevskii, history of Russian art—Bor. Von-Eding, history of antique mythology—Vyacheslav Ivanov, history of contemporary French art—I. A. Aksenov, plastic anatomy—A. S. Golozhis.

Besides this, lectures were read on drawing, factura, color and composition, on the technology of paints, on the history of monumental painting, on theatrical- director work, on psychology, logic and philosophy in contemporary forms of art, on poetry etc. The lecturers were A. A. Sidorova, A. V. Grishchenko, M. I. Borisov, A. Tairoz, A. K. Toporkov, Vl. Mayakovsky, S. P. Bobrov and more. At the rallies spoke: People's Commissar A. V. Lunacharsky, Commissar of fine arts D. P. Shterenberg, members of the R. K. P. (Bolshevikov), artists, poets, critics, professors and apprentices in the 1st and 2nd State Free Arts Studios.

At the end of the academic year a graded exhibition of the past year was arranged, showing how substantial that work was. Besides their own exhibitions the apprentices participated in state exhibitions, arranged by the Department of Fine Arts.

With a farewell glance towards the past year, with gratification it can be said that it did not go in vain. From the forgotten, unalive culture of art, “strogachi” not trail blazing through, the incivility of which was proverbial, --emerged young artists with clear intentional paths, carrying significant baggage of knowledge, saturated with artistic culture and setting the goal for themselves of creating new forms that respond to the new structure of life, and its new demands.

Forward – to the spiritualization of daily life, having discarded the rusty chains of bourgeois culture. To the creation of the new, beautiful life. To the construction of new free art”. These were the slogans which the 1st State Free Arts Studios put to their work in the coming autumn.

G. Shch.”²⁷²

²⁷² Shchetinin, Georgii. *Iskusstvo*, 2 August 1919, n.7, pp.4-5.

OUR TASKS

K. Malevich

1. "War on academicism.
2. Direction by innovators.
3. Creation of a world collective for matters of art.
4. Institution of arts embassies in countries.
5. Creation of static museums of contemporary art across the whole country.
6. Creation of major routes across the whole Russian Republic for movement of living exhibitions of creative art.
7. Founding of a Central Museum of Contemporary Creativity in Moscow.
8. Appointment of commissars for the matters of art in the provincial cities of Russia.
9. Agitation among the peoples about life and creativity in Russia.
10. Publication of papers on the question of arts for the masses."²⁷³

²⁷³ Malevich. "Nashi Zadachi", *Izobrazitel'noe Iskusstvo*, v.1, 1919, p.27.

LONG LIVE THE NEW ARCHITECTURIZATION OF MEANING, OF NEW ART

ON THE MOSCOW FREE STATE ARTS STUDIOS. IMPRESSIONS OF THE MOSCOW STUDIOS FROM AN EXCURSION OF UNOVIS VITEBSK ART STUDIOS. 15 NOVEMBER 1920.

“In the absence of a printed program, from information collected privately it became clear that the program is divided into 3 faculties, where painting is the head and there is no architecture, in sculpture where clay serves as the material, a system is absent. Painting is divided into 8 disciplines, the relationships between which was not clear, that is, not clear through which sequence of the 8 the student progresses. From there the output to special studios of narrowly individualized direction.

In Pevsner’s experimental – preparatory class the following clarifications were obtained: they study the elementary understanding of material, the world of paints, the primary real basis of that life, which encircles us. Master is first and foremost, the student must be a master, must know how to draw signage, the façade of a house, must understand paint, create their own paint, they must do something new in painting, then all techniques in art must be known to them. Pevsner makes an effort to discuss cubism, futurism and all existing schools. A school is born when mastery appears, so it is important to have; paint handling, canvas and world view.

The head Shemiakin revealed that all movements starting with the archaic merged into the true pedagogical method and were made into an entirety. The rule is no violence to anyone, whether born a realist or a non-objectivist. Learn to identify constructive color forms. The difference between the experimental department and the department of common painting (ie. Fedorov), where they copy still-lives, is not apparent.

In Falk’s studio, there is consciousness of the multicolor of nature, and a battle is taking place connected with the movement of forms in nature. An etude presents a chaotic conglomeration of colors, yearning beyond the forms of nature on canvas. Nature is torn, faceted forms dashed, overall in a condition of chaos. In a conversation with the students the answer was: “we are aware of the advantages to the constructive method, but are weak.”

In Rodchenko’s studio, -- the discipline “construction” the still-life constructed, well made of metal, painted glass, lacquer, but in it all work ends with construction, because the students copy exactly with any subject.

In Udaltsova’s studio, the discipline of volume and space “the still life of the machine” on the background board. Here the students take and implement elements from nature into painterly construction, they give a spatial resolution of nature in planarity through color shifts.

In I. Mashkov’s studio paintings are “decoratively-monumental”, on the walls are women and vases with fruits reminiscent of Roman-Greek decorations and western-Roman style of decoration. The meaning of the studio is in the clarification that the goal of preparing for fresco painting workshops.

In Kliun’s studio “the discipline of two dimensional color planes” – turning volumes into planes.

In the remaining studios were many still-lives and drawing “accordingly”

Comrades Senkin and Klutis

Personal studios, towards the end of study—are not well understood, that is, those studios that, speaking boldly, are the basis of really new studios, which irrespective of their independence, stand in a system of pure science and practical realism. Klutis's paintings and Senkin's searching are formative to us, we can say they serve as examples to the school and all living understudies of the schools. N.K."²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Kogan, Nina. *Put' Unovisa*. pp.5-6.

APPENDIX E
ILLUSTRATIONS

МАРИНЕТТИ ВЪ МОСКВѢ.

Король футуризма, итальянец Маринетти, прибылъ въ Москву и прочелъ двѣ лекціи о футуризмѣ и его будущемъ и имѣлъ большой успѣхъ, но... только не у своихъ единомышленниковъ. Несмотря, московскіе футуристы встрѣтили Маринетти враждебно и отказались отъ всякаго общенія съ нимъ. Они не согласны съ его взглядами относительно будущаго футуризма.



Illustration 1. Moscow. Photo of “Marinetti in Moscow”, 1914

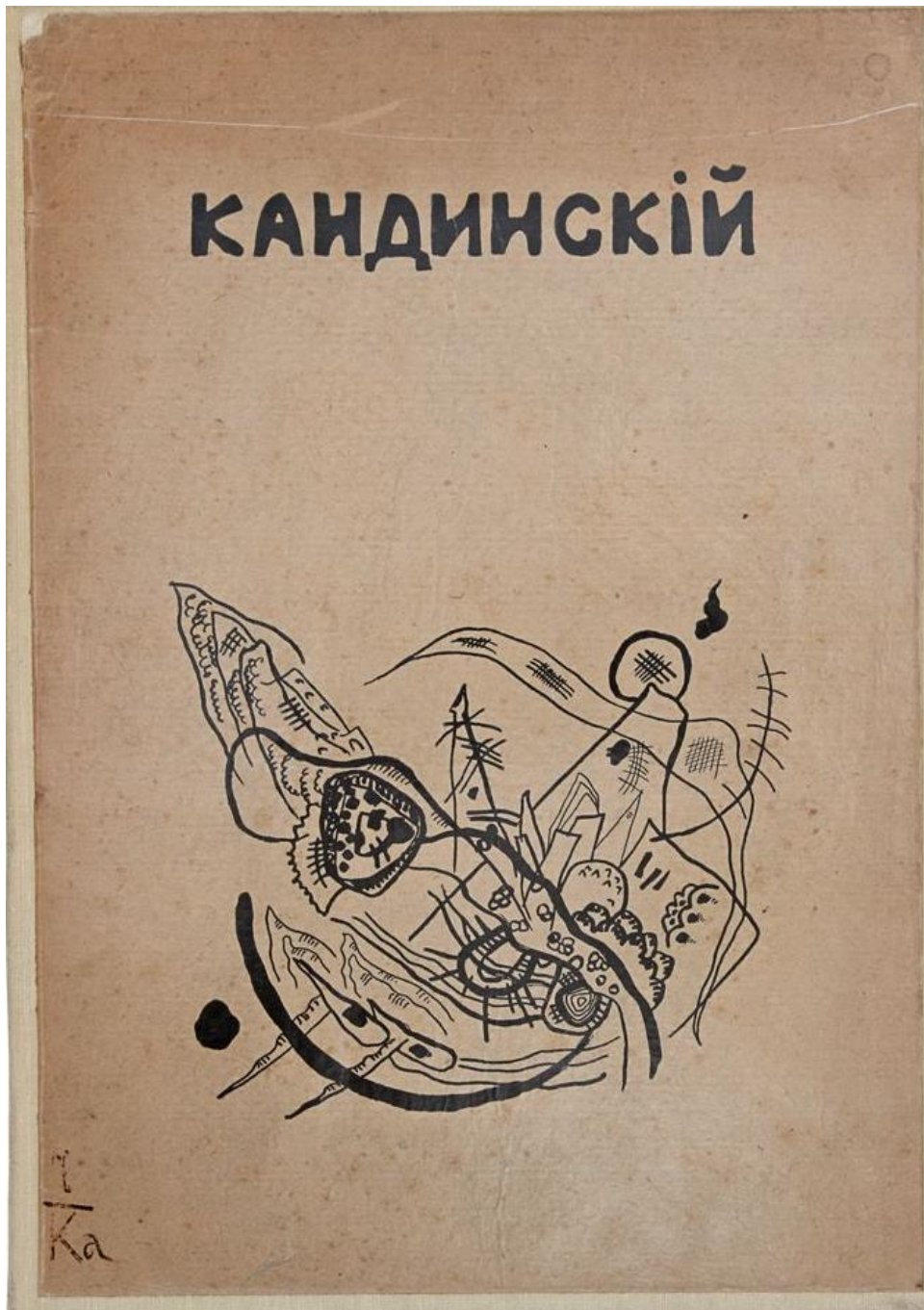


Illustration 3. Moscow. Cover of *Kandinsky: Text of an Artist*, 1918



Illustration 4. Moscow. Photo of Kandinsky with Svomas Students, 1920

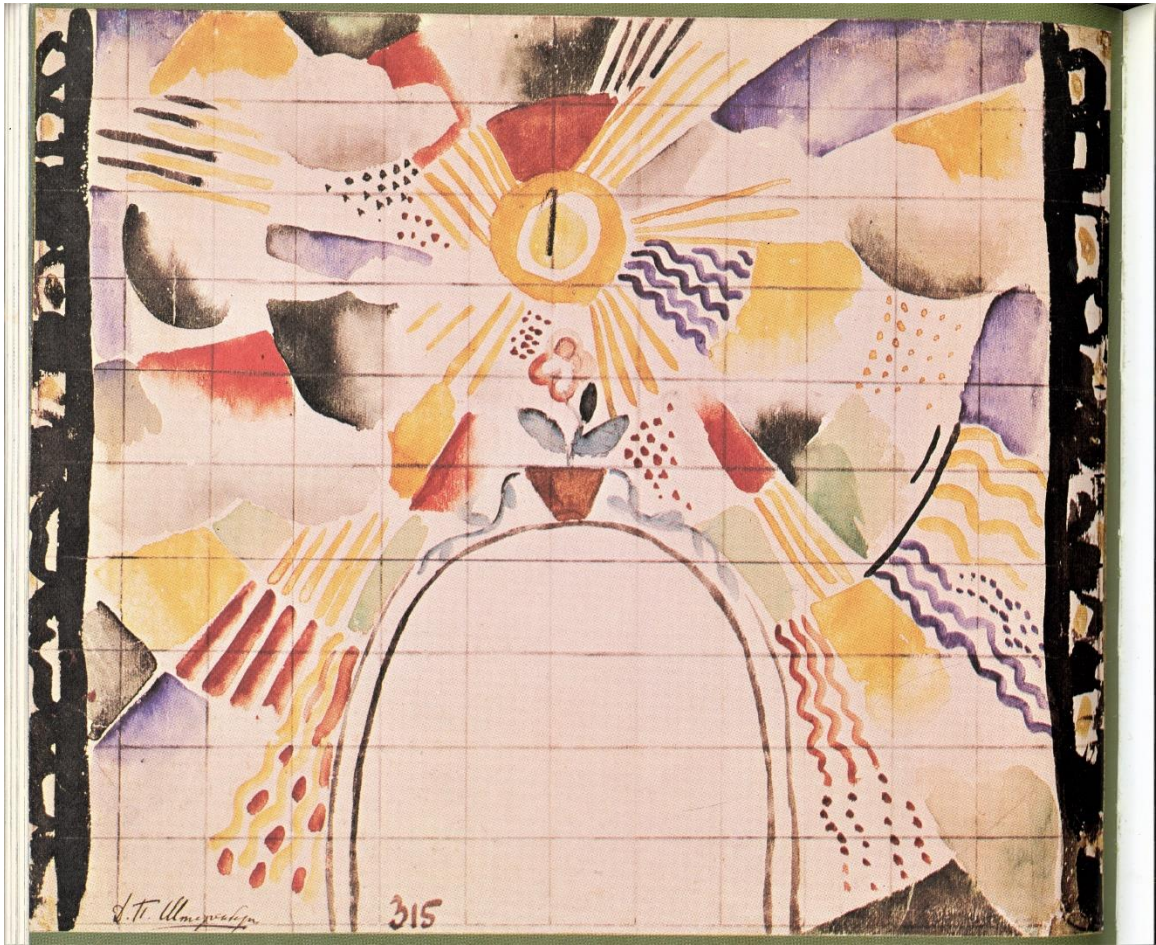


Illustration 5. Petrograd. Shterenberg, "Sun of Freedom", 1918



Illustration 6. Petrograd. Photo of Gathering at Altman Installation, 1918

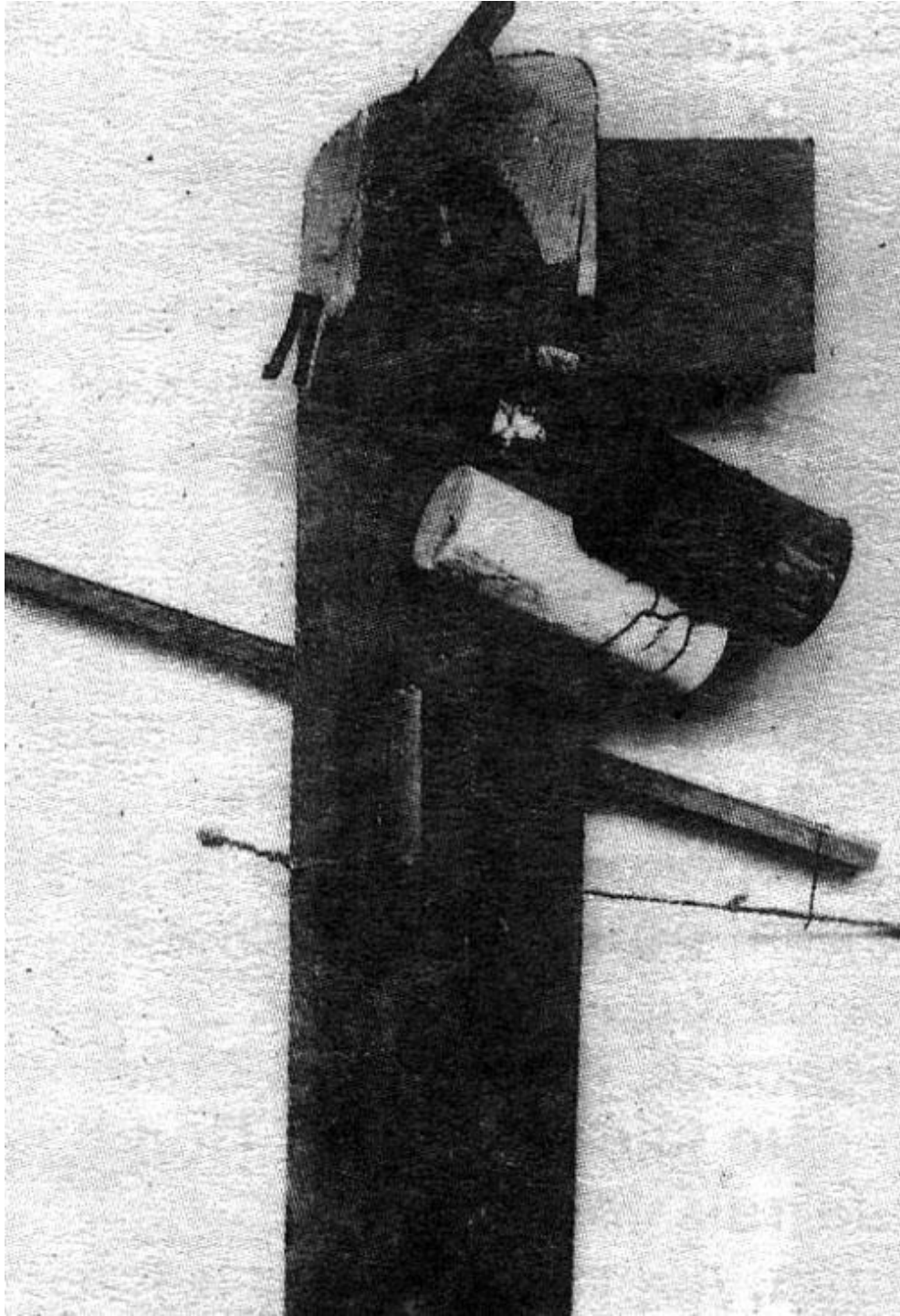


Illustration 7. Unknown. Meerzon, Counter-Relief, 1919



Illustration 8. Petrograd. Shapiro, Selection of Materials, 1920-21



Illustration 9. Petrograd. Photo of Tatlin Group Building Monument, 1920



Illustration 10. Petrograd. Photo of the Monument Exhibited at Svomas, 1920



Illustration 11. Moscow. Korolev, Monument to Bakunin, 1919

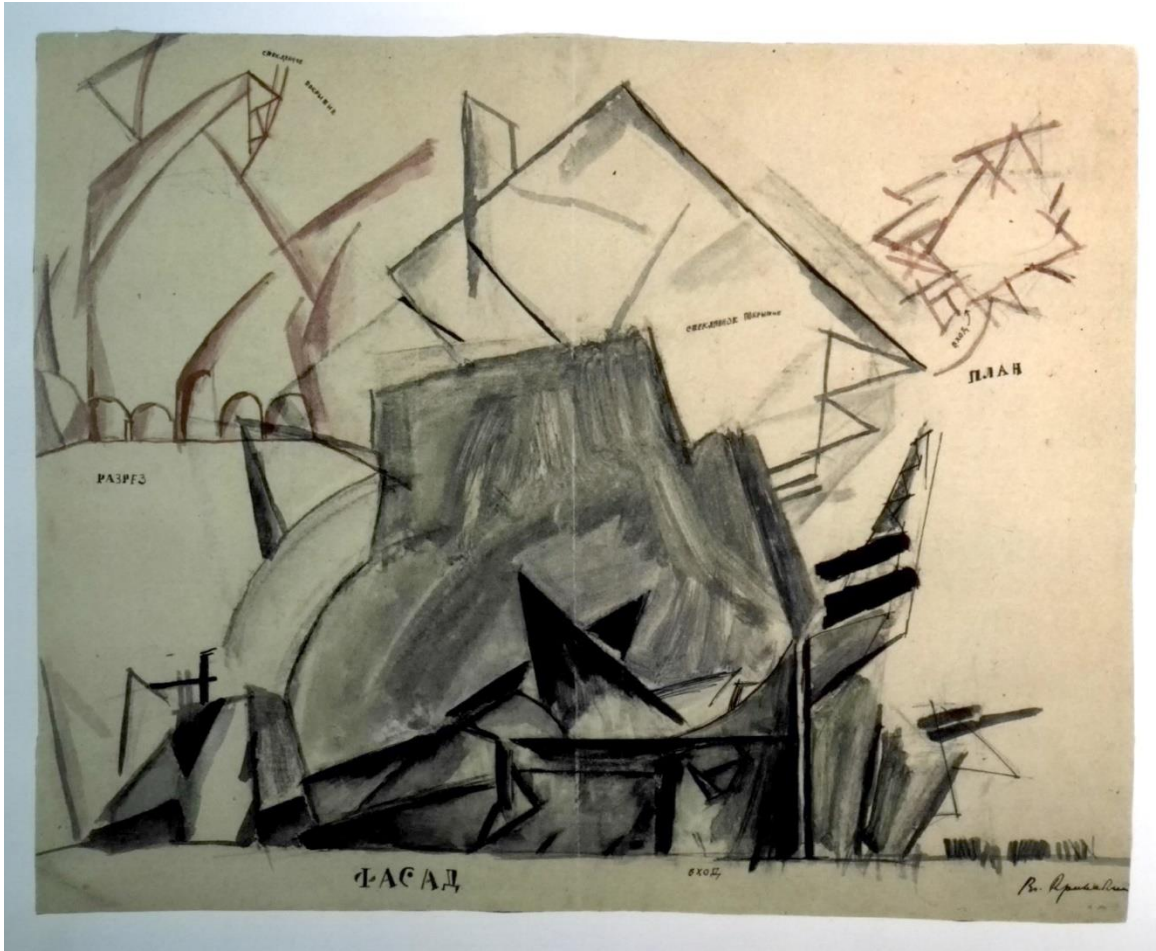


Illustration 12. Moscow. Krinsky, Temple of Communion Among Nations, 1919

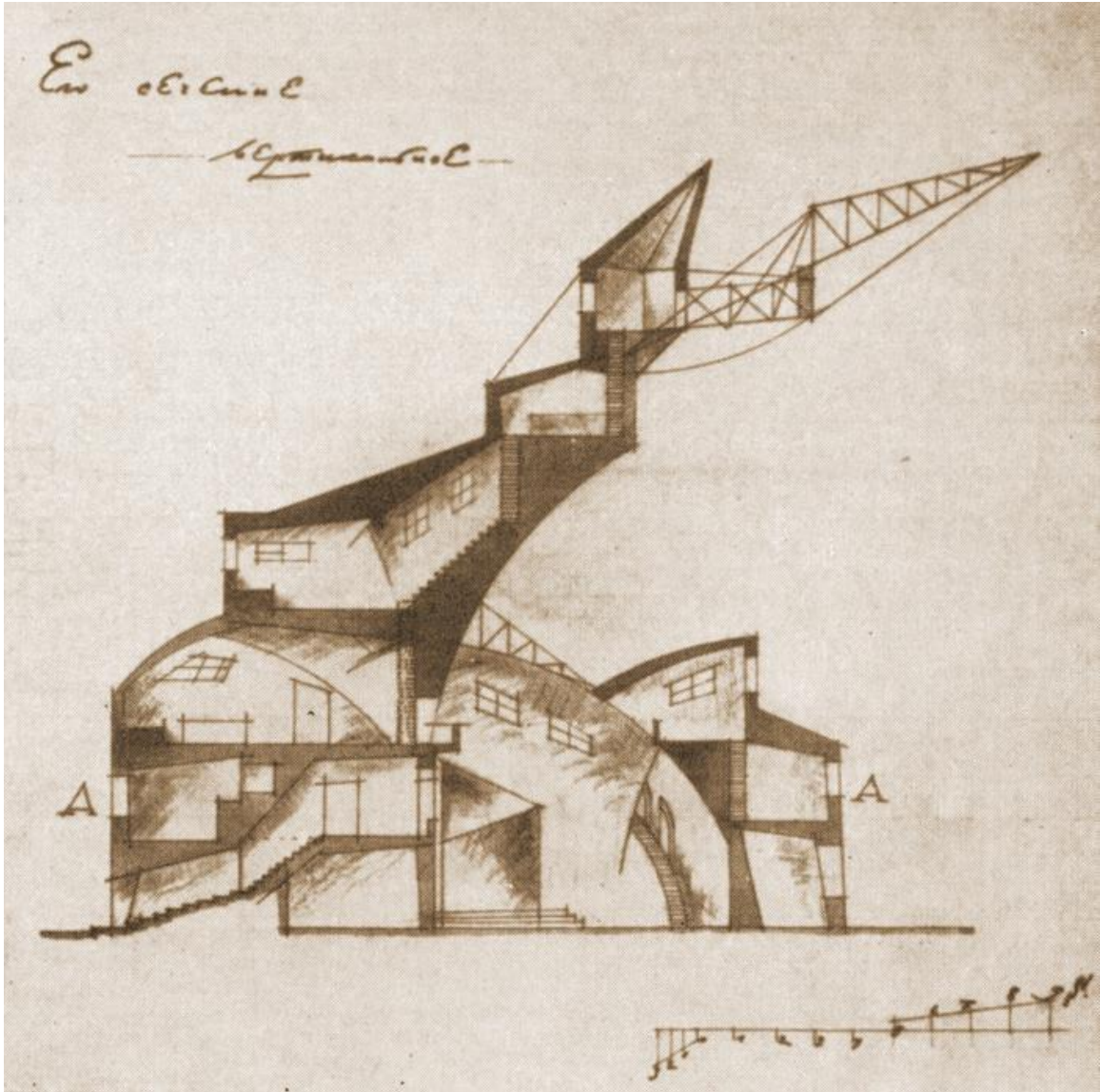


Illustration 13. Moscow. Ladovsky, Communal House Section, 1920



Illustration 14. Moscow. Rodchenko, Sovdep Section, 1920

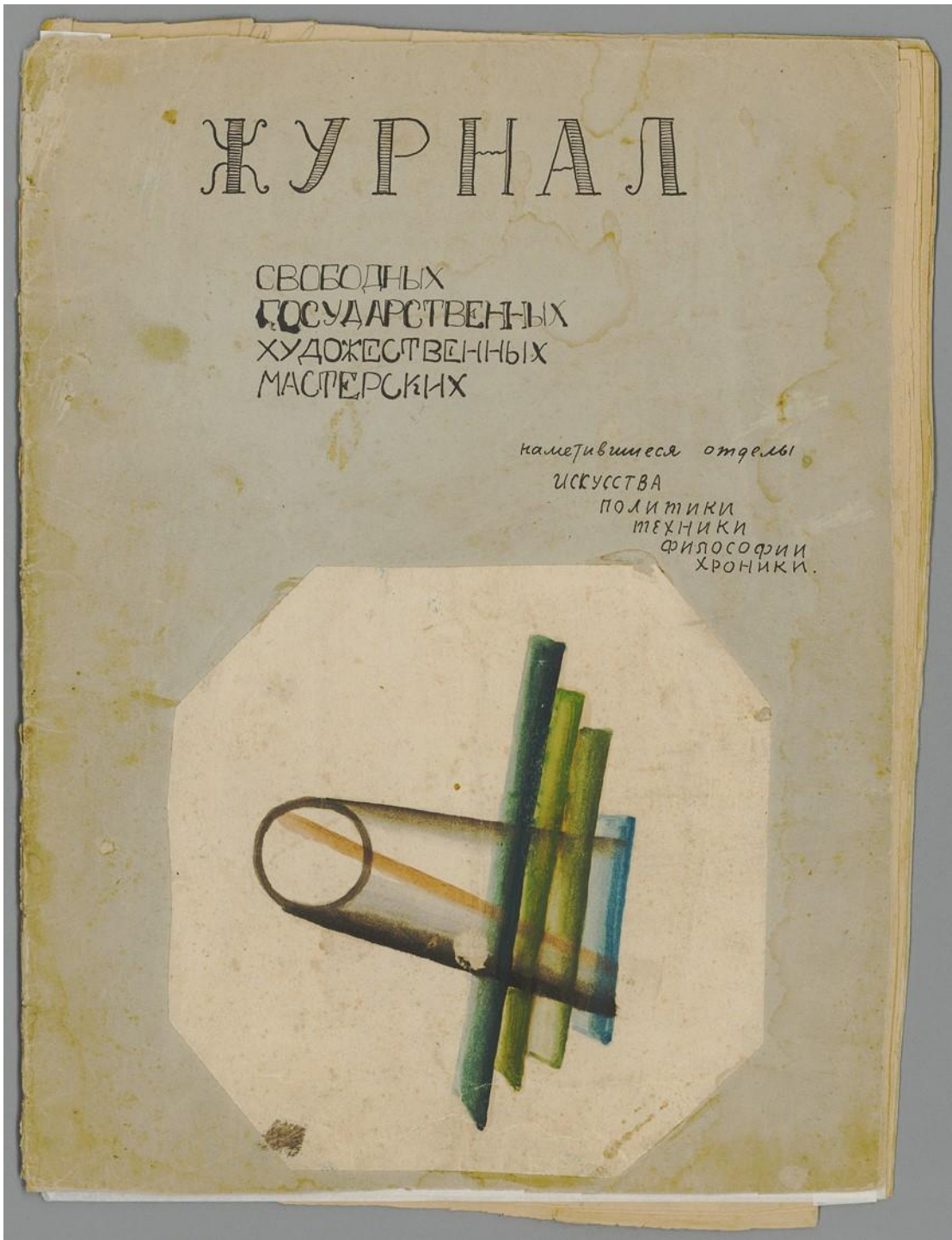


Illustration 15. Moscow. Cover of *Journal of the Free State Arts Studios*, 1919

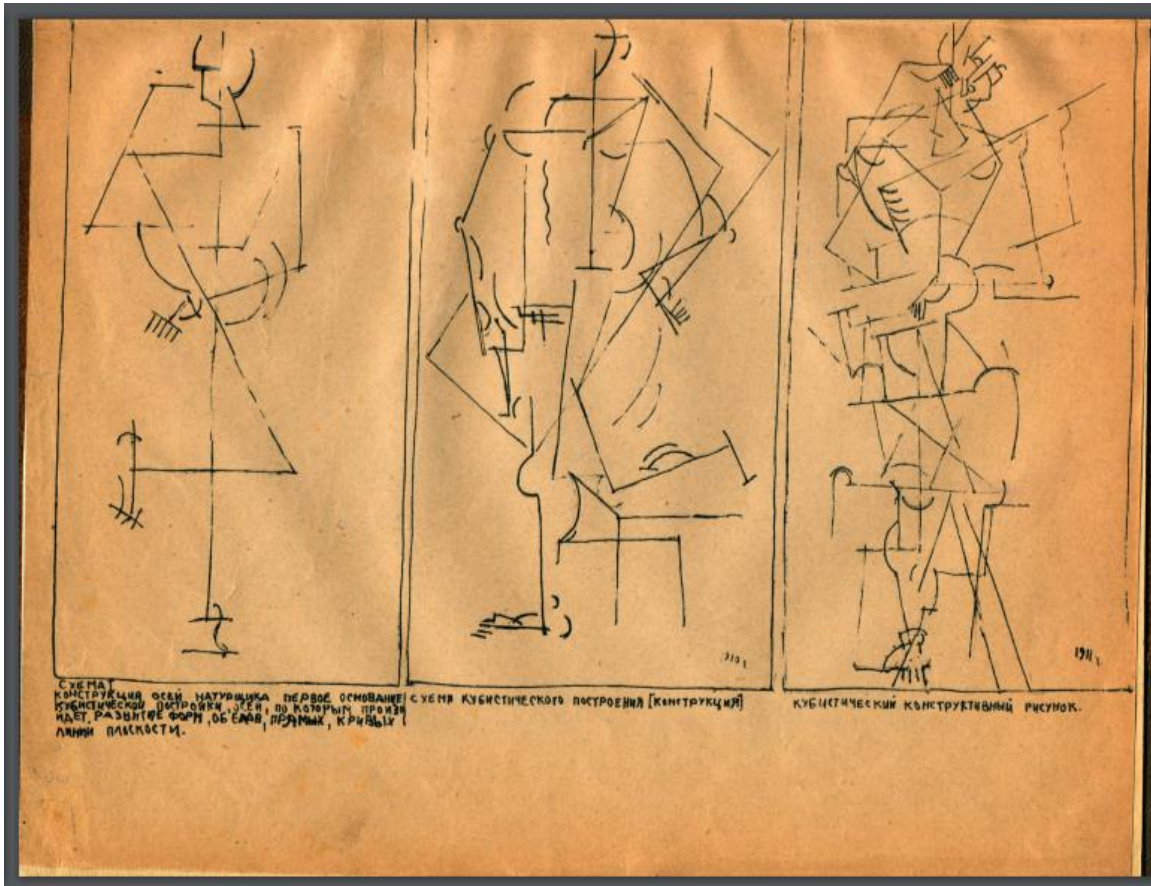


Illustration 16. Vitebsk. Malevich, Schema for Teaching Cubism and Abstraction, 1919



Illustration 17. Vitebsk. Photo of Unovis Boarding a Train to Moscow, 1920

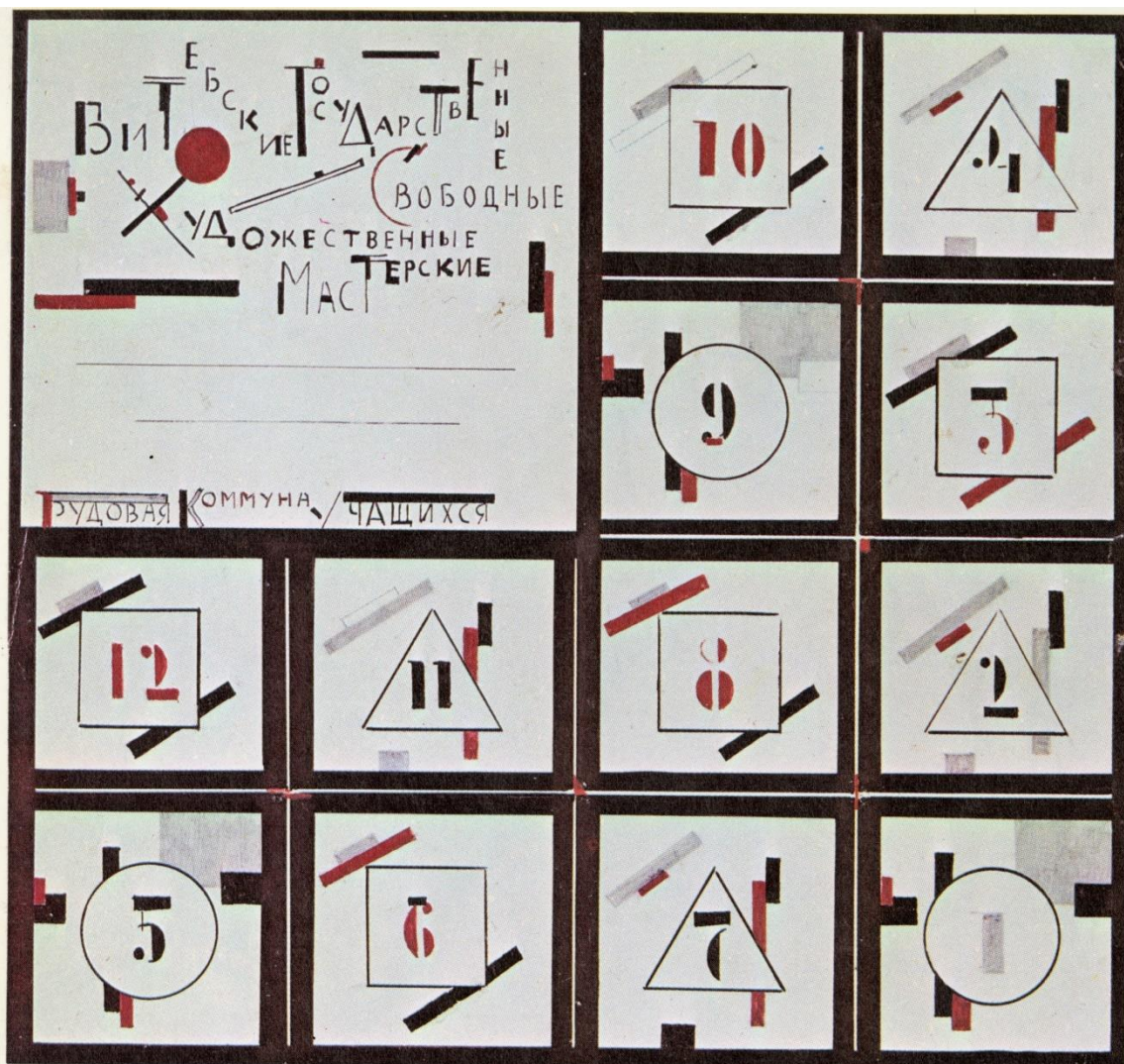


Illustration 18. Vitebsk. Tseitlin, Ration Card for Vitebsk Svomas, 1920

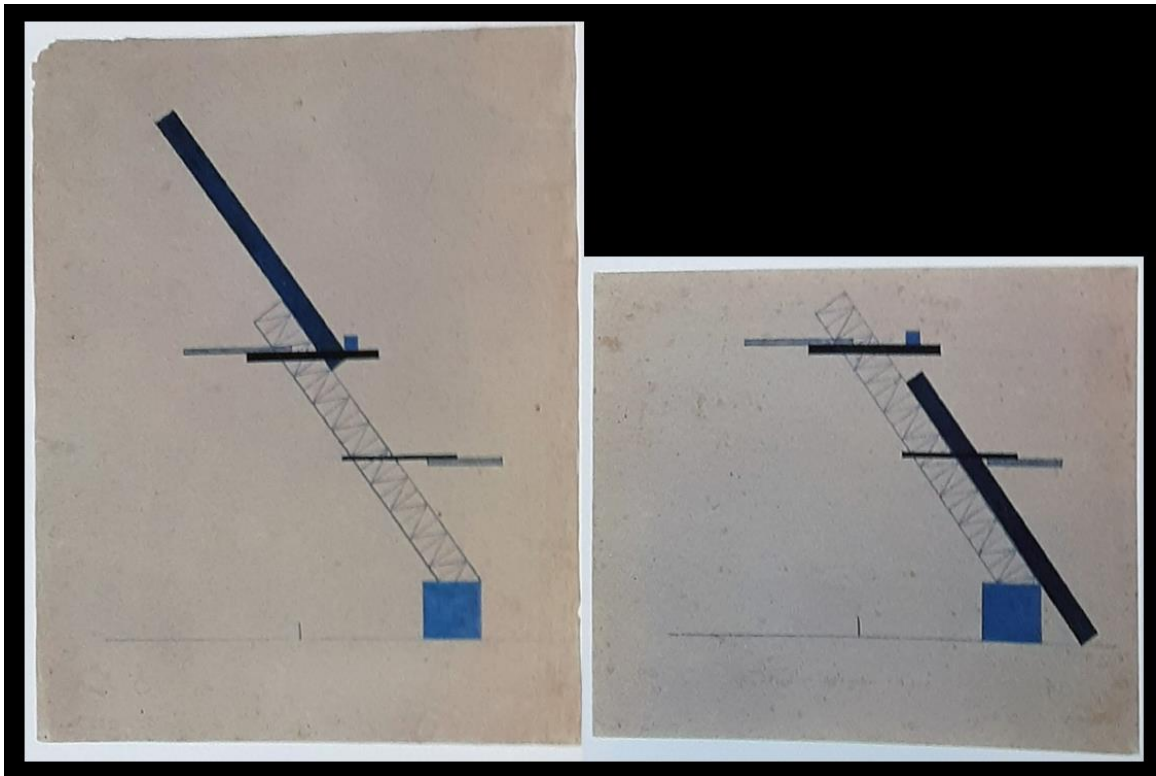


Illustration 19. Vitebsk. Chashnik, Tribune for a Square in Smolensk, 1920

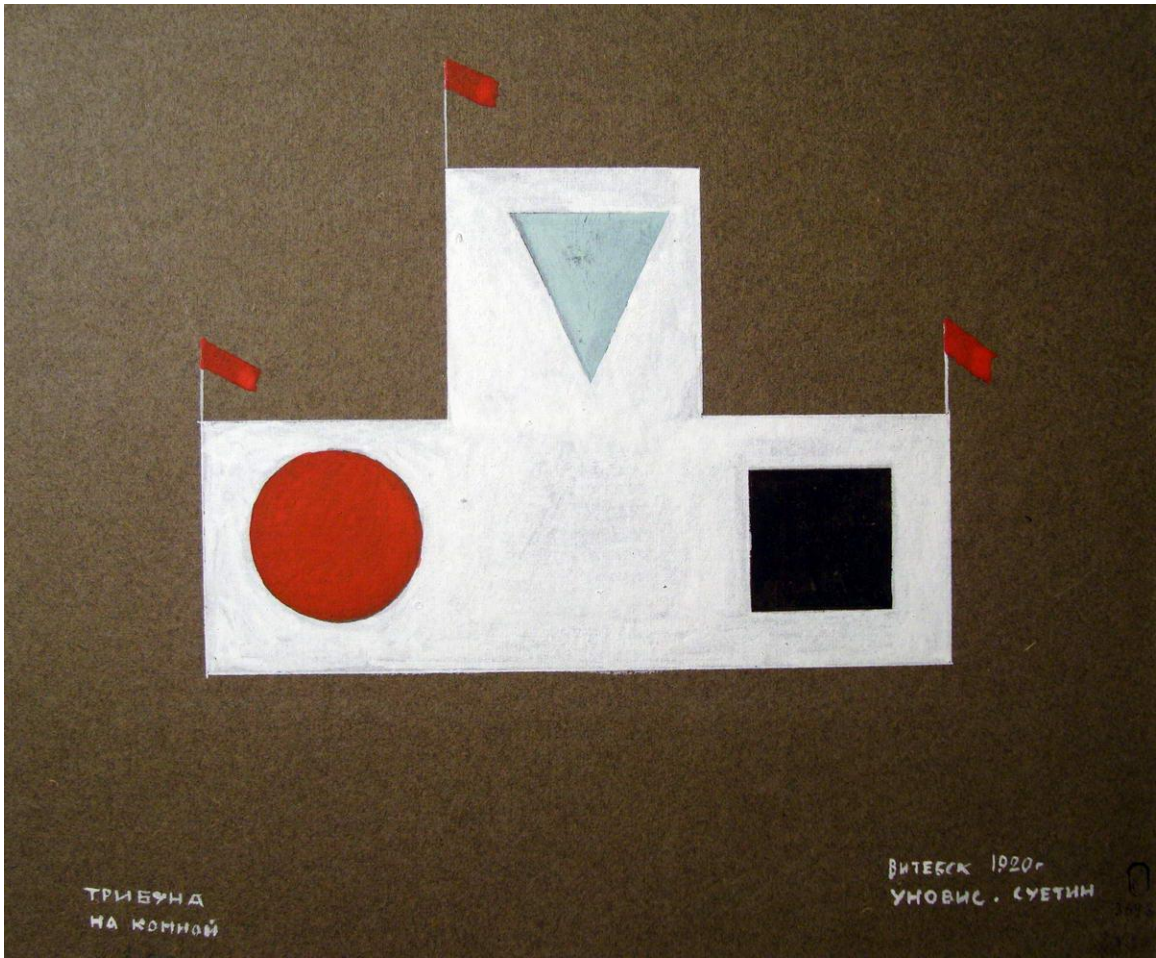


Illustration 20. Vitebsk. Suetin, Design for Tribune, 1920-21



Illustration 21. Moscow. Klutsis, "Dynamic City", 1919



Illustration 22. Moscow. Stepanova, "Study the Old but Create Anew", 1919



« П О ЧЕРНОМУ
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Illustration 23. Vitebsk. Lissitzky, Pages from *About Two Squares*, [1920] 1922

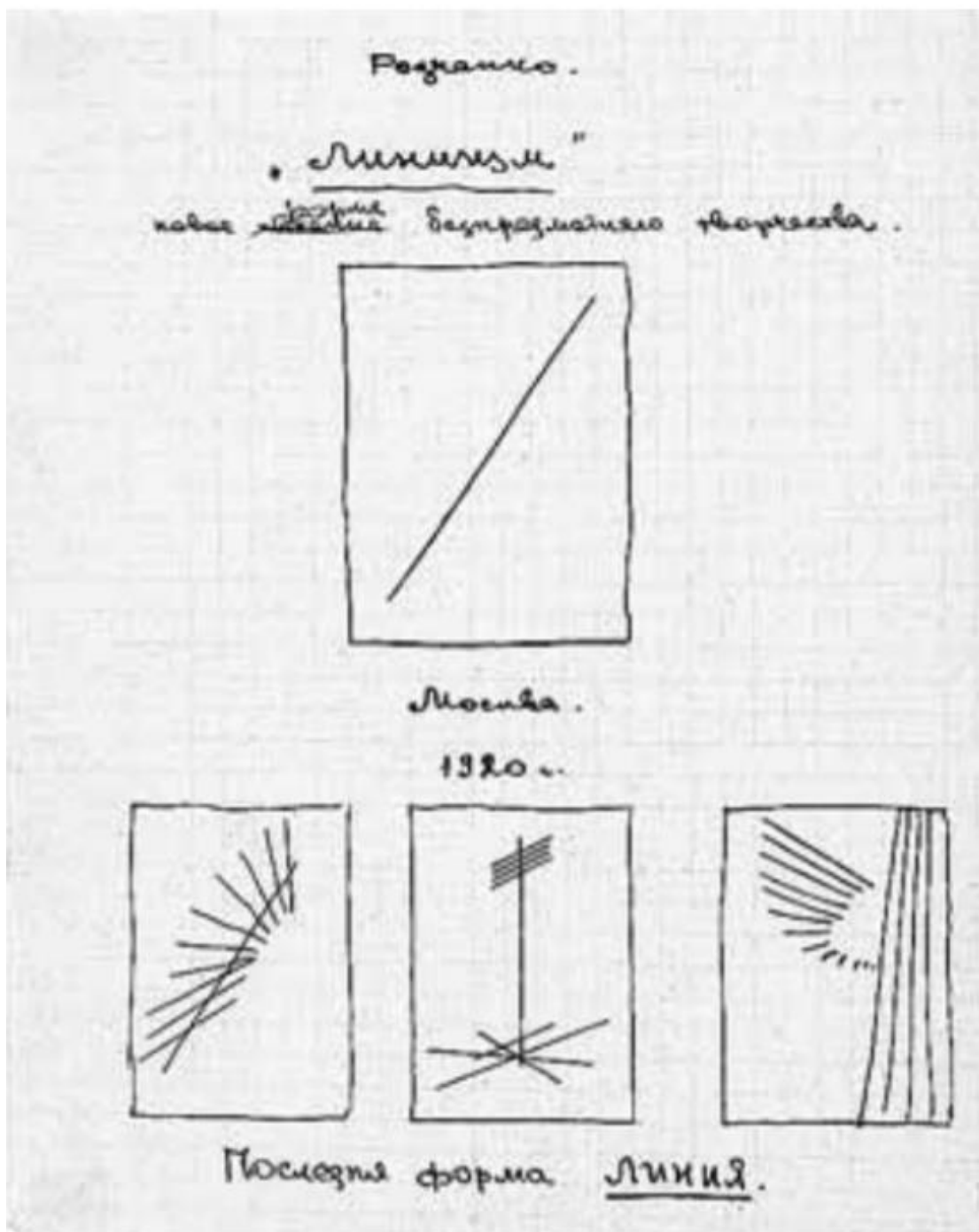


Illustration 24. Moscow. Rodchenko “Line-ism”, 1920

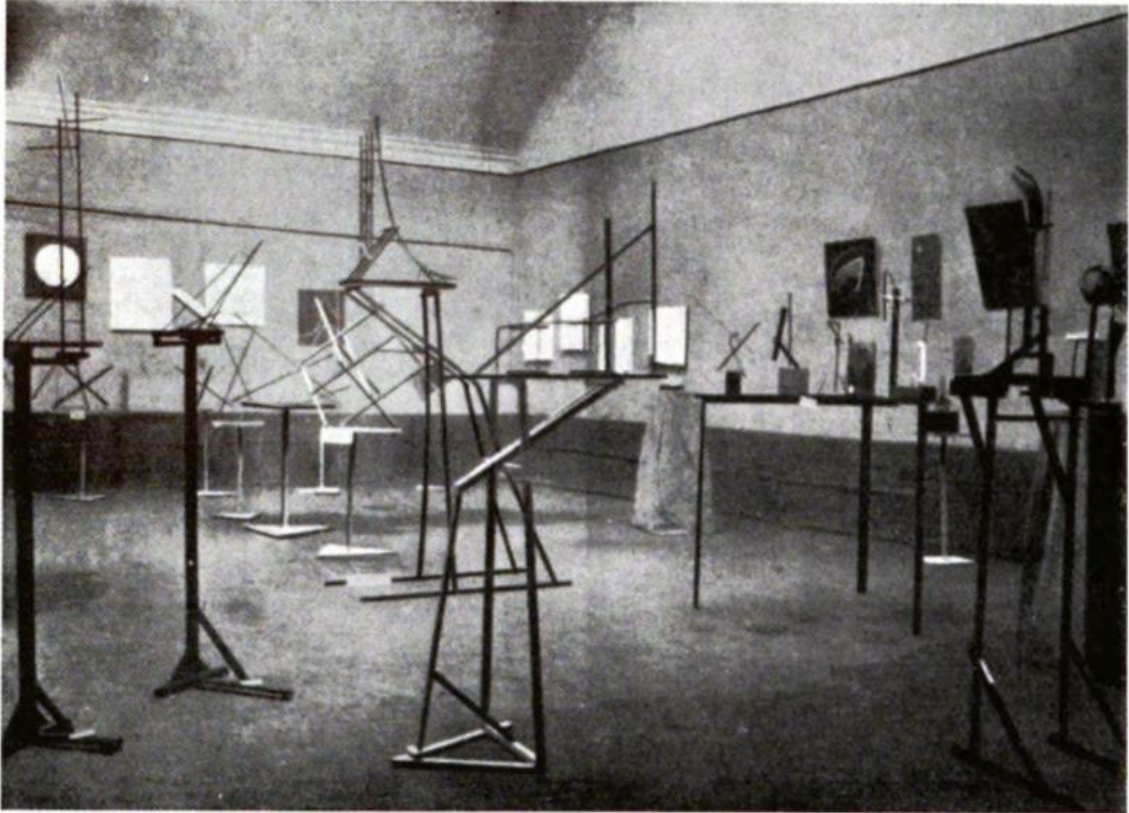


Illustration 25. Moscow. Photo of Obmokhu Exhibition, 1921