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**The activities of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops /
the Higher Art and Technical Institute as a stage in the development
of the Moscow school of industrial design**

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Abstract

The article aims to describe the experience of the development of Russian design, or artistic construction, in the activities of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops / the Higher Art and Technical Institute. This period, which is viewed as one of the stages in the development of the Moscow school of industrial design, was characterized by the active interaction of the artistic approach inherited by the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops from the Stroganov School with the innovative aesthetic and technological approach, which marked the development of design as the art of the industrial era. The search of early Soviet designers had a pronounced artistic and experimental character. Design theory during that period was associated with the theory (and practice) of constructivism and suprematism. The renewal of the social order was considered so irrevocable that the very concept of art had to die out as a purely aesthetic phenomenon. Designing (not decorating) products and creating new forms of products were a breakthrough in industrial art. Having studied the activities of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, the author of the article points out that most of their design projects were not realized due to the lack of interaction between industrial artists and industry.

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Keywords

History of design, Soviet design, Higher Art and Technical Institute, Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, Moscow school of industrial design, Stroganov School, constructivism.

Introduction

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops (later known as the Higher Art and Technical Institute) were one of the first schools in the world to train specialists in industrial design. The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops had a unique experience of the formation of the first school of design education. Their program was based on the aesthetic concept of shaping. The purpose of the education was to train highly qualified artists for industry, as well as instructors for professional technical education.

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops were organized as a result of the second reform of art education after the October Revolution of 1917. The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops were founded in 1920 on the basis of the First and Second Free State Artistic Workshops created in 1918 by reorganizing the Stroganov School of Arts and Industry and the School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture [Khan-Magomedov, VKhUTEMAS, 1995, book 1, 7]. The interaction of artists, sculptors, and architects with the industrial school was seen as an important social step towards the integration of art and production.

Research results

Despite the successful experience of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute and the practical need for design in various fields of industry, the words "design" and "designer" were not popular in Soviet Russia due to their clear connection with foreign activities. The phrase "construction artist" was the Soviet synonym of the word "designer" for many years.

In fact, the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute taught and practised design: it was a fusion of artistic and engineering thought, which found its way in parallel and in conjunction with foreign schools (e. g., the German Bauhaus). The first experience of such education required not only a theoretical basis, but also methodological experience. The questions as to how the creative and industrial parts should be combined, how one can move away from traditional decorativeness and come to a new understanding of the form, faced the higher education institution during its 10-year existence: "Artistic and technical education at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops aimed to train highly qualified designers with systemic thinking that would be capable of coping with the most difficult tasks of complex recreation of the material environment" [Partylova, 2018, 160].

It is necessary to note the originality of the formation of design in Russia. While design in Western Europe in the 1920s developed due to the desire of industrial firms to increase the attractiveness of their products in a competitive market, there was no such an order from industry in Russia. And that is why industrial art "originated outside the industrial sphere: it rested upon the activities of both left-wing artists who "went out" into the subject world during their formal aesthetic experiments, and theorists (sociologists and art historians)" [Khan-Magomedov, Pionery..., 1995, 12]. The search of early Soviet designers had a pronounced artistic and experimental character.

The specialist in the theory of industrial art B.I. Arvatov wrote in 1926: "The first task for the working class in art is to destroy the historically relative boundary between artistic and general social techniques" [Arvatov, 1926, 96]. Art theorists proposed to revise art: "any utilitarian production may be the field of artistic work" [Ibidem, 97], while art ceases to crown the types of human activities: "The fetishism of aesthetic techniques, forms, and tasks must be destroyed" [Ibidem, 98].

P.I. Novitsky wrote the following about the Higher Art and Technical Institute in 1929: "Artists are specialists in the form of things. They decorate everyday life and the ideological struggle. The rapidly growing socialist industry of our union needs highly qualified artists who are familiar with the technology of materials and the technological processes of production and who also have some technical education in addition to artistic one" [Novitskii, 1929, 5].

N.M. Tarabukin wrote the following, insisting that the proletariat will not have "pure" art at all, but only the concept of industrial mastery will remain: "The proletariat will not create its own poetry, as in general any "pure" form of art, because aesthetic contemplative forms are not characteristic of the creative relevance of the working class. In order to start creating the values of easel, museum art, the proletariat must turn into a parasitic class, i. e. cease to be the proletariat. In the future society, therefore, there will be no "pure" forms of art, but there will be production ones, because there will be no parasitic classes, but there will be a non-class working element. The proletariat must assimilate the values of the old art as the values of craftsmanship, and this will be its only fruitful contact with stankovism. It will be a politician, an inventor, a producer of industrial culture in its active creative work. I consider not the idea of "proletarian" creativity, but that of industrial skill to be progressive in the Russian socialist state. Production skills are the organizer not only of our orientation ability, but also of our intense activity. Art is combined with technology. The technique turns into art when it consciously strives for perfection" [Tarabukin, 1923, 42]. It is interesting to note that the renewal of the social order was seen so irrevocable that the very concept of art had to die out as a purely aesthetic phenomenon.

In addition, the theory of design was connected with the theory (and practice) of constructivism and suprematism during this period. The cultural researcher concludes about the fundamental content of the concept of design during the 1920s: "Design in the culture of the avant-garde is a systemic phenomenon that manifests itself at the conceptual level, which is explained by its universal design ability associated with the human need to build "models of the desired future", and at the pragmatic level, which is connected with the sociocultural practice of relations between man and things" [Golenok, 2004, 9]. Constructivism and suprematism brought a lot to the theory of design and its inner essence—liberation from decorativeness, deliverance from mimetic life-likeness, rejection of familiar forms and designing of new ones.

The Moscow school of design "developed as a classically academic one with an "architectural" style of design graphics, the predominance of a three-dimensional solution of a thing over a colorographic one" [Lavrent'ev, 2007, 287]. The Leningrad school understood the systematic nature of design as "the whole complex of its interrelations with social needs, culture, the environment, and technology" [Ibidem]. The history of the Moscow school of design has not yet been written in detail, but researchers draw the following conclusions: "Despite the complexity of the characteristics of the concept of the Moscow school (Stroganov Moscow State Academy of Arts and Industry) as a stylistic phenomenon, the predominance of compositions in the Russian style at an early stage of the existence of the school can be explained by the purposeful task of the school and the influence of the style and taste orientation of the local artistic environment and cultural life in Moscow, the originality of which had a great influence on all Russian art. This was also the reason for the Moscow school's fascination with ornament, styles, and later formalism. The Moscow school compared favorably with the Saint Petersburg school due to its great democracy, realistic aspiration, and attraction to advanced trends. Young artists less constrained in their searches by academic recipes, developed in a lively and free creative atmosphere. The path to realism was more consistent, without the cataclysms that took place in the Saint Petersburg artistic environment" [Mirzoyan, 2017, 38].

The artistic approach to design in Moscow was developed at the Stroganov School. The history of

this school can be traced back from 1825, through the constructivism of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute, to the present [Kurasov et al., 2015]. The aesthetic and technological approach was developed by the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and then borrowed by the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics to be used in its educational and design practice. Russian technical aesthetics as a theoretical basis for design appeared in the works of teachers of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and in educational practice. In Russia, the ideas of technical aesthetics were promoted through the unity of art and technology, the aestheticization of industrial enterprises, in line with the ideas of constructivism.

The greatest artists of that time taught in the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, organized on the basis of the workshops of the Stroganov School; they experimentally approached the theorization of industrial art and its practical application [Galaktionov, 2010]. The program of the higher education institution was based on the aesthetic concept of shaping. The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops trained highly qualified artists for industry, as well as instructors for professional technical education. As N.A. Koveshnikova notes, "left-wing artists had to solve several difficult tasks in the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops: (i) to work out "objective" methods of teaching artistic disciplines, contrasting them with "workshop" methods of teaching in the Free Workshops; (ii) to develop some common technique for teaching various artistic disciplines, thereby bringing together artistic and technical education at the same higher education institution; (iii) to reorient the professional training of artistic personnel from easel art to working in industry. Thus, the creation of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops marked the beginning of the second stage of the reform of art education in Soviet Russia, during which the national school of design emerged and developed" [Koveshnikova, 2010, 331].

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, the first Soviet school of architecture and design [Minervin, Shimko, 2004, 229], created on the basis of the former Stroganov School, provided a basis for developing a fundamentally new approach to artistic design, when artistic disciplines were studied as a way to cognizing the laws of forms and space, color and light and united under the sign of such a new style as constructivism. The tasks of "engineering" the country required deploying art education to the needs of production. The teachers of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops Moisei Ginzburg, El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin and others developed the principles of "industrial art", technical aesthetics and design. Historians point out that the scientific foundations of the Russian school of design were laid here [Elochkin, 2010, 96].

"The decline of design in our country begins simultaneously with the establishment of the totalitarian regime" [Pankratova, 2017, 68]. The short-lived existence of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute, limited to the bright decade of the 1920s and 1930s, has nevertheless left its mark on Russian design and Russian art.

Nikolai Tarabukin, who taught at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, wrote about the necessity of industrial art: "In the "production skill", the "content" is the utilitarianism and expediency of a thing, its tectonism, which determine its form and construction and justify its social purpose and function" [Tarabukin, 1923, 18]. He also wrote about the need for a new type of education that would combine creativity and craft: "It is necessary to introduce creative constructivism that only masters of art have possessed so far, into technology, a primarily craft science" [Ibidem, 25].

The resolution of the Council of People's Commissars signed by Vladimir Lenin and Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich in 1920, said: "The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops in Moscow is a special higher technical and industrial educational institution aimed training highly qualified artists for INDUSTRY, as well as instructors and managers for professional technical education" [Novitskii,

1929, 5]. The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops were believed to train "artists of a new type—artists working for industry, organizing everyday life, and serving the cultural and political struggle of the working class", specialists "in the quality and form of things" [Ibidem]. The higher education institution was founded on the basis of Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture and the Stroganov School of Arts and Industry [Slozhenikina, 2014, 110-111].

The experience of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops is most often compared with the German Bauhaus, which worked in the same years and is also known for the graduation of certified specialists in the field of design [Khan-Magomedov, VKhUTEMAS, 1995, book 1; Koinova, 2011]. "The stage of the formation of design education (the 1920s and 1930s) is connected with the activities of two outstanding educational institutions—the German Bauhaus and the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute in Russia. These educational institutions appeared (almost simultaneously, in 1919 and 1920) during a sharp social change that affected a wide range of sociocultural relations and the material and subject environment of man" [Koveshnikova, Koveshnikova, 2012, 249]. Despite the differences in the strategy of the Bauhaus and the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, the main goals of both schools consisted in the integration of artistic practice into mass production and the creation of such objects of the subject-spatial environment that educated a person from the perspective of the moral attitudes of the postwar period [Kozlovskii, 2015, 223].

This comparison is justified due to the multiple professional, creative ties between the two schools, due to a certain unity of their educational and creative atmosphere, e. g., Wassily Kandinsky organized a workshop at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops in 1921 and was a professor at the Bauhaus from 1922 to 1933.

As I.A. Pakshina notes, the creative and educational process of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops was stormy and bright: students were trained during the period of the breaking of old aesthetic values, the emergence of new art trends and changes in the vector of public life. Disputes between "applied artists" (Vladimir Favorsky, Pavel Florensky, Pavel Pavlinov, Nikolai Sheverdyayev, etc.) and "constructivists" (El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, Solomon Telingater, etc.), representatives of different aesthetic systems and trends, have become an important part of the formation and development of Soviet design [Pakshina, 2011, 54]. The educational process was aimed at teaching students not just to create things and decorate them, but to express some creative idea through the plastic form [Zimina, Pokhlebaeva, 2019, 158].

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops had a significant impact on the formation of a new style in technical aesthetics in the USSR. As the researchers of the beginning of the 21st century wrote, "we can consider the activities of "production workers" to be the beginning of the practice of Russian design, which, even in the specific form of projects that were not implemented, left a deep mark on world design culture" [Minervin, Shimko, 2004, 215]. Besides, the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops had a unique experience of the formation of the first school of design education. As it was written in 1929, "the Higher Art and Technical Institute trained artists of a new type—artists working for industry, organizing everyday life, and serving the cultural and political struggle of the working class" [Novitskii, 1929, 5].

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and the Bauhaus introduced the idea and experience of propaedeutics as a system of abstract exercises in shaping into architectural and design education. These propaedeutic disciplines were based on the experience of avant-garde artists, and these were their own versions of the courses. The abstractness of the compositions studied during propaedeutic classes helped to understand the universal laws of form, elements of art; it was some kind

of ABC of shaping. As it was noted, "the findings and achievements of radical formal-aesthetic experiments of left-wing fine art were applied at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops mainly by propaedeutic disciplines, on which they had a decisive influence" [Khan-Magomedov, VKhUTEMAS, 1995, book 1, 13].

The theorization of design took place within the framework of original courses and was sometimes inseparable from educational practice, directly expressed in it [Lavrent'ev, 2010]. As S.O. Khan-Magomedov notes, "the legacy of radical left-wing movements of fine art (its non-objective stage) was most productively used not in the Painting or Sculpture faculties, but in propaedeutic disciplines. These left-wing trends have powerfully influenced the entire creative atmosphere at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops" [Khan-Magomedov, VKhUTEMAS, 1995, book 1, 12]. It is important to note that designing (not decorating) products and creating new forms of products were a breakthrough in industrial art.

Unlike the traditions of the Stroganov School, it was important for the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops to train a future product engineer not only in the field of handicraft work, but also theoretically, as an engineer of forms of future life, to educate "a new type of engineers of household fittings that thoroughly knows the organization and rationalization of production" [Konferentsiya..., 1926, 5].

Great artists of that time, whose participation in the formation of the first Russian school of design largely determined its future features, taught at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops [Ivanova-Veen, 2017; Lapin, 2017; Smekalov, 2016]. For example, one of the heads of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops was Vladimir Favorsky—a bright graphic artist, theater decorator, documentary artist. He thoroughly developed the theory of composition, revived the genre of book engraving, which is also related to the genre of the handwritten futuristic book.

The painter and architect El Lissitzky was a professor at the faculty of metal and wood processing at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops. He created the department of interior outfitting and "became a pioneer of Russian design" [Minervin, Shimko, 2004, 244]. "El Lissitzky focused students on the development of outfitting and furniture for real apartments of both mass and experimental construction. At the same time, there was orientation towards built-in and transformed furniture" [Slozhenikina, 2014, 118].

Nikolai Ladovsky's "psychoanalytic method" helped him to create the propaedeutic discipline "Space", which was taught at the main department. The method from the abstract to the concrete developed students' spatial thinking; they learned to move on from some abstract composition, detailing it, to a real object. Nikolai Ladovsky wrote: "Space, not stone, is the material of architecture" [Ladovskii, 1926, 3].

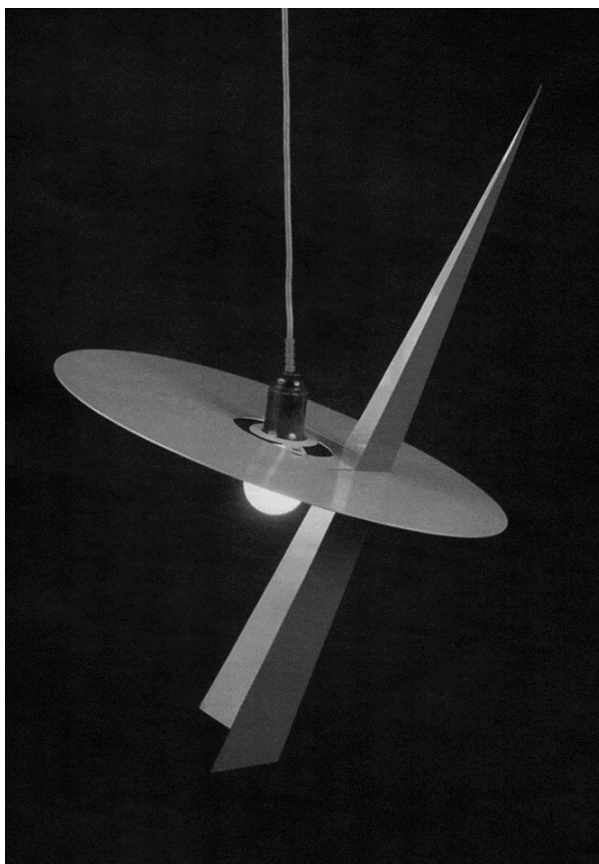
The essence of teaching, thus, was based on two mutually directed vectors—both from the general to the particular, and from the concrete to the abstract. In the first case (Wassily Kandinsky, Boris Korolev, Alexander Rodchenko), the real object had to be abstracted by students to simple geometric shapes. The second method (Aleksey Babichev, Lyubov Popova, Alexander Vesnin), on the contrary, was characterized by step-by-step concretization of the original abstract composition. In both cases, abstract compositional modeling, aimed ultimately at production, was the most important component of the learning process.

The purification of artistic images from excessive decorativeness was a distinctive feature of teaching at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops. Simple graphic forms were used to develop universal design techniques and study harmony and rhythm, proportions and scale, color and its perception. "The rejection of the "subjective" method of design and teaching and the creation of the

"objective" one corresponded to scientific atheism, which provided a basis for building Soviet society and culture" [Kozlovskii, 2014, 234].

In general, students underwent engineering and technical training at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops in three areas: practising at workshops, consulting engineers during the design process and getting acquainted with theoretical disciplines. Many workshops of the Stroganov School were held at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, preserving the continuity of the Moscow school of artistic production. "The breadth of teachers' interests, their penetration into related areas of technical and artistic culture (Alexander Rodchenko worked in the theater, cinema, and printing at the same time; El Lissitzky collaborated with architects and designed Soviet exhibitions abroad) were one of the important conditions for the functioning of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops as a school open to technical and artistic innovations" [Lavrent'ev, 2010, 17].

The topics of students' course projects were diverse: kiosks, transforming furniture, small household items (lamps, ashtrays, plates and dishes, etc.) [Slozhenikina, 2014, 119]. Here is the wording of the thesis of A.A. Galaktionov, one of the graduates of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops: "Prefabricated equipment for a traveling exhibition". The work shows how standard exhibition equipment, easily disassembled, stored and transported, is assembled and mounted from standardized factory-made elements. Stands, tables, showcases, shelves, billboards, tents, kiosks are assembled from a set of the same mass-produced elements into other equipment for displaying goods [Galaktionov, 2010, 33]. This is a noticeably engineering and design work, aimed at creating standard products (Figure 1).



**Figure 1 - A paper lampshade with a disc changing the slope.
Z. Bykov. 1927 [Khan-Magomedov, Pionery..., 1995, 373]**

The propaedeutic course at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops retained the influence of Malevich's ideas, in particular, the suprematist style-forming basis. The uniqueness of his method consisted in consistent study of cubism, futurism and suprematism as the foundations of contemporary art, including the art of construction. Already in the 1910s, Malevich's theory of art displayed tendencies towards non-objectiveness and the purification of a work of art from any decorativeness: "Let there be a new symmetry in art... Let there be a new system of things. Let there be a suprematist federation of colorlessness... The points that have established the reality of things are shifting... The world of things disappears, and the color, the sound, the letter, and the volume will establish their form, will reveal a texture on which clean, easy running will lie in infinity as a phenomenon of new realities" [Ibidem, 46].

The achievements of avant-garde art opened the way to design that was far from the ideas of decoration: "Non-objective abstract art, overcoming the old style canons, absolutized new categories that art began to deal with. New speeds, changed time rhythms, which gave rise to futurism, opened the way to depicting the perception of speed and dynamics in painting (initially contemplative) and in graphics. Abstractionism and constructivism in the transfer of "production" impressions supplemented the paints with material compositions made of truly industrial materials, introduced new textures. Suprematism essentially created a project to transform the stylistics of the subject-spatial world from planar ornamental elements to the modeling of suprematist volumes and three-dimensional decor based on elementary geometry" [Zaeva-Burdonskaya, 2010, 37]. This opened the way not only to educational programs, but also to the practice of simple, constructivist industrial art, architecture and design [Kozhevnikov, 2013].

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops were reproached for the lack of practice, the idea of "pure art", especially at art faculties. The memo of the Institute of Artistic Culture contains the following: "The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops do not perform any practical tasks. They do not take part in the artistic life of the country. There is no connection with factories, with economic bodies, with political enlightenment centers, with publishing houses, or with any other social consumers of artistic labor. Everything is oriented towards the petty demand for "pictures", for rings, for embroidery. All the achievements of the proletarian revolution in the field of artistic ideology, artistic work and pedagogy have been lost. Decisive, urgent measures are needed" [Slozhenikina, 2014, 126]. It was true that most of the design projects of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops remained projects; however, the problem occurred not because of the orientation of graduates towards the demand for household items, but due to the lack of interaction between industrial artists and industry.

Conclusion

The new world demanded some new art, and the new art, as it seemed then, would be fundamentally new and would leave the field of art as such, stepping into reality. This new art was understood, in particular, as industrial art, i. e., a harbinger of design. The first thesis of the new reality in relation to the theory of design was its principled orientation towards a new look of production, a new look of technology and society. In addition, the theory of design was connected with the theory (and practice) of constructivism and suprematism during this period. The greatest artists of that time, who experimentally approached the theorization of industrial art and its practical application, taught at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops that were organized on the basis of the workshops of the Stroganov School. The theorization of design took place within the framework of their courses and

was sometimes inseparable from educational practice, directly expressed in it.

The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops occupied a special place in the system of the design search among various institutions, such as the State Higher Theater Workshops, the Society of Young Artists, the Institute of Artistic Culture, the Champions of the New Art, and the Commission on the Synthesis of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. It was the place where the original creative concepts of El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, and Vladimir Tatlin were formulated and found their way to students, a school for training professionally qualified designers was created (at production faculties). Avant-garde artists, sculptors and architects developed the concept of aesthetic shaping here and created one of the early systems of design education.

The formation of the foundations of design, both in theory and in practice, in the culture of the 1920s, especially in the artistic and educational practice of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, is connected with the material, vital sector of the concept of life-building, which helped to bring art closer to the pragmatics of life. This development was influenced by the projective "philosophy" of suprematism (Kazimir Malevich), constructivist production theory (Boris Arvatov, Nikolai Chuzhak, Aleksei Gan), formal experiments (Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin). All this led to the emergence of new design principles of shaping ("non-objectiveness" and constructiveness), subsequently transferred from the sphere of art to the sphere of design, industrial production.

The aesthetic and technological approach was developed by the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and then borrowed by the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics to be used in its educational and design practice. Russian technical aesthetics as a theoretical basis for design appeared in the works of teachers of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and in educational practice. The tasks of "engineering" the country required deploying art education to the needs of production.

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Деятельность ВХУТЕМАСа/ВХУТЕИНа как этап развития московской школы промышленного дизайна

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена опыту развития отечественного дизайна, или художественного конструирования, в деятельности ВХУТЕМАСа/ВХУТЕИНа. В этот период, который рассматривается как один из этапов развития московской школы промышленного дизайна, происходило активное взаимодействие художественного подхода, унаследованного ВХУТЕМАСом от Строгановского училища, и новаторского эстетико-технологического подхода, который знаменовал развитие дизайна как искусства промышленной эпохи. Поиски раннесоветских дизайнеров носили ярко выраженный художественно-экспериментальный характер. Теория дизайна в этот период была связана с теорией (и практикой) конструктивизма и супрематизма. Обновление социального строя виделось настолько бесповоротным, что и само понятие искусства должно было отмереть как явление чисто эстетическое. Проектирование (а не декорирование) изделий и новых форм этих изделий было тем самым новым словом в промышленном искусстве, которое и стало первой репликой русского дизайна. Дизайнерские проекты ВХУТЕМАСа в основном так и остались проектами. Источником этой проблемы был недостаток взаимодействия промышленных художников и промышленности.

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Ключевые слова

История дизайна, советский дизайн, ВХУТЕИН, ВХУТЕМАС, московская школа промышленного дизайна, строгановская школа, конструктивизм.

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