

Institut Khudozhestvennoy Kultury (INKhUK) (Институт Художественной Культуры; Institute of Artistic Culture, 1920–24) was an artistic organisation, a society of painters, graphic artists, sculptors, architects, and art scholars. The institute was set up in Moscow in March 1920 as a section of IZO Narkompros (the Department of Visual Arts of the People's Commissariat for Education) to determine the course of artistic experiment in post-Revolutionary Russia. INKhUK had its own regulations and program.

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Organisation

INKhUK repeatedly changed its general orientation, organisational structure, membership, and leadership. It maintained close ties with a number of other creative, educational, and research organizations, such as the VkhUTEMAS and LEF. INKhUK was a discussion club and theoretical center.

Its first director was Kandinsky. Further sections were formed in Petrograd under Tatlin and in Vitebsk under Malevich. The program of INKhUK was initially influenced by the leftist trends in art (for example, abstract art). In accordance with Kandinsky's program of 1920, artists affiliated with INKhUK studied the formal devices in various types of art (for example, music, painting, and sculpture) and the uniqueness of their influence upon the viewer.

Kandinsky's ideals soon proved uncongenial to the more widespread desire to create an art suitable for a Communist utopia. After Kandinsky was voted out of office in the late 1920, two different programmes emerged. 'Laboratory art' involved a rationalizing, analytical approach often using traditional artistic materials (such as paint and canvas); 'production art' placed the emphasis more on designers and craftsmen working for machine production, striving to apply the results of their artistic experiments to daily practical activities. The latter group proved the more influential of the two, contributing to the development of Constructivism. [1]

In 1921, the LEF program was developed in INKhUK, and attention was focused upon finding a theoretical solution to the problems of constructivism and production art. Under the auspices of INKhUK, experimental work in artistic design was conducted, and educational programs were organized at VkhUTEMAS.

Among the artists active in INKhUK were B. I. Arvatov, A. V. Babichev, Brik, Lissitzky, Popova, Rodchenko, and Stepanova.

Signatures of the Working Group of Constructivists of the INKhUK (meeting of 20 April 1921): Medunetsky, G. Stenberg, loganson, Gan, Rodchenko, V. Stenberg, Stepanova.

Constructivism

Between 1 January and 22 April 1921 INKhUK hosted a series of meetings of the Working Group of Objective Analysis to discuss and define the distinction between construction and composition. (see literature)

Parallel and in reaction to these the First Working Group of Constructivists [Рабочая группа конструктивистов ИНХУКа] had formed with its first official meeting on 18 March 1921[1]. The group included five creators of "spatial constructions"--Rodchenko, loganson, Medunetsky, Stenberg brothers--joined by Stepanova and, from outside the Inkhuk, the cultural agitator Gan.

The five constructors participated in the now renowned Second Spring Exhibition of OBMOKhU in May-June 1921.
Architecture

During their affiliation with INKhUK the leaders of the two most important schools of Soviet architecture in the 1920s, Nikolai Ladovsky and Alexander Vesnin, advanced their views on art. In addition, the first working groups were organized in INKhUK, which later became the Association of New Architects (ASNOVA) and the Organization of Contemporary Architects (OSA).

In 1923, an institute similar in character was organized in Leningrad, the State Institute of Artistic Culture (Ginkhuk).
Dispersal

In 1923 the work in the Institute began to stagnate. During 1923 and 1924 the institute experienced a lack of public support and gradually disintegrated.

After its closure, the archive of INKhUK passed to a sculptor who played a vital role in its daily operations--Alekssei Babichev--from whose widow, Natal'ia Babicheva, it was eventually acquired by the Greco-Russian collector George Costakis (Georgii Kostaki) before his emigration to Greece in 1978, where it is now preserved in the State Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki.[2] Documents and publications of the First Working Group of Constructivists. The names of Alexei Babichev and Anton Lavinski appear many times in these documents.

Below is a selective list of documents produced by the working group. Three of them were made during its first three formal meetings at Inkhuk, on 18 Mar, 28 Mar and 1 Apr 1921. These were printed in Khan-Magomedov's books (Russian versions in 2003, English translations in 1986). The fourth document is a slightly modified version of the program produced on third meeting, published in the journal Ermitazh in Aug 1922. The last one is a version printed in Hungarian in Viennese journal Egység in 1922 which differs slightly from the one in Ermitazh.

"Protokol No 1. Organizatsionnogo sobraniya rabochey gruppy konstruktivistov INKHUKa 18 marta 1921 g. /Moskva, Volkhonka, 14, kv. 8, 10 chas 20 min/" [Протокол No 1. Организационного собрания рабочей группы конструктивистов ИНХУКа 18 марта 1921 г. / Москва, Волхонка, 14, кв. 8, 10 час 20 мин/]. Protocol from the first formal meeting of the working group; present and signed by all four then-members of the group: loganson, Rodchenko, Stepanova, G. Stenberg. Printed in S.O. Khan-Magomedov (С.О. Хан-Магомедов), *Konstruktivizm: kontseptsiya formoobrazovaniya* [Конструктивизм: концепция формообразования], Moscow: Stroyizdat, 2003, pp 117-118. (Russian)

"Report No. 1. The Assembly for the Organisation of the Working Group of Constructivists of Inkhuk" [18 Mar 1921], trans. Huw Evans, in S.O. Khan-Magomedov, Rodchenko: *The Complete Work*, London, 1986, pp 289-290. (English)

"Protokol No 2. zasedaniya plenuma Rabochey gruppy konstruktivistov INKHUKa 28 marta 1921 g. /Volkhonka, 14, 8 - 8 chas vechera/" [Протокол No 2. заседания пленума Рабочей группы конструктивистов ИНХУКа 28 марта 1921 г. /Волхонка, 14, 8 - 8 час вечера/]. Protocol from the second formal meeting of the group; present were six of seven members: Gan, loganson, Rodchenko, G. Stenberg, V. Stenberg, Stepanova (Medunetsky was absent). Printed in S.O. Khan-Magomedov (С.О. Хан-Магомедов), *Konstruktivizm: kontseptsiya formoobrazovaniya* [Конструктивизм: концепция формообразования], Moscow: Stroyizdat, 2003, p 118. (Russian)

"Report No. 2. Meeting of the Plenum of the Working Group of Constructivists of Inkhuk" [28 Mar 1921], trans. Huw Evans, in S.O. Khan-Magomedov, Rodchenko: *The Complete Work*, London, 1986, p 290. (English)

"Programma rabochey gruppy konstruktivistov INKhUKa" [Программа рабочей группы конструктивистов ИНХУКа] [1 Apr 1921]. Draft program approved on the third meeting of the group; with few alterations published in Aug 1922 and further elaborated in Gan 1922. Printed in

S.O. Khan-Magomedov (С.О. Хан-Магомедов), *Konstruktivizm: kontsepsiya formoobrazovaniya* [Конструктивизм: концепция формообразования], Moscow: Stroyizdat, 2003, pp 118-119. (Russian)

"Programme of the Working Group of Constructivist of Inkhuk", in S.O. Khan-Magomedov, Rodchenko: The Complete Work, London, 1986, p 290. (English)

"Front khudozhestvennogo truda. Materialy k Vserossiiskoi konferentsii levyykh v iskusstve. Konstruktivisty. Pervaya programma rabochey gruppy konstruktivistov" [Фронт художественного труда. Материалы к Всероссийской конференции левых в искусстве. Конструктивисты. Первая программа рабочей группы конструктивистов], *Ermitazh* [Эрмитаж] 13, Moscow, 8-13 Aug 1922, pp 3-4. The only printed Russian version of their program that appeared in the 1920s. The introduction states "On 13 December 1920, the First Working Group of Constructivists was formed" (p. 3) and cites Rodchenko, Stepanova, and Gan as the founders. (Russian)

"Program of the Constructivist Working Group of INKhUK", in *Art Into Life: Russian Constructivism, 1914-1932*, eds. Richard Andrews and Milena Kalinovska, New York: Rizzoli, 1990, pp 67f. (English)

Programme of the First Working Group of Constructivists", trans. Christina Lodder, in *Art in Theory*, 1992, pp 317-318. (English)

"A konstruktivisták csoportjának programja", *Egység* 2:5, Vienna, 1922. (Hungarian)

"The Programme of the Working Group of Constructivists", trans. Naum Gabo, in Gabo, London: Lund Humphries, 1957, p 153. (English)

Notes

Khan-Magomedov 1986: 289. Khan-Magomedov 1996 dates their first organisational meeting to 23 February.

Gough 2005: 25.

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See also

IZO
GINKhUK
OBMOKhU
Russia#Avant-garde