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| Chernikhov, Iakov (1889-1951) |
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| Iakov Georgievich Chernikhov was born in Pavlograd, Yekaterinenskav Gubernia of the Russian Empire (today Dnepropetrovskaya Oblast’, Ukraine) to an impoverished bourgeois Jewish family. Having demonstrated an artistic talent during childhood, as a teenager Chernikhov worked as an apprentice in a photography workshop. After running away from home (where his desire to become an artist found little support), Chernikhov studied at the Odessa Art School (Odesskoe Khudozhestvennoe Uchilishche) from 1906 to 1914. After graduating, he entered the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, where he received a diploma in architecture in 1925. Chernikhov’s training as an artist and architect determined his idiosyncratic approach to architectural form, and his interest in specific aspects of its representation. |
| Iakov Georgievich Chernikhov was born in Pavlograd, Yekaterinenskav Gubernia of the Russian Empire (today Dnepropetrovskaya Oblast’, Ukraine) to an impoverished bourgeois Jewish family. Having demonstrated an artistic talent during childhood, as a teenager Chernikhov worked as an apprentice in a photography workshop. After running away from home (where his desire to become an artist found little support), Chernikhov studied at the Odessa Art School (Odesskoe Khudozhestvennoe Uchilishche) from 1906 to 1914. After graduating, he entered the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, where he received a diploma in architecture in 1925. Chernikhov’s training as an artist and architect determined his idiosyncratic approach to architectural form, and his interest in specific aspects of its representation.  Chernikhov took an interest in drafting techniques, and the geometric construction of ornament while enrolled at the Odessa Art School. In 1915, under the influence of modernist art movements, Chernikhov created a new ornament style devoid of symmetry and repetitive rhythm. Over the next several years, Chernikhov synthesised these ideas into a novel art form called exprimatics (from the French *exprimer* [to express]), which represented abstract ideas in geometric forms. From 1918 to 1924, he supplemented exprimatics with aristography (from the Greek *aristo* [the most beautiful]), which suggested a way of intensifying spatial compositions through colour. If Chernikhov’s early works were predominantly abstract, he applied the fundamental premises of exprimatics and aristography to architectural drawing in the early 1930s. Published as a series of colourfully illustrated books, these drawings merged painterly (expressionism, cubism, suprematism) and architectural (axonometry, architectural plan conventions) techniques of representation to create fanciful images of utopian cities, factories, machines, and combinations of abstract geometric forms. Chernikhov’s later graphic cycles produced in the late 1930s and 1940s responded to the historicist turn in Soviet architecture, rejecting modernist graphic minimalism in favour of Piranesi-inspired, quasi-Surrealist landscapes.  While Chernikhov is mostly remembered as an author of utopian drawings, he led a prolific architectural practice. Between 1926 and 1941 he was involved in the design and construction of dozens of industrial (chemical and metallurgical factories) and residential buildings. His best-known work is the water tower from a rope-making workshop of the Krasnyi Gvozdil’shchik (‘The Red Nailer’) factory (1930-31) in Leningrad. Well-paid, Chernikhov’s architectural commissions allowed him to publish his drawings in colour (a rare privilege for the time, considering the scarcity of Soviet printing resources), and to finance his own Scientific-Research Laboratory of Architectural Forms and Methods of Graphics in Leningrad (1927-34). Chernikhov remained active as a pedagogue throughout his career, teaching at the Leningrad Institute of Transportation Engineers (1928-45), and in several industrial and transportation higher educational institutions in Moscow.  Image: arist.jpg  Figure 1 Aristography, 1914-27.  <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/aristo/pages/aristo-fond-73.htm>  Image: fundamentals.jpg  Figure 2 The Fundamentals of Contemporary Architecture, 1925-30.  <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/oca/pages/OCA-116fond.htm>  Image: fantasies.jpg  Figure 3 Architectural fantasies, 1925-33.  <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/101/pages/32.htm> Publications: *Iskusstvo nachertanii︠a︡* [The art of drafting]. Leningrad: Izd-vo Akademii khudozhestv, 1927.  *Ornament: kompozit︠s︡ionno-klassicheskie postroenii︠a︡* [Ornament: compositional-classical designs]. Leningrad: Izd. avtora, 1930.  *Osnovy sovremennoi arkhitektury: ėksperimentalʹno-issledovatelʹskie raboty* [Fundamentals of modern Architecture: experimental-research works]. Leningrad : Izd. Leningradskogo ob-va arkhitektorov, 1930.  *Konstruktsii arkhitekturnykh i mashinnykh form* [Construction of Architectural and Machine Forms]*,* [Leningrad] : Izd. Leningradskogo ob-va arkhitektorov, 1931.  *Arkhitekturnye fantazii. 101 Kompozitsia* [Architectural Fantasies. 101 Compositions],Leningrad : Izd. Leningradskogo obl. otd-ni︠i︡a Vses. obʺedinenii︠a︡ "Mezhdunarodna︠i︡a kniga", 1933. Selected Graphic Cycles: *Ornament* (1915-27)  *Exprimatics* (1915-1920s)  *Aristography* (1914-27)  *Architecture of Industry* (1932-36)  *Architectural Fairy Tales* (1927-34)  *Architectural Ensembles* (1937-43)  *The Palaces of Communism* (1934-41)  *The Pantheons of the Great Patriotic War* (1942-45) Selected Works: Water tower, Krasnyi Gvozdil’shchik [‘The Red Nailer’] factory (1930-31, Leningrad).  Rope-making and steel-wire workshops, Krasnyi Gvozdil’shchik factory, (1930-31, Leningrad).  Neva chemical factory (1930-34, Leningrad).  Perm’ bichromate factory (1934, Perm’). |
| Further reading:  (Fantasy and Construction — Iakov Chernikhov)  (Olmo and Magistris)  (Chernikhov) |