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| Stepanova, Varvara Fedorovna (1894-1958) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Varvara Stepanova was a Russian artist. Although she made her mark as an innovative painter in Moscow exhibitions (1920), Stepanova became particularly well known as a designer. Between 1921 and the late 1940s, she designed sets and costumes for theatre and film (1922-1926), textiles and practical clothing for both women and men (thus creating a ‘new look’ for the new Soviet citizen [1924]), and taught textile design at the art school VKhUTEMAS in Moscow beginning in 1923. Under commissions from the State, Stepanova’s developed various designs to establish an aesthetic for the Soviet regime, including designs of books, magazines, journals, and the celebration albums of the 1930s and 1940s. This new look was largely determined by geometrical models, including circular patterns using a pair of compasses, linear designs using a ruler, contrasts of light and dark, repeating patterns inspired by film, and, more generally, the aesthetic potential of simple geometric lines and shapes. Stepanova assimilated the human figure, photomontage, and pure design into a visual whole made possible by her modernist method of creating with geometrical models. This was the Constructivist process, and its principles were described by Stepanova in her articles ‘On Non-Objectivity Creativity in Painting’ (1919), ‘On the Possibility of Cognizing Art’ (1920), ‘Construction’ (1920), ‘On Constructivism’ (1921), ‘On Facture’ (1922), ‘Photomontage’ (1928), ‘Draft Syllabus for a Course in Artistic Composition in the Textile’ (c. 1925), ‘From Clothing to Pattern and Fabric’ (1929), and ‘How We Worked on The First Cavalry’ (1936). |
| Varvara Stepanova (b. 5 December 1894 in Kaunas, Lithuania; d. 20 May 1958 in Moscow, USSR) was a Russian artist. Although she made her mark as an innovative painter in Moscow exhibitions (1920), Stepanova became particularly well known as a designer. Between 1921 and the late 1940s, she designed sets and costumes for theatre and film (1922-1926), textiles and practical clothing for both women and men (thus creating a ‘new look’ for the new Soviet citizen [1924]), and taught textile design at the art school VKhUTEMAS in Moscow beginning in 1923. Under commissions from the State, Stepanova’s developed various designs to establish an aesthetic for the Soviet regime, including designs of books, magazines, journals, and the celebration albums of the 1930s and 1940s. This new look was largely determined by geometrical models, including circular patterns using a pair of compasses, linear designs using a ruler, contrasts of light and dark, repeating patterns inspired by film, and, more generally, the aesthetic potential of simple geometric lines and shapes. Stepanova assimilated the human figure, photomontage, and pure design into a visual whole made possible by her modernist method of creating with geometrical models. This was the Constructivist process, and its principles were described by Stepanova in her articles ‘On Non-Objectivity Creativity in Painting’ (1919), ‘On the Possibility of Cognizing Art’ (1920), ‘Construction’ (1920), ‘On Constructivism’ (1921), ‘On Facture’ (1922), ‘Photomontage’ (1928), ‘Draft Syllabus for a Course in Artistic Composition in the Textile’ (c. 1925), ‘From Clothing to Pattern and Fabric’ (1929), and ‘How We Worked on The First Cavalry’ (1936).  *File: Stepanova.jpg*  Figure Stepanova drawing textile designs, 1924.  Source: <http://monoskop.org/Varvara_Stepanova> |
| Further reading:  (Alexander and Bowlt)  (Noever)  (Bowlt and Drutt) |