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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) in an impoverished petty bourgeois Jewish family. Having demonstrated an artistic talent already in his childhood, as a teenager Chernikhov worked as an apprentice in a photography workshop and (after running away from home, where his desire to become an artist found little support) studied in Odessa Art School (Odesskoe Khudozhestvennoe Uchilishche) in 1906-14. After graduating from the School, Chernikhov entered the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, from which he received a diploma in architecture in 1925. Chernikhov’s training as both an artist and an architect determined his idiosyncratic approach to architectural form and his particular interest in the aspects of its representation. |
| File: Iakov Chernikhov  Source: <http://www.icif.ru/about.htm>  Iakov Georgievich Chernikhov was born in Pavlograd, Yekaterinenskav Gubernia of the Russian Empire (today Dnepropetrovskaya Oblast’, Ukraine) in an impoverished petty bourgeois Jewish family. Having demonstrated an artistic talent already in his childhood, as a teenager Chernikhov worked as an apprentice in a photography workshop and (after running away from home, where his desire to become an artist found little support) studied in Odessa Art School (Odesskoe Khudozhestvennoe Uchilishche) in 1906-14. After graduating from the School, Chernikhov entered the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, from which he received a diploma in architecture in 1925. Chernikhov’s training as both an artist and an architect determined his idiosyncratic approach to architectural form and his particular interest in the aspects of its representation.  File: Aristography, 1914-27.  Source: <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/aristo/pages/aristo-fond-73.htm>  Since his years in Odessa Art School, Chernikhov had been interested in drafting techniques and, in particular, in the geometric construction of ornament. Already in 1915, under the influence of modernist art movements, Chernikhov decided to create a “new ornament,” devoid of symmetry and repetitive rhythm. During the next several years, Chernikhov developed these ideas into a novel art form, “exprimatics” (from the French *exprimer,* to express), which expressed abstract ideas in geometric forms. In 1918-24, 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 work was predominantly abstract, in the early 1930s he applied the fundamental premises of exprimatics and aristography to architectural drawing. Published as a series of colourfully illustrated books, these drawings merged painterly (EXPRESSIONISM, CUBISM, SUPREMATISM) and architectural (axonometry, architectural plan conventions) techniques of representation in order to create fanciful images of utopian cities, factories, machines, and abstract geometric forms and their combinations. 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 dreamy landscapes.  File: The Fundamentals of Contemporary Architecture, 1925-30.  Source: <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/oca/pages/OCA-116fond.htm>  Although today Chernikhov is mostly remembered as an author of utopian drawings, he led a prolific architectural practice. Between 1926 and 1941 he was involved in design and construction of several dozens of buildings, predominantly industrial (chemical and metallurgical factories) and residential ones. His best-known work is the water tower of a rope-making workshop of the Krasnyi Gvozdil’shchik (“The Red Nailer”) factory (1930-31) in Leningrad. Well-paid, Chernikhov’s architectural commissions allowed the architect to publish his drawings in colour (an exceptional fact considering the scarcity of Soviet printing resources) and even to finance his own Scientific-Research Laboratory of Architectural Forms and Methods of Graphics in Leningrad (1927-34). Moreover, throughout his career, Chernikhov remained active as a pedagogue, teaching at the Leningrad Institute of Transportation Engineers (1928-45) and several industrial and transportation higher educational institutions in Moscow.  File: Architectural fantasies, 1925-33.  Source: <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/101/pages/32.htm>  File: The Palaces of Communism, 1934-41  Source: <http://www.icif.ru/cyc/dvor/pages/dv-017.htm> 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:  (Cooke)  (Olmo)  (Chernikhov) |