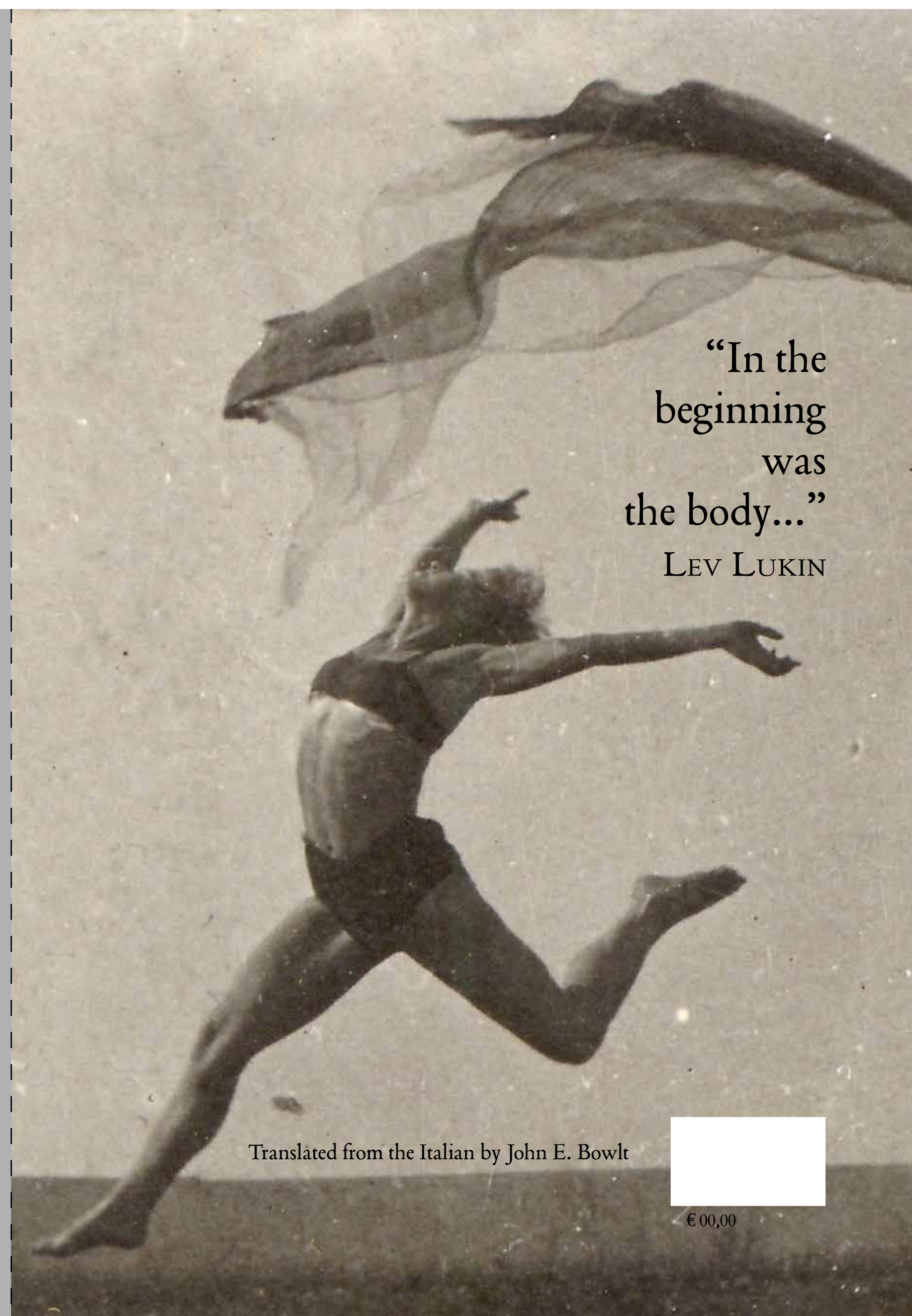




NICOLETTA MISLER, Professor of Russian and East European Art at the Università di Napoli “L’Orientale”, Italy (now retired), is a specialist in the visual culture of Russian Modernism. Her academic interests range from the artists of the avant-garde such as Kazimir Malevich, Pavel Filonov and Vasilii Kandinsky to the philosophers of the time, especially Pavel Florensky (her

book on his spatial concepts appeared as *Beyond Vision. Essays on the Perception of Art* from Reaktion Books, London, in 2002), and the architects of the avant-garde such as Yakov Chernikhov and Ivan Leonidov. Among her studies of modern Russian art are monographs on Filonov, Francisco Infante, Solomon Nikritin, Aleksandr Ponomarev. In addition, Dr. Misler has curated or co-curated numerous museum exhibitions, together with their catalogs, including *Kazimir Malevich* (Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence, 1993), *Kandinsky tra Oriente e Occidente* (Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 1993), *Marc Chagall. Les années russes, 1907-1922* (Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, 1995), *El Cosmos de la vanguardia rusa* at the Fundacion Marcelino Botin, Santander, and the State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki (2010); and *L’avanguardia russa, la Siberia e l’Oriente* for the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (2013). At the moment Dr. Misler’s principal avenue of enquiry is the evolution of New Dance in early Soviet Russia. In this regard, she has organized major exhibitions in Rome, Moscow and Rotterdam. The recipient of international fellowships, Dr. Misler has conducted much of her research in Holland, Japan, Russia and the USA and she has been a visiting scholar at universities in Australia, Israel and the USA.



“In the
beginning
was
the body...”

LEV LUKIN

Translated from the Italian by John E. Bowl



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THE RUSSIAN
ART OF MOVEMENT
NICOLETTA MISLER

Allemandi

THE RUSSIAN 1920|1930 ART OF MOVEMENT

BY NICOLETTA MISLER



Allemandi

Supporting a declaration fundamental to Russian body culture of the 1920s - “In the Beginning Was the Body” - this book highlights the development of modern dance, the language of movement and its representation during Russia’s revolutionary decade of 1920-1930.

Using this hieratic statement as its theoretical and practical premise, *The Russian Art of Movement* revisits what was called the “Art of Movement” investigated by an innovative group of scholars, dancers and choreographers from the Choreological Laboratory at the Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences in Moscow. Established by Vasilii Kandinsky and other researchers such as Aleksandr Larionov and Aleksei Sidorov in 1921, the Laboratory was a unique institution in the history of New Dance in Europe and one of many utopian projects within late Imperial Russian and early Soviet culture. But unlike other experiments during those turbulent years, as an active enterprise, the Laboratory lasted a relatively long time (from 1923 until 1929), sponsoring conferences, publications and four major exhibitions under the rubric “The Art of Movement”. The Laboratory studied how movement could be recorded in its various kinetic extensions – gesture, mime, dance, gymnastics, emotional expression – and, to this end, made recourse to various instruments and methodologies, including graphic registration along the lines of musical, pictorial and sculptural transcription as well as mechanical registration (still photography, cinematography, cyclograms). The essential goal was to establish a dialogue between the artistic or “esthetic” reproduction of movement and the photomechanical one. *The Russian Art of Movement* treats of the diverse manifestations of this multi-faceted subject – from plastic dance to rhythmic gymnastics (from Nina Aleksandrova to Liudmila Alekseeva), from time and motion studies (Nikolai Bernshtein’s experiments in biomechanics) to provocative performances ~~en-scène~~ (Kas’ian Goleizovsky, Lev Lukin, Aleksandr Rumnev) and from acrobatics and gymnastics (Valeriia Tsvetaeva) to variety theatre and folk dance (Nikolai Foregger, Vera Shabshai). Copious references are also made ~~to the European and American~~ apogees of the New Dance such as Isadora Duncan and Rudolf von Laban and to their interaction with Russia’s own new and radical Art of Movement. The evolution of the Art of Movement just before and after the October Revolution and its formative relationship with the figurative, performing and musical arts are still unfamiliar territories. Based on extensive research in public and private archives, *The Russian Art of Movement* brings the conceptual ideas and champions of the dynamic into strong relief, describing the theory and practice of its champions and reproducing unique works of art and vintage photographs, most of which are being seen for the first time in the West: in this way, the book restores an entire chapter to the history of Russian and Soviet culture, one long forgotten after the political impositions and expurgations of the Stalin era.

In copertina:

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THE **RUSSIAN** 1920 | 1930 ART OF MOVEMENT

NICOLETTA MISLER

Translated by John E. Bowlt

*In the beginning
was the body...*

LEV LUKIN

Allemandi *with* AVC Charity Foundation



N. Svishchov-Paola, *Couple dancing. Plastic pose*, 1926. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva). Signed and dated: “N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow 1926”. Artist’s photographic print, 7 x 7 cm (10.3 x 5.6 mounted). VTs.

KANDINSKY, WASSILY
(VASILII VASIL’EVICH)
*Moscow, 1866 - Neuilly-sur-Seine,
near Paris, 1944*

Artist. Kandinsky spent his childhood in Odessa. 1886-92 studied law at Moscow University. 1896 settled in Munich, taking up residence in the Schwabing district; enrolled in the Akademie der bildenden Künste, studying under Anton Azbe and Franz von Stuck. Late 1890s onwards close contact with fellow Russians in Munich such as Alexej Jawlensky, Alexander Sacharoff, Alexander Saltsmann and Marianne Werefkin. 1901 organized Phalanx group; close to Gabriele Münter with whom, in 1908, founded the Russenhaus in Murnau, which became an international centre for artists and musicians. 1900s strong interest in the new theories of art such as Wilhelm Worringer’s treatise *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (1908). 1910 first abstract painting, followed by numerous

Improvisations and Compositions. 1912 published German version of theoretical essay *On the Spiritual in Art*, part of which had been presented at the Second Congress of Artists in St. Petersburg in December, 1911. Early 1910s met Aleksei Sidorov in Munich. 1915 repatriated owing to the Great War, returned to Moscow via Scandinavia. 1917 assumed various pedagogical and administrative responsibilities under the Bolshevik regime. 1920 director of Inkhuk; professor at Moscow University. 1921 vice-director of RAKhN; elaborated a theory of monumental or synthetic art in which music and dance were to play a primary role, explaining his ideas in the essay “On a Method for Working with Synthetic Art” and in the lecture “Fundamental Elements of Painting” (RAKhN, 1 September, 1921); established a specific dance section within RAKhN; returned to Germany on the pretext of organizing a Berlin [branch](#) of RAKhN, but in reality to teach at the Bauhaus in Weimar and then Dessau

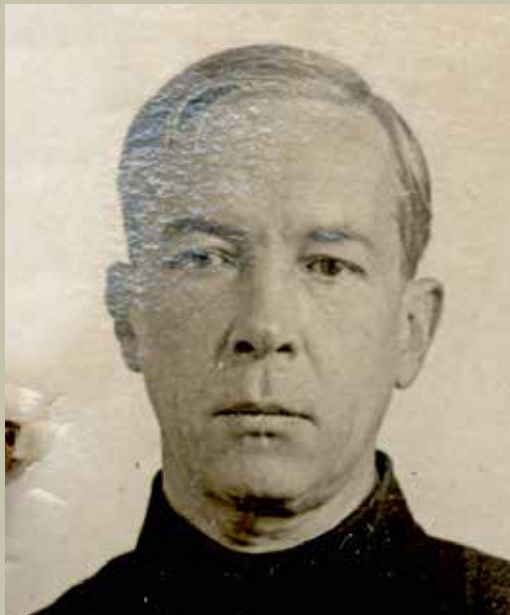
(until 1933). 1929 formal termination of GAKhN membership. 1933 accused of being a Communist by the Nazis, moved to France. 1939 became a French citizen.



Photographer unknown, V. Kandinsky in Berlin, December 1921.

I

A Choreological Laboratory



A. Larionov, Archive of the Lev Tolstoi Museum, Moscow.

LARIONOV, ALEKSANDR
ILLARIONOVICH
Moscow, 1889-1954

Linguistician, art historian, critic and theorist. 1912 travelled in Italy, France and Germany, before graduating in physics and mathematics at Moscow University (where he also audited courses in the history and philology of art). 1910s close to the Symbolists. Studied languages, including Sanskrit. Attended the Archaeological Institute, Moscow, and took part in ethnographical expeditions. 1920-25 professor of alphabetic characters at Vkhutemas. 1921 published his first essay on the *danse plastique* in the journal *Zhizn’ iskusstva*. Besides his wide diapason of interests, also began to study photography, serving as director of the Department of Aerial Photography for aviation with the Red Army. Especially interested in integrating the various disciplines into a common semiotic interpretation, including pictogrammes and hieroglyphs. 1920s while at RAKhN/GAKhN studied the interrelationships of movement, space,

sound and colour, delivering relevant lectures there such as “Artistic Movement and the Word” (3 October, 1925), “Organizing the Artistic Phenomenon of Dance in Space” (7 March, 1925) and “Sound and Movement” (3 October, 1928). Responsible for many activities at RAKhN/GAKhN, including directorship of the Choreological Laboratory (in collaboration with Aleksei Sidorov), also focused on the elements of sports and gymnastics in movement, served as secretary of the Section for Popular Dances at VSFK and participated in the organization of the 1928 Spartakiada. Between 1943 and 1954 was academic consultant for the Lev Tolstoi Museums in Tula and then in Moscow. Early 1950s was still in correspondence with Sidorov.

SIDOROV, ALEKSEI ALEKSEEVICH
Moscow, 1891-1978

Art and dance historian, connoisseur of the graphic arts, collector. 1909 after graduating from high-school joined the Little Circle for the Study of Symbolism led by the sculptor Konstantin Krakht, becoming close to Andrei Bely and other writers associated with the publishing-house Musaget. Met Aleksandr Larionov. Interested in Bely’s promotion of eurhythmics as a new approach to the art of movement and gesture in dance. 1911 granted third prize for poetry by the Society for Free Esthetics in Moscow. Enrolled in the Department of Architecture and Art History at Moscow University. 1913 went to Munich to study art history further where he frequented the Café Stephanie, learning about Expressionism and “integrating Freud and psychoanalysis with Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy”. Followed courses offered by Theodor Lipps, Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin. Contributed to the lively discussions inspired by Vasilii Kandinsky’s *Klänge* and began to cultivate a strong interest in the new

Expressionist dance, writing a long essay on this. 1914 returned to Moscow. 1916 onwards taught art history at Moscow University. 1916-21 worked at the Museum of Fine Arts. 1917 onwards played an active role in the new Soviet museums and research institutions. Took lessons in rhythmic gymnastics offered by Proletcult where met Sergei Volkonsky. 1921 together with Kandinsky helped establish RAKhN, becoming its secretary for academic affairs and director of its department of graphic arts as well as editor of its annual bulletin (1926 onwards). 1924 with Aleksandr Larionov co-directed (albeit not officially) the Choreological Laboratory there. 1927-36 director of the Cabinet of Graphic Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts. 1930-60 worked at the Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History, the Institute of Architecture and Institute of the Printing Arts and various museums. 1944 onwards leading member and distinguished scholar of the Institute of Art History at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.



N. Vysheslavitsev, *Portrait of A. Sidorov*, 1923. Sanguine and pencil on cream paper, 24.1 x 20.30 cm. Signed and dated: “A.A. Sidorov N. Vysheslavitsev, 1923”. GTG (formerly in the collection of A. Sidorov).



BIRTH OF THE NEW DANCE

The history of the New Dance in early Soviet Russia is as much the history of the Choreological Laboratory at the Russian (later State) Academy of Artistic Sciences (RAKhN/GAKhN) in Moscow. Active between 1923 and 1929, the Choreological Laboratory hosted debates, seminars and performances, published numerous essays and organized four pioneering exhibitions entitled “The Art of Movement” (1925, 1926, 1927 and 1928). Unique in the history of Russian and European performance culture, this institution did much to record, evaluate – and inspire – the development of the *danse plastique* or, as it is known more generally, free dance or the New Dance. RAKhN, which in the summer of 1925 changed its name to GAKhN (State Academy of Artistic Sciences), was born under the aegis of Narkompros (People’s Commissariat for Enlightenment) on 13 October, 1921, but within a decade it lost its autonomous status, was merged with GAIS (State Academy of Art History) and transferred to Leningrad. Founded by Vasilii Kandinsky and other prominent artists and intellectuals, RAKhN was a unique, polymorphic institution containing departments and sections devoted to the study of the visual arts, literature, theatre, music, the printing arts, philosophy, psychology and many other branches of learning. Uniting these subjects above the common denominator of “artistic sciences”, RAKhN was distinguished by the amplitude and variety of its theoretical and practical investigations, a capacity which placed it on a par with European institutions such as the Bauhaus. But RAKhN was also the last stronghold of an autonomous Russian culture within a society which was to become ever more monolithic and homogenous, even if the kind of “Russian culture” which RAKhN promoted was actually an organic part of the European, especially the German, tradition as filtered through the prism of the Russian *fin de siècle*.

It is important to understand that the Stalinist repression of GAKhN and the imprisonment and even liquidation of many of its members in the late 1920s onwards was not part of the general campaign against the avant-garde. After all, RAKhN/GAKhN was an academic, even pedantic, institution which, Kandinsky notwithstanding, maintained a highly ambivalent attitude towards the more boisterous poets and painters of Russian Modernism such as Kazimir Malevich, Aleksandr Rodchenko and Vladimir Tatlin. The same attitude was closely identifiable with the Choreological Laboratory, too.

The various “laboratories” within RAKhN such as the Physical-Psychological and Choreological ones were very important inasmuch as each focused on a specific avenue of enquiry. The history of the Choreological Laboratory is as much the history of three extraordinary individuals, i.e. the artist Oton Engel’s²¹ and the critics and historians Aleksandr Larionov and Aleksei Sidorov, who did so much to perpetuate and develop the mission of the Laboratory. Larionov was director, Sidorov was a leading member of the administrative board of RAKhN (and to all intents and purposes co-director

Photographer unknown, Premises of RAKhN at 32, Prechistenka St., Moscow, 1920s. Original print. A. Gabrichevsky family archive, Moscow.



of the Laboratory),²² while Engel's, a superb draftsman, was charged with depicting the Laboratory's experiments in, and experiences of, movement in close collaboration with photographers. An unfailing, if reticent, participant in the many meetings and debates within the Laboratory, Engel's managed to create a particular kind of figurative ekphrasis in his endeavours to capture movement.²³ Above all, he used the drawing as an instrument not so much for the registration of anatomical analysis as for synthesizing the very sense of movement in dance, whether Classical ballet or free performance. Larionov and Sidorov, refined connoisseurs, appreciated all the genres and techniques of graphic representation, whether manual or mechanical, and they supported complementary approaches to the visualization of movement, deriving from both a common ground in Symbolism and an interest in the modern technologies of representation such as photography and cinematography.

It was a deep passion for rhythmic and eurythmic which brought Larionov²⁴ to the New Dance.²⁵ Like many intellectuals of his time and place, Larionov favoured a multidisciplinary approach to his topics of study, moving from philosophy and mathematics to cinema and even aerial photography. He first alighted upon the art of movement in 1910-12 while attending the studio of the sculptor Konstantin Krakht (1868-1919) and befriending young Symbolist writers from the Musaget publishing-house, a favourite topic of discussion being the phenomenon of rhythm in the work of art.²⁶ Sidorov and the art historian Dmitrii Nedovich (1889-1947) (a future *gakhnovets*) also came to these meetings, much taken with the theme of rhythm in art, history and performance.²⁷ Larionov frequented other Symbolist rendezvous in Moscow such as the Society of Free Esthetics and the Philosophical and Religious Society and, like Sidorov, cultivated a serious interest in psychology. Eventually, interest in mathematics, art history and linguistics led Larionov to concentrate on the semiotics of visual language – from ideographic languages²⁸ to the visual forms of the various alphabets (the subject of one of his courses at Vkhutemas between 1921 and 1925), from corporeal communication to the semantics of postage stamps.²⁹ As director of the Choreological Laboratory,³⁰ Larionov focused on the musical expressivity of the “liberated” body à la Isadora Duncan, of whom he was a fervent admirer, and also on the more standardized, so called physical culture which, in the 1920s, became his primary field of expertise.³¹ In this capacity he served as secretary of the Section for the Subject of Folk Dancing (*plaska*) as a Means of Physical Development within the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Higher Council on Physical Culture.³²

Apart from physical education, Larionov was also fascinated by transcription of movement and by the various choices offered by graphic rendering, photography and the cinema. Undoubtedly, he made momentous theoretical and practical discoveries in this area, as is demonstrated by his contribution of cinematic diagrams (present whereabouts unknown) to the second “Art of Movement” exhibition in 1926, precise diagrams

Photographer unknown, Three studies for the “Role of Gesture in a Defined Pose”, one of the assigned research themes at the Choreological Laboratory for 1924-26. Original print. ICh: Box N. 7: *Plastic 2. Various photographs. Small format*, 1923-26. a) 5.8 x 9.8 cm. ICh.



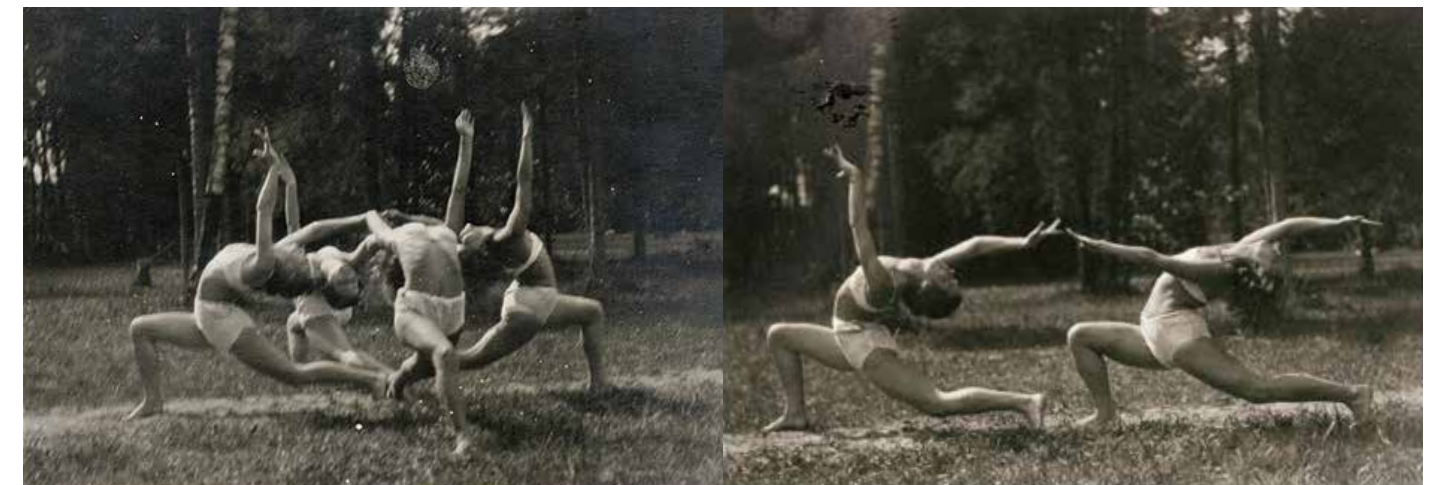
K. Goleizovsky, Choreographic design for a group in the Slow Dance in *Joseph the Beautiful* Inscribed "14 November, 1927". Music by S. Vasilenko, designs by B. Erdman and choreography by K. Goleizovsky. Experimental Affiliation of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, 1927. Pencil on paper, 9.2 x 22.1 cm. ICh.

Photographer unknown, Three studies for the "Role of Gesture in a Defined Pose" [...] b) 5.7 x 9.7 cm. ICh.

which documented every kind of movement and, as a result, helped move the discourse towards the possibility of mathematical interpretation.³³ Although, quite logically, Larionov came close to constructing an alphabet of the body, especially via the movements of physical education, he ~~never rejected his interest in~~ early Modernism, maintaining, as Sidorov did, that in any analysis of movement fleeting elements such as emotion and spirituality should not be disregarded. Like many of his colleagues, Larionov disappeared from view after GAKhN and its Choreological Laboratory were phased out in 1930, although we know that he was working at the Tolstoi Museum in Tula in the early 1940s, presumably in evacuation, and then in Moscow in 1943–1948. Until his death in 1954 he was still in touch with Sidorov.³⁴

Sidorov was also much indebted to the Symbolist ethos,³⁵ and, not surprisingly, therefore, remained close to Kandinsky when Inkhuk (the Institute of Artistic Culture for which Kandinsky compiled the research programme in 1920) transmuted into RAKhN.³⁶ Both men were attracted to psychology and psycho-analysis and to the links between these disciplines and artistic perception, the moreso since in 1921 Sidorov assumed directorship of the Section of Experimental Esthetics at the Institute of Psycho-Neurology in Moscow – the same agency which employed Russia's primary psycho-analyst, Ivan Ermakov (from the very beginning a prominent member of GAKhN).³⁷ In his unpublished "From the Memoirs of a Soviet Historian of Art and Books", Sidorov mentions his interest in dance and psychoanalysis as a young man.³⁸ Like Larionov, Sidorov also studied cinema and photography, albeit as a glorified amateur, and in the 1920s worked for the Committee for Cinema and the Technical School of Cinema, one reason perhaps why he regarded the dance, especially the *danse plastique*, as an art adjacent to cinematography: "The theory of plasticity, of contemporary plastic dance, provides us with very important indications as to how to combine time and space in a single art. Just like cinematography, the dance also moves in space and develops in time".³⁹





While working at the Choreological Laboratory, Larionov and Sidorov shared a wide variety of research assignments and initiatives. True, Sidorov was more oriented towards the New Dance, having cultivated an interest in this since the early 1910s when he had been studying art history in Germany. Larionov, on the other hand, ~~was more interested in~~ the scientific verification of the transcription of movement, insisting that physical education or, rather, physical culture should be examined from both an artistic and a scientific viewpoint (medicine, hygiene, bio-mechanics, etc.). However, the two friends both agreed that the single point of departure for their different paths was the revolution which Duncan had fired in dance, more exactly, her non-mechanistic performance of the body in movement.

Although Engel's, Larionov and Sidorov were all Muscovites and the phenomenon of the Choreological Laboratory is, essentially a Moscow story, it is important to introduce another, Petersburgian component. This is Geptakhor, a dance group guided by Stefanida Rudneva between 1918 and 1934 – which, also inspired by Duncan and the culture of Classical Greece,⁴⁰ elaborated a very special approach to the *danse plastique*. Of necessity, copious reference must be made to Rudneva's rich archive which has come to light only recently⁴¹ as well as to other fundamental archives related to the Choreological Laboratory such as Sidorov's photographic collection and unpublished dance texts, Chernetskaia's photographic archive, Andrei Teleshev's private collection of photographs, the archive of Valeriia Tsvetaeva's school and, finally, the drawings and photographs of Engel's, the most committed of all the artists working within the Laboratory. Examination of these archives, old and new, have helped to realize an almost utopian dream – through word and image to restore the history of the Russian art of movement of the 1920s.

Certainly, these archaeological excavations and attempts to insert them within a broader cultural context are not isolated. Scholars from other fields have also reevaluated the notion of gesture and movement in all their interdisciplinary autonomy and, no doubt, their findings will throw new light upon the history of the art of movement.⁴²

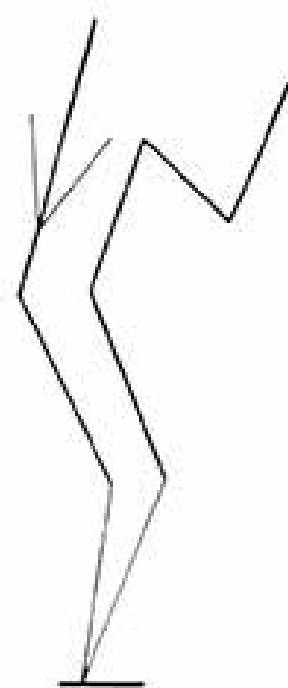
Photographer unknown, Three studies for the "Role of Gesture in a Defined Pose" [...] c) 6 x 10 cm. ICh.

Photographer unknown, *Plastic study outdoors*, early 1920s. a) 6.6 x 9.2 cm; b) 8.5 x 7.5 cm. Original print. OE.

While Inna Chernetskaia and Aleksei Sidorov were studying in Munich in the early 1910s, they followed not only Rudolf Von Laban's dance research, but also the latest ideas on artistic movement being elaborated by dancer and painter Alexander Sacharoff (Aleksandr Zakharov) who gave his first experimental performance – a solo – there on 21 June, 1910.⁴³ In fact, Chernetskaia, who had been taking lessons with Elizabeth Duncan in Berlin and had attended a four-month course with Emile Jaques-Dalcroze in Hellerau, recalled that her real mentor had been Sacharoff.

To some extent, Sacharoff's 1910 solo resulted from lively discussions about analogies between movement, rhythm and colour in music, painting and dance which he and Kandinsky were conducting in the "salon" of the Russian *giselists* (deriving from the Giselastrasse where Marianne Werefkin [Marianna Verevkina] held her *jours fixes*).⁴⁴ That Sidorov also attended the meetings is indicated by the fact that he described Sacharoff and his companion, Clothilde von Derp, as innovators of dance, associating them with the "Dynamism" category in an essay which he wrote on modern dance just a few years later (not published) (p. 45).⁴⁵

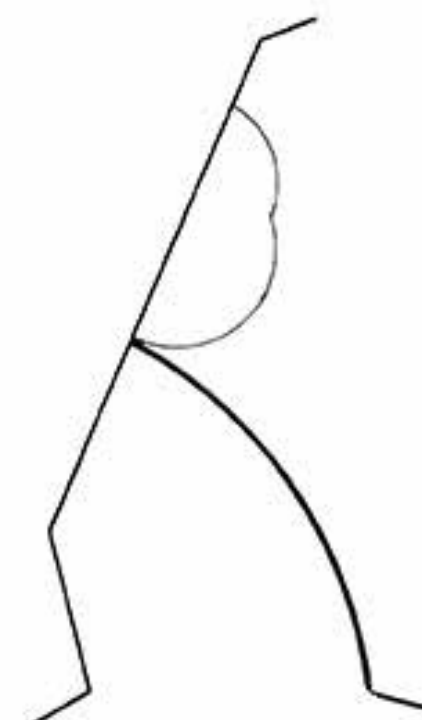
Undoubtedly, Sidorov also knew of Sacharoff's drawings of "Hellenistic" choreographies from the reproductions in Hans Brandenburg's *Der Moderne Tanz*,⁴⁶ drawings which, essentially, constituted a "pre-history" to the new approaches to movement transcription. Arguing that movement must become a major component in the great "synthetic art" which was to represent the expressive culmination of abstract art, Kandinsky



also acknowledged Sacharoff to be the most authentic representative of dance as an art form and as an expression of interior movement.

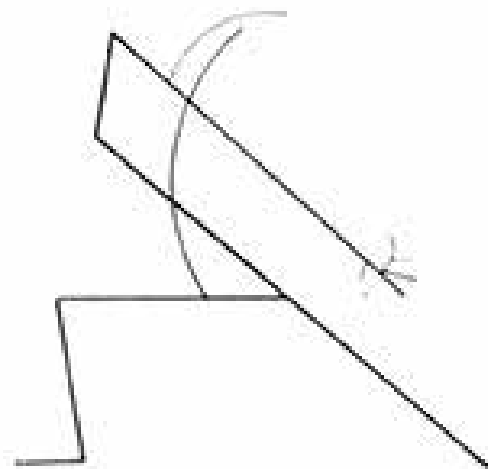
Of course, another component essential to the birth of abstract art was the influence of esoteric doctrines on the artists of the early 20th century. Among these occult teachings were Theosophy and Anthroposophy, in particular, which underlined the links between corporeal movement, poetical rhythm, the word, sound, form and colour, looking forward, therefore, to the avant-gardes. Kandinsky, for example, was well aware of such trends as was Andrei Bely, who produced "abstract" drawings and watercolours, for example, *Soul of Movement* of 1913, during his visits to Rudolf Steiner's Goethenaum. They bring to mind the force-lines of Kandinsky's drawings of Gret Palucca dancing and, in a broader sense, allude to the cosmic energy inherent in any form of movement, whether that be verbal, musical or physical.

During the early 1910s Sidorov and other Russian colleagues attended the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where the basic concept of art history as a science (*Kunstwissenschaft*) was being developed. In Munich Sidorov also witnessed the rapid development of new tendencies in dance, especially the Expressionist style. Indeed, he was the first to introduce not only the language of the New Dance to Russia, but also the new art historical theories.⁴⁷ Later on, concepts such as *Abstraktion* and *Einfühlung* (empathy) with other terms such as "construction", "composition" and "tectonics" became part and parcel of the RAKhN glossary of artistic terms – which were then also applied to analyses of the dance. That these two parallel paths of enquiry into art and performance at RAKhN/GAKhN continued to attract scholars throughout the 1920s led to the com-



V. Kandinsky, *Parallel construction drawing from a single point at the bottom. Gradual development from below, with the angles becoming continuously more acute*. Reproduced from V. Kandinsky: "Tanzkurven zu der Tänzen der Palucca" in *Das Kunstblatt*, Potsdam, 1926, 10 March, p. 117. The photograph of Gret Palucca performing is by Charlotte Rudolph.

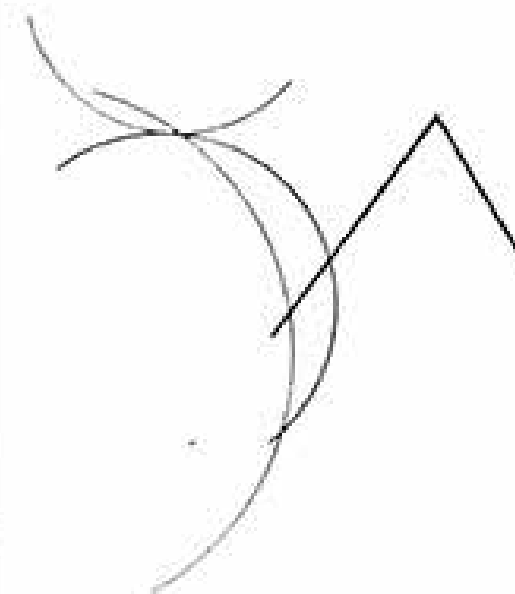
V. Kandinsky, *A long straight line striving upward supported upon a single curve. Beginning at the bottom - foot, ending at the top - hand, both in the same direction*. From V. Kandinsky: "Tanzkurven zu der Tänzen der Palucca" in *Das Kunstblatt*, Potsdam, 1926, 10 March, p. 117. The photograph of Gret Palucca performing is by Charlotte Rudolph.



binatory definition of their “Theory of the Art History of Movement.” Sidorov intended to apply this title – a labour of love – to a major publication, which would have been his third and final volume on contemporary or New Dance, but this did not come to pass. What better subject for verifying Wilhelm Worringer’s theory of empathy than the human body seen within the movements of space, free, but still totally under control? It was Sidorov’s neophyte enthusiasm for the latest art historical theories which fostered his statements on the need to consider dance as a new artistic category: “Beginning with the Baroque and especially in our own time, movement has become a very interesting, if complex, motif for the spatial arts.” Moreover, it is Sidorov’s telling description of the perception of movement in dance which also manifests the influence of the latest theories of art: “We still don’t have movement, but we will and this ‘will’ has been prepared so well by imagery that we will ‘empathize’ with its representation with ease and legerity.”⁴⁸

No doubt, Kandinsky, who had also developed some of his ideas about abstract art on the basis of Worringer’s theories, would have agreed. After all, it was Kandinsky, who, on the eve of his return to Germany from Moscow in December, 1921, came up with the idea of creating a laboratory for the study of dance, something which he had already proposed at the conference, “On the Method of Working with Synthetic Art”, held in Moscow nine months earlier.⁴⁹ In this paper he mentioned that a group of theorists, painters, musicians, dance historians, scientists and art historians (the future nucleus of the Choreological Laboratory) was already researching the problem of how to define a synthetic or monumental art. He added, however, that in order to arrive at objective, concrete results the group would have to “conduct research laboratorially” and apply the “experimental method” so as to verify both the elements of the “more abstract character of movement” and its “more material forms” in the hands of the artist, for example,

V. Kandinsky, *Two large parallel lines supported upon a right angle. Energetic development of a diagonal. Observe the exact positioning acute of the fingers as an example of precision in every detail.* From V. Kandinsky: “Tanzkurven zu der Tänzen der Palucca” in *Das Kunstblatt*, Potsdam, 1926, 10 March, p. 118. The photograph of Gret Palucca performing is by Charlotte Rudolph.



the “movement of someone under stress”. In any case, the previous year Kandinsky had delineated the characteristics of the new synthetic art in his “Project for the Monumental Section of the Institute of Artistic Culture”, indicating that it should include mime, pantomime, dance and, to some extent, even ballet. He also suggested that it might be possible to record movement with the aid of various artistic and mechanical instruments:

It is essential to establish a link between the movement of lines and the movement of the human body both *in toto* and in its individual parts, to translate line into the movement of the body and the movement of the body into line. Such observations should be registered both in word and graphic image, which would then enable us to compile what we might call a dictionary of abstract movements.⁵⁰

In this statement, therefore, Kandinsky was prefiguring a primary topic of investigation which would be pursued under the rubric of the “Art of Movement” at the Choreological Laboratory. In turn, Kandinsky – coinciding with the first “Art of Movement” exhibition in Moscow in 1925 – went on to produce a cycle of abstract drawings capturing the dances of Palucca which he published next to photographs of the same dances⁵¹ and which were very close to the experimental tracings and diagrams which the *gakh-novtsy* contributed to their own exhibitions.

Another coincidence between the experiments at the Choreological Laboratory and Kandinsky’s theories is to be found in the continuation of his ideas concerning synaesthesia, for example, in the experiments which dancers Zinaida Kaminova, Vera Maïia

V. Kandinsky, *Three curves meeting at a single point. In contrast - two straight lines forming an angle. An example of the extreme pliability of the body - curves as the best means of expressing this.* From V. Kandinsky: “Tanzkurven zu der Tänzen der Palucca” in *Das Kunstblatt*, Potsdam, 1926, 10 March, p. 117. The photograph of Gret Palucca performing is by Charlotte Rudolph.



M. Werefkin,
A. Sacharoff as
Salomé, early 1900s.
Mixed media on
paper, 12.5 x 18 cm.
Museo Cantonale,
Ascona.

Photographer
unknown, *Portrait of*
A. Sidorov, 1912.
9.3 x 4.9 cm.
Original print. Private
collection.

A. Sidorov, *Diagram*
for the book
manuscript O
sushchnosti tantsa
[On the essence of
dance]. Unpublished.
Signed and dated
"A. Sidorov,
15 February, 1915,
Moscow". Private
collection.

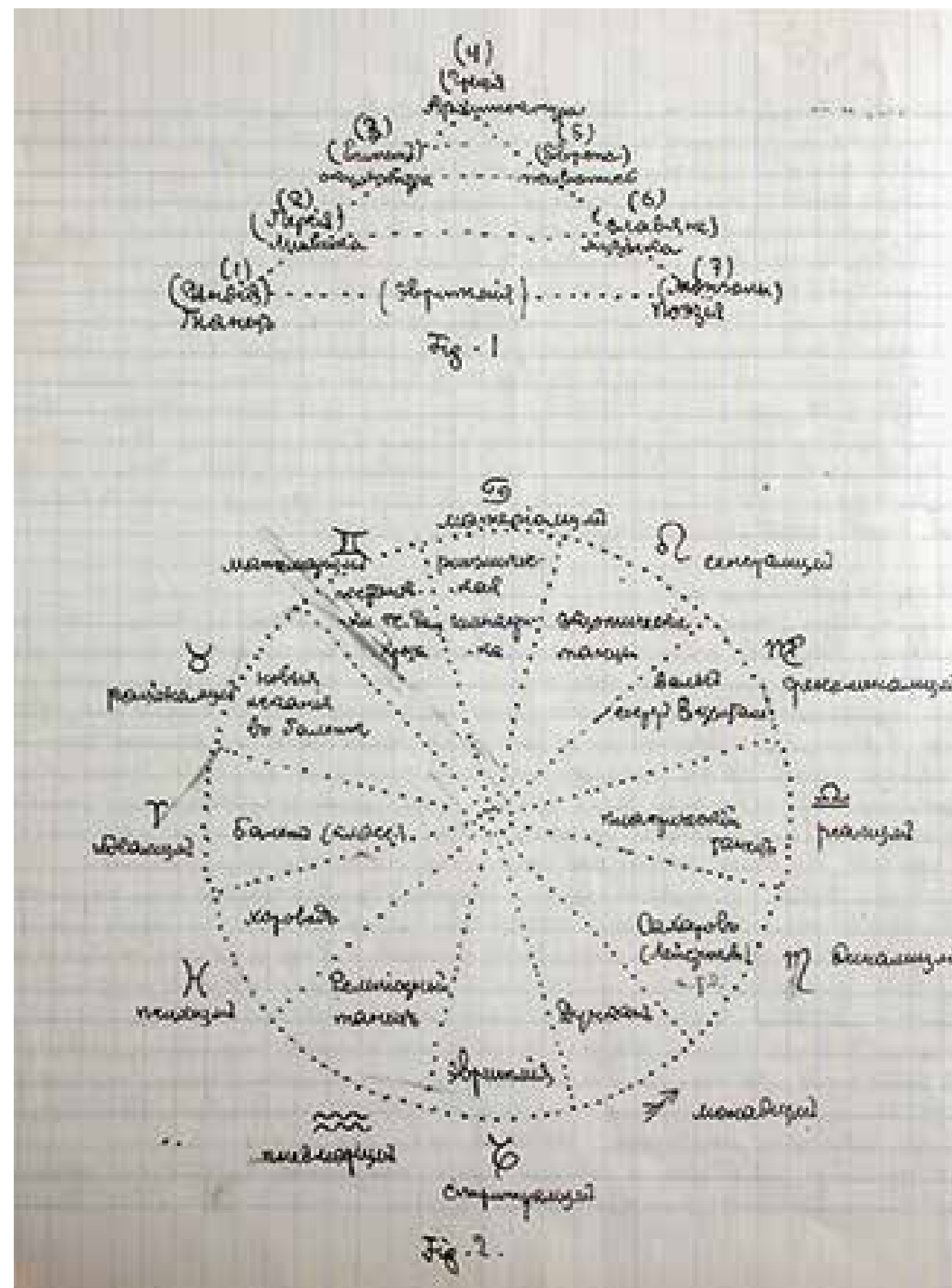


and Natal'ia Tian conducted for their various researches into the "chromatic components of plastic action" in 1925.⁵²

Kandinsky and Sidorov, both of whom shared a deep passion not only for new theories of art, but also for the synthetic and semiological approaches to the question of dance, pursued two other kinds of research in this area. One was Kandinsky's pet project, i.e. the compilation of a Dictionary of Art Terminology which, after his move to the Bauhaus, separated into two complementary projects at RAKhN: the Terminological Dictionary curated by a special commission⁵³ and the *Symbolarium* or Dictionary of Symbols undertaken by Aleksandr Larionov and Pavel Florensky in which the symbology of gesture was to have occupied a special place.⁵⁴

A striking aspect of all the experiments at the Laboratory was the curious mix of amateurism such as the often dilettante photographs and the scientific – semiological – approach to the problem of movement manifest, for example, in the notation assignments which it fulfilled and documented. Indeed, from its very beginning in 1924-25 the Laboratory oriented its researches towards the elaboration of a precise system of movement notation.⁵⁵ In other words, "here was a single institution bearing a mandate to investigate and analyze the problems of the art of movement and all notation systems, past and present, whether European such as those of Jaques-Dalcroze, Demeny and Desmond or Russian such as those of Gorsky and Stepanov and of more contemporary observers such as Mal'tsev, N. Pozniakov, Sotonin and Yavorsky."⁵⁶ Unlike the photographs and drawings, however, this part of the Laboratory data has been lost (or perhaps has yet to be rediscovered) with the exception of a few diagrams and designs accompanying lecture notes by Larionov, Mal'tsev, Pozniakov and Evgenii Yavorsky (1900-1938)⁵⁷ and a curious notation manual on labour movements which Sotonin published in Kazan in 1928 (p. 49).⁵⁸

For example, in the graphic scheme interpreting the "birth of a grain of wheat" which Larionov appended to his RAKhN lecture on "An Experiment in the Field of Plastic Dance,"⁵⁹ (p. 50) he proposed a method for recording movement which he was developing together with the philosopher Florensky (not by chance were they both also work-



ing on the *Symbolarium*). According to this method, any movement could be rendered both analytically and abstractly via the sequential representation of poses and gestures. As in the graphic scheme, the synthetic performance following the lecture synthesized the symbolic representation of the growth of a grain of wheat.

Larionov's graphic scheme is one of the rare original movement notations which have come down to us, although *gakhmovets* Nikolai Mal'tsev⁶⁰ did include photographs of them in his unpublished "Theory and Notations in the Art of Movement" which he completed in 1940.⁶¹ In this rather ponderous treatise he adduced a comprehensive description of the RAKhN researches, focusing – in Chapter 1 – on the various attempts to record movement. It is important to remember that Mal'tsev contributed examples of his own well-articulated notations to the "Art of Movement" exhibitions,⁶² illustrating the final version of his argument with four of Larionov's and Sidorov's systems which had received wide discussion in the various RAKhN debates. One of the two Larionov notations recorded "movement via [geometric] framing" resorting to abstract language,⁶³ while the other recorded the "symmetrical trajectory of 'tempi' in ballet"⁶⁴ using the traditional representation of the legs of ballerinas (p. 48).

In his capacity of mathematician, Larionov formulated the basic theories of his "frame" notational system in a lecture on the fundamental problems of choreology. Referring to the "continuous-discontinuous antinomy of the space-time process in dance", he argued that choreology consisted of "frames" containing the specific forms of "personal space".⁶⁵ One of the two graphic schemes by Sidorov which Mal'tsev included in his account constituted a "graphic stenogramme of dance", while the other was a sample of the constructive notation of movement. Here were just two examples from a deliberation which was, in fact, much richer and much more complex than might appear, the moreso since Sidorov boasted that "The aim of the system which Sidorov has elaborated in the [Choreological] Laboratory... is to record movement and not the precise play of the articulations and flexions of the figure. Moreover, the system records [exactly] what it sees and not rough notes about imaginary positions."⁶⁶

Towards the end of his text Mal'tsev proposed a new system wherein the movement of the human body in space would no longer be examined within the two-dimensional

Photographic reproduction of A. Sidorov, *Example of a Constructive Movement Notation*, 1926-27, in N. Mal'tsev: *Teoriia iskusstva dvizheniia* [Theory of the art of movement], ca. 1940 (unpublished), Book 1, Ill. 6, p. 30. GTsTMB, f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 29.

ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ КОНСТРУКТИВНОЙ ЗАДАЧИ ДВИЖЕНИЯ. РАБОТЫ А.А. СИДОРОВА.



II СПАРИТЕЛЬНАЯ СМЕЖИТЕЛЬНАЯ МАТРИЦА

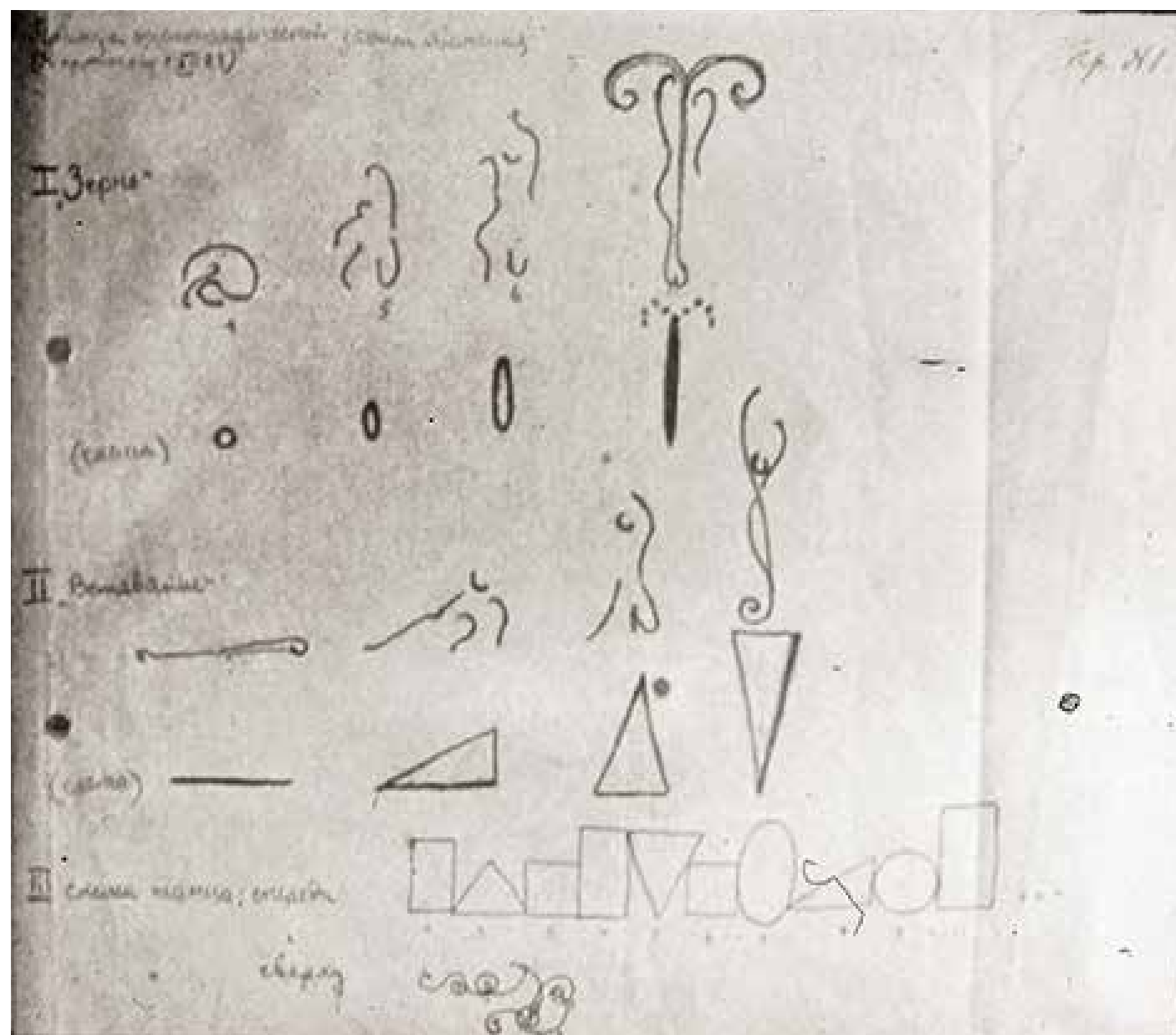


structure of the triangle or the rhombus of the laboratory as in RAKhN or within Larionov's three-dimensional icoesaedro, but within the "total" dimension of the sphere:

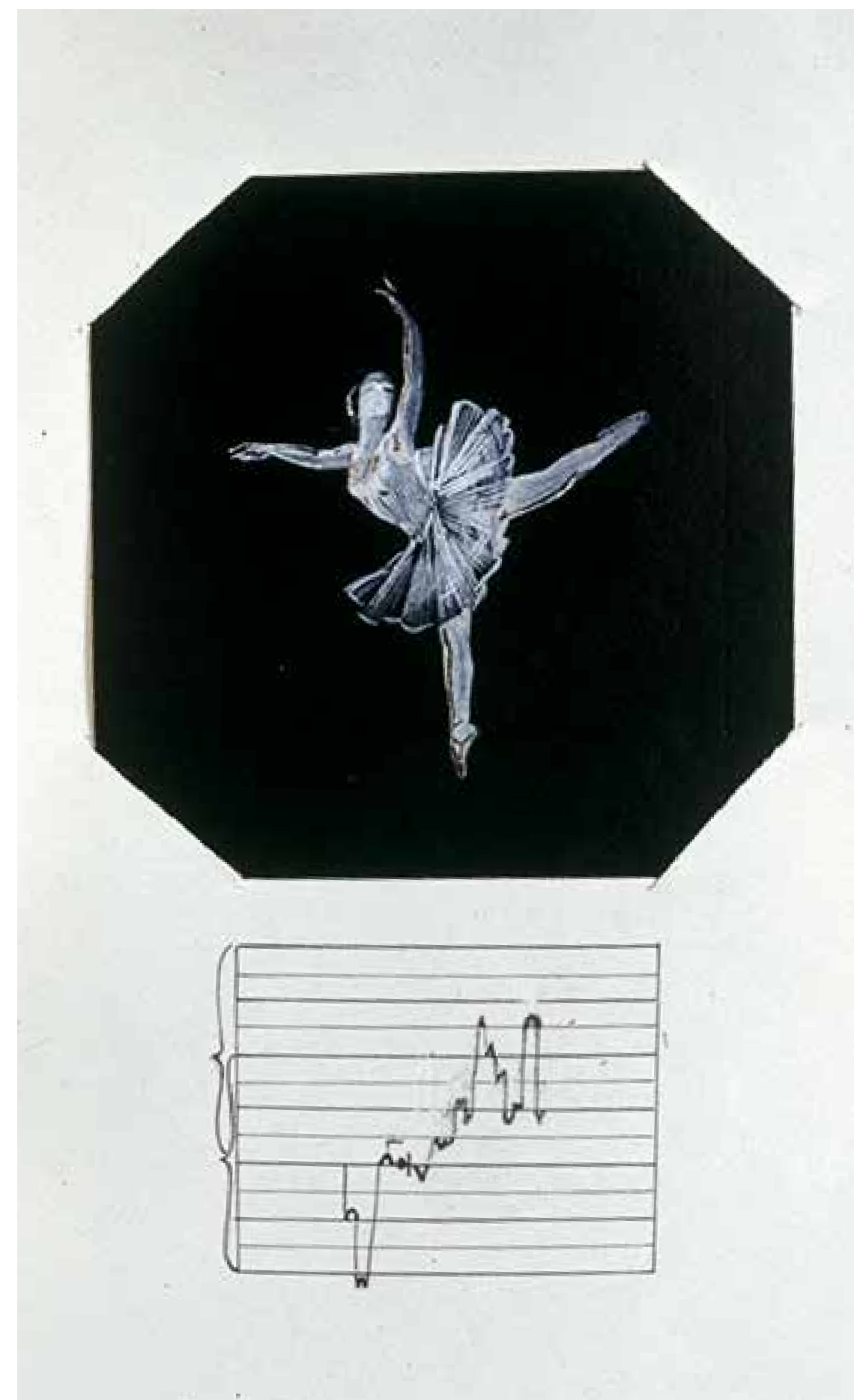
We are studying movement in space – the cognition of a spatial configuration of movement – which presents us with the notion of the sphere. But without the spherical route there would be no comprehension of movement right or left, forwards or backwards. We are borrowing the concepts of the sphere from astronomy, although it transpires that during the process of movement the spatial spheres of the movements of the parts of the body transmute visually: the spheres change their form like a rubber ball. We are borrowing the concept of how to study the sphere from topology, i.e. topos, place, logos and science. Topology is the science of place.⁶⁷

In the final version of his study Mal'tsev touched on the researches into movement notation at the Choreological Laboratory only fleetingly – just as another, concurrent monograph on kinetography did, i.e. by the Armenian dancer Sbrui Azarpetian. This was

A. Sidorov, *Graphic Stenogramme of Dance*, 1926-27, in N. Mal'tsev: *Teoriia iskusstva dvizheniia* [Theory of the art of movement], ca. 1940 (unpublished), Book 1, Ill. 12, p. 38. GTsTMB, f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 44.



the *Zapis' dvizheniia (Kinetografiia)* [Notation of movement (Kinetography)] which, unlike the Mal'tsev manuscript, was published, albeit in a miniscule edition, in 1940, making it a bibliographical rarity today.⁶⁸ Daughter of the celebrated ethnographer Stepan Lisitsian and founder of the Institute of Rhythm in Tiflis (Tbilisi) in the 1920s, Lisitsian, who, surely, merits more universal recognition, was yet one more interpreter of the *danse plastique*, especially the “exotic dance”. Later on she became especially interested in popular Armenian dances,⁶⁹ which she also used as historical and academic material to further her researches into movement notation, both for ancient popular dances and for contemporary dance in general.



A. Larionov,
Illustration to lecture
on “An Experiment
in the Field of
Plastic Dance. Birth
of a wheat germ”,
delivered at RAKhN
on 1 December,
1923. RGALI, f. 941,
op.17, ed. khr. 2,
l. 10.

Photographer
unknown,
A. Sacharoff,
ca. 1912.
From A. Sidorov,
Sovremennyi tanets
[Contemporary
dance], Moscow:
Pervina, 1923,
between pp. 36
and 37.

E. Astaf'eva,
*Movement notations
according to
N. Mal'tsev's
system*, undated, in
N. Mal'tsev: *Teoriia
iskusstva dvizheniia*
[Theory of the art of
movement], ca. 1940
(unpublished), Book
1, p. 292. GTsTMB,
f. 646, ed. khr. 1,
l. 351.

A LABORATORY OF MOVEMENT

Kandinsky's initial observations concerning a new synthetic art served as fertile ground for developing the idea of a choreological laboratory which Larionov and Sidorov brought to fruition.

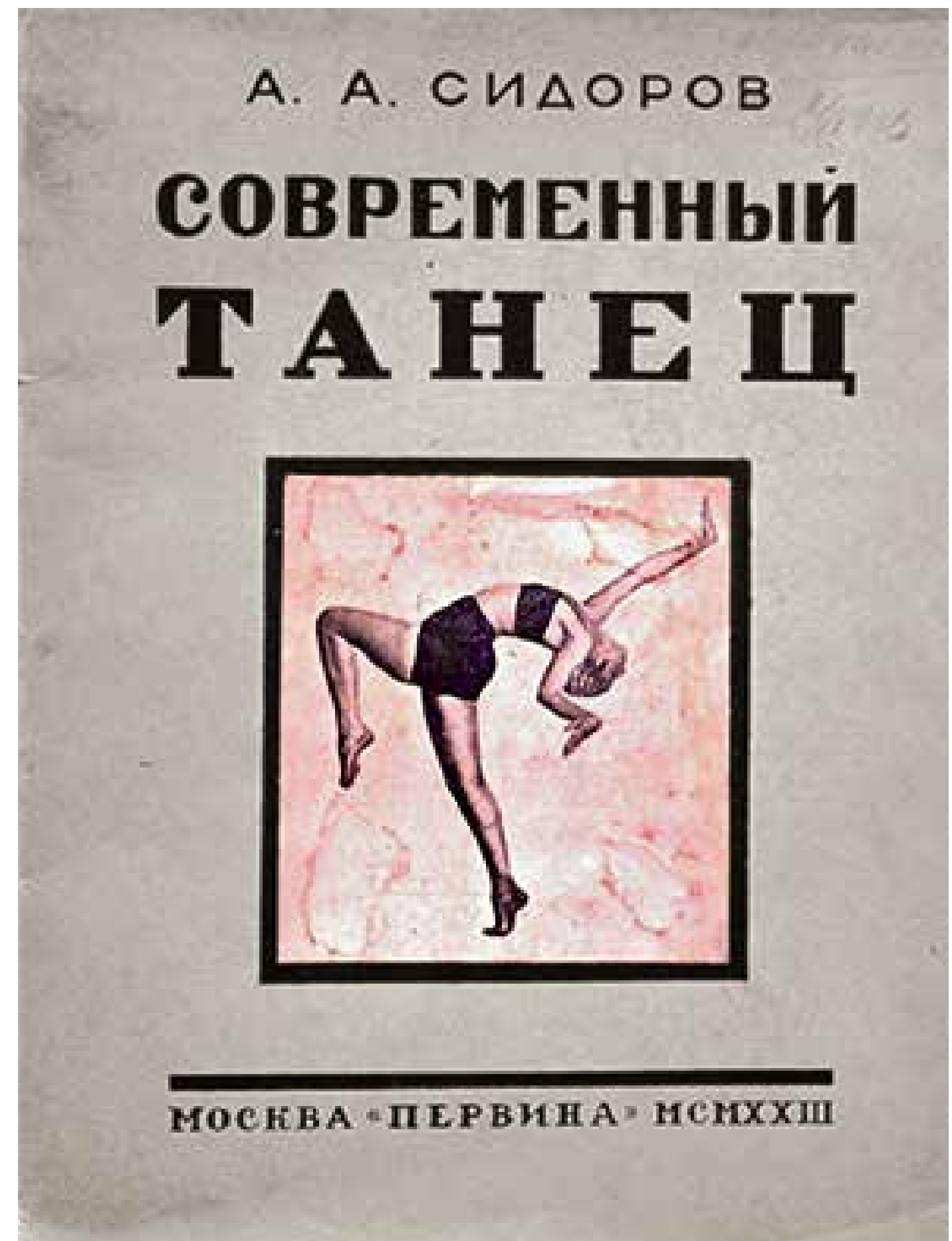
In any case, the first concrete steps taken towards the realization of the project came just after Kandinsky had left for Germany at the end of 1921. A few weeks into the new year Sidorov, as chief secretary for academic affairs, asked the president of RAKhN (Petr Kogan) for permission to organize a special commission to establish a new laboratory dedicated expressly to the study of movement. The commission included the composer and musicologist Leonid Sabaneev (1881-1968),⁷⁰ the philosopher Gustav Shpet (1879-1937) and the dancer Natal'ia Tian (an adept of the *danse plastique* and follower of Isadora Duncan and Eli Rabenek). Supported eagerly by Sabaneev, Shpet and Sidorov, Tian was appointed director of a so-called Laboratory of Dance⁷¹ (soon to become the Laboratory of Dance Composition and then the Choreological Laboratory) in April, 1922⁷² – which was, however, situated outside of RAKhN, i.e. in Tian's own apartment (No. 20) at 6, Maliy Nikolaevskii Lane.⁷³

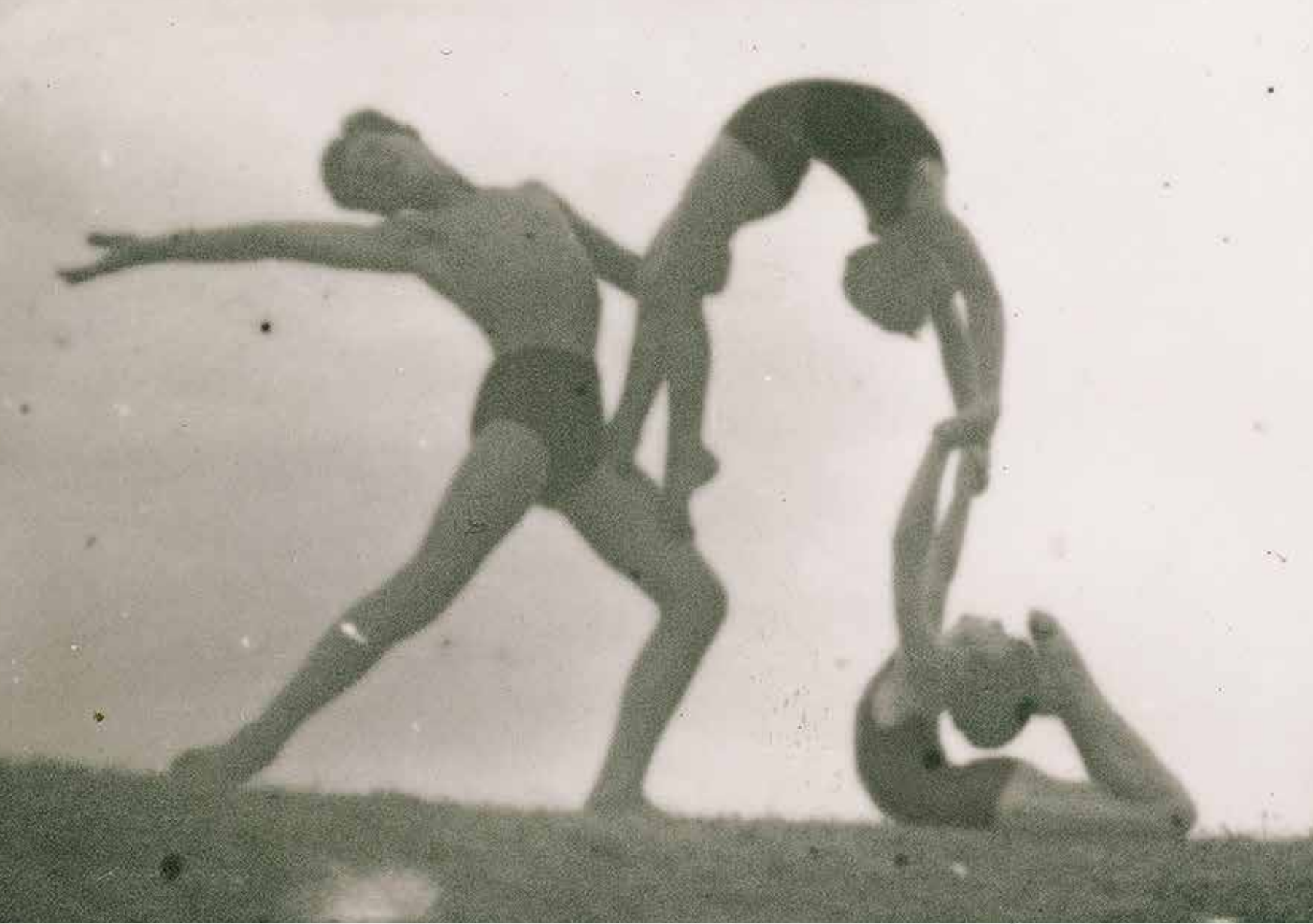
Tian's passion for performance aside, the Laboratory of Dance Composition was based on firm theoretical ground⁷⁴ – with cycles of methodological lectures, debates and live demonstrations orchestrated by Larionov and Sidorov. An autonomous creative space and, therefore, distinct from RAKhN, the Laboratory of Dance was modest, to say the least, consisting simply of a piano, carpet, large mirror and pens and paper. Nonetheless, Tian was more interested in live performance than in philosophical speculation, so, in May, 1923, after breaking an ankle in an accident, she moved to Petrograd ostensibly to seek therapy and stayed there for several months far from the intellectual wranglings of her fellow *rakhnovtsy*.

The Choreological Laboratory as such began to coalesce with the cycle of methodological lectures, practical demonstrations and discussions (not always amicable) which Larionov and Sidorov presided over in December, 1923. On their initiative – and with Tian away – the Laboratory of Dance Composition was renamed the Choreographical Section which then became the Choreological Laboratory, Larionov being appointed director.⁷⁵ At first, the brand new research facility did not enjoy its own dedicated space, even if, in October, 1923, the RAKhN Praesidium, concerned that the practical exercises were still being carried out in a private apartment (presumably, Tian's), did supply a more appropriate space.⁷⁶ In December, the newly appointed Larionov delivered a lecture on "Experimentation in the Field of Plastic Dance",⁷⁷ discussing – from an art historical viewpoint – the "expedient filling of space" and how this could be verified through the plastic arts of movement.⁷⁸ Another, complementary topic which Larionov addressed was movement in time, a synchrony informed by new art historical approaches.

N. Svishchov-Paola, *Couple dancing*. *Plastic pose*, 1926. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva). Signed and dated: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow 1926". Artist's photographic print, 7 x 7 cm (10.3 x 5.6 mounted). VTs.

Cover of A. Sidorov's book *Sovremenniy tanets* [Contemporary dance], Moscow: Pervina, 1923, showing A. Rudovich dancing.





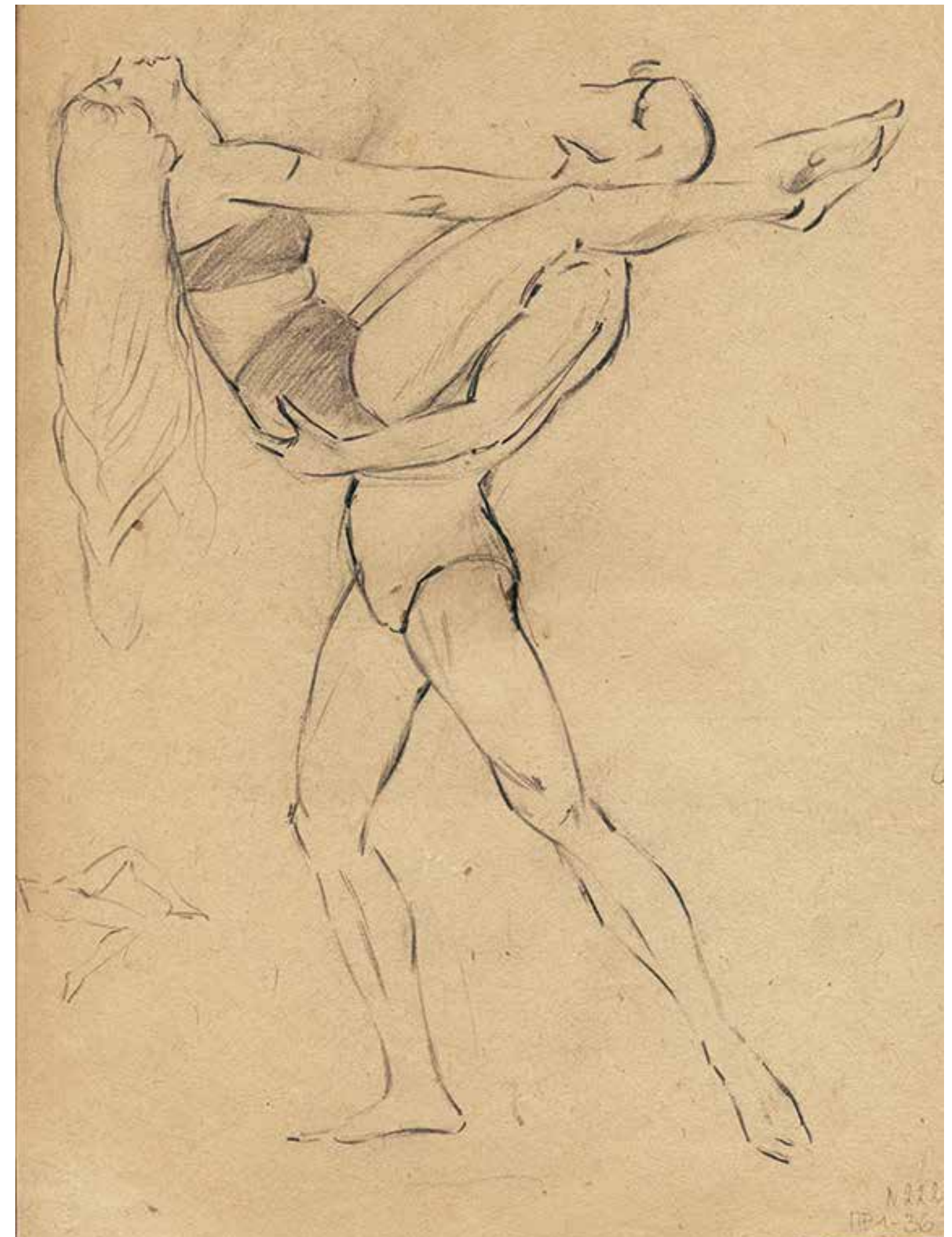
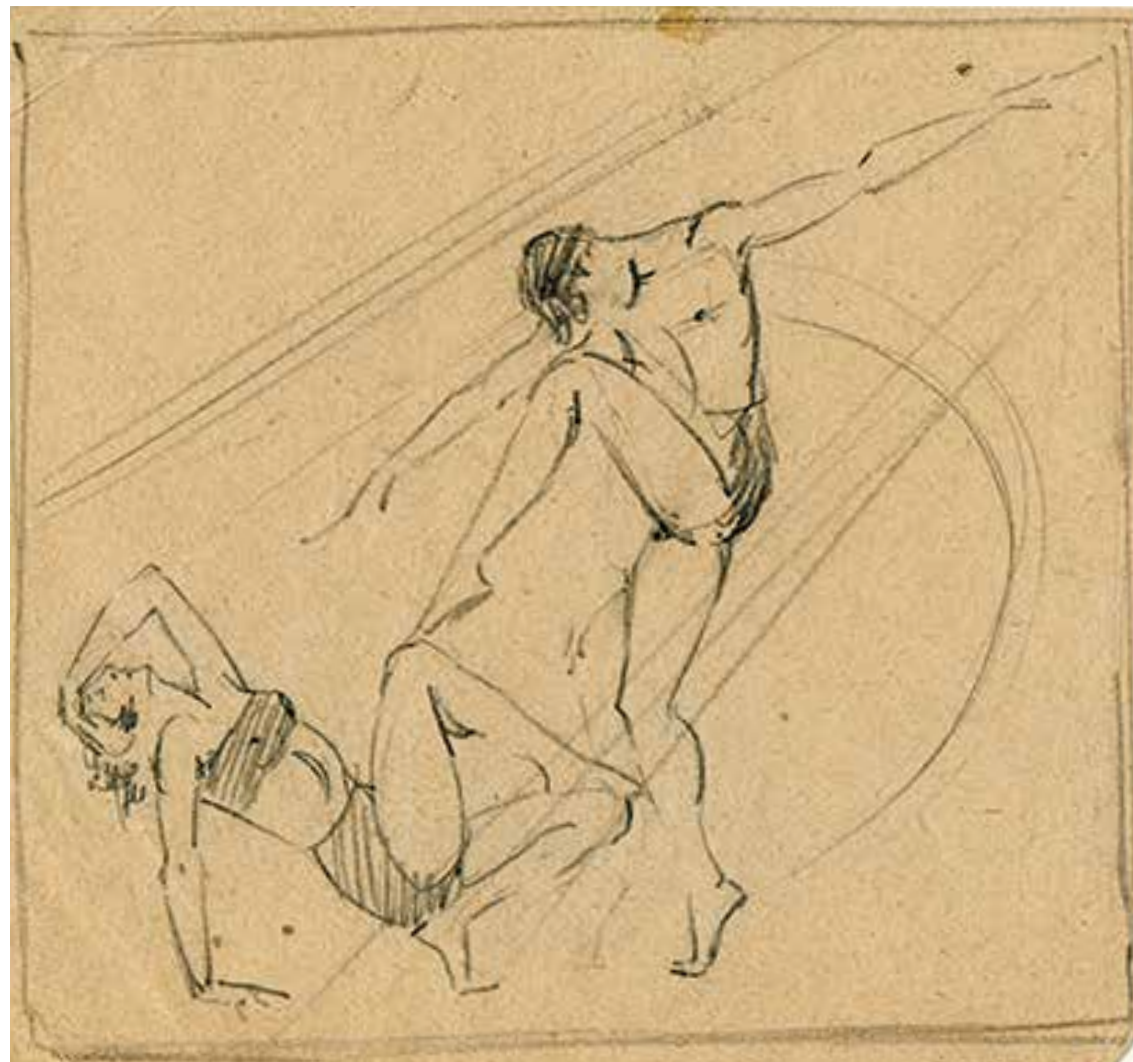
During the ensuing debate Sidorov declared that the Choreographic Section should be renamed the Choreological Laboratory – and his dream came true.

Larionov now apprised the RAKhN Praesidium of the formal establishment of a Laboratory for “researching the laws of movement” and of a parallel Commission for the Study of Cinematographic Art which, together with sections devoted to sports and physical education, were to constitute a new, comprehensive department within RAKhN. Moreover, Larionov hoped that the Choreological Laboratory with which various plastic dance studios such as Nina Aleksandrova’s Association of Rhythmists (recently affiliated with RAKhN) had begun to collaborate and the ambitious new department would constitute a central platform for practical research and experimental theory. A list, dated August, 1924, of the various kinds of equipment procured or at least requested by the Laboratory indicates that numerous research programmes were well underway: photography and cyclography were being applied, standard projection screens as well as special screens for the “study of the esthetic filling of space” had been installed together with “stretched wooden frames and instruments for the study of the esthetic canon, a carpet and various costumes.”⁷⁹

Previous pages:

Photographer unknown, *Four acrobatic poses outdoors from a course manual in artistic acrobatics*, late 1920s. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva), VTs.
a) 7.2 x 8.3 cm;
b) 5.7 x 8.2 cm;
c) 4.6 x 8.6 cm;
d) 5.4 x 8.1 cm.

O. Engel’s, *Couples dancing*, pencil on paper. OE.
a) 21.5 x 29 cm;
b) 26.9 x 18.7 cm.



Clearly, it would be erroneous to try and relate the history of the Choreological Laboratory outside of the organic structure of RAKhN/GAKhN, because from the very beginning the practical demonstrations, performances, lectures and theoretical debates were open to all members – and not only to artists and photographers, but also to art historians such as Aleksandr Gabrichovsky and psychologists such as Ivan Chetverikov.⁸⁰ A formative role was also played by musicologists, especially Sabaneev, a champion of Scriabin's music with its erotic and mystical elements – which might explain why Scriabin was the favourite composer of bold choreographers such as Goleizovsky and Lukin, still close to the Symbolist aesthetic.⁸¹ All played an energetic and constructive role in the development of the Laboratory,⁸² often delivering guest lectures on interdisciplinary topics of mutual concern such as rhythm and gesture.

As was to be expected, the Laboratory focused on the *danse plastique* at least during its first two years, when various studios such as Chernetskaia's Studio of Synthetic Dance were invited to perform at the RAKhN facility⁸³ – and where, for the intellectual élite, to be seen was *de rigueur*. On 29 November, 1923, Chernetskaia's Studio of Synthetic Dance and RAKhN signed a draft contract,⁸⁴ whereby the Studio became an affiliate of RAKhN and was allowed to occupy space there for a nominal rent, while still retaining its autonomy. But RAKhN also collaborated with dance studios and schools extra-murally, organizing in early 1924, for example, a “cell” or sub-section at Maïia's School for the “scientific study of movement” under Sidorov's directorship.⁸⁵ As a matter of fact, the alliance was timely, helping the school to overcome a very difficult moment – just when the *danse plastique* and any other dance which did not conform to the new Soviet social and cultural canons were being scrutinized and censured by the custodians of order. At the same time, Tian's sudden return to Moscow and her firm intention to resume her position at the Choreological Laboratory created further problems.

A full member of RAKhN, Tian delivered a lecture there on 22 March, 1924, entitled “Musical and Plastic Parallelisms in Relation to the Form of Dance,”⁸⁶ peeking Larionov, an expert on the links between music and dance and dance and colour. The ensuing debate prompted her to write an indignant letter to Sidorov, accusing him of inappropriate behaviour in usurping her directorship, copying Anatolii Lunacharsky. On 28 November Tian delivered another lecture, “On Teaching Assignments in the Plastic Arts”, in which she blamed the state for the profound crisis in the *danse plastique*.⁸⁷ A compromise was reached by assigning the prestigious duty of selecting and preparing items for the first “Art of Movement” exhibition (1925) to Tian – and to the photographer Moisei Nappel'baum. Finally, under Larionov's auspices the Choreological Laboratory did elaborate a serious, scientific programme of research wherein the esthetic laws which govern movement were to be studied with the aid of photographic and cinematographic instruments. The approach was based on the “principles of exact psy-

cho-physiological experimentation” and the results “would be extremely important to those who understand the value of the artistic organization of movement.”⁸⁸

The intention to elevate the photographic and cinematographic media from the level of applied art to the rank of “high” art indicates just how open and tolerant the *rakhnovtsy* were and how RAKhN intended to “broaden the perimeter of those arts which are considered to be ‘academic’ so as to encompass outsiders such as dance and the cinema”. Such was the “basic function of the RAKhN Photographic Cabinet, ramifying into a complex programme of assignments whereby the arts of representation and movement confront the science of art.”⁸⁹

That Larionov and Sidorov were particularly interested in photography and cinema is demonstrated by their simultaneous support of the Cinema Commission within RAKhN⁹⁰ and, in 1924 onwards, by their systematic use of the camera in almost all their recording experiments and analyses of movement. Sidorov even delivered a lecture on “Dance and Cinema” to the Cinema Commission on 14 September, 1924,⁹¹ again advocating a name change – this time from Choreological Laboratory to Cinemalogical Section – as if to underline the common lexical origin of the art of movement and the art of the cinema.⁹² “In our opinion this is the right thing to do as we pursue our research inasmuch as the Academy already boasts a section studying the problems of choreologics. The art of the cinema is much closer to the field of the art of movement in general and to that of choreologics in particular.”⁹³ Strictly speaking, this was more Larionov's field, since from 1918 onwards he had been working with the Cinema Committee under Narkompros.

In 1924 Larionov and Sidorov also entertained the idea of organizing regular exhibitions which would publicize the results of their experiments. The four sessions, held between 1925 and 1928, were intended to promote a new synthetic artistic form on a level with the other visual arts, the title – “Art of Movement” – deriving from the German *Bewegungskunst*. Indeed, it was an art historian, Sidorov, who in his book *Sovremennyi tanets* [Contemporary dance] of 1922,⁹⁴ focused this first (and until the 1970s, the last!) Russian survey of the New Dance on the very latest developments in plastic movement. Curiously enough, “Art of Movements” had also been the title of a dance manual which Classical ballerina and teacher Lidiia Nelidova had published in 1908, i.e. *Iskusstvo dvizhenii i baletnaia gimnastika. Kratkaia teoriia, istoriia i mekhanika khoreografii* [The art of movements and ballet gymnastics. A brief theory, history and mechanics of choreography].⁹⁵ Impressed by the predictions in Nelidova's modest book, Sidorov hastened to include her studio under the broad umbrella of the Choreological Laboratory in 1924 just as the Soviet authorities were lambasting private dance schools.⁹⁶

In the absence of professionals, a certain number of “apprentices” or “practitioners” were selected from among young researchers (female rather than male) attached to RAKhN or Moscow State University (twelve students) and were invited to help with the

experiments.⁹⁷ High on their agenda was the demand to “put into practice the demonstrations and experiments in movement in accordance with the assignments set by the instructors.”⁹⁸

Finding willing and enthusiastic young ladies was easy, especially for the charismatic Sidorov. In 1922, for example, he had taken an active part in organizing the annual Olympics of the New Dance at the Theatre of Ballet, Pantomime and Buffonery in Moscow directed by Eduard Elirov,⁹⁹ presenting live demonstrations, mainly by women, of the artistic productions coming out of the numerous studios of ballet and *danse plastique*. The names and specialties of these studios were at once annoyingly repetitious and yet uniquely fanciful – from the Studio of Synthetic Dance to the Workshop of Organizational Theatre – offering courses in the rhythmic dynamics of the word, rhythmized gesture, construction of movement, acrobatics, plastic dance, speech and even something called “verbal technique”.¹⁰⁰ Here in the capital of a country reduced to ashes by the Great War, revolutions and the Civil War the number of Classical ballet schools and studios of *danse plastique*, already popular in the early 1910s, had increased a hundredfold between 1917 and 1922 – a phenomenon which prompted all manner of wry remarks: “An amazing vitality dominated the field of dance. It may seem paradoxical, but in those years of deprivation and famine, Moscow witnessed an exceptional interest in choreography. Countless numbers of young men and girls, suitcase in hand, tried to enroll in the dance schools and studios where Inna Chernetskaia, Vera Maia, Lidiia Redega, Valeriia Tsvetaeva and other ‘barefooters’ and *plastichki* vied with Mikhail Mordkin, Vera Mosolova, Nelidova, Antonina Shalomytova, the Dramballet¹⁰¹ and other collectives, as they investigated the forms of contemporary dance. Everyone was dancing and everyone wanted to dance”¹⁰² – to which Iving (pseudonym of Viktor Ivanov), an especially acerbic critic of the time, responded: “So what? Well, all these young things with their suitcases have multiplied so much that the production of suitcases has increased significantly,” adding that a more adequate term for describing the numerous versions of the *danse plastique* might be “plastitution,”¹⁰³ a term which, of course, appealed to the detractors of the New Dance. Almost literally, the Russia of the New Economic Policy was overrun with studios of plastic dance, each trying to apply the lessons of Isadora Duncan who, in any case, had opened her own official school in Moscow in October, 1921.

Duncan liked to have herself photographed surrounded by her baby ballerinas, as we can see in the first snapshot taken of her in her school on the Prechistenka.¹⁰⁴ Duncan seemed to find an inner, primitive expressivity in the infantile spontaneity of these little girls in their tunics who, ironically, would soon be christened *dunkaniaty* [duncanettes] as we see in the affectionate renderings by caricaturist Dani (pseudonym of Daniil Smirnov). Such images soon caught the imagination of artists and photographers nostalgic for the Hellenic and Mediterranean worlds.

²¹ N. Misler: “Eksperimenty A. Sidorova i A. Laronova v Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN” in Klim, *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Istorii i sovremennost’*, pp. 20-28.

²² See “Plan raboty Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii na 1924-25”. Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 12, ed. khr. 10, l. 28.

²³ Little is known of the life of Oton Engel’s, although some of his drawings and photographs have been included in recent museum and gallery exhibitions of Russian art and photography of the 1920s. For some biographical information see T. Portnova: “Etot neizvestnyi Engel’s” in *Balet*, 1998, No. 98-99, September-December, pp. 62-64.

²⁴ See N. Misler: “A. Laronov” in *Experiment*, 1997, No. 3, pp. 148-56. Also see A. Laronov: “Lichnoe delo”. Manuscript in RGALI, f. 941, op. 10, ed. khr. 344.

²⁵ On the influence of Rudolf Steiner on Russian culture see T. Surina, *Rudolf’f Shteiner i rossiiskaia teatral’naia kul’tura*, M: Progress-Pleiada, 2014.

²⁶ In his Curriculum Vitae, i.e. “Lichnoe delo”, in GARF, Call No.: f. 2307 (Glavnauka), op. 23, ed. khr. 6, l. 91, Laronov states that he had studied the “art of movement” in the studio of the sculptor Konstantin Fedorovich Krakht. In 1914 onwards Krakht headed the so called Circle for the Study of the Problems of Symbolist Culture and Symbolism in the Arts. See D. Nedovich: “Vaiaiel’ K.F. Krakht, ego obrazy i ritmy”. Typescript in OR-GTG: Call No.: f. 103, ed. khr. 2, l. 4.

²⁷ On Sidorov and Musaget see T. Prokopov, ed.: *Moskovskii Parinas: kruchki, salony, zhurfiksy Serebriannogo veka 1890-1922*, M: Intelvak, 2006, p. 665; also see A. Reznichenko, ed.: *Knigozdatel’stvo ‘Musaget’. Issledovaniia i materialy*, M: Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 1914.

²⁸ Together with other *gakhnovtsy* Laronov also began work on a dictionary of ideographic symbols intended to address issues such as “An Attempt at a Theory of Ideography”, “The Problem of Unity and Plurality in the Ideographic System of Writing” and “Ideographic Elements of Alchemical Signs”. The dictionary (“Slovar’ ideograficheskikh znakov”) was never completed.

²⁹ A. Laronov: *Marki Sergeia Gruzenberga*, M. Lokshin, 1923.

³⁰ A manuscript list dated 6 April, 1922, indicates that Laronov was director of the Laboratory, while Leonid Sabaneev, Gustav Shpet and Aleksei Sidorov were “members of other sections operating in the Laboratory”. See RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 1, l. 16.

³¹ A. Laronov: “Khudozhestvennoe dvizhenie” in A. Laronov et al.: *Teoriia i praktika fizkul’tury. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov i statei po voprosam fizicheskoi kul’tury*, M: VMSFK, 1925, pp. 72-82.

³² OR-GTsTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 140.

³³ A. Sidorov: “Itogi 3-’ei Vystavki iskusstva dvizheniia 13 yanvaria, 1926” in “Protokol No 12 (32) otkrytogo zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii sovместno s Russkim fotograficheskim obshchestvom” (13 January, 1926). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 11, ll. 46-47.

³⁴ OR-RGB contains a fragmentary correspondence between Laronov and Sidorov for the period 1924-52 (Call No.: f. 776, kart. 88, ed. khr. 32). This includes three of Laronov’s letters from Koktebel’ and Feodosiia for 1933, 1934 and 1935 (ll. 4-5, 6, 7-8) indicating that Koktebel’, at least, was one of the last halting-places of the Symbolist intellectuals; and also two letters of 1944 (l. 9, 11) from Yasnaia Poliana (Lev Tolstoi’s estate in Tula) in which Laronov writes that he had not seen Sidorov for the longest time and also requests a recommendation for someone (illegible), because “he is a man of our culture”.

³⁵ In his capacities as secretary of GAKhN, head of the Section of Printing Arts and editor of the bulletins, Sidorov was largely

responsible for its ideological structure. In his unpublished memoirs, “Iz vospominanii sovetskogo iskusstvoveda i knigoveda” [From the memoirs of a Soviet art and book historian], he mentions his interest in dance and psychoanalysis as a young man. Later in life, however, he extrapolated references to less “orthodox” activities such as his study of modern dance and precarious liaisons with Florensky and Kandinsky. See his “Lichnoe delo” in RGALI: f. 984 (GAIS), op. 1, ed. khr. 189. Also see N. Kozhina and P. Lebedeva: *A.A. Sidorov*, M: Nauka, 1974, and N. Sidorova, ed.: *A.A. Sidorov: O masterakh zarubezhnogo russkogo i sovetskogo iskusstva*, M: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1985.

³⁶ On Kandinsky’s connections with Soviet institutions see S. Khan-Magomedov: “Raboचाia gruppa ob’ektivnogo analiza v INKhUKe” in *Problemy istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury*, M, 1978, No. 4, pp. 53-56; and “Diskussiia v INKhUKe po sootnosheniiu konstruktii i kompozitsii (yanvar’-aprel’, 1921 g.)” in *Trudy VNIITE*, M, 1979, No. 20, pp. 40-78.

³⁷ I. Ermakov: “Lichnoe delo” in RGALI, Call. No.: f. 984, op. 10, ed. khr. 205. Ermakov was a member of RAKhN while Kandinsky was president. See I. Ermakov: “Psikhoanaliz i khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo” in “Protokol No. 20 plenarnogo zasedaniia RAKhN” (10 November, 1921). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 3, ll. 159-60.

³⁸ A. Sidorov: “Iz vospominanii sovetskogo iskusstvoveda i knigoveda” in Archive of the Sidorov family, Moscow. Also see A. Sidorov: “Lichnoe delo”. Typescript in RGALI, f. 984 (GAIS), op. 1, ed. khr. 189. Also see Kozhina and Lebedeva, *A.A. Sidorov*; and Sidorova, *A.A. Sidorov: O masterakh zarubezhnogo russkogo i sovetskogo iskusstva*.

³⁹ A. Sidorov: “Kinematograf i izobrazitel’nye iskusstva” in A. Lunacharsky et al.: eds.: *Sbornik Kinematograf*, M: Photograph and Cinema Section of NKP, 1919, pp. 27-32. This quotation is on p. 30.

⁴⁰ On the Classical theme in dance see, for example, G. Prudhommeau: *La danse grecque antique*, Paris: C.N.R.S, 1998.

⁴¹ The manuscript of Rudneva’s memoirs, i.e. S. Rudneva: *Vospominaniia shchastlivogo cheloveka*, which she wrote between 1978 and 1982, are at TsGAM: f. 140, op. 1, d. 12-15. The memoirs were published under the same title by Glavarkhiv, Moscow, in 2007. Also see S. Nuridzhanova, ed.: *K istorii Septakhora: ot Aisedory Dunkan k muzykal’nomu dvizheniiu*, SP: Akademicheskii proekt, 2008.

⁴² Especially in the history and theory of the cinema. See O. Bulgakova: *Fabrika zhestov*, M: NLO, 2005; and Yu. Tsivian: *Na postupakh i karpalistiche. Dvizhenie i zhest v literature, iskusstve i kino*, M: NLO, 2010.

⁴³ See P. Veroli: “Alexander Sacharoff as Symbolist Dancer” in *Experiment*, 1996, No. 2, pp. 41-60.

⁴⁴ J. Hahl Fontaine: “Alexander Sakharoff a Monaco” in P. Veroli, ed.: *I Sakharoff. Un mito della danza fra teatro e avanguardie artistiche*. Catalogue of exhibition at the Convento dei cappuccini, Argenta, 1991, pp. 42-49. Also see B. Fäthke, ed.: *Marianne Werefkin. Vita e opere 1860-1938*. Catalogue of exhibition at Museo Comunale d’Arte Moderna, Ascona, 1988.

⁴⁵ The reference is to the two manuscripts, i.e. *Problemy tantsa* [Problems of dance] and *O sushchnosti tantsa* [On the essence of the dance] dated Moscow, 15 January and 15 February, 1915, respectively. Private archive.

⁴⁶ H. Brandenburg: *Der Modern Tanz*, Munich: Georg Müller, 1913. Sidorov had a copy of this book in his dance library and, along with other publications, showed it at the “Art of Movement” exhibitions. See the respective bibliography on the art of movement in the typescript catalogue of the 1925 exhibition, i.e.

Katalog zakrytoi vystavki po iskusstvu dvizheniia, organizovannoi Khoreograficheskoi laboratorii RAKhN i Russkim fotograficheskim obshchestvom. A copy of this typescript catalogue is in OR-GTsTMB: f. 517 (GAKhN), ed. 134 (folder No. 7, Preparatory materials for the I, II, III and IV exhibitions of the “Art of Movement”), l. 45.

⁴⁷ A. Sidorov: “Osnovopolozheniia istorii iskusstv” [Basic theses of the history of the arts] in *Zhizn'*, M, 1922, No. 1, pp. 181-87; “Osiazatel'nyi moment v istorii zhivopisi” [The tactile aspect in the history of painting], *ibid.*, No. 2, pp. 78-100.

⁴⁸ A. Sidorov: “Problema dvizheniia: izo i foto” in *Katalog tret'ei vystavki “Iskusstvo dvizheniia”*, M: GAKhN, 1927, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁹ V. Kandinsky: “O metode rabot po sinteticheskomy iskusstvu” (1921). Typescript in RGALI: f. 2740, op. 1, ed. khr. 198. English translation: N. Misler, ed.: “An Unpublished Translation of Wassily Kandinsky’s Lecture of 1921: ‘On a Method for Working on Synthetic Art’” in *The Structurist*, Saskatoon, 1991-92, No. 31-32, pp. 67-71.

⁵⁰ V. Kandinsky: *Institut khudozhestvennoi kul'tury v Moskve (INKhUK)*. *Programma*, M: NKP, 1920, p. 4. English translation in: K. Lindsay and P. Vergo, eds.: *Kandinsky. Complete Writings on Art*, Boston: Hall, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 455-72.

⁵¹ Kandinsky’s four pencil and ink drawings of 1925, which are now in the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Städtische Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (16.5 x 16.2; 21.5 x 16.5; 21.5 x 13.8; 19.3 x 15.5, respectively), were then published as “Tanzkurven zu der Tänzen der Palucca” in *Das Kunstblatt*, Potsdam, 1926, 10 March, pp. 117-20.

⁵² See “Otchet” (1925) in RGALI, Call. No.: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 70, l. 213.

⁵³ On the idea of creating a dictionary of artistic terminology at GAKhN see A. Gabrichevsky: “Painting” in *Experiment*, 1997, No. 3, p. 202, footnote 3.

⁵⁴ See P. Florensky and A. Larionov: “*Symbolarium* (Slovar' simvolov). Predislovie. Tochka” in A. Kopysova et al., eds.: *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiia*, 1982, L: Nauka, 1984, pp. 99-115.

⁵⁵ See E. Surits: “Zapisi tantsa v Gosudarstvennoi Akademii khudozhestvennykh nauk” in N. Dunaeva, ed.: *Stranitsy istorii baleta. Novye issledovaniia i materialy*, SP: Sankt-Peterburgskaia Gosudarstvennaia konservatoriia, 2009, pp. 219-35.

⁵⁶ A. Sidorov: “Ob”iasnitel'naia zapiska i opis' negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN”. Typescript, l. 1. Archive of the Sidorov family, Moscow.

⁵⁷ See, for example, E. Yavorsky: “Zametki i stat'i o zapisi khudozhestvennykh dvizhenii cheloveka” (1925). Manuscript in OR-RGB: f. 776, kart. 4, ed. khr. 19, especially the section called “Sistema tsifrovoi analiticheskoi zapisi dvizhenii cheloveka” on ll. 6-7 and the graphic example on l. 5. Also see E. Surits: “N.S. Pozniakov i E.V. Yavorsky. Rabota v oblasti teorii i praktiki tantsa” in *Voprosy iskusstvovedeniia*, 1998, No. 1, pp. 318-28.

⁵⁸ K. Sotonin: *Sistema notnoi zapisi dvizhenii chelovecheskogo tela*, Kazan: Tatpoligraf: Shkola FZU im. A.V. Lunacharskogo, 1928. For further information see R. Malysheva: “Filosofiia schastiia Konstantina Sotonina” in *Tatarstan*, Kazan, 1994, No. 7-8, pp. 110-15. I would like to thank Il'dar Galeev for this reference.

⁵⁹ A. Larionov: “Eksperiment v oblasti plastiki”. Typescript dated 1 December, 1923 in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, l. 10.

⁶⁰ See N. Mal'tsev: “Avtobiografiia”. Typescript in OR-GTsTMB: f. 646 (N.Ya. Mal'tsev), ed. khr. 26.

⁶¹ N. Mal'tsev: “Teoriia i zapisi iskusstva dvizheniia. Osnovnoi trud”. Typescript in *ibid.*, ed. khr. 1. Compare illustration No. 5: “Notations of the Rhythmic Movements of Jaques-Dalcroze”, No. 8: “Notations of Olga Desmond’s Rhythmography”, No. 9: “Notations of K. Sotonin’s Labour Movements”, back of p. 3: “Table of Signs for Ballet Movements according to Stepanov’s

System”, No. 11: “Notations of Movements of Artistic Gymnastics according to G. Demyen’s System” (1909-11), No. 6: “Model of a Constructive Notation of Movement Elaborated by A.A. Sidorov” and No. 12: “A. Sidorov. Graphic Stenogramme of Dance”.

⁶² See Mal'tsev’s pass for attending the sessions of the Choreological Laboratory at GAKhN dated 1 October, 1928 in OR-GTsTMB: f. 646, ed. khr. 27, l. 1, plus the three diagrams from his first experiments at GAKhN. Also see “Tri zapisi khudozhestvennogo dvizheniia N.Ya. Mal'tseva” in OR-RGB: f. 776, kart. 4, ed. khr. 19, ll. 1-5 (undated).

⁶³ N. Mal'tsev: “Teoriia iskusstva dvizheniia. Kniga 1” in OR-GTsTMB: f. 646, ed. khr. 1, Ill. 10 for p. 25, l. 47.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Ill. 9 for p. 24, l. 46.

⁶⁵ A. Larionov: “Osnovnye problemy khoreologii”. Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 2, ll. 128-29. The influence of Pavel Florensky, with whom Larionov had worked on the *Symbolarium*, would seem to be manifest in these affirmations. Furthermore, both had taught in the Department of Printing Arts at Vkhutemas. See N. Misler, ed.: *P. Florenskij: “Lo spazio e il tempo nell'arte”*, Milan: Adelphi, 1995.

⁶⁶ Sidorov, “Ob”iasnitel'naia zapiska i opis' negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN, 1927-29”, l.1.

⁶⁷ N. Mal'tsev: “Doklad po teorii iskusstva dvizheniia 16 fevralia 1951 dlia Khoreograficheskoi laboratorii”. Typescript in Department of Manuscripts, GTsTMB: f. 646, ed. khr. 11, l.7.

⁶⁸ S. Azarpetian-Lisitsian: *Zapisi dvizheniia (Kinotografiia)*, M-L: Iskusstvo, 1940. Also see N. Lisitsian: “S.S. Azarpetian-Lisitsian i ego metodika prepodavaniia svobodnogo tantsa” in Klim, *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 117-30.

⁶⁹ S. Lisitsian: *Armianskie starinnye pliaski*, Erevan: AN ARM SSSR, 1983.

⁷⁰ See T. Maslovskaiia, ed.: *L.L. Sabaneev: “Vospominaniia o Rossii”*, M: Klassika-XXI vek, 2004.

⁷¹ A. Sidorov: “Zaiavlenie. 20.04.1922” in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 1, l. 1.

⁷² See her “Lichnoe delo” in RGALI, Call. No. f. 941, op. 10, ed. khr. 612.

⁷³ “Smeta po organizatsii laboratorii kompozitsii tantsa”. Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 1, 2, 4.

⁷⁴ A. Sidorov: “Plasticheskii tanets i ego zritel' (N. Tian)” in *Teatral'noe obozrenie*, M, 1922, No. 6, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁵ See “Khoreologicheskaiia laboratoriia” in A. Sidorov, ed.: *GAKhN. Otchet 1921-1925*, M: GAKhN, 1926, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁶ See “Protokol 14 zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii” (11 October, 1923). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, l. 1.

⁷⁷ Larionov, “Eksperiment v oblasti plastiki”, l. 10.

⁷⁸ See anon.: “Khoreologicheskaiia laboratoriia” in *Zrelishcha*, M, 1923, No. 16, p. 11.

⁷⁹ “Smeta oborudovaniia laboratorii” in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, l. 51.

⁸⁰ See his “Lichnoe delo” in RGALI: f. 941, op. 10, ed. khr. 685.

⁸¹ Sabaneev published the first monograph on Skriabin in 1916 and his memoirs of the musician in 1924. From 1922 until 1926 he was an active member of GAKhN before emigrating to Paris.

⁸² See “Khoreologicheskaiia laboratoriia” in *GAKhN. Otchet 1921-1925*, pp. 63-64.

⁸³ I. Chernetskaiia: “Plastika i analiz zhesta. Protokol zasedaniia Khoreograficheskoi sektiisii” (10 December, 1923). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, l. 14.

⁸⁴ See “Polozhenie i plan raboty” in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 4, l.1.

⁸⁵ Iving (pseudonym of Viktor Ivanov): “Materialy dlia istorii ansambliia ‘V. Maiia’” (1930). Typescript in RGALI: f. 2694 (Iving), op. 1, ed. khr. 22, l. 45.

⁸⁶ N. Tian: “Meloplasticheskie parallelizmy v sviazi s problemoi formy tantsa”. Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, ll. 35-36.

⁸⁷ N. Tian: “O zadachakh prepodavaniia v plasticheskom iskusstve”. Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 5, l. 17.

⁸⁸ A. Kondrat'ev: “Khoreologicheskaiia laboratoriia RAKhN” in *Iskusstvo*, M, 1923, No. 1, pp. 442-43.

⁸⁹ Anon. (= A.A. Sidorov?): “Akademiiia khudozhestvennykh nauk” in *Nauka i iskusstvo*, M, 1926, No. 1, p. 211.

⁹⁰ See “Protokol 14 zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN” (11 October, 1923). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, l. 1.

⁹¹ See “Kino-komissiiia” in *GAKhN. Otchet 1921-1925*, p. 59.

⁹² See “Doklad Larionova” in “Protokol zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii” (29 March, 1924). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 2, l. 37.

⁹³ “Ob”iasnitel'naia zapiska k proektu ob organizatsii ‘Kinemalogicheskaiia sektiisii’ pri RAKhN-e” (26 February, 1922). Typescript in OR-GTsTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 139, ll. 28-29.

⁹⁴ A. Sidorov: *Sovremennyi tanets*, M: Pervina, 1922 (“1923” on the cover). Sidorov had already published a shorter version of his text as an article under the title “Sovremennyi tanets (Aisedora Dunkan, Mod Allan i dr.)” in the almanac *Stremniny*, M, 1918, No. 2. As a matter of fact, the art historian Pavel Ettinger accused Sidorov of having plagiarized Brandenburg’s *Der moderne Tanz* of 1913 (see Note 46). See Note 9 in Sirotkina’s *Svobodnoe dvizhenie i plasticheskii tanets v Rossii*, p. 235.

⁹⁵ L. Nelidova: *Iskusstvo dvizhenii i Baletnaia gimnastika. Istoriia i mekhanika khoreografii*, M: Khoreograficheskaiia shkola, 1908.

⁹⁶ See Larionov’s solicitation to the RAKhN Board on 26 July, 1924, in which he asks Nelidova for a summary of her activities and the programme of her school. In OR-GTsTMB: f. 517 (GAKhN), ed. khr. 133, ll. 1-8.

⁹⁷ According to an interview between Ekaterina Nekrasova and the author, Moscow, 19 June, 1990.

⁹⁸ “Spisok sotrudnikov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii” (undated). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 1-8.

⁹⁹ Anon.: “Teatr baleta, pantomimy i buffonady” in *Ermitazh*, M, 1922, No. 8, p. 14; Anon.: “Khoreografiia. Iaia baletnaia olimpiada” in *Vestnik iskusstv*, M, 1922, No. 5, p. 40; Anon.: *Iaia Khor. Olimpiada Programma*, 1922. A copy of this programme is in OR-RGB: f. 776 (A. Sidorov), kart. 111, ed. khr.12, l. 4.

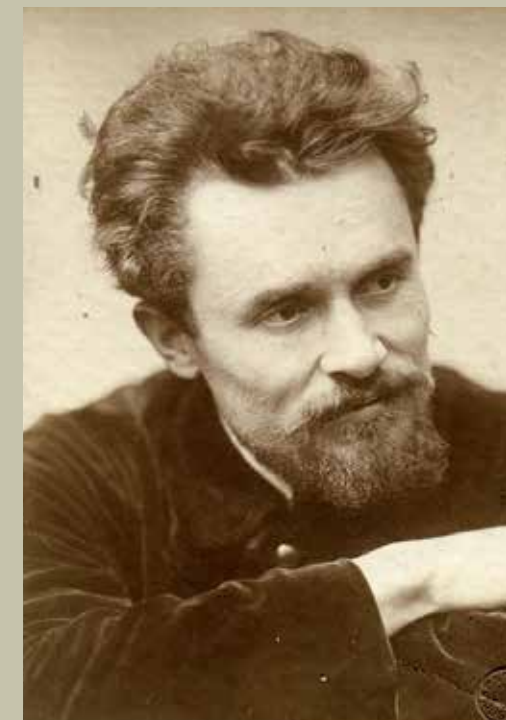
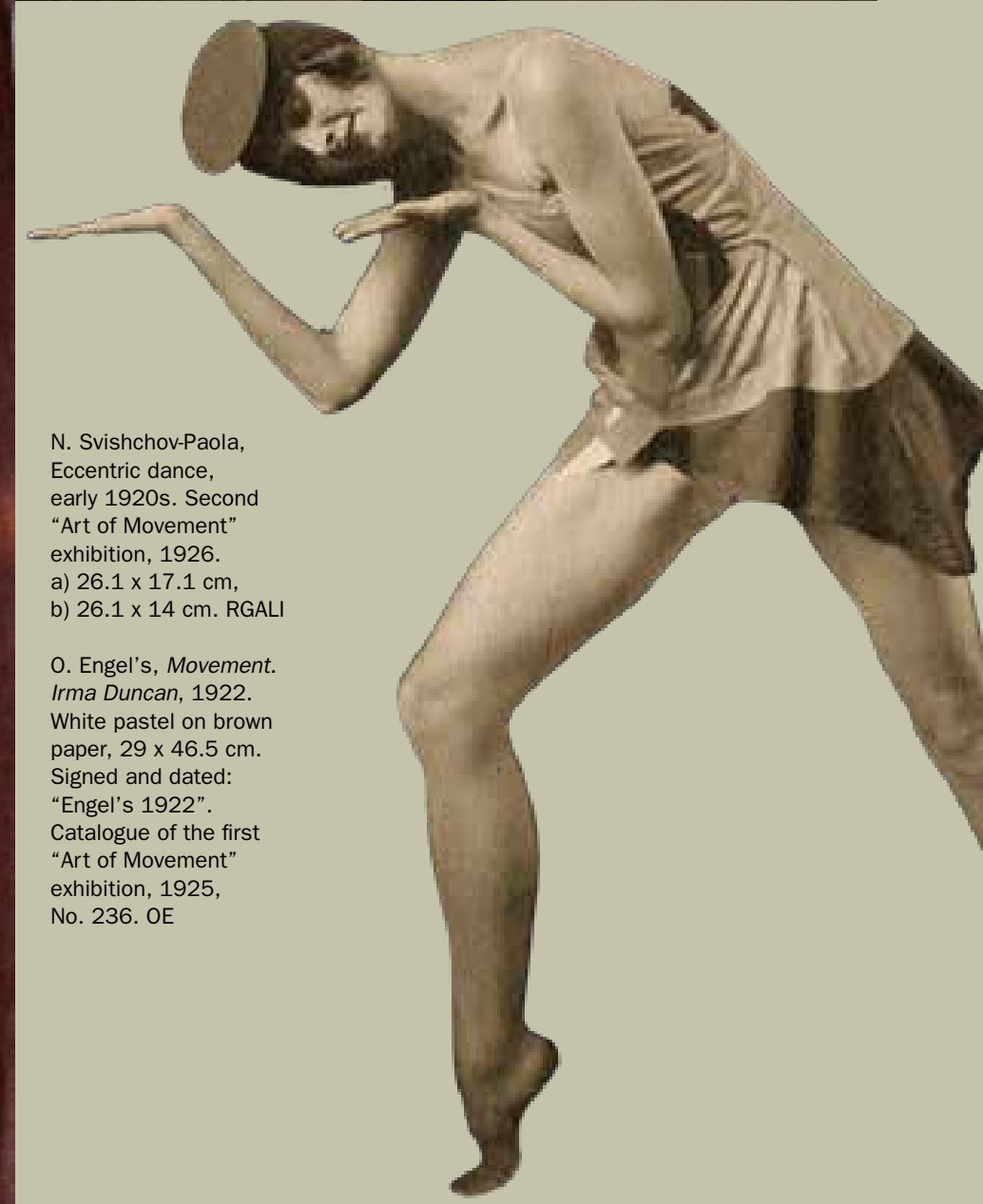
¹⁰⁰ Anon.: “Khronika” in *Zrelishcha*, 1922, No.1, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰¹ For further information on Drambalet see E. Belova: “The Dramballet Studio” in *Experiment*, 1997, No. 3, pp. 253-76.

¹⁰² A. Rumnev: “Vospominaniia. ‘Minuvshee prochodit predomnoi’”. Manuscript in RGALI, f. 2721 (Rumnev), op. 1, ed. khr. 34, l. 46.

¹⁰³ Iving: “Vecher vsekh napravlenii stsenicheskogo dvizheniia” in *Rampa*, M, 1922, No. 6, 11 December, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ I. Duncan and A. Ross MacDougall: *Isadora Duncan’s Russian Days and Her Last Year in France*, New York: New World, 1929; E. Suritz: “Isadora Duncan and Prewar Russian Dancemakers” in L. Garafola and N. Van Norman Baer: *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999, pp. 97-115; G. Makvei (Gordon MacVay): “Moskovskaia shkola Aisedory Dunkan 1921-1949” in V. Vasil'ev et al., eds.: *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiia 2003*, L: Nauka, 2004, pp. 236-475; G. Hill, ed.: *In Isadora’s Steps: The Story of Isadora Duncan’s School in Moscow Told by Her Favourite Pupil Lily Dikovskaya*, Brighton: Book Guild, 2008.



ENGEL'S, OTON (OTTON)
VASIL'EVICH
Moscow, 1880 - after 1946

Artist. Studied at Fedor Rerberg's private school in Moscow. Bibliophile and passionate collector of books, creating ex-libris designs which were shown at national and international exhibitions. One of the most active members of the Choreological Laboratory at RAKhN/GAKhN, attending virtually all its staff meetings. Collaborated closely with Vera Maiia and Valeriia Tsvetaeva, depicting – together with them and professional photographers – specific movement poses (both *danse plastique* and Classical ballet) and superscribing the exact hour of execution on his drawings. He assembled albums, now dispersed, containing numerous photographs taken of these dancers and choreographers. Inspired by Maiia, for whom he worked as “artist-in-residence” and was a constant visitor to her courses. Showed pertinent drawings at an exhibition which she installed as part of a “choreo-evening” of dances in 1927. 1930s arrested and imprisoned. The recent discovery of a drawing dated 1946 and carrying a dedication from Engel's to Aleksei Sidorov puts the traditional death date (1930s) of this mysterious artist into question.

GRINBERG, ALEKSANDR
DANILOVICH
Moscow, 1885-1979

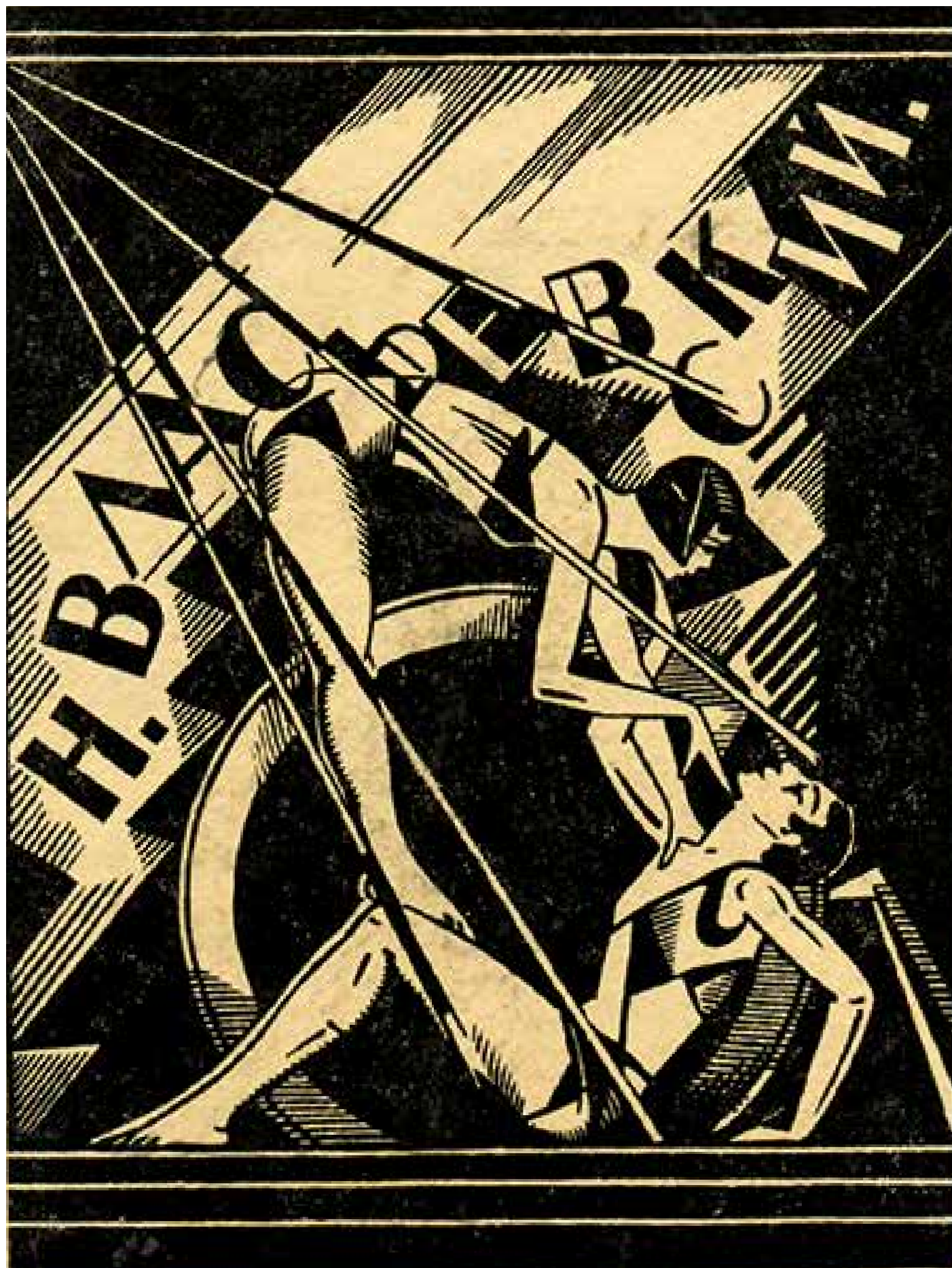
Leading pictorialist photographer. Specialist in all aspects of making and developing photographs. 1905-12 enrolled in the Department of Physics and Mathematics at Moscow University, while also studying photography at the Stroganov Imperial Arts and Applied Arts Institute. 1907 member of the Russian Photographic Society. 1909 Gold Medal at the “Internationale Photographische Ausstellung” in Dresden. 1914 also active as a cinema cameraman; subsequently, taught cinema at the State Technical Institute of Cinematography where served as chair of the Department of Cinema Technique and Film Shooting until 1930. 1920s contributed to all the “Art of Movement” exhibitions. 1936 accused of pornography owing to photographs of female nudes, arrested and sentenced to five years prison camp. 1939 liberated thanks to his photographic services in the camp. Became photographer for the Zagorsk Museum (previously Sergiev Posad).



N. Svishchov-Paola,
Eccentric dance,
early 1920s. Second
“Art of Movement”
exhibition, 1926.
a) 26.1 x 17.1 cm,
b) 26.1 x 14 cm. RGALI

O. Engel's, *Movement*.
Irma Duncan, 1922.
White pastel on brown
paper, 29 x 46.5 cm.
Signed and dated:
“Engel's 1922”.
Catalogue of the first
“Art of Movement”
exhibition, 1925,
No. 236. OE

N. Svishchov-Paola, Plastic pose.
Study in gesture, early 1920s.
Artist's photographic print,
16.2 x 15.2 cm. Second
“Art of Movement” exhibition,
1926. RGALI



THE FIRST EXHIBITION, MOSCOW, 1925

The refusal of RABIS and Narkompros to ratify the establishment of VMKhF as a new pedagogical institution proposed by the Choreological Laboratory devoted expressly to the study of the art of movement should not come as a surprise. The Soviet authorities, in general, viewed such activities, including those of the Laboratory, ambivalently, to say the least – although the latter did forge ahead with new initiatives, *not least*, with the organization of four annual exhibitions between 1925 and 1928. Larionov and Sidorov made every effort to ensure the success of the first exhibition – following in the wake of the MONO reorganization of private studios – although, ever cautious, they decided not to open it to the public at large.¹⁹⁴ Unfortunately, and perhaps because of this, virtually no visual documentation in the form of archives or *the press* has come down to us (at least for the moment), an exception being one photograph of the section of the RFO within the exhibition (with the Larionov family collection, Moscow). According to a request signed and dated 9 December, 1924, Larionov first proposed opening the exhibition during the winter holidays, i.e. from 20 December, 1924, until 10 January, 1925, so as to ensure the maximum number of visitors.¹⁹⁵ But a parallel and more prudent statement from the ad hoc commission hurriedly convened in December, stipulated that the exhibition be a closed one, i.e. assembled exclusively for specialists, “owing to the novelty of the theme,” regarding the organization of a more comprehensive exhibition to be entirely appropriate in the future.¹⁹⁶ As a result, but also out of fear of public scandal, the exhibition was allowed to run for only four days (3–7 January), although, eventually, this was extended until 10 January.

Given the large number of works on display and the complex infrastructure, it is clear that the exhibition had long been in the planning stage and, in any case, was organized in collaboration with the RFO, a prestigious, pre-Revolutionary institution which had just reopened under the protective wing of RAKhN. Moreover, the actual premises of the exhibition, i.e. the Great Hall or Concert Hall, was the most impressive space at RAKhN, underlining the superior quality of the exhibits, on the one hand, but also foiling potential criticism and censure, on the other. The organizers increased the special entry ticket from 20 copecks to 50 so as to cover the expenses incurred from publishing the modest catalogue (a typewritten, “samizdat” handout intended exclusively for specialists)¹⁹⁷ and copies of ex-libris designs were offered as prizes for the best photographs. 150 visitors a day were expected, but one suspects that there were many more inasmuch as the representatives of the New Dance, now banished to limbo and to what they saw as unjust persecution after the MONO decree, still continued to be very active.

The first exhibition, then, was intimate and experimental. For example, members of the Choreological Laboratory had long been researching a musical theme from Rob-

O. Engel's,
Ex-libris design for
N.Vlas'evsky, 1926.
Etching, 9.8 x 7.5
cm. OE

Following pages:
O. Engel's,
A. Rumnev in
one of L. Lukin's
choreographies,
1923. Pencil on
paper, 27.3 x 22.3
cm. Inscribed and
dated: “Chamber
Theatre, Thursday,
7.30, 12/VI/1923”.
Catalogue of the first
“Art of Movement”
exhibition, 1925,
No. 197. OE

Hess Studio,
Frankfurt, A. Rumnev.
Plastic study, 1923.
Original print, 16 x
21.4 cm (18 x 23
cm mounted). Signed
and dated on mount:
“Hess, Frankfurt
1923”. Choreography
by L. Lukin. Tournée
of the Moscow
Chamber Theatre,
1923. The reverse of
an analogous print in
the Lukin archive at
GTsTMB carries the
inscription: “To dear
Lev Lukin with faith in
his inimitable talent,
1923, A. Rumnev”.
RGALI

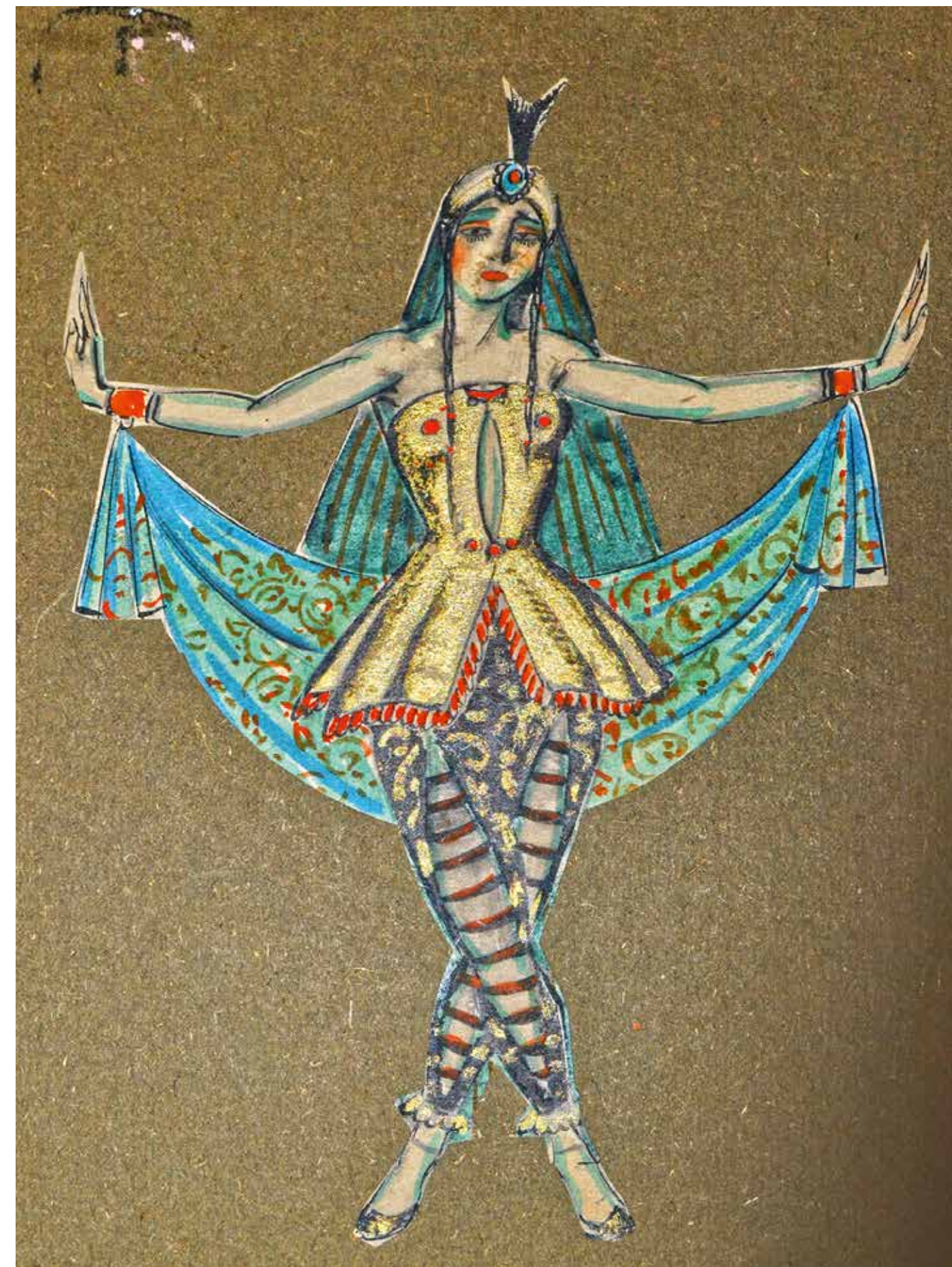




ert Schumann's *Leides Ahnung* choreographed and interpreted by Nikolai Pozniakov. Working with this arrangement, Pozniakov and his immediate colleagues (Larionov, Sidorov and the choreographer, Evgenii Yavorsky) came up with various systems for transcribing movement, while artists such as Lev Bruni, Petr L'vov and Sergei Storozhenko made graphic renderings.¹⁹⁸ The photographic section, organized in tandem with the RFO, was decisively more audacious, even if the declarations of intent seemed to be innocuous and impartial: the goal was to fully represent the “problem of how to convey the movement of the human body” and “to define the meaning of the art photograph as well as the registration of movement in general and of dance in particular”¹⁹⁹ – alluding to the primary motive for the relative secrecy and intimacy of the exhibition, i.e. only a few months had elapsed since the open discussions on nudity in dance at RAKhN had prompted the official investigation into Moscow's private dance schools.

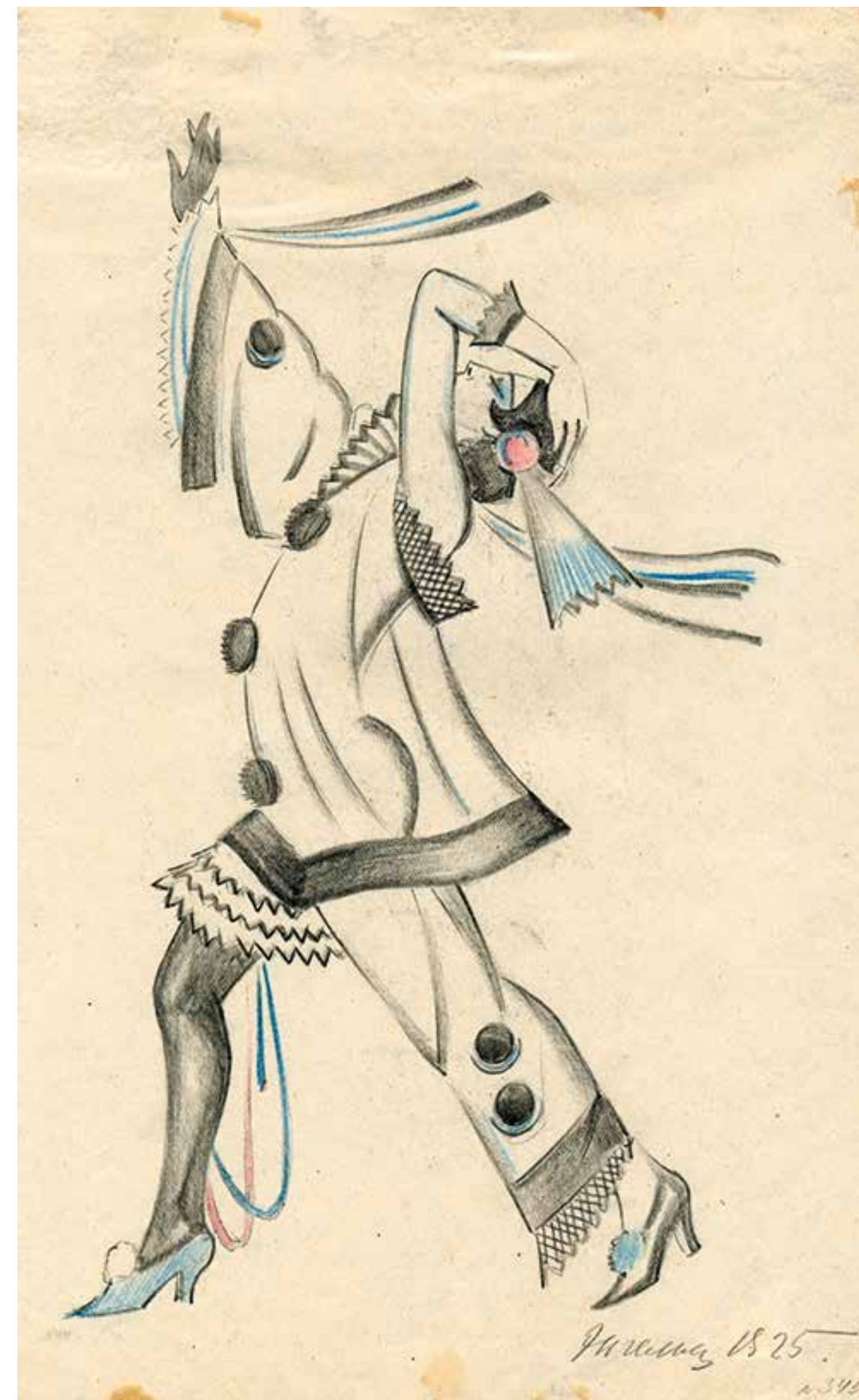
The first exhibition, like those later on, presented photographers who interpreted the many forms of the art of movement – “ballet, acrobatic movement, *danse plastique*, movement in gymnastics and sports, movements in the workplace and mass or collective movements,”²⁰⁰ although Free Dance still reigned supreme. Photographers took the lion's share,²⁰¹ RFO members simply repeating the photographs which they had just shown at their “First Exhibition of Contemporary Russian Photography” at RAKhN the year before.²⁰² As president of the new RFO (arisen from the ashes of its pre-Revolutionary prototype in 1921), Boris Podluzsky²⁰³ insisted that it become part of RAKhN in 1922 and three years later he was appointed director of the Photographic Cabinet there (formerly the Photographic Laboratory). Photographers of the older generation, above all, pictorialists such as Eremin, Aleksandr Grinberg, Nappel'baum and Svishchov-Paola, far from the avant-garde experiments of El Lissitzky and Aleksandr Rodchenko, found a mutual understanding and coincidence of ideas in the haven of RAKhN. Conversely, Larionov and Sidorov saw them as a major potential for representing the New Dance and, to this end, granted the RFO pride of place within the photographic section at the first exhibition.

Artists, however, were in the minority. The painter Konstantin Yuon, for example, who was soon to disappear from the Choreological Laboratory altogether, seems to have contributed more through personal acquaintance than professional interest. Oton Engel's and Storozhenko contributed not only drawings of dancers to the first and subsequent exhibitions, but also, as members of RAKhN, participated in the concurrent theoretical discussions at the Laboratory. Sculptor Vatagin was represented by a wooden sculpture called *Motif of an Oriental Dance* (No. 262 in the catalogue) and two acrobatic studies in plaster (Nos. 263 and 264). Justifying his deep interest in dance during the early 1920s, Vatagin later recalled that for him the “natural” movements of animals had much in common with the dance, especially plastic dance:





Анатолий Александрович Боймачалыха
H. Boymacalycha 1923



H. Boymacalycha 1925

Previous pages:

V. Vatagin, *Oriental Dance*, 1919.
Painted wood, h.
53 cm. Catalogue
of the first "Art
of Movement"
exhibition, 1925,
Nos. 262-64. GTG

O. Engel's, *Oriental Dance*, 1925.
Watercolour, Indian
ink and collage on
paper, 25.6 x 19 cm.
Catalogue of the first
"Art of Movement"
exhibition, 1925, No.
223. OE

N. Vysheslavitsev,
Nude from behind,
1923. Ink on paper,
34.8 x 25.9 cm.
Signed and dated:
"To dear Aleksei
Sidorov, N. N.
Vysheslavitsev,
1923". GTG (formerly
in the collection of
Aleksei Sidorov)

O. Engel's, *Pierrot*,
1925. Crayons on
paper, 20 x 29 cm.
Signed and dated:
"Engel's 1925".
Catalogue of the first
"Art of Movement"
exhibition, 1925,
Nos. 208-09. OE

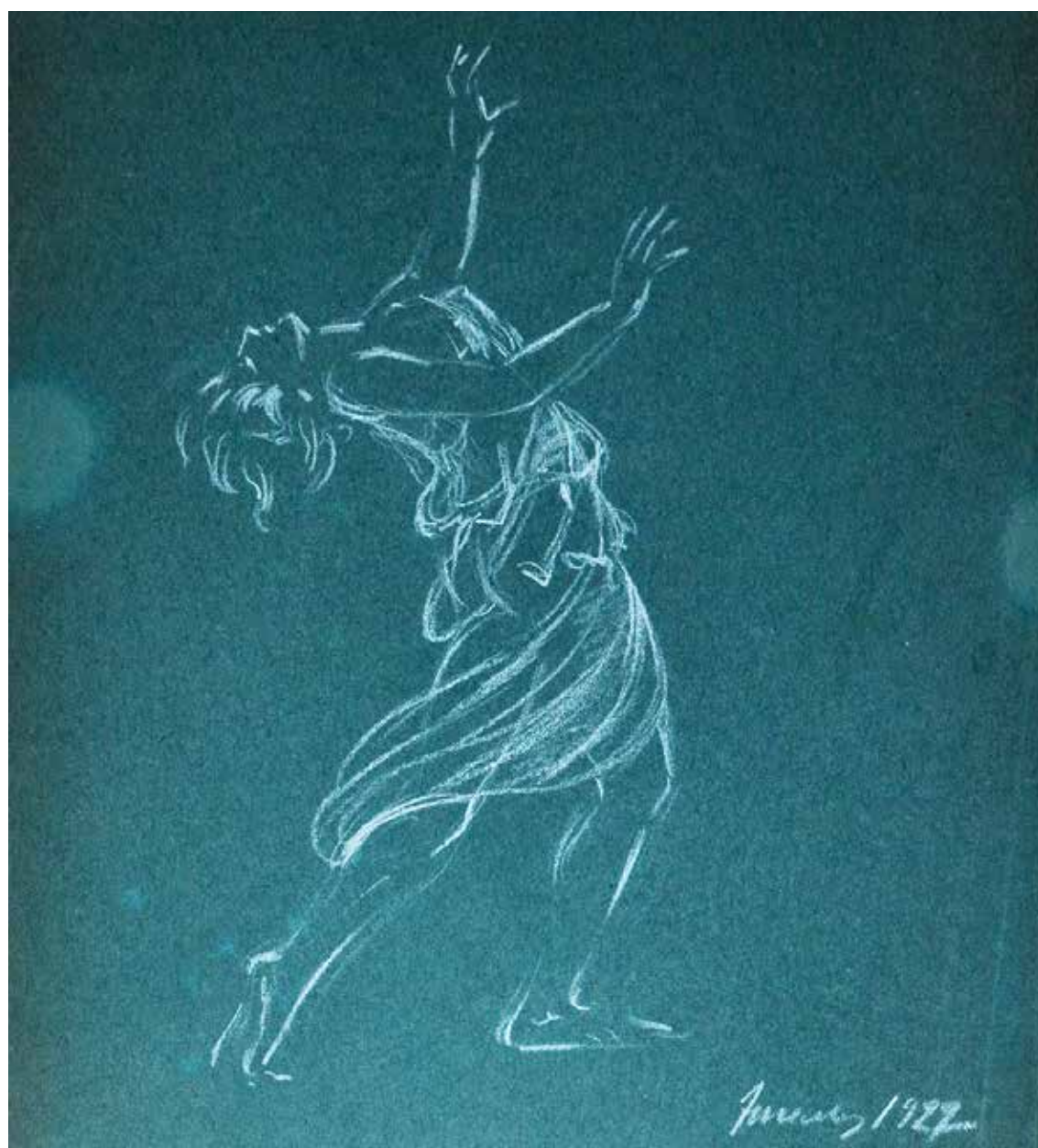


Together with sketches of animals I did many drawings of the human nude. As far as animals were concerned, I was accustomed to catching the pose of the live subject and quickly capturing its living movements. At the beach I sketched young boys and the dance movements of girls. While I was working for the Darwin Museum [in Moscow] I learnt how to sculpt, so I decided to try my hand at sculpting the human figure, trying out various poses for Mowgli, and using the very malleable, colored clays of Tarusa [where Vatagin had his dacha]. I could easily select the finest living subjects from among the students of Valeriia Ivanovna [Tsvetaeva's] school, who had come down to Tarusa for the holidays, sketching the young novices. I went on with this back in Moscow. I made a lot of small sculptures, some in clay, others cast in metal.²⁰⁴

L. Bruni, *Ballerina*, 1926. Watercolour on paper, 34 x 45 cm. National Museum of the Fine Arts of Georgia, Tbilisi

O. Engel's, *Barefoot (Irma Duncan)*, 1927. White chalk on blue paper, 30.4 x 23.8 cm. Signed and dated: "Engels 1927". OE

I. Bokhonov, E. Lenskaia and V. Latyshevsky dancing at the "Bourgeois Party" in Ya. Protazanov's film *Aelita* (Mezhrapom-Rus), 1924. Choreography by K. Goleizovsky. Original print, 10.1 x 13.2 cm. GTsTMB



Although cinema was an important instrument in the researches of the Choreological Laboratory, the discipline – as a mechanical record of movement – was still in its infancy and was represented at the first exhibition only by Igor' Bokhonov's photogrammes (*A Study in Ballet*, based on Yakov Protazanov's film *He Summons* released on the first anniversary of the death of Lenin) and the photogrammes of a bourgeois party in pseudo-Egyptian costume from the film *Aelita* (Nos. 22-35 in the catalogue).

One of the most exciting elements of the exhibitions in general and one perhaps underestimated even by the organizers themselves is that of the visual confrontation between the results attained from different media and methods of transcription applied to the same object. For example, the drawings of poses and dance movements which Engel's made from nature can be juxtaposed with the photographs of the same poses which he and his colleagues assembled in special albums (today, unfortunately, most of them have been broken up).²⁰⁵

THE BODY DELINEATED, THE BODY IMPRINTED.
THE ARCHIVE OF OTON ENGEL'S

The three principal archives in Moscow relating to the Choreological Laboratory possess precious few materials regarding its discussions and debates. The documents which do survive tend to be dry and tedious protocols, typewritten (but not always legible), which shed little light on the complex theme of movement. After all, every scholar at RAKhN/GAKhN approached the topic from his or her particular standpoint, whether philosophical (Gustav Shpet), art historical (Aleksei Sidorov), musicological (Leonid Sabeneev), artistic or photographic. Still, there is at least one private archive – the photographs and drawings of Oton Engel's – which does provide a synthetic idea of the fertile experimental collaboration between art and photography on the registration of movement, at least from a visual standpoint. Assembling his archive while working at the Laboratory in the 1920s, Engel's, eventually, was arrested, but, by a miracle, his papers and artworks were preserved, even if we know very little about his professional career.²⁰⁶ Although Engel's had been a student of Fedor Rerberg, mentor to several members of the avant-garde, including Ivan Kliun and Kazimir Malevich, he was distant from radical experiment. On the contrary, his predilection for the sinuous graphic line and hence for the female nude bring Engel's close to the second generation of the World of Art draftsmen such as Boris Grigor'ev and Vasilii Masiutin.

As a matter of fact, Masiutin, a remarkable engraver, was one of Sidorov's favourite artists and the Masiutin archive even contains a photograph dated 1927 of Aleksandr Larionov and Sidorov out for a stroll in Berlin. Masiutin, with his theme of the seven deadly sins, was among Sidorov's favourite graphic artists – whose "weakness" for erotic drawings and engravings, old and new, was readily forgiven by his fellow art historians. By 1927 Masiutin was living in emigration in Berlin, while Sidorov was a member of a Soviet delegation to Leipzig, but, perhaps wary of compromising his official position, he omitted Berlin or the presumed meeting with Masiutin from his subsequent *compte rendu* of the trip. An earlier photograph of 1913 also shows Masiutin next to Larionov, i.e. just at the time when Larionov and Sidorov were frequenting the Symbolist circle of Musaget.²⁰⁷ In any case, if Masiutin (p. 137) did emigrate in 1921 and, therefore, escaped the Stalin purges, Engel's was not so fortunate and, ever fearful of arrest, entrusted his archive to a friend, Dmitrii Isakov, at one time close to the novelist Mikhail Bulgakov and the actor Vasilii Kachalov. It is reasonable to assume that Engel's was arrested when GAKhN was "cleansed" of its so-called counter-revolutionary elements, but, in any case, the last public reference to Engel's seems to have been at an exhibition of woodcuts in Moscow in 1929.²⁰⁸ No doubt, his Germanic name was reason enough to associate him with the so-called anti-Soviet plot hatched by the compilers of the Russian-German dictionary, many of whom were arrested in 1930/31 after the

O. Engel's,
Ex-libris design for
A. Larionov. Pencil
and ink on paper,
19 x 13 cm. OE

O. Engel's,
Ex-libris design
for L. Semenova.
Etching, 5.5 x 4.8
cm. OE

Photographer
unknown, Two
barefoot poses
outdoors.
Original print,
a) 7.3 x 5.5 cm,
b) 7.8 x 5.5 cm. OE



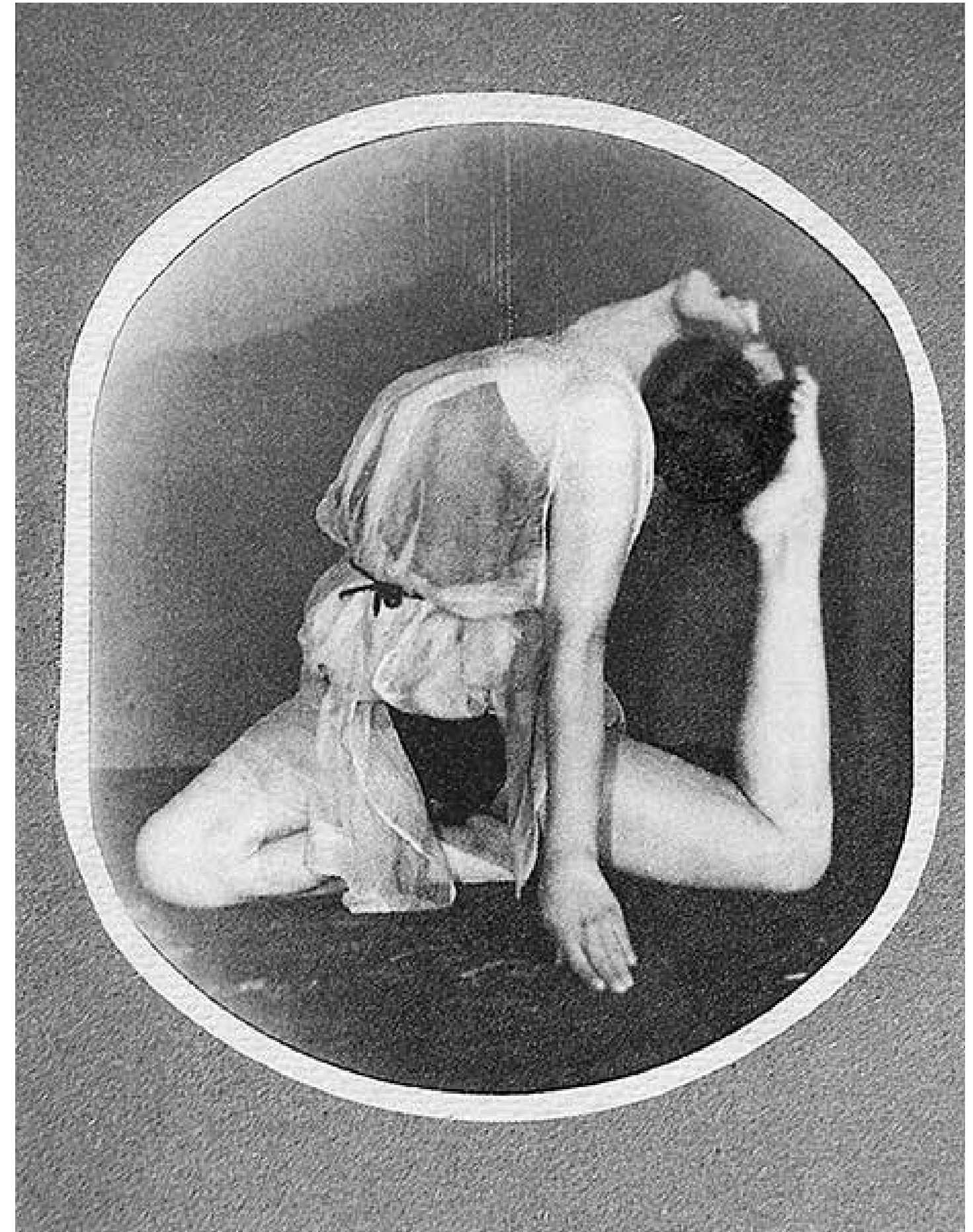
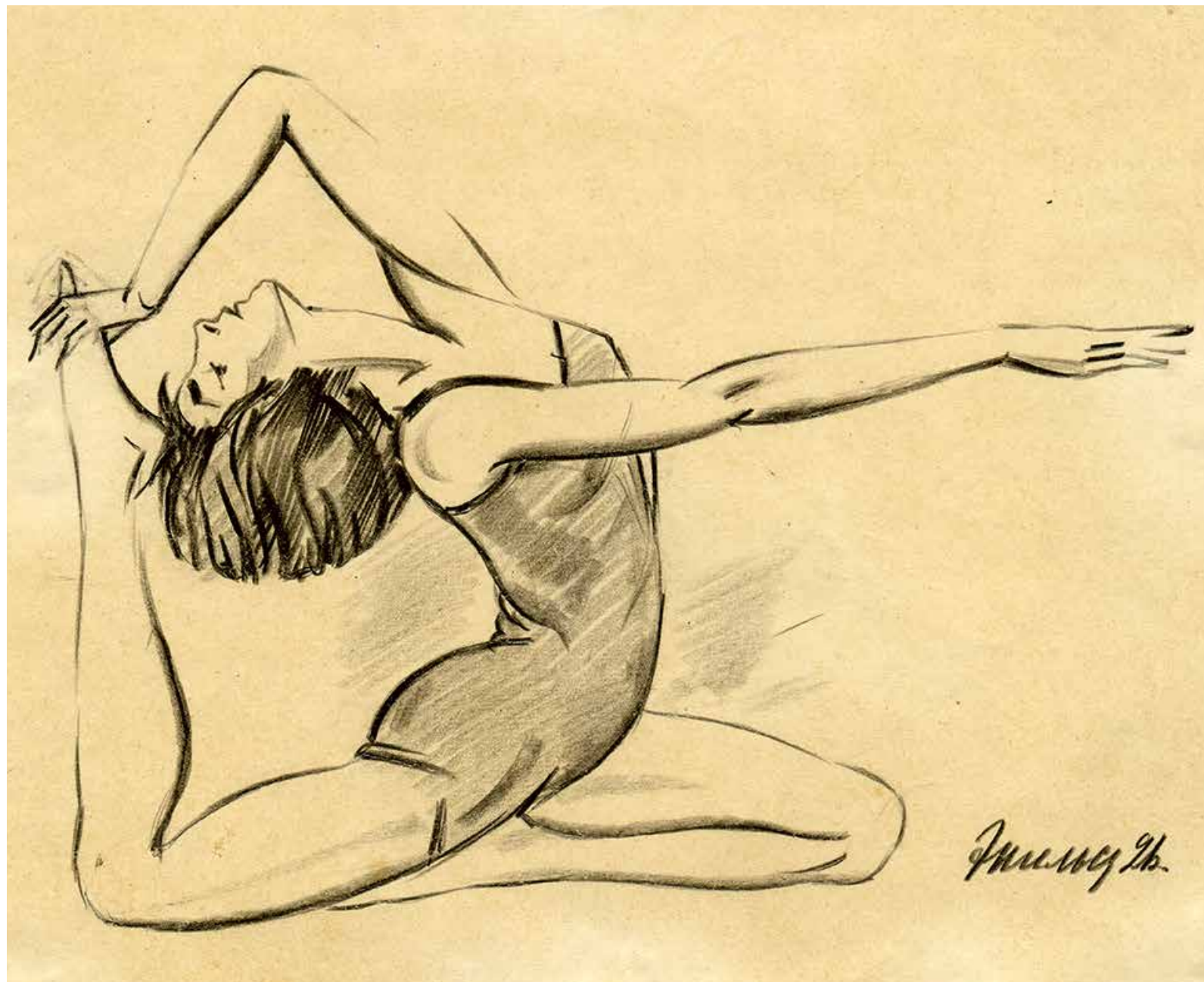
closing of GAKhN. Like so many friends and colleagues, Engel's also vanished into the darkness of the Stalin gulag, at least according to Isakov. However, like a phantom, Engel's seems to have returned from the camps if we can believe a signature dated "1946" on a drawing previously in Sidorov's private collection and now with ROSIZO (State Museum and Exhibition Centre, Moscow) – which would indicate that he had been liberated after the War. This drawing is the last enigmatic trace of Engel's and, unfortunately, Isakov's descendants, who still own the archive today, can supply no further information. For all that, the archive is unique in its focus on the artist's movement drawings of the 1920s and on the photographs by members of the RFO also treating of the art of movement. Presumably, the Choreological Laboratory had instructed Engel's to create relevant drawings of this or that performance, photographers recording the same scene, although the precise details of the assignment are wanting. His albums carrying these photographs seem to be a record which, apparently, he wished to preserve as a personal souvenir or as a way of documenting the phases of the various movement sessions. Even if the photographs are not signed, it is clear that they belong to the photographic élite of the 1920s such as Sergei Rybin, Andrei Teleshev and Nikolai Vlas'evsky for whom Engel's also created



O. Engel's, Plastic
pose, 1926. Pencil
on paper, 23.2 x
18.2 cm. Signed
and dated: "Engel's
1926". OE



personal ex-libris designs. These photographs grant us the opportunity to confront the images impressed on photographic film with his drawings, one of the most articulate interdisciplinary experiments which the Laboratory conducted. The drawings demonstrate that Engel's was an artist not only of profound sensibility, precision and graphic succinctness, but also of an intense sensual energy dynamizing the lines of his graphic interpretations of the model, variegated and forthright, whether static or in movement. In fact, Engel's adjusted each drawing or, rather his technique and figurative means, both to the exigencies of this or that dancer and to the actual type of dance. As a result, we have pencil drawings, stenographic, yet synthetic, tracing an acrobatic movement in a single, rapid stroke, a soft pastel indicating the fluid and plastic movements of Irma Duncan, vigorous, highly coloured collages illustrating ethnic costumes or sharp and



Previous pages:

O. Engel's, A. Khodakova in ballet pose, 1927. Pencil on paper, 10.6 x 4.6 cm. V. Maiia's Art of Dance Ensemble. Inscribed and dated: "Wednesday A. Khodakova 30/IX/1927 6.30". OE

O. Engel's, Acrobatic study, 1926. Gray and black pencil, 18 x 20.4 cm. Signed and dated: "Engels, 26". Class conducted by V. Maiia for the Plastic Section of MGTT. Catalogue of the third "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1927, No. 550. OE

A. Teleshev, Acrobatic pose. Artist's photographic print, 13.8 x 12.6 cm (27 x 20.4 cm mounted oval photograph). AT

syncopated lines rendering the rhythms of the eccentric dances of the music-hall and variety show. Two photographs accompanying the drawings allow us to date the Engel's archive to ca. 1915-ca. 1925: Svishchov-Paola's photo-portrait of Engel's shows us the handsome, earnest, bearded face of an intellectual thirty years old or so (dated "1910s") and one of Rybin's photographs (tacked in blue) on the theme of *Leap*, included in the second "Art of Movement" exhibition in 1926.

All this is to say that Engel's was part of that intimate group of intellectuals, critics, artists and bibliophiles at RAKhN/GAKhN who derived much of their spiritual and philosophical strength from Symbolism, and their *passe-parole*, so to speak, was the *ex-libris* which, with its quintessentially symbolic, if not, often lascivious, imagery, they swapped and bartered, as if belonging to some secret sect. Engel's was, indeed, a member of this brotherhood and, not surprisingly, dedicated at least two versions of an *ex-libris* design to Larionov (then director of the Choreological Laboratory), to the various photographers who collaborated with him and to Liudmila Semenova (p. 132), a celebrated dancer of the time and primary student of the choreographer Vera Maiia who directed one of the studios which Engel's frequented. The collaboration would seem to date from 1925 and 1926 when his presence is often noted in the minutes of the Laboratory sessions. Engel's sent thirty-nine works to the first "Art of Movement" exhibition in 1925 (Nos. 197-229), twenty-three to the second exhibition in 1926 (Nos. 411-33)²⁰⁹ and nineteen to the third session in 1927²¹⁰ (Nos. 536-54), which included three *ex-libris* designs.

The Engel's archive contains a number of rather brazen nude drawings which the artist, clearly, chose not to contribute to the exhibitions, even if many of his sketches there were of ballerinas in the nude. His contributions to the first exhibition demonstrate that he had been visiting many diverse studios, showcasing two Classical arabesques and several poses from performances by Irma Duncan, Goleizovsky, Lukin and Maiia as well as portraits of dancers such as Irina Dubovskaia, Sofiia Ostrovskaia and Rumnev. The second exhibition included his drawings of ethnographic costumes as models of movement and also a drawing of one of Inna Chernetskaia's *Jumps*, an *Erotic Tango* choreographed by Lukin, an eccentric dance interpreted by Ostrovskaia, a *Savage Dance* and a dance entitled *Ecstasy* – a significant addendum to his artistic repertoire. For some reason, Engel's did not contribute to the fourth and last exhibition of 1928.²¹¹

As the three exhibition lists indicate, Engel's worked in close collaboration with photographers, dancers and gymnasts in various studios and also outdoors with Maiia and Tsve-taeva. One of his most impressive drawings of movement is the *jeté* of a female dancer in flight, arms stretched in different directions, legs split and back arched in an elegant thrust and full of dynamic tension, whom he likens to a greyhound – evident from the casual canine sketch on the same sheet. This [image](#) of the *jeté* can be compared to Rybin's photograph called *Leap*, Rybin being one of Engel's's favourite photographers (pp. 278-9).



From the drawings which have come down to us, it seems clear that Engel's made most of them from the life model and perhaps on the basis of a programme dictated by what the Choreological Laboratory had scheduled and made available. In effect, on many of his drawings Engel's indicated not only the day of the session, but also the hour, as well as the names of performer and studio, even if sometimes he did draw poses from memory which had made an especially deep impression. One drawing, in particular, which Engel's has dated 1925, bears immediate testimony to this – of a characteristic pose of Rumnev, who at that very moment was on tour in Germany with Tairov's Chamber Theatre (as is demonstrated by the photographs of him in similar poses signed and dated 1925 by the Hess Studio of Frankfurt, pp. 124-5).

Russian artists – and not only of the Silver Age – were quick to recognize the proximity of the drawing to dance, of line to movement. For example, Sergei Eisenstein, who had started his career as a close colleague of "movers" such as Nikolai Foregger and Sergei Yutkevich, recalled: "Naturally, drawing and dance are born from the same womb, being simply two different embodiments of the same impulse."²¹²

Photographer unknown, V. Masiutin and A. Larionov in Moscow, 1913. 5 x 9.1 cm. Dated: "1 March, 1913". Private collection

Following pages: Centrefold from the journal *Izvestiia fizkul'tury VSFK* [Physical culture news of the Higher Council for Physical Education], Moscow, 1926, No. 2, pp. 12-13

„ИСКУССТВО ДВИЖЕНИЯ“

Под этим названием в январе месяце в Москве дважды открывалась выставка материалов по изучению движения — первый раз 4 января в помещении Государственной академии художественных наук (ГАХН) и во второй — 28 января в помещении Госинфизкультуры.

Экспонатами выставки служат работы Хореологической лаборатории при ГАХН по изучению танца и пляски; художественные фотографии Русского фотографического общества, охватывающие хореографию и в очень небольшой степени физкультуру; фото-моменты трудовых процессов в отдельных их элементах, заснятые Центром, институтом труда; таблицы, диаграммы, стенограммы, планы уроков физ. упражнений и т. п. из музея ГЦИФК и, наконец, спорт. фотографии, выставленные Физкультиздатом.

Из работ особое внимание привлекают таблицы Н. С. Познякова по записи движения рук и ног, позволяющие при помощи особой системы (имеющей общие принципы с музыкальной нотной записью) быстро записывать и читать различные положения этих конечностей. Система записи может быть с успехом применена для гимнастических упражнений.

Интересна также стенограмма записи движения А. А. Сидорова, более применимая к упражнениям спортивного порядка, так как дает возможность производить запись упражнений с сильно выраженной динамикой.

Спортивные фотографии, иллюстрирующие отдельные моменты соревнований по различным видам спорта, заснятые в естественной обстановке, в большинстве случаев ненормальной, под угрозой поломки аппарата футбольным мячом и т. п., в техническом и отчасти художественном отношении значительно уступают фотографиям РФО, выполненным на 90% при искусственно созданных обстановке, освещении и к тому же в момент пребывания объекта съемки в статическом положении, что способствует более резкой фиксации фигуры на фото-пленке. Кроме того, эти работы, не будучи связаны срочностью выполнения, подвергаются тщательной и длительной обработке, в то время, как от спортивной фотографии, запечатлевающей события дня, хронике, требуется быстрая сдача в редакцию, что исключает возмож-

ность ее художественной отделки. Подробнее о трудностях спортивных съемок — в следующем раз.

Для физкультурников и руководителей физкультуры, выставка, поскольку она предоставляет материалы по изучению эстетического, трудового и гигиенического движения, имеет громадное значение.

Эти три направления (эстетическое, гигиеническое и трудовое), преследуемые нашим воспитательным методом, — сказал т. Семашко на открытии выставки, — не должны идти каждое своим путем, а отобрав из них самое лучшее, разумное и полезное, слить это все воедино для создания культурного во всех отношениях человека.

Русский народ, таящий в себе огромные дарования, не будучи в своей большей массе культурно воспитан, не умеет экономно расходовать свои силы и энергию в работе; не зная самых элементарных правил порядка движения, не умеет ходить по улицам, так, чтобы не давить ноги прохожим; не соблюдает даже основных правил гигиены и т. д. и т. п. У культурного же человека во всем движении рассчитаны, четки, точны и просты — работая, он не производит лишних, ненужных движений, которые главным образом и являются фактором преждевременного переутомления; идя по улицам, он не наталкивается на прохожих и в то же время не мешает им; он не попадает под трамвай или экипаж, так как он и внимателен, и умеет быстро заставить свое тело или остановиться, или двинуться в безопасное место; никогда в таких случаях он не будет метаться из стороны в сторону, что обычно у людей, физкультурно невоспитанных, имеет печальный финал — беспомощный человек оказывается сначала под колесами, а затем в хирургической больнице.

Вот почему нашей очередной задачей становится не только поддержка настоящей выставки, но и всемерное распространение этого хорошего начала и повсеместная организация подобных ей (может быть даже передвижных) выставок. При выборе же материалов для выставки, в первую очередь следует отдавать предпочтение экспонатам, более конкретно, применительно к бытовым условиям, указывающим на все наши недостатки в этой области, противопоставляя рядом правильные навыки.

П. Р.





N. Svishchov-Paola, *Spanish Dance (Al'perova)*, 1926. Artist's photographic print, 23.3 x 13 cm (26.4 x 14.4 cm mounted). Signed on the mount: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow". Second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926. RGALI

S. Rybin, *Plastic pose*, 1926. Artist's photographic print, 21.6 x 16.5 cm. Signed and dated on the photograph: "Rybin S. 1926 IV 12". Second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926. OE

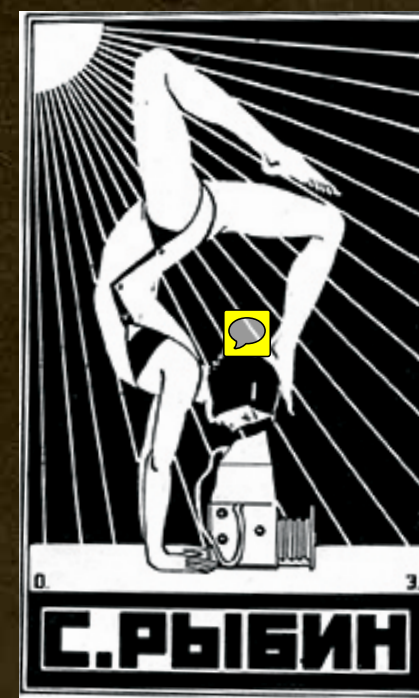
O. Engel's, *Ex-libris design for S. Rybin*, 1926. Etching, 5.6 x 3.5 cm. Signed: "O.E.". Catalogue of the third "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1927, No. 153. OE

THE SECOND EXHIBITION, MOSCOW, 1926

The first "Art of Movement" exhibition of 1925 was followed by three more, each accompanied by a published catalogue, the second session being of particular importance. Open from 4-10 January, 1926, the second exhibition generated ample press coverage and, unlike the others, has left us one important visual document – a centrefold published in the journal *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul'tury VSEK* [Physical culture news of the Higher Council for Physical Education] (pp. 138-9).²¹³ Thanks to this double spread we can both identify a number of the drawings and photographs and understand how the show had been structured and the images organized. Evidently, the installation was minimal, consisting of wide, dark-coloured panels standing between the columns of the hall at regular intervals, each one showing groups of drawings or photographs according to this or that artist or technique.

As at the first "Art of Movement", numerically, the *danse plastique* constituted the epicentre, the moreso since many of the photographs shown the year before almost in secret were now being legitimized within this broader and well-articulated selection. Once again, the photographers who contributed were prominent members of RFO (an official partner of this initiative), by and large, the same, with Eremin, Nappel'baum, Svishchov-Paola and Zhivago at the forefront. Movement was their primary subject-matter and the various studios, from Maïia's to Chernetskaia's, from Alekseeva's to Tsvetaeva's, coupled with the names of distinguished photographers of the time indicated that the ecstatic element of the plastic dance had now entered the realm of mechanical reproduction, even if sculpture and the graphic arts still constituted a section at the exhibition, however minor. Ivan Efimov, more celebrated as a sculptor, for example, contributed graphic interpretations of plastic poses, three with Eli Rabenek's, including her dance with a scarf (Nos. 390-96), while Vatin showed three bronze and plaster statuettes based on choreographies by Natal'ia Glan and Tsvetaeva (Nos. 356-60); other submissions included drawings by Boris Erdman, Dani, Engel's and Goleizovsky who, as artist rather than choreographer here, showed terracotta figurines, including an exotic Java dancer (No. 371) as well as drawings of movements (Nos. 361-70). In the panoramic photograph it is difficult to attribute all the respective statuettes, because they are standing very close together, although, generally speaking, Vatin's were more rigid in their movements, while Goleizovsky, a dancer, could feel and convey their flexibility, as we can see from Vlas'evsky's 1926 photograph of Itta Penzo (p. 147) and an anonymous one capturing her audacious pose in Goleizovsky's plaster figure (present whereabouts unknown, p. 146).

Goleizovsky's contribution was the greater in terms not only of his own artifacts, but also of the number of artists and photographers who had chosen to represent his choreographies and dancers. Such was the case with Erdman and his costume designs for the ballet *Joseph the Beautiful* (Nos. 432-42) which Goleizovsky (pp. 148-9) had presented





at the Experimental Affiliation of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in 1925 which had already been well received at the first “Art of Movement” exhibition. The same was true for Svishchov-Paola with his photographs of Goleizovsky and Tat’iana Kutasova dancing her Spanish, Ethiopian and eccentric dances (Nos. 330-337). With his eighty-three photographs (Nos. 277-349) of ascendent stars such as Sbrui Azarpetian, Vera Drutskaia, Irma Duncan, Lukin, Rumnev and A. I. Shapovalova, Svishchov-Paola proved that he was the leading photographer of the *danse plastique* – his elegant pictorialism even including ju-jitsu poses adopted by a teacher from a local police college! In an effort to balance the wealth of bold poses and Decadent images supplied by the members of RFO to the exhibition, the Choreological Laboratory and the RFO worked in concert with the editorial offices of the sports journal *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul’tury VSFK* (see above) and even with a scientific research facility, i.e. Aleksei Gastev’s TsIT.²¹⁴ In other words, an important mission of the second “Art of Movement” exhibition was, at least manifestly, to move away from emphasis on carnal sensuality and, instead, to delineate three principal fields for the study of movement. As Larionov asserted in his introduction to the catalogue:

The... movements of the human body can be divided into three basic groups of movements dependent upon the ultimate goals which they pursue. Artistic movements can be accommodated within the first group, i.e. the dance, ballet, *plastique*, various kinds of gymnastics... Physical culture movements intended to have a hygienic and physiological effect on the organism can be accommodated within the second group (all types of pedagogical gymnastics such as Swedish workouts or exercises by the *sokoly*) together with all types of sports, martial arts etc. Finally, the third group consists of working and labour movements intended to produce things of material value. All three groups of movements should be studied in appropriate scientific institutions, namely: artistic movement in the Choreological Laboratory at GAKhN, physical culture by the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Higher Council for Physical Education and labour movement at the Central Institute of Labour.²¹⁵

At first glance, it would seem that the approaches to gymnastics and labour at TsIT differed from the research methods employed at the Choreological Laboratory:

After all, the Laboratory dealt with issues of the art of movement on the basis of experimental research, the more so since it started out under the assumption that artistic movement was distinctive. “The methodology of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Higher Council for Physical Education is founded on the physiological, psychotechnical and biometric study of the organism, that of TsIT on bio-mechanics, physiotechnics and psychotechnics.”²¹⁶

Nevertheless, the different methodologies did interconnect, the “reciprocal isolation of these sectors of movement pointing to a single instrument of research... these same methodologies tend to interfuse and to link up with all the movement groups and, thereby, to integrate different kinds of phenomena which flourish on the one soil of the movements of the human body.”²¹⁷



V. Vatagin, *Ballerina*, ca. 1925. Painted wood, h 39 cm. GTG



Larionov's words, however, also indicate that the attempt to organize movements, each within its delegated field, and, consequently, to record them, did not always work. For example, Zhivago, on the one hand, promoted himself as an art photographer with his shots of Chernetskaya's "Expressionist" dances such as *Danse Macabre* and *Pan*, and, on the other, as an objective press photographer with sports scenes such as [image](#) No. 203 showing the finish of a 200 metre race.

In fact, the sports section at the second exhibition boasted the most celebrated names in sports photography at that time, such as Grigori Iossa and Sergei Krasinsky, and an amazing variety of subjects caught by the camera, including football, tennis, swimming, running and fencing – all of which helped to balance the racier photographs from RFO. Furthermore, true to its new mission (to try and make the exhibitions more scientific), the Choreological Laboratory inserted a sequence of movement diagrams and notations into the introductory section which its members had compiled, i.e. Larionov, Olga Lizgunova (dancer and one-time secretary of the Laboratory), Pozniakov and Sidorov (Nos. 1-14). These included Larionov's "differential" system, Sidorov's system of photographic registration, several examples of the transcription of specific movements according to Pozniakov's analytical system as well as Olga Desmond's "historical" graphic notations.

N.Vlas'evsky, *Itta Penzo. Bridge on demi-point*, 1926. Original photographic print, 22.5 x 17.2 cm. Signed: "Vlas'evsky". Catalogue of the second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926, No. 147. OE

Photographer unknown, *Sculpture* by V. Vatagin. Original photograph, 8 x 8.1 cm. Second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926. KG



Photographer unknown, Sculpture by K. Goleizovsky (present whereabouts unknown), 1925 (?). Original print, 23 x 14.3 cm. Itta Penzo in the role of Taiakh in the ballet *Joseph the Beautiful*, 1925. Music by S. Vasilenko, designs by B. Erdman and choreography by K. Goleizovsky. Catalogue of the second “Art of Movement” exhibition, 1926, No. 148-50. KG

N. Vlas'evsky, Itta Penzo in the role of Taiakh in the ballet *Joseph the Beautiful*, 1926. Artist's photographic print, 23.2 x 15 cm. Signed: “Vlas'evsky”. Music by S. Vasilenko, designs by B. Erdman and choreography by K. Goleizovsky for the Odessa Theatre of Opera and Ballet, 1926. Catalogue of the second “Art of Movement” exhibition, 1926, Nos. 148-50. KG

These were complemented by other notations (pp. 430-1) which Nina Aleksandrova's Association of Rhythmists had put together (Nos. 113-25), the Association now being affiliated with RAKhN after the reorganization of the private studios in 1924. An accredited partner, TsIT also played a central role at the exhibition (Nos. 27-44), especially since Sidorov was fascinated by the artistic potentials of chronophotography and Larionov, the “engineer”, by its technology. The TsIT materials consisted of graphs, chronophotographs and photographic cyclograms of different labour movements such as cutting with a chisel, working with a saw and a hammer, a blacksmith striking and forging a piece of iron and digging with a shovel – each of which had been transcribed to show the correct trajectory of this or that movement as well as the ergonomic posture of the subject. Unlike the first “Art of Movement” exhibition, the second was open to the public (although only for six days). During the last three days there was an average of 120 visitors every day and after its closure the exhibition reopened 28 January at the Higher Council for Physical Education for another three weeks, attracting a grand total of 537 visitors. This time the local press – from *Pravda* for 5 January and *Vecherniaia Moskva* [Evening Moscow] for 8 January to *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul'tury VSKF* for 9 January – took due note of the event, even if reviews were brief.²¹⁸ The Choreological Laboratory now emerged from the fray with greater assurance and aplomb thanks to the concentration on sports and labour and could now start to organize the next exhibition, devoting much of 1926 expressly to that project.

True, some members of the Laboratory did try to find a compromise, at least, in theory, with the new political directives to the effect that the body must belong to the collective, great or small. For example, after the second exhibition Yavorsky proposed a new artistic form called the “PhysCultDance” (physical education through dance)²¹⁹ which was to have revitalized the military (and male) element of dance as opposed to all the bourgeois Duncanisms (female).

If the second exhibition owed much of its success to the collaboration with TsIT, the Laboratory (Larionov, Pozniakov, Sidorov) still manifested a certain scepticism towards the mechanical registration of movements via, for example, the cyclograph (“appropriate only for elementary movements”)²²⁰ and similar TsIT gadgets – and this in spite of contrary statements in the exhibition catalogue to the effect that both labour and artistic movements were to be recorded with specific instruments and were not interchangeable. The Laboratory did not regard the art of movement and Taylorism to be compatible, even if “artistic” experiments were also being undertaken at TsIT – for example, by the Projection Theatre and by the painters Sergei Luchishkin and Solomon Nikritin in 1923 whom TsIT invited to work on short Taylorist propaganda pieces (p. 175).²²¹ But perhaps the experiments of Nikritin and his young colleagues were too “avant-garde” for the tastes of the Laboratory members so that, as one might expect, TsIT was not invited to the third “Art of Movement” exhibition.





Previous pages:

K. Goleizovsky, Couple dancing, early 1920s. Collage, watercolour, pencil and varnish on cardboard, 36.5 x 30 cm. KG

B. Erdman, *Egyptian Dance*, 1925. Costume design for *Joseph the Beautiful*. Collage and varnish on plywood, 38 x 30 cm. Music by S. Vasilenko, designs by B. Erdman and choreography by K. Goleizovsky. Experimental Affiliation of the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, 1925. KG

¹⁹⁴ GAKhN put together a special folder of documents relevant to the four exhibitions. See OR-GT'sTMB, f. 517, ed. khr. 134, folder No. 7.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., l. 2.

¹⁹⁶ "Protokol zasedaniia Komissii po organizatsii i vystavki 'Iskusstvo dvizheniia'" (20 December, 1924). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517 (GAKhN), ed. khr. 134 (folder No. 7), l. 8.

¹⁹⁷ Anon. [A. Sidorov and A. Larionov]: *Katalog zakrytoi vystavki po iskusstvu dvizheniia, organizovannoi Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii RAKhN i Russkim Fotograficheskim obshchestvom*, 1925. Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: 1925, f. 517 (GAKhN), ed. khr. 134 (folder No. 7), ll. 35-50.

¹⁹⁸ S. Storozhenko: "Lichnoe delo" in RGALI: f. 941, op. 10, ed. khr. 598.

¹⁹⁹ "Otchet o deiatel'nosti Russkogo Fotograficheskogo obshchestva s 1/X/1924 po 1/7/1925 (Pravleniiu GAKhN)" (25 July, 1925), l. 188.

²⁰⁰ Anon. [Sidorov and Larionov], *Katalog zakrytoi vystavki po iskusstvu dvizheniia*, f. 517 (GAKhN), ed. khr. 134, l. 38.

²⁰¹ V. Stigneev: "Fotografiia na vystavkakh, 'Iskusstvo dvizheniia'" in Duksina and Misler, *Chelovek plasticheskii*, pp. 19-22.

²⁰² For the history of the relationship between RFO and RA-

KhN/GAKhN (from 1922 onwards) see A. Sidorov: "Fotografiia v orbite khudozhestvennykh nauk" in *Sovetskaia fotografiia za 10 let*. Catalogue of the exhibition, M: Izdanie Komiteta, 1928, pp. 5-8.

²⁰³ See S. Sebriakov: "B.P. Podluzsky" (obituary) in *Iskusstvo*, M, 1928, Book 1-2, p. 174-75.

²⁰⁴ Vagina, *V. A. Vagin*, p. 67.

²⁰⁵ The archive was first brought to light at the exhibition "The Unknown Engel's" in Moscow in 1996. See N. Misler, ed.: *Neizvestnyi Engel's. Vystavka proizvedenii zhivopisi i grafiki O. V. Engel'sa*. Catalogue of exhibition at the Gallery on the Solianka, M, 1997.

²⁰⁶ A brief biographical reference is to be found in D. Mitrokhin, P. Neradovsky and A. Sokolovsky, eds.: *Knizhnye znaki russkikh khudozhnikov*, P: Petropolis, 1922, pp. 217-18.

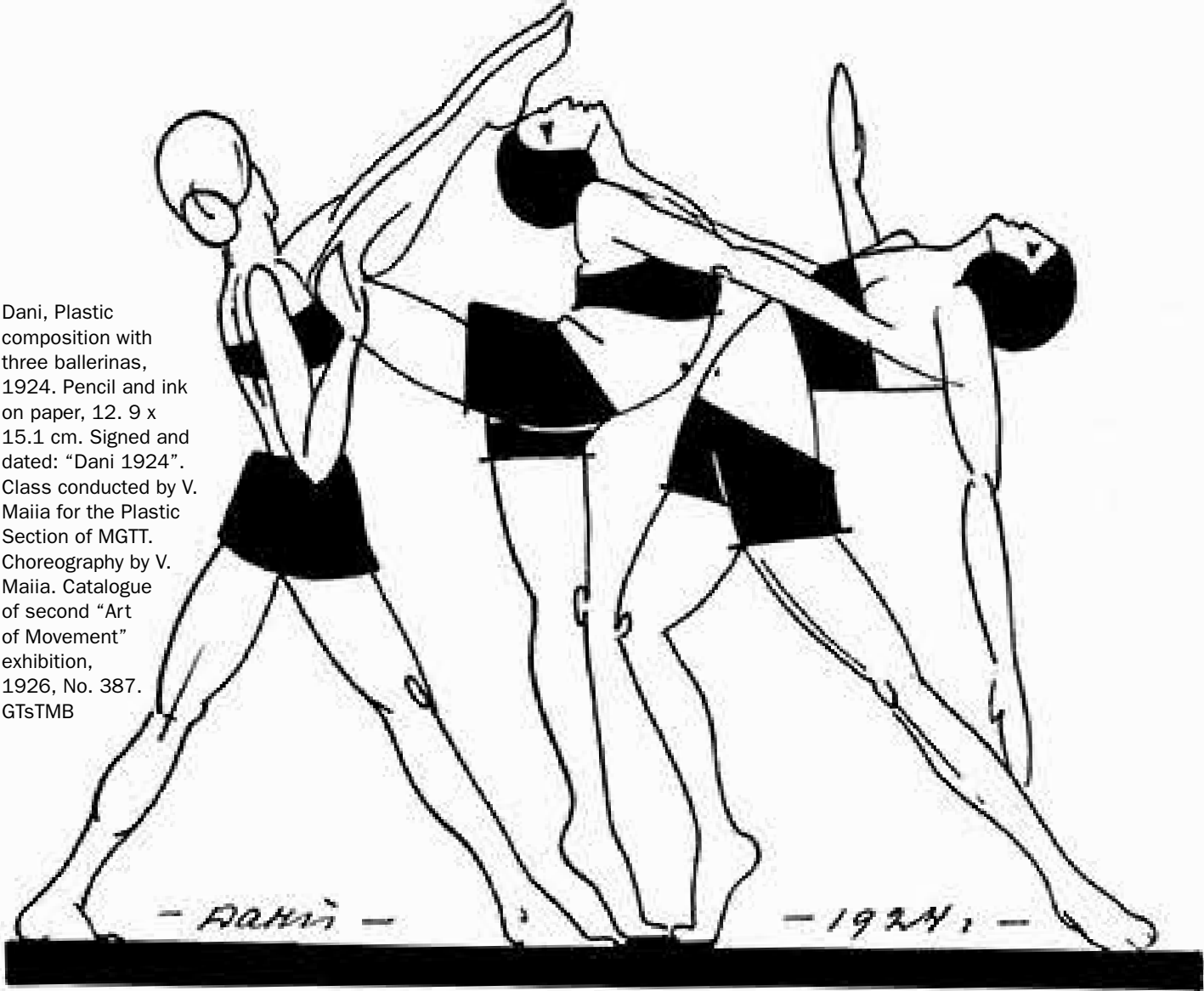
²⁰⁷ Both photographs are in a private Masiutin archive in Berlin. See I. Galeev, ed.: *Vasilii Nikolaevich Masiutin (1884-1955). Gravura, risunok, zhivopis'*. Catalogue of exhibition at the Galeev Gallery, M, 2012, where the photographs are reproduced on pp. 263 and 256 respectively.

²⁰⁸ E. Butorina et al., eds.: *Vystavki sovetskogo izobrazitel'ogo iskusstva. Spravochnik Vol. I, 1917-1932*, M: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1965. The last reference to Engel's as a contributor to exhibitions is in



N. Svishchov-Paola, Plastic pose, 1920s. Artist's photographic print, 14.8 x 24 cm (22.4 x 26.2 cm mounted). Signed on the mount: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow". Choreography by V. Maiia. RGALI

S. Storozhenko, Acrobatic pose, 1925. Pencil and watercolour on paper, 23.1 x 16.4 cm. Signed and dated: "S. Storozhenko 1925". Catalogue of the second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926, No. 397. GTsTMB



Dani, Plastic composition with three ballerinas, 1924. Pencil and ink on paper, 12.9 x 15.1 cm. Signed and dated: "Dani 1924". Class conducted by V. Maiia for the Plastic Section of MGTT. Choreography by V. Maiia. Catalogue of second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926, No. 387. GTsTMB

1929 at an exhibition of woodcuts at the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow which Sidorov organized – and, curiously enough, at the fifth exhibition of the International Bookplate Association held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, also in 1929 (catalogue, pp. 299, 336).

²⁰⁹ *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog vtoroi vystavki*, M, 1926, p. 24.

²¹⁰ *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog tret'ei vystavki*, M, 1927, p. 32

²¹¹ *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Bewegungskunst. Katalog chetvertoi vystavki*, M: GAKhN, 1928.

²¹² S. Eizenshtein: *Memuary*, Vol. 2, p. 123. Quoted in V. Shcherbakov: *Pantominy Serebriannogo veka*, SP: Peterburgskii teatral'nyi zhurnal, 2014, p. 243.

²¹³ Anon.: "Vystavka 'Iskusstvo dvizheniia'" in *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul'tury VSEK*, M, 1926, No. 2, pp. 10-11.

²¹⁴ N. Misler: "L'uomo di ferro leninista. Aleksej Gastev e l'Istituto Centrale del Lavoro (CIT) e il Teatro del Progetto" in A. De Magistris et al., eds.: *Le culture della tecnica*, Turin: Archivio Storico dell'AMMA, Nuova serie, 2011, No. 21-22, pp. 135-54. Also see K. Johansson: *A. Gastev. Proletarian Bard of the Machine Age*, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1983.

²¹⁵ A. Larionov: "Izuchenie dvizheniia" in *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog vtoroi vystavki*, M: GAKhN, 1926, pp. 7-8.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

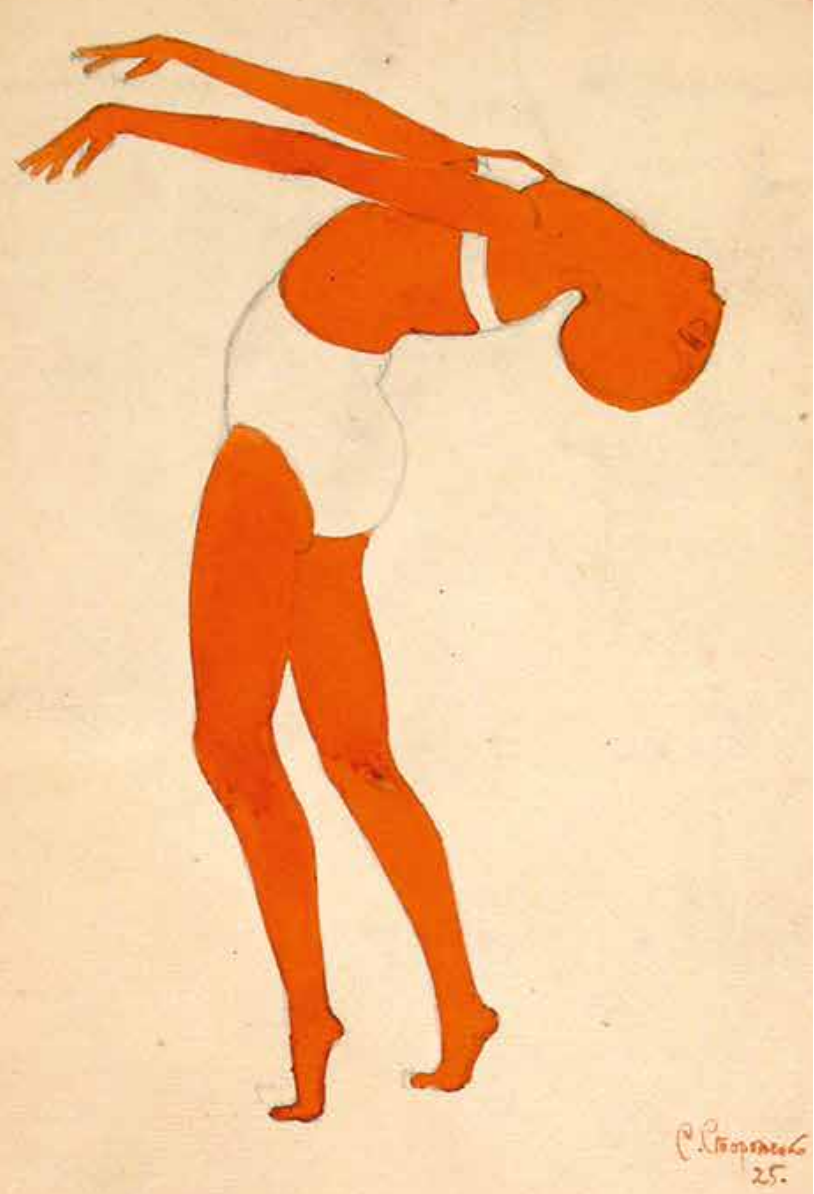
²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

²¹⁸ See V.L. [=Viktor Lobanov]: "Iskusstvo dvizheniia (v rubrike po vystavkam)" in *Vecherniaia Moskva*, M, 1926, 8 January, No. 6, p. 3; and anon.: "Vystavka 'Iskusstvo dvizheniia'" in *Izvestiia VTsIK*, M, 1926, Saturday, 9 January, No. 7, p. 7.

²¹⁹ E. Yavorsky: "Osnovy teorii fizkul'tantsa" in "Protokol No. 21/41 zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii" (12 May, 1926). Typescript in RGALI: f. 94, op.17, ed. khr. 11, l. 75.

²²⁰ E. Yavorsky: "Analiticheskaia sistema zapisi telodvizhenii" in "Protokol '7 (15) otkrytogo zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii (RAKhN)" (13 January, 1925). Typescript in RGALI: Call No.: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 11, l. 5.

²²¹ On this collaboration see N. Misler: "The Art of Movement" in M. Tsantsanoglou, ed.: *Spheres of Light. Stations of Darkness. The Art of Solomon Nikritin*. Catalogue of exhibition at the State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, 2004, pp. 362-69.



N. Svishchov-Paola, Egyptian prayer (A. [Shapavalova](#)), early 1920s. Original photographic print, 8.4 x 5.8 cm. Catalogue of the second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926, No. 299. RGALI

O. Engel's, Oriental dance, mid-1920s. Collage and coloured paper on paper, 23.6 x 23.2 cm. Catalogue of the third "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1927, No. 543. OE





N. Svishchov-Paola, Ethnic Dance: Chaban, mid-1920s. Artist's photographic print, 19.5 x 16 cm (23.5 x 19.5 cm on mount). Signed on the mount: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow". Catalogue of the second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926, Nos. 279-81. RGALI

N. Svishchov-Paola, Acrobatic pose, early 1920s. Artist's photographic print, 28.5 x 19.4 cm. Signed: "SP. N". Studio of V. Maïia. Second "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1926. RGALI

O. Engel's, Dance pose, 1926. Pencil and crayons on paper, 28.5 x 21 cm. Dated: "7/1/ 1926". Class conducted by V. Maïia for the Plastic Section of MGTT. OE







Previous pages:

N. Svishchov-Paola, Plastic study, early 1920s. Artist's original print, 21.8 x 17.5 cm. Signed: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow". Second "Art of Movement" exhibition 1926. RGALI

O. Engel's, Plastic study, early 1920s. Pencil on paper, 15.8 x 19.7 cm. OE

Cover of *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul'tury VSFK* [Physical culture news of the Higher Council for Physical Education], Moscow, 1925, No. 3

Cover of *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul'tury VSFK* [Physical culture news of the Higher Council for Physical Education], Moscow, 1925, No. 7-8

Cover of *Izvestiia fizicheskoi kul'tury VSFK* [Physical culture news of the Higher Council for Physical Education], Moscow, 1925, No. 13-14

IX

The Third “Art of Movement” Exhibition, Moscow, 1927



O. Amosova, *Shaman Ritual Dance in Tuva*, 1920s. Oil on canvas, 106.7 x 148 cm. Some of the preparatory drawings for this painting are listed in the catalogue of the third “Art of Movement” exhibition, Moscow, 1927, between Nos. 125-64. Private collection



SVISHCHOV-PAOLA (SVISHCHOV),
NIKOLAI IVANOVICH

Moscow, 1874-1964

Foremost pictorialist photographer. Born into a family of business people. Worked as an assistant in various Moscow photography studios. 1906 member of the RFO. Began to contribute to international exhibitions. 1908 opened a studio in central Moscow, adding the exotic, Italianate “Paolo” to his surname. Concentrated on the female nude and portraits, one of his most celebrated being that of Sergei Esenin. As photographer, noted for his use of gum arabic and bromol in the printing process, attaining the effect of a soft, almost pastel *sfumatura* in his imagery by using the “monocle” lens. 1925 Gold Medal at the “Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels” in Paris for his celebrated photograph *Blond*. As member of the RFO contributed to all the “Art of Movement” exhibitions. 1940 worked as photographer for various Moscow museums. 1950s taught photography in one of the Moscow Houses of Pioneers.

YANSON-MANIZER, ELENA
ALEKSANDROVNA

Peterhof, 1890 - Moscow, 1961

Sculptress. Hailed from a family of craftsmen. 1911 after graduating from grammar school, took private classes in architecture under Elizaveta Bagaeva in St. Petersburg before enrolling in the Department of Architecture at the Petrograd Polytechnic and then, in 1921-22, in the Department of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts (Vkhutemas). After working for the theatre, enrolled in the Department of Sculpture at Vkhutein directed by Matvei Manizer who, in 1926, became her husband. 1927 showed some of her elegant statues at the third “Art of Movement” exhibition at GAKhN: presumably, collaboration with the Choreological Laboratory prompted her interest in the female dance in sculpture. 1938 especially interested in monumental sculpture, received prestigious commissions such as the ceramic bas-relief medallions for the Dynamo metro station in Moscow, revealing her predilection for the female figure as sportswoman imbued with the grace of the dance. 1930s installed monumental bronze statues in the Moscow and Leningrad Parks of Culture and Rest. 1930s-40s celebrated for her interpretations of ballets and Soviet ballerinas, including Maya Plisetskaya and Galina Ulanova. 1947-52 taught at the Institute of Decorative and Applied Arts in Moscow.



Рис. 1. Фотография Б. Н. Гинзбург. — Парный мужской прыжок.
Из цикла ритмических движений.



Рис. 2. Из того же цикла. Преминоранная фотография
Н. И. Власовского — смешанный прыжок.

ВЫСТАВКА „ИСКУССТВО ДВИЖЕНИЯ“

ОРГАНИЗОВАННАЯ хореологической лабораторией Гос. Акад. Худ. Наук совместно с Рус. Фотограф. об-вом и ВСФК третья очередная выставка „Искусство движения“ посвящена, подобно двум предыдущим, проблемам художественного изображения различных форм движения в графических искусствах и фотографии. В плане выставки находится изучение художественно-сценических физкультурных, массовых и трудовых движений, но поскольку основное ядро выставки составляют работы хореологической лаборатории, задачи которой сосредоточиваются главным образом на изучении только сценического движения в его разнообразных видах, то и на выставке мы видим наиболее полно представленную эту группу движений. В этой части лабораторией проделана большая и ценная на-



Рис. 3. Конькобежец — скульптура М. Г. Маннзера.

ним движениям, экспонаты графики и скульптуры, выполненные группой ленинградских скульпторов Г. С. Кирпичниковой, М. Г. Маннзер и Е. А. Янсон под общей редакцией М. Маннзера, и отлитых из бронзы Госпромцветметаллом. Серия эта включает в себе ряд круглых скульптур и барельефов, посвященных различным видам физ. упражнений. Надо полагать, что работы эти получат достойную оценку и популярность, так как восполняют собой пробел в советском искусстве по отображению физкультурных мотивов. В смысле богатства динамичности физкультурные движения представляют особый интерес для изобрази-

тельного искусства, к тому же глубоко современный по своему содержанию, и нужно полагать, что на следующих выставках искусства движения нам будет показана углубленная работа на этом пути.



Рис. 5. Старт бега — скульптура Г. С. Кирпичниковой.



Рис. 4. Баскетболистка — скульптура Е. А. Янсон.

учная работа по изучению движений танца (сценического, народно-бытового и ритуального), а также различных систем, начиная от ритмической гимнастики Ж. Далькроза и до новейших течений.

Переходя к остальным видам движений, намеченных в плане выставки, как-то трудовым и массовым, нужно признать, что эти отделы представлены менее полно. В отношении интересующих нас физкультурных движений, представленных экспонатами ВСФК и работами отдельных фотографов и художников, мы, к сожалению, ничего не видим в смысле научного подхода, к их изучению работ, аналогичных тем, которые представлены на выставке хореологической лабораторией. Прекрасно выполненные экспонаты ВСФК (фотогр. В. Р. Живаго), представляющие собой ценные материалы для изучения техники и приемов выполнения различных видов физ. упражнений, к сожалению, не представляют собой интереса в смысле новизны, так как за малым исключением они почти все фигурировали уже на предыдущей выставке.

Подобные повторения в смысле экспонируемого материала лишают выставку той остроты новизны, которая является характерной для всякой выставки и которую мы вправе ожидать от нее.

Значительно большее внимание привлекают к себе на выставке из материала, посвященного физкультур-

Тhat the subject of the costume was of particular interest to the Choreological Laboratory is also evident from the third “Art of Movement” exhibition to which Aleksei Sidorov contributed a number of photographs and diagrams under the rubric “Research Materials Concerning the Influence of Costume on Movement and the Image of the Dance. Movements with a White Shawl. Photographic Registration and Analysis.”³²⁸ Aleksandr Larionov also contributed a number of “reconstructions” of costumes from antiquity with dancers in various chitons, himatons and Pallas and pseudo-Minoan costumes, as we see from photographs in the Chernet-skaia archive.

The third exhibition was very well attended and enjoyed a remarkable public success. Like the preceding sessions, it was open throughout the January recess in the Great Hall of GAKhN, although this time for even longer, i.e. for ten days and with a grand total of 660 visitors.³²⁹ Well reviewed in the press, the exhibition promoted the idea of dance as the new synthetic art, something which Kandinsky had validated long before, but which was now being tempered by the exigencies of the time:

In this regard, the history of the three GAKhN exhibitions is very curious. They are meant to illustrate the study of dance. This is the first time an exhibition had been regarded exclusively as being auxiliary to the work done at the Laboratory. However, at the first exhibition the best photograph turned out to be one of physical education, conveying the impression of movement and flight in all its fullness. In other words, the art of movement, the art of conveying movement, was forced to yield its primacy. GAKhN cannot fail to understand that the very boundary between the dance spectacle and the acrobatic or sporting spectacle is very unstable. Now is the time to bring dance and physical culture closer together! The Choreological Laboratory has redoubled its attention to the study of movement in all its manifestations: the Exhibition grants a special place to photographs of labour and machine movements. It transpires that the “synthesis” in question can be attained in various ways.³³⁰

On the threshold of major moves in the political arena towards Stalinism, the third exhibition called for an even greater scientific motivation and, consequently, tried to involve other important institutions of the hard sciences such as the State Institute of Reflexology, the Institute for the Study of the Brain and the Psychoneurological Laboratory. Mention should also be made of the Organizational Office of the Choreological Laboratory, the RFO directed by Evgenii Piotrovsky, GAKhN's Photographic Cabinet directed by Boris Podluzsky and the Higher Council for Physical Education (VSFK) directed by I.M. Yablonsky. A special section of the exhibition paid homage to the school of Isadora Duncan (Nos. 165-89), recently deceased in a tragic accident (on 14 September, 1927), but who, in one way or another, had left a deep impression on all the Russian exponents of the New Dance.

Divided into six large sections, the third exhibition showed the systematization of every type of movement: artistic movement (including gymnastics), sports, work (whether in factory or field), circus (acrobats, jugglers, etc.) and mass or collective. Almost 600

Anon., review of the third “Art of Movement” exhibition in *Izvestia fizkul'tury VSFK* [Physical culture news of the Higher Council for Physical Education], Moscow, 1927, No. 2, p. 10

A. Teleshev, Couple jumping. Artist's original print, 3.6 x 5.3 cm. AT

O. Engel's, Couple jumping, 1918. Pencil on paper, 21.4 x 23.7 cm. Dated: “4/ II/1918”. OE



E. Yanson-Manizer,
Basketball Player,
1926. Bronze, h.
39.4 cm. GTG.
Formerly in the
collection of A.
Sidorov

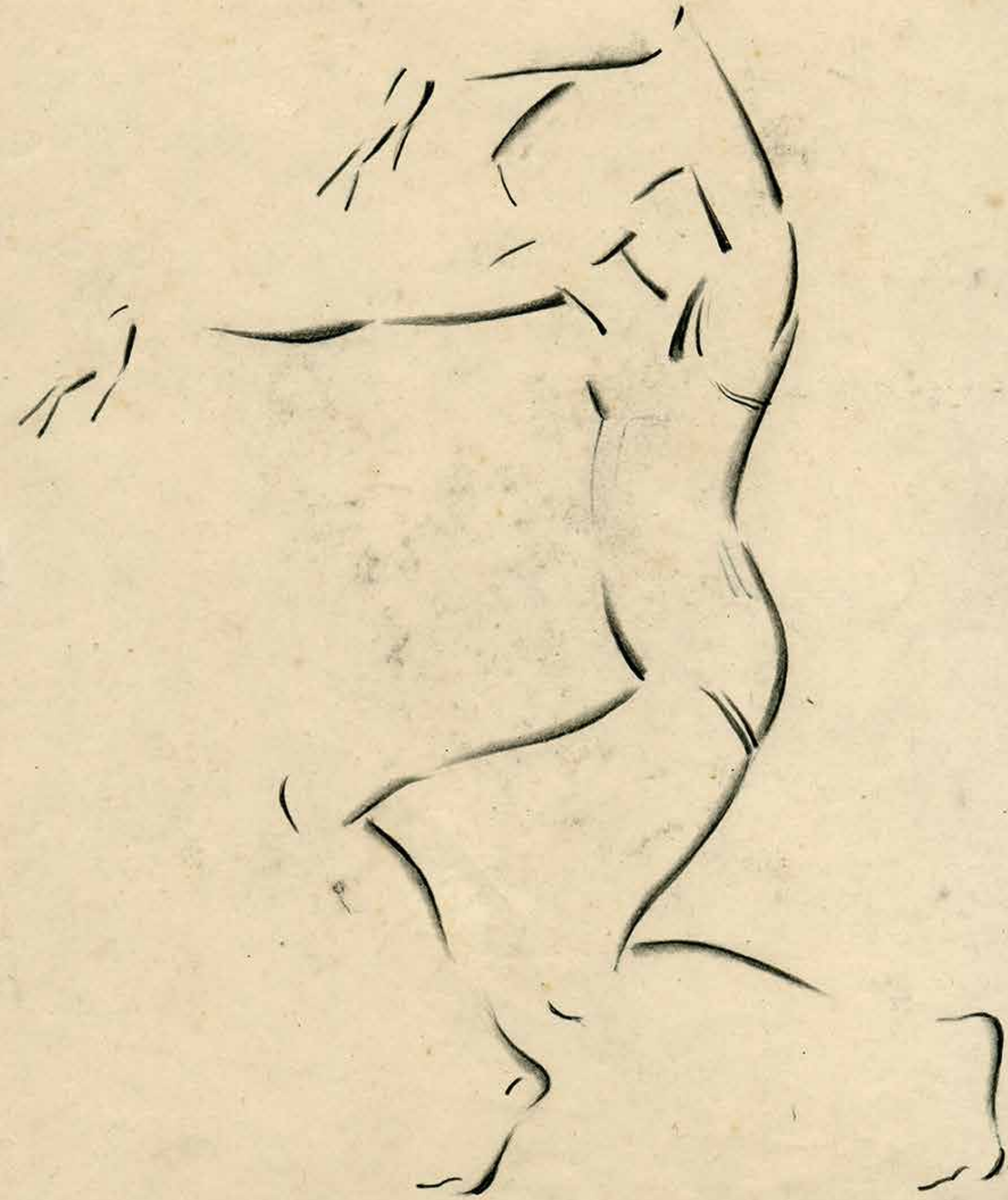
E. Yanson-Manizer,
Swimming Contest.
*On Your Marks! Get
Set! Go!*, 1926.
Bronze, h. 38 cm.
GTG. Formerly in
the collection of
A. Sidorov



Following pages:

A. Grinberg (?),
Ornamental plastic
pose, mid-1920s.
Artist's photographic
print, 22.8 x 14 cm
(24.3 x 15.3 cm
mounted). Catalogue
of the third
"Art of Movement"
exhibition, 1927,
No. 277. OE

O. Engel's, *Plastic
study*, 1926. Pencil
and ink on paper,
25 x 20 cm. Signed
and dated: "Engel's
1926". OE



Jimmy Bib.

1376
AI-58

S. Rybin, Folk dance.
Original photograph,
21.4 x 16 cm.
Catalogue of the third
"Art of Movement"
exhibition, 1927,
No. 367. OE

S. Rybin, *Chizhik*:
rural dance from
Yaroslav District.
Artist's photographic
print, 15.9 x 22.1
cm. Catalogue of
the third "Art of
Movement"
exhibition, 1927,
No. 366. OE



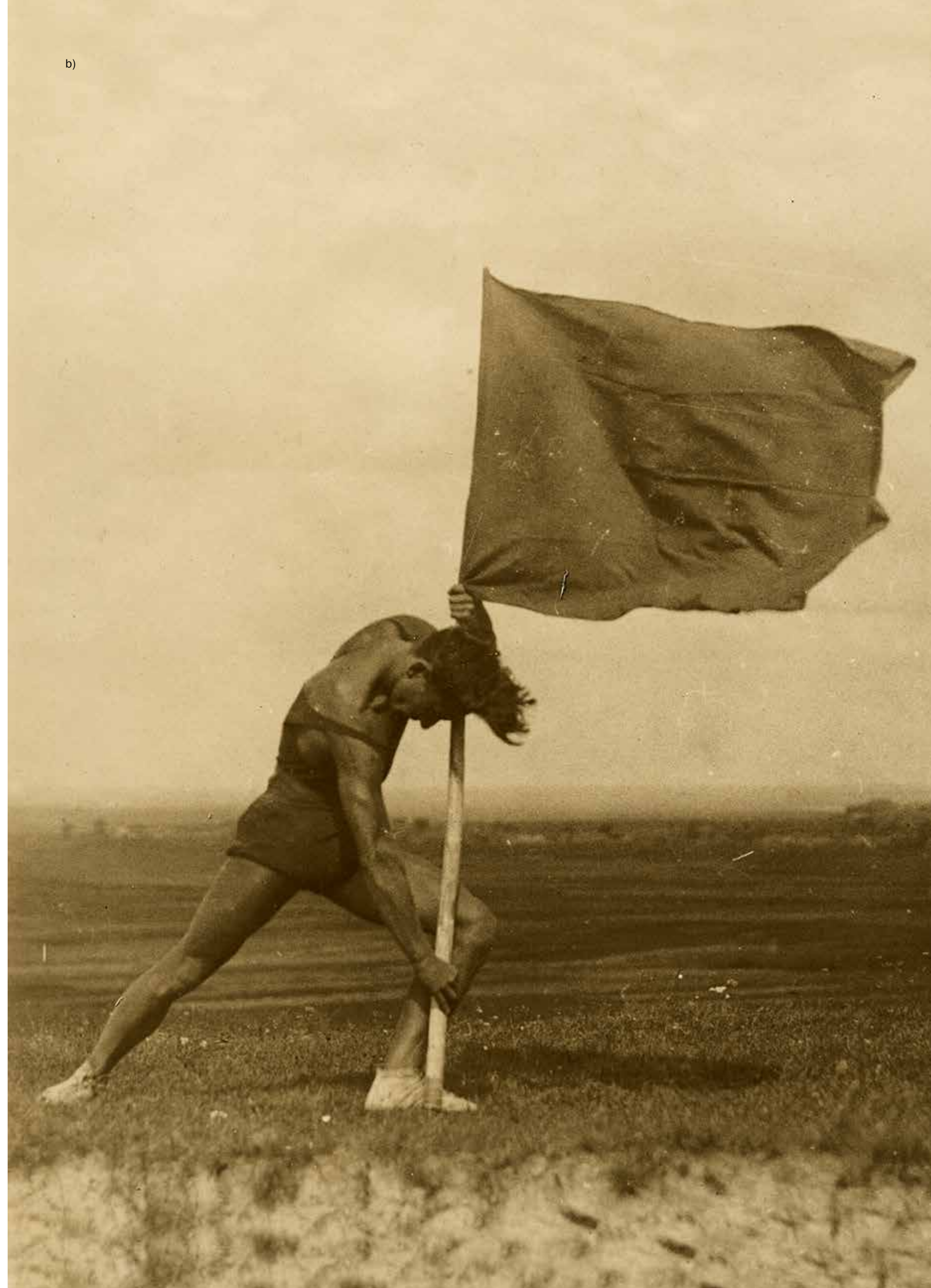
works were on display, constituting or intended to constitute a universal encyclopedia of the Art of Movement. However, TsIT was noticeable by its absence, being somewhat foreign to the aims of the Laboratory, while a new addition was Vsevolod Avdiev's Cabinet of the Eastern Theatre of the Scientific Research Institute of National and Ethnic Cultures of the Peoples of the East of the USSR.



a)

Here and following pages:
S. Rybin, I. Kozlov
in a "Study with
Flag". Choreography
by V. Tsvetaeva. Art
of Movement State
Courses (of Valeriia
Tsvetaeva).
Original photograph,
a) 7 x 4.7 cm,
b) 22.3 x 16.8 cm,
c) 16.5 x 22.7 cm.
OE
Catalogue of the
fourth "Art of
Movement"
exhibition, 1928,
Nos. 241-43.

b)





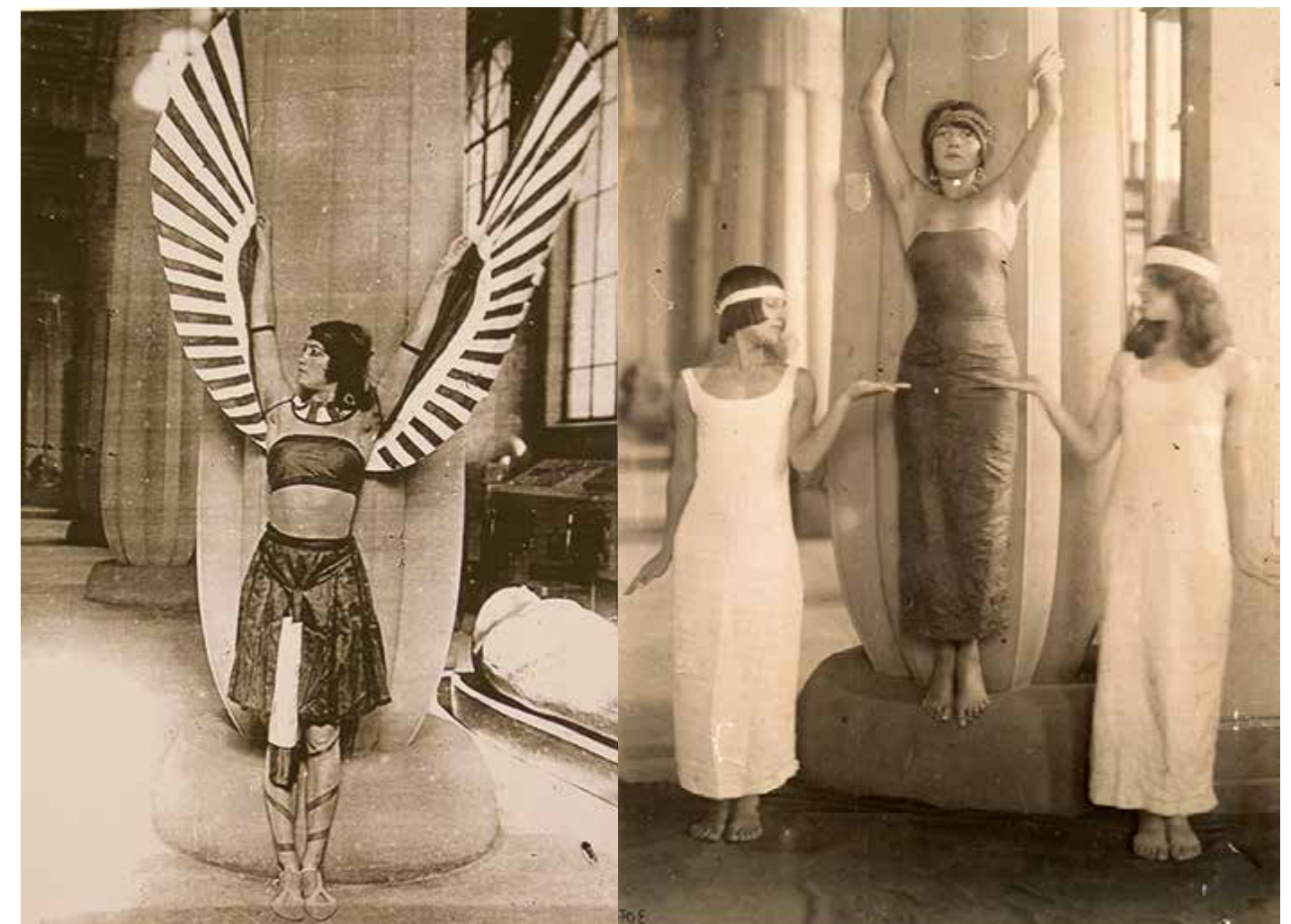


But this was 1927 and, clearly, GAKhN was also attempting to adjust to the new political directives of the Soviet Union regarding the issue of the nationalities. Symptomatic of this readiness to be politically correct is the fact that the same year another GAKhN art historian and critic, Yakov Tugendkhol'd, organized a large exhibition devoted to the peoples of the USSR.³³¹ Opened under the auspices of GAKhN, this "Jubilee Exhibition of the Art of the Peoples of the USSR" presented the visual culture of national groups through ideological, as well as anthropological, definitions of ethnographical status.

Even if, traditionally, the Laboratory had regarded the study of ethnic dance as an important part of any research into the new, expressive forms of the body, Larionov now made special mention of this section in his introduction to the catalogue. He also confirmed that the new collaboration had enhanced the exhibition with important "ethnological material."³³²

That this tendency coincided with an increasing Soviet emphasis on ethnography is indicated by the cycle of drawings (Nos. 125-64) which Ol'ga Amosova (p. 250) contributed under the auspices of the Cabinet of the Eastern Theatre. Here were ritual

A. Sidorov, Experiment in dramatization in the Egyptian Rooms of the Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (now the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts). Reconstruction by V. Avdiev for the Cabinet of the Eastern Theatre of the Institute of the Peoples of the East Choreography by N. Leont'ev. Catalogue of the third "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1927, within Nos. 102-24. a-b) Two photographic prints from the original negative plate, 12 x 9 cm. c) 14.8 x 10.7. ICh. Private collection



dances entitled *Ergil* (Festival of the Tongue of Tuva) from the Republic of Tannu-Tuva in Northern Mongolia, which Amosova had visited in 1926 as member of an ethnographical expedition led by Viktor Bunak (her husband to be). Later on, the drawings formed the basis of two of Amosova's larger paintings evoking the dances of the local lama-shamans³³³ and she even delivered a lecture at GAKhN on "Religious Dances of the Tannu-Tuva Lamas." Of course, Soviet ideologists, especially the new anthropologists and ethnographers, regarded the ecstatic element in shaman dances (as in free dance) with suspicion, perhaps even more so than religious rituals. That Amosova contributed her drawings (present whereabouts unknown) to the exhibition was an act of courageous intellectual independence.

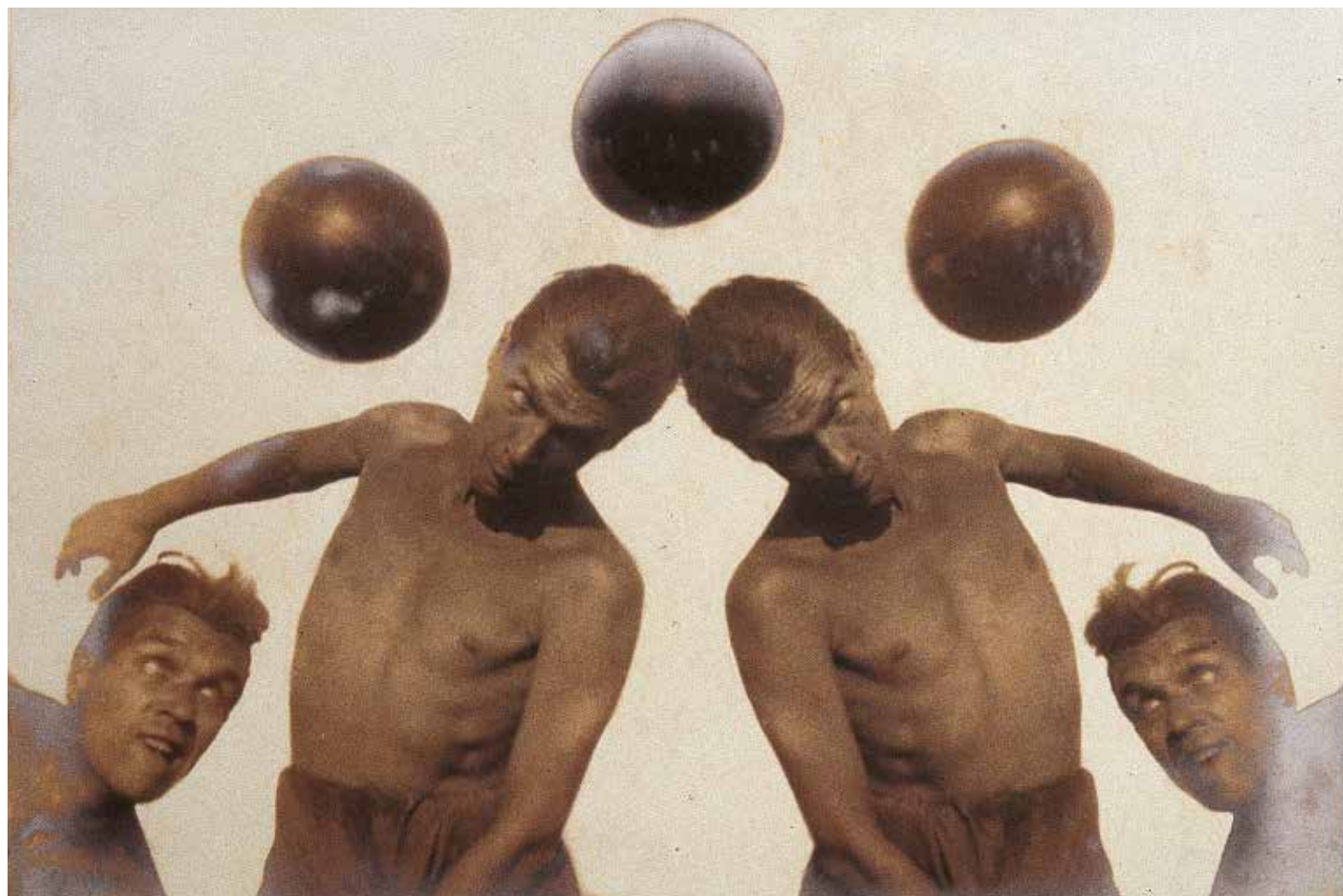
As for the reconstruction of Oriental dances so fashionable among dancers of the time, Larionov continued: "The common ideological principle of this exhibition might be determined as being an attempt to unite all kinds of artistic movement from peoples of different countries, both extant and in archaeological reconstruction."³³⁴ What Larionov had in mind was, indeed, an "archaeology" *sui generis*, given that the works from the Cabinet of the Eastern Theatre included a number of philological reconstructions of Ancient Egyptian dances based on bas-reliefs and murals from famous Egyptian monuments. The reconstructions were entrusted to choreographer Nikolai Leont'ev and interpreted by Elena Korableva and Natal'ia Legat, while Sidorov photographed their motifs and poses corresponding to the monuments ~~and showed the images at~~ the exhibition. Curiously enough, the reconstructions or, rather, just the "poses" in the photographs (pp. 264-5) were "interpreted" right in the Egyptian Halls of the Museum of Fine Arts (today the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts) – a sure sign that GAKhN's authority in cultural affairs was still undisputed.³³⁵ According to the memoirs of Irina Maïia, her mother (Vera) also took part in this project (although her name does not figure in the catalogue) and, guided by Orientalist Avdiev, she even studied scenes of dance on Egyptian monuments (the exhibition catalogue contains a detailed list of them).³³⁶

Although not a separate section, sports photography at the "Art of Movement" exhibition was well represented under the auspices of the VSFK, essentially because, first and foremost, the RFO felt duty-bound to present sports photographs of the various athletic and sports disciplines such as light athletics, tennis, running, fencing and football; in addition, the Exhibition showed the elegant covers of the journal *Izvestiia fizkul'tury VSFK* (pp. 158-9). Evidently, the photographers were enthused by the prospect of the first Soviet Spartakiada – the international Socialist sports meet – planned for 1928, which promised new and exciting commissions.³³⁷

Another section which helped readjust the delicate balance between the individual and the collective body was the fifth, devoted entirely to "Collective and Popular (Mass) Movements. Processions, Demonstrations, Parades, Popular Festivities, etc."³³⁸ This was unprecedented.

Z. Elgashtina, *Dance of the Mountains: Facing the Sun*, 1926. Collage on paper, 25.1 x 16.1 cm. Catalogue of the third "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1927, No. 507. ROZISO





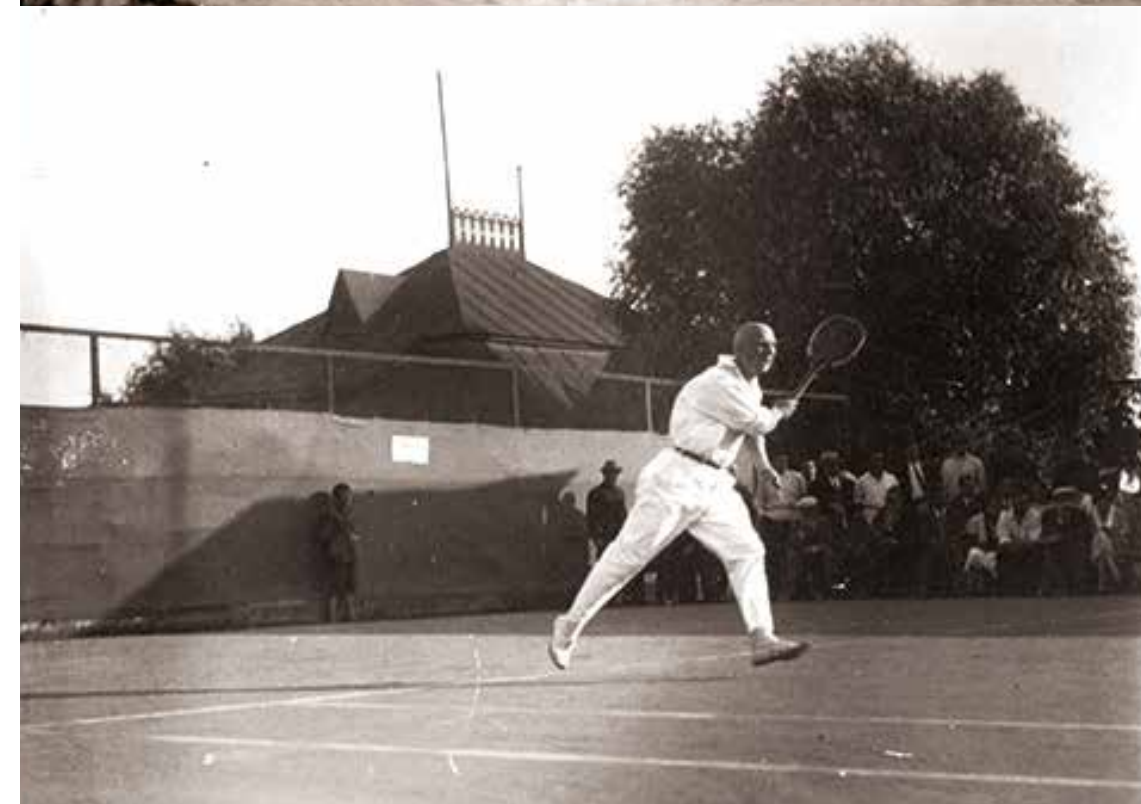
A. Teleshev, *Footballer*, late 1920s. Double mirror image, from the original glass negative. AT

One section which bridged the images of sports and those of the *danse plastique* was of Engel's' drawings of open-air exercises, especially those of Valeriia Tsvetaeva's school in Tarusa, together with photographs. As in the two preceding sessions, Engel's once again emerged as the genuine interpreter of the Laboratory's intentions. For the third exhibition he sent a group of brightly coloured drawings of national dances and costumes and a few ex-libris designs dedicated to Larionov and his library as well as to the photographer Sergei Rybin, not to mention a rendering of Tsvetaeva's choreography for the production of *Spillikins*.

An especially important section of the Exhibition was devoted to the photographs of Andrei Teleshev (pp. 268-72). Although this was his first contribution to an "Art of Movement" exhibition, immediately thereafter he became especially active in the Laboratory. Researching the theme of open-air gymnastics, Teleshev tried to transcribe the dynamism of sports movements by superimposing consecutive moments of the same action, experiments which at the Laboratory and its exhibitions earned the title of "experiments in the multiplication of movement". The difference between Teleshev's and Sidorov's "multiplications" lies in the fact that the former was careful to avoid the lat-



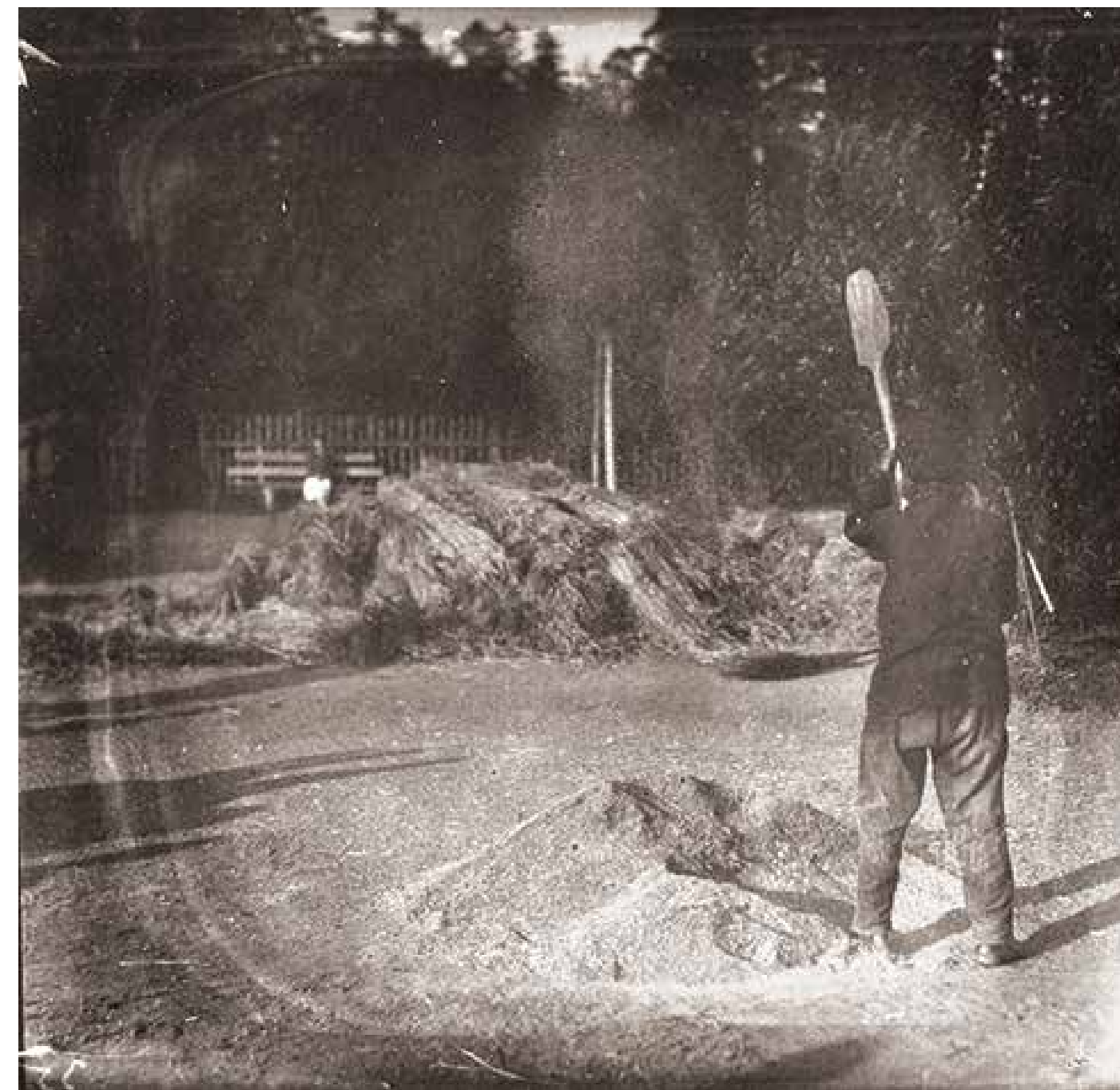
A. Teleshev, *Football*, late 1920s. Recent print from the original glass negative. Catalogue of the third "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1927, No. 484. AT



A. Teleshev, *Tennis*, late 1920s. Recent print from the original glass negative. AT



ter's method of image overlay which tended to render the content ambiguous or equivocal. Two photographs in Teleshev's series are especially effective – one the double, mirror image of a footballer bouncing the ball with his head and the other the elegant silhouette of a diver hurtling from the high diving-board into the swimming-pool – both of which were shown at international exhibitions of photography in Paris, Tokyo, Turin and other cities.³³⁹ Such publicity enabled Teleshev to join the staff of the Cinematographic Cabinet at GAKhN and the Cinema Museum, where he worked until 1929.³⁴⁰ Like Engel's, he also became photographer-in-residence, so to speak, for Tsvetaeva's studio concentrating on poses of younger gymnasts outdoors, something



which also coincided with Vera Maiia's preference. Maiia was a choreographer, incidentally, who had now moved from the ecstatic and other kinds of dances (shown at the second "Art of Movement" exhibition) through a plethora of other genres, from Russian folkloric dances to acrobatics. In her efforts to record the training sessions of her young performers in gymnastics and acrobatics, Maiia alighted upon Teleshev who was much more interested in sports photography than in ~~the~~ claustrophobic ~~images of~~ *intérieurs*. He was the perfect partner.

Coinciding with the political and propagandistic enthusiasm surrounding the Spartakiada, the Graphic and Sculpture Section, too, organized by a group of Leningrad

A. Teleshev, *Beating the hay*, late 1920s. Recent prints from the original glass negatives. AT

sculptors, focused on the representation of various sports disciplines from basketball to running. Supervised by Matvei Manizer and his companion Elena Yanson together with another sculptress, Tat'iana Kirpichnikova (1899-1981), a number of smaller bronze sculptures and bas-reliefs also graced the Exhibition, showing athletes in Classical poses. Manizer showed his *Discus Thrower* (No. 529) which, in its monumental version, was to become a major attraction in the Park of Culture and Leisure in Kharkov. After Yanson's Duncanism, here was a "second" return to Ancient Greece, although more to the masculine values of sport as represented in Classical statuary. Manizer and Yanson pursued – emblematically – two different paths towards the Classical ideal, even if they both collaborated with GAKhN in 1927. Later on Yanson achieved renown for her renderings of official, Classical ballerinas, whereas Manizer became a leading exponent of Stalin's monumental style.

As for Yanson's interpretation of sports, suffice it to remember her ceramic bas-relief decorations on the subject at the Dynamo metro station in Moscow (1938), representing elegant, feminine sports (pp. 254-5), as, for example, in graceful figure skaters or sprinters who still possess the elegant movements of *danseuses plastiques*.³⁴¹ Enwrapped in their athletic vestments, these slender figurines of dancers are comrades to Vera Mukhina's 1937 stainless steel monument with the collective farm girl (now at the Exhibition of Achievements of the People's Economy in Moscow [VDNKh]), who, together with her male co-worker, is still dancing with her veil, just as in the open-air leaps and bounds of the Maïia and Tsvetaeva schools photographed by Teleshev and Zhivago. This slender, if androgynous, typology continued into the 1930s as an ongoing and almost clandestine presence – and perhaps it is not by chance that sculptresses, rather than sculptors, promoted the [image](#) so favoured by the Choreological Laboratory in the late 1920s. Was this not an emergent, albeit unconscious, opposition to the masculine cult which weighted the female body to render it compatible to the double ideological role of mother and worker? From those artists who had contributed to the preceding "Art of Movement" exhibitions only Sergei Storozhenko was left, represented by just a few labour images. However, Zinaida Elgashtina (1897-1979), a newcomer, contributed a group of *Dance Compositions* (Nos. 502-07) made of appliqué and collage – at which she was especially good just as she was at making marionettes. Elgashtina was a pupil of Vaslav Nijinsky and friend of Maksimilian Voloshin (whom she visited in Koktebel' in 1926-27)³⁴² and in 1926 had even delivered a lecture at GAKhN on stylization in Egyptian dance. A collage, recently discovered in the ROSIZO collection, carries a title perfectly in tune with the "Naturism" which Voloshin had encouraged within his tight circle of friends in the Crimea, i.e. *Dance of the Mountains: Facing the Sun* (1926) – which corresponds to No. 507 in the catalogue (p. 267). Here Elgashtina cites the dedication accompanying a photograph which she had received from Voloshin and which could almost serve as its caption: "Captured by the earth, I melt my golden wings."³⁴³ In her memoirs of the

A. Teleshev, *Dive*, late 1920s. Multiple prints sequenced [within one image](#). Recent prints from the original glass negative. AT

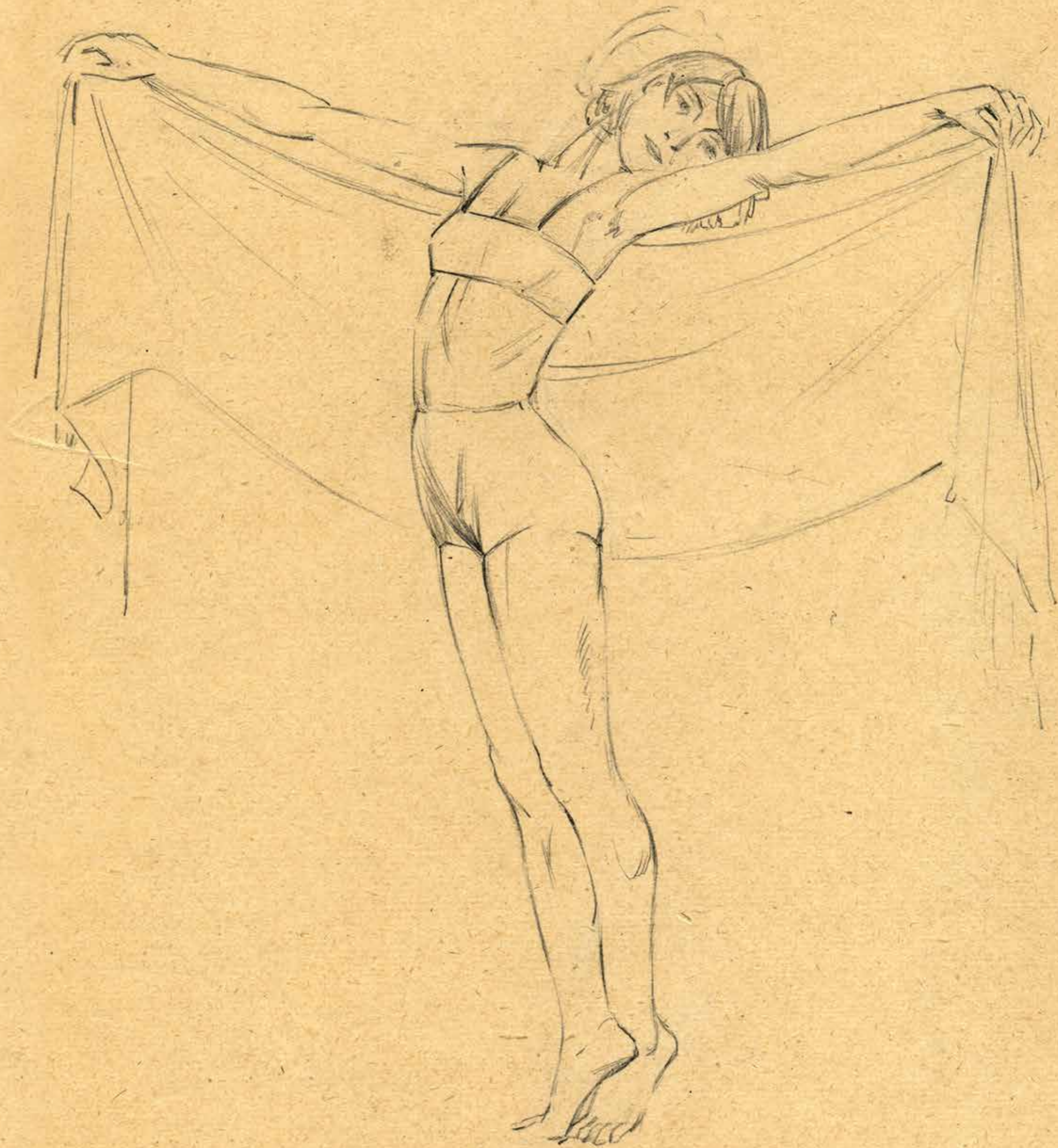


Crimea, Elgashtina recalls her conversations about music and dance, movement of the hands and their "streaming rhythm" and how she "danced" the Crimean landscape, especially Koktebel', a mystical site for the Russian intelligentsia just as Monte Verità was for the Europeans. Elgashtina's drawing is especially interesting as an experiment in visualizing movement "abstractly", the only attempt of its kind at all four "Art of Movement" exhibitions. The topic of the lecture which she delivered for the third exhibition, "The Dance of the Future", recalled Duncan's 1903 manifesto, also entitled "The Dance of the Future", as well as that quiet Crimean backwater where Voloshin had created his oasis for the new, Soviet "children of the sun."

Another section which referred back to preceding exhibitions was the one devoted to T. Faddeev and his pedagogical system concerning artistic movement, particularly the illustrations of "exercises for exposing elements of musical harmony in movement."³⁴⁴ However, the catalogue information is sparse and fails to indicate whether Faddeev had contributed photographs, diagrams or drawings. As a matter of fact, none of the photographs or figurative works was accompanied by data which might have rendered them identifiable – a lacuna especially vexing in the case of Engel's and other artists who have vanished into oblivion. Their rediscovery is long overdue, even if relevant materials, especially the [images](#), have been lost, leaving us at best with only very approximate criteria for identification and evaluation.

N. Svishchov-Paola, *Study in movement. Barefoot dancer with cape*, 1928. Artist's photographic print, 7.8 x 6 cm (15 x 10.7 cm mounted). Signed and dated on mount: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow 1928". RGALI

N. Svishchov-Paola, *Study in movement. Barefoot dancer with cape*, 1928. Artist's photographic print, 7.8 x 6 cm (15.3 x 11 cm mounted). Signed and dated on mount: "N. Svishchov-Paola, Moscow 1928". RGALI



³²⁸ *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog tret'ei vystavki*, p. 14.

³²⁹ “Materialy k tret'ei vystavke” in OR-GTsTMB, f. 517, ed. khr. 134 (folder No. 7), ll. 73 and 89.

³³⁰ Sidorov, “Iskusstvo dvizheniia i fotografiia (Okonchanie)” in *Fotograf*, 1927, No. 9-10, pp. 259-63. This quotation is on p. 260.

³³¹ Ya. Tugendkhol'd: *Yubileinaia vystavka iskusstva narodov SSSR*, M: GAKhN, 1927.

³³² A. Larionov: “Zadachi i perspektivy” in *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog tret'ei vystavki*, p. 7.

³³³ T. Mikhienko and M. Molchanova, eds.: *Ol'ga Amosova-Bunak*. Catalogue of exhibition at the Elysium Gallery, M, 2007.

³³⁴ Larionov, “Zadachi i perspektivy”, p. 7.

³³⁵ See exhibits Nos. 102-24 which presented dances from the Cabinet of Eastern Theatre of the Institute of Peoples of the East of the USSR subsumed under the caption: “Avdiev, V.I.: ‘Experimental Reconstruction of an Ancient Egyptian Dance. Mise-en-scène by N.A. Leont'eva. Performed by E. Korableva and N. Legat. A.A. Sidorov.’”

³³⁶ See I. Maiak: “Vera Maiia (Vospominaniia docheri)” in Klim, *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Istoriia i sovremennost'*, pp. 131-47.

³³⁷ The archival materials regarding the participation of the Choreographical Laboratory and its members, in particular, Larionov, in the Spartakiada are to be found in OR-GTsTMB, Call No: f. 517, ed. khr. 134.

³³⁸ Larionov, “Zadachi i perspektivy”, pp. 5-6.

³³⁹ These particular photographs are mentioned in the lists (undated) of works sent to these exhibitions (now in the Teleshev family archive in Moscow).

³⁴⁰ Teleshev delivered two lectures at GAKhN: “The Art Film Poster and Its Social Significance” in 1927 and “Photography as a Means of Artistic Agitation and Propaganda” in 1928 – on the eve of the exhibition “Soviet Photography of the Last Ten years”. During the last two years of its active life, Teleshev was Secretary for Academic Affairs of the Committee of Artistic Agitation and Propaganda at GAKhN. See the typescript biography in the Teleshev family archive, p. 1.

³⁴¹ The Dynamo station was opened on 11 September, 1938. See V. Stepanova (designer): *Moskovskii metropoliten*, M: Gos. Iz-stvo Izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva, 1953; V. Moriakov: *Stadion Dinamo 80*, M: Interreklama, 2009, pp. 62-73; A. Zinov'ev: *Stalinskoe metro: Istoricheskii putevoditel'*, M: Zinov'ev 2011.

³⁴² Z. Elgashtina: “Koktebel' i ego legendy” in V. Kupchenko, ed.: *Vospominaniia o Maksimiliane Volodshine*, M: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990, pp. 537-55.

³⁴³ Elgashtina, “Koktebel' i ego legendy”, p. 545.

³⁴⁴ *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog tret'ei vystavki*, pp. 28-29.



O. Engel's,
Dancer with veil.
Pencil on paper,
26.6 x 20.7 cm. OE

Photographer
unknown, Animal
movements:
Dog. Original print,
7.3 x 5 cm. OE



Photographer unknown, A. Larionov and A. Sidorov in Berlin, 1927. Original print, 5.3 x 8.5 cm. Private collection

Study of movement and pose in filling a triangle or rhombus. Choreological Laboratory, 1924-25. Three photographs. Original prints. ICh: Box No. 4: *Small Format. Before the Revolution and 1920-30. School of Plastic Dance. Various Photographs*, 3.7 x 8 cm



XII

Final Act



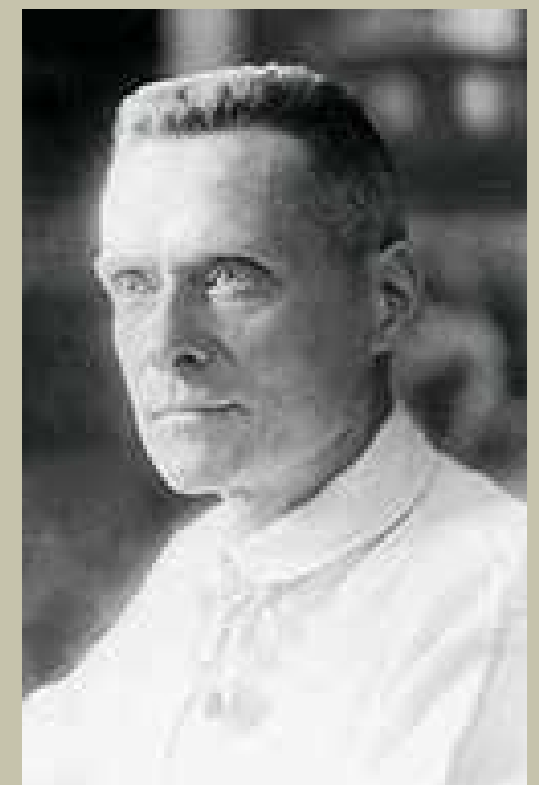
DOBROV, MATVEI ALEKSEEVICH
Moscow, 1877-1958

Graphic artist. Graduated from the Department of Physics and Mathematics at Moscow University, before attending Konstantin Yuon and Ivan Dudin's private art school. 1901-06 attended the Moscow Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Travelled in Europe, studying the technique of etching in Paris where, in 1908-09, worked as a librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale; while in Paris impressed by Isadora Duncan's performance. 1921 onwards worked at the Historical Museum in Moscow, specializing in 18th century rare books. 1923, onwards member of the Printing Arts Section of RAKhN and director of the Commission for the Theoretical Subdivision of Books within the Bibliological Section there.

Atelier Kolliner, Mila Cirul. Photograph from the cover of the brochure for her *Tanz-Matinée*, Max Reinhardt Theatre, Vienna, 1925. Gisa Geert Group, Artist's photographic print. PKh

CIRUL, MILA
Rīga, 1901 - Nice, 1977

Latvian dancer. Began her dancing career under Mikhail Mordkin in Moscow. Also studied the ideas of Delsarte and worked with Vsevolod Meierkhol'd. 1918 joined Eli Rabenek's company *Tanzdyllen Ellen*, combining her training in Mordkin's Classical ballet method with pantomimic movement; danced duets with Rabenek. 1919 moved to Vienna with her company consisting of herself and three other women. 1926 advised by Mary Wigman to seek inspiration in the forces of the unconscious, began to redefine her own dance language, demonstrating this in her solo opera performances in Vienna, Hanover and Berlin. 1929 embodied the "sufferings of Revolutionary Russia" in her *Russische Tanz*. 1932 moved to Paris, but broke with Rabenek. 1962 retired to Nice after serving as mentor to an entire generation of French dancers.





Here and right,
below:
Trude Fleischmann,
M. Cirul and J. Algo:
Dance poses,
1926. 22.2 x
14 cm. Catalogue
of the fourth
“Art of Movement”
exhibition, 1928,
within Nos. 534-35
and 536-41. PKh

THE FOURTH “ART OF MOVEMENT” EXHIBITION, MOSCOW, 1928

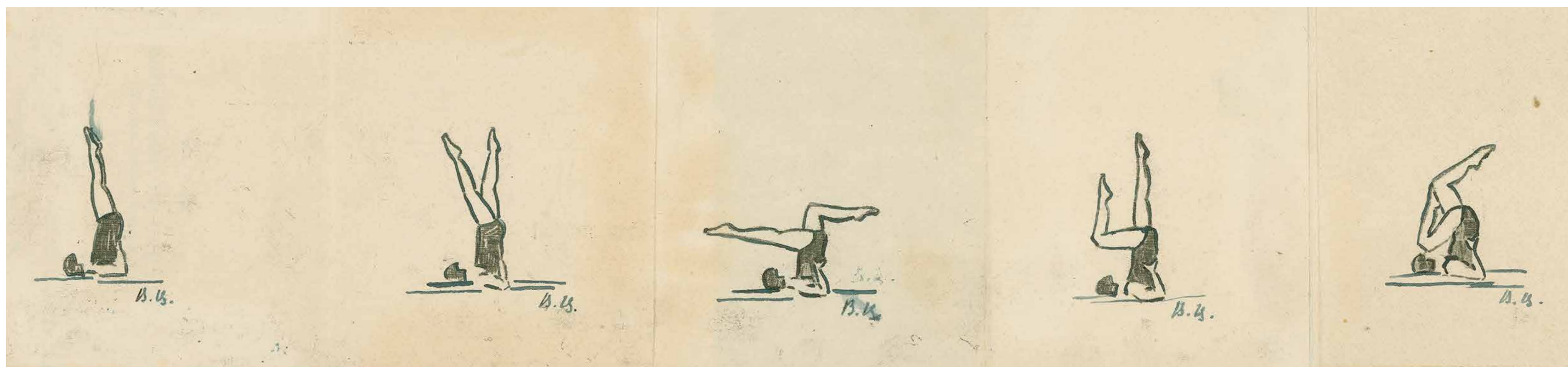
In his catalogue introduction to the third “Art of Movement” exhibition in 1927 Aleksandr Larionov had spoken boldly of an imminent international collaboration which was to be highlighted in the next session. Presumably, hopes ran high because of the contacts which Aleksei Sidorov had established during his research trip to Germany and Austria in the summer of 1927, ~~the~~ particularly because he had been sponsored by the All-Union Society for Cultural Links Abroad (VOKS) and Narkompros.⁴⁸³ Also in May, 1927 Magdeburg had hosted the First International Dance Festival, an event which had an especially strong resonance throughout Europe. In his highly detailed account of the trip, Sidorov omitted any reference to the Magdeburg event, stating, however, that he had spent all his time visiting with art historians and seeing museums. But it is also clear from archival correspondence that in Vienna Sidorov made the acquaintance of the Ukrainian artist Georg Kirsta, a resident of Vienna, who served as advisor and curator for the European section of the fourth Moscow exhibition.⁴⁸⁴ As a matter of fact, Kirsta was the artist who had designed the costumes for Mila Cirul in the *Tanz-Matinée* which she danced on 26 April, 1925 – photographs of which were included in the fourth “Art of Movement” exhibition in Moscow (pp. 432-3, 435, 437, 439, 440-1). This was the same Cirul who had studied dance with Mordkin and who, between 1917 and 1932, worked in close collaboration with Eli Rabenek and who, therefore, was an ideal intermediary between Europe and Russia. As with the preceding exhibitions, the fourth one occupied the Great Hall of GAKhN, a venue which, once again, sanctioned the official importance of these displays not only to the Choreological Laboratory, but also to the Academy as a whole. Indeed, this fourth and last session – with contributions from Germany, Austria and France – had been planned so as to highlight the international profile of the Laboratory and to demonstrate that it had the capacity to centralize the most diverse experiences in the field of dance and movement. Instead, it marked the swansong of the Laboratory.⁴⁸⁵

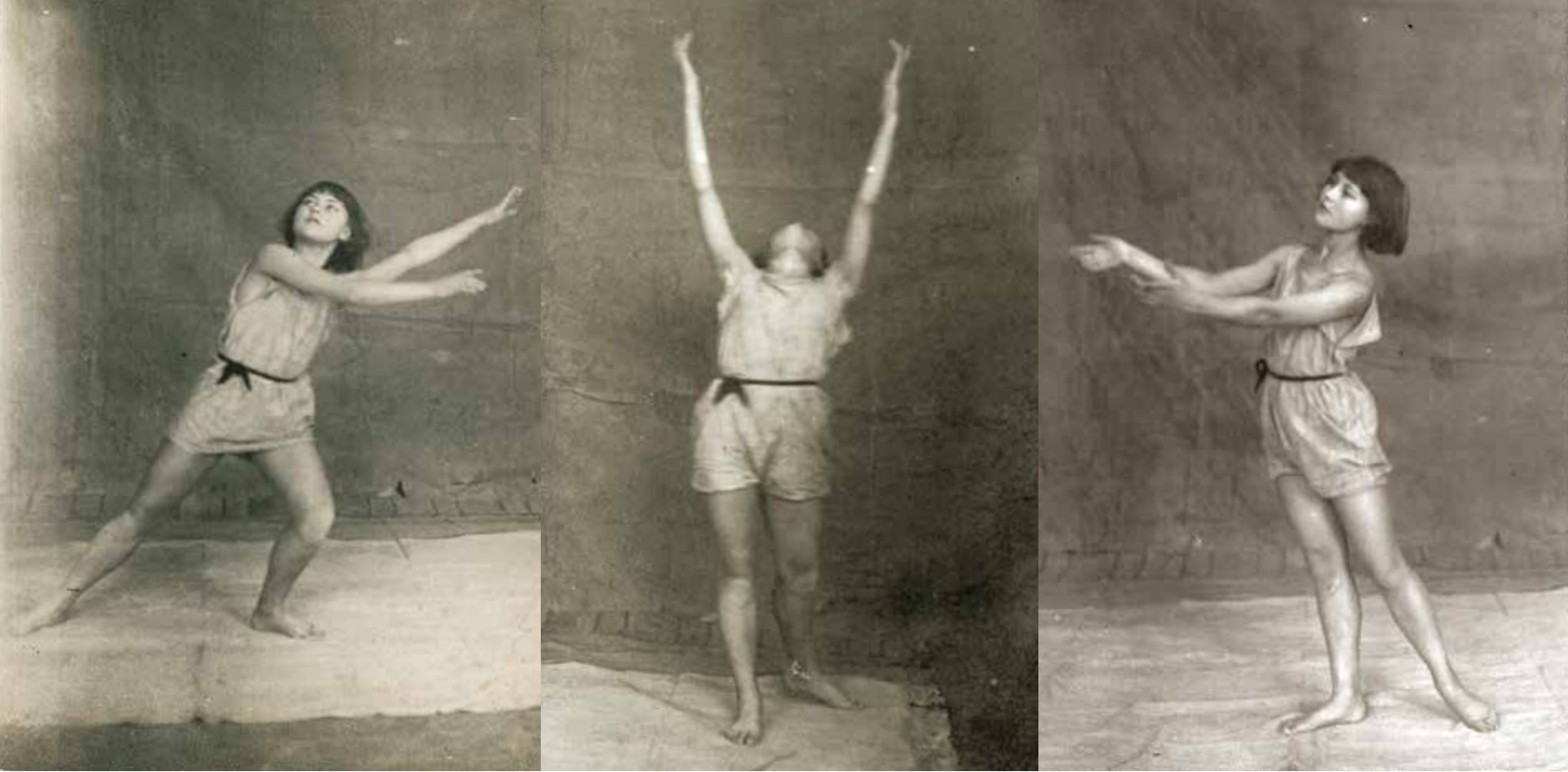
The exhibition was a triumph, perhaps even moreso than that of its precursors: the almost 800 exhibits (with 370 coming from Germany and Austria plus sixteen by the French artist Jules Grandjouan) attracted over 837 visitors during the two weeks it was up (2-15 January,



Above:
Cover of the catalogue
of the fourth
“Art of Movement”
exhibition, 1928, i.e.
Iskusstvo dvizheniia/
Bewegungskunst, Moscow:
Choreological Laboratory
at GAKhN, 1928







1928) who paid between 20 and 50 kopecks entrance fee. The real attraction lay in the foreign contingent containing splendid dance photographs submitted by the [most famous](#) Austrian photographers of the time. The list included Grete Kolliner's Atelier für Porträtphotografie as well as Artur Benda's (and Madame d'Ora's) studio, the Hungarian photographer Laszlo Willinger, the Viennese photographer Trude Fleischmann (incidentally, in 1925 one of the first photographers to record "indecent" nudes in the New Dance), with all of whom Sidorov was in close correspondence.⁴⁸⁶ It was Kirsta who gathered the photographic materials from Germany and Austria and who made sure that they arrived in Moscow safely.

The dancer, Gertrud Bodenwieser, founder of *Ausdruckstanz* in Vienna,⁴⁸⁷ was invited to write an essay on the relationship between dance and theatre for the catalogue, a topic of particular relevance to the discussion of the New Dance in Germany.⁴⁸⁸ In their preface, Larionov and Sidorov declared proudly that the Choreological Laboratory at GAKhN was the only international institution to be offering a scientific elaboration of the theory of movement, especially with regard to the vexed question as to how to notate artistic movement. As with the previous exhibitions, photography and the cinema constituted the main sections, Sidorov even delivering an evening lecture on "Movement in the Cinema" to kick off the opening of the Artel Cinema.⁴⁸⁹ True, the organizers refused to project a film (from Sovkino) about the recording of movement, because it cost too much,⁴⁹⁰ so, instead, the photographer Andrei Teleshev, who had championed the idea, and his colleague Aleksandr Chernyshev, demonstrated some of their experiments in the symmetry of photographic composition – one of the Laboratory's major research assignments for 1928. Both men collaborated closely with Valeriia Tsvetaeva and her Art of Movement classes (Nos. 286-315), she being a key protagonist of the new trends within the Laboratory and beyond. What constituted Tsvetaeva's pedagogical system? Specifically, a wish to form a "syncretic" dancer (pp. 404-5) who, with Classical training and the "inward" inspiration of free dance, would be capable of under-

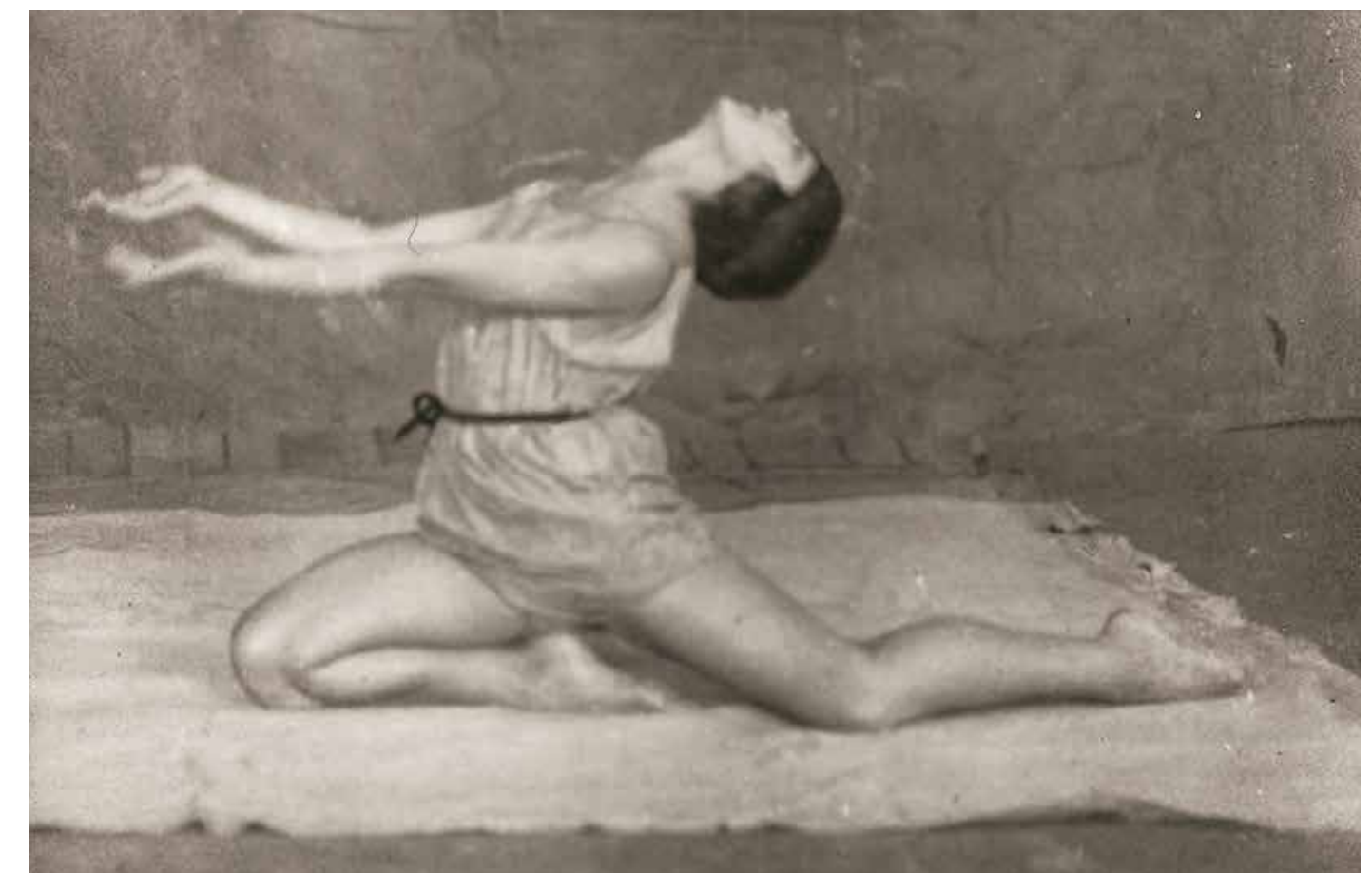
standing and integrating the *danse plastique*, the arts and circus numbers in general. An especially important aspect of her curriculum was the study of rhythm, a subject which Ippolit Sokolov taught at the School. Many of the [photographic images](#) of young men and women from both Vera Maiia's and Tsvetaeva's schools exercising outdoors were made by Teleshev who, as director of the Ciné-Cabinet, was on the exhibition committee together with the two photographers Nikolai Vlas'evsky and Vasilii Zhivago who respectively, were in charge of the RFO and the Photographic Cabinet. As with the preceding exhibitions, the Laboratory presented the results of its own researches on how to record movement, adapting the various solutions proposed by Larionov, the choreographer Evgenii Yavorsky, the choreographer and dancer Nikolai Pozniakov⁴⁹¹ and the musicologist Nikolai Mal'tsev.

Following the European contribution, the Russian materials were divided into sections, studios and institutions, the first being dedicated to the choreographies of the Choreographical Department of MGTT, to all intents and purposes, Drambalet. The most significant of these was the spectacle called *Fable of the City* which Serafima Birman staged in 1923 (with music by Evgenii Gvozdkov, choreography by Lidiia Redega and designs by Natal'ia Iznar, the latter contributing her sketches to the art section).

The small, adjacent unit organized by the Central Directorate of the State Circus demonstrated how intense the creative collaboration still was between the theater and the circus

A. Grinberg, L. Bader. Exercises in plastic dance. Children's class, ca. 1926. Four versions. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva). Original print. VTs a) 9.8 x 7.2 cm, b) 10 x 6.3 cm, c) 7.3 x 10.5 cm

A. Grinberg, L. Bader. Exercises in plastic dance. Children's class, ca. 1926. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva). Original print, 12 x 17.9 cm. VTs



Previous pages:

Photographer unknown, Stationary pose on the elbows, late 1920s. Manual for a course in artistic acrobatics. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva). 41 x 12.1 cm. The manual folds out. VTs

V. Tsvetaeva, Stationary pose on elbows, late 1920s. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva) for the Department of Circus and Variety Theatre at MGTT. Pencil on paper, 11.5 x 93 cm. Initialled: "V. Ts.". The manual folds out



C. Rudolph, Mary Wigmann, 1926. Stamped on the photograph: "Ch. Rudolph Dresden". Catalogue of the fourth "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1928, No. 505. Artist's photographic print. PKh

Atelier Kolliner, Ellinor Tordis in *Einselne Ausdrucksbewegungen*. Artist's photographic print, 18.7 x 13.2 cm. Catalogue of the fourth "Art of Movement" exhibition, 1928, Nos. 481-84. Stamped on the photograph: Atelier Kolliner Wien. PKh

D'Ora Benda Photographic Studio, V. Gert. 11.9 x 22 cm. PKh

(a creative space less subordinate to ideological pressure and incursion). In addition, a number of Moscow studios such as Tsvetaeva's Art of Movement and Maiia's Ensemble of the Art of Dance were well represented as were Leningrad studios such as Zinaida Verbova's Studio of Plastic Movement. Aleksandr Kaverzin, who, with his partner Mariia Ponna, had elevated acrobatics to the level of a precise, exquisite and innovative performance art with its own independent character, was also represented. As the photographs reveal, the flexibility of their figures was highlighted by the sculptural beauty of their bodies and the facility with which they executed every complex acrobatic movement on stage,⁴⁹² the critic Iving describing Ponna's remarkable stage presence as follows:

Ponna buckles, tightens up, turns around and stretches. She flies in the arms of her cavalier, wraps herself around his neck like a boa, launches herself, falls on to the floor in an audacious pose, raises her legs at such an angle that her femoral head is about to spring out of its support, the ligaments no longer supporting the pressure. Nevertheless, all this is ennobled by a perfect plasticity and a grand sense of poise which very few sculptures possess.⁴⁹³

It was probably Natal'ia Tian who helped select the Leningrad studios as well as the individual choreographers and dancers who, this time, constituted an impressive section in the "Art of Movement" exhibition. Tian herself had been among the first to collaborate with the Choreological Laboratory and she was represented here by maquettes made by a certain K. Studentsova analyzing three attitudes – firstly, in accordance with the ancient Greek canon, secondly, as in Greek plastic dance, and thirdly, as in Classical ballet (Nos. 135-43). As independent participants, the Russian photographers were all grouped under the aegis of RFO.

An addendum to Zinaida Verbova's studio was provided by the Leningrad artist, Lev Bruni, who contributed elegant drawings of her dancers in movement such as Anna Gumileva and Evgeniia Lapchinskaia (p. 130) – part of a large cycle on which he had been working throughout 1926 in Verbova's studio.⁴⁹⁴ Apart from the somewhat lacklustre drawings by Sergei Storozhenko, justified perhaps by his being an active member of the Laboratory, the Graphics Section also displayed drawings by Aleksei Kravchenko and Nikolai Vysheslavets – to whom we owe not only two very fine portraits of Lukin and Rumnev, but also portraits of scholars and philosophers of the same era such as Pavel Florensky and Sidorov himself. Once again the choice of exhibits underlined the strong Symbolist orientation of the Laboratory – from Dobrov's more ethereal evocations of Duncan (Nos. 327-36) to Nikolai Vlasov's Dionysian Ekaterina Gel'tser as a feverish *Menade* (No. 318), a pictorial counterpart to the photographs of *Pan* being danced orgiastically *en plein air* by Chernetskaia and her dancers.

In addition to the Austrian and German consignment, the Laboratory also included a collection of sixteen drawings of Isadora Duncan dancing by the French artist Jules Grandjouan (Nos. 735-50).⁴⁹⁵ The exhibition marked the first anniversary of her death



and, paying homage to her memory, the State Isadora Duncan Studio contributed a number of documentary photographs, including some of its own productions, while the Graphics Section displayed the Dobrov images.

The broad range of photographs of the new European dance covered all the principal institutions and leading dancers from Austria and Germany, Sidorov interpreting the selection as an extension of “revolutionary ballet in the West”, but from the standpoint of form rather than of content.⁴⁹⁶ He added that at this time many public institutions in Germany such as the Operhaus in Hanover and the Staatsoper in Berlin were open to innovative dancers such as Yvonne Georgi, Harald Kreuzberg and Max Terpis, and a cardinal influence on the new German theatre was Russian Constructivism which, for example, had been brought to the West by the Moscow Chamber Theatre during its European tour in 1923. In Soviet Russia, on the other hand, the “Bolshoi Theatre, the premier academic theatre, was still drawn to 19th century Classicism – fatal for such a creative individual as Goleizovsky.”⁴⁹⁷ Anyway, in contrast to dancers and choreographers from before the Revolution, Russians were discouraged from travelling abroad, although, certainly, they were able to see a comprehensive panorama of the New Dance at the GAKhN exhibition, at least, in photographs: from Valerie Kratina holding the banner of Jaques-Dalcroze high at the Hellerau-Laxenburg School to Grete Kollmann’s *Neue Schule für Bewegungskunst*, from Ellinor Tordis to Gertrud Bodenwieser, from Gisa Geert to Mila Cirul and from Mary Wigman to Kurt Jooss’s *Neue Tanzbühne* in Münster. Russians could even learn something about modern French dance thanks to the Luxemburg production photographs of Jean Cocteau’s *Le Boeuf sur le toit* to music by Darius Milhaud. The exhibition also included a group of sports scenes by German photographers (Nos. 556-85), sketches of movement and dance by Benedikt Dolbin and three costume designs by Kirsta, probably the ones made for Cirul which the former mentions in a letter to Sidorov.⁴⁹⁸ Two frames from Wilhelm Präger’s 1925 Berlin film *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* which the Soviet film distributor Sovkino had acquired were shown on the occasion of the first Russian Spartakiada in Moscow, which, of course, celebrated German, not Soviet, photographers and choreographers. Some of them went on to collaborate with the Nazi regime, which, of course, embarrassed Soviet colleagues who had first presented them to Moscow.⁴⁹⁹

At the last “Art of Movement” exhibition shots of labour movements and “machine dances” were conspicuous by their absence, even if a couple of relevant works by individual photographers were included. Be that as it may, in their introduction to the catalogue the two curators, Larionov and Sidorov, issued an unequivocal declaration of intent: “Juxtaposing the two goals – the quest for better results in the very process of the plastic creativity of the artist of movement, on the one hand, and, on the other, a better expression and registration of this movement in the visual and spatial media such as photography and the graphic arts – clarifies how the exhibition jury will function in the future.”⁵⁰⁰

THE CHOREOLOGICAL LABORATORY AND ITS ARCHIVE

Among the many unsolved riddles associated with the Choreological Laboratory is that of the connection between its internal experiments and the four exhibitions which it installed. For example, Larionov, Pozniakov, Sidorov and Yavorsky presented their research data on dance notation at every session, but the question remains as to how near or far the photographers and artists were from the experiments which they were recording or how scientific they were. In any case, the latter contributed only some of their many images to the exhibitions, the major part of which, presumably, became part of the vast GAKhN archive of photographic negatives and films.

As noted above, Larionov and Sidorov both hailed from a generation of Decadent Idealists who, in the early Soviet years, were still active in public institutions. They understood only too well that Stalin’s political transformations would soon transform the artistic and cultural horizon, be that the art of movement or the “arts of movement”. By the early 1930s they also realized that visual documents could be used against them and, aware of this, they ceased, at least formally, to research the art of movement. Nevertheless, their exodus from the New Dance before the dramatic and definitive closure of GAKhN took different strategic paths. For his part, Larionov, who had championed the movement of the New Dance since 1924, emphasizing the importance of gymnastics and physical education, was much involved in the organization of the Spartakiada in 1928 as a GAKhN delegate. In this capacity he worked in the Commission of Propaganda Agitation within the Organizational Committee for the Spartakiada and, a



O. Engel's, Ex-libris for N.P. (Nikolai Pozniakov). Linocut, 5.5 x 9 cm. OE

V. Zhivago, Legs.
Original print,
16.5 x 21.7 cm. ICh

Photographer
unknown, *Cinema
and mime. Studies
in the expressivity
of extremities:
Legs*, Conducted by
the Choreological
Laboratory in
1924-25. Five
original prints. ICh:
Box No. 3 *Small
format. Mime.
Various photographs
1923-30*
a) 5 x 4.1 cm,
b) 4 x 4 cm,
c) 5.2 x 4 cm,
d) 4 x 4 cm,
e) 4.5 x 3 cm



semiologist, suggested publicizing the “image” of the event by distributing celebratory buttons, postcards, diplomas, postage stamps and posters.⁵⁰¹ At the same time Larionov was chief promoter and organizer of the related exhibition “Achievements of Physical Education over the Last 10 Years (1918-1928)”⁵⁰² and was elected to the jury for the Contest of Folk Dances, Club Dances and the Artistic Design of Gymnastic Achievements. The detailed questionnaire which the jury put together in an attempt to define its criteria for the Contest affirmed (Point No. 4) that the choreographies “should nurture healthy emotions and not end up in exaltation” and that (Point No. 5) they “should be deprived of eroticism, although a healthy sexuality is quite acceptable” – criteria which, of course, did not conform to most of the photographs at the “Art of Movement” exhibitions which still held strong erotic appeal. Coming together on 9 August, 1928, after several delays, the jury, however, did recognize the Laboratory’s yeoman service by awarding a diploma to the Association of Rhythmists (within GAKhN) for its “composition of club dances.”⁵⁰³ Supervised by Nina Aleksandrova, the Association had played a formative role in organizing a Popular Dance Section and was strongly oriented towards collective gymnastics and choreographies for mass parades.⁵⁰⁴ Like many of his colleagues, Lev Lukin, too, was forced to accept the changing times, choreographing a gymnastics parade for Gorky Park in the summer of 1929.

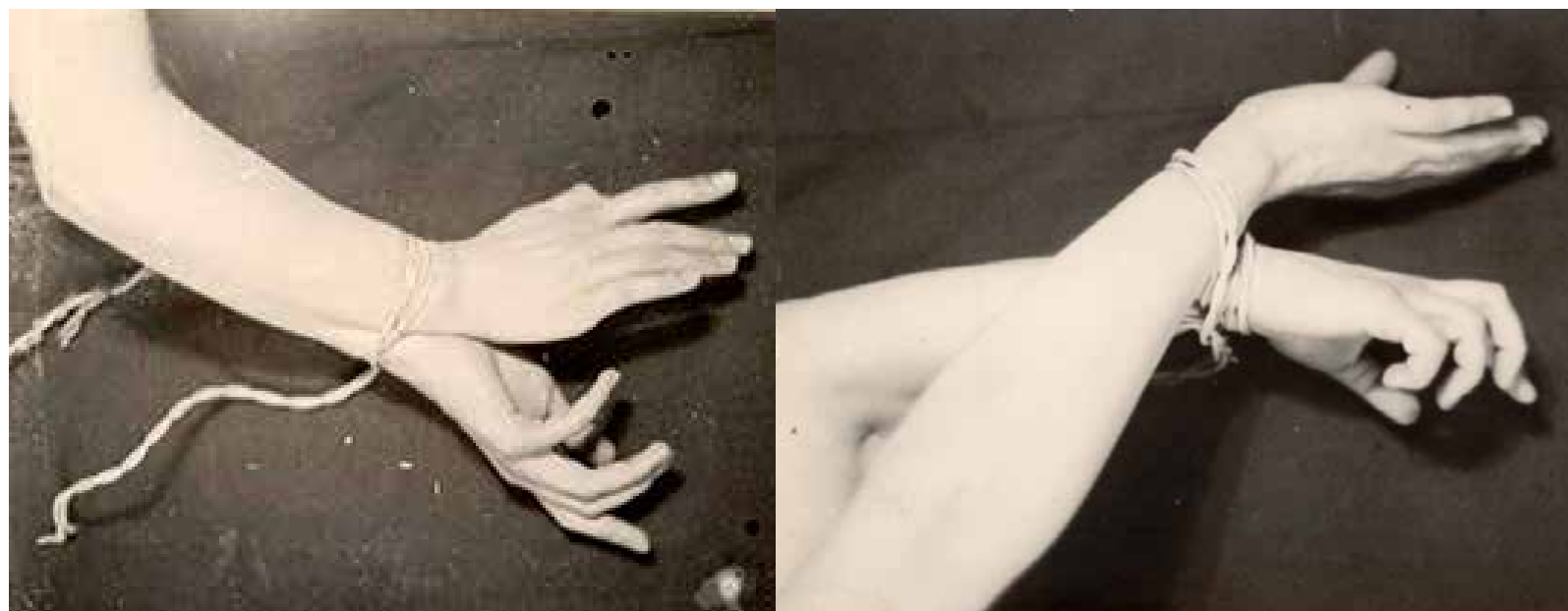
As we might gather from his desperate attempt to take part in, and then distance himself from, the Essen Congress, Sidorov – in 1928 – still had the grand idea of dedicating his

intellectual energies to movement and plastic dance. Strong testimony to this aspiration is the Laboratory’s collection of 740 film negatives and glass plates documenting the experiments or, more precisely, the experiments in recording images, conducted at the Laboratory. In the “Explanatory Note”⁵⁰⁵ accompanying the *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN* [Journal of photographic work at the GAKhN Choreological Laboratory] (compiled by Sidorov and Larionov),⁵⁰⁶ Sidorov stated: “A detailed explication of all the deductions and a summary of the achievements, experiments and observations are part and parcel of Professor Sidorov’s research. He has been working on this since 1928 and, entitled *Iskusstvovedenie dvizheniia* [An art history of movement], the findings will constitute no less than three hundred or so typewritten pages.”⁵⁰⁷

Unfortunately, this monumental opus covering the period 1924 through late 1928 is missing from the Sidorov archive, although, clearly, he intended it to accompany the images which the Laboratory had been collecting.⁵⁰⁸ The negatives had been gathered together in boxes, named and numbered, but, presumably, were lost or thrown out during the police investigations and searches which GAKhN was forced to endure in 1929 onwards. For example, we learn that the collection of photographic images was still at the GAKhN library as late as July of that year, but inasmuch as the library was broken up shortly thereafter, we can assume that most of the archive was destroyed.⁵⁰⁹ Nevertheless, during the preparatory research for the movement exhibitions organized in Rome and Moscow in 1999 and 2000 respectively, various sources were uncovered which helped us to reconstruct, if only fragmentarily, the photographic archive of the Choreological Laboratory. In any event, the destiny of that archive was symptomatic of the deliberate intention – on the part of Party bureaucrats in the early 1930s – to eradicate the Choreological Laboratory from cultural history as an anti-Soviet phenomenon. Remnants of the Laboratory experiments, i.e. the photographs, deriving from many different sources, are now dispersed among public and private collections. Many of the relevant prints now in the collection of the State Bakhrushin Museum in Moscow come from Larionov’s collection, while those at RGALI are to be found in the personal dossiers of various photographers (Svishchov-Paola, in particular) or critics such as Viktor Ivanov (Iving). Other important items are in the family collections of choreographers such as Goleizovsky and Lukin, photographers such as Grinberg and Teleshev and dance historians such as Sidorov.

A rather different scenario regards the remarkable collection of photographic prints from the Chernetskaia archive which is now with Galina and Maksim Fedorovsky in Berlin and which, presumably, duplicates the negatives at the Choreological Laboratory (which Larionov and Sidorov had registered and systematized in their *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot*). After all, vying with Sidorov, Chernetskaia had intended to write her own history of dance.





Obviously, key associates of the Choreological Laboratory also made copies of what they considered to be the more important photographic prints for themselves. The motive may have been a purely esthetic one, as in the case of the albums belonging to Oton Engel's, or a scholarly one, some hoping to preserve documentary testimony to their own research. Clearly, both intentions guided Chernetskaia as she amassed her own extraordinary collection of photographic prints of the art of movement, which she divided up by subject-matter into special files and containers – and which, miraculously, resurfaced in the early 1980s.

From the dimensions and denominations of the photographic prints in the Chernetskaia containers we can deduce precise coincidences with the glass and celluloid negatives which the Laboratory still had in its possession in the late 1920s. For example, the container dedicated entirely to the analysis of Alekseeva's *Dying Birds* in the Chernetskaia Berlin archive corresponds exactly to negative box No. 20 (13 x 18 cms.) listed in the *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot* and dated 1924-25;⁵¹⁰ the containers entitled *Plastika 1* and *Plastika 2* and GAKhN (No. 10, for example) and dated by academic year in the Chernetskaia archive also correspond to the chronology and thematic repertoire in the *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot*. The latter provides precise indications as to how the material had been subdivided into various sections, for example: "Studies in the Mimic Possibilities of Plastic Dance" or "Movements of the Hands", "Movements of the Legs", "Unified Movements of Arms and Legs", "Composition of Gesture while Lifting and Lowering", "Role of Drapery and Background in the Analysis of Movement", "Group Movements" and "Complementary Reciprocal Compositions via Functional Movements".

During the academic year 1925-26 the issue of gait constituted a special field of study, the *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot* mentioning boxes (Nos. 9, 10, 11) of small negatives

(4.1 x 2.6) subdivided into "Diverse Typologies of Gait", "Episodic Snapshots of Gait with Footwear", "Gait in Stockings", etc., which correspond, at least, in part, to the tiny box of photographs called "Legs" in the Chernetskaia archive (pp. 412-3).

That the theme of gait lay at the foundation of key researches at the Laboratory is demonstrated by the fact that, even before the institution was established, there had been much discussion about this. As early as 1923 Sidorov had been trying to systematize a terminology for the various kinds of gait,⁵¹¹ while in December, 1925, Larionov and Sidorov even delivered a joint lecture on "The Problem of Artistic Gait", prompting a wide-ranging debate.⁵¹² Here Larionov discussed the anatomical basis of gait and the kinds of gait associated with various movements – artistic, gymnastic and at the workplace – while Sidorov presented the results of four experiments which he had conducted on how to represent gait and highlight its mobile trajectory by means of the cyclograph. He also discussed psychic and physiological elements in his enquiry as, for example, gait under hypnosis or gait while blindfolded or with hands tied. Unfortunately, the cinematographic materials produced by the Ciné-Cabinet of the Laboratory have not come down to us, so we are unable to reconstruct Sidorov's various experiments, although the Chernetskaia archive does contain a few stills of hands tied.

According to the *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot*, the academic year 1925-26 saw the development of a special research project devoted to the "multiple recording of an image in movement," (p. 416)⁵¹³ "meaning the photographic or, more precisely, cinematographic registration of poses in sequence on a single plate."⁵¹⁴ This coincided with the establishment of the Cinematological Section at GAKhN the same year which, for researchers such as Larionov and Sidorov, was of the utmost importance: "We feel that organizing this kind of research within an academic department which is already studying issues of choreology is very appropriate, because, in general, the art of cinema enjoys the maximum proximity to the art of movement, specifically in the sphere of choreology."⁵¹⁵ Some of the prints in the Chernetskaia archive confirm that the Laboratory continued to cultivate a particular interest in the cinema and its potential use for future research, because the:

education of the film star parallels that of the performer of plastic dance. A film director's activities are conditioned by the need to operate with an artistic phenomenon moving through space and time wherein rhythm and frame are his main concerns. It is the very element of rhythm which forges such a close link between the cinematic spectacle and plastic movement and which confronts both art forms with an analogous task – to synthesize theatrical and musical rhythm: as for the psychological aspect of cinematic perception, this is an artistic one which, in its active ingredient, is very like perceiving a mimodrama.⁵¹⁶

It is not coincidental that the idea or genre of mimodrama came about as a result of research on mime:



Photographer unknown, *Cinema and mime. Studies in the expressivity of extremities: Hands*. Conducted by the Choreological Laboratory in 1924-25. Three original prints. ICh: Box No. 3 Small format. *Mime. Various photographs 1923-30*
a) 13.5 x 10.5 cm,
b) 14.5 x 10.5 cm,
c) 5 x 3 cm



The problems of mime induced us to examine issues of movement not only in the dance, but also in cinema. The purely formal mime within this or that particular pose transmuted into a mime of content or gesture. In turn, this confronted the researcher with the question as to how organic the method of study was vis-à-vis all the arts of movement and not just in theatre and dance... Studying mime has led us to the [question] of how mime is registered in mimodrama wherein, we should emphasize, the role of the interpreter's visage expressing the interior emotions is important as is the role of gesture releasing the potentiality of mime not only in the movements of the extremities, but also in the pose.⁵¹⁷

However, in looking at the various photographic sequences in the Berlin archive, we might speak more of “melodrama” than of “mimodrama” ~~inasmuch~~ ^{inasmuch} as they often recall the gestural caricature of silent film. In dimensions, too, these “cinematographic” sequences are close to the negatives (6 x 9) which used to be in the Laboratory boxes, a case in point being the group (Nos. 3,4,5) dedicated to “Experiments in Mime: Sequence of Poses in Movement” and “Sequence of Poses during Mimic Mise-en-scènes” representing “mise-en-scènes” such as *Poor Girl, Beside the Water* and *Attack* (pp. 418-9). The latter appears in four or five versions, of which one, at least, corresponds to a sequence in the Chernetskaia archive, i.e. container No. 10 entitled *GAKhN. Chor. Lab. Compositional Experiments in Photographic Scenarios*. The patent content of this “mimodrama”, a rape scene, recalls the shaded charcoal drawings of Engel's, so very “cinematographic”, whose Decadent taste, sometimes on the verge of the ridiculous, is redeemed by his technical skill.

Also in 1925-26 the Laboratory studied the issue of national costume and costume for the stage and how plastic pose depends on costume and background – in other words, how costume can influence pose and posture or, conversely, can be transformed by the conditions being dictated by this or that dance. Several boxes in the Laboratory archive or, rather, their denominations, are of particular importance here such as No. 1 (“Study of Movements and Poses of a Couple Dancing in Diverse Costume Styles and Variations”) which analyzes poses in costumes of antiquity, including chitons and peploi, as well as poses from Foregger's eccentric dances, box No. 3 containing images (p. 421) intended for the “Study of the Same Pose, but in Different Costumes”, and also No. 7 devoted to more complex interconnections such as negative No. 171: “Light dress, long and wide against a dark background. Serene pose,” or, conversely, in the next photograph: “Short dark dress against a clear background. Dance pose.”⁵¹⁸

Identifying all these variants against the items in the Chernetskaia archive is not especially difficult, the moreso since it contains the more “piquant” versions of nudes posing in transparent shawls of lace – images which are mentioned rather demurely in the *Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot* under the general rubric of “Study of costume and its influence on pose. Using shawls.” (p. 420)⁵¹⁹ Many of the photographs also represent characteristic poses and specific moments of performance taken from the various studios collaborating with the Laboratory or actually operating under its aegis as, for example, the School of Liudmila Alekseeva (with her famous *Dying Birds*) and the studios of Chernetskaia, Irina Dubovskaia, the Drambalet, Foregger, Tar et al. Goleizovsky, who contributed much to the four Laboratory “Art of Movement” exhibitions, is represented in the Chernetskaia archive by two images only, while Lukin and Rumnev (both well represented at the exhibitions) are missing altogether – which may indicate a desire – on the part of Larionov and Sidorov not to publicize the Laboratory experiments too widely. Still, Lukin's choreographies are well represented in the archive – including Rybin's photographic sequence of an entire performance called *Indian Dance* of 1929 (pp. 400, 422-5),

A. Sidorov, Experiment in double mirror image photography. Photographic print from the original negative, 5.4 x 7 cm. At the second and third “Art of Movement” exhibitions, 1926 and 1927. OE

Photographer unknown, *Aggression*. Choreological Laborator, 1926-27. Original print, 6.6 x 4.3 cm. ICh: Box No. 10: GAKhN: *Experiments with Photographic Scenarios. Various Photographs 1924-27*

Photographer unknown, Sequence of movement poses and corresponding mime expressions. Poses in sequence within a scenario using mime entitled: *Aggression*. Choreological Laboratory, 1926-27. Four poses. Original prints. ICh: Box No. 10: GAKhN: *Experiments with Photographic Scenarios. Various Photographs 1924-27*
a) 3.4 x 6.2 cm,
b) 5 x 6.8 cm,
c) 4,9 x 5,4 cm,
d) 5,3 x 5,9 cm

O. Engel's, *Aggression*. Mimodrama, late 1920s. Charcoal on paper, 25 x 18 cm. OE





Previous pages:
Unidentified
photographers, Study
of costume and its
influence on pose.
Use of gesture and
mime. Choreological
Laboratory, 1924-25.
Original prints. ICh:
Box *Plastic Dance*
1B: *Experiments*
with *Photographic*
Scenarios. Various
Photographs 1923-
25
Movements with a
shawl. Two poses,
a) 11.4 x 5.2 cm,
b) 9.6 x 15.2 cm
Costume and pose.
Short tunic,
c) 16.7 x 6.1 cm,
d) 15.7 x 6.9 cm



Here and following
pages:

S. Rybin, Indian
Dance (India), 1929.
Choreography by
L. Lukin. Original
prints. ICh Box No. 5:
Small Format:
Plastic Dance.
Various Photographs
1923-29
a) 7.5 x 5.,3 cm,
b) 4.2 x 8.2 cm,
c) 5 x 8.,4 cm,
d) 5 x 8 cm

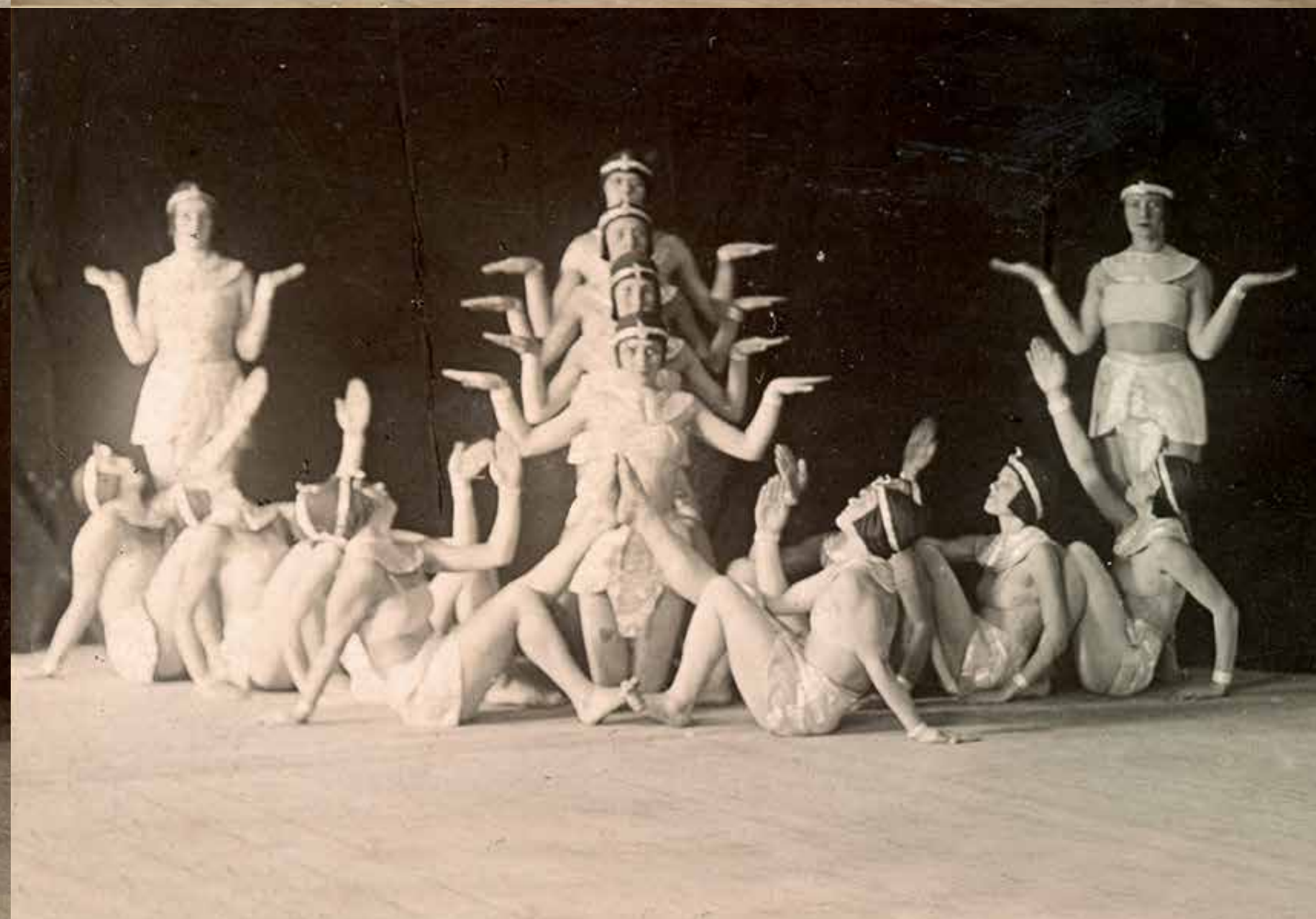
Study of movement
and pose in filling a
triangle or rhombus.
Choreological
Laboratory, 1924-25.
Three photographs.
Original prints. ICh:
Box No. 4: *Small*
Format. Before the
Revolution and 1920-
30. School of Plastic
Dance. Various
Photographs
a) 5 x 8.5 cm,
b) 5 x 8.5 cm



presumably, the same as the performance piece called *India* which, according to Lukin's repertoire list, he had choreographed for the Theatre of Revolution in Moscow the year before.⁵²⁰ The date demonstrates that even just before the official closure of GAKhN in 1930 and the imminent dispersal of the negatives held by the Laboratory, its more enterprising members continued to study the New Dance and to gather relevant images. Another coincidence between the GAKhN list of negatives in Moscow and the collection of photographic prints in Berlin concerns a fundamental field of research during 1924-25, i.e. that of the "framing" or:

recording of that single moment of artistic movement which subsumes all the others, which can be conceived within a simple geometric frame and which imbues each dance pose with its own definitive artistic form. This device, which, undoubtedly, is important for any kind of performative art, has been manifested and elaborated via the materials of three "frames" – the circle, the triangle and the rhombus.⁵²¹ (pp. 426-9)

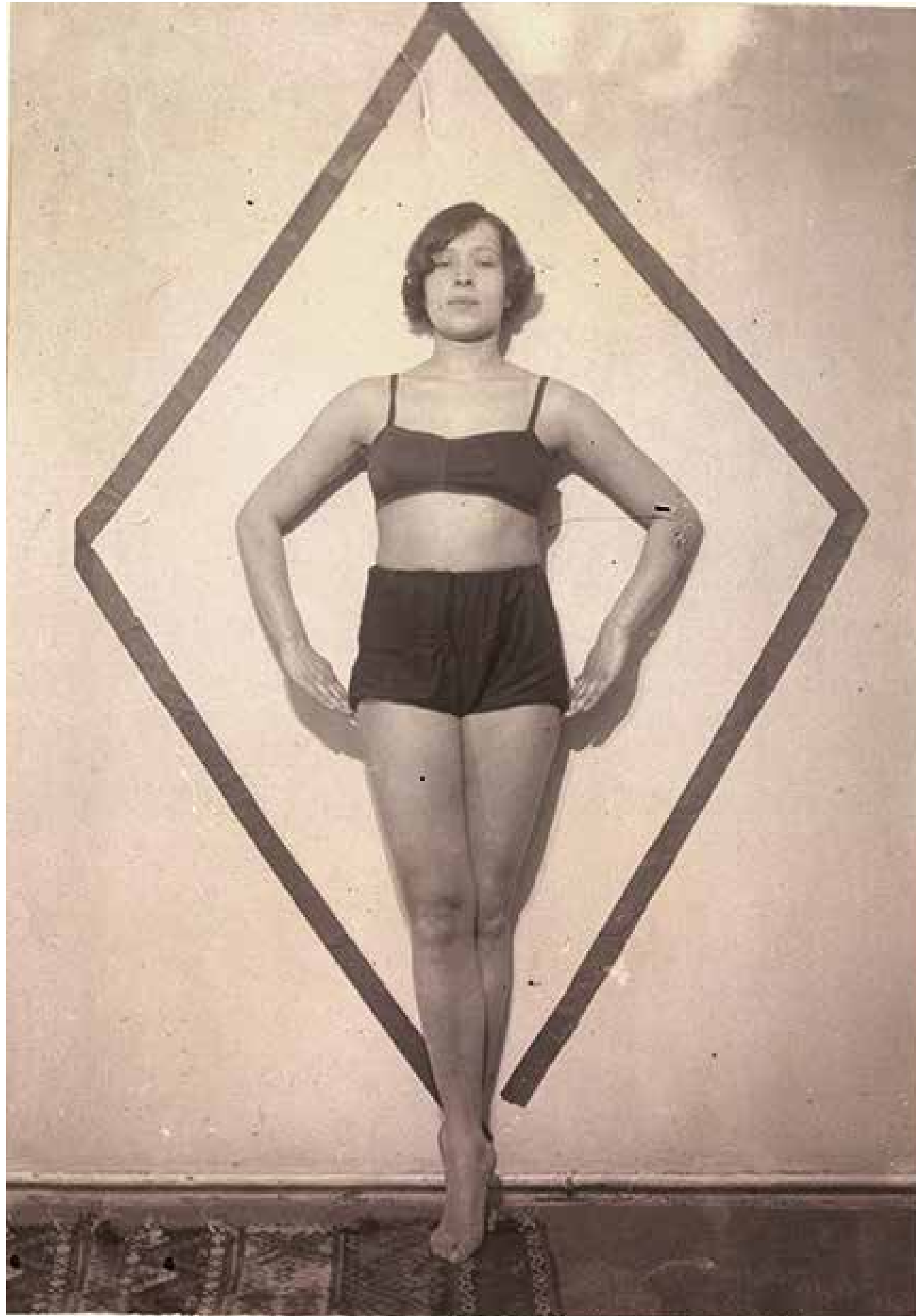
The Chernetskaia archive also possesses representations of certain poses within the form of a triangle or a rhombus, an ancillary device adopted by Laban and then developed by the

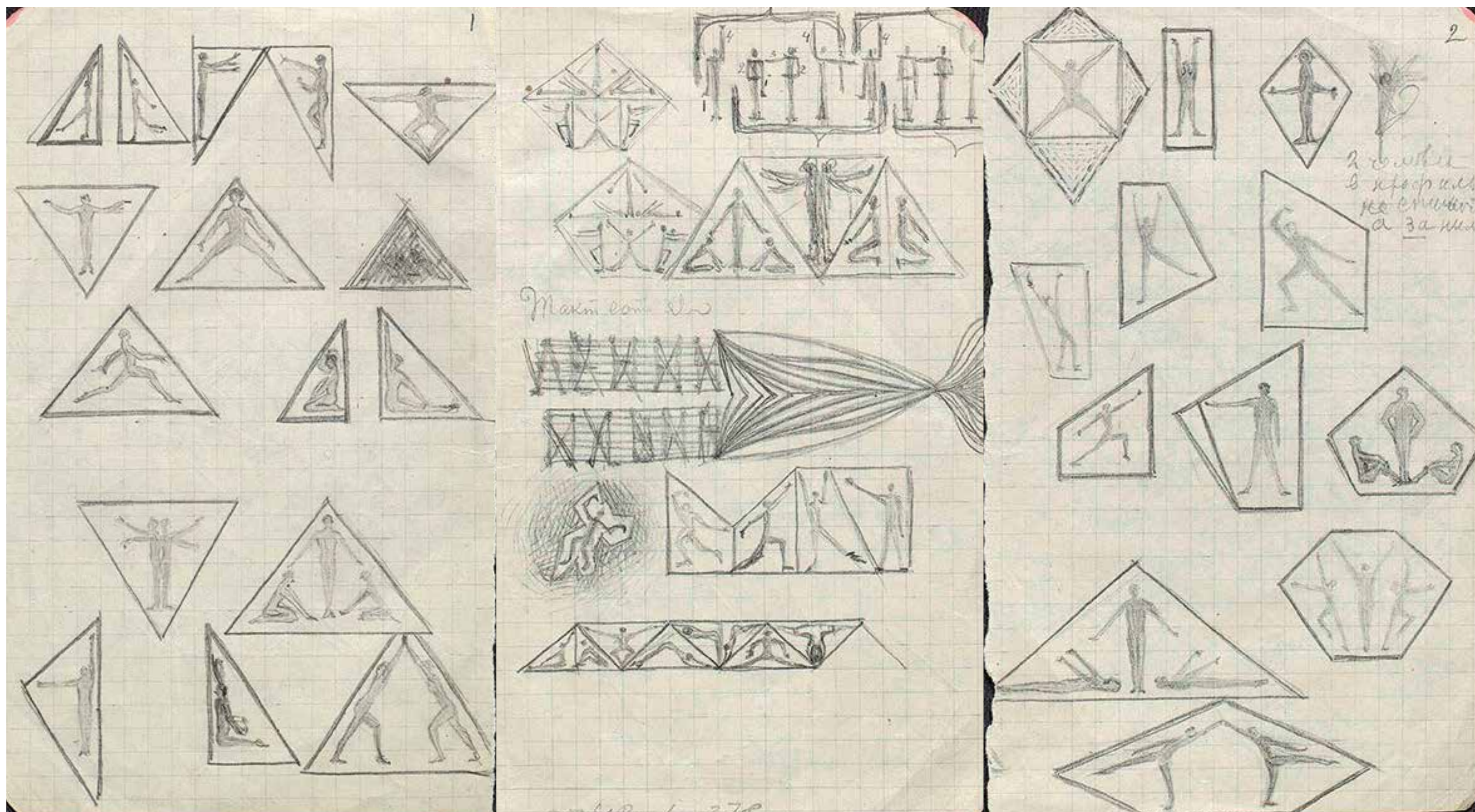




a) Movement in a triangle, 7.6 x 9.2 cm, b) Movement in a triangle, 7.2 x 10.4 cm,
c) Filling a triangular space with two figures on the basis of the principle of two
diagonals parallel to the centre, 9 x 10.7 cm. ICh: Box GAKhN 1924-27

Following pages:
Filling up a rhombus, Two photographs, Original
prints, a) 7.6 x11 cm, b) 8.10 x 4 cm. ICh





choreographers of the New Dance so as to harmonize a dancer's gesture with the surrounding space. Some of the glass negatives previously in Sidorov's collection which show poses and movements inside the geometric figures of triangles or rhombuses recall this method. Indeed, several Laboratory meetings were dedicated to Laban or, more exactly, to the

system of movement notation which he was still developing (Alfred Schlee presented Laban's cinetography – his Labanotation – officially in Essen in 1928, publishing it at his own publishing-house, Universal Edition, in Vienna)⁵²² and he inspired immediate responses from Russian colleagues also trying to formulate movement notations.

N. Aleksandrova, Three pages of graphic movement notations for rhythmic gymnastics from a notebook, mid-1920s. Pencil on paper, each page 17.5 x 11 cm. RGALI

THE II TANZKONGRESS IN ESSEN

Undoubtedly, the highly visible presence of foreign artists and photographers at the last “Art of Movement” exhibition in 1928 owed much to Sidorov’s enthusiasm and promotional spirit. Impressed by the reviews which had appeared in the German and Austrian press and galvanized into action, Sidorov entered into an intense correspondence with Georg Kirsta⁵²³ and the German choreographer, Kurt Jooss,⁵²⁴ who had just opened his Folkwangschule in Essen in 1927 and was now planning the second international congress on the New Dance for 22-26 June the following year.⁵²⁵

One of Jooss’s ideas for the Congress was to organize a special Russian evening showcasing the most important new wave choreographers – to be selected by Sidorov no less – and to import an “Art of Movement” exhibition. If the project had come to fruition, undoubtedly, the course of modern European and American dance criticism might have taken a very different path, less sectarian and better articulated. More exactly,



Atelier Kolliner,
Mira Cirul in *Tango*.
Gisa Geert Group.
Artist’s photographic
print. Catalogue
of the fourth “Art
of Movement”
exhibition 1928,
Nos. 524-35. PKh
a) 10.9 x 13.33 cm,
b) 10.9 x 14 cm





the recent Western notion of Soviet dance as something polarized between the highly professional, but hardly innovative, Classical ballet and the kaleidoscopic repertoire of the Ballets Russes moulded by Parisian taste would have acquired a third direction, as radical and disruptive as the European New Dance. But in the 1930s onwards this direction was driven to the peripheral space of the so-called *estrada* (circus, variety-theatre, music-hall) or diluted, if not dissolved, into folkloristic dance. Perhaps the fact that even the finest dancers relished the *estrada* repertoire explains why the variety theatre was granted such a superior professional status in the Soviet Union. Indeed, some of them did switch to the repertoire of the variety theatre, and, far from feeling degraded, attained a high professional status in Soviet culture. Consequently, from the late 1960s onwards the first historical and critical accounts of the New Dance are to be found not in histories of the Russian ballet, but in appreciations of *estrada* – something analogous to the concurrent Western rediscovery of the Russian avant-garde which began on the fringe of the applied arts such as children’s book illustration or ceramics, but which, eventually, upset our critical understanding of the Soviet 1920s. Unfortunately, a series of events, for which the Soviet bureaucracy is, surely, to be blamed, halted any reunification of German and Russian talents at the Tanzkongress, although the fact that the great German choreographers chose to identify themselves with Nazi ideology would have foiled any subsequent practical collaboration. Contrary to Nazism, Soviet ideology regarded the body as healthy, sportive and collective, rejecting all traces of Decadent estheticism. The complex relationships at the fourth “Art of Movement” exhibition and their consequences together with the invitations to Essen are ample testimony to this new cultural and political stance.

The first contact with Austrian colleagues which Sidorov established was via Alfred Schlee, who, writing as secretary of the Neue Tanzbühne in Vienna on 1 March, 1928,⁵²⁶ and referring to Jooss, asked for a copy of the catalogue of the last “Art of Movement” exhibition, and suggested that it serve as a model for a German sequel. In touch with Sidorov, Jooss sent off an informal note a month later, describing the future convention in Essen and its accompanying exhibition⁵²⁷ and extending an invitation to Russian performers and scholars who were most representative of the New Dance. This was followed by a second, informal invitation dated 16 April, in which Jooss announced that the aim of his Folkwangschule was to promote the national element in the art of dance as a constituent part of the “modern” spirit. Although Jooss still owed much to the mysticism of the *fin de siècle*, he did intend to demonstrate how a new “spiritual Tanzbund” in the sphere of living, plastic dance, derived not from America or France, but from a spiritual union between Germany and the New Russia. The invitation gave Sidorov full licence to choose the names of the choreographers who were to be included in the list of Russian exponents of the New Dance, although Jooss’s allusion to lack of funds and his leading question as to whether the Russians might help finance the conference did be-

Here and following pages:
Atelier Kolliner, Mira Cirul in *Polshinelle Tänze*. Gisa Geert Group. Stamped on the photograph: “Atelier Kolliner Wien”. Artist’s photographic print. Catalogue of the fourth “Art of Movement” exhibition, 1928, No. 324-35. PKh a) 21.5 x 15 cm, b) 10.9 x 13.8 cm, c) 10.4 x 14 cm (17.8 x 26.6 cm mounted)



Photo: Kolliner.

tray an intrinsic ingenuity. Still, Sidorov and the Choreological Laboratory responded with enthusiasm (if not, also with ingenuity!), scheduling a special session at the Laboratory for 25 April, 1928, where he presented the Essen invitation in the hope of winning the support of potential performers and choreographers. Sidorov did so with such fervour that he could not fail to incite rivalry, conflict and intrigue amidst the many who wished to be invited. An undated list indicates that the following were selected: Chernetskaia, Dubovskaia, Natal'ia Gremina, Maïia, Emil' Mei, Asaf Messerer, Mariia Ulitskaia and Zinaida Verbova. Ever since November of 1925, Maïia, in particular, had been in contact with Germany via VOKS and, from time to time, she received German performers and other foreign dance specialists in her Studio. Perhaps a ready sign of the climate of ferocious rivalry among the Soviet professionals can be seen from the fact that Lukin, whom Sidorov held in very high regard, was ignored, while Goleizovsky declined Sidorov's invitation, even if the latter did write (on the invitation itself) that "here we have the greatest Maestro in the art of dance on the stage of the USSR."⁵²⁸

Examining the chronology of facts, however marginal they may be, tells us that, from the very beginning, the story of the Soviet participation, specifically of the Choreological Laboratory, in the Essen conference was a utopian dream. True, Jooss and his colleagues firmly believed in the fatherland of Socialism, a faith which made them go so far as to pre-publish the names and dates of the Russian delegation in the general programme for the Congress.

On 30 April, 1928, Sidorov received two letters from Germany. One was from Ludwig Buchholz, general secretary of Rudolf von Laban's Choreographisches Institut in Berlin,⁵²⁹ inviting him to deliver a lecture on the relationship between Germany and Russia in the sphere of dance movement. Buchholz also requested two copies of the catalogue, one being for "Herr Laban" who wished to confer a diploma *Honoris Causa* on Sidorov – probably to match the analogous diploma which GAKhN had conferred on Laban for his scholarly achievements in the sphere of choreology.⁵³⁰ The second letter, also postmarked 30 April, was from Kirsta, asking Sidorov if

“GAKhN would agree to organize an exhibition in Essen like the Moscow one on the art of movement in the form of ‘eine kleine Auslese’.”⁵³¹

However, living in the highly bureaucratic Soviet Union and beneath the stormclouds gathering fast and furious above GAKhN, the very prudent Sidorov needed an official invitation, which did arrive from Jooss, but only on 3 May (just a little over a month before the slated opening of the Congress). The communication touched on practical aspects such as how long Sidorov’s lecture should be and whether a courier should be dispatched with all the formal invitations for GAKhN so that Sidorov could distribute them individually. True, subsequently, Sidorov denied bearing any responsibility – or GAKhN’s – for selecting the individuals to be invited to the Congress. Given the limited space of the Congress halls, Jooss proposed organizing one full evening devoted to the new Russian dance which would last at least two hours. Jooss was sorry that the exhibition materials which Schlee had been keeping in Vienna, had already been sent back to Moscow, but he still hoped that they could be used for Essen. From this correspondence it transpires that the materials of the fourth “Art of Movement” exhibition had been circulating in Austria and Germany, although this needs to be verified. In the same letter Jooss complains of lack of funds for the Congress, but also mentions that the Communist Party is ready to play host to Sidorov and help him visit different German cities afterwards, adding, nervously, that the catalogue had already gone to press. In fact, it already advertised Sidorov’s slide lecture on “The Art of Dance in the New Russia”, at “7.30 p.m. on Sunday, 24 June, in the Grosse Ausstellungshalle” which was scheduled to follow a recital called *The New Dance in Russia* with the “new Moscow companies: Chernetskaia, Dubovskaia, Glan, Maïia and others.”⁵³² One result of this published information is that it was long believed that, in fact, there had been a Soviet contribution and that Sidorov had travelled to Essen, although it is now clear that neither Sidorov, nor a Soviet delegation, took part in the Essen gathering.⁵³³ The frenetic telegrammes from Jooss which seemed to have gone unanswered, the ambiguous position of the Soviet authorities and, indeed, of GAKhN itself which refused to take any organizational initiative regarding passports or finances are testimony to the hazardous predicament of GAKhN and, by default, of the Choreological Laboratory.

To this end, an old and proven tactic was brought into play, namely, establishing yet another institution, a kind of “cover operation,” which was to assume responsibility for the German connection, namely, the Association for the Contemporary Art of Dance (ASIT). But in spite of numerous meetings and discussions, it was not recognized by the authorities and never incorporated. As late as 7 June, a number of dance specialists who wished to attend the Essen Congress, renewed the proposal,⁵³⁴ the director of VOKS insisting that funds be found so that Russians could participate, even if those who were toying with the idea were now plagued by doubt and had strong reservations about the whole project.





K. Kolliner, Mira
Cirul in *Rustic
Dance*, 1925. Music
by N. Medtner
and costumes by
G. Kirsta. Artist's
original print. PKh
a) 14 x 19.7 cm,
b) 8.2 x 13.5 cm

K. Kolliner, Mira Cirul in a solo. Music by S. Prokofiev and costumes by G. Kirsta. Original print, 6.1 x 16.6 cm. PKh



Chernetskaia, for example, whose life was becoming increasingly difficult (her brother, the film director, Arkadii Boitler, had emigrated in 1919), wondered: “Do we really need to go? Are we able to show something really different from all the smart Alec émigrés? After all, the taverns in Paris and Berlin are full of émigrés dancing ethnographical dances.”⁵³⁵ In the wake of such vacillation and masked misgiving, the hypocritical conclusion (typical of Soviet behaviour in the years to come) was that the “impending deadline for the Congress as much as the immature position of the Soviet art of dance would detract from the worthiness of showing [dance] at the Essen Congress. Consequently, while acknowledging the value of the invitation itself very highly, [we] feel it inappropriate to accept the offer to present dance at said Congress.”⁵³⁶ The same day Sidorov, hoping at least to secure his own passage, wrote to Narkompros, repeating that he had been entrusted with a mission to participate in the Dürer celebrations in Nuremberg and that he would be covering his travel expenses from his own state bank account – even though he had already been refused a passport for foreign travel.⁵³⁷ In his later, official account Sidorov referred to his 1927 trip to Germany (mentioned above), adding that “in 1928 Narkompros entrusted me with a second (free) mission abroad which, however, I could not accomplish [because] I was not issued a passport for foreign travel in time by AOMS (Administrative Department of the Moscow Soviet). Consequently, unable to take part in the celebrations honouring Dürer or to contribute to the Congress on the art of dance in the city of Essen, to which I had also received a personal invitation, I retracted my petition for the passport.”⁵³⁸

Dancers and choreographers, from Tsvetaeva to Ulitskaia, roundly reproached Sidorov for the Essen debacle, to which Sidorov responded in a letter to the latter which, however, still does not shed light on the nature of his rapport with Essen. Distancing both himself and GAKhN from any responsibility for organizing the trip, Sidorov argued that the main reason for the failure was mistrust and anti-social behaviour on the part of those who had been invited.⁵³⁹ Writing to Tsvetaeva, he reaffirmed his personal sympathy for the choreographer, adding that, as a member of GAKhN, “I regard the trip to Essen as a [chance] to show each and everyone the Soviet art of dance – which, actually, does not yet exist.”⁵⁴⁰

But after the Essen fiasco, October, 1928 still witnessed an attempt to organize a new Choreographical Section within VOKS – intended to facilitate travel abroad by dance specialists – under the directorship of Ol’ga Kameneva.⁵⁴¹ Larionov played an active role in this new initiative, being elected member of the triumvirate charged with drawing up plans for a fifth “Art of Movement” exhibition and exerting a strong influence on the strategic orientation of the Section towards physical education. This is demonstrated by the instructions regarding the selection of dances for “export” which were to have the following characteristics:

- 1) Soviet subject-matter or a general ideological position conforming to Soviet culture;
- 2) Maintaining a common style appropriate to the principles of strong and healthy movement being advocated by Soviet physical culture.⁵⁴²

One of the goals of the new VOKS Section was to organize a dance library for specialists — not a mere bureaucratic pipe-dream, but an essential prerequisite, because it entailed saving the extraordinarily rich collection of dance books coming from Sidorov's own private library and the books and periodicals which the Choreological Laboratory had been acquiring for the “Art of Movement” exhibitions, always insisting that ample space be given over to the latest specialist literature on the New Dance. That the ultimate fate of the library was worrying many scholars is evident, for example, from the ASIT Statutes which advocated the creation of a specialist library and museum and, incidentally, also spoke of the need for its members to travel abroad in the search for relevant publications.

As mentioned above, bibliophilism verging on fetishism was an elitist element which brought together many scholars of the New Dance, but which also signaled a certain “distance from the masses.” Late 1928 and early 1929 saw the first external enquiries into the various activities of GAKhN, where, as a matter of fact, Sidorov kept most of his dance books as well as his photographic negatives and prints. On 29 October, 1929, as part of radical ideological restructuring, GAKhN was forced to curb its subscriptions to foreign periodicals,⁵⁴³ while between late 1929 and early 1930 not only books, but also key *gakhmoutsy*, were expelled. The situation of GAKhN, both as a research institution and as a physical building, was precarious, indeed, much of its space being given over “temporarily” to School No. 34 of the Moscow Department of Popular Education in October, 1929.⁵⁴⁴ On 1 December the order came down for all the religious books at GAKhN to be transferred to the Anti-Religious Museum (as well as books of Idealist philosophy), books which by then had been shoved into the cellars and attics of the Kropotkinskaia building.⁵⁴⁵ If Larionov and Sidorov did manage to rescue parts of their own private libraries (including Sidorov's dance literature), the vast archive of glass negatives and film documenting the researches of the Choreological Laboratory was in dire straits. The psychologist, Vladimir Ekzempliarsky, one of the more influential members of GAKhN, sent a stern letter to the new Praesidium, complaining that students of School No. 34 were smoking in the Photo-Laboratory and Ciné-Cabinet,⁵⁴⁶ while on 14 January, 1930, this same Praesidium stated that the question of GAKhN would be resolved swiftly. Naturally, Ekzempliarsky's letter went unanswered: the fate of GAKhN, den of Idealist and anti-Marxist iniquity, was already assured — together with the Choreological Laboratory and its experiments with the body, so Decadent, unhealthy and intolerable to the new regime.



K. Kolliner, R. Chladek dancing the *Präludium* from A. Corelli's *Klagelied* at the Hellerau-Laxenburg School. Stamped on the photograph: “Atelier Kolliner Wien”. Artist's photographic print, 22 x 13.4 cm (26.6 x 17.8 cm mounted). Catalogue of the fourth “Art of Movement” exhibition, 1928, within Nos. 451-452 or 522-23. PKh



Artist unknown,
Cover for B. Kal'pus
et al., *Spartakiada*,
Moscow: FIS, 1928

⁴⁸³ Sidorov went to Berlin for a month in mid-July, 1927, and then for a week in Leipzig. Before travelling on to Frankfurt on 31 August, he visited Vienna and then went back to Berlin for ten days, before returning to Moscow in mid-September. A. Sidorov: “Otchet o zagranichnoi kommandirovke Prof. A.A. Sidorova, 1927 g.”. Typescript, pp. 1-11. Archive of Sidorov family, Moscow.

⁴⁸⁴ The first official letter concerning the exhibition was dated 26 October, 1927, followed by another letter containing a brief biography of the artist, which Sidorov had requested. See OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 135, ll. 9-11.

⁴⁸⁵ “Protokol zasedaniia Komissii po organizatsii IV Vystavki ‘Iskusstvo dvizheniia’” (8 December, 1927). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 134 (folder No. 7), l. 107. Apart from Larionov and Sidorov, the session was attended by the photographers Yurii Dement'ev, Yurii Eremin, Andrei Teleshov and Vasilii Zhivago.

⁴⁸⁶ I. Sollertinsky: “O vystavke ‘Iskusstvo dvizheniia’ (1929)” in I. Beletsky, ed.: *Stat'i o baletе*, M: Muzyka, 1973, pp. 63-64.

⁴⁸⁷ B. Vernon-Warren and C. Warren, eds.: *Gertrud Bodenwieser and Vienna's Contribution to Ausdruckstanz*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999.

⁴⁸⁸ Bodenwieser's *Tanz auf der Sprechbühne* was published in German in the catalogue with a Russian summary by Sidorov. See *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Bewegungskunst. Katalog chetvertoi vystavki*, pp. 10-14.

⁴⁸⁹ “Protokol zasedaniia Komissii po organizatsii vystavki” (29 December, 1927). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 134, l. 110.

⁴⁹⁰ “Protokol zasedaniia komissii po organizatsii IV-oi vystavki” (8 December, 1927). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB, Call No.: f. 517, ed. khr. 134, l. 107.

⁴⁹¹ Pozniakov collaborated with Larionov on the subject of “stationary poses” in dance. See RGALI, f. 941, op. 1, ed khr. 5, ll. 159-61. Also see his curriculum vitae in ibid., op. 10, ed. khr. 483.

⁴⁹² See Sheremet'evskaia, *Tanets na estrade*, pp. 157-60; “Tango, step e bosonožki: il ballo nel varietà degli anni venti” in Misler, *In principio era il corpo*, pp. 99-105.

⁴⁹³ Iving: “Tanets v ‘Krivom zerkale’” in *Programma Gosudarstvennykh Akademicheskikh teatrov*, M, 1927, No. 20, p. 6.

⁴⁹⁴ A. Sarab'ianov: *Zhizneopisanie khudozhnika L'va Bruni*. Catalogue of exhibition at G.O.S.T. Gallery, M, 2009, p. 103.

⁴⁹⁵ See. C. Rousier, ed.: *Grandjean dessine Duncan*. Catalogue of exhibition at the Centre National de la Danse, Paris-Pantin, 2005.

⁴⁹⁶ A. Sidorov: “Revoliutsionnyi balet Zapada” in *Sovremennyi teatr*, M, 1928, No. 14, pp. 286-87.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Dated 15 December, 1927, the letter contains a brief biography of Kirsta in response to Sidorov's request plus a reference to the three costume designs for Mira Cirul (tempera and watercolour) of 1925. Manuscript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 134, ll. 9-11.

⁴⁹⁹ L. Karina and M. Kant: *Hitler's Dancers. German Modern Dance and the Third Reich*, New York: Berghahn, New York 2003.

⁵⁰⁰ A. Larionov and A. Sidorov: untitled preface in *Iskusstvo dvizheniia. Katalog chetvertoi vystavki*, p. 7.

⁵⁰¹ Materials concerning the All-Union Spartakiada in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 141 (1928), ll. 3, 8.

⁵⁰² “Protokol zasedaniia Komissii po vystavke ‘Dostizheniia po fizkul'ture za 10 let’”. Typescript in ibid., l. 2.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., ll. 48, 49.

⁵⁰⁴ See A. Larionov: “Massovye agitpiaski Aleksandrovoi” (3 July, 1933). Typescript in OR-RGB: f. 776, k. 118, ed. khr. 43, l. 9.

⁵⁰⁵ Sidorov, “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska i opis’ negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN, 1927-29”.

⁵⁰⁶ “Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN rukoi Larionova i Sidorova” (1925-26) accompanying the “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska i opis’ negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii 1927-29”. Typescript in OR-RGB, Call No.: f. 776, k. 4, ed. khr. 18.

⁵⁰⁷ Sidorov, “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska i opis’ negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN, 1927-29”, l. 1.

⁵⁰⁸ According to ibid., there were a total of “740 negatives distributed in the following manner: 1924-25 – 294 negatives; 1925-26 – 276 negatives; 1926-27 – 148 negatives; first six months through the autumn of 1927 – 23 negatives.”

⁵⁰⁹ On 28 July, 1929, Sidorov left for the holidays, leaving the archive in the care of a certain Pokadsky, a librarian at GAKhN. See Sidorov, “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska i opis’ negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN, 1927-29”, l. 10.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid. l. 5: Box No. 20 (13 x 18) – The Birds. Dance and Analysis; No. No. 220-26 – Conditional Moments of the Dance, Dynamic and Partner Poses.

⁵¹¹ A. Sidorov: “Terminologiiia pokhodki. Tezisy doklada” (8 August, 1923). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941 op. 17, ed. khr. 23, l. 25.

⁵¹² See the lecture by Larionov in “Protokol No 10/30 zasedaniia Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii” (25 December, 1925). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 11, l. 41/42.

⁵¹³ Anon.: “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska k proektu ob organizatsii Kinemalogicheskoi sektsii pri RAKhN” (26 February, 1922), ll. 28-29.

⁵¹⁴ Sidorov, “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska”. Typescript, Archive of the Sidorov family, Moscow, l. 1 (reverse).

⁵¹⁵ A. Larionov, A. Toporkov, L. Kuleshov: “Dokladnaia zapiska v Komissiiu po voprosu organizatsii kinemalogicheskoi sektsii” (6 May, 1922). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 139, l. 31.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Sidorov, “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska i opis’ negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN”. Typescript, l. 2. Archive of the Sidorov family, Moscow.

⁵¹⁸ “Zhurnal fotograficheskikh rabot Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN rukoi Larionova i Sidorova”, ll. 6-7.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., l. 7.

⁵²⁰ See Lukin, “Perechen’ tantsev, baletov i postanovok s 1919-1947 g.”, p. 3.

⁵²¹ Sidorov, “Ob’iasnitel’naia zapiska i opis’ negativov Khoreologicheskoi laboratorii GAKhN, 1927-29”, l.1.

⁵²² V. Preston-Dunlop: *An Introduction to Kinetography Laban*, London: Dance Books, 1966; A. Hutchinson Guest: *Labanotation: or Kinetography Laban: The System of Analyzing and Recording Movement*, New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1970.

⁵²³ The Choreological Laboratory archive at GT'sTMB contains Sidorov's correspondence (from October, 1927) with the Ukrainian artist Georg Kirsta who was then living in Vienna. See OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 135.

⁵²⁴ S. Walther: *Dance of Death: Kurt Jooss and the Weimar Years*, New York: Routledge, 1994.

⁵²⁵ I. Partsch-Bergsohn: *Modern Dance in Germany and United States. Crosscurrents and Influences*, Chur: Harwood Academic Publisher, 1994.

⁵²⁶ OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 137 (folder No. 14: “Kongress tantsa v gorode Essen”), l. 6. Alfred Schlee was editor of Rudolph von Laban's *Schrifttanz* which he presented at the Essen Congress.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., l. 5.

⁵²⁸ Letter from A. Sidorov to K. Goleizovsky dated 7 April, 1928. Quoted in Vasil'eva and Chernova, *Kas'ian Goleizovsky*, p. 175.

⁵²⁹ Signed letter written on Laban Institute stationery. Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB, f. 517, ed. khr. 137 (folder No. 14), l. 5.

⁵³⁰ “Arabesken” in *Der Tanz. Monatsschriften für Tanzkultur*, Berlin, 1928, August, No. 10, p. 10.

⁵³¹ Manuscript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 137, l. 17 (reverse).

⁵³² The journal *Singchor und Tanz. Fachblatt für Theatersingchor und Kunstanztanz* (Mannheim, 1928, 15 June, No. 12, p. 165) dedicated a special section to the second Tanzkongress (22-26 June).

⁵³³ See OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 137, ll. 26-27. Letter from Sidorov to Anatolii Lunacharsky and Ol'ga Kameneva (then in charge of VOKS) dated 7 June, 1928. Typescript, manuscript and draft; and Sidorov's undated draft of a letter to the director of the foreign department of LOMS indicating that the lecture had been scheduled officially for the 24 June, 1928 (ibid., l. 28).

⁵³⁴ “Protokol zaveschaniia predstavitelei zainteresovannykh v sovetskom tantse organizatsii po povodu Kongressa Essena”. Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 137, l. 37.

⁵³⁵ Ibid. l. 38. Later on Chernetskaia tried to distance herself from the entire episode by publishing a manual completely expurgated of her utopian and radical experiments, i.e. *Osnovnye elementy iskusstva tantsa (Metodicheskie ukazaniia dlia rukovoditelei tantseval'nykh kruzhkov)*, M: Krasnyi voim, 1937.

⁵³⁶ “Protokol zaveschaniia predstavitelei zainteresovannykh v sovetskom tantse organizatsii po povodu Kongressa Essena”, l. 38.

⁵³⁷ Letter from Sidorov to Anatolii Lunacharsky and Ol'ga Kameneva dated 7 June, 1928. Manuscript and typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 137, ll. 27, 28.

⁵³⁸ Sidorov, “Otchet o zagranichnoi komandirovke Prof. A.A. Sidorova, 1927 g.”, pp. 10.

⁵³⁹ Letter from Sidorov to Mariia Ulitskaia (undated). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB, f. 517, ed. khr. 137, l. 49 (and reverse).

⁵⁴⁰ Letter from Sidorov to Valeriia Tsvetaeva (undated), ibid., l. 48 (reverse).

⁵⁴¹ “Organizatsionnoe zasedanie Khoreograficheskoi sektsii VOKS” (6 October, 1928). Typescript in OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed. khr. 136 (folder No. 16 VOKS), l. 49.

⁵⁴² “Protokol Khoreograficheskoi sektsii VOKS” (14 November, 1928). Typescript OR-GT'sTMB: f. 517, ed khr. 136 (folder No. 16 VOKS), l. 60.

⁵⁴³ “Protokol No. 340 zasedaniia presidiuma GAKhN” (1 December, 1929). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941 (GAKhN), op. 1, ed. khr. 138, ll. 84-85.

⁵⁴⁴ The GAKhN archive contains at least one memorandum lamenting the fact that “Labour School No. 34” had taken over the premises. RGALI, f. 941 (GAKhN), op. 1, ed. khr. 138, l. 27.

⁵⁴⁵ “Protokol No. 1 zasedaniia Komissii reorganizatsii biblioteki GAKhN” (24 January, 1930). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 138, l. 160.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., l. 90.



Conclusion

“To love a butterfly is difficult, indeed, for at the slightest touch dust scatters from its rainbow wings. A butterfly must be loved cautiously and tenderly, for it may fly away whither it had come – to Eden. That is how I imagine the love of the dance”.

A. Sidorov, *O sushchnosti tantsa* [On the essence of dance], 1915, unpublished manuscript. Private archive.

That the archive of the Choreological Laboratory has ~~survived, albeit fragmentarily,~~ ~~now~~ scattered amidst various public and private collections, testifies to the fact that images, as well as manuscripts, “do not burn” (as Mikhail Bulgakov might have said). Indeed, the resistance of these ~~images~~ to the vicissitudes of time, their persistence of memory, offer a bold challenge to the forces of censorship, something of which Stalin’s henchmen and the protagonists of GAKhN themselves were fully aware. The ensuing silence of those who did outlast the trials of those years is not only a symptom of how to balance on the edge of a precipice. The tragic end of GAKhN demonstrates this very clearly, for many of its supporters, “enemies of the people”, were arrested and imprisoned during the Great Terror. But there is a strange twist of events: given the ominous political environment, something very surprising happened in February, 1935, i.e. after the liquidation of GAKhN, and that was the organization of an entire month dedicated to various evenings of the art of the dance which took place at the Radio-Theatre in the Club of Narkompros Art Workers at 17, Gorky Street in central Moscow. We learn that most of the prominent exponents of “alternative” dance – and their schools – took part, from Liudmila Alekseeva to Emil’ Mei, from Anna Redel’ to Mikhail Khrustalev, from Kas’ian Goleizovsky to Vera Shabshai, from Valeriia Tsvetaeva to Natali’a Glan, and even from Vera Drutskaia to Valentin Parnakh (his last public appearance). The Selection Committee was made up of critics such as Iving, musicians such as Ivan Sollertinsky and theatre and film celebrities such as Erwin Piscator, Sergei Eisenstein and Aleksandr Tairov. Also present was Sidorov himself who, after the closure of GAKhN, seemed to have retreated from the dance scene.⁵⁴⁷ Just as bizarre was the remarkable exhibition of dance images which opened a year later, in the autumn of 1936, at the Stage Design School directed by Evgenii Yavorsky on the Island of Dance in the Gorky Park of Culture and Recreation. Interestingly enough, according to official stationery, a Sector of Arts of a certain, unidentified Choreological Laboratory situated at 9, Krymskii val, i.e. in Gorky Park, was also active in the 1930s.⁵⁴⁸ Yet in the autumn of the same year Yavorsky, champion of *fizkul’tanets* (lit., physical education dance), was arrested and, two years later, executed at Kolyma.

Most of the members of the Choreological Laboratory were purged or simply retired from public life to abide in the perpetual fear of being “discovered”, even if Sidorov, its primary founder, remained unscathed. One explanation for this may lie in the recent

K. Goleizovsky, *The Kas’ian Goleizovsky Ballet*, mid-1920s. Design for a poster. Collage, whitening and pencil on plywood, 104.5 x 71.4 cm. KG

discovery that Sidorov (pseudonym: “Old Man”) was embroiled in the NKVD as a counter agent in the so-called Operation Monastery. With excellent German, he was assigned to communicate false information to the German intelligence, a task which earned him a service medal after the War.⁵⁴⁹

Be that as it may, the experiences and the experiments of the Choreological Laboratory were not forgotten. On the contrary, they were applied to functional ends within rigidly codified areas of endeavour. For example, its choreographic inventions were adjusted to Stalin’s grand sports parades of the 1930s and 1940s where many of the athletic poses replicated the elegant photographs of the Art of Movement (such as the pyramid, the lift and various acrobatic positions). Furthermore, many discoveries in the physiology of movement and bio-mechanics were applied, for example, to Stakhanovite theories. The translation of movements into signs which the Laboratory studied in the different modalities of movement notation proved to be especially beneficial to elaborating iso-types in image standardization (as in visual statistics applied to mass communication and propaganda concerning the five-year plans).

But the most essential aspect of all this research, perhaps the most authentic nucleus, was, alas, removed and annihilated. The Choreological Laboratory was the catalyzer for the study of movement, but not just owing to the experiments and piecemeal theorizing of its individual sections. Rather, the Laboratory functioned at a crossroads where the most complex and disparate experiences could be assembled and discussed regarding the visualization of movement. Indeed, the bold and extensive use of the cinema and photography in these experiments anticipated the course of our contemporary researches wherein, of necessity, new media intertwine with the physiology of movement. The relationship of the body to time (duration in the Bergsonian sense) and of bodies to space (proxemics) were among the topics examined at the Choreological Laboratory, even if the rubrics may have been different. Sidorov’s idea about the culminating point of movement might be regarded as a prediction of the concept of intensity which Erin Manning is elaborating today,⁵⁵⁰ while the analytical study of gait, for example, looked forward to our animated, contemporary debates about digital choreography and multi-medial animation.⁵⁵¹ The photographs of gait, reproduced here, this parade of different female legs, rather absurd and clumsy in their light pornography, remind us of the “ancillary” or propaedeutic nature of the photographs in the archive. On the other hand, for those who might seek artistic realia, there are the unique drawings of Engel’s or Svishchov-Paola’s amazing photographic poses of Rumnev.

The history of the Art of Movement in the Soviet Union is the history of sequences or, rather, concatenations whereby the body is pictured from unprecedented angles, often arresting and provocative. The ultimate sequence is now the reappearance of diverse tendencies in the field of movement which the Choreological Laboratory promoted such as the eccentric dance, rhythemics and the dance theatre which, long languishing on the



Photographer unknown, Reconstruction of Vera Mukhina’s *Worker and Collective Farm Girl* (1937) as a *tableau vivant* at the Gymnastic Parade on Red Square in 1938. From the book, *A Pageant of Youth*, Moscow-Leningrad, State Art Publishers, 1939.

sidelines of Soviet culture, are now flourishing anew and under other names. Witness to this, for example, is the Geptakhor school of musical movement with its diverse activities in Moscow, the new Alekseeva school with its many branches, eurythmics and the numerous dance studios and festivals of experimental dance not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but also in the Crimea, Ekaterinburg, Perm’, Volgograd and even further afield.

The rediscovery and reappraisal of the Russian Art of Movement demonstrate not only the survival and vitality of a precious cultural legacy, but also the fact that the Russian renaissance of the 1910s and 1920s was a truly synthetic phenomenon embracing not only painting, literature and music, but also the theatre of movement and even the recreation of the body itself.

⁵⁴⁷ A copy of the poster advertizing the various evenings of the art of dance with their dates is in the Shabshai family archive in Or Akiva, Israel.

⁵⁴⁸ According to the poster for the exhibition of dance images, Yavorsky was supervising a “choreological laboratory” located at 8, Krymskii val, in central Moscow, although, apparently, this had little to do with the GAKhN enterprise. In any case, the Shabshai archive contains a handwritten receipt for eight photographs destined for the exhibition of dance images at the Krymskii val address.

⁵⁴⁹ On “Operation Monastery” see V. Men’shikov: *Rzhev-Stalingrad. Skrytyi gambit marshala Stalina*, SP: Piter, 2012, pp. 160-63.

⁵⁵⁰ E. Manning: *Relationscapes. Movement, Art, Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2009.

⁵⁵¹ S. Kozel: *Closer. Performance, Technology, Phenomenology*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2008.