TABLE RONDE 4

ENTRE L'UTOPIE DU SAVOIR ET L'ARCHIVE. RECHERCHES, PUBLICATIONS ET PRESENTATIONS DES MATÉRIAUX DES ARCHIVES DES PREMIERS INSTITUTS SOVIÉTIQUES EN SCIENCES HUMAINES ET ARTS / BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE UTOPIA AND ARCHIVE. RESEARCHING, PUBLISHING, AND PRESENTING ARCHIVES OF EARLY SOVIET INSTITUTES IN HUMANITIES AND ARTS

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INTRODUCTION

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The State Academy of Artistic Sciences (GAKhN, 1921-1930) in Moscow emerged as a pioneering research institution during the early Soviet era. It was established with the aim of becoming a methodological hub for advancements in philosophy, aesthetics, art studies, the visual and performative arts. The Academy focused its efforts on cultivating new research environment through the development of a complex hierarchy of diverse departments, laboratories, commissions, and cabinets. This infrastructure facilitated experimentation, systematization, and archival work among scholars engaged in interdisciplinary inquiries spanning psychophysics and performative arts, phenomenology and visual arts, poetics, as well as emerging disciplines like cinema and contemporary design.

GAKhN's multifunctional nature extended beyond research, as it actively sought to implement its findings through institutionalized forms of memory, contemporary education, and public culture. This diverse engagement included traditional dissemination methods such as publications and exhibitions, alongside innovative approaches like experimental laboratories that fostered collaboration with practitioners from various artistic domains across the USSR.

For contemporary scholarship, GAKhN gained prominence for its ambitious endeavor, the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology, which aimed to provide a comprehensive research environment for humanities in the USSR. The development of this encyclopedia involved a collaborative effort by a multidisciplinary body of scholars over several years (Plotnikov 2023). While the Encyclopedia has since been published in both Russian and English, all published versions should be regarded and analyzed solely as reconstructions, as the original publication envisioned by the GAKhN members was never achieved.

This round table wants to address the questions of publication and reconstruction principles of such complex multidisciplinary projects as the GAKhN Encyclopedia. For this, the round table will provide a space for experts to discuss historical research design and multidisciplinary projects in the humanities throughout the long 20th century, exploring intersections with contemporary archiving, study, publication, and other forms of public promotion of intellectual history in the USSR.

Plotnikov, Nikolaj (2023). 100 years GAKhN: Artistic Research between Art and Science. Guest editor introduction. In: Studies in East European Thought 75 (2023), 213–219, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11212-022-09523-9

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The Role of the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology Project in Shaping the Language of Art Studies

2. The problem of interdisciplinarity in the study of art and culture

3. The Encyclopedia Archive as Document and Monument. Ways of researching and re-actualizing the heritage of the GAKhN today.

TOWARD A THEORY OF DECORATIVE ARTS AT GAKHN: FORMALISM AND MATERIAL CONTEXT

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1. The work on terminology at GAKhN was crucial for the development of both traditional aesthetics and historical methodologies of art. It marked a turning point in the study of art in the 20th century. For me, the available texts and archives on terminology reveal a tension between two poles: on one hand, the belief in the logic of empirical sciences, where a consensus on key definitions allows for cumulative progress; and on the other, the fundamentally open and experimental institutional environment of the 1920s.

At that time, GAKhN became a hub for the development of multiple emerging approaches to the arts—such as formalism, psychophysiology, hermeneutics, phenomenology, and a range of genealogical methods. These have since been overshadowed by critical cultural and decolonial studies.

More specifically, the materials from the Dictionary offer insight into the monumental effort to construct a formalist language for the decorative arts, as exemplified by Dmitry Ivanov (1870-1930), then head of the Moscow Armory Museum, an imperial treasury. The museum's collection provided him with the material to conceptualize terms such as grandeur, solidity, cheapness, and movement—key characteristics of what was understood as "decorativeness."

Decorative objects were regarded as complete works of art, where formal qualities such as movement, rhythm, and mass were believed to reflect a purely aesthetic nature. While this understanding is now outdated and no longer in use, the attempts to develop such a framework reflect the epistemological and methodological optimism of 1920s art historians—an optimism that, by the 1940s, had faded, only to be revived later as a formal discipline with structured professional training.

2. An excellent example of interdisciplinarity at GAKhN is the Commission for the Study of Primitive Art, headed by Anatoly Bakushinsky (1883–1939). An art historian, museum curator, and educator, Bakushinsky was active in two divisions: the Section of Spatial Arts, and, from 1922 onward, the Commission (later Cabinet) for the Study of Primitive Art. In under seven years, he transformed the latter into a leading laboratory for the study of visual perception and a center for aesthetic education in Soviet Russia, where children's art education was a top priority.

GAKhN offered a variety of experimental laboratories and facilities that enabled Bakushinsky and his team—including Galina Labinskaya, Nina Flerina, and others—to gather

different types of data: children's drawings, empirical observations, and field studies from state-run schools and creative centers. This interdisciplinary and empirical approach allowed Bakushinsky to develop a theory of the evolution of human creativity, linking stages of childhood with different cognitive and artistic abilities, such as recognizing rhythmic ornamentation, illusionistic surface treatments, and three-dimensional architectural space. According to their findings, each stage of human development has its own logic of artistic expression. This framework helped educators support children in a more fluid and coherent creative process—a method that continues to influence arts education globally.

What is particularly distinctive is that Bakushinsky combined this empirical and experimental work with his contributions to the formalist analysis of Russian historical painting—works centered on narrative scenes requiring active interpretation by the viewer. In this context, he viewed subject matter as a formal challenge undertaken by the artist. For example, the theme of a procession was not merely interpreted as a historical event—such as in *Boyarynya Morozova* (1887) by Vasily Surikov (1848–1916)—but as an artistic opportunity to explore movement. These readings, though now overlooked by many scholars, were deeply influential and informed the visual strategies employed by filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948), as evidenced in his notes on *Boyarynya Morozova*.

Overall, the experimental structure of GAKhN allowed it to recognize and embody both epistemological and material differences across disciplines. This approach shaped the structure of the Dictionary of Artistic Sciences as well as the function of various commissions and research units.

3. This is partly addressed in the first answer. It is important to emphasize that the production of articles for the *Dictionary of Artistic Sciences* reveals a fundamental tension. On one side is the traditional dictionary form, which implies a fixed list of definitions meant to convey the canonical or normative body of knowledge of an era. On the other side is the more dynamic, open-ended logic—one that became increasingly characteristic of the 20th century and remains relevant today—where knowledge is generated through evolving methodologies that themselves define the key terms.

The unique situation at GAKhN was the rare interplay—and indeed tension—among numerous competing methodologies. This interplay contributed to the *unfinished* nature of the Dictionary project, which appears to have resulted not simply from the institution's closure during the purges of 1929–1931, but also from the very epistemological conditions under which knowledge was being produced.

WAS THERE AN ENTRY ON DANCE IN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARTISTIC TERMINOLOGY?

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1. The Role of the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology Project in Shaping the Language of Art Studies

In order to make art studies into a positive science, Vasily Kandinsky suggested examining scientifically each basic element of art including color, sound, rhythm and movement. He planned to study both the object of art, that is, the viewer's perception of an art work, and the subject of art, the creator of the work. Kandinsky mentioned the project of Prof. A.A. Sidorov's laboratory' (Kandinsky 1921), which, almost certainly, was the Choreological Laboratory (1922-1929). It became one of the most innovative projects within the Academy of Art Sciences (GAKhN). Its subject – dance and movement – was new in art studies, and the 'objective' approah, experimental method and the use of modern technology were as well innovative.

Kandinsky's supporter, Aleksei Alekseevich Sidorov (1891-1978) argued that art studies 'had been for too long hijacked by emotions not of an aesthetic character' meaning that it was a popular entertainment of erotic nature, rather than art (Sidorov 2017, 81). Both Kandinsky and Sidorov believed that the substance of dance is 'not the language of the body (*plastique*), and not the language of music (rhythm), but the movement itself', or, in the words of Russian Formalists, 'movement as such' (Sidorov 1923, 60).

The Choreological Laboratory (Choreolab) opened at GAKhN in 1922, but the experimental work started already in September 1921, while Kandinsky was still in Russia. Sidorov set up an experiment in which the audience watched several dance performances and then was invited to answer the questionnaire about the perception of dance that he devised. Sidorov conducted this survey twice: the first time, in 1921, at the Moscow Psychoneurological Institute, and, two years later, at GAKhN. Although he did not publish the results, the sketches of the dancers, their names, and the questionnaire with a few answers are preserved in the archives (The Sidorov File).

An amateur photographer, Sidorov also set up a photo studio at GAKhN where he and his colleagues took pictures of dancers individual and in groups, in different costumes as well as nude, and assuming various postures. He invited several choreographers to share the notation they used for recording dance, and he also devised his own dance notation. Finally, he and his fellow colleagues in GAKhN developed the terminology for dance studies. In the early 1920s,

Rudolf von Laban in Germany (Laban 1966) and Sidorov in Russia independently of each other coined the term, *choreology*, for the discipline of dance studies.

In the winter of 1922/23, Sidorov published a monograph, *Contemporary Dance*, the first Russian-language about the subject. The book was timely, as the beginning of 1920s saw a boom of new dance.

In the choreology project, Sidorov was assisted by the friend of their youth years, Aleksandr Illarionovich Larionov (1889-1954). An engineer by training, Larionov attended, like Sidorov, the Symbolist Circle of the sculptor, Konstantin Krakht, in Moscow (Misler 1997). The members of this circle worshiped Charles Baudelaire and studied both Helene Blavatsky's Theosophy and the Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy. Like Sidorov, Larionov was involved in mystical societies, including the Rosicrucian Order. They both intentionally used ancient wisdom and hermetic knowledge to shape a new area of dance studies, and of general art studies (*Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*). In particular, Sidorov suggested graphic schemes in the shape of a mystical rose from 'petals'. In one of his schemes, there are seven petals arranged in concentric circles. In the outermost circle are the words: prayer, ritual, icon, temple, in the next one towards the center – mystery, hieroglyph, plan, etc. Seven circles converged on the inner one containing the arts: music, painting, architecture, sculpture, facial expressions, and, finally, dance. In the center of the rose, where the mystics placed *the One*, or God, Sidorov had 'ecstasy' and 'art'. Could it be the plan for the future Academy of Artistic Sciences? In any case, dance had a definite presence there, and, in the shape of the Choreolab, it eventually assumed an important place within GAKhN.

In May 1923, Larionov became official head of the Choreological Laboratory and colleagues drew the program of research, to study the basic principles and 'artistic organization of movement' using 'precise psychophysiological experiment' (Kondratiev 1923). This signalled the Choreolab's intention to integrate with other GAKhN departments, especially those of visual arts. Yet, an article on dance is absent from the known versions of the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology. The dictionary contains related articles including 'Движение' (Motion), by Nikolai Tarabukin, and 'Жест' (Gesture), by Mikhail Fabrikant. The former describes the perceived motion in visual arts, rather than physical movement of the body in performance arts. The latter looks at gesture from the semiotic angle, analyzing it as a natural language. The author compares gesture with alphabet: 'In a certain sense, the graphic form of a letter should be regarded as a continuation of G[esture], through the letter sound, which, in its turn, was a continuation and indispensable accompaniment of G[esture].' (quote courtesy Nikolai Plotnikov). Like Fabrikant, Larionov drew a parallel between graphic alphabets, one

the one hand, and gestures/movements, on the other (Larionov 1997). The shared an interest in mystical alphabets and secret languages motivated Larionov and Sidorov in their research into dance notation, mentioned earlier (Sirotkina 2023).

In contrast to the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology, there was a plan to write entries on dance for the Philosophical Encyclopedia, including 'Танец' (Dance), 'Балет' (Ballet) and the kinaesthetic aspects of bodily movement, 'Моторные ощущения' (Muscle sensations) and 'Мускульное чувство' (Muscle sense) (I thank Nikolai Plotnikov for the information). However, none of the entries is know to be written. One of the obstacles might be a conceptual problem of integrating the outer, visual image of movement, the movement as it looks, with its experiential, kinaesthetic side, the movement as it is felt by the mover. For instance, M. N. Raikhinshtein, the author of the entry 'Тело' (The Body) in the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology, treated the body solely as a model for artists rather than focusing on its physical and experiential aspects. It might also be the case that GAKhN members in charge of the Philosophical Encyclopedia disagreed with the experimental approach that the Choreolab was committed to.

2. The problem of interdisciplinarity in the study of art and culture

Although, for unknown reasons, the Choreolab was either unable or not welcome to contribute into the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology Project, it stood firmly for interdisciplinary approach. Interested in both film and photography, Sidorov coined the term *кинемология* / *kinemology* (Sirotkina 2017), for a general science covering both physical movement and motion perceived on screen. The project was especially relevant to the Choreolab, especially because contemporary dance, also called 'modern', or 'expressive' dance (*Ausdruckstanz*), shared the art of expressive gesture and acting with silent movies.

In September 1924, Sidorov talked on 'Dance and cinema' to the Cinematography commission at GAKhN, and on 7 November 1924, he submitted a project for the *kinemology* division, with three sub-divisions, including choreology, film and rhythm and *plastique*. The first one was to study dance, gymnastic, work and other movements, the second, representations of movement in film, and the last one, rhythmic patterns. The creation of an independent scholarly division, larger than a lab, would have significantly raised the status of dance and movement studies within GAKhN. The academic council, however, rejected the proposal for a separate *kinemology* division.

Continuing its interdisciplinary project, in 1926, the Choreolab invited Ivan Bokhonov, head of the photography department of the 'Mezhrabpom-Rus' (Кинопроизводство

«Межрабпом–Русь»), to film four pieces of choreography in the professional studio. Four videos were used to make a chart of movements typical of each dance piece. Besides the lab recorded and analysed acting in silent film, with the objective to discover 'knots' (similar to Roland Bart's *punctum*), that is, movements relevant to the most dramatic moments of the movie script. The results were presented at the Choreolab during the 1927/28 academic year in a number of talks including that by Sidorov, on 'The issue of scenario in photography', by Larionov, on 'The architectonics of artistic movement', and by M. S. Gutovskaya, on 'The problem of movement in a photographic scenario'. In the same series, V. V. Nikitin-Gorsky's talk, on 'Gesture as an instrument of the actor's creation', included a demonstration by the students of the Lunacharsky Theatre College and of the Cinema Courses.

3. The Encyclopedia Archive as document and monument. Ways of researching and re-actualizing the heritage of the GAKhN today

Although the project for a synthesis of movement studies with the perception of motion on screen has never materialised, it stimulated GAKhN scholars to focus on dynamics and motion and to bring performance arts, visual arts, film and photography closer to each other. The Choreolab archive at the Bakhrushin Theatre Museum contains the *kinemology* project – a blueprint for a synthesis of three disciplines: the choreology sub-division was to study spatial forms of movement, including dance composition and spectatorship, and the analysis of its key moments, poses, order and grouping. The cinematography sub-division was to do research into cinematic motion and in the composition of movie frames (кинокадры). Finally, the Rhythm and gymnastics sub-division was to analyze the aesthetic norms of gymnastic movement, both individual and in groups. This is an example of archival materials, still unpublished, which might be of interest to contemporary scholars of dance, photography and film.

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FINE ARTS PROJECT AND KANDINSKY'S WORK ON THE TERMINOLOGY OF PICTORIAL THEORY

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As one of the main founders of the Russian (State) Academy of Artistic Research (RAKhN/GAKhN), Wassily Kandinsky participated in its work for only a few months before his departure for Germany at the end of December 1921. Although he kept in touch with members of the Academy over the years, it is likely that he was not aware of the specifics of the dictionaries that were developed in various departments of the Academy until its closure in the late 1920s.

Thus, even though there are no documents among the surviving materials of the encyclopedic activities of the State Academy of Artistic Studies that we can directly attribute to Kandinsky, his role is evident at the very first stage of the project's formation. Moreover, it was apparently Kandinsky who most actively promoted the idea of the need for terminological work in the field of art within the Commission of Art Science in the summer of 1921. Two years earlier, at the beginning of 1919, together with Evsei Shor, Ivan Zholtovsky, Vadim Shershenevich, and Roman Jakobson, he had joined the special commission established at the Collegium of the Department of Fine Arts to compile the Encyclopedia of Fine Arts, and in 1920 he organized terminological work in the Monumental Art Section of the Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUK).

It is difficult to say exactly who came up with the idea of creating a commission to compile the Encyclopedia of Fine Arts: Shor or Kandinsky, but most likely it was the result of joint discussions that began in the summer of 1913. It was then that the artist met the student Yevsey Shor and his companion Grigory Angert, founders of the very young Art Publishing House in the Beethoven Studio of Yevsey's father, the pianist David Shor.

The young publishers set themselves the goal of acquainting Russian readers with the latest trends in literature, music, painting, and sculpture, for which they developed an extensive program of publishing original and translated books, including Kandinsky's treatise *On the Spiritual in Art*. This program was a deliberate response to the tumultuous artistic debates of those years, in which the arguments of the heart rather than the arguments of reason were at play. The new series was intended to help the reader to study in depth and as objectively as possible the causes of contemporary artistic phenomena, to establish their continuity with the art of the past, and to form his or her own opinion about them.

The war prevented the realization of this ambitious plan, but Shor's work at the Academy of Artistic Research and in close collaboration with the architect Ivan Zholtovsky in the first post-revolutionary years provided him with new and very broad opportunities. In 1918-1922, until his departure for Germany, Shor organized the translation and publication of classical theoretical literature on art and developed an extensive lecture program. The compilation of the Encyclopedia of Fine Arts was obviously part of this vast project, which in 1921 he transferred in its entirety to a new body, the Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences, in the creation of which he played a major role alongside Kandinsky.

Kandinsky's interest in artistic terminology is inextricably linked to his work on the creation of a theory of painting and can be found in all of his theoretical works, beginning with his earliest fragments of 1904 on drawing, form, and the language of color, written in Russian and German. Bilingualism, which forced the artist to constantly maneuver between languages, undoubtedly played no small part in heightening the artist's attention to terminological issues, but he regarded this preoccupation itself as a necessary part of the development of theory. The work on the doctrine of color, undertaken in 1904-1909, continued in the study of the theory of composition, and culminated on the eve of World War I in the drafting of a theory of graphic forms, was constantly accompanied by the refinement of relevant terminology. Among the unpublished manuscript materials, the artist's archive contains numerous lists of terminology, as well as sheets with definitions of individual terms in both languages.

The methodological model for both Kandinsky's general theoretical and terminological work was music theory, the doctrine of harmony and counterpoint. It became the matrix of his pictorial theory, and much of the pictorial terminology proposed by Kandinsky is nothing more than the result of transferring musical terms to the field of painting and drawing. Kandinsky worked on it particularly intensively in Munich between 1911 and 1914. Drawing on his extensive personal experience, he proposed a collective interdisciplinary project after the revolution, first at the INKhUK and then at the Russian Academy of Artistic Studies.

THE WAR OF TERMS IN THE STATE ACADEMY OF ARTISTIC RESERACH: THE FORMATION OF LITERARY TERMINOLOGY

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1. Encyclopedia of artistic terms

The subject of my study is the issues of literary form in the discussions of the State Academy of Artistic Research (GAKhN), in particular, the polemics between the Academy's scholars and the representatives of the Russian Formal School (OPOJAZ). The 1920s were a period of increased interest in the problems of poetics in Russia. This was connected with the internal development of literary criticism, with a more serious methodological justification of both the science of literature and the emergence of art studies as such. This pan-European process in Russia was intensified by social upheavals and ideological pressure from the state. The GAKhN was not left out of this process, especially since it brought together representatives of different approaches to literary studies, different generations, and different social groups. Those innovative ideas in poetics, in literary theory that I am interested in: the foundations of comparative-statistical literary studies (Boris Yarkho) and hermeneutic-phenomenological direction (Gustav Speth and his group) cannot be understood outside the context of that turn in art history that began in Germany at the end of the XIX century (Wölfflin, Worringer, Riegl) and was developed within the walls of the GAKhN.

The "Encyclopedia of Artistic Terms" was a project devoted primarily to questions of art. Literature was considered to be one of the forms of art, so various theoretical, aesthetic, and philosophical aspects of art, articles on "great styles" or artistic movements, questions of artistic form - all of this also concerned literature. In this way, the dictionary reflected the historical moment of the development of the humanities and the specificity of its construction in the GAChN: it was art history that became the discipline that introduced new principles of viewing its object, constructing the history of its subject, and then became the methodological model for the science of literature.

The methodology of "precise literary studies" of Yarkho, a philologist-medievalist, poet, historian of drama, and a very active member of the GAKhN, was another revolution in literary studies. Its significance and contours become particularly clear in the context of the entire theoretical thought of the Academy, which found one of its expressions in the Dictionary of Artistic Terminology. In fact, Yarkho offered his own answers to the questions raised by German art studies and inherited by the GAKhN. Common to Yarkho, the discussions at the Institute, and the Dictionary are such issues and problems as the ways of defining the "great styles"

(Baroque, Classicism, Romanticism), artistic form, stylistics, iconology (image), the laws of art development, and the genesis of the artwork. It was not possible to create a special dictionary of literary terms in the GAKhN, but Yarkho, creating his methodology, reviewed the state of individual literary disciplines and concepts, as it was done in the dictionary. That is, it was a fundamental approach, tracing the history of the term and summarizing the range of its contemporary meanings. The full range of established understandings of terms to which Yarkho appealed can be found in the dictionary. The scholar's innovation was to offer further critiques of these concepts based on his own research. It is important to emphasize that they were always based on initial clear definitions. On the one hand, he needed this himself in order to formalize the concepts as much as possible for their further mathematization. On the other hand, this was the general style of work in the theoretical sections of the GAKhN: rarely was a seminar without disputes over terms and attempts to define them more precisely. Thus, the encyclopedia of terms seems to be a crystallization of live theorizing and oral discussions in the academy, and the methodological system constructed by Yarkho is another system of terms, a product of all this activity of continuous criticism of concepts.

At the Academy, an attempt was made to create a dictionary of exclusively literary terminology. The identification of the corpus of related texts is a major problem of source research. It is clear that the work has only just begun. This activity was led by Mikhail Petrovsky, a philologist-Germanist who was close to both Shpet and Yarkho. Apparently, the dictionary was being compiled, because Yarkho's papers contain a list of terms assigned to him. Most of them are related to poetics and stylistics. This is evidence of the scholar's competence and his ability to present material analytically and to define terms concisely and consistently. Sketches of articles by other authors and a few minutes of discussions about the literary part of the encyclopedia have been preserved. I think that the literary section could not create its part of the encyclopedia partly because of lack of time, partly because of poor organization of work, but this does not mean that the specialists were not capable of creating articles of encyclopedic type. On the contrary, this activity was characteristic of several literary historians, especially Yarkho, Petrovsky, Rosalia Shor, Pavel Sakulin, and Maxim Koenigsberg. This is evidenced by the articles printed in other dictionaries of the time: in the Literary Encyclopedia of Lvov-Rogachevsky and Lunacharsky, in the dictionary "Granat". It is difficult to imagine a unified corpus of articles on the main theoretical problems of literary science coming from the GAHN, also because all the basic concepts (form and content, idea, genre, style, direction, rubrication of poetics, competencies of literary criticism) were controversial. The St. Petersburg "formalists" had been proposing their revision since the mid-1910s; they also proposed their

own terms and created their own language for describing literature. At the same time, in Moscow, Shpet's group claimed a monopoly on the creation of consistent, purely logical definitions. Such aspirations gave rise to detailed articles such as Koenigsberg's "Experiments in the Definition of the Concept of Verse". However, such an individual and fundamental approach prevented the creation of a short encyclopedic article. Thus, the incompleteness of the literary part of the encyclopedia was also explained by the fact that the theory of literature, poetics, was at that time a bundle of very different ways of thinking about literature, a space of polemics.

2. Interdisciplinarity

The State Academy of Artistic Research was conceived by its founders as an institution in which art would be studied by scientific methods, and art would draw from the discoveries of the sciences, not only the humanities, but also the natural sciences. The closest alliance between science and art was embodied in the Psycho-physiological Department. In particular, psychologists conducted experiments on the artistic perception of pictorial elements (color, composition, line, dots, movement); almost for the first time in Russia, the creativity of the mentally ill and children, primitive art, was studied.

The Bibliological Cabinet studied not only the art of the book (itself multidimensional), but also manuscripts. The latter were transformed from a source of text or a biographical fact into another object of complex study. The problems of studying handwriting were raised, as well as the task of collecting handwriting techniques. Within the framework of this study, the greatest Pushkinist, M.A. Tsyavlovsky, gave his report when he read Pushkin's manuscripts for the first time with the help of the newest technical means (borrowed from the GPU), i.e. he applied the experiment to the humanitarian sphere. The same technical methods (numerous photographs) were used to study the art of movement and dance in the Choreographic Laboratory. This was a kind of methodological signal, especially for those who adhered to the Rikkerian division of sciences into spiritual and natural sciences. The GAKhN's scholars demonstrated that art could be studied using the typical methods of the "natural sciences". In this sense, Yarkho, in his major work Methodology of Exact Literary Studies (1935-1942), refuted Rickert's distinctions and moved toward a new system of humanistic knowledge.

In addition, the Philosophical Department of the Academy, which was called upon to substantiate the primary foundations of culture, art, and aesthetics and to define the boundaries of the subject matter and method of the various disciplines, was the center that united the various disciplines. This was Speth's vision when he founded the Academy. Subsequently, the

work programs of the various sections were to some extent determined by Speth and like-minded scholars close to him, not necessarily philosophers: Alexander Gabrichevsky, Petrovsky.

In order to maintain and spread the interdisciplinary approach, the Academy had regular plenary sessions, so-called "joint sessions" of two or three different sections (e.g., philosophical and literary), and various events that brought together all staff and guests: concerts, discussions of plays, literary evenings, and exhibitions. One of the highlights of the evening was a discussion of the play "Woe to Wit" by the Vsevolod Meyerhold Theater. Impressions from this discussion then led to various written responses from Academy members.

Papers on interdisciplinary topics were apparently encouraged by the leadership of GAKhN. For example, at the reception of Oskar Walzel within the walls of the Academy, Petrovsky read a paper on the parallels between music and literature.

After all, in the Academy worked people who were exceptional in the range of scientific and artistic interests. Among them were the vice-president Shpet, the artist and museologist Boris Shaposhnikov, the bibliophile, art historian and ballet dancer, Freemason and scientific secretary Alexei Sidorov. Many scientists simultaneously wrote poetry and prose, were artists, actors, teachers, translators, and musicians. For the narrow circle of Moscow intelligentsia of those years it was natural and was supported by social contacts outside the academy. Suffice it to mention Voloshin's house in Koktebel, which became a real colony of artists, including the staff of the Academy.

3. Archive of the State Academy of Arts

Archival materials are the main source for the historian of the GAKhN. Only a tiny part of the huge heritage has been published. However, more and more specialists are studying the GAHN papers and conducting separate studies based on them. As a philologist, I believe that before any interpretation, criticism, and construction of the history of ideas, a document - the main source of information - should be published. Such publication should at least be the result of textual criticism, at most accompanied by an explanatory commentary. As a historian of the Literary Section, I believe that the vast majority of the minutes of the discussions of the papers of this section deserve to be published. They are an invaluable source of intellectual and social history and culture. The oral discussions of the reports reflect the peculiarities of the functioning of the Academy. It is a lively exchange of opinions of outstanding scientists, unique personalities, as a result of which new knowledge emerged. The minutes are a record of scholarly conversation, the culture of which dates back to antiquity. Reading the minutes and

observing the logic of the discussion allows us to penetrate into the very idea of the Academy's creation, to reflect on its classical character.

NIKOLAI TARABUKIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE GAKHN ENCYCLOPEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS THEORY OF ART

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1. The Role of the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology Project in Shaping the Language of Art Studies

According to the approved plan, the *Dictionary of Artistic Terms* of GAKhN (the State Academy of Artistic Sciences) was intended to comprise a general theoretical volume, prepared by the Terminological Commission at the Philosophy Department, alongside a series of so-called technical volumes compiled by the GAKhN sections dedicated to the study of individual art forms. The dictionary prepared by the Section of Spatial Arts occupies a special place among them, not least because it is the most voluminous. Moreover, it notably transcends its nominal "technical" or "applied" function, and also aspires to broad theoretical generalizations.

Thus, a number of general terms (such as "Harmony," "Influence," and "Archaic") appear in both dictionaries. However, while the Philosophy Department—largely influenced by Gustav Shpet and his circle—tended to regard literature as the paradigmatic form of art, for the Section of Spatial Arts, painting and architecture played that role.

One third of the entries for the *Dictionary of Spatial Arts* were written by Dmitry Nedovich (over 80 articles), a representative figure of the Moscow school of academic art history, initially focused on the study of Ancient monuments. The second most prolific contributor, with 27 entries, was Nikolai Tarabukin, who is best known to the broader public as the author of the manifesto *From the Easel to the Machine* (published in 1923). Tarabukin, who had studied for only one year at the Faculty of History and Philology at Moscow State University, began his career as an art critic. However, he soon revealed a strong inclination towards theory, particularly towards comprehensive theoretical syntheses in the study of art. This interest resulted in his book *A Study in a Theory of Painting* (published in 1923), as well as his unpublished works *Theory of Art* and *Theory of Painting*, written at the very end of the 1920s—simultaneously with his work on the terminological dictionary. In a number of his dictionary entries, Tarabukin's ambition to move beyond mere technical description toward broader theoretical generalization is especially evident. For example, in the entry "Movement," he discusses "dynamic" and "static" epochs, while in the entry "Quality," he identifies four possible meanings of the concept in relation to art, ranking them according to their degree of objectivity.

One of the distinctive features of the preparation of the *Dictionary of Spatial Arts* was the initial rejection of any attempt to develop a unified terminological framework, instead allowing room for original authorial interpretations. A vivid illustration of this approach can be found in Tarabukin's articles dedicated to what we would now call genres of painting — still life, portrait, and landscape. A distinctive aspect of Tarabukin's approach is that he considers these categories not only thematically but also in terms of formal-stylistic analysis, thereby developing his own original theoretical framework, previously articulated in a series of papers and articles.

2. The problem of interdisciplinarity in the study of art and culture

If we adress the Dictionary of Artistic Terms prepared by the Section of Spatial Arts, at first glance, the Academy's professed commitment to interdisciplinarity appears rather difficult to discern. The majority of entries bear the imprint of the so-called "Moscow school of academic art historians," which, as Nedovich asserts (in his entry "Theory of Art"), "addresses theoretical problems primarily through the lenses of organicism and formalism". Although by the late 1920s most contributors acknowledged the limitations and insufficiencies of the formal method, the names of Wölfflin and Hildebrand remain the most frequently cited among theorists, while Rembrandt and Cézanne most repeatedly serve as illustrative examples.

In those cases where interdisciplinarity does emerge, it sometimes appears precisely as a problem—visible, for example, in the rather unconvincing attempts to transfer terminology from other art forms into the realm of spatial arts. A representative case, in my opinion, is Tarabukin's attempt to differentiate within a painting not only the *theme*, but also the *fabula* (the chronological sequence of events) and the *syuzhet* (the compositional arrangement of events within the work). By contrast, Nedovich tends to equate theme and plot.

Another, more successful incorporation of interdisciplinarity can be seen in attempts across several articles to interpret terms through different methods: formal, historical, or sociological. Occasionally, psychological and even psychoanalytic approaches are also invoked. An illustrative example is provided by Nedovich's entry on "Eroticism," where he proposes not only a thematic and formal interpretation of the concept but also a sociological perspective on eroticism in art, along with reflections from, how he call it, "that branch of art studies concerned with the artist's creative expression," which, among other tools employs psychoanalytic method. Nonetheless, despite their heuristic potential, such methodological integrations remain rare, with historical and formal approaches continuing to predominate.

3. The Encyclopedia Archive as Document and Monument. Ways of researching and re-actualizing the heritage of the GAKhN today

The archive of the GAKhN Dictionary is simultaneously a document (in the sense of a source of information) and a monument (a historical testimony), which leads to numerous complexities in the process of preparing it for publication. Regrettably, the work on the Dictionary was never completed, and it did not undergo an editing stage. Consequently, on the one hand, there are significant lacunae, — notably, the absence of the term "style," arguably central to the intellectual circle responsible for the Dictionary. On the other hand, the existing articles vary markedly in scope, stylistic execution, and formal presentation. Editorial work frequently involves addressing numerous typographical errors and inconsistencies in sentence structure, requiring careful, case-by-case judgments regarding the permissible extent of intervention into the authors' original formulations. The same applies to factual inaccuracies, including errors in dates and titles. In some cases, we also encounter outdated attributions, hypotheses, and data, the thorough revision of which would require many years of painstaking work by a large team of experts.

Nevertheless, in both of its capacities — as a document and as a monument — the Dictionary represents a truly unique phenomenon, comparable to an entire archaeological stratum. Whereas an individual author's contribution might be likened to an isolated artifact, the Dictionary as a whole represents an entire system of such artifacts, collectively forming a vivid and detailed representation of the state of progressive art historical scholarship as of 1929.

This allows us not only to uncover numerous forgotten names and facts, thereby giving a fuller picture of the development of art studies, but also immerses us in the current theoretical concerns of the time, highlighting those pressing issues which resolution deemed most urgent. Many examples could be given here, but I will limit myself to the issue of "folk handicraft art" (kustarnoe iskusstvo), the evaluation of which could ultimately influence the direction of state cultural policy. Justifying the idea that folk handicraft art, as a "pseudo-folk" phenomenon, could not serve as a model for emulation because it was itself imitative, became an important task for a number of theorists of the 1920s — and it also found its reflection in the Dictionary

DEVELOPMENT OF TERMINOLOGY FOR THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN THE GAKHN ENCYCLOPEDIA

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1. The Role of the Encyclopedia of Artistic Terminology Project in Shaping the Language of Art Studies

In my research, I focus on the materials prepared for the Philosophy Department volume of the GAKhN Encyclopedia. Although the volume remained in draft form, its conceptual orientation suggests that it was part of a broader — though ultimately unrealized — attempt to rethink the foundations of art studies. The goal appears to have been not merely to continue the traditions of philosophical aesthetics, but to move toward something closer to Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft — a general theory of art in the sense developed by German theorists such as Utitz. This ambition is particularly evident in the desire to define key categories, clarify terminology, and establish the conceptual infrastructure for a science of art capable of responding to new artistic forms and media.

That GAKhN thinkers were engaging with this discourse directly is supported by Shpet's explicit reference to volume 19 of the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* in his 1923 essay *On the Organization of Scientific Work in the Field of Art Studie*s [K voprosu o postanovke nauchnoi raboty v oblasti iskusstvovedeniia].[1] In that text, Shpet aligns himself with the view that traditional art history and psychology were insufficient for grasping the essence of artistic form, and embraces the notion of art as a "form filled with meaning". This view finds a parallel in the GAKhN conception, where art is seen as a sign to which meaning corresponds, or Shpet's own understanding of *inner form* as a structure that shapes the semantic organization of the world.[2]

In exploring the contribution of the Philosophy Department to the GAChN Encyclopedia, I have concentrated on a particular group of authors — those connected to Gustav Shpet and shaped by his intellectual orientation (the so-called formal-philosophical school). Their work represents one of the most methodologically unified segments of the Encyclopedia. What emerges from their entries is not simply a collection of definitions, but a sustained attempt to

[1] Bernadette Collenberg-Plotnikova, *Estetika i obshchee iskusstvoznanie: nemetskie teorii obshchego iskusstvoznaniia kak istochnik kontseptual'nykh novatsii GAKhN* [*Aesthetics and General Art Studies: German Theories of Kunstwissenschaft as a Source of GAChN's Conceptual Innovations*], in *Iskusstvo kak iazyk — iazyki iskusstva. Gosudarstvennaia akademiia khudozhestvennykh nauk i esteticheskaia teoriia 1920-kh godov* [*Art as Language — Languages of Art: The State Academy of Artistic Sciences and Aesthetic Theory of the 1920s*], vol. 1, ed. N.S. Plotnikov and N.P. Podzemskaia (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2017), 153.
[2] Ibid., 170.

construct a conceptual apparatus for thinking about art, meaning, and experience — an effort that, in many respects, reflects Shpet's ambition to ground the study of art in rigorous philosophical analysis.

Whether or not this coherence was fully intentional, the articles written by this circle collectively form a structure that organizes the philosophical volume from within. Among the central concepts are **Sign** [Znak], **Meaning** [Znachenie], **Sense** [Smysl], and **Scheme** [Skhema] — categories that point to a semiotic and epistemological foundation. These are joined by psychologically inflected notions like **Impression** [Vpechatlenie], **Empathy** [Vchuvstvovanie], **Sensualism** [Sensualizm], **Contemplation** [Sozertsanie], and **Affect** [Affekt], which foreground the role of the perceiving subject. A separate symbolic layer is represented by entries such as **Allegory** [Allegoriia], **Myth** [Mif], and **Fantasy** [Fantaziia], which address the role of imagination, narrative structure, and cultural symbolism in the production of meaning. Other entries, such as **The Beautiful** [Prekrasnoe] and **Aesthetic Categories** [Kategorii esteticheskogo] reflect attempts to articulate the foundations of aesthetic judgment and to structure the conceptual field of aesthetic experience. Finally, terms like **The Absolute** [Absoliutnoe], **Truth** [Istina], **Intention** [Intentsiia], **Idea** [Ideia] and **Individuality** [Individual'nost'] locate the discussion within a broader metaphysical and philosophical context.

Taken together, these concepts allow us to read the philosophical volume not simply as a loose compilation of entries, but as a layered and internally differentiated system of reflection on the conditions of artistic meaning.

2. The problem of interdisciplinarity in the study of art and culture

The problem of interdisciplinarity within the GAKhN project is complex and somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, the institutional structure of GAKhN brought together scholars from a wide range of disciplines — philosophy, art history, psychology, and linguistics — creating the conditions for genuine interdisciplinary collaboration. On the other hand, in practice, philosophy remained a dominant and often directive force, shaping not only the conceptual framework but also the language and priorities of the entire project. This philosophical dominance often meant that other disciplinary perspectives were absorbed into a larger philosophical system rather than engaging in equal dialogue. As a result, the interdisciplinarity of GAKhN tends to manifest less as a horizontal exchange among fields, and more as a vertical integration of disciplines into a philosophical worldview — one that sought

to systematize knowledge about art and culture through its own conceptual and terminological apparatus.

What does this mean for the Philosophy volume, which is the focus of my work? It is no surprise that philosophy remains the dominant framework — this is, after all, the volume prepared by the Philosophy Department. However, this also suggests that, despite certain visible attempts, the transition from aesthetics and the philosophy of art toward Kunstwissenschaft remains incomplete in the project.

3. The Encyclopedia Archive as Document and Monument. Ways of researching and re-actualizing the heritage of the GAKhN today.

Approaching the GAChN Encyclopedia today inevitably involves navigating its unfinished and heterogeneous character. Rather than treating it as a polished scholarly product, it makes more sense to engage with it as a layered intellectual process, reflecting both conceptual ambitions and institutional limitations. The material we have is fragmentary, uneven, and at times contradictory — yet precisely in this state it offers unique insight into the tensions, blind spots, and priorities of Soviet art theory at a crucial moment of its formation. Its value lies not in doctrinal coherence but in the possibility of tracing how knowledge about art was being structured, challenged, and negotiated in real time.