

Suprematic Architecture — Commitment to Excellence, Back to the Basics*

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Abstract—Unique character of suprematic art is rooted in the perception of its author (founder) — K. S. Malevich which developed to become the belief that it is necessary to create a suprematic method — the way of targeted movement towards perfection, constructed as a mental projection from the surface “painted on a canvas” onto the space of the world order. The article covers the establishment and construction of suprematic approach to creative process fixed by K. S. Malevich in the beginning of the 1920s, on the background of the world perception at that time, based on logic patterns derived, first of all, on I. Kant’s philosophy, W. Windelband’s culturology, the theory of history by A. S. Lappo-Danilevskiy, tectology by A. A. Bogdanov, B. P. Vysheslavtsev’s notion of “absolute”. The author attempts to comprehend the regularities accountable for interior logics of architecture’s “life and fate” implemented through “construction theory” methods. The construction theory is viewed in terms of Grand-Time architectonics and is perceived, as applicable to architecture, as “an experiment on itself”. In this context the history of Recent Time architecture may be regarded as an “autobiography” of architectonic expertise during the whole of Grand Time — starting from the beginning of the 20th century, with an open ending date...

Keywords—architectonics; values; culture and civilization; culturology; suprematic architecture; theory of history; theory of building; artistic image; intellectual idea; commitment to excellence; raising to the extreme

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern world view is increasingly based on the laws of nonlinear (hence, non-obvious, i.e. not lying on the surface) perception of the world order. With that, the dialogue between the artistic image and the intellectual idea, focused on finding a truly new in the process of creativity, becomes Central in understanding the mechanisms of its integrity. In this regard, it is natural to pay attention to the possibilities of a Suprematic approach to creativity which is understood as the pursuit of perfection. First of all, we should be

interested how the author of Suprematism K. S. Malevich built a spatial structure of his interpretation of Suprematism — fully meaningful integrity, with the evidence (for him) seen in all its planar projections.

The expediency of the returning to discourse about the possibilities already established in philosophy and the humanitarian science of understanding the “topological way” to the attainment of suprematic organized New in the creativity [1] is exacerbated by obvious crisis evident manifestations of modern domestic (Russian) architecture. Seeing them mainly in the shortcomings of law enforcement, economic and social costs, active attempts are being made to break out of the “contours” of the current situation. Considering the expediency of all these efforts, it is necessary to fix attention to the fact that conceptually they (these attempts) do not affect, in the author’s opinion, the determining value of the main problem of the creative profession (architecture sees itself as such), because not only do not try to find ways out of the perception of the world within the boundaries of “catching-up development”, but, on the contrary, consolidate the situation of secondariness which is disastrous for full-fledged creativity, because at best, they leave the opportunity to work “in styles”. If you still try to return the conversation about creativity in architecture to its original authenticity, i.e. the acquisition of the fullness of those values, which are only worthy of a profession, it makes sense to overcome the “overload of everyday life” and focus on understanding how to form or, more precisely, formed in time genuine values, adequate along with this and our modernity.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

According to the course of General history chronologically lower limit of Modern time is fixed in 1914, i.e. refers us to the cultural understanding of the situation at the beginning of the last century. It was the period 1913~1915 when Suprematic ideas were formed. It is crucial for understanding the current level of understanding the worldview in architecture, i.e. the current situation in the profession, to reconstruct the General picture of the perception of environment and the actual findings of science that formed an atmosphere of “direct knowledge” [1], in which the intuition of the author of Suprematism has grown.

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A century since many of the events that took place in those years, in our time — it has become customary to celebrate anniversaries... The choice of anniversaries is mainly determined by the humanitarian preferences of our days. A key watershed hides here between the perception of the world of “everyday” and the world understanding which has formed a fundamental and, as it is not surprising — quite stable, although outwardly not catchy, views that define the “core” (through) trends in the movement of meaning (content) which is forming the concept of “modern architecture”.

The globality of the crisis in the architecture of our days is in those contradictions that accumulate on the “external contour” of professionalism, where there are always vain attempts to break out of the “embrace of discontent with what is happening” and the understanding of true professionalism which allowed at one time to attribute architecture as modern, i.e. adequate architecture which personifies own time. Discussing the problems of the crisis of architecture in our everyday life, it is appropriate to return to the understanding of the problems of the crisis of the universal foundations of architectural professionalism. The more especially as it is possible to refer to the historical precedent which is methodologically acceptable in our case. I mean widely known in the science studies the crisis of the “foundations of mathematics”, identified by Hilbert. [3].

In the logic of our discourse about the search for the root causes of crisis situations and the ways in which one can try to overcome them (get out of them), it makes sense to sit over a problem (go deeper into the problem, delve into the problem), starting from the commonality of the worldview and space understanding (according to P.A. Florensky) in architecture and mathematics. The basic for such methodologically correct approach is laid in the works of Wilhelm Windelband, well and quite systematically known in Russia at the beginning of the last century as a holistic knowledge [4].

Windelband built the foundation of modern the science of values. Certainly a very “branched tree” of axiological science has grown on its basis with time. But it is more important for our discourse to focus on the “roots”(beginnings) and the earliest seedlings of the future in the structure of knowledge, interested, first of all, in the future “life and destiny” of architecture. Windelband has shared historical (humanitarian) knowledge and natural science — not on the subject, but on the methodological principle. Some Sciences focus on understanding the individuality of fact, others identify the mates that form the laws of a particular activity. After that, it is necessary to emphasize what place he paid to understanding the essence of mathematics and its role in modern for him worldview. Mathematics is not only capable of analysis and synthesis, but also methodologically brings them together. For this reason, Windelband has paid attention to the role of artistry, intuition in strictly logical constructions of mathematics. In this context, a well-known phrase is appropriate aphorism, different versions of which now have a lot of “authors”: “He (a student, a graduate student, etc.) did not have enough

intuition and because of that he did not become a mathematician. He became a poet”. [5].

III. PSYCHODIAGNOSTICS METHODOLOGY

From this point of view Windelband wrote his understanding of biography and life of I.Kant. And here we can notice two main plots which are necessary in order to understand the “seats” of modern architecture. These two subjects should be emphasized firstly. Why is it so important? Because with the help of their life and everyday reality it is possible to converge architecture, philosophy, mathematic and to reveal the architectonical community.

Windelband Gives key phrase to understanding Kants Architecture-centricity: “Give me matter and I will build the world out of it.”(highlighted by me — Y.V.). Accented action here is — “I will build”... [6]. A lot of the problems which have formed the current situation in architecture (as well as in project creativity and in architectural science) go back to the beginning of the XX century. It is more correct not only to blame the legacy of past century but also realize our debts to it. In particular, speaking about today’s problems in architectural science it is impossible not to take in consideration the heritage of I. Kant. And how mostly this legacy developed all the methodological foundations for constructing in time the entire “building” of the humanities. Including the deepening of knowledge about architecture in our country. Here I would like to refer only to one unconditionally eloquent experience from the life and fate of V.F. Asmus. Philosopher in his will asked to see him on his last way with Kant’s portrait in his hands. Within the framework of this conversation which is limited by the scope of this article first of all not without interest is the work of Asmus “The problem of intuition in philosophy and mathematics”[7]. This work is a landmark for the reconstruction of lifetime “theory of structure” Suprematism approach to creativity:

- Asmus explains (in subtitle) that he is mainly focused on the problem of three-hundred times can (“History essay XVII — the beginning of XX century”);
- The book is published in 1963 in the Moscow publishing house — “Stegiz”. Here it is appropriate to remember an interesting for us “ifal” of the history of the publishing house of socio-economic literature, which was reorganized also in 1963 (expanding it by attracting Geograpgiz) and became the publishing house called “Thought”. So the Asmus’s book in some way appeared to be at a turning point in the world view of that time. (The second edition almost repeating the first one which was published in 1965 in the publishing house “Thought”);
- for this conversation it is important to mention that the origins of modern architecture were formed exactly in the early 1960s. Nowadays mass interest for heritage of “thaw” time absorbs also an attention to the heritage of architecture. However, at the same time it is necessary to recreate the way of the

“restoration” of architectural “fabric” and to understand how it was going in those years. With the help of that “fabric” it became possible to continue the construction of the “building” of a Suprematism approach to creativity. Such approach was understood as the pursuit of perfection but in a new time. [8].

It is useful to think about the role of Kant’s biography, his fate, i.e. everything that becomes the basis for the construction of intellectual history as the section of modern historical knowledge which in fact nowadays is in the epicenter of study everywhere. (I should say that this area of historical science is developing actively in our country).

Turning to the basics on which the fundamental cultural knowledge (created by Windelband) is based, it is worth mentioning that in particular the first Department that Kant was offered to occupy at the University of Königsberg was the Department of Theory of poetry. But to be honest, he refused from this suggestion. And the most popular lectures among the citizens were lectures not about philosophy, but about physical geography. Although it is known that Kant did not travel outside his hometown. (Awareness of such details of Kant’s biography can be learnt from Windelband’s books.)

It is especially interesting to read about Kant’s involvement in theory of poetry remembering about the book “Poem of the Right Angle (Le Poeme De L’Angle Droit)” [9] by Le Corbusier and about his “Philips” pavilion created for Brussels’ Belgium World’s Fair 1958 which an architect called “The electronic Poem”...[10].

Lectures on the physical geography that Kant perceived from the “spot” of the specifics of the urban culture of Königsberg as a projection from the “plane” of perception of his city into a three-dimensional world space are methodologically quite correctly connected with the modern interest of cultural studies in the urban problems of the city, city life and urban culture. That is inextricably linked with the theoretical problems of architecture, focused on urban development problems. (The creation of the Moscow publishing house “Thought” in 1963 on the basis of a merger of publishing houses of economic and geographical literature is very eloquently integrated into this sequence).

It seems appropriate in this article to mention the early works of I. Kant: before the 1770s (before the “critical period”. In his first published work (almost during his student period) which (in my opinion) still has an eloquently speaking name “Thoughts about the true evaluation of living forces” [11] Kant “entered into a discussion” with Descartes and Leibniz who became his “interlocutors” for many years. Exactly in these “conversations” Kant’s fundamental thinking was born, about which Windelband was saying: “Give me matter, and I will build the world out of it, i.e. give me matter, and I will show you how the world should arise out of it” [12].

Strictly speaking, in scientific use, this idea is given in the shorten form (aphorism) “Give me matter, and I will build a world out of it...”. In this form, it clearly adjoins its

primary source – the words of Descartes: “Give me matter and movement, and I will build the world” (highlighted by me – Y. V.). Kant allows himself to interpret the concept of the ancient philosopher, as I understand it, fixing attention to the fact that we are constantly in the movement of time. At the forefront of immersion in the problem of “building the world” there is a conversation about the visibility of how it (the world) can be arranged, constructing this process, being inside the time flow.

In 1770 I. Kant completed the dissertation “The form and principles of the sensual and intelligible world” summarizing a long period of understanding of this problem [13]. Here the combination of “sensual” and “intelligible” in fact is the original interpretation of what in our time is more appropriate to interpret as a dialogue of artistic image and intellectual idea which forms the methodological basis for the full implementation of architectonic thinking and activity. Perhaps it is useful to remind once again that in this article the conversation goes beyond the boundaries of the history of philosophy to the subject area of knowledge about architecture, forming its “life and destiny”. In other words, I’d like to return to the early works of I. Kant within the boundaries of the history of Modern architecture.

Here I would like to try to understand the words of the philosopher S. L. Frank like one of the problems of architecture. He was one of the first to translate Windelband into Russian. In the end of 1903 Frank wrote in the Preface to the first edition of the translation of “Preludes”: “If the Windelband opinions about the construction of the knowledge theory and about his understanding of Kant can diverge, the depth and richness of thought and the beauty of the form of “Preludes” make them indisputably one of the most important basic manual in familiarization with the problem of modern philosophical idealism which in recent years forms the ideological anger of the day” (highlighted by me — Y.V.) [14].

T.B. Dlugach in her speech at the international Congress in Moscow, may2004 quotes the words of Kant: “If I, for example, turn the empirically visual representation of the house...into a perception, the necessary unity (highlighted by I. Kant– Y.V.) of space and external sensuous pictorial representation form the basis; I draw the shape of the house in some way...according to this unity of diversity in space.” [15].

The architectural “fabric” from which it was cut out within a hundred years between the dates of these two publications refers to the name of I. Kant, the Suprematist construction of the House image in its “unity of diversity in space”, was repeatedly interrupted by historical events, realized every time in the current daily routine ... The necessity of restoration of the architectural professionalism fabric returns to the origins of modern ideas about the striving for perfection formation. (ZahaHadid’s repeated statements about the importance for her creativity of a “spiritual connection” with K.S. Malevich, are relevant here [16].

K.S. Malevich, being equally an artist and theorist of his art, created Suprematism as an intellectual art. Starting from

cubism, he combined the author's triad of a conscious attitude to artistic creativity: to see, to know, to build. And it is impossible not to mention that Heidegger's report "Building, dwelling, thinking" (1951), which became very popular in the world of architecture, "takes up" and develops the logic and semantic sequence of the suprematic construction of the world order. But at the same time it is important to realize the possibility of reducing these meanings, "read" from two languages (in this case from German and Russian) into a single, common whole. (I refer here to the "Notes of the translator" of M. Heidegger's book "Being and Time" by V.V. Bibikhin, 1997).

Collecting a holistic view of the humanitarian interpretation of the concept of "construction" at the time, it is necessary to say that in the early 10s of the XX century construction was perceived as a synonym of creativity, in particular, V.Y. Bryusov [17] thought the same way. It concretized the creative process and shifted the emphasis from visionary perception and surface (i.e. mainly, understood with the help of the facade) style formation to the need to feel and delve into the device and the organization of spatial integrity. Along with that in the same years a general organizational science or, according to the author, A.A. Bogdanov — "humanitarian science of construction" — was formed [18].

IV. CONCLUSION

The volume of the article does not provide an opportunity to collect all the variety of knowledge formed in the logic of the declared methodology proposed by W. Windelband. Within its borders, the "biography" of the formation of the integral picture of interesting for us historical knowledge about the interrelationships of architecture, philosophy and mathematics in the first two decades of the twentieth century is fully revealed "in connection with the general culture and individual sciences" of its time.

We can say that this layer of general knowledge regularities and methodology formation, which is adequate to suprematist worldview, is generalized by at least two works in which a three-dimensional construction of aspiration for perfection is presented. B.P. Vysheslavtsev in the Ethics of Fichte in 1914 formulated the thesis that "The desire for the Absolute is the unity of the four sides" [19]. Along with this, A.S. Lappo-Danilevsky created a methodology for acquiring historical knowledge as a theory of structure [20]. And it is necessary to say that his theoretical constructions are quite appropriate in the context of the modern understanding of the laws of the philosophy of history in the world-historical science [21].

Suprematism, according to Malevich, grows in the "volumetric time of the new architectural construction". In 1928, in a letter to the editor of the journal Modern Architecture, he wrote: "Suprematism arose in 1913... Since 1918, the development of volumetric suprematism begins the elements of which arose in 1915. ...Thus, the whole path of the new art in all kinds of culture came to the modern art, which is architecture" [22].

The uniqueness of Suprematist art goes back to the sensation of its author (founder) — K.S. Malevich, this sensation is growing to his conviction of the need to create a Suprematist method — a method of purposeful approximation to perfection, constructing it as a speculative projection from the plane "drawn on canvas" (located "in the skull" — in the words of Malevich) "quadrangle" in the space of the world order.

The convergence of the concepts of the "square" and "quadrangle", which goes back to Malevich's searches of the author's design of Suprematism, comprehended by us in the logic of Vysheslavtsev's formula "aspiration for the absolute", in architecture acquires the stability of the volumetric dome of the world order. Its height determines the aspiration for perfection.

K.S. Malevich fixed an attention on "all kinds of culture", which collectively paved the way for a new architecture. Along with interest in the possibilities of non-objective painting, he penetrated into the modern state of science and the achievements of technical development. He was not interested in the specificity of each of the scientific or technical disciplines, but in the universality of the world order, the most common patterns. For Malevich, it was natural to understand the structure of the city, the universe and man as a single system of integrity building [23]. The convergence of the worldview of K.S. Malevich and W. Windelband's approach to acquiring integrity in the scientific knowledge, in my opinion, is quite convincing. It is appropriate to refer to at least one authoritative experience of mentioning these names in the context of philosophy and science presentation at the beginning of the 20th century, undertaken by A.P. Ogurtsov [24]. The search for a figurative interpretation of the deep layers of humanitarian and natural science consistently led Malevich to an awareness of the methodological possibilities of architectonic thinking and activity, according to him, as a "pure art form". Art, embracing new worldviews in the logic of Suprematist thinking and activity, goes back to an understanding of the role of spatiality in the construction of modern life. Geometrically designed planes as Suprematist elements interact with each other in space, organizing and individualizing it. Stylistic patterns retreat into the "shadow", giving a way for the problematic of creating an architectural form.

An attempt to comprehend the patterns that create the internal logic of the "life and destiny" of architecture, implemented by the methodology of "theory of structure", or rather — its reconstruction within the boundaries of the architectonics of the Great Time, in fact, is perceived in relation to architecture as "an experiment on itself".

In this context, the history of Modern Times architecture can be regarded as an "autobiography" of architectonic professionalism for a long time — from the beginning of the twentieth century to our times... And this brings architecture closer to the intellectual history of the Newest Time.

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