

# Arche. Revival of the Notion of "the Fine" for Comprehension of the Dialogue between Artistic Image and Intellectual Idea in a Modern Architectural Form

Yuri Volchok

Scientific Research Institute of Theory and History of Architecture and Urban Planning  
 Central Institute for Research and Design of the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Communal Services of the Russian Federation  
 Moscow, Russia  
 yvolchok@gmail.com

**Abstract**—The revival of the notion of the “fine” has become a new task in the framework of matching historical and theoretical issues related to architectural criticism at the present stage of architectonic thinking and its integration into the framework of a non-linear world perception. The return to one of the original interpretations of the “fine” (based on the “formula” by H. Poincaré) as the result of harmoniously wholesome internal structure of any integrity provides for filling visual perception of architectural form with intellectual contents. The application of this notion may become a methodical basis for the establishment of the essentially “fine” dialogue between the two notions that have drifted apart relatively long ago - “history” and “evolution” within the logics of the “Grand-Time Architectonics” (M.M. Bakhtin).

**Keywords**—*fine art triad architecture - sculpture - painting; internal structure; perception of the exterior; architectural form; integrity; Grand-Time Architectonics*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Why is there the need to bring the notion of "fine" to the forefront of architectural studies and wider – to the center of humanitarian knowledge once again? In my opinion, it not only allows to draw attention to the internal arrangement (structure) of any arbitrarily chosen whole, generated in the dialogue of an artistic image and intellectual ideas, but also provides an impetus for its in-depth of perception, enclosing the visual analysis and the real knowledge about the piece. Especially when going back to understanding of the essence of fine according to A. Poincaré (Poincaré, in particular, wrote: "the Impression of elegant can be caused by the unexpected convergence of things that we are not used to bring together; and in this case the elegance is fruitful, because the relationship, that we had not noticed until then, gets exposed thanks to it; it is also fruitful in case when it is determined solely by the contrast between the simplicity of means and the complexity of the problem...") [1].

The essence of the problem is the justification of the need of returning to the beginnings of modern concepts of the regularities of morphogenesis and on the role that architecture can and should play in, if we talk about the beginning=arche, understanding it as the multiplicity of the whole [2].

Today, it is essential that individual characteristics integrated into the architectural form get into the focus of understanding of an art piece. This is exactly the architectural form which increasingly gains value and gets to the foreground of a layered architecture analysis. Stylistic and typological generalizations get shadowed and blurred at the peripheral perception of values of visible results of the architectural work focused on the intellectual efforts in finding the New.

The sensation arising at the first acquaintance with a work of architecture, naturally causes a need to delve into the understanding of its internal structure in search of reasoning to be able to appreciate the creative decision as genuine (and sometimes with admiration) "graceful". So once again the realization comes that the great Master-architect is always a "weaver" [3]. He forms the artistically presented whole of an architectural tissue from within its “canvas”; the nodes, fixing the threads in the process of "weaving" the architectural forms, are created inside the structure. They are invisible to prying eyes, but the realization of the laws of their functioning reveals in full the artistic image of the work and its intellectual idea, which are joined by the dialogue of architectonic form interpretation.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The central work for the proposed conversation is the book by V. N. Lazarev "the Beginning of the early Renaissance in Italian art" [4]. This book is known to be the final volume of the series "The origin of the Italian Renaissance" [5].

The first thing that catches the eye is the structure of the book or the updated order of the presentation of "fine" arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, i.e., the reverse order of traditional scheme which is essential for our conversation. Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446) becomes the major figure for Lazarev's reflections and research schemes. The book shows that the art of Brunelleschi allows consolidating the formation of the Renaissance view of the value of the New into a single whole, its internal structure and world-forming advantage of the architecture, as well as putting architecture in its new interpretation in a first place in the triad of fine arts, which defined the centuries of the Renaissance.

When reading the work of Lazarev the feeling appears that while being engaged in history and deeply immersed in the understanding of the nuances of new knowledge about the studied era, he remains contemporary for his time. It's hard to abandon the thought, while reading following, in particular: "Now that we have the ability to look at the historical process more objectively, the architecture of Brunelleschi retains its absolute value as the first new word, and as marked with high artistic excellence and as imbued with the spirit of "civic humanism", and for being spring-like fresh, open and happy" [6]. This conversation is adjacent to another place in the book, bringing together the situation in the formation of the beginning of the Renaissance tradition with its interpretation five centuries later. Lazarev writes that "Filippo went far beyond the humanists. While many of them were interested in a bare form, giving it an exaggerated importance, Brunelleschi, through the creative use of ancient and proto-renaissance heritage managed, with help of the language of art, through the language of architecture to embody the essence of the new..." (hereinafter all marks by the author) [6].

The fascination with the "bare form," prolonged in time, was clear to Lazarev. He knew the essence of this multifaceted problem not only because, in particular, G. Wollflin, but also on the example of the variety of creative quests of the avant-garde artists of the first decades of the twentieth century, both domestic and foreign. The sense of movement of time added certainty to the formula of the heritage regaining in the early Renaissance. The heritage, that has shaped a new understanding of the content of architecture not only in its times but also for centuries to come. Throughout his study Lazarev uses a binomial design – antique and proto-renaissance heritage in an indissoluble synthesis. In this formula, the notion about the ancient heritage captures its cultural filling, and "protorenaissance" heritage encompasses all the things that civilization has given to its own time, whether it's the beginning of the 15th century, or five centuries later. The usefulness of this second part of the binomial formula of Renaissance tradition is determined by its dynamics that is adequate to the logic of the development of civilization in the movement of time. This understanding of Renaissance tradition allows updating its content. Another piece of text from our source confirms Lazarev's "formula" of the formation of the Renaissance: "To the Florentines Brunelleschi was not only a great architect, but also a fount of knowledge. All his activities were based on a deep penetration into the laws of

mathematics, geometry, mechanics, and statics. He was interested in real problems..." [6]. And just like for a contemporary architect, who lives in an anticipation of soon to come imminent nonlinear Renaissance in the understanding of architecture, the continuation of historian's reasoning published thirty-five years ago, is addressed to: "So Brunelleschi, erecting one building after another, managed to give an artist the respect of society, to ensure that the architect took the place next to the writer and humanist, transformed from a medieval "master" to the artist whose work had granted him immortality. And Brunelleschi achieved it not only with his buildings, but also his deep knowledge in sciences which were far superior in objectivity and concreteness than even the most skilled medieval architects" [6].

Art historian V. N. Lazarev draws attention to the fact that Brunelleschi ensured the high status of the Artist to the architect, but at the same time, consistently realizing his approach to the formation of the profession in the Renaissance worldview, the researcher captures the validity of the binomial construction of architectonic professionalism. Brunelleschi is not only the author of "beautiful buildings", but also the scientist, with an expertise in different fields of sciences. It is pertinent to note that later L. M. Batkin, analyzing the legacy of Leonardo da Vinci, also reflected on the dual nature of his genius. Leonardo is the artist and the scientist [7]. V. P. Zubov in his book about Leonardo da Vinci gives the name "Mathematical Paradise" to the central chapter of the book [8].

It is the reconstruction of the understanding of architectural professionalism from the perspective of artistic creativity. Historians of art and culture (V. N. Lazarev, V. P. Zubov, L. M. Batkin, in our case) draw attention to an additional to the artistic – the scientific, mathematically-focused component of the original formula for Brunelleschi's architectonic of professionalism. And what if we look at the same formula through the eyes of a science historian? B. G. Kuznetsov, by the way, in the same 1979 as V. N. Lazarev wrote, in particular, pays attention to and appreciates the fact that "Brunelleschi in his painting justified the introduction of perspective and its law in a such comprehensive way that made his idea (a true triumph of translating ideas into an image and an artistic image to the mathematical idea) the beginning of descriptive geometry" [9].

And as if concluding his thoughts on the role of an artist and painting in the formation of the logic of understanding of the world, Kuznetsov writes: "the Renaissance Painting was to uncover the structure of the infinite world of time and space through the structure of the inner world..." [9].

What is there to capture from the experience of the evolution of the Renaissance worldview? The contemporary reader (poet, artist, critic, historian, architect, historian of architecture) is not as interested in a particular result, i.e. what is presented on the "surface" of the historical process as in the reflection of how the masters thought achieving the results that has put them in history (created its presentation). L. M. Batkin writes However, that "It was not easier for the Italian humanists than for us now to understand their own

terms, to shape them and themselves together with them, to rethink the unusual harmony of the architectonic formula of the "Renaissance"..., renewal (Renovatio), the "Golden age". It took almost two centuries" [10]. Further, the author emphasizes: "It took... a huge effort, since the original premise of the Renaissance, revolutionized culture so much, was traditionalist when needed" [10].

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Another fragment, important to us, continuing these reflections, is from the book by A. I. Nekrasov "Russian Empire Style", published in 1935, also on the verge of a radical change in understanding the essence of the New in architecture: "Spatial moment of an architectural work is not limited to only one internal volume, but is related to the surrounding space, which is a part of it, i.e., asserts a sense of its space. More complex spatial creations, consisting of the series of coordinated monuments that we call the ensemble can emerge as a result" [11].

#### A. Internal Structure of an Architectural Form

A. I. Nekrasov immediately sums up this idea, quite paradoxically, as it would seem, expanding the boundaries of perception and translating it (perception) to the depth of an inner dialogue. However, this approach to the analysis and understanding of perception is quite timely and modern, if we remember that the year before, in 1934, L.S. Vygotsky published his theory of inner speech as the fundamental foundation of the psychology of creativity [12]. Nekrasov writes: "... it follows that in the perception of architecture it is absolutely not enough to stick to the "visionary", exterior perception, which is acceptable in a relation to painting and sculpture. The space of the building in which we find ourselves is perceived not only by our eye, but we move in it, hear sounds, feel the space with all our being" [13].

Nekrasov recalls Wollflin, criticizing him for giving an almost exclusively "visionary", sculptural and pictorial interpretation of facades..." in his classic work "the Renaissance and the Baroque." ("Therefore, we must consider a big disadvantage the fact that the science of the recent past was often content with "visionarie" definitions in the study of architecture," Nekrasov writes, based on the new interpretation of the concept "perception") [13].

I think that Nekrasov's criticism of previous (mostly Western) art science is not so much connected with the "visionary" perception of architecture, but with an inappropriate, according to the author, place of architecture in a list of spatial arts: painting, sculpture, architecture. Nekrasov obviously calls for the special place for architecture, excepting it from a "visionary" perceived line. Let's remember again: "... Of all spatial arts architecture is a spatial one by origin".

Nekrasov makes a noteworthy conclusion which, sums up the consideration of historical material: "Some forms of Empire partly connected with Art-Nouveau elements. ... At the same time constructivism began to grow in architecture, first in the pre-October period..., reducing the significance of architecture to practical material needs (functions). A new

image, leveling and destroying the complexity of life of the individual is being created". Further, attention: "Denial of mass by constructivism, "theoreticist" wall construction, schematicism of lines along with the desire to embrace large spaces in the ensemble – all these properties originate from the architecture of the past, particularly the Empire style. It is not surprising therefore that the early constructivistic buildings (terminology of the author – Y. V.) always contain elements of the Empire Style" [13].

It is not surprising for the logic of this conversation that when Nekrasov published a book almost at the same time, when Leningrad architect I. A. Fomin (the year before) during the discussion of the annual may exhibition of the Moscow architecture in 1934 said: "During past 15 years we have introduced a number of valuable techniques to the arsenal of architecture. First of all it is a smooth plane. We took it from Corbusier and it's very valuable... Let's get the architecture built in a new way" [14]. This is an inter-professional search for the understanding of the New in architectural studies.

#### B. In the Pursuit of Architectural Perfectionism in Art

Art and arts studies have put architecture to the forefront, recognizing its morphological abilities in the acquisition of the new content and characteristics of the art form (also for two decades before that). K. S. Malevich saw the potential in the development of the modern possibilities of painting to Suprematist aspirations (to perfection) of the new architecture. O. E. Mandelstam has searched and found an architectonic content in poetry and prose. A. Bely has equated the construction and creativity, believing them to be synonymous. A. M. Gan, the author of the first book about it – "Constructivism" (1922), became the part of the Association of contemporary architects, and created the face of one of the most significant architectural magazines in the history ("Modern architecture. SA"). K.S. Stanislavsky in 1919 began to rehearse the tragedy of Byron "Cain". During a long work process he also understood (realized) that he has "to give up the artist in favor of the architect and the sculptor ... to identify the inner life (of an actor - Y.V.)" [15].

In the same 1920, in Vitebsk, when Malevich wrote an article "Suprematism", the "UNOVIS" group staged the "Victory over the Sun" opera (libretto by A. Kruchenykh).

But perhaps the most clear and convincing (among known to me) presentation of the structure of the Absolute by means of art and in this regard asserting the avant-garde role of architecture is the book "Four phonetic Novels" by A. Kruchenykh [16]. It is not necessary to agree with the author, it is more important to understand how he organizes his text, while being mindful that Kruchenykh was unconditionally perceived as an "absolute" artist. But an additional argument in favor of the choice was the publication of a book in 1927 in Moscow, when I. Leonidov presented his thesis work. The search for the "perfect" form in the Leonidov's project discussed on the "background" of this Kruchenykh's work, substantially objectivized the place of architecture, and architectural form-finding in the avant-garde world of that time [17].

Now let us return to architecture and music in the Kruchenykh's book. Strictly speaking, there can be only two mutually exclusive solutions for their fate: they are either derived beyond the boundaries of "arts" so they become non-arts or fully present "here and now", within which the search of form and stylistic technique take place. Architecture and music thus become main arts for Kruchenykh, generating the concept of "pairing".

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Gustavs Klucis's "four-axis skyscraper" pictured on the cover of the book of A. Kruchenykh clearly indicates the validity of this conclusion. It is difficult to assume that someone could offer a solution for the cover besides the author or against his will when the book is published by the author independently and at his own expense. The work of Klucis – is an attempt and, in my opinion, a surprisingly successful one, to through a synthesis of architecture and music, and the concept four-dimensionality – space-time on the one hand, and on the other – the concept of "node", not so much required for a style, but for the form-shaping principle of the New art. In this conversation architecture is present as a full-fledged fourth component the author required to build the desired system of multifaceted linguistic activities. So, Y. S. Stepanov builds (constructs) the system of his argumentation, relying on the poetic experience of the late XIX – early XX century in the three-dimensional system of language constructs [18]. A. K. Zholkovsky has undertaken analysis of new and newest Russian poetry in the context of architectonic space-understanding. He opens the preface of his book on this subject, with the thesis about the authorship of "the famous formula": "God (Devil) is in the details." "It is attributed, the author notes, to different people, but it is no coincidence that all of them are artists: Michelangelo, Flaubert, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, to whom we can add Boris Pasternak with his 'Omnipotent God of details' line. The clue for how the parts praise the plan of their Creator is the matter of any science..." [19]. Following this, Zholkovsky confirms that the names of Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier included in his list of representatives of the various arts for a reason, are almost crucial for the author's understanding of creativity. The content of the modern concept of "elegant" develops clearly (prolonged in time), fixing the persistent striving for the realization of the internal structure of the multidimensional architectural form [20].

In this regard, the concept of "fine" could play the role in understanding the place of architecture in the contemporary dialogue of culture and civilization, close to that of the "chronotope" as the submission of integrity in the relations of space and time in the realities of the specific place of origin, formation and reflection on the individual merits of architectural forms.

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