

communiqué /press release**For immediate release****Canadian First****Stunning works from the Soviet Union**

19 June - 8 September 1991

Montréal, Thursday, 13 June 1991 – The exhibitions **Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-garde 1917-1935** and **Soviet Avant-garde Publications** explore one of the most adventurous and influential moments in the history of architecture: the explosion of invention and ideas that followed the October Revolution in Russia.

Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-garde 1917-1935, organized by Stuart Wrede for the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is taken from the collections of the A. V. Shchusev State Research Museum of Architecture in Moscow. For the first time, it brings into view a full range of works by architects in the varied movements associated with the Russian avant-garde-Constructivists, Rationalists, Futurists, and followers of the International Style. It therefore allows us to relate the works and their makers to one another; to ground them in the context of their times; and to see over time the humane and transforming visions of the early twenties dissolve into the often inhuman and grandiose daydreams of the Stalin years.

Soviet Avant-garde Publications, selected from the collections of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) by Grena Zantovskà Murray, explores how the ideas that underlay these movements were communicated. The inventiveness of the graphics in the publications mirrors the adventurousness of the architectural ideas they present. Clearly intended for a mass market, they express the astounding growth of literacy and the new curiosity about design that followed upon the educational reforms of this Revolutionary society. This great burst of popular participation in the architectural culture is clearly reflected in a graphic and typographic vitality that transcends the content of the publications.

Recently, a new generation of architects and designers has rediscovered some of the stylistic elements in the architecture and graphics of the era. They have, however, paid less attention to the moral intelligence that informed this work.

The Soviet avant-garde architects were productivist as much as aesthetic in their concerns; they saw architecture and the arts as one; and they were committed to bringing design into life, rethinking design so that it applied to real social needs. Now, with these two exhibitions, it becomes possible to fully grasp the broader intellectual context in which these astonishing works were produced.

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