

# Soviet architectural avant-garde: utopias, theories and practice



Exhibition of the MSc1/Msc2 models, Autumn 2023

Curated by Pavel Kuznetsov

27 January – 26 February 2024

Foyer Palazzo Canavée

Università  
della  
Svizzera  
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di  
architettura

The exhibition of examination models, the outcome of the theoretical course of the eponymous name, gives a broad picture of architectural experiments of the 1920s and early 1930s in the Soviet Union, telling both about realized projects and those that have forever remained "paper architecture": from actually built house-communes and water towers to the colonization of space, from the propaedeutic course for architecture students at VKhUTEMAS to the visionary projects of Ivan Leonidov and Vladimir Tatlin.

Why are we now returning to this architecture from 100 years ago? Why is it so fresh in the context of today's city, even physically worn out? What can we learn from Ladovsky, El Lissitzky, the Vesnins, Ginzburg, Chernikhov, and many other lesser-known or forgotten names for today's architectural practice?

By focusing on the history of architectural thought, the course and the exhibition seek to go beyond the popular clichés and labeling of the Soviet avant-garde as Moscow-centred constructivism and to show the diversity and richness of concepts and movements within it, as well as its close links and exchange of ideas with contemporaries in Europe.

Ivan Leonidov. Heavy Industry Commissariat Building. Competition entry. 1934.  
From collection of the Schusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow

