

Alexei Gan, Excerpt from *Constructivism* (1922)

Tectonic emerges and forms itself based on the one hand on the characteristics of Communism, and on the other on the expedient use of industrial materials.

The word tectonic is taken from geology where it is used to define eruption from the earth's centre.

Tectonic is a synonym for the organic, for the explosion from an inner being. The tectonic as a discipline should lead the Constructivist in practice to a synthesis of the new content and the new form. He must be a Marxist educated man who has once and for all outlived art and really advanced on industrial material. The tectonic is his guiding star, the brain of experimental and practical activity.

Faktura is the whole process of the working of material. The working of material as a whole and not the working of one side.

Here the material is understood in its raw state. The expedient use of material means its selection and working over, but the character of this working over [of the material] in its integrity is *faktura*: the organic condition of the worked over material or the new condition of its organism.

The material is the body, the matter. The transformation of this raw material into one form or another continues to remind us of its primary form and conveys to us the next possibility in its transformation.

In so far as we transform and work over [materials], we are engaged in *faktura*. Proceeding from this, the second discipline one can formulate thus: *Faktura* is to consciously select material and use it expediently without halting the movement of the construction or limiting its tectonic.

Construction. Construction must be understood as the coordinating function of Constructivism.

If the tectonic unites the ideological and formal, and as a result gives a unity of conception, and the *faktura* is the condition of the material, then the construction discovers the actual process of putting together.

Thus we have the third discipline, the discipline of the formation of conception through the use of worked material.

All hail to the Communist expression of material building! [. . .]

The end has come to pure and applied [art]. A time of social expediency has begun. An object of only utilitarian significance will be introduced in a form acceptable to all.

Nothing by chance, uncalculated, nothing from blind taste and aesthetic arbitrariness. Everything must be technically and functionally directed.

Once and for all the idea of a final solution and eternal truths must be invalidated.

The roots of art were always in material-formal substances, in production ... From the speculative activity of art to socially directed artistic work ... The technical system of society, the ordering of its wealth, creates the ordering of human relationships....

In the field of cultural organization, the only valid criterion is that which is indissolubly connected with the general tasks of the revolution ... Art is dead! There is no room for it in the human work apparatus. Work, technique and organization!

Let us tear ourselves away from our speculative activity [art] and find the way to real work, applying our knowledge and skills to real, live and expedient work.

Intellectual-material production sets up working mutual relations and a production basis with science and technique, replacing art which by its very nature cannot be disentangled from

religion and philosophy and is not capable of pulling itself out of the closed circle of abstract, speculative activity . . .

Tectonic, *faktura*, construction. Retaining the lasting material and formal basis of art such as color, line, surface, volume and movement, artistic work materialistically directed will become, in conditions of expedient activity and intellectual-material production, capable of opening new means of artistic expression.

Not to reflect, not to represent and not to interpret reality, but to really build and express the systematic tasks of the new class, the proletariat. The master of color and line, the builder of space-volume forms and the organizer of mass productions must all become constructors in the general work of the arming and moving of the many-millioned human masses....

Our Constructivism has declared unconditional war on art, for the means and qualities of art are not able to systematize the feelings of a revolutionary environment. [...]