

## What is Classical Architectural Theory for Russian Constructivism: a Threshold or a Closure?

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### Abstract

The Russian Constructivism of the 1920s is traditionally reviewed in opposition to principles of classical architecture. Disharmony and disproportions are its identifying features. But were loud manifestations of Avant-Guard ideologists a real opposition to basics of classical architecture or rejection of stencils of the XIXth century eclectic age and order system as external features of the gone epochs? Speaking about basics of constructivist theory, I claim they are grounded on Vitruvian triad of Firmitas, Utilitas and Venustas, bringing each element to comparison with theoretical postulates by Constructivists (first of all by M. Ginsburg). Constructivists intended to introduce new functional architecture as it was in its origins before sculpture, painting and music. Turning to the "Lectures on Aesthetics" by Hegel, I reflect on Constructivist theory in Hegelian terms of Symbolic, Classical and Romantic architecture, attributing huge part of Avant-Guard heritage as Independent or Symbolic architecture. This helps understand "Creative Discussion" of the 1932 after which Constructivism was abandoned and the course taken to apprehension of "Classical Heritage" resulted in establishment of Socialist Realism. I argue that Stalinist architecture in Hegelian sense is more Romantic (Gothic) than Classical. Analysis of categories of harmony, proportions and identity in early Soviet architecture through classical theories by Vitruvius and Hegel enables to reach the origins of modernist architecture and understand its later development.

**Keywords:** Russian Constructivism, architecture, Hegel, Vitruvius, architectural theory.