THE RUSSIAN ART OF MOVEMENT

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Translated from the Italian by John E. Bowlt

“In the beginning was the body...”

LEV LUKIN

Allemandi
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Introduction

This book is the result of exhaustive research which commenced in the 1970s and culminated in my Russian monograph, *Vnachale bylo telo: Ritmoplasticheskie eksperimenty nachala xx veka*, published in Moscow in 2011. My course of study also informed my preparation of two major exhibitions on this subject – at the Acquario Romano in Rome and then at the Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum in Moscow in 1999 and 2000 respectively (in collaboration with theatre historian, Irina Duksina). The history of dance in Russia, of both before and after the Revolution of October, 1917, has long been a favourite subject of research and assessment, especially the attainments of what is known as the Silver Age. For example – and not surprisingly – much has been written on the Ballets Russes guided by the irrepressible personality of Sergei Diaghilev, on the dazzling, if eclectic, fantasy of stage designers such as Léon Bakst and Aleksandr Golovin, on the superior professionalism of the Imperial dancers – and on the brilliant caprices of celebrities such as Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky. In turn, much has been said about the synthesis of the arts promoted by the Symbolist writers and artists, about modern Russian music, especially of the avant-garde, about nostalgia for the Classical tradition and about choreographic innovation. The focus of this book, however, is not on these more familiar subjects, but on something rather different: experimental movement in the new, Soviet Russia of the 1920s. In other words, this is not a book about dance, the visual arts or the Silver Age – but about a particular temporal cross-section alternating between the communal utopias of the fin de siècle and the collective utopias of early Communism which, under Stalin, then fused with a utopia of a very different kind.

True, the reader will find references to the prominent Symbolist writers and artists here such as Andrei Bely and Maksimilan Voloshin and to the major themes such as nudity and rhythm which they cultivated. Furthermore, some of the heroes of this book such as Matvei Dobrov, Oton Engel’s, Aleksandr Larionov and Aleksei Sidorov may still be regarded as epigones of the great Symbolist tradition, given their Decadent, yet highly refined taste, their bibliophilic passion (collecting rare editions and exchanging ex-libris designs) and their profound knowledge of the literature, art and music of the fin de siècle.

At the intersection of these diverse arguments is the human body nude, vested, individual, collective, visible and transparent, but, above all, in movement. The focus of this investigation is on how and by what means the body was visualized during the 1920s – a decade so crucial to the evolution of Soviet culture – and on its representation in dance, gymnastics, on the factory floor and in everyday life. The primary intention, therefore, is to bring to the fore a rich, but umbrageous, avenue of enquiry which, for many years, has remained unrecognized and unexplored.
Before their enforced ideological removal in the 1930s, the history and evaluation of artistic movement in all its various articulations had inspired the elaboration of an extraordinary research programme at the so-called Choreological Laboratory within the Russian (later State) Academy of Artistic Sciences (RAKhN/GAKhN) in Moscow, an institution which serves as the common denominator of my narrative. The Laboratory constituted one of many such utopian projects within late Imperial Russian and early Soviet culture, although, unlike other experiments during those turbulent years, it lasted a relatively long time as an active enterprise (from 1923 until 1929), even sponsoring four major exhibitions under the rubric “The Art of Movement”.

But perhaps it was precisely the success story of the Laboratory on the threshold of Stalin’s cultural involution which caused it to be expurgated from the history of the Soviet performing and visual arts. The two exhibitions of the Soviet art of movement which I assembled and curated brought to light archives long lost and forgotten and helped to redefine an entire field of scholarly investigation or, perhaps we should say movement, within the history of early Soviet culture.

A primary mission of the present monograph is to demonstrate the vastness and diversity of this history, especially from a visual and documentary standpoint. True, certain individuals such as Valentin Parnakh or groups such as Geptakhor are, strictly speaking, outside the accepted perimeters of the Art of Movement, but they still have every right to be examined. However, identifying and describing the numerous relevant studios and institutions is not an easy task inasmuch as some of them shared the same name and, in
any case, were frequented, somewhat promiscuously, by most of the protagonists of the New Dance, including Liudmila Alekseeva, Inna Chernetskaia, Irina Dubovskaia, Nikolai Foregger, Natal’ia Glan, Kas’ian Goleizovsky, Lev Lukin, Vera Maiia, Alek-sandr Rumnev, Natal’ia Tian and Valeriia Tsvetaeva. The list could be expanded to include the many other dancers, male and female, for whom the danse plastique was a decisive, yet isolated, episode in their lives, but to do so would require a second monograph. In any case, this book claims not to be a professional and comprehensive history of dance, but, rather, to offer an open forum for the further discussion of many complex and often paradoxical questions. For example, why did the Soviet Union, stern and puritanical, conduct a damning campaign against the fox-trot and other new American dances such as the shimmy, but seemed, officially, at least, to be less shocked at the experiments which Decadent dancers and choreographers such as Goleizovsky, Lukin and Rumnev were conducting with the nude body? Again, to what extent did the bold movements of the radical Russian choreographers impact the language of dance in the West? Or, more immediately, how did their disciples gestate the fruits of their enlightenment in the West (the debt of George Balanchine to his mentor Goleizovsky is a case in point) when the choreographers themselves were often relegated to the artistic if not,
The active participation of other institutions in the *comptes rendus* of the “Art of Movement” exhibitions such as the Russian Photographic Society (RFO), the Central Institute of Labor (TsIT) and the Institute of the Brain, each with its own research programme paving the way for the elaboration of practical applications such as bio-mechanics and movement notation, also render any discourse on the art of the Russian geographical, periphery (Lukin’s “relocation” to Baku, for example)? Last, but not least, how successful were Nina Aleksandrova, Goleizovsky and other practitioners in their attempts to apply innovative ideas and designs to mass choreographies such as the Stalin gymnastic displays?
“representation of movement” complex, peculiar and distinctive *vis à vis* the New or Free Dance in Europe and America.

In other words, within the space of a single treatise it is impossible to examine each and every institution, research programme or theoretical approach just as each individual choreographer, artist or studio would also merit a separate and dedicated assessment. True, there do exist both general and monographic studies on modern dance in Russia and the Soviet Union by Natal’ia Sheremet’evskaya, Elizaveta Surits, Evgeniia Uvarova and other specialists, just as there are a number of detailed publications on individual maestri such as Goleizovsky and Foregger. Even so, major figures such as Chernetskaia and Lukin still await “rehabilitation”, although, given the dynamic trajectory of current research in this area, such lacunae will, no doubt, soon be filled by the new generation of scholars such as Irina Sirotkina. In any case, a major failing of previous, pioneering studies is that, in spite of vigorous descriptions, often first-hand, of actual performances and costumes (Sheremet’evskaya, Uvarova) or of precise, historiographical information (Natal’ia Chernova, Surits), there is a patent lack of visual imagery, making it very difficult for us to place, albeit virtually, a given choreographic, artistic and dance experiment within the synthesis of actual movement. To a large extent, this deficiency, still characterizing the more recent publications, is to be regretted, the more so since the mission of the Choreological Laboratory itself had been to record movement visually.

*In the Beginning Was the Body* seeks to rectify the problem by resorting to the rich visual and documentary material now at our disposal. That a recording – whether via the static photograph and drawing or via the cinematic film – of movement can be incomplete, inadequate and ambiguous is indisputable. As dance and art historian Aleksei Sidorov asserted in 1922, the essential artistic material of dance is the “body itself, the body as such.” With this statement, Sidorov restored the body with its physical reality to the mystery of its inscrutable and intangible spiritual essence, because, as priest and mathematician Pavel Florensky, another luminary of Sidorov’s generation, conceded: “In the depths of the physical there lies a mystery partly hidden, but one which is not at all physical. The physical nature of the mystery may not only erase the mystery itself, but, on certain occasions, may itself be erased by the mystery.”
of movement – to which this book is devoted.


2 Particular mention should be made of the following exhibition catalogue devoted to the relationship between the figurative arts and dance, i.e. G. Belli and E. Vascari, eds.: La danza delle avanguardie. Catalogue of exhibition at Museo d’Arte e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (MART), Rovereto 2005-06. Published by Skira, Milan, in 2005.


4 The French historian and collector, Adrien Sina, has been pursuing an analogous avenue of enquiry and research by assembling a vast collection of documents and materials with the primary focus on France and Germany. See A. Sina et al.: kvinesteti nik lanage makes her writings an instrument essential to the field of the New Dance.


6 N. Sheremt’evskaiia: Taarte la estrade, M: Iskusstvo, 1985. Sheremt’evskaiia’s profound and often personal knowledge of dancers and choreographers and her ability to speak their language makes her writings an instrument essential to the field of the New Dance.


9 I. Chernetskaia: "Lichnoe delo". Manuscript in RGALI, f. 517 (Khoreologicheskaia laboratoriia GAKhNa), ed. khr. 133, l. 46.


11 K. Kropotova: "Alekseandr Rumnev. Esteticheskie idealy" in T. Khm, ed.: Iskusstvo drizheniia. Istoriia i sovremennost’, M: GTITMB, 2002, pp. 77-84; also see OR-GTsTMB: Call No.: f. 517 (Khoreologicheskaia laboratorii GAKhNa), ed. khr. 133, l. 46.

12 N. Sheremt’evskaiia: Taarte la estrade, M: Iskusstvo, 1985. Sheremt’evskaiia’s profound and often personal knowledge of dancers and choreographers and her ability to speak their language makes her writings an instrument essential to the field of the New Dance.


14 On the history of this institution see N. Misler, ed.: "RAKhN. The Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences" in Experiment, 1997, No. 1, 1997; the monographic issue of the journal Voprosy iskusstva, i.e. Vol. 11, No. 2 for 1997; also see S. Strekopytov: "Iz istorii Gosudarstvennoi Akademii khudozhestvennykh nauk" in Dekorativnoe iskusstvo, M, 1922, No. 1, 1922, pp. 4-16; and in I. Chernetskaia: "Lichnoe delo". Manuscript in RGALI, f. 517 (Khoreologicheskaia laboratoriia GAKhNa), ed. khr. 133, l. 46.

15 The first Western monograph devoted to the New Dance trends of the 1910s and 1920s in Russia was the special issue of the Los Angeles journal, Experiment, 1996, No. 2, op. cit.


20 A. Sidorov: "Ocherednye zadachi iskusstva tannia" in Tann i studii, M, 1922, No. 1-2, p. 16.

Kandinsky, Wassily (Vasili Vasilevich)
Moscow, 1866 - Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris, 1944

Artist. Kandinsky spent his childhood in Odessa. 1886-92 studied law at Moscow University. 1896 settled in Munich, taking up residence in the Schwabing district; enrolled in the Akademie der bildenden Künste, studying under Anton Azbe and Franz von Stuck. Late 1890s onwards close contact with fellow Russians in Munich such as Alejx Jawlensky, Alexander Sacharoff, Alexander Saltsmann and Marianne Werekkin. 1901 organized Phalanx group; close to Gabriele Munter with whom, in 1908, founded the Russenhaus in Murnau, which became an international centre for artists and musicians. 1900s strong interest in the new theories of art such as Wilhelm Worring's treatise Abstraktion und Einfühlung (1908). 1910 first abstract painting, followed by numerous Improvisations and Compositions. 1912 published German version of theoretical essay On the Spiritual in Art, part of which had been presented at the Second Congress of Artists in St. Petersburg in December, 1911. Early 1910s met Aleksi Sidorov in Munich. 1915 repatriated owing to the Great War, returned to Moscow via Scandinavia. 1917 assumed various pedagogical and administrative responsibilities under the Bolshevik regime. 1920 director of Inkhuk; professor at Moscow University. 1921 vice-director of RAKhN; elaborated a theory of monumental or synthetic art in which music and dance were to play a primary role, explaining his ideas in the essay “On a Method for Working with Synthetic Art” and in the lecture “Fundamental Elements of Painting” (RAKhN, 1 September, 1921); established a specific dance section within RAKhN; returned to Germany on the pretext of organizing a Berlin brance of RAKhN, but in reality to teach at the Bauhaus in Weimar and then Dessau (until 1933). 1929 formal termination of GAKhN membership. 1933 accused of being a Communist by the Nazis, moved to France. 1939 became a French citizen. 1944 an international celebrity, died in a Paris suburb.
Larionov, Alekandr Illarionovich
Moscow, 1889-1954
Linguistician, art historian, critic and theorist. 1912 travelled in Italy, France and Germany, before graduating in physics and mathematics at Moscow University (where he also audited courses in the history and philology of art). 1910s close to the Symbolists. Studied languages, including Sanskrit. Attended the Archaeological Institute, Moscow, and took part in ethnographical expeditions. 1920-25 professor of alphabetic characters at Vkhutemas. 1921 published his first essay on the danse plastique in the journal Zhizn' iskusstva. Besides his wide diapason of interests, also began to study photography, serving as director of the Department of Aerial Photography for aviation with the Red Army. Especially interested in integrating the various disciplines into a common semiotic interpretation, including pictogrammes and hieroglyphs. 1920s while at RAKhN/GAKhN studied the interrelationships of movement, space, sound and colour, delivering relevant lectures there such as “Artistic Movement and the Word” (1 October, 1925), “Organizing the Artistic Phenomenon of Dance in Space” (7 March, 1925) and “Sound and Movement” (1 October, 1928). Responsible for many activities at RAKhN/GAKhN, including directorship of the Choreological Laboratory (in collaboration with Aleksei Sidorov), also focused on the elements of sports and gymnastics in movement, served as secretary of the Section for Popular Dances at VSFK and participated in the organization of the 1928 Spartakiada. Between 1943 and 1954 was academic consultant for the Lev Tolstoi Museums in Tula and then in Moscow. Early 1950s was still in correspondence with Sidorov.

Sidorov, Aleksei Alekseevich
Moscow, 1891-1978
Art and dance historian, connoisseur of the graphic arts, collector. 1909 after graduating from high-school joined the Little Circle for the Study of Symbolism led by the sculptor Konstantin Krakht, becoming close to Andrei Bely and other writers associated with the publishing-house Musaget. Met Aleksandr Larionov. Interested in Bely’s promotion of eurhythmics as a new approach to the art of movement and gesture in dance. 1911 granted third prize for poetry by the Society for Free Esthetics in Moscow. Enrolled in the Department of Architecture and Art History at Moscow University. 1913 went to Munich to study art history further where he frequented the Café Stephanie, learning about Expressionism and “integrating Freud and psychoanalysis with Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy”. Followed courses offered by Theodor Lipps, Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölflin. Contributed to the lively discussions inspired by Vasilii Kandinsky’s Klang and began to cultivate a strong interest in the new Expressionist dance, writing a long essay on this. 1914 returned to Moscow. 1916 onwards taught art history of Moscow University. 1916-21 worked at the Museum of Fine Arts. 1917 onwards played an active role in the new Soviet museums and research institutions. Took lessons in rhythmic gymnastics offered by Proletcult where met Sergei Volkonsky. 1921 together with Kandinsky helped establish RAKhN, becoming its secretary for academic affairs and director of its department of graphic arts as well as editor of its annual bulletin (1926 onwards). 1924 with Aleksandr Larionov co-directed (albeit not officially) the Choreological Laboratory there. 1927-36 director of the Cabinet of Graphic Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts. 1930-60 worked at the Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History, the Institute of Architecture and Institute of the Printing Arts and various museums. 1944 onwards leading member and distinguished scholar of the Institute of Art History at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.
The history of the New Dance in early Soviet Russia is as much the history of the Choreological Laboratory at the Russian (later State) Academy of Artistic Sciences (RAKhN/GAKhN) in Moscow. Active between 1923 and 1929, the Choreological Laboratory hosted debates, seminars and performances, published numerous essays and organized four pioneering exhibitions entitled “The Art of Movement” (1925, 1926, 1927 and 1928). Unique in the history of Russian and European performance culture, this institution did much to record, evaluate – and inspire – the development of the *danse plastique* or, as it is known more generally, free dance or the New Dance.

RAKhN, which in the summer of 1925 changed its name to GAKhN (State Academy of Artistic Sciences), was born under the aegis of Narkompros (People’s Commissariat for Enlightenment) on 13 October, 1921, but a decade later lost its autonomous status when it was merged with GAIS (State Academy of Art History) and transferred to Leningrad. Founded by Vasilii Kandinsky and other prominent artists and intellectuals, RAKhN was a unique, polymorphic institution containing departments and sections devoted to the study of the visual arts, literature, theatre, music, the printing arts, philosophy, psychology and many other branches of learning. Uniting these subjects above the common denominator of “artistic sciences”, RAKhN was distinguished by the amplitude and variety of its theoretical and practical investigations, a capacity which placed it on a par with European institutions such as the Bauhaus. But RAKhN was also the last stronghold of an autonomous Russian culture within a society which was to become ever more monolithic and homogenous, even if the kind of “Russian culture” which RAKhN promoted was actually an organic part of the European, especially the German, tradition as filtered through the prism of the Russian *fin de siècle*.

It is important to understand that the Stalinist repression of GAKhN and the imprisonment and even liquidation of many of its members in the late 1920s onwards was not part of the general campaign against the avant-garde. After all, RAKhN/GAKhN was an academic, even pedantic, institution which, Kandinsky notwithstanding, maintained a highly ambivalent attitude towards the more boisterous poets and painters of Russian Modernism such as Kazimir Malevich, Aleksandr Rodchenko and Vladimir Tatlin.

The same attitude was closely identifiable with the Choreological Laboratory, too. The various “laboratories” within RAKhN such as the Physical-Psychological and Choreological ones were very important inasmuch as each focused on a specific avenue of enquiry. The history of the Choreological Laboratory is as much the history of three extraordinary individuals, i.e. the artist Oton Engel’s and the critics and historians Aleksandr Larionov and Aleksei Sidorov, who did so much to perpetuate and develop the mission of the Laboratory. Larionov was director, Sidorov was a leading member of the administrative board of RAKhN (and to all intents and purposes co-director
of the Laboratory), while Engel’s, a superb draftsman, was charged with depicting the Laboratory’s experiments in, and experiences of, movement in close collaboration with photographers. An unfailing, if reticent, participant in the many meetings and debates within the Laboratory, Engel’s managed to create a particular kind of figurative ekphrasis in his endeavours to capture movement. Above all, he used the drawing as an instrument not so much for the registration of anatomical analysis as for synthesizing the very sense of movement in dance, whether Classical ballet or free performance. 

Larionov and Sidorov, refined connoisseurs, appreciated all the genres and techniques of graphic representation, whether manual or mechanical, and they supported complementary approaches to the visualization of movement, deriving both from a common ground in Symbolism and an interest in the modern technologies of representation such as photography and cinematography.

It was a deep passion for rhythms and eurythmics which brought Larionov to the New Dance. Like many intellectuals of his time and place, Larionov favoured a multidisciplinary approach to his topics of study, moving from philosophy and mathematics to cinema and even aerial photography. He first alighted upon the art of movement in 1910-12 while attending the studio of the sculptor Konstantin Krakht (1868-1919) and befriending young Symbolist writers from the Musaget publishing-house, a favourite topic of discussion being the phenomenon of rhythm in the work of art. Sidorov and the art historian Dmitrii Nedovich (1889-1947) (a future gakhnovets) also came to these meetings, much taken with the theme of rhythm in art, history and performance. Larionov frequented other Symbolist rendezvous in Moscow such as the Society of Free Esthetics and the Philosophical and Religious Society and, like Sidorov, cultivated a serious interest in psychology. Eventually, interest in mathematics, art history and linguistics led Larionov to concentrate on the semiotics of visual language – from ideographic languages to the visual forms of the various alphabets (the subject of one of his courses at Vkhutemas between 1921 and 1925), from corporeal communication to the semantics of postage stamps.

As director of the Choreological Laboratory, Larionov focused on the musical expressivity of the “liberated” body à la Isadora Duncan, of whom he was a fervent admirer, and also on the more standardized, so called physical culture which, in the 1920s, became his primary field of expertise. In this capacity he served as secretary of the Section for the Subject of Folk Dancing (pliaska) as a Means of Physical Development within the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Higher Council on Physical Culture.

Apart from physical education, Larionov was also fascinated by transcription of movement and by the various choices offered by graphic rendering, photography and the cinema. Undoubtedly, he made momentous theoretical and practical discoveries in this area, as is demonstrated by his contribution of cinematic diagrams (present whereabouts unknown) to the second “Art of Movement” exhibition in 1926, precise diagrams
which documented every kind of movement and, as a result, helped move the discourse towards the possibility of mathematical interpretation. 33 Although, quite logically, Larionov came close to constructing an alphabet of the body, especially via the movements of physical education, he never rejected his interest in early Modernism, maintaining, as Sidorov did, that in any analysis of movement fleeting elements such as emotion and spirituality should not be disregarded. Like many of his colleagues, Larionov disappeared from view after GAKhN and its Choreological Laboratory were phased out in 1930, although we know that he was working at the Tolstoi Museum in Tula in the early 1940s, presumably in evacuation, and then in Moscow in 1943-1948. Until his death in 1954 he was still in touch with Sidorov. 34 Sidorov was also much indebted to the Symbolist ethos, 35 and, not surprisingly, therefore, remained close to Kandinsky when Inkhuk (the Institute of Artistic Culture for which Kandinsky compiled the research programme in 1920) transmuted into RAKhN. 36 Both men were attracted to psychology and psycho-analysis and to the links between these disciplines and artistic perception, the more so since in 1921 Sidorov assumed directorship of the Section of Experimental Esthetics at the Institute of Psycho-Neurology in Moscow – the same agency which employed Russia’s primary psycho-analyst, Ivan Ermakov (from the very beginning a prominent member of GAKhN). 37 In his unpublished “From the Memoirs of a Soviet Historian of Art and Books”, Sidorov mentions his interest in dance and psychoanalysis as a young man. 38 Like Larionov, Sidorov also studied cinema and photography, albeit as a glorified amateur, and in the 1920s worked for the Committee for Cinema and the Technical School of Cinema, one reason perhaps why he regarded the dance, especially the danse plastique, as an art adjacent to cinematography: “The theory of plasticity, of contemporary plastic dance, provides us with very important indications as to how to combine time and space in a single art. Just like cinematography, the dance also moves in space and develops in time”. 39
Chapter 1

A Choreological Laboratory
While working at the Choreological Laboratory, Larionov and Sidorov shared a wide variety of research assignments and initiatives. True, Sidorov was more oriented towards the New Dance, having cultivated an interest in this since the early 1910s when he had been studying art history in Germany. Larionov, on the other hand, was more interested in the scientific verification of the transcription of movement, insisting that physical education or, rather, physical culture should be examined from both an artistic and a scientific viewpoint (medicine, hygiene, bio-mechanics, etc.). However, the two friends both agreed that the single point of departure for their different paths was the revolution which Duncan had fired in dance, more exactly, her non-mechanistic performance of the body in movement.

Although Engel’s, Larionov and Sidorov were all Muscovites and the phenomenon of the Choreological Laboratory is, essentially a Moscow story, it is important to introduce another, Petersburgian component. This is Geptakhor, a dance group guided by Stefanida Rudneva between 1918 and 1934 – which, also inspired by Duncan and the culture of Classical Greece,\textsuperscript{40} elaborated a very special approach to the \textit{danse plastique}. Of necessity, copious reference must be made to Rudneva’s rich archive which has come to light only recently\textsuperscript{41} as well as to other fundamental archives related to the Choreological Laboratory such as Sidorov’s photographic collection and unpublished dance texts, Chernetskaia’s photographic archive, Andrei Teleshev’s private collection of photographs, the archive of Valeria Tsvetaeva’s school and, finally, the drawings and photographs of Engel’s, the most committed of all the artists working within the Laboratory. Examination of these archives, old and new, have helped to realize an almost utopian dream – through word and image to restore the history of the Russian art of movement of the 1920s.

Certainly, these archaeological excavations and attempts to insert them within a broader cultural context are not isolated. Scholars from other fields have also reevaluated the notion of gesture and movement in all their interdisciplinary autonomy and, no doubt, their findings will throw new light upon the history of the art of movement.\textsuperscript{42}
While Inna Chernetskaia and Aleksei Sidorov were studying in Munich in the early 1910s, they followed not only Rudolf Von Laban’s dance research, but also the latest ideas on artistic movement being elaborated by dancer and painter Alexander Sacharoff (Aleksandr Zakharov) who gave his first experimental performance—a solo—there on 21 June, 1910. In fact, Chernetskaia, who had been taking lessons with Elizabeth Duncan in Berlin and had attended a four-month course with Emile Jaques-Dalcroze in Hellerau, recalled that her real mentor had been Sacharoff.

To some extent, Sacharoff’s 1910 solo resulted from lively discussions about analogies between movement, rhythm and colour in music, painting and dance which he and Kandinsky were conducting in the “salon” of the Russian giselists (deriving from the Giselastrasse where Marianne Werefkin [Marianna Verevkina] held her jours fixes). That Sidorov also attended the meetings is indicated by the fact that he described Sacharoff and his companion, Clothilde von Derp, as innovators of dance, associating them with the “Dynamism” category in an essay which he wrote on modern dance just a few years later (not published). Undoubtedly, Sidorov also knew of Sacharoff’s drawings of “Hellenistic” choreographies from the reproductions in Hans Brandenburg’s Der Moderne Tanz, drawings which, essentially, constituted a “pre-history” to the new approaches to movement transcription. Arguing that movement must become a major component in the great “synthetic art” which was to represent the expressive culmination of abstract art, Kandinsky
also acknowledged Sacharoff to be the most authentic representative of dance as an art form and as an expression of interior movement.

Of course, another component essential to the birth of abstract art was the influence of esoteric doctrines on the artists of the early 20th century. Among these occult teachings were Theosophy and Anthroposophy, in particular, which underlined the links between corporeal movement, poetical rhythm, the word, sound, form and colour, looking forward, therefore, to the avant-gardes. Kandinsky, for example, was well aware of such trends as was Andrei Bely, who produced “abstract” drawings and watercolours, for example, *Soul of Movement* of 1913, during his visits to Rudolf Steiner’s Goethenaum. They bring to mind the force-lines of Kandinsky’s drawings of Gret Palucca dancing and, in a broader sense, allude to the cosmic energy inherent in any form of movement, whether that be verbal, musical or physical.

During the early 1910s Sidorov and other Russian colleagues attended the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where the basic concept of art history as a science (*Kunstwissenschaft*) was being developed. In Munich Sidorov also witnessed the rapid development of new tendencies in dance, especially the Expressionist style. Indeed, he was the first to introduce not only the language of the New Dance to Russia, but was new art historical theories. Later on, concepts such as *Abstraktion* and *Einfühlung* (empathy) with other terms such as “construction”, “composition” and “tectonics” became part and parcel of the RAKhN glossary of artistic terms – which were then also applied to analyses of the dance. That these two parallel paths of enquiry into art and performance at RAKhN/GAKhN continued to attract scholars throughout the 1920s led to the com-
V. Kandinsky, Two large parallel lines supported upon a right angle. Energetic development of a diagonal. Observe the exact positioning acute of the fingers as an example of precision in every detail. From V. Kandinsky: “Tanzkurven zu der Tänzen der Palucca” in Das Kunstblatt, Potsdam, 1926, 10 March, p. 118. The photograph of Gret Palucca performing is by Charlotte Rudolph.

binary definition of their “Theory of the Art History of Movement.” Sidorov intended to apply this title – a labour of love – to a major publication, which would have been his third and final volume on contemporary or New Dance, but this did not come to pass. What better subject for verifying Wilhelm Worrringer’s theory of empathy than the human body seen within the movements of space, free, but still totally under control? It was Sidorov’s neophyte enthusiasm for the latest art historical theories which fostered his statements on the need to consider dance as a new artistic category: “Beginning with the Baroque and especially in our own time, movement has become a very interesting, if complex, motif for the spatial arts.” Moreover, it is Sidorov’s telling description of the perception of movement in dance which also manifests the influence of the latest theories of art: “We still don’t have movement, but we will and this ‘will’ has been prepared so well by imagery that we will ‘empathize’ with its representation with ease and leggerity.”

No doubt, Kandinsky, who had also developed some of his ideas about abstract art on the basis of Worrringer’s theories, would have agreed. After all, it was Kandinsky, who, on the eve of his return to Germany from Moscow in December, 1921, came up with the idea of creating a laboratory for the study of dance, something which he had already proposed at the conference, “On the Method of Working with Synthetic Art”, held in Moscow nine months earlier. In this paper he mentioned that a group of theorists, painters, musicians, dance historians, scientists and art historians (the future nucleus of the Choreological Laboratory) was already researching the problem of how to define a synthetic or monumental art. He added, however, that in order to arrive at objective, concrete results the group would have to “conduct research laboratorially” and apply the “experimental method” so as to verify both the elements of the “more abstract character of movement” and its “more material forms” in the hands of the artist, for example,
the “movement of someone under stress”. In any case, the previous year Kandinsky had delineated the characteristics of the new synthetic art in his “Project for the Monumental Section of the Institute of Artistic Culture”, indicating that it should include mime, pantomime, dance and, to some extent, even ballet. He also suggested that it might be possible to record movement with the aid of various artistic and mechanical instruments:

It is essential to establish a link between the movement of lines and the movement of the human body both in toto and in its individual parts, to translate line into the movement of the body and the movement of the body into line. Such observations should be registered both in word and graphic image, which would then enable us to compile what we might call a dictionary of abstract movements.  

In this statement, therefore, Kandinsky was prefiguring a primary topic of investigation which would be pursued under the rubric of the “Art of Movement” at the Choreological Laboratory. In turn, Kandinsky – coinciding with the first “Art of Movement” exhibition in Moscow in 1925 – went on to produce a cycle of abstract drawings capturing the dances of Palucca which he published next to photographs of the same dances and which were very close to the experimental tracings and diagrams which the gakhnovtsy contributed to their own exhibitions.

Another coincidence between the experiments at the Choreological Laboratory and Kandinsky’s theories is to be found in the continuation of his ideas concerning synaesthesia, for example, in the experiments which dancers Zinaida Kaminova, Vera Maiia
Chapter 1 A Choreological Laboratory

and Natal’ia Tian conducted in their various studios on the “chromatic components of plastic action” in 1925.32

Kandinsky and Sidorov, both of whom shared a deep passion not only for new theories of art, but also for the synthetic and semiological approaches to the question of dance, pursued two other kinds of research in this area. One was Kandinsky’s pet project, i.e. the compilation of a Dictionary of Art Terminology which, after his move to the Bauhaus, separated into two complementary projects at RAKhN: the Terminological Dictionary curated by a special commission33 and the Symbolarium or Dictionary of Symbols undertaken by Aleksandr Larionov and Pavel Florensky in which the symbology of gesture was to have occupied a special place.34

A striking aspect of all the experiments at the Laboratory was the curious mix of amateurism such as the often dilettante photographs and the scientific – semiological – approach to the problem of movement manifest, for example, in the notation assignments which it fulfilled and documented. Indeed, from its very beginning in 1924-25 the Laboratory oriented its researches towards the elaboration of a precise system of movement notation.35 In other words, “here was a single institution bearing a mandate to investigate and analyze the problems of the art of movement and all notation systems, past and present, whether European such as those of Jaques-Dalcroze, Demeny and Desmond or Russian such as those of Gorsky and Stepanov and of more contemporary observers such as Mal’tsev, N. Pozniakov, Sotonin and Yavorsky.”36 Unlike the photographs and drawings, however, this part of the Laboratory data has been lost (or perhaps has yet to be rediscovered) with the exception of a few diagrams and designs accompanying lecture notes by Larionov, Mal’tsev, Pozniakov and Evgenii Yavorsky (1900-1938)37 and a curious notation manual on labour movements which Sotonin published in Kazan in 1928.38

For example, in the graphic scheme interpreting the “birth of a grain of wheat” which Larionov appended to his RAKhN lecture on “An Experiment in the Field of Plastic Dance,”39 he proposed a method for recording movement which he was developing together with the philosopher Florensky (not by chance were they both also working on the Symbolarium). According to this method, any movement could be rendered both
analytically and abstractly via the sequential representation of poses and gestures. As in the graphic scheme, the synthetic performance following the lecture synthesized the symbolic representation of the growth of a grain of wheat.

Larionov’s graphic scheme is one of the rare original movement notations which have come down to us, although gakhnovets Nikolai Mal’tsev did include photographs of them in his unpublished “Theory and Notations in the Art of Movement” which he completed in 1940. In this rather ponderous treatise he adduced a comprehensive description of the RAKhN researches, focusing — in Chapter 1 — on the various attempts to record movement. It is important to remember that Mal’tsev contributed examples of his own well-articulated notations to the “Art of Movement” exhibitions, illustrating the final version of his treatise with four of Larionov’s and Sidorov’s systems which had received wide discussion in the various RAKhN debates. One of the two Larionov notations recorded “movement via [geometric] framing” resorting to abstract language, while the other recorded the “symmetrical trajectory of ‘tempi’ in ballet” using the traditional representation of the legs of ballerinas.

In his capacity of mathematician, Larionov formulated the basic theories of his “frame” notational system in a lecture on the fundamental problems of choreology. Referring to the “continuous-discontinuous antinomy of the space-time process in dance”, he argued that choreology consisted of “frames” containing the specific forms of “personal space”. One of the two graphic schemes by Sidorov which Mal’tsev included in his account constituted a “graphic stenogramme of dance”, while the other was a sample of the constructive notation of movement. Here were just two examples from a deliberation which was, in fact, much richer and much more complex than might appear, the moreso since Sidorov boasted that “The aim of the system which Sidorov has elaborated in the [Choreological] Laboratory... is to record movement and not the precise play of the articulations and flexions of the figure. Moreover, the system records [exactly] what it sees and not rough notes about imaginary positions.”

Towards the end of his text Mal’tsev proposed a new system wherein the movement of the human body in space would no longer be examined within the two-dimensional...
structure of the triangle or the rhombus of the laboratory as in RAKhN or within Laban’s three-dimensional icoesaedro, but within the “total” dimension of the sphere:

We are studying movement in space – the cognition of a spatial configuration of movement which presents us with the notion of the sphere. But without the spherical route there would be no comprehension of movement right or left, forwards or backwards. We are borrowing the concepts of the sphere from astronomy, although it transpires that during the process of movement the spatial spheres of the movements of the parts of the body transmute visually: the spheres change their form like a rubber ball. We are borrowing the concept of how to study the sphere from topology, i.e. topos, place, logos and science. Topology is the science of place.67

In the final version of his study Mal’tsev touched on the researches into movement notation at the Choreological Laboratory only fleetingly – just as another, concurrent monograph on kinetography did, i.e. by the Armenian dancer Sbrui Azarpetian. This was

A. Sidorov, Graphic Stenogramme of Dance, 1926-27, in N. Mal’tsev: Teoriia iskusstva dvizheniia [Theory of the art of movement], ca. 1940 (unpublished), Book 1, Ill. 12, p. 38. GTsTMB, f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 44.
Симметрия траекторий балетных "temps".
Changement de pieds

Entrechat из V позиции во II.

Entrechat из III позиции в V.

Entrechat из V позиции в V.
1) Entrechat quatre.
2) Entrechat six.

Demi-contretemps

Brisé:
1) Brisé dessus
2) Brisé dessous

Примеры из Е. Кашми, поведавшей сама учитель танца.
A. Larionov, *Notation of Movement through “Frames”*, 1926-27, in N. Mal’tsev: *Teoriia iskusstva dvizheniia* [Theory of the art of movement], ca. 1940 (unpublished), Book 1, Ill. 14, p. 41. GTsTMB, f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 47.


K. Sotonin, *Notations of Work Movements*, 1928, in N. Mal’tsev: *Teoriia iskusstva dvizheniia* [Theory of the art of movement], ca. 1940 (unpublished), Book 1, Ill. 9, p. 31. GTsTMB, f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 36 verso.
the *Zapis’ dvizheniia (Kinetografia)* [Notation of movement (Kineto\nography)] which, unlike the Mal’tsev manuscript, was pub\nlished, albeit in a miniscule edition, in 1940, making it a biblio\ngraphical rarity today. Daughter of the celebrated ethnographer
Stepan Lisitsian and founder of the Institute of Rhythm in Tiflis
(Tbilisi) in the 1920s, Lisitsian, who, surely, merits more uni\nversal recognition, was yet one more interpreter of the *danse plas\ntique*, especially the “exotic dance”. Later on she became especial\nly interested in popular Armenian dances, which she also used
as historical and academic material to further her researches into
movement notation, both for ancient popular dances and for con\ntemporary dance in general.
A. Larionov, Illustration to lecture on “An Experiment in the Field of Plastic Dance”, delivered at RAKhN on 1 December, 1923. RGALI, f. 941, op.17, ed. khr. 2, l. 10.

Photographer unknown, A. Sacharoff; ca. 1912. From A. Sidorov, Sovremennyi tanets [Contemporary dance], Moscow: Pervina, 1923, between pp. 36 and 37.

E. Astaf’eva, Movement notations according to N. Mal’tsev’s system, undated, in N. Mal’tsev: Teorii iskusstva dvizheniiia [Theory of the art of movement], ca. 1940 (unpublished), Book 1, p. 292. GTsTMB, f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 351.
Kandinsky’s initial observations concerning a new synthetic art served as fertile ground for developing the idea of a choreological laboratory which Larionov and Sidorov brought to fruition.

In any case, the first concrete steps taken towards the realization of the project came just after Kandinsky had left for Germany at the end of 1921. A few weeks into the new year Sidorov, as chief secretary for academic affairs, asked the president of RAKhN (Petr Kogan) for permission to organize a special commission to establish a new laboratory dedicated expressly to the study of movement. The commission included the composer and musicologist Leonid Sabaneev (1881-1968), the philosopher Gustav Shpet (1879-1937) and the dancer Natal’ia Tian (an adept of the danse plastique and follower of Isadora Duncan and Eli Rabenek). Supported eagerly by Sabaneev, Shpet and Sidorov, Tian was appointed director of a so-called Laboratory of Dance (soon to become the Laboratory of Dance Composition and then the Choreological Laboratory) in April, 1922 – which was, however, situated outside of RAkhN, i.e. in Tian’s own apartment (No. 20) at 6, Mal’yi Nikolaevskii Lane.

Tian’s passion for performance aside, the Laboratory of Dance Composition was based on firm theoretical ground with cycles of methodological lectures, debates and live demonstrations orchestrated by Larionov and Sidorov. An autonomous creative space and, therefore, distinct from RAkhN, the Laboratory of Dance was modest, to say the least, consisting simply of a piano, carpet, large mirror and pens and paper. Nonetheless, Tian was more interested in live performance than in philosophical speculation, so, in May, 1923, after breaking an ankle in an accident, she moved to Petrograd ostensibly to seek therapy and stayed there for several months far from the intellectual wranglings of her fellow RAkhnovtsy.

The Choreological Laboratory as such began to coalesce with the cycle of methodological lectures, practical demonstrations and discussions (not always amicable) which Larionov and Sidorov presided over in December, 1923. On their initiative – and with Tian away – the Laboratory of Dance Composition was renamed the Choreographical Section which then became the Choreological Laboratory, Larionov being appointed director.

At first, the brand new research facility did not enjoy its own dedicated space, even if, in October, 1923, the RAKhN Praesidium, concerned that the practical exercises were still being carried out in a private apartment (presumably, Tian’s), did supply a more appropriate space. In December, the newly appointed Larionov delivered a lecture on “Experimentation in the Field of Plastic Dance”, discussing – from an art historical viewpoint – the “expedient filling of space” and how this could be verified through the plastic arts of movement. Another, complementary topic which Larionov addressed was movement in time, a synchrony informed by new art historical approaches.
es. During the ensuing debate Sidorov declared that the Choreographic Section should be renamed the Choreological Laboratory – and his dream came true. Larionov now apprised the RAKhN Praesidium of the formal establishment of a Laboratory for “researching the laws of movement” and of a parallel Commission for the Study of Cinematographic Art which, together with sections devoted to sports and physical education, were to constitute a new, comprehensive department within RAKhN. Moreover, Larionov hoped that the Choreological Laboratory with which various plastic dance studios such as Nina Aleksandrova’s Association of Rhythmists (recently affiliated with RAKhN) had begun to collaborate and the ambitious new department would constitute a central platform for practical research and experimental theory. A list, dated August, 1924, of the various kinds of equipment procured or at least requested by the Laboratory indicates that numerous research programmes were well underway: photography and cyclography were being applied, standard projection screens as well as special screens for the “study of the esthetic filling of space” had been installed together with “stretched wooden frames and instruments for the study of the esthetic canon, a carpet and various costumes.”

Photographer unknown, *Four acrobatic poses outdoors from a course manual in artistic acrobatics, late 1920s. Art of Movement State Courses (of Valeriia Tsvetaeva), VTs. A) 7.2 x 8.3 cm; B) 5.7 x 8.2 cm; C) 4.6 x 8.6 cm; D) 5.4 x 8.1 cm.*

O. Engel’s, *Couples dancing, pencil on paper. OE. A) 21.5 x 29 cm; B) 26.9 x 18.7 cm.*
Clearly, it would be erroneous to try and relate the history of the Choreological Laboratory outside of the organic structure of RAKhN/GAKhN, because from the very beginning the practical demonstrations, performances, lectures and theoretical debates were open to all members – and not only to artists and photographers, but also to art historians such as Aleksandr Gabrichevsky and psychologists such as Ivan Chetverikov. A formative role was also played by musicologists, especially Sabaneev, a champion of Skriabin’s music with its erotic and mystical elements – which might explain why Skriabin was the favourite composer of bold choreographers such as Goleizovsky and Lukin, still close to the Symbolist aesthetic. All played an energetic and constructive role in the development of the Laboratory, often delivering guest lectures on interdisciplinary topics of mutual concern such as rhythm and gesture.

As was to be expected, the Laboratory focused on the danse plastique at least during its first two years, when various studios such as Chernetskaia’s Studio of Synthetic Dance were invited to perform at the RAKhN facility – and where, for the intellectual élite, to be seen was de rigueur. On 29 November, 1923, Chernetskaia’s Studio of Synthetic Dance and RAKhN signed a draft contract, whereby the Studio became an affiliate of RAKhN and was allowed to occupy space there for a nominal rent, while still retaining its autonomy. But RAKhN also collaborated with dance studios and schools extra-murally, organizing in early 1924, for example, a “cell” or sub-section at Maiia’s School for the “scientific study of movement” under Sidorov’s directorship. As a matter of fact, the alliance was timely, helping the school to overcome a very difficult moment – just when the danse plastique and any other dance which did not conform to the new Soviet social and cultural canons were being scrutinized and censured by the custodians of order. At the same time, Tian’s sudden return to Moscow and her firm intention to resume her position at the Choreological Laboratory created further problems.

A full member of RAKhN, Tian delivered a lecture there on 22 March, 1924, entitled “Musical and Plastic Parallelisms in Relation to the Form of Dance,” peeking Larionov, an expert on the links between music and dance and dance and colour. The ensuing debate prompted her to write an indignant letter to Sidorov, accusing him of inappropriate behaviour in usurping her directorship, copying Anatolii Lunacharsky. On 28 November Tian delivered another lecture, “On Teaching Assignments in the Plastic Arts”, in which she blamed the state for the profound crisis in the danse plastique. A compromise was reached by assigning the prestigious duty of selecting and preparing items for the first “Art of Movement” exhibition (1925) to Tian – and to the photographer Moisei Nappel’baum. Finally, under Larionov’s auspices the Choreological Laboratory did elaborate a serious, scientific programme of research wherein the esthetic laws which govern movement were to be studied with the aid of photographic and cinematographic instruments. The approach was based on the “principles of exact psy-
cho-physiological experimentation” and the results “would be extremely important to those who understand the value of the artistic organization of movement.”\textsuperscript{88}

The intention to elevate the photographic and cinematographic media from the level of applied art to the rank of “high” art indicates just how open and tolerant the rakhnovtsy were and how RAKhN intended to “broaden the perimeter of those arts which are considered to be ‘academic’ so as to encompass outsiders such as dance and the cinema”. Such was the “basic function of the RAKhN Photographic Cabinet, ramifying into a complex programme of assignments whereby the arts of representation and movement confront the science of art.”\textsuperscript{89}

That Larionov and Sidorov were particularly interested in photography and cinema is demonstrated by their simultaneous support of the Cinema Commission within RA-KhN\textsuperscript{90} and, in 1924 onwards, by their systematic use of the camera in almost all their recording experiments and analyses of movement. Sidorov even delivered a lecture on “Dance and Cinema” to the Cinema Commission on 14 September, 1924,\textsuperscript{91} again advocating a name change – this time from Choreological Laboratory to Cinemalogical Section – as if to underline the common lexical origin of the art of movement and the art of the cinema:\textsuperscript{92} “In our opinion this is the right thing to do as we pursue our research inasmuch as the Academy already boasts a section studying the problems of choreologics. The art of the cinema is much closer to the field of the art of movement in general and to that of choreologies in particular.”\textsuperscript{93} Strictly speaking, this was more Larionov’s field, since from 1918 onwards he had been working with the Cinema Committee under Narkompros.

In 1924 Larionov and Sidorov also entertained the idea of organizing regular exhibitions which would publicize the results of their experiments. The four sessions, held between 1925 and 1928, were intended to promote a new synthetic artistic form on a level with the other visual arts, the title – “Art of Movement” – deriving from the German Bewegungskunst. Indeed, it was an art historian, Sidorov, who in his book Sovremennyi tanets [Contemporary dance] of 1922,\textsuperscript{94} focused this first (and until the 1970s, the last!) Russian survey of the New Dance on the very latest developments in plastic movement. Curiously enough, “Art of Movements” had also been the title of a dance manual which Classical ballerina and teacher Lidiia Nelidova had published in 1908, i.e. Iskusstvo dvizhenii i baletnaia gimnastika. Kratkaia teoriia, istoriia i mekhanika khoreografii [The art of movements and ballet gymnastics. A brief theory, history and mechanics of choreography].\textsuperscript{95} Impressed by the predictions in Nelidova’s modest book, Sidorov hastened to include her studio under the broad umbrella of the Choreological Laboratory in 1924 just as the Soviet authorities were lambasting private dance schools.\textsuperscript{96}

In the absence of professionals, a certain number of “apprentices” or “practitioners” were selected from among young researchers (female rather than male) attached to RA-KhN or Moscow State University (twelve students) and were invited to help with the
experiments.\textsuperscript{97} High on their agenda was the demand to “put into practice the demonstrations and experiments in movement in accordance with the assignments set by the instructors.”\textsuperscript{98}

Finding willing and enthusiastic young ladies was easy, especially for the charismatic Sidorov. In 1922, for example, he had taken an active part in organizing the annual Olympics of the New Dance at the Theatre of Ballet, Pantomime and Buffonery in Moscow directed by Eduard Elirov,\textsuperscript{99} presenting live demonstrations, mainly by women, of the artistic productions coming out of the numerous studios of ballet and \textit{danse plastique}. The names and specialties of these studios were at once annoyingly repetitious and yet uniquely fanciful – from the Studio of Synthetic Dance to the Workshop of Organizational Theatre – offering courses in the rhythmic dynamics of the word, rhythmized gesture, construction of movement, acrobatics, plastic dance, speech and even something called “verbal technique”.\textsuperscript{100} Here in the capital of a country reduced to ashes by the Great War, revolutions and the Civil War the number of Classical ballet schools and studios of \textit{danse plastique}, already popular in the early 1910s, had increased a hundredfold between 1917 and 1922 – a phenomenon which prompted all manner of wry remarks: “An amazing vitality dominated the field of dance. It may seem paradoxical, but in those years of deprivation and famine, Moscow witnessed an exceptional interest in choreography. Countless numbers of young men and girls, suitcase in hand, tried to enroll in the dance schools and studios where Inna Chernetskaia, Vera Maiia, Lidia Redega, Valeria Tsvetaeva and other ‘barefooters’ and \textit{plastichki} vied with Mikhail Mordkin, Vera Mosolova, Nelidova, Antonina Shalomytova, the Drambalet\textsuperscript{101} and other collectives, as they investigated the forms of contemporary dance. Everyone was dancing and everyone wanted to dance”\textsuperscript{102} – to which Iving (pseudonym of Viktor Ivanov), an especially acerbic critic of the time, responded: “So what? Well, all these young things with their suitcases have multiplied so much that the production of suitcases has increased significantly,” adding that a more adequate term for describing the numerous versions of the \textit{danse plastique} might be “plastitution,”\textsuperscript{103} a term which, of course, appealed to the detractors of the New Dance. Almost literally, the Russia of the New Economic Policy was overrun with studios of plastic dance, each trying to apply the lessons of Isadora Duncan who, in any case, had opened her own official school in Moscow in October, 1921.

Duncan liked to have herself photographed surrounded by her baby ballerinas, as we can see in the first snapshot taken of her in her school on the Prechistenka.\textsuperscript{104} Duncan seemed to find an inner, primitive expressivity in the infantile spontaneity of these little girls in their tunics who, ironically, would soon be christened \textit{dunkaniaty} [duncanettes] as we see in the affectionate renderings by caricaturist Dani (pseudonym of Daniil Smirnov). Such images soon caught the imagination of artists and photographers nostalgic for the Hellenic and Mediterranean worlds.
23. Little is known of the life of Onon Engel's, although some of his drawings and photographs have been included in recent museum and gallery exhibitions of Russian art and photography of the 1920s. For some biographical information see T. Pervomayeva: "Etoi neizvestnoi Engel'" in Bul', 1968, No. 98-99, September-December, pp. 62-64.
25. On the influence of Rudolf Steiner on Russian culture see T. Surina, Rudolf Steiner i rossiiskaia teatral'naia kul'tura, M: Progress-Pleiada, 2014.
26. In his curriculum vitae, i.e. "Lichnoe delo", in GARF, Call No.: f. 2307 (Glavnaia), op. 23, ed. khr. 6, l. 91, Larionov states that he had studied the "art of movement" in the studio of the sculptor Konstantin Fedorovich Krakht (1868-1919). In 1914 onwards Krakht headed the so called Circle for the Study of the Problems of Symbolist Culture and Symbolism was director of the Laboratory, while Leonid Sabaneev, Gustav Balet, and Aleksii Sidorov were "members of other sections operating in the Laboratory". See RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 11, ll. 46-47.
27. Together with other galleryview Larionov also began work on a dictionary of ideographic symbols intended to address issues such as "An Attempt at a Theory of Ideography", "The Problem of Unity and Plurality in the Ideographic System of Writing" and "Ideographic Elements of Alchemical Signs". The dictionary ("Sovrashie ideograficheskikh znakov") was never completed.
29. See "Iz vospominani sovetskogo iskusstva i knigoveda" in Archive of the Sidorov family, Moscow. Also see A. Sidorov: "Lichnoe delo". Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 10, l. 205. Ermakov was a member of RAKhn while Kandinsky was president. See I. Ermakov: "Puldmoanaliz i khudozhnnoe tvorchestvo" in "Protokol No. 20 plenarnogo zasedania RAKhn" (10 November, 1921). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 11, ll. 159-60.
30. A. Sidorov: "Khudozhestvennoe dvizhenie" in GARF, Call No.: f. 941, op. 10, ed. khr. 205. Ermakov was a member of RAKhn while Kandinsky was president. See I. Ermakov: "Pulkhaanaliz i khudozhnnoe tvorchestvo" in "Protokol No. 20 plenarnogo zasedania RAKhn" (10 November, 1921). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 10, l. 205. Ermakov was a member of RAKhn while Kandinsky was president. See I. Ermakov: "Pulkhaanaliz i khudozhnnoe tvorchestvo" in "Protokol No. 20 plenarnogo zasedania RAKhn" (10 November, 1921). Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 11, ll. 159-60.
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39. OR-GTBMT: F. 517, ed. khr. 140.
40. A. Sidorov: "Iz vospominani sovetskogo iskusstva i knigoveda" in Archive of the Sidorov family, Moscow. Also see A. Sidorov: "Lichnoe delo". Typescript in RGALI: f. 941, op. 1, ed. khr. 11, ll. 159-60.
42. The manuscript of Rudneva's memoirs, i.e. S. Rudneva: Vospominaniam cherkistykh dela, she wrote between 1978 and 1982, see at TsGAM: f. 140, op. 1, d. 13-15. The memoirs were published under the same title by Galvatkh, Moscow, in 2007. Also see S. Nudzidzhanova, ed.: K itori Geptakh: o Aksel'ru Dunan k muzhykal'nuiu dvizheniu, SP Akademicheskii proekt, 2008.
44. See P. Veroli: "Alexander Sacharoff as Symbolist Dancer" in Experiment, 1996, No. 2, pp. 41-60.
46. The reference is to the two manuscripts, i.e. Problemy tantsa [Problems of dance] and O sovremennoi tantsa [On the essence of the dance] dated Moscow, 13 January and 15 February, 1915, respectively. Private archive.
47. H. Brandenburg: Der Modern Tanz, Munich: Georg Muller, 1913. Sidorov had a copy of this book in his dance library and, along with other publications, showed it at the "Art of
Movement" exhibitions. See the respective bibliography on the art of movement in the typecript catalogue of the 1925 exhibition, i.e. Katalog zaehrenm vystavki po iskusstvu dvizhenii, organizovannoi Khoreograficheskoi laboratorii RKhN i Rasulkin fotograficheskomu dvizhenii. A copy of this typecript catalogue is in OR-GTsTMB: f. 577 (GAKhN), ed. 134 (folder No. 7.

Preparatory materials for the I, II, and IV exhibitions of the "Art of Movement", l. 45.


"Osnovani' moment v istori zhitelnost'" [The tactile aspect in the history of painting], [ibid., No. 2, pp. 78-100.


Kandinsky's four pencil and ink drawings of 1925, which are now in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin's Kupferstichkabinett (KK), Neuer Teil, 1922, l. 1984, pp. 99-115.

A. Sidorov: "Plasticheskii tanets i ego zritel' (N. Tian)" in Teatral'noe obozrenie, Potsdam, 1926, No. 6, pp. 4-5.


See N. Mal'tsev's pass for attending the sessions of the Choreological Laboratory at GAKhN dated 1 October, 1923, in OR-GTsTMB: f. 646, ed. khr. 27, l. 1, plus the three diagrams from his first experiments at GAKhN. Also see "Osnovnoe problemy khoreologii". Typescript in: K. Lindsay and P. Vergo, eds.: V. Kandinsky. Full Writings on Art, Boston: Hall, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 455-72.


N. Mal'tsev: "Teorii iskusstva dvizhenii. Kniga 2" in OR-GTsTMB: f. 646, ed. khr. 1, l. 10 for p. 25, l. 47.

Ibid., lll. 9 for p. 24, l. 46.


N. Mal'tsev: "Doklad po teorii iskusstva dvizhenii 16 fevralia 1927 dlia Khoreograficheskoi laboratorii". Typescript in Department of Manuscripts, GAKhN, 1927-29", l. 17.

N. Mal'tsev: "Doklad po teorii iskusstva dvizhenii 16 fevralia 1927 dlia Khoreograficheskoi laboratorii". Typescript in Department of Manuscripts, GAKhN, 1927-29", l. 17.


See her "Lichne delo" in RGALI, Call. No. f. 941, ed. khr. 10, ed. khr. 612.


A. Sidorov: "Plasticheskii tanets i ego zritel' (N. Tian)" in Teatral'noe obozrenie, M, 1922, No. 6, pp. 4-5.


See Mal'tsev's pass for attending the sessions of the Choreological Laboratory at GAKhN dated 1 October, 1923, in OR-GTsTMB: f. 646, ed. khr. 27, l. 1, plus the three diagrams from his first experiments at GAKhN. Also see "Osnovnoe problemy khoreologii". Typescript in: K. Lindsay and P. Vergo, eds.: V. Kandinsky. Full Writings on Art, Boston: Hall, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 455-72.

he was an active member of GAKhN before emigrating to Paris.

82 See “Khoreologicheskaia laboratoriia” in GAKhN. Otchet 1921-1925, pp. 61-64.


84 See “Polozhenie i plan raboty” in RGALI: f. 941, op. 17, ed. khr. 4, l. 1.


89 Anon. (= A.A. Sidorov?): “Akademiia khudozhestvennykh nauk” in Nauka i iskusstvo, M, 1926, No. 1, p. 211.


92 According to an interview between Ekaterina Nekrasova and the author, Moscow, 19 June, 1990.


94 A. Sidorov: Sovremennyi tanets, M: Pervina, 1922 (“1923” on the cover). Sidorov had already published a shorter version of his text as an article under the title “Sovremennyi tanets (Aisedora Dunkan, Mod Allan i dr.)” in the almanac Strmennyi, M, 1918, No. 2. As a matter of fact, the art historian Pavel Entinger accused Sidorov of having plagiarized Brandenburg’s Der moderne Tanz of 1913 (see Note 46). See Note 9 in Simirskia’s Svobodne dvizhenie i plasticheskii tants v Rossii, p. 215.


96 See Larionov’s solicitation to the RAKhN Board on 26 July, 1924, in which he asks Nelidova for a summary of her activities and the programme of her school. In OR-GTsTMB: f. 517 (GAKhN), ed. khr. 135, ll. 1-8.

97 According to an interview between Ekaterina Nekrasova and the author, Moscow, 19 June, 1990.


100 Anon.: I-aia Khor. Olimpiada Programme, 1922. A copy of this programme is in OR-RGB: f. 776 (A. Sidorov), kant. 111, ed. khr. 12, l. 4.


102 A. Rumnev: “Vospominaniia. ‘Minuvshee prochodit predo mnoi’”. Manuscript in RGALI, f. 2721 (Rumnev), op. 1, ed. khr. 34, l. 46.

103 Iving: “Vecher vsekh napravlenii stsenicheskogo dvizheniia” in Rampa, M, 1922, No. 6, 11 December, p. 12.