Прекрасный и страдальный
Павел Николаевич Филонов

Сборник посвящён памяти Евгения Федоровича Ковтуна (1928–1996), внесшему значительный вклад в изучение современного русского искусства и творческого наследия П.Н. Филонова.

Хотя в настоящее время избранное и литературное наследство Павла Николаевича Филонова (1883–1941) пристально исследуется, особенно российскими специалистами, его искусство все еще продолжает окружать тайну. Знаменательно, что творчество Филонова высоко ценят в России, но и в Западе – меньше. Отчасти это происходит потому, что большинство его картин находится в Русском музее, поскольку сам Филонов считал себя глубоко русским человеком и хотел, чтобы русский народ стал законным владельцем его наследия, а отчасти – из-за философской глубины его искусства, которая во многом созвучна с русским менталитетом. Если современниками Филонова, таких как Василий Кандинский, Каземир Малевич, Александр Родченко и Владимир Татлин, посвящены многочисленные публикации, экспонаты и конференции, то Филонову повезло меньше, и все еще есть серьезные пробелы в изучении его биографии и эстетического развития, самыми серьезными из которых являются: так и не выясненные источники стиля мастера, отсутствие точной хронологии его творчества (его собственные «удлиненные» даты – особенная проблема для исследователей), интерес художника к анатомии и хирургии и его интерпретация православной традиции. Вопросы большой сложности – происхождение искусства мастера, то есть источники и ресурсы творчества, сформировавшие его тематическое и стилистическое развитие, о которых он почти не упоминает в своих письмах и дневниках. Это особенно досадно, поскольку видаются разные оттенки влияния на его творчество работ Босха, Брейгеля, Кранаха, Микеланджело, Леонардо да Винчи – только предположительные, редко подтвержденные документальными свидетельствами.

При оценке места Филонова в истории русского авангарда мы должны напомнить общие места, которые, поскольку они общие, часто исключаются из серьезного обсуждения. Филонов был фанатически убежден, что «аналитическое искусство» – единственно законная, революционная система, и он высказывал свои аргументы и мнения, чтобы продвигать и вводить в действие эту систему. Даже в те времена, когда политический конформизм и уравниловка достигли вершины, Филонов рвался спорить со Сталиным и НКВД, а на своих лекциях он даже смел противостоять диктату Карла Маркса, о чем позже вспоминал Григорий Серый: «Маркс говорил... А Филонов говорит...»
The eleventh issue of the journal *Experiment* is a collection of articles on Pavel Filonov edited by Nicoletta Misler, Irina Menshova and John E. Bowlt. Published in Los Angeles in 2005, this issue is dedicated to the memory of Evgeny Kovtun (1928–1996), who devoted his life to the study of modern Russian art and to the art of Pavel Filonov in particular.

Despite the close scrutiny which the artistic and literary legacy of Pavel Filonov (1883–1941) has received in recent years, much of his work remains shrouded in mystery. Highly regarded in Russia, the artist is less known in the West. The majority of his paintings are housed in the Russian Museum Filonov considered himself a true Russian and desired that the Russian people inherit his works. Furthermore, the polyphonic philosophy of his work is perhaps more in tune with the Russian mentality. For this reason, Filonov’s art has proved of greater interest to Russian rather than to Western specialists.

Much has been written on Filonov’s eminent contemporaries such as Vasily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko and Vladimir Tatlin. Their work is often exhibited and the artists themselves discussed at countless conferences. Filonov is not so fortunate: a number of significant ‘gaps’ remain in our knowledge of his biography and aesthetic development. Most importantly, we still cannot trace the emergence of his style, we lack a definite chronology of his works (Filonov’s system of extended dates is betrays by specialists) and detailed information on his interest in anatomy and surgery. The artist’s interpretation of the Christian Orthodox tradition is likewise not entirely clear. Much doubt surrounds Filonov’s influences and the factors which determined the subject matter and style of his work – the artist rarely mentions sources and influences in his diary and correspondence. Thus, the perceived connections with Bosch, Brueghel, Cranach, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci remain, on the whole, speculative and inconclusive.

In discussing Filonov’s place in Russian avant-garde art, it is important to remember certain accepted truths which are frequently ignored in serious debates. Frequently and fantastically, Filonov believed analytical art to be the only true revolutionary system. Exposing his theory and producing various arguments, he strove to introduce this system in actual fact. At the height of political conformism and false egalitarianism, he dared even to oppose Stalin and the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in an attempt to correct what he saw as false ideas concerning art. As Grigory Sery reminisced, in his lectures Filonov went so far as to disagree with Karl Marx: “Marx said... Whereas Filonov says...”

Steadfast and dogmatic, Filonov claimed that the true artist is a skilled craftsman, well-versed in matters of anatomy, perspective and composition. The physical needs of the artist are secondary compared to the requirements of art. Furthermore, should not be sold but preserved for future generations. The artist must respect political, as well as academic authority. “One day, Stalin will enter this room,” Filonov used to say, imagining the head of state visiting his home.

Many tales are told about Filonov. We hear about his time in a lunatic asylum in the charge of Vladimir Bekhterev and of his common attitude towards Leonardo da Vinci remain, on the whole, speculative and inconclusive.

**Pavel Filonov**

_Evening Concert_ by Filonov, oil on canvas, 98.7 by 67 cm, 1919. *The Tretyakov Gallery*

_Family (The Holy Family)_ by Filonov, oil on canvas, 98.7 by 67 cm, 1927. *The Tretyakov Gallery*

_Family (The Holy Family)_ by Filonov, oil on canvas, 98.7 by 67 cm, 1927. *The Tretyakov Gallery*
The main aim of this collection is to increase understanding of one of the most enigmatic figures in modern Russian art, for Filonov’s importance in the Russian avant-garde movement is certainly equal to that of figures such as Malevich and Tatlin. Experiment includes a number of articles exploring lesser known aspects of Filonov’s life and work, particular attention being paid to the early years. Yuliyan Khal’turin, for instance, tells us about Filonov’s studies under Dmitriy Rakhmanov, whilst Irina Pominova juxtaposes the artist’s landscapes with real locations. Nicolletta Miele writes about Filonov’s early works in the light of German Renaissance traditions.

painting and drawing, which for him were one. “I paint in ink,” he would say.

The lack of clarity surrounding Filonov’s life is due mainly to the artist himself. “I do not like talking about my life,” he claimed. In this issue of Experiment, Alexander Lozanov attempts to lift the curtain, offering a number of hypotheses as to what Filonov was really trying to say. Despite the risk of misinterpretation, this author strives to shed light upon the so-called madeness (“sdelannost”) – this central theoretical concept – those of whose authorship is disputed.

Filonov’s personal life is not the only area we are kept in the dark. His central theoretical concepts – those of analytical painting, of the formula and of so-called madness (“sdelannost”) – remain unclear in spite of the artist’s own efforts at elucidation and conversion of the masses. Even the diaries of Filonov and his wife fail to illuminate the inner world of the artist and his creative path.

Experiment appeared shortly after the international symposium “A Chant of Universal Flowering” organised in Los Angeles in 2005. Held at the Getty Center in the light of German Renaissance traditions, the symposium proved not to be the final word on Filonov’s importance in the Russian avant-garde movement, but also a number of articles, as to what Filonov was really trying to say. Despite the risk of misinterpretation, this author strives to shed light upon the so-called madeness (“sdelannost”) – this central theoretical concept – those of whose authorship is disputed. Despite the risk of misinterpretation, this author strives to shed light upon the so-called madeness (“sdelannost”) – this central theoretical concept – those of whose authorship is disputed.

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The special issue of Experiment is but part of a wider process of research into the life and work of Pavel Filonov. This summer and fall the Russian Museum is holding a Filonov retrospective, accompanied by an academic catalog, and the first Russian anthology of the artist’s critical and theoretical texts. The exhibition will then move to the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, and, subsequently, to a number of European and American museums.

Lidiya Prazhkovskaya highlights not only the spiritual, philosophical, and aesthetic concerns of Filonov, but also the reciprocal relationship between idea and expression. As time went by, Filonov’s once formidable eye-sight became weaker and, increasingly, his vision required superhuman effort. Filonov once remarked to Alexei Kruchenikh: “Here we are, no sparing myself. My will is constantly so tense that I’ve chewed my teeth to pieces.” The writer Vladimir Metelin also speaks of the “tense” mood of “suffering” in Filonov’s paintings.

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