Publication of Renaissance architectural treatises in the Soviet Union in the 1930s: Alexander Gabrichevsky's contribution to the theory and history of architecture:

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In just a few years, a considerable corpus of architectural treatises was translated and published with detailed commentaries in the USSR in the second half of the 1930s. Primarily dating from the Renaissance, these treatises were written by Leon Battista Alberti, Giacome Barozzi da Vignola, Daniele Barbaro, Andrea Pozzo, Andrea Palladio, and so on. A complete list is found in Branko Mitrović's article 'Studying Renaissance Architectural Theory in the Age of Stalinism' (2009); this article first introduced the English-speaking audience to this unprecedentedly broad, precise, academically meticulous and extraordinarily rapid publishing project that, paradoxically enough (considering the time and circumstances), outpaced similar English-language translations by 50 years. Although this project clearly corresponded to the classical taste that began to be inculcated into Soviet architecture after the wild 1920s, these publications, according to Mitrović, evinced 'remarkably little effort to adjust their content to the needs of practicing architects and the ongoing classical revival'. Is this due to the fact that, with the exception of Ivan Zholtovsky and Georgy Yemelyanov, none of the contributors were architects? Nevertheless, as Mitrović remarked, even in Yemelyanov's commentary to Vignola's treatise, 'the main intention is not to facilitate the use of the Regola but rather to analyse [its] sources'.

The question of the historical and cultural significance of this publishing project, the principles guiding translation and commentary, and the connection between this project and contemporary architectural development and its needs should be posed in the broader context of the 1920s and the 1930s discussion about the relation between architecture and the cultural heritage. This discussion divided Soviet architects into two major groups, as Moisei Ginzburg remarked as far back as 1924 in his book Стиль и эпоха (Stil' i epokha) (Style and Epoch), which shaped the aesthetics of early constructivism. Ginzburg wrote this work while working at the State Academy of Artistic Sciences ("GAKhN") in the Section of Spatial Arts.

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1 I would like to thank Olga Severtseva, a niece of Alexander Gabrichevsky's wife Natalya Severtsova, the guardian of the family archive and an indefatigable scholar of Gabrichevsky's heritage, for her invaluable help in writing this article, my colleagues Federica Rossi and Branko Mitrović for stimulating discussion during the reviewing process and also Daniel Dynin for translating it from Russian.
4 Mitrović, 'Studying Renaissance Architectural Theory', 257.
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(Subsection Architecture), where he conducted research on historical and folk architectural experience for several years. Noting the existence of two distinct paths in architecture based on the law of succession, on the one hand, and the independence of new thought, on the other, Ginzburg, expectedly enough, proposed a third path that should take both of these laws into account.

Nevertheless, in the article 'Architecture', written by Ginzburg for the Dictionary of Art Terms that was being drafted at GAKhN (yet not published ultimately), the question of the historical tradition and the aesthetic component of the architectural work was not even posed. The entire article focused on materials and technologies, while the most important aspects of architecture were said to be the goal and the means. Ginzburg wrote, 'Architecture is the art of organizing a certain part of space for the concrete needs of the individual, group or class with the use of different material means determined according to the level of the age'.

According to this definition, buildings (whether a Greek temple or a modern residential building) are 'functions of the goals of the age and the latter's technological level'. Furthermore, Ginzburg voiced the idea of two historical periods: a period of great social aspiration and a period of social depression. In architecture, the former period corresponds to the creation of fundamental constructive principles. During the second period, these principles give way to purely decorative aims, leading to eclecticism.

The outright rejection of eclecticism, which gradually gained momentum in Soviet architecture, served as a common platform that, in the 1930s, brought together several constructivist architects and Ivan Zholtovsky, one of the main proponents of traditionalism. A categorical opponent of eclecticism, Zholtovsky maintained that architectural development must be based on a certain artistic and cultural tradition and on assimilating 'classical art as a method'.

6 In early 1925, Ginzburg organized an exhibition at the Academy entitled The Art of Bukhara, with drawings, blueprints, measurements and photographs of the monuments, reconstructing the long genesis of the development of city architecture from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries. The exhibition also presented applied artworks that Ginzburg had collected during an expedition in the autumn of 1924. In December 1925, he gave a talk before the Commission for Architectural Studies at GAKhN with the title 'Problems of space in the mosques of Constantinople and Brussa'. Cf. 'Protocols of meetings of the Architectural Subsection of the Section of Spatial Arts at GAKhN in 1925', Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, Moscow (RGALI, coll. 941, box 3, folder 22, f. 3 and folder 47, ff. 1-2v.).

7 'Архитектура – искусство организовать для конкретных целей индивидуума, коллектива, класса определенную часть пространства при помощи тех или иных материальных средств, определяемых уровнем эпохи.' Cf. И.М. Чубаров (И.М. Чубаров), ed., Словарь художественных терминов (Slovar' khudozhestvennykh terminov) (Dictionary of Art Terms), Moscow: Logos-Alter and Ecce Homo, 2005, 45.

8 'функциями той или иной целевой устремленности эпохи и ее технического уровня'. Chubarov, Dictionary, 45.

9 ‘классики как метода’. Cf. М.Г. Бархин (М.Г. Бархин), А.В. Иконников (А.В. Иконников), И.Л. Матс (И.Л. Матс) and others, eds, Мастера советской архитектуры об архитектуре. Избранные отрывки из писем, статей, выступлений и трактатов в 2 томах (‘Mastera sovetskoy arkitektury ob arkitekture. Izbrannye otryvki iz pisem, statey, vystupleniy i traktatov’)
An exceptionally gifted teacher, Zholtovsky preferred not to prepare his lectures ahead of time but, instead, engage in a live conversation with his audience. In particular, his lecture before the Commission for the Study of the Philosophy of Art at the Department of Philosophy of the State Academy of Arts (GAKhN) on 14 December 1926 took the form of a conversation. In this lecture/conversation entitled 'Опыт исследования античного мышления в архитектуре' ('Opyt issledovaniya antichnogo myshleniya v arkhitekture') ('An attempt at studying ancient thought on architecture'), Zholtovsky compared two 'architectural modes of thinking':

Greek thought, which saw the building as a growing plant whose lower parts are more massive than the upper parts, and Roman thought, which considered the building to be a plant with a flower in full bloom, making its upper part more massive. The Parthenon and Hagia Sophya are examples of the former, while the Coliseum and St Mark's Cathedral typify the latter. Putting the principles of organic growth at the basis of the theoretical study of architecture, Zholtovsky rejected the historical classification of architecture by style. He argued that the notion of gothic architecture encompasses both Italian and Northern gothic styles that are based on totally different principles; in contrast, the ancient Parthenon and the gothic St Mark’s Cathedral are both classical buildings insofar as they develop organically.

Organic development and the harmonic proportions of a building are the main features of classical architecture, according to Zholtovsky. He asserted that, among Renaissance architects, only Brunelleschi can be called a classical architect in the strict sense of the term, and even Zholtovsky’s absolute idol Palladio only occasionally approached the lofty heights of ancient architecture. As for modernity, it has totally lost the sense of organic architecture. This can be seen, according to Zholtovsky, not only in individual buildings but also in entire cities. In contrast, the great architects of the past based each building on a unified principle and subjected all buildings to the unity of the city.

This lecture/conversation contains all the basic notions and principles of Zholtovsky’s architectural aesthetics. These include, first and foremost, the concepts of nature and organism. For Zholtovsky, imitating nature meant that the artist creates new works by continuing the creative process of nature using the latter’s own laws and therefore in total harmony with it. The unity of the architectural image/organism derives, according to him, from the existence of a single idea that determines all the expressive and formal qualities of the whole and its parts. This results in the co-subordination of forms in the system of the bigger form. Demonstrating the unity of the structural system of nature and art, Zholtovsky treated the architectural organism as part of the natural whole marked by the equilibrium between forces of gravitation and growth. Such are the main aspects of


10 'архитектурных мышлений'. Cf. "Протокол № 3 Заседания Комиссии по изучению философии искусства при Философском Отделении ГАХН от 14 декабря 1926 г." ("Protokol № 3 Zasedaniya Komissii po izucheniyu filosofii iskusstva pri Filosofskom Otdelenii GAKhN ot 14 dekabrya 1926 g.") ("Protocol #3 of the Meeting of the Commission for the Study of the Philosophy of Art at the GAKhN Department of Philosophy of 14 December 1926"), RGALI, coll. 941. GAKhN, box 14, folder 25, f. 7-7v.
Zholtovsky’s artistic system, which are taken here from the article ‘Zholtovsky as a theoretician’ by Alexander Gabrichevsky,¹¹ Zholtovsky’s close associate for several decades.

The history of the collaboration between Alexander Gabrichevsky (1891-1968) and Ivan Zholtovsky (1867-1959) is very important for understanding the publishing project of the 1930s, which was their common brainchild. Gabrichevsky, an art historian and theorist, was a downright marginal in the complicated political situation of the time (he was arrested thrice in 1930, 1935, and 1941)¹², while Zholtovsky, who had already become an academician of architecture before the Revolution, was a renowned architect decorated with Soviet regalia. Their collaboration began in the second half of the 1920s,¹³ and, after the establishment of the artistic workshops of the Moscow City Council in 1934, Gabrichevsky became a close associate of the staff of Zholtovsky’s Workshop #1, where many constructivists had migrated. Gabrichevsky helped them to find their bearings in scholarly works on the history of architecture. At the same time, Zholtovsky invited him to the All-Union Academy of Architecture that was also established in 1934 together with a Post-Doctoral Institute, which was conceived as a school of advanced studies for particularly talented architects of the young generation. It was Gabrichevsky who designed the innovative system of teaching architectural history and theory at the Institute – a system that got the acclaim of several generations of Soviet architects. It called for uniting practical and theoretical/historical knowledge to the greatest possible extent as well as introducing architectural ‘analyses’ that will be described below.

In the mid-1940s, Gabrichevsky and Zholtovsky developed a conception of the ‘artistic education of architects—an architect’ that served as a basis for the new curricular programme of the Moscow Architectural Institute. When he presented it at the Institute in 1944, Gabrichevsky, who had just returned from exile thanks to the intercession of Ivan Zholtovsky and Viktor Vesnin, had to manoeuvre carefully in a very complicated ideological environment. He designed his talk to be a justification of ‘realism in architecture’, opposing it to ornamentation (the old struggle against eclecticism, which became particularly topical after the war) and to


¹³ Upon his return to Moscow in 1926 after spending several years in Italy, Zholtovsky settled in the former home of Gabrichevsky’s mother, the hereditary home of the Stankevich family.
the emphasis on expediency, material and structure (the debate with constructivism, which had already played itself out by that time). Calling upon the audience to ‘look at architecture and read it as a big image encompassing the entire world’,\(^\text{14}\) he reiterated the main principles of Zholtovsky’s aesthetics: the harmonious inclusion of buildings into the natural landscape, unity, and the respect of the organic laws of nature.

In the mid-1940s, this notion of realism clearly catered to the ideological expectations of the age, yet it referred here once again to Zholtovsky’s and Gabrichevsky’s very broad and poorly defined concept of ‘classical art’. Speaking about the latter in his talk in January 1946 at the Leningrad Section of the Union of Soviet Architects, where he and Yemelyanov had been invited to describe the teaching methods on which the new curricular programme of the Moscow Architectural Institute was based, Gabrichevsky raised the issue of heritage and its use in the educational process:

> Classical architecture is the basis of everything – ’classical’ not in the sense of a certain style but understood as realistic architecture, whose brilliant examples are found in Greece. We take classical architecture in all the diversity of its historical development.\(^\text{15}\)

Expounding his thought, Gabrichevsky said that he was referring first and foremost to Antiquity, which was brought by Hellenism to Byzantium, from which it spread both to Russian national art and to the Italian Renaissance, where high classical art arose thanks to the impact of the Greek heritage: ‘No more summits have been attained since.’\(^\text{16}\)

The biased nature of this approach was evident to contemporaries. While they highly assessed Zholtovsky’s carefully designed system of architectural education and his striving to teach students to think architecturally, Gabrichevsky’s audience spoke about his and Zholtovsky’s archaic approach and their insufficient attention to modern materials and constructions.\(^\text{17}\) Gabrichevsky himself gradually changed his attitude towards Zholtovsky. According to the architectural theorist

\(^{14}\) ‘смотреть на архитектуру, читать ее как большой образ, охватывающий весь мир’. Cf. A.G. Gabrichevsky (А.Г. Габричевский), ‘Реализм в архитектуре (стенограмма лекции)’ (‘Realizm v arkhitekte (stenogramma lektsiji)’ (‘Realism in architecture (lecture transcript’) in Gabrichevsky, Morphology of Art, 494-511 (esp. 500).

\(^{15}\) ‘В основу всего положена классика, причем классика отнюдь не в понимании каких-либо стилей определенных, а классика, понимаемая, как реалистическая архитектура, блестящие образы которой имеем в Греции. Но мы берем классику во всем многообразии исторического развития архитектуры.’ Cf. ‘Стенограмма Собрания членов Ленинградского отделения Союза советских архитекторов 4 января 1946 г.’ (‘Stenogramma Sobraniya chlenov Leningradskogo otdeleniya Soyuzu sovetskikh arkhitkektorov 4 yanvarya 1946 g.’) (Transcript of the Meeting of the members of the Leningrad Section of the Union of Soviet Architects on 4 January 1946’), RGALI, coll. 2606, box 1, folder 164, f. 4.

\(^{16}\) ‘после этого мы не имеем взлетов’. Cf. ‘Transcript’, f. 4.

\(^{17}\) ‘Transcript’, ff. 19-20.
Vladimir Markuzon, a student of Gabrichevsky, the latter had hoped in 1940 that Zholtovsky's theory, teaching and practical work would contribute to the development of architecture, yet he had come to the conclusion by 1950 that Zholtovsky's buildings, despite all their artistic subtlety and profoundly structured composition, were more the culmination of earlier architectural development than the beginning of a new stage.\(^{18}\) Gabrichevsky gradually began to distance himself from architecture. His last work in this field was an article about Leonardo the architect that was written on the occasion of the latter's 500\(^{th}\) birthday.\(^{19}\)

Without a doubt, the collaboration between Gabrichevsky and Zholtovsky had a major structuring impact on the architectural research of the former, for whom the study of the history and theory of architecture had real meaning only when it was applied to the living creative process of architectural construction. In his teaching, Gabrichevsky worked closely with the professors and practicing architects Georgy Golts and Andrei Burov. In the 1930s, he also worked together with Ginzburg on a multivolume General History of Architecture that ultimately did not appear.

This background is necessary for understanding the importance attached by Gabrichevsky to studying and publishing the architectural treatises of the classic past. Gabrichevsky was the life and driving force of this project: he developed the project's conception, translated and commented many of the texts himself, edited translations made by others and compared them with the originals, and wrote all the introductory prefaces to the volumes (these prefaces were published anonymously with the indication 'From the editor').\(^{20}\)

For the publishing project, Gabrichevsky gathered an outstanding group of philologists, philosophers and cultural historians, many of whom had been his colleagues at GAKhN in the 1920s. They included Vasily Zubov, Fyodor Petrovsky, Aleksey Venediktov and others. Like Gabrichevsky, they were mostly educated in prerevolutionary Russia; consequently, they were mistrusted as potential “class enemies” and had no academic prospects at all in the 1930s. They were glad to be able to participate in a project with clear intellectual, cultural and historical significance. However, the project’s ties with the development of contemporary architecture, which were so important to Gabrichevsky, evidently lay outside their scope of interest.


\(^{19}\) А.Г. Gabrichevsky (А.Г. Габричевский), 'Леонардо – архитектор' ('Leonardo – arkhitektor') ('Leonardo the architect'), Советская архитектура (Sovetskaya arkhitektura) (Soviet Architecture), 3, 1952, 67-79.

Generally speaking, Gabrichevsky’s friends and colleagues understood the ties between architectural (and, more broadly, artistic) theory and artistic (including architectural) practice differently than he did. A case in point is the literary (and, without a doubt, personal) debate between Gabrichevsky and Zubov – one of Gabrichevsky’s closest friends and collaborators that made a major contribution to the publishing project (in particular, with his translations and commentary of Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria*). In an article published in 1945, Zubov summed up the results of the ten-year architectural publishing project and raised the question of the meaning of architectural theory and its relation to practice. The theory of architecture, he asserted, studies the ‘logic of architecture’ and ‘stands in the same relation to architectural work as the science of logic to human thought’. It is not a codex of rules and canons imposed from without but the ‘result of the study of practice and the regularities upon which it is based’. Gabrichevsky would have hardly objected to this view or to Zubov’s critique of the understanding of architectural theory as a narrow professional discipline that is the ‘monopoly of practicing architects’ (Zubov cited the example of Vitruvius and Alberti, whose theories are more valuable than their practical work). Nevertheless, Gabrichevsky believed that architectural theory, as all other artistic theory, always emerges within the creative process as its part and therefore, in the final account, cannot be understood separately from the architecture practice of the time. This is the essence of his criticism voiced during the discussion of Zubov’s doctoral dissertation *Alberti’s Architectural Theory* in 1946: Gabrichevsky said that Zubov isolated Alberti’s theory from the real architecture of the fifteenth century.

Gabrichevsky’s astonishing gift of artistic empathy made him a truly unique figure on the Moscow artistic and cultural scene (the creative rather than the official scene). For several decades, he held a unique position of his own in this milieu, as shown by his close relations with such painters, poets and musicians as Maximilian Voloshin, Sergei Shervinsky, Heinrich Neuhaus, Robert Falk and Nathan Altman, who discussed with Gabrichevsky both general artistic issues and concrete problems that arose in their work.

At the very beginning of his career in 1920-1921, Gabrichevsky collaborated with Wassily Kandinsky, an artist of the same generation as Zholtovsky,
foreshadowing his and Zholtovsky’s later joint work on creating a system for educating architects. Gabrichevsky first worked with Kandinsky at the Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) and then at GAKhN. They collaborated on the project of the ‘science of art’ – a theory of art developed through the close collaboration of artists, scholars and philosophers. This project led to the establishment of GAKhN, largely thanks to Kandinsky’s and Gabrichevsky’s initiative. One easily notices echoes of the same idea in Gabrichevsky’s famous architectural ‘analyses’ that he introduced at the All-Union Academy of Architecture in the 1930s. They involved the analysis of an architectural phenomenon (monument, architect or style) chosen by a post-graduate student as his or her research topic. These analyses were made under the supervision of two academic advisers from the departments of architecture and history, and their results were presented at a joint meeting of departments. Their aim was to help young architects understand the architectural logic and artistic language of the masters of the past so as to develop their own artistic thinking.

Without a doubt, Gabrichevsky and Zholtovsky’s friendship had a decisive impact on the shift of the former’s research interests towards Renaissance theories of architecture. As to their conceptual and terminological toolkit and, in particular, their notion of ‘classical art’, which played a decisive role for both specialists, it would be more correct to speak about a true meeting of minds based on profound mutual understanding and common basic notions of art than about the influence of the famous architect on the much younger theorist. After all, when he began to collaborate with Zholtovsky in the mid-1920s, Gabrichevsky was already a mature thinker who had written a series of fundamental essays on architectural theory.

Vladimir Markuzon pointed out that Gabrichevsky’s studies in Paul Frankl’s seminar at the University of Munich during the summer semester of 1914 had a major impact on him as a historian and theorist of art and architecture. An outstanding art historian and an architect by training, Frankl gave special attention to spatial composition in architecture and had just published his key theoretic work *Die Entwicklungsphasen der neueren Baukunst* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1914). A privatdozent at the time, he not only gave lectures but also held practical seminars with students. Over forty drawings of different views of Renaissance arches in one of Gabrichevsky’s early notebooks evidently stem from these seminars.

After graduating from Moscow University in 1915, Gabrichevsky was offered a position at Professor Malmberg’s section in the newly created Department of Art History and began to lecture at the university. In 1918-1920, he served as curator of the collection of ancient vases at the Moscow University Museum of Fine Arts (today, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts). The first scholarly articles that he wrote while working at the university treated the paintings of Mantegna and Tintoretto and Ancient Greek vase painting and focused on problems of space, plane and surface.

After coming to GAKhN, Gabrichevsky began to study issues of space and time in a broader theoretical context. Since 1923, he discussed them mostly at the Department of Philosophy and hardly participated at all in the work of the Section of Spatial Arts and its subsection Architecture, where Ginzburg’s aforementioned work was actively discussed in 1923-1924. As it turned out, Ginzburg and
Gabrichevsky both wrote articles entitled 'Architecture' for the Dictionary of Art Terms that was being prepared for publication at GAKhN. Both of these articles were published by Igor Chubarov in 2005 in his reconstructed Dictionary of Art Terms. In his article, Gabrichevsky gives two definitions of architecture: in a broad sense, as 'different types of construction as the goal-oriented work of living beings' (architecture of man, animals, and the universe) and, in a narrow sense, as a 'special form of spatial art that creates structures that are not only useful but also considered to be artworks and a visual artistic unity of spatial relations'.

Gabrichevsky's main work of the early 1920s was The Morphology of Art. Its task was 'to show that art theory is an ontological science in relation to the concepts of form and form construction in general'. In this unfinished work, which Gabrichevsky himself called the 'confession (...) of a convinced organicist and true Goethean,' he asserted that art theory and natural philosophy are two domains of a single morphology of life in general. Describing creativity as the supreme approach to surmounting the eternal dualism of being and becoming, Gabrichevsky strove to 'study the structure of creativity, as it is manifested in the product'.

He found parallels to his ideas, which he took from the philosophy of Friedrich Schelling and the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in the thought of Henri Bergson and, above all, Georg Simmel. In his 'Introduction to the morphology of art', Gabrichevsky referred to Simmel's Lebensanschauung (The View of Life, 1918). He pointed out that, for Simmel, aesthetics and metaphysics unite in the name of form, the artwork is both closed in itself and participates in the stream of life, and life becomes form and form becomes life. Gabrichevsky borrowed Simmel's method of employing art as the principal hermeneutic model and his ability to make sweeping generalizations on the basis of concrete "physiological" analysis of individual phenomena (a picture frame, a vase handle, a bridge, a door, etc.). The aesthetic paradigm unites everything, because everything has form. Only art can harmoniously combine the depths of being with the superficiality of phenomena.

26 ‘все виды строительства как целесообразной деятельности живых существ’.
27 ‘особый вид пространственных искусств, создающих постройку, которая является не только полезной вещью, но и созерцается как художественное произведение, как наглядное художественное единство пространственных отношений’. Cf. Chubarov, ed., Dictionary, 46-52 (here 52). Gabrichevsky’s article was discussed at a meeting of the RAKhN Committee for the Study of Art Terms on 4 March 1926. The protocol of this meeting has survived (RGALI, coll. 941, box 14, folder 19, f. 30-30v).
30 ‘исследования структуры творчества, поскольку оно дано в продукте’. Gabrichevsky, 'Introduction to the morphology of art', 103.
31 Gabrichevsky, 'Introduction to the morphology of art', 88.
Following Goethe and Simmel, Gabrichevsky tried to show the gnoseological aspect of the aesthetic feeling. He also took from these thinkers the idea of classical art as an organic whole and the unity of life and form, nature and spirit.

Gabrichevsky wrote his first texts on architecture in preparation for his book *The Morphology of Art* in the first half of the 1920s. They include the articles 'Clothing and building,' 'Space and mass in architecture,' 'On the structure of the artistic image in architecture' and 'The problem of architectural synthesis as the mutual organization of mass and space' that constitute a unified theoretical corpus. Its distinctive feature lies in the fact that the question of architecture arises in the framework of a general philosophical discussion about the philosophy of art being a part of the philosophy of science and about the specific nature of form construction in art in comparison to the construction of form in nature. Gabrichevsky wrote in his work 'Clothing and building',

The human individual surrounds himself with a whole system of shells, beginning with the body itself, insofar as it is seen as the repository of the spiritual and vital nucleus, and ending with the universe as it is understood by human science at each moment of the history of our consciousness and at the particular stage of our conquest of nature.

Human clothing is one of the first chains in this system, and the building is one of the last. What do they have in common and how do they differ?

Gabrichevsky clearly chose the building and clothing for a comparative genetic study, because they represent two different types of human construction of form:

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32 The first two articles received prizes in a competition organized by the Architectural Department of the People’s Commissariat of Education. The article 'Space and mass in architecture' was published in the journal *Iskusstvo (Art)* in 1923, and the article 'On the structure of the artistic image in architecture' appeared in 1927. 

33 Человеческая личность окружает себя целой системой оболочек, начиная от самого тела, поскольку оно воспринимается как хранилище духовного, жизненного субстанциального ядра, и кончая мировозданием, каким оно мыслится человеческой наукой в каждый данный момент истории нашего сознания, в данный этап завоевания природы. Одно из первых звеньев этой системы – это человеческая одежда, одно из последних – здание. Что общего между ними и каково их различие?’ A.G. Gabrichevsky, 'Clothing and building', 404-405.
rational-adaptive and intuitive-autonomous.34 Organic and instinctive creation is ‘beautiful insofar as it is an end in itself and useful insofar as it is goal-oriented’, whereas human consciousness splits the primordial instinctive act into goal and means.35 According to Gabrichevsky, form constructed by an organism without consciousness always expresses its goal, as it is simultaneously both goal and means. In contrast, form constructed by man can simply be a means that does not express its goal. This leads to the ‘problem of all applied art: how to subordinate dead matter to the spirit and how to organize it to make the form of the new material object express its goal and to turn it into an organic gesture of spiritualized matter?’36 Such is the main problem of clothing and building, according to Gabrichevsky. In contrast to clothing that comes into direct contact with the body and moves together with it, the building does not directly surround the human figure itself but rather its potential sphere of action that is valuable from the utilitarian or spiritual standpoint. Any building can be seen in two different ways: from the outside as a plastic mass and from the inside as a motive spatial form or a nucleus isolated from the rest of space by a material shell.37

In the article ‘Space and mass in architecture’, Gabrichevsky gives a broad definition of architecture as human creativity that isolates part of space that is valuable for the spiritual and material activity of the human individual or group, either through the removal of natural mass or through the construction of a three-dimensional material shell. Gabrichevsky then separately discusses mass and space as the main elements of architecture by examining extreme types where one of the elements is present in a pure and quasi-autonomous form (‘inorganic sculpture’ and Hegel’s ‘negative architecture’).38 He draws attention to the fact that these primordial stages and types ‘are no more than symbols or philosophical mythologems’39 rather than ‘archaeological hypotheses about the “origins” of architecture.’40 The nucleus and the shell gradually begin to separate out in these inorganic sculptures (denoted by the German word Mal): first the monument or tower is the deity itself, then the place of its invisible presence, then the abstract symbol of its existence, and finally a mere shell, while the object of worship is transferred inside. The pyramid is one of the transition forms of this process, which Gabrichevsky discusses in a very general and abstract manner.

34 Gabrichevsky, ‘Clothing and building’, 405.
35 ‘прекрасно, поскольку оно самоцельно, и полезно, поскольку оно целесообразно’. Gabrichevsky, ‘Clothing and building’, 408.
Whereas in the article 'Mass and space in architecture' Gabrichevsky describes mass and space as primordial and polar moments that determine the structure of architectural content, in the article 'On the structure of the artistic image in architecture' he tries to find a synthesis of these primordial elements. The distinctive mark of architectural artistic content is its bivalence as opposed to the univalent structure of sculpture and painting. In architecture, space and mass have no meaning separately but only when they combine to form a unity that is artistically significant on the condition that the two moments are differentiable and irreducible to one another. While plastic forms have autonomous artistic meaning insofar as they express the functions of matter as such, tectonic entities always refer to something "else" – dynamic space that constructs form. Three elements characterize the architectural form: the internal space, the external space and the shell. The external forms of the shell have a double expressive function: they show the internal form of the nucleus and the building's relation to the external spatial environment; the external world gives form to the internal space through doors and windows. Finally, every architectural form, as every other material cultural entity, is part of nature. The cultural object expresses the relation between culture and nature. The building gives form to the landscape, blending with natural forms or contrasting with them, insofar as it is a natural organism with non-natural elements.

In the article 'On the structure of the artistic image in architecture', Gabrichevsky identifies two extreme types of mutually formative relations between the spatial nucleus and its tectonic shell: classical (static relation, harmonious co-subordination) and baroque (living dialogue and struggle between the movable nucleus and inert matter). Finally, in the last article of his tetralogy 'Problem of architectural synthesis as the mutual organization of mass and space', Gabrichevsky poses the question in a slightly different way: how can one create an organized artistic unity of mass and space despite the total opposition and polarity between static plastic and dynamic spatial content? He replies that the synthetic nature of architecture as an art form manifests itself in its structuralism, which is predominantly characteristic of classical art. He asserts that, in contrast to preceding ages that all had a classical art of their own, nineteenth-century architecture did not create its own classical art or even its own language. The artist no longer views matter as containing a living element that is potentially innate in it, augmenting the opposition between the static and the dynamic.

Gabrichevsky concludes the article by expressing his dream of the appearance of 'major synthetic classical art' in which 'the feeling of the divine and organic nature of creativity generates a worldview that would abolish the antinomy between spirit and matter, man and nature'. In the 1930s and 1940s, Gabrichevsky believed that Zholtovsky's theory and work could help realize this dream. A means

42 ’большого синтетического искусства классицизма’.
43 ’чувство божественности и органичности творчества ляжет в основу того мироощущения, которое снимет антиномию между духом и материеи, человеком и природой’. A.G. Gabrichevsky, 'The problem of architectural synthesis as the mutual organization of mass and space', 486.
towards this goal was the development and implementation of a publishing project for translating and commenting classical theoretical architectural treatises intended as a part of a new system of architectural training. Developing in a living relation with contemporary creative activity, the classical heritage was not meant to become a dead letter, as had been the case with eclecticism. Although, in the conditions of the time, this dream was doomed to fail and seemed utopian from the start, it inspired Gabrichevsky’s project of publishing commented translations of classical artistic theories that would serve as textbooks for several generations of Russian architects. It is regretful that, because of the language barrier, this large corpus of Renaissance scholarship, that arguably includes some of the most comprehensive contributions to the study of Renaissance architectural theory written in the era between two world wars, has remained unaccessible to the scholars who work in West-European languages.44

44 One should mention in the first place Zubov’s works and his detailed commentary to Alberti’s treatise De re aedificatoria. Zubov has remained little known to Western scholars. At the time, the commentary on Alberti’s architectural treatise was reviewed by A. Pogo (Isis, 30:3, (1939), 523-525) who observed that “The literature on Alberti is very extensive; this Russian publication is not merely an addition to this literature; no Western student of Alberti can afford it to disregard the existence of volume II”. At this moment a French translation of Zubov’s doctoral dissertation Alberti’s Architectural Theory is in the final stage of preparation. The English translation of Zubov’s Leonardo da Vinci (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968) was reviewed immediately by Ernst Gombrich in New York Review of Books (5 December 1968, see Ernst Gombrich, “Leonardo in the history of science”, in Ernst Gombrich, Reflections on the history of art. Views and reviews, Richard Woodfield, ed., Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987, 68-73). Gombrich stated about Zubov’s commentary on Daniele Barbaro’s commentary on Vitruvius: “It would be hard to think of an entreprise more typical of ‘cloistered scholarship’ than such a commentary on a commentary published in the worst periode of Stalinist terror” (68).
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