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The Moscow school of industrial design: history, trends, and stylistic features

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the history of design in Russia and aims to study the Moscow school of design. The author of the article analyzes the development of design in our country. The Moscow school of industrial design developed two approaches to the practice of design and design education—artistic (the Stroganov School) and aesthetic and technological (the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics) approaches. The Stroganov School trained design artists, the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics prepared design engineers; they approached the design object from different sides. The masters of the Stroganov School contributed to the formation of the philosophy of design as a unity of searches in artistic and compositional solutions and the usability, rationality of design and technology, the scientific approach. The aesthetic and technological approach, developed at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, was then used in the educational and design practice of All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics. Russian technical aesthetics as a theoretical basis for design appeared in the works of the teachers of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and in educational practice. The main achievements of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics included the development of design theory, the preparation of many projects of industrial goods and series, the development of the method of design-oriented programming, i. e., aesthetic and functional ordering of product series and even industries.

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Keywords

Design, history of design, Moscow school of design, industrial design, Stroganov School, All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics, Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, artistic design, Soviet design.

Introduction

The formation of design is conditioned by the desire to make the world commensurate with man and to harmonize it, to adapt it to the needs of the individual and society; "design appeared to satisfy the need for harmonizing the objective world" [Bystrova, 2015, 45]. It is important to note that designers have to decide every time the question of the combination and degree of interdependence of form and content, matter and spirit, ideal and concrete objects; overcoming this essential contradiction occurs in design. Thus, spiritual work takes place in consumers: "consumers come through the material to the ideal in the process of consuming the object of spiritual production" [Slozhenikina, Pit'ko, Pishchugina, 2015, 4587].

Design falls into the field of the concept "art" in the Russian tradition, but the Western tradition deals more with aesthetic design, i. e., it is closer to engineering. The worldview of industrial design is connected with the ideology of the modern world, namely, it is conditioned by the crisis of technocratism as the dominant style of thinking in industrial society.

Design is directed against utilitarian mechanicality: "Design, in its desire to beautify the world, appeared as a conscious response to industrial production, which began to show its destructive consequences at the turn of the century" [Petrova, 2013, 26]. Design is the aesthetic ecology of the human environment and its various activities.

The main content and aesthetic trends of modern design include the following:

- the desire to individualize the appearance, the rejection of mass circulation and the choice in favor of limited series; an extended model range of manufactured items; the use of restyling and tuning, the introduction of mobility and variability, the "form follows emotion" principle;
- the diminishment of things, which manifests itself in miniaturization, increased mobility, and the expansion of the functionality of form; the emergence of the so-called "disembodied design", where the external form of a thing becomes less dependent on its functional task;
- the formation of the design of the virtual environment, which leads to the popularization of work with virtual space, the expansion of the role of cyber design and the creation of the appearance of objects of the world information network;
- the increasing role of ergonomics, engineering, and psychological aspects in the design of industrial products [Mikhailova, 2009; Sergeeva, 2018].

The Moscow school of design: on specifying the concept

Despite the successful experience of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute and the practical need for design in various fields of industry, the words "design" and "designer" were not popular in Soviet Russia due to their clear connection with foreign activities. The phrase "construction artist" was the Soviet synonym of the word "designer" for many years.

The foreign, borrowed concept "design" opposed the Soviet understanding of collective labor to a certain extent and therefore was not used until the 1970s: "Capitalist design... would not be able to support the needs of a communist collective, because both were derived from the capitalist division of labour. Artistic projecteering, on the other hand, was envisaged as a type of creative collective labour that would support harmonious conditions in all areas of life" [Cubbin, 2016, 17].

Industrial art in Russia "originated outside the industrial sphere: it rested upon the activities of both left-wing artists who "went out" into the subject world during their formal aesthetic experiments, and

theorists (sociologists and art historians)" [Khan-Magomedov, 1995, 12]. The search of early Soviet designers had a pronounced artistic and experimental character.

Russian design developed in a number of directions that differed stylistically and geographically. Thus, specialists quite early began to distinguish the artistic and stylistic originality in the activities of the Moscow and Leningrad schools of design. The foundation of the Saint Petersburg school is associated with the foundation of the Central School of Technical Drawing in 1876, and the development of the school in Soviet times is associated with the name of I.A. Vaks and his student I.A. Fomin [Vershinin, 2018, 194].

The history of the Moscow school dates back to the foundation of the School of Drawing in Arts and Crafts by Count Stroganov in 1825. The school "emerged a decade after the Patriotic War of 1812, when the educated society began to think about the problems of Russian culture and to look for ways to renew national art and the art industry" [Dul'kina, 2013, 14]. As D.G. Chernykh notes, "the people's realization that samples of industrial products obtained from abroad can no longer fully satisfy the aesthetic demand in the fatherland created a public need to have their own (national) art and industrial educational institutions. S.G. Stroganov was one of the first who understood and implemented this in practice, laying a foundation for Russian art and industrial education" [Chernykh, 2017, 149-150].

The school was founded in Moscow due to a number of reasons: in Saint Petersburg there were more educational institutions and skilled foreign craftsmen; in addition, in Moscow, which suffered from the fire and the French invasion, there was a great need to create beautiful household goods.

The Stroganov School is the oldest art and industrial educational institution in Russia. Children of various classes were admitted from the day of its opening and the school focused on the creative development of each student. Tuition and meals were free for most students, and the criteria for admission included the talent of applicants and their ability to draw. There was also no corporal punishment at school, which was mandatory in the educational institutions of that time [Ibidem, 138]. The school was designed to hold 360 students, and its principle consisted in the connection of theory with practice.

The Moscow school of design "developed as a classically academic one with an "architectural" style of design graphics, the predominance of the three-dimensional solution of a thing over the colorographic one" [Lavrent'ev, 2007, 287]. The Leningrad school understood the systemic nature of design as "the whole complex of its interrelations with social needs, culture, the environment, and technology" [Ibidem]. The history of the Moscow school of design has not yet been written in detail, but S.V. Mirzoyan has come to the following conclusions: "Despite the complexity of the characteristics of the concept of the Moscow school (Stroganov Moscow State Academy of Arts and Industry) as a stylistic phenomenon, the predominance of compositions in the Russian style at an early stage of the existence of the school can be explained by the purposeful task of the school and the influence of the style and taste orientation of the local artistic environment and cultural life in Moscow, the originality of which had a great influence on all Russian art. This was also the reason for the Moscow school's fascination with ornament, styles, and later formalism. The Moscow school compared favorably with the Saint Petersburg school due to its great democracy, realistic aspiration, and attraction to advanced trends. Young artists less constrained in their searches by academic recipes, developed in a lively and free creative atmosphere. The path to realism was more consistent, without the cataclysms that took place in the Saint Petersburg artistic environment" [Mirzoyan, 2017, 38].

Researchers distinguish two approaches to the practice of design and design education at the Moscow school—artistic (the Stroganov School) and aesthetic and technological (the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics) approaches. M.E. Elochkin writes the following: "The first

school was strong in the field of design, which is far from virtual spaces and in which the creative, artistic side, i. e., the external beauty of the object, prevails. The aesthetic and technological approach considers the essence of the design object, comfort (convenience) and compliance with the specified requirements at all stages of the life cycle of the process/product/thing to be the key point. <...> The Stroganov School is described by the first and second areas of functional comfort, i. e., the object and man, the object and the environment, whereas the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics is the third area contributing to further development towards the fourth area—ecological design" [Elochkin, 2010, 97]. The researcher connects ecological design with the concept of the noosphere [Ibidem, 98].

The artistic approach to design in Moscow was developed at the Stroganov School. The history of this school can be traced back from 1825, through the constructivism of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute, to the present [Kurasov, 2015].

The Stroganov School, by its very origin, tended to preserve the old styles—that "native Russian" style, with the study of which the history of the school began, and others that replaced it. The style and the artistic image remained a priority in the design of the Stroganov School. The unity of the artistic and compositional solution, the expressiveness of the thing, and the correctness of proportions were important in the industrial design of the Stroganov School. V.R. Aronov points out the following: "The Stroganov school of design was the citadel of design during the 1960s. It inherited the traditions of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute, learnt the lessons from architects and engineers who came to this field in the 1960s and 1970s. It has become a model for many domestic design universities" [Ibidem, vol. 1, 8].

The stylistic identity of the Stroganov School manifested itself quite early as a search for a national style in the visual arts in their application to industry. The ideological triad—Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality, which was formulated in the 1830s, was reflected in the search for the "Russian style", which was associated with the beginning of research on Russian olden times, the study of archeology and restoration. The monuments of the past were viewed as the richest source of the national style. This direction was formulated in 1901 as follows: "The predominance of compositions in the Russian style is explained by the immediate and guiding task of the school—to direct the artistic instincts of students towards developing beauty in Russian national art" [Sbornik..., 1900, vol. 1, 3].

The teachers and students of the school studied the artistic heritage of ancient Russian art: they made copies of the white-stoned decoration of the temples in Vladimir and Suzdal, the bas-reliefs of the gates of the Cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod, and manuscripts.

At the same time, there was also industrial design in the program of the Stroganov School: there were tasks for drawing machines and machine tools. Designing, or the "technical drawing" class, was opened at the school in 1830. The industry of the 19th century used samples that needed to be adapted to mass production technology, i. e., to create a "technological form" of the ornament. "At this stage, the drawing included three parts: making a copy of the ornamental form; transforming the ornamental form for machine technology; creating a technical pattern (technical documentation and drawing)" [Gorelov, 2019, 11]. Despite the fact that the program of the discipline changed, the principle of its connection with production remained unchanged.

Drawings and projects made at the Stroganov School received well-deserved recognition at many Russian and international exhibitions—in Kazan (1909), Ekaterinoslav, Vilnius and Pyatigorsk (1910), Turin (1911), etc. The school won the Grand Prix at the exhibition in Paris (1904) and got a gold medal in Saint Petersburg in 1907. It was the peculiar Stroganov style that attracted attention at international exhibitions. As the commission at the Nizhny Novgorod exhibition wrote in 1896, "the influence of the

new direction is significantly expressed at this exhibition, in many objects made according to drawings by students of the Stroganov School, impressing with their novelty in combination with the national style, but more refined and elegant" [Ivanovskaya, 2018, 197].

The history of the Stroganov school can be traced back from 1825, through the constructivism of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute, to the present [Kurasov, 2015]. The Moscow school of Russian industrial design was revived in 1945, when the Stroganov School was recreated. Thus, the Department of graphic disciplines was one of the first to be established, it was renamed to the Department of the fundamentals of architecture and graphic disciplines. It was headed by Associate Professor N.I. Tkachenko. Industrial products were also made; e. g., the Department of ceramics and glass created tableware for mass production when the educational institution was headed by Z.N. Bykov. The Department of metal was engaged in designing tourist buses and cars for the Moscow Plant of Small Cars a few years before the Resolution "On improving the quality of engineering products and cultural and social goods by introducing artistic design methods" adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1962, which marked the beginning of the history of new Russian design and the history of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics.

Such an early appeal to specialists from the Stroganov School was natural: it was this school that was engaged in artistic design of various directions even before it was reflected in the resolution. So, the mid-1950s were marked by the fact that the Department of artistic metalworking carried out tasks for the design of household and industrial products. Specialization was introduced during senior courses in 1959 because enterprises and industries needed design artists. The programs and methodological developments of Moscow Higher School of Arts and Industry (formerly known as the Stroganov School) were recognized as basic models for all higher education institutions of the USSR that trained construction artists [Mukhlynkina, 2019].

The aesthetic and technological approach, developed at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, was then used in the educational and design practice of All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics. Russian technical aesthetics as a theoretical basis for design appeared in the works of the teachers of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and in educational practice. The ideas of technical aesthetics were promoted in Russia by the development of the ideas of the unity of art and technology, the aestheticization of industrial enterprises in line with the ideas of constructivism.

The formation of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops—the Higher Art and Technical Institute was connected not only with the rethinking of the experience of the Stroganov School in the context of a new historical reality, but also with a fundamental turn in the theoretical approach to industrial design.

The first thesis of the new reality in relation to design theory was its principled orientation towards a new look of production, a new look of technology and society. The specialist in the theory of industrial art B.I. Arvatov wrote in 1926: "The first task for the working class in art is to destroy the historically relative boundary between artistic and general social techniques" [Arvatov, 1926, 96].

Art theorists proposed to revise art: "any utilitarian production may be the field of artistic work" [Ibidem, 97], while art ceases to crown the types of human activities: "The fetishism of aesthetic techniques, forms, and tasks must be destroyed" [Ibidem, 98].

P.I. Novitsky wrote the following about the Higher Art and Technical Institute in 1929: "Artists are specialists in the form of things. They decorate everyday life and the ideological struggle. The rapidly growing socialist industry of our union needs highly qualified artists who are familiar with the technology of materials and the technological processes of production and who also have some

technical education in addition to artistic one" [Novitskii, 1929, 5].

N.M. Tarabukin wrote the following, insisting that the proletariat will not have "pure" art at all, but only the concept of industrial mastery will remain: "The proletariat will not create its own poetry, as in general any "pure" form of art, because aesthetic contemplative forms are not characteristic of the creative relevance of the working class. In order to start creating the values of easel, museum art, the proletariat must turn into a parasitic class, i. e. cease to be the proletariat. In the future society, therefore, there will be no "pure" forms of art, but there will be production ones, because there will be no parasitic classes, but there will be a non-class working element. The proletariat must assimilate the values of the old art as the values of craftsmanship, and this will be its only fruitful contact with stankovism. It will be a politician, an inventor, a producer of industrial culture in its active creative work. I consider not the idea of "proletarian" creativity, but that of industrial skill to be progressive in the Russian socialist state. Production skills are the organizer not only of our orientation ability, but also of our intense activity. Art is combined with technology. The technique turns into art when it consciously strives for perfection" [Tarabukin, 1923, 42]. It is interesting to note that the renewal of the social order was seen so irrevocable that the very concept of art had to die out as a purely aesthetic phenomenon.

In addition, the theory of design was connected with the theory (and practice) of constructivism and suprematism during this period. The cultural researcher concludes about the fundamental content of the concept of design during the 1920s: "Design in the culture of the avant-garde is a systemic phenomenon that manifests itself at the conceptual level, which is explained by its universal design ability associated with the human need to build "models of the desired future", and at the pragmatic level, which is connected with the sociocultural practice of relations between man and things" [Golenok, 2004, 9]. Constructivism and suprematism brought a lot to the theory of design and its inner essence—liberation from decorativeness, deliverance from mimetic life-likeness, rejection of familiar forms and designing of new ones.

The formation of the foundations of design, both in theory and in practice, in the culture of the 1920s, especially in the artistic and educational practice of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, is connected with the material, vital sector of the concept of life-building, which helped to bring art closer to the pragmatics of life. This development was influenced by the projective "philosophy" of suprematism (Kazimir Malevich), constructivist production theory (Boris Arvatov, Nikolai Chuzhak, Aleksei Gan), formal experiments (Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin). All this led to the emergence of new design principles of shaping ("non-objectiveness" and constructiveness), subsequently transferred from the sphere of art to the sphere of design, industrial production.

The post-war period in the USSR expressed the need for designers to rebuild cities and reconstruct industry. Yuri Soloviev's railway carriage design was the first sign of new Soviet design, and soon he organized first the Architectural and Artistic Bureau and then the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics.

The foundation of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics in 1962, one of the achievements of Yuri Soloviev, was also a considerable step towards the development of domestic design in its aesthetic and technological approach. The organization of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics on the territory of the Exhibition of the Achievements of the National Economy meant that the authorities recognized the need for a breakthrough in industrial design: the country needed high-quality, beautiful and commensurate things, tools, transport, etc.

The heads of various levels were not sure of the necessity and usefulness of design. Yuri Soloviev actively worked on this problem "from above"—"through demonstrating the advantages of design to

senior officials" [Lavrent'ev, 2007, 277]. The problem of the newly created industry was that after the dissolution of the Higher Art and Technical Institute, there was no education aimed at industrial art, the fusion of artistic and inventive talent, which would include the concepts of style, construction, and plasticity.

The All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics determined the ways of the development of Soviet design for many years. The fundamental task of the institute was to form a scientific, theoretical and methodological basis for design, which was important for the design education system and ensuring designers' professional activities in industry. The theory of design at the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics was later called the "axiomorphological theory of design" [Slozhenikina, 2014]. Talented art historians, architectural theorists, and historians worked at the Department of theory of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics. It is important to note that Yuri Soloviev initiated the assimilation of foreign experience in this industry: "Yuri Soloviev focused the department on creating general theoretical foundations of design, studying its domestic and foreign history, developing issues of shaping and composition of industrial products and functional analysis, as well as studying the organization of design education abroad" [Anisimov, Chaban, 2014, 21]. The Scientific and Technical Library of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics became the depository of the Lenin Library in the field of design.

It is important to note the bidirectionality of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics as a practical and theoretical design center: scientific, theoretical work was necessary as a basis for design practice in the country, and design practice supported theory. The works of Russian and foreign art critics, constructivists, and "applied artists" were a basis for the emerging theory of design. The theoretical direction was headed by G.B. Minervin, the first Doctor of Art History in the field of design in the country.

"Design thinking", i. e., a systemic approach to solving project tasks, is one of the most promising areas of design. This approach was developed at the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics from the 1960s to 1980s and applied in Soviet design [L'vov et al., 2016].

The main achievements of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics included the development of design theory, the preparation of many projects of industrial goods and series, the development of the method of design-oriented programming, i. e., aesthetic and functional ordering of product series and even industries. As M.E. Elochkin notes, "the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics is becoming the leading design institute in the USSR and one of the world centers of design development. The leading place of this institute in the scientific developments largely contributed to the formation of Western European, American and partly Asian design. Many areas had a unique status—they could only develop effectively in the USSR, ergodesign being an example" [Elochkin, 2010, 25].

Unlike the artistic approach to design, which focused on aesthetics and style, the aesthetic and technological approach rested on other parameters formulated, e. g., by T. Johánek in the following way: "(i) ensuring compliance with safety regulations; (ii) the rationality of a product from the perspective of psychophysical and physiological requirements; (iii) the beautiful appearance of a product" [Johánek T. et al., 1969, 13].

Unlike the Stroganov School, with its propaedeutic course inherited from the practices of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and the general artistic context of the profession, the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics concentrated on technical aesthetics, ergodesign, and production. Aesthetics was a very important aspect of the design process, but it was subordinated to the issues of convenience, anthropometry, ergonomics, and safety.

This point of view, in particular, was expressed by V.K. Fedorov at a round table in the journal *Technical Aesthetics*: "good design" is "understood as good engineering design because artistic design cannot be considered out of connection with production and technological problems. Otherwise, it becomes just an exercise in composition, style, shaping, etc. A product that meets the requirements of good design, in addition to originality in the composition and style, must have high manufacturability in mass production, some novelty of the constructive, technological and functional solution. It is impossible to launch an artistic design project ensuring the creation of such a product without a vast knowledge of engineering" [Chto takoe..., 1987, 2].

The design programs of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics "became a new stage in the development of not only Soviet, but also world design" [Druzhinina, 2018, 57]. However, the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics was merged into Moscow Technological University as a result of the reorganization of higher education institutions and research institutes in 2013 and was named the Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics of Moscow Technological University [L'vov et al., 2016].

Different countries have different approaches to the need for state policy in the field of design. According to experts, Russia is among those countries (along with Malta, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, etc.) that consider design not to be an important factor affecting the development and is not directly linked to the goals of innovation [Knyagin, 2012, 48-49]. This is the bottom of the "design ladder": the Danish Design Center participated in the development of this concept; at the top (the fourth stage) there is the concept of design as a continuous cycle of innovative development, and this vector includes the United States and Great Britain, Denmark and France. Moreover, this situation does not change: according to 2018 estimates, "Russia still occupies a place at the lowest step of the "design ladder" that characterizes the state's policy on design" [Pavlovskaya, Klimenko, 2018, 141].

At the beginning of the 21st century, "industrial design completely fell out of the priorities of Russian state policy" [Knyagin, 2012, 64]; "the state is not up to design" [Pavlovskaya, Klimenko, 2018, 148]. Moreover, "urban planning, the construction of socioculturally significant buildings, public procurement in the field of transport, education, healthcare, social security were carried out and are carried out without taking into account advanced requirements for the design and functionality of objects and the environment" [Basaeva, Totieva, 2018, 276].

Conclusion

The Moscow school of industrial design developed two approaches to the practice of design and design education—artistic (the Stroganov School) and aesthetic and technological (the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics) approaches. The Stroganov School trained design artists, the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics prepared design engineers; they approached the design object from different sides.

The artistic approach to design in Moscow was developed at the Stroganov School. The masters of the Stroganov School contributed to the formation of the philosophy of design as a unity of searches in artistic and compositional solutions and the usability, rationality of design and technology, the scientific approach.

The aesthetic and technological approach, developed at the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops, was then used in the educational and design practice of All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics. Russian technical aesthetics as a theoretical basis for design appeared in the works of the teachers of the Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops and in educational practice.

The tasks of "engineering" the country required deploying art education to the needs of production. The main achievements of the All-Russian Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics included the development of design theory, the preparation of many projects of industrial goods and series, the development of the method of design-oriented programming, i. e., aesthetic and functional ordering of product series and even industries. Aesthetics was a very important aspect of the design process, but it was subordinated to the issues of convenience, anthropometry, ergonomics, and safety.

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Московская школа промышленного дизайна: история, направления и стилистические особенности

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена истории дизайна в России на примере московской школы дизайна. Автор анализирует развитие дизайна в нашей стране как направления промышленного искусства. В московской школе промышленного дизайна существует два подхода к практике дизайна и дизайн-образованию: художественный (Строгановское училище) и эстетико-технологический (ВНИИТЭ). Строгановка готовила художников-дизайнеров, ВНИИТЭ – инженеров-дизайнеров, они подходили к объекту дизайна с разных сторон. Ученые Строгановского училища способствовали становлению философии дизайна как единства поисков в художественно-композиционном решении и удобства пользования,

рациональности конструкции и технологии, научного подхода. Эстетико-технологический подход, начатый еще во ВХУТЕМАСе, был затем подхвачен и развит в образовательной и проектной практике ВНИИТЭ. Уже в работах преподавателей ВХУТЕМАСа и в образовательной практике зарождалась отечественная техническая эстетика, ставшая теоретической основой дизайна. Среди основных заслуг ВНИИТЭ остаются разработка теории дизайна, подготовка множества проектов промышленных товаров и серий, разработка метода дизайн-программирования, т. е. эстетико-функционального упорядочивания серий и даже отраслей продукции.

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Дизайн, история дизайна, московская школа дизайна, промышленный дизайн, Строгановка, ВНИИТЭ, ВХУТЕМАС, художественное проектирование, советский дизайн.

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