

# HAUNTED HOUSES

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Buyers of masterpieces of a functionalism – courageous people. In a collecting of architectural monuments there are at least three problems: first, they are difficult for finding, secondly, for the sake of the new owner they will not move a little, – in them it is necessary to live in the third, and it is uneasy.

Soviet avant-guard of 20-30th years – here than is famous our architecture, and not so idyllic manors of noble family. But try, find a constructivist private residence, the private house constructed in the heat of attack to a private property. It in the West Le Corbusier propagandised new democratic art, projecting country houses for the rich acquaintances. In Councils of misters was not, was not and the monuments of architecture constructed for them. At us in everyday life of great buildings one furious hymn to collective sounded. A private residence of architect Konstantin Melnikov in the Krivoarbatsky lane and a country house of people's commissar Nikolay Milyutin on a roof of the house of Narkomfina – surprising exceptions.

The people bravely buying the well-known modernist private residences, are worthy all understanding and respect. These buildings, as a rule, were projected not as habitation for concrete people, and as abstract manifestos. Houses which were under construction for the sake of a celebration of a functionalism not always correspond to modern representations about comfort and quality of a life and at times are defiantly nonfunctional. To difficultly itself to present a today's everyday life in such sign architectural monuments, as the house of Ritvelda or a country house "Sava" Le Corbusier, glass Farnsworth house to Mis Van Der Roe or hanging over falls Fallingwater of Frenka Lloyd Right – if only not to hold them as the house of receptions: to hand over it under corporate banquets (as a country house "Sava") or to start up there for a modest bribe of fans of the fine. As the butler in «the House over falls», transformed it, without the knowledge of owners, certainly, in a brothel has arrived.

Sex over falls pleased Americans, I am afraid, not officials from protection of a heritage which loom behind the back of the owner of each of houses-manifestos. Besides that customers of a country house "Sava" ran from leakings, having left a country house only the name, the house of Ritvelda has started to reconstruct still Ritveld, and the falls visited time and again an interior «At home over falls». Think of tediousness of "security guards", which will watch closely living to you was as inconveniently, as before. The educated public opinion will damn you for incorrectly hung up curtains.

Nevertheless collectors of the modernist architecture, ready to contain, love it, as native, and to forgive technical imperfection, have not disappeared. They serve it as truly as owners of antiquarian cars serve jingling fetishes. When in a private residence constructed by Right, the



roof once again has leaked; the owner only has made a helpless gesture and has told: «Here that happens, when leave a work of art in the street and in the rain».

The person buying a monument of a functionalism incurs the hardest physical and moral obligations. The old car should go; the plane – to fly, and someone should live in the house.

Aleksey Tarkhanov

## **SERGEY GORDEEV AND MELNIKOV HOUSE**



In December, 2005, Sergey Gordeyev, a member of Council of Russian Federation from Ust-Ordynskiy autonomous area bought the house of Konstantin Melnikov, rather a half of the house. Gordeyev does not have intention to live there but is planning to create a Melnikov House Museum. If it looks like extravagance or exoting thing in Russia but abroad this kind of museums exist from the XIX century. They are John Soun House Museum in London or Telliesin cottage in Visconsin where Frank Lloyd Wright lived.

As Senator Gordeyed said, his passion to architecture began from his acquaintance with gothic architecture then he turned to Wright and Le Corbusie. Then he started looking for the figure which was comparable to avant-garde classics of west and he naturally attracted his attention to Konstantin Melnikov.

The architect built his house-studio in 1927- 1929 in Krivoarbatskiy lane by his own resources. That was unexampled event for Soviet Country. Before the construction of the building the Soviet Government gave to the house a status of pilot-demonstration project what played a great part. The house is absolutely unique – from the lay-out to the construction. It consists of two vertical cylinders of different height and cut into each other till the third part of a radius. Lower cylinder with vertically cut southern part is completed with the plate roof with open terrace. The house's walls are the brilliant technical invention provoked with the lack of hardware materials. Their structure reminds honeycombs where the unprofitable brick is faced the way of a net with hexahedral openings. And theoretically it is possible to make a window at any part of a wall. There is neither beam no roof timber in the floors which are a wooden trellised membrane made of boards miniaturizing the building weight.



Inside the architect provided for various spatial impressions for guests and for the inmates – from the ground floor porous labyrinth to the illuminated with the big stained-glass window drawing room and a “sleepy sonata” bedroom.

“This is the only architect’ house built in Soviet Russia where private and individual aspects were submitted to collective. Melnikov was not frightened and created something of his own stile, unheard. The majority are not able to that. Our problem is probably that we do not make such attempts. Personal action, the personal contribution to destiny of our country it is not so popular, still in a fashion there is all collective. And it is necessary to make as a museum not simply certain ingenious building, and this act », – Sergey Gordeyev says. Business does not lag behind a word; the board of guardians of the future museum into which Rem Koolhaas, Alvaro Siza, Ilja Kabakov and the deputy minister of culture Pavel Khoroshilov enter is already created. The museum concept was developed together with firm CassonMann and restorer Stewart Tappin. This spring the house-workshop should pass completely in conducting the founded by the senator «Russian Avantgarde» Foundation, and a making of a museum of a masterpiece becomes a reality.

Sergey Kulikov, Maria Sedova  
Foto by Sergey Krasnovsky

