

Unrealised Potential

ARTIST: Neil Cummings

TITLE: From Things to Flows

Outline of Unrealised Potential

A selection of objects remade from documentary evidence of Vladimir Tatlin's practice 1913-1924. Few if any of Tatlin's artworks or artefacts survive. Apparently existing objects have been clumsily remade or awkwardly restored and so a process of critical interpretation would be required. From the enigmatic and grainy photographic records, From Things to Flows – in the spirit of collaboration – would remake key objects and commission ideological extensions to Tatlin's work. The exhibition would not be a museum retrospective and therefore there would be no need to remake the Tower again. The aim would be to recreate Tatlin's thoughtful, provocative and engaged practice and mesh this with a contemporary equivalent in art, design and technology.

The exhibition would trace Tatlin's radical trajectory from the production of artworks to an engagement with social space via objects. "Art not as speculation, but as socially thought our creative work" Tatlin.

Links would be made with contemporary artists working with social space – Jeremy Deller, Group Material, Nils Norman, jodi.org, etc. And workshops, a resource room – with internet access, a lecture program, publication and an educational project would all be important components of the exhibition.

Suggested Artists

Remade reliefs from 1913. A stunning series of reliefs would play with the pictorial potential of materials-bequeathed by the cubists still lives. Tatlin was almost able pun with material; imagine a broom-handle, as it becomes a bottleneck, or a lozenge of plywood a table.

Remade counter-reliefs from 1914. A sequence of counter-reliefs (counter-attack) that are titled 'A selection of Materials'. Divested of any pictorial pretension, the assembled 'found' materials are exploited for their structural characteristics; wire suspends, aluminium is cut, pierced, folded and bent, wood is jointed or roughly splintered, cardboard folded and torn, etc.

Many of the 1914 reliefs were made from materials abandoned by other artists in the course of installing their own works for exhibitions that Tatlin was participating in. Some of this spirit would need to be recreated, a radical and provisional DIY with available yet advanced technology. (Sheet aluminium had only recently produced in Russia).

Remade objects from 1917. After the Revolution Tatlin continued his systematic investigation into materials and their properties. He founded Vkhutemas, an institute for the research into the materials of culture, with particular regard to the functional potential of their structural characteristics. Vkhutemas and Tatlin designed a range of artefacts including a beautiful bentwood armchair, a milk jug and tea service, a very efficient wood burning stove, a workers reading room and a range of radical clothing. It might be possible to restart the reproduction of some of these items: Contemporary commissions might include Jeremy Deller, Superflex, jodi.org, Michael Marriott, Nils Norman etc.

Signed on behalf of Neil Cummings by Unrealised Potential, (Chavez-Dawson, Ely & Harris).

Date

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