

Title: Educational Reform and Modernist Aesthetics: Pedagogy and the Art of Elena Guro  
Author: Juliette Stapanian-Apkarian, Emory University

Although scholars regularly recognize the interests of Russian Futurists in the perceptual and expressive modalities of children, relationships between the pre-Revolutionary avantgarde arts and specific aspects of pedagogical reform have yet to be examined in detail. Certainly ties between pedagogy and revolutionary political thought in nineteenth-century Russia are extensive (e.g. Chernyshevskii), and Tolstoi's focus on pedagogy is well known. But the proposed methods of teaching and the actual methods of early avantgarde artists have not yet been systematically examined in tandem. In part, this may reflect traditional relegation of pedagogy—like women's writing—to a secondary status by literary analysts. But as Foucault and others remind us, schools are an institutional key to normative values and behaviors. And precisely because avantgardists sought to challenge and shift norms, consideration of issues in educational reform may provide special insights into their aesthetic ideas and practices—a relationship richly demonstrated in the art of Elena Guro.

Biographies of Guro often mention her relationship to two Chistiakovs: one – Pavel P. – a painter and highly respected teacher of painting, and the other – Mikhail B. – Guro's grandfather and a specialist in pedagogy. While scholars have productively examined the importance of some of Pavel Chistiakov's ideas on the development of Russian modernist painting, the significance of Mikhail Chistiakov's pedagogical concerns on Guro and their resonance in Russian modernism awaits attention. M. Chistiakov published the children's magazine *Zhurnal dlia detei* (1851-1865), which was widely distributed and unusually innovative for its time. His later pedagogical writings are wide-ranging, reflecting progressive ideas of Western educators such as Friederich Froebel (1782-1852). *Zhurnal dlia detei* and Chistiakov's educational articles not only remarkably anticipate key aspects of Guro's visual and verbal art but they also foreshadow techniques and ideas of early modernist writers and painters more broadly.