

# Alternative methods of architecture training outside formal university education.

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This research aims to represent existing architecture educational practices formed beyond the formal university curriculums and created by individual practitioner-architects in Kazan, Russia. Their self-designed methodology has proven to be successful, as shown by the strong outcomes of graduates now working as leading architects of their firms or at top architecture companies like OMA, BIG, Kengo Kuma, etc.<sup>1</sup> The research includes in-depth descriptions of these institutions, practices, and methodologies, alongside an analysis of what is behind their success. The research aims to represent and rethink alternative education in the field of architecture, to show the benefit of such long-term education, and to raise a discussion of whether architecture education should be started from childhood.

The research focuses on exploring and analyzing alternative architecture institutions in Kazan, chosen by criteria that have proven to graduate students with successful career paths (being enrolled to top architecture universities or employed by well-recognized architecture offices). The analysis methods will include the consideration of resources written by the professors of these institutions as well as interviews with its graduates and professors.

The first case study will focus on the analysis of the school in the architecture field as a supplementary education to primary and secondary regular schools. The object of the research is DASHKA, Children's Architecture and Design School, founded in 1987 in Kazan where architecture education starts at the age of seven and includes a ten-year program. After graduation, students have strong skills in hand drawing and modeling, as well as creativity and aesthetics senses that position them as *“successful applicants to Architecture Universities of Russia, Europe, and Canada”*.<sup>2</sup>

The second case study will be devoted to students' architecture studio led by individual practitioner-architects. Such an example is the studio “TiArch” founded by architects Ilnar

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 4

<sup>2</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA About school, n.d., last viewed: 20.09.2022.  
<https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/o-shkole.php>

and Rezeda Akhtyamovs. The studio functions as an extra education alongside Kazan State Architecture University's curriculum, created for the best architecture students to develop their skills in hand drawing, fantasy creativity, architecture design, and urban planning. Students of the studio annually win architecture competitions including Velux and ArchiPrix, and they further succeed working in the top companies.

In conclusion, the research expectations include scoping alternative educational institutions, analyzing their methodology dedicated to young architects in Kazan, and exploring their benefits for pursuing a successful career. The result will be useful for architects who search for new approaches to developing their skills and knowledge about alternative methods of learning and teaching architecture.

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## **1. General architectural education for architects in Russia, specifically in Kazan.**

The education for architects formally starts at the university level in Russia. After finishing secondary school any person can start architectural education. The Bachelor's degree education lasts for 5 years, then a graduate can enter the Master's degree level for 2 years period. PhD level is also available after the successful completion of a Master's degree. The structure of educational levels is based according to the Russian and international standards of the educational stages in Architecture. However, what outstands in Russian architecture education is the entry competition to any university.

The next paragraph is devoted to describing the Russian architecture educational system; the high standard requirements in specific skills such as traditional drawing, technical drafting, and composition are the main selection criteria for entering any architecture university. Considering this fact we can mention that architecture alternative institutions have appeared as a consequence of these requirements in the educational system.

First, the completion of the Russian State Exam (EGE) as an overall completion of High school education is a final step for any Russian pupil, including 2 mandatory subjects – mathematics and Russian language – and 2-3 mandatory subjects free of choice. All universities demand about 2-3 free-of-choice subjects to fulfill through State Exam depending on the bachelor education program's major. For example, a person wishing to study medicine, besides mathematics and the Russian language, should additionally pass state exams in biology and chemistry, future lawyers are required for supplementary exams in social studies and history, etc. As for applying for an architecture bachelor's degree, there are no relevant supplementary state exams from high school subjects that can be considered for application, therefore, architecture universities provide their exams instead of free-of-choice exams.<sup>3</sup> These exams will differ for each architecture university since institutions can demand internal exams individually. It can include exams in traditional drawing, geometrical drawing, technical drafting,<sup>4</sup> drawing of the interior,<sup>5</sup> compositional drawing, and others. It can differ also within

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<sup>3</sup> MARCHI official website, Bachelor degree 2022, 2022, last viewed: 24.10.2022, [https://marhi.ru/abiturient/A\\_BAK/index.php](https://marhi.ru/abiturient/A_BAK/index.php)

<sup>4</sup> KSUAE official website, Institute of Architecture and Design, 2022, last viewed: 24.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/applicant/postupay.php?ysclid=I9ouc2z1zz472825509#ap>

<sup>5</sup> SpbGASU official website, Examples of art works (previous years) in fragment of interior, n.d., last viewed: 24.10.2022.

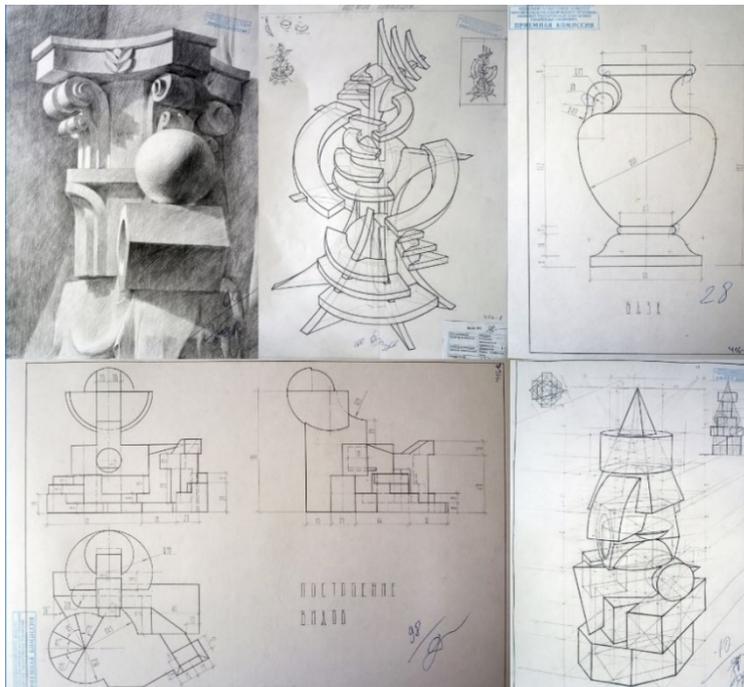
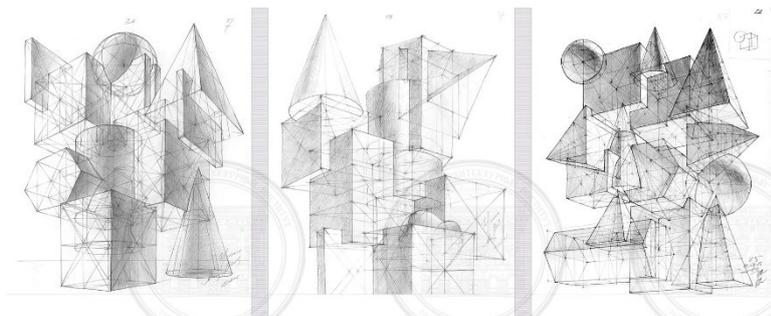
[https://www.spbgasu.ru/Abiturientam/Vstupitelnye\\_ispytaniya/Dopolnitelnye\\_vstupitelnye\\_ispytaniya\\_tvorcheskoy\\_napravlenosti/Obrazcy\\_jezkamenacionnyh\\_rabot/](https://www.spbgasu.ru/Abiturientam/Vstupitelnye_ispytaniya/Dopolnitelnye_vstupitelnye_ispytaniya_tvorcheskoy_napravlenosti/Obrazcy_jezkamenacionnyh_rabot/)

the niche of the exam, for instance, both Moscow (MARCHI) and Kazan (KSUAE) Architecture Universities require exams in traditional drawing fulfilled in personal presence— however, in Moscow University it is drawing of the antic head statue, in Kazan – drawing of antic capitals or vases.

**Comparison of internal exams to Architecture Universities in the biggest cities of Russia –Moscow (MARCHI), Kazan (KSUAE), and St. Petersburg (SpbGASU)**



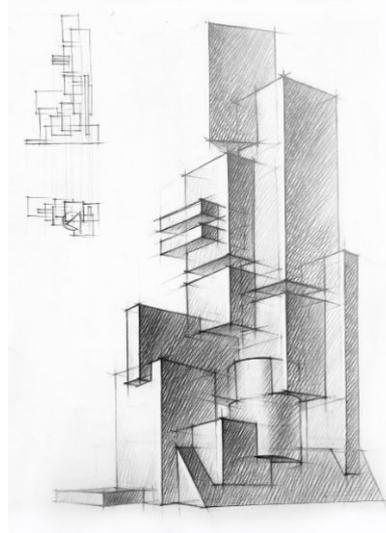
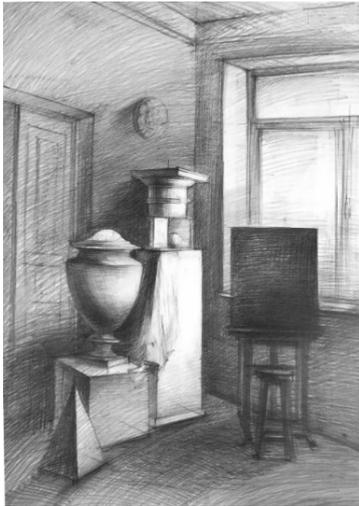
*Examples of internal exams to Moscow Architecture Institute (MARCHI). Top row - exams in the discipline of antic head drawing, bottom row – volumetric-imaginary composition.<sup>6</sup>*



*Examples of internal exams to Kazan Architecture University (KSUAE). From top left to bottom right exams in disciplines: 1. Traditional drawing, 2. Composition, 3. Technical drawing – 1, 4. Technical drawing -2, 5. Volumetric-imaginary composition.<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> MARCHI official website, Tasks of exams, 2022, last viewed: 24.10.2022, [https://marhi.ru/abiturient/A\\_BAK/ris\\_golova.php](https://marhi.ru/abiturient/A_BAK/ris_golova.php)

<sup>7</sup> KSUAE, Institute of Architecture.



*Examples of internal exams to St. Petersburg Architecture University (SpbGASU). The left one is in the discipline of interior drawing composition, the right one- volumetric-imaginary composition.<sup>8</sup>*

By the following images it can be seen what a high standard of drawing images is required to produce on the exams –prospective students should already obtain professional skills in drawing, know most of the drawing techniques, have a sense of beauty, harmony, composition – these are the main skills tested in future architecture students for admission to any architecture university. Based on KGASU Kazan State Architecture University, the 5 exams are required in total (mathematics, Russian language, 3 drawing exams), rank with the points (100 points maximum for each), and the entry points summary must be more than 184 points for full paid admission to university (without scholarship),<sup>9</sup> and in average starting from 400 out of 500 points for admission with tuition-free education with monthly scholarship according to the analysis of table of admitted students in the admission year 2022 (30 available budget places available out of competition of 363 applicants).<sup>10</sup>

According to a simple calculation, only about 8% of prospective students are permitted free education and monthly scholarship for obtaining a bachelor's degree in architecture at Kazan Architecture University KSUAE.

Considering this situation, there is a huge competition for entering architecture education, with high standard requirements that force future students to start preparing for entering architecture education as early as possible. Learning drawing skills, a sense of composition, and beauty

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<sup>8</sup> SpbGASU, Examples of art works.

<sup>9</sup> KSUAE, Institute of Architecture.

<sup>10</sup> KSUAE official website, List of admitted students, 04.08.2022, last viewed: 24.10.2026, p. 17-22.  
<https://www.kgasu.ru/applicant/priem2022/files/stat/spisokbudj.pdf>

takes years to acquire, therefore, the possibilities have appeared through alternative and additional education in architecture for pre-university level students.

Starting from the Architecture universities, the such institution as KSUAE organizes the preparatory courses specific for their internal exams in 3/5/8 months length.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, KSUAE subdivisional institution DASHKA offers pre-university education, however, starting to work with very young people – pupils of 5-16 years old age group.

## **2. Introduction of the school “DASHKA”**

### *2.1 General information*

"DASHKA" is an abbreviature of Children's architectural and design school of Kazan, and as mentioned before is a subdivision of the Kazan State University of Architecture and Engineering (KSUAE), and it is engaged in professionally directed additional education and pre-university architectural education.

The school has a three-stage educational system depending on age group, where the stage “Studio” is for the 5-10 years old students, stage “School” is for 11-14 years old students and stage “College” is for 15-16 years old students.

According to the official website of the school, the main tasks of the school are: *“Development of children's creative skills and their ability to express themselves; development of figurative, spatial thinking of children; development of the ability to embody one's idea in graphic and three-dimensional compositions; familiarization with architecture and art; professional orientation and familiarity with the professions of an architect, designer; initial preparation for further vocational training.....teaching them ways of self-expression and aesthetic knowledge of the world.”*<sup>12</sup>

Even though DASHKA is a subdivision of KSUAE, it does not have the direct aim to prepare students solely for admission to the architecture university, but to develop their fantasy, creative imaginary vision, and technical skills – model making, drawing, composition creation. Students of the last stage “College” have a more serious and professional education, where they get

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<sup>11</sup> KSUAE official website, Preparatory course Institute of Architecture and Design (IAaD), n.d., last viewed: 24.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/pkiad/>

<sup>12</sup> KSUAE, DASHKA About school.

acquainted with the architecture profession, descriptive geometry, and other professional subjects.<sup>13</sup>

Every year, in addition to traditional classroom education, the school actively participates in competitions, exhibitions, and festivals; much attention is focused on the organization of extracurricular activities (organization of exhibitions and promotions, publications in magazines, publication of postcards and calendars, organization of children's theatrical holidays), which helps to maintain a creative atmosphere at school and stimulate children's motivation in developing artistic skills.

The school has a strong popularity and reputation in Tatarstan and other nearby regions of the country, every year the number of students is growing, and the school trains applicants “who successfully enter the Institute of Architecture and Design of KSUAE and other specialized universities. Among the graduates of the school, there are many successful architects and designers of the Republic of Tatarstan, winners of all-Russian and international competitions, and applicants from Russian, European, and Canadian universities”.<sup>14</sup>

## *2.2 Foundation of the school*

The Children's Architectural School was born at the Faculty of Architecture of the Kazan Engineering University (KSUAE today) in 1987, initially as a small studio for children's creativity, in 1990 it became known as the Children's Architectural School. It was created among the educational institutions of additional preschool and school education in the architectural and artistic direction, which arose on the initiative of the architectural universities and faculties of our country - a process that had no foreign analogs.<sup>15</sup>

Its director (from 1998 to 2018) - Candidate of Architecture Marina Zabruskova in one of her interviews declares: “*Initially, DASHKA was not a school, it was formed as a studio for classes with young children at the architectural faculty of KISI (abbrev. For Kazan Engineering Institute – renamed today KSUAE). Explaining the appearance of such studios in universities of different Russian cities was quite common in the late 80s, it draws attention to the actual*

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<sup>13</sup> KSUAE Institute of Architecture and Design, Interview with M. Zabruskova – ex-director of DASHKA, Art Park Black Lake, 18.05.2013, Youtube 9.50-10.50, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMdcx0XoTfQ>

<sup>14</sup> KSUAE, DASHKA About school.

<sup>15</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA History, n.d., last viewed: 19.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/history.php>

*problem of professional self-identification. Limited by rigid standards and a narrow range of tasks, the architect (practitioner, as well as the teacher) of those years was cut off from what he was guided by at the moment professional choice - from the creative side of your business<sup>16</sup>. Organization at architectural faculties of technical universities such as studios for the children of employees can be viewed as a kind of compensatory form of activity that allows feeling they belong to the creative sphere<sup>17</sup>.*

Kazan studio (only in 1990 it was transformed into a school for children of age 6 to 17 years old) was organized by Associate Professor of the Department of Fundamentals of Architecture M.T. Lin. His assistants were his own students, who from the very beginning determined the originality of this pedagogical experiment - the processes of creative development of the students and the formation of an expanded idea for teachers of a new application of their creative skills.<sup>18</sup> This initial message can be seen as the basis of one of the main school traditions (most of the school teachers are students of senior courses at the Institute of Architecture and Design KSUAE). This experiment rooting as well in 1897 when Kazan Art School (KHS) led by architect Karl Mufke launched the architecture faculty. And this is the main similarity between the two schools of KHS and DASHKA - the "combination by teachers of the architectural department practice with teaching, which ensured the "early" connection of their students to direct professional activity".<sup>19</sup>

Over the years, the school was headed by: Associate Professor, Candidate of Architecture Lin M.T., architect Kotelnikov K.V.; architect Artamonova Yu.I., architect Ustinov A.V., Associate Professor, Candidate of Architecture Zabruskova M.Yu. At present, the school is headed by the architect Latypova M.S., who herself was a young student of DASHKA<sup>20</sup>.

### *2.3 Background to methodology of the DASHKA*

The methodology of DASHKA is based on the author's methodology of professors of the school. At present, the core of the team is made up of teachers from the Institute of Architecture and Design of KSUAE, practicing architects, designers, and artists. Initially, the educational

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<sup>16</sup> Notes from the author: considering the Soviet time strict political regime forcing architects working on governmental utile and functional projects solely.

<sup>17</sup> Kirillov A., Architectural childhood, *Energorazvitiye*, 2015, № 1-2., page 18–25.

<sup>18</sup> Ryabov N.F., Burova T.Y., Factors of influence in the formation and work of regional children's architecture schools, *Izvestia KSUAE*, 2017, № 1, page 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ryabov, Burova, Factors of influence., page 5.

<sup>20</sup> Business-gazeta, "DASHKA" or Exciting path into profession of architect-designer, 06.09.2018, last viewed: 19.10.2022, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/394257>

process was methodically worked out by student architects of KSUAE. Their methodology is based on research thesis and articles in the pedagogical and architecture fields<sup>21</sup>. A special feature of the school is brought as well by representatives of other professional fields: heuristics teacher, mathematician Sher S.Yu, teachers and musicians - Galiakberova D.R. and Stroganova O.O., bringing the focus on acquaintance with the musical culture and the use of music in the process of visual and artistic education, the holistic development of the visual and audio spheres of perception.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to professional methods, since 1998 the school has been guided by the general methodological principles of education according to the Elkonin-Davydov system – it is a pedagogical technology that promotes the gradual “cultivation” in schoolchildren the theoretical thinking, thinking skills, and development of the ability to acquire new knowledge.<sup>23</sup> This is reflected in the project program of pre-university architectural and design education "Young Architect" (the head of the team of authors is ex-director Zabruskova M.Yu.), which received a diploma of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republican competition of educational programs in 1998, conducted by the Institute for Advanced Studies of Education Workers of the Republic of Tatarstan. Other author’s methodologies that are important to mention include personally designed teaching methods of Smirnova T.V. in architectural composition and of Ryabov N.F. in the integrated course of the history of art and composition, they were awarded diplomas of the 1st degree at the 3rd Republican competition (2001).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ryabov N.F., Burova T.Y., Factors of influence in the formation and work of regional children's architecture schools, *Izvestia KSUAE*, 2017, № 1; Khaziakhmetova E. V., Akhtiamov I. I., Akhtiamova R. H. Principles of forming of architectural space of school on the basis of Reggio Emilia pedagogical methodology, *Architecture and Modern Information Technologies*. 2019. Iss. 3 (48); Ryabov N.F., Design and game practices in the procedural organization of the educational space on the example of the children's architectural and design school «DASHKA» KSUAE, n.d., *Izvestia KSUAE*, 2021, № 3 (57). DOI:10.52409/20731523\_2021\_3\_61., and others.

<sup>22</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA History, n.d., last viewed: 19.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/history.php>

<sup>23</sup> Gordeeva T.O., Cognitive and Educational Effects of the Elkonin—Davydov System of Developmental Education: Opportunities and Limitations, 2020, *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 2020. Vol. 16, no. 4, 14–25 , doi:10.17759/chp.2020160402

<sup>24</sup> KSUAE, DASHKA History.

### 3. Methodology of the school “DASHKA”

#### 3.1 Children – Teacher relations

As was mentioned before, from the foundation of the school, the tradition to have students-architects as assistants staff of the leading professors was the first main feature of the methodology; this creative teaching approach of DASHKA provides personal and professional growth. This is proven by the example of one of the leading teachers of the school - associate professor of the design department of KSUAE T.Yu.Burova. From 1991-1992 she was a student at the school "DASHKA"; later she became a student of architecture Faculty of KSUAE, she started teaching at DASHKA herself. Early experience in this practice predetermined the direction of further professional achievements for T. Burova – she further worked at the departments of the Institute of architecture and design of KSUAE. Later her daughter studied also at the same school.<sup>25</sup>

The studying-teaching with generations experience with example by T. Yu. Burova proves that DASHKA has a special positive atmosphere that encourages to return to this school again and again. M.Zabruskova, explaining the formation of the school team, especially emphasizes the importance of psychological comfort: *In DASHKA, such an atmosphere was initially created where you don't feel like you are at (regular) school. There is no competitive system; the school accepts any student who wishes to study in DASHKA, and treats him as a person, and not as a student”*

*It turned out to be almost a family atmosphere - this is a very valuable thing. When we accept new teachers, we proclaim it as an important program point”.*<sup>26</sup> Such an atmosphere is kept by now as well. The graduate of DASHKA in 2016 Arthur Muhametshin shares his point of view about his relationship with professors: *“S.V. Novikov and A.N. Moskaleev were the most inspiring professors for me, they had their personal methodology, but the most valuable – they were extremely involved into teaching, motivated to share their experience and knowledge, giving great constructive commenting to our projects, as well as was fun to be nearby with, were laughing with us equally. I could ask any question and find an answer. Stepan Viktorovich (Novikov) feels for me as close as a godfather, we still keep in touch; he led me all the way through DASHKA, he long-term supported and helped me, further when I was at Kazan*

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<sup>25</sup> Ryabov, Burova, Factors of influence., page 6.

<sup>26</sup> Kirillov A., Architectural childhood, page 21.

*Architecture University KSUAE as well as he was guiding me with advice and teaching there - he was truly a mentor for me throughout architecture professional life.”<sup>27</sup>*

### *3.2 Teaching architecture through theatrical activity*

The child-teacher relationship does not include only classroom education. The base tradition of DASHKA to organize theatrical events in the celebration of the New Year (31 December of each year is greatly celebrated in Russia) for young students of the stage “Studio” (5-10 years old age group), roots from the foundation of the school, keeps its role in methodology as well.<sup>28</sup> In determining the origins of the tradition of inclusion in the educational process of the student-architects of KSUAE University, a strong connection can be seen again with the above-mentioned Kazan Art School, with a professor Karl Mufke. Along with teaching in the architecture department, he was engaged in the organization of student clubs, exhibitions, competitions, organization of theatrical plays.<sup>29</sup>

Theatrical performances are a mandatory part of the educational process with the subject “Model making” for children of the “School” stage (11-14 years old). For children – it is an opportunity for self-expression and learning new skills, passing through the necessary development of “social adaptation” as well.<sup>30</sup> However, not only children benefit from this activity but their teachers. For teachers who are young people themselves, students-architects of KSUAE, it is an additional opportunity to acquire new competencies for architecture planning – in understanding the demands of people of any age. Architect E. Razuvalova, who was previously a student-architect teaching in DASHKA (2000-2003), affirms that the theatrical activity became a start point in her professional career, and during the professional design of a school project (in Yalta, 2016, client – ASK “TatStroiPoject”) she designed the theatrical scene, considering the knowledge of children behavior patterns and inter-communication between children and teaching staff.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Appendix 1. Interview with graduate of DASHKA – Arthur Muhametshin.

<sup>28</sup> Ryabov N.F., Design and game practices in the procedural organization of the educational space on the example of the children's architectural and design school «DASHKA» KSUAE, n.d., Izvestia KSUAE, 2021, № 3 (57), page 61-62. DOI:10.52409/20731523\_2021\_3\_61.

<sup>29</sup> Ryabov N.F., Design practices «DASHKA», page 69.

<sup>30</sup> Khaziakhmetova E. V., Akhtiamov I. I., Akhtiamova R. H. Principles of forming of architectural space of school on the basis of Reggio Emilia pedagogical methodology, Architecture and Modern Information Technologies. 2019. Iss. 3 (48). P. 148–163.

<sup>31</sup> Ryabov N.F., Design practices «DASHKA», page 65.

DASHKA believes that organizing thematic theatrical performances and building the associative connection "architecture - theater", increases the productivity and effectiveness of obtaining competencies related to flexible creative thinking and, as a result, high susceptibility to the surrounding world, the ability to generate non-typical solutions. Thematic theatrical performances are an example of non-standard training in new competencies that go beyond the classroom system; it is an effective form of developing them for both children and teachers, implementation of which includes, on one hand, learning the theatrical process - script writing, role distribution, rehearsal process, creation of the costumes and scenery, and in another hand—skills of project development (starting from stating the idea to model the decorations and then a demonstration on stage).<sup>32</sup>



*Costumes and interior decorations modeled by students and teachers for a theatrical performance in 2018 for the left picture and in 2015 for the right picture.<sup>33</sup>*

### *3.3 School interiors as part of the educational process*

Today the school building contains 30 educational auditoriums, including common spaces at each floor (4 floors in total in the building by address Kazan, Erchova, 31B, 420061). The total floor area available for students is 2500 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ryabov, Design practices in «DASHKA», page 68-69.

<sup>33</sup> Latipova M.S., O.O. Stroganova, Teachers and students of children school "DASHKA" have organized the New Year theatrical event, KSUAE official website, DASHKA, outdoor class events, 11.01.2019, last viewed 25.10.2022, [https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/news/vneshkoly/prepodavateli-i-uchashchiesya-detskoy-shkoly-dashka-ustroili-novogodniy-spektakl-/](https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/news/vneshkoly/prepodavateli-i-uchashchiesya-detskoy-shkoly-dashka-ustroili-novogodniy-spektakl/)

<sup>34</sup> Lagoda M., Interview about school DASHKA, 23.10.2022, Annex 2.

Interiors of the school play a significant importance in the school “DASHKA”. The head of the school and teaching staff pay careful attention to the creation of a motivating atmosphere for their students. The positive influence of it on the work atmosphere is proven by the words of A. Muhametshin, a graduate student of DASHKA: *“I loved the atmosphere, I felt much more psychologically comfortable there than in the regular school, since there was the atmosphere of development ... it was an artistic atmosphere, a lot of art and best works were exhibited, encouraging me.”*<sup>35</sup>

Besides the permanent function of the interiors as a communal and exhibition space, especially, the corridors undergo a transformation in their function during celebrations. Conversion of a corridor of the first floor of the school with an adjacent hall and educational classrooms to the theater space brings a new functional pattern to the school. Transformation is taken care of the way that every element of scenery and decoration must have the proper amount of associative values and game potential. Each December as part of the subject classes of the course "Model making" students groups of the "School" stage (11-14 years old) master the proper skills and abilities in the creation of fantasy concepts and forms, where a selection of materials and color must be predetermined by the scenario development of the future performance. An obligatory condition is the creation of scaled concept models that must answer the theatrical topic of the following event. The educational model further is used as a decorative background of the theatrical story. However, during the “Model making” class the students must validate the constructional and compositional clarity of the model concept reflecting the given theme.

The form of organization of educational and project work is collective; and the stages of implementation include the presentation of the task, its discussion, diverse graphical search of concept representation, selection of the best option, constructive design of the form, layout execution of parts with their subsequent assembly into a single volume, installation of a decorative element in the school space. Placement of the scenery elements collectively teaches children the proper methods of spatial identification and organization: learning space boundaries, and identifying paths of movement, zones, nodes, its spatial accents. Simultaneously, the decoration and plot of the theatrical act are always dedicated to Russian folk or literary fairy tales and urban legends.<sup>36</sup> Considering the above-mentioned, we can make an assumption about the pedagogical concept of the school by including theatrical activity in

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<sup>35</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ryabov, Design practices «DASHKA», page 66.

the curriculum of children's architecture school: besides learning hard skills in model making, the design process promotes the acquaintance of children with classical poems and stories, development of the skills of visual expression through the cultural content recognizable to any child.

### *3.4. City as an extension of the school DASHKA*

The special feature of DASHKA education is the focus on the involvement of urban spaces in the educational process. Involvement the streets and parks of Kazan in the educational process is a traditional tool of the school in the creation of links among the institution, the city, and the students. The pedagogical aim is to raise awareness of the sense of belonging to a certain place. One of such activities is the summer open-air drawing course. It is a mandatory subject for all stages of students (5-16 years old).

Open-air drawing offers students the opportunity to draw elements of the built environment on site. According to the methodology of the school, the presence at the scene is important in the development of measuring and composing skills and it also increases sensitivity towards proportions. All these skills are necessary for children at each stage of the training. At the same time, children learn more information about Kazan, and gain stronger contact with local architecture and historical places, since the city walks include as well lectures and visits to museums.<sup>37</sup>



*Left picture – students are in an open-air drawing class in a historically significant city location in Kazan Kremlin. Right picture – drawing of one of the students after the summer practice.<sup>38</sup>*

<sup>37</sup> O.O.Stroganova, Students pass through summer open-air drawing practice in DASHKA at the end of semester, KSUAE official website, DASHKA News, 27.07.2022, last viewed: 27.10.2022 <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/news/dashka/v-detskoy-arkhitekturno-dizaynerskoy-shkole-dashka-v-kontse-kazhdogo-uchebnogo-goda-ucheniki-prokhod/>

<sup>38</sup> Stroganova, Students pass drawing practice.

Other communication of student activity with the city happens through creative workshops and exhibitions that the school organizes in city museums or parks. Through form-making tasks dedicated to workshops or exhibitions, children and their teachers (the organizers of such city events) form creative skills, understand their belonging to the location, and develop consciousness about the importance of dialogue with the city through a certain project.<sup>39</sup>

One example of such an experiment is the installation in the city park Black Lake – composition from tubular elements with an attached exhibition of school works (18.05.2013), where the educational process was dedicated to teaching students the skills of project creation - starting from a paper idea in the classroom to a communal construction in three-dimensional space. A. Muhametshin - the student who was a participant in this workshop as well, shares in an interview the skills students learn through such project design practice: *"finishing work till the end, ....learning skills of adaptivity – that direction of creation can change dramatically with each work stage.... Critical and analytical thinking, working with research before the start of the work, ability to generate ideas, learning the mechanism of idea creation and elaboration, learning to manage with deadlines, speed-creation, creation of a project for couple days, learning how to defend the idea."*<sup>40</sup>



*Left and right pictures - model constructions of associative architecture form from Tatar and Mongolian culture – yurts, and exhibition of drawings in the study of constructivism style.*<sup>41</sup>

Another example of student integration into the city space is the exhibition "Sound Portrait of the Kazan Kremlin" (3-9 Oct 2019), initiated by professor of school D. Galiakberova. The concept of the project is work with a conscious perception of the architectural spaces of the

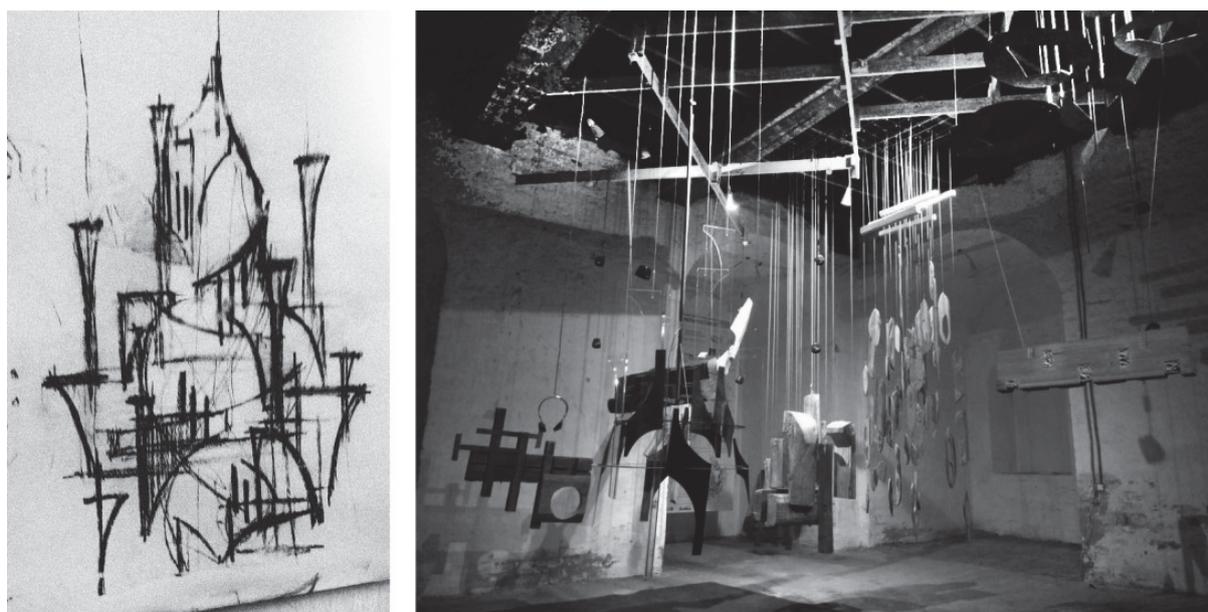
<sup>39</sup> Ryabov, Burova, Factors of influence, page 6.

<sup>40</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>41</sup> DASHKA, Art Park Black Lake, 18.05.2013, Youtube 9.50-10.50, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMdcx0XoTfQ>

Kazan Kremlin through the prism of studying the sound landscape of the area. Choosing sound as an instrument is a part of the methodology of DASHKA, designed by D. Galiakberova. As a musician and mathematician by education, she incorporated music into the subject requirements of the school with the class “Musical aesthetics”, where her thesis work "Sounds around us – a symphony of space"<sup>42</sup> became the base of the subject.<sup>43</sup>

The aim of the project has its role for both students of the school DASHKA, and for the citizens of Kazan. For the citizens, it is an opportunity to pay attention to a sound component of the historical area<sup>44</sup>, and for the DASHKA students - a creative task devoted to imagination development. The musical impressions of students during the walks had to be represented later in images, by means of graphics and color. The basic rule of representation is that it also must be a project development, with analysis of the sounds, calculation of the patterns, and drawing out the culmination points, showing the emotional expressiveness of sound through lines and graphics.<sup>45</sup>



*Image of graphical drawing and installation in Tainitskaya tower of Kremlin museum.<sup>46</sup>*

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<sup>42</sup> Galiakberova D.R., "Sounds around us – a symphony of space", Kazan: New knowledge, 2013, ISBN 978-5-906668-04-2

<sup>43</sup> KSUAE official website, Teaching stuff – Galiakberova Dilyara Rashitovna, n.d., last review: 27.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/kollektiv.php>

<sup>44</sup> KSUAE, Galiakberova Dilyara Rashitovna.

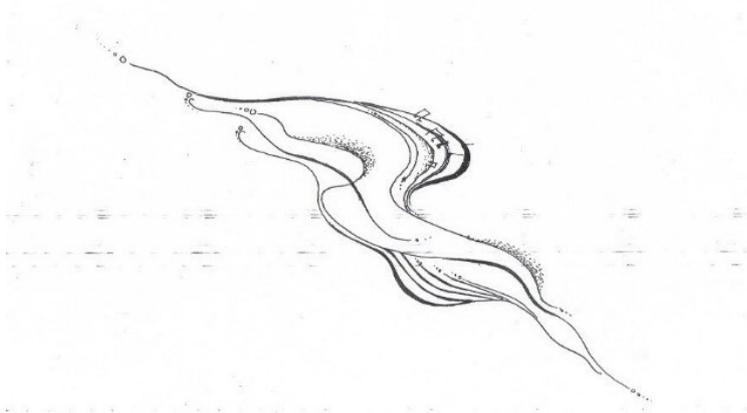
<sup>45</sup> Galiakberova D. R., Infographics as an Object for a Demonstrating Kazan Kremlin Territory Soundscape, Art of sound and light, Materials of International scientific-practical research, 2018, page 42, ISBN 978-5-86845-233-8

<sup>46</sup> Ryabov, Design practices «DASHKA», page 64.

### *3.5 Traditional classroom education with the non-traditional methodology of the DASHKA*

As mentioned before, the school has a three-step system of education: “Studio” (5-10 years old), “School” (11-14 years old), and “College” (15-16 years old).

Students pass through various classes and tasks, some of which last throughout all stages of the education. One of them is the subject of “Musical aesthetics” which focuses on the acquaintance with the musical culture and the use of music in the process of visual and artistic education, holistic development of visual and audio spheres of perception. The idea of this subject was conceived by D. Galiakberova. She explains about the methodology that the creative tasks of “Musical aesthetics” are based on the fact that there are several patterns of composition formation that appear and are common to both fine art and music (the principles of repetition, imitation, variation, contrast, climax, etc.).<sup>47</sup> These principles can be easily translated into graphical images through an analysis of a composition of a particular musical piece and an understanding of its main formation base.<sup>48</sup> A student of DASHKA gives positive feedback about this class as well: *“I loved we were taught to study in a non-traditional way. For me it was the first shock when we were given a task to listen to music and draw it. It in general changes the perspective on the vision of the world. You start to see the city differently - through colors, and imaginary figures... Studying about the connection of incompatible things was the strongest in their methodology..”*<sup>49</sup>



*Drawing example from the subject  
“Musical aesthetics” designed by  
the professor of the class  
Galiakberova D.R.<sup>50</sup>*

<sup>47</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA Methodological activity, n.d., last viewed: 19.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/history.php>

<sup>48</sup> Galiakberova D. R., Artistic interpretations of the forms of the musical compositions by the students of school “DASHKA”, n.d., last viewed: 28.10.2022, <http://www.rexvakazan.ru/books/gn-aidarova/6-dr-galiakberova-khud.php>

<sup>49</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>50</sup> Drawing of graduated student of DASHKA - Alena Dolzhikova, provided by author.

Other subjects that follow students throughout all years of education are drawing and modeling. To understand these subjects' involvement in the educational structure, it is worth mentioning their role in each stage of education.

In the stage “Studio” students-children only start to get acquainted with drawing materials – gouache, aquarelle, pens, colored pencils, work with plasticine and alternative materials. The task of the school for the students of age 5-10 years old is not concluded to train architecture directly but to create additional creative and playful time spent for raising interest in art and to sustain the developing fantasy.<sup>51</sup> The classes of the “Studio” stage are only once a week (Saturday or Sunday) in order to not overwhelm a child with work but to encourage additional education. Most of the techniques young students learn in this stage in drawing class are feeling the correlation between colors, differentiation of warm/ cold, light/dark colors, working with lines – thinner/ thicker, angular/smooth, working with composition – closer/further or foreground/background. The works are worked through playful and positive topics connected to architectural notions and forms, folks and literature, nature, fantasy stories, and others.<sup>52</sup>



*Pictures from left to right - “Mushrooms”, “Orangery in the night city”, “Architecture of the cartoon Karlsson on the Roof”<sup>53</sup>*

As for the modeling class – the aims of the subject include teaching using a cutter, and glue, working with various materials, and developing three-dimensional vision and a sense of composition. It can be a mixed technique of modeling incorporated into a drawing task, or a

<sup>51</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA to the applicant, n.d., last viewed: 19.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/applicant.php>

<sup>52</sup> Children architecture school DASHKA, official webpage in social media Vkontakte. Last viewed: 29.10.2022, <https://vk.com/public212425408>

<sup>53</sup> DASHKA, post from 19.10.2022; from 12.10.2022, from 17.07.2022, Vkontakte

model form development, working with volume<sup>54</sup>. The main methodological approach of working with the young category of students is to that they must be easy to fulfill. Children should know they are able to cope with any type of task. Secondly, it should be a captivating idea of the work, so children could be encouraged to finish it. Besides the hard skills, DASHKA tries to input the soft skills to students, including kindness, friendship, and free expression of themselves. M. Lagoda – a teacher of school DASHKA with 17 years of experience in teaching states: *“I think that’s what stands out DASHKA is that students can feel a positive atmosphere here, and feel “free”*.”<sup>55</sup>



*Pictures from left to right – graduation project of stage “Studio”, during subject of model making, model “Background and foreground”*.”<sup>56</sup>

The “School” stage for the 11-14 years old group age is considered a more professional-oriented education with a focus on giving children the basic hard skills in concept creation, art skills, compositional skills, volumetric-imaginary skills; the ability to model in a layout, broadening horizons in the field of architecture. This is the stage where are added specific knowledge acquiring - introduction to architecture project creation, color combination, and architecture history. The subject that students of the “School” stage have are “Drawing”, “Model making”, “Composition”, “Coloristics”, “History of Architecture” and “Musical aesthetics”. Also, the school organizes sessions in teaching additional creative skills in classes on “Cartoon

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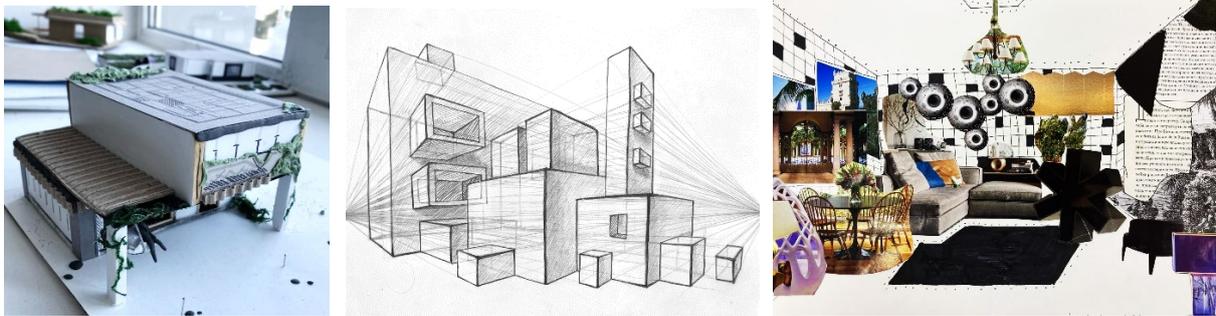
<sup>54</sup> DASHKA official webpage Vkontakte.

<sup>55</sup> Lagoda M., Interview about school DASHKA, 23.10.2022, Annex 2.

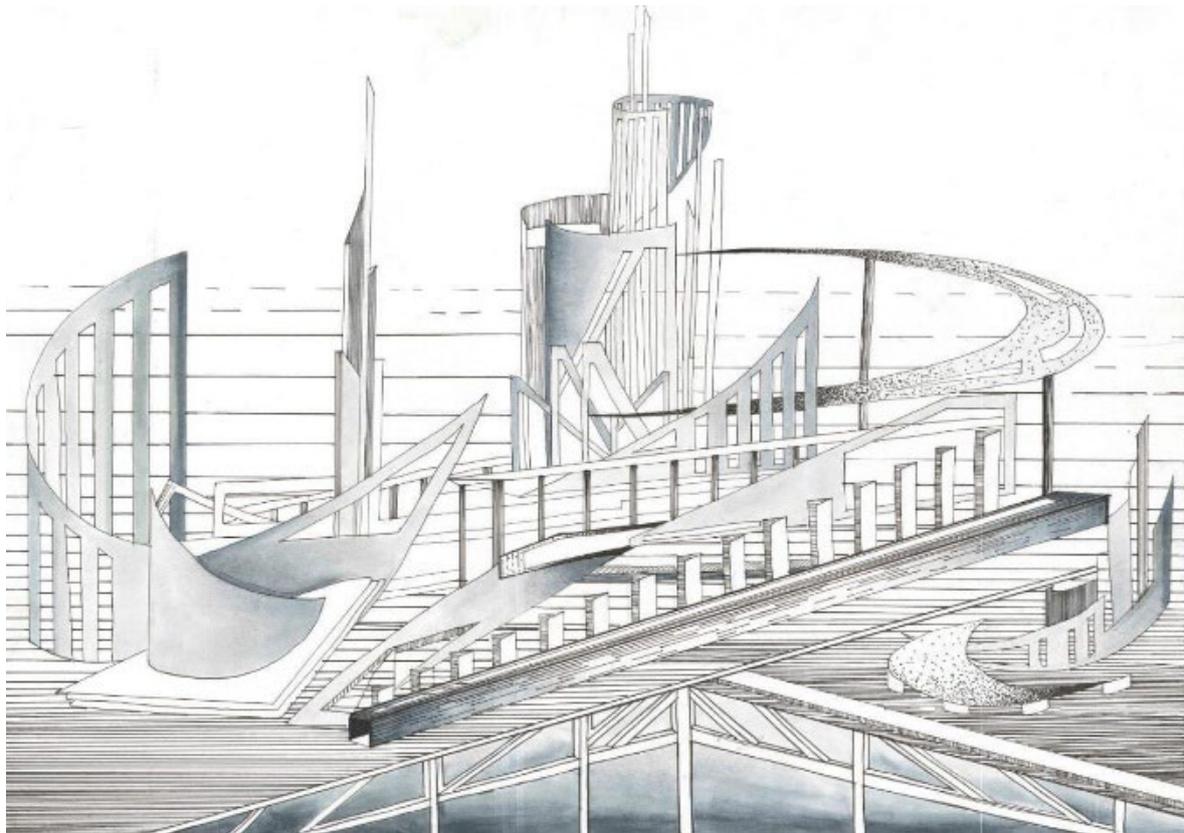
<sup>56</sup> DASHKA, post from 19.10.2022; from 04.08.2022, from 03.10.2022, Vkontakte

animation”, “Graphical design (using a tablet)”, “Basics of composition, model making and theatre”, and classes in 3D printing.<sup>57</sup>

By the following examples of students’ works, we can observe the skills that DASHKA develops in this stage - volumetric design, creativity, knowledge of basics of architecture and art, ability in various techniques in drawing and modeling.



Pictures from left to right – tasks: “design of private housing”, “factory”, “ modern interior collage”.<sup>58</sup>

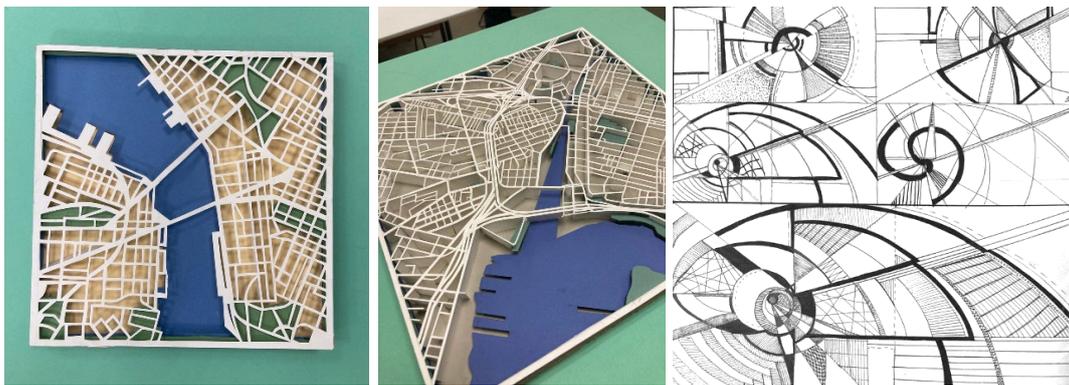


<sup>57</sup> KSUAE, Art Park Black Lake, Youtube 9.50-10.50.; KSUAE official website, DASHKA to the applicant; Annex 2.

<sup>58</sup> DASHKA, post from 05.04.2022, post from 17.04.2022, post from 06.04.2022, Vkontakte.

Picture of final work of stage “School” before the entrance to stage “College” – individual design of “city node”, representing the strong development of hard skills acquired in 3 years of the education in this stage – work with concept, architectural composition, color, and graphics.<sup>59</sup>

The stage “College” (14-16 group age) is more architectural-oriented than other stages. At this stage, children are getting prepared for Diploma work – the simulation of architecture projects that they will have at any architecture university. The students continue the same subjects they had in the “School” stage with the addition of the subject “Technical drafting” (other words, Descriptive Geometry)<sup>60</sup>. The development of hard skills is more intense at this stage, with a more realistic architectural work atmosphere – with rigid deadlines and higher standards of work and requirements. Teenagers obtain a deeper knowledge of the basics of architecture, architecture history, and even in concepts of city design.



*Pictures from left to right – pictures one and two are the results of the subject “model making”, and picture three is the result of the subject “Musical aesthetics”<sup>61</sup>.*

The stage of Diploma work is worth mentioning in more detail since it is a true pre-education for any architecture university, where students learn project development and presentation skills. Some students explain about the last stage experience that teachers are suppressing and pushing students in the Diploma year but it is a great learning experience for them.<sup>62</sup>

The methodological value of diploma work is that in general, such a term as "project" becomes a new concept and challenge for a student. And the final project must be a defined and direct result of each stage of the design. The specific focus of the process of the diploma is learning

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<sup>59</sup> DASHKA, post from 27.05.2022, Vkontakte.

<sup>60</sup> Annex 2.

<sup>61</sup> DASHKA, post from 16.04.2022; post from 06.04.2022, Vkontakte.

<sup>62</sup> Annex 1.

characterization and conceptualization of their design, with the elimination of abstract content. Shortly, creating work that allows obtaining skills in the formation of an object and space, with learning to insert function connected with human life for work, rest, and leisure.

The difficulty of the diploma task is that for the student it is challenging to understand the core difference between the architecture project from previously elaborated educational tasks. Tasks of previous stages before the diploma were not connected with each other, but in this stage, children should understand the coherence and connection between steps of work and how it is related to the final design at the end. The main feature of this particular educational stage is the complexity and volumetric amount of the final task, including both the functional aspect of the formation of space and its elements, as well as the challenge of forming an enriched concept. New skills that students learn though is that the composition of the project should not be abstract - it should express the specific concept, connected to “person” or/and the functions. The main aspects of Vitruvius’s “strength, utility and beauty” should also represent the main aspects of diploma work.

A successful result of a graduating student is typically reached when professors give a clear statement about the diploma work process, highlighting steps of work with a certain time frame and deadline.

The first stage of the work is the choice of the topic of the diploma. To understand this stage for a student, several parameters are asked to be determined. One of them is to assure that the topic is familiar to a student. The topic also must be up-to-date and must have access to information resources since DASHKA teaches to base diploma work on research, developing analytical skills. The diploma work is considered not fulfilled and successful if no research is provided. And another essential parameter, the topic of the diploma project is asked to be as personalized and interesting for the student as possible; the student must be motivated to work long-term on the project and enjoy the task. When choosing a topic, professors ask students to identify the problem and become conscious of the context of the idea, its relevance, and theoretical and practical background.

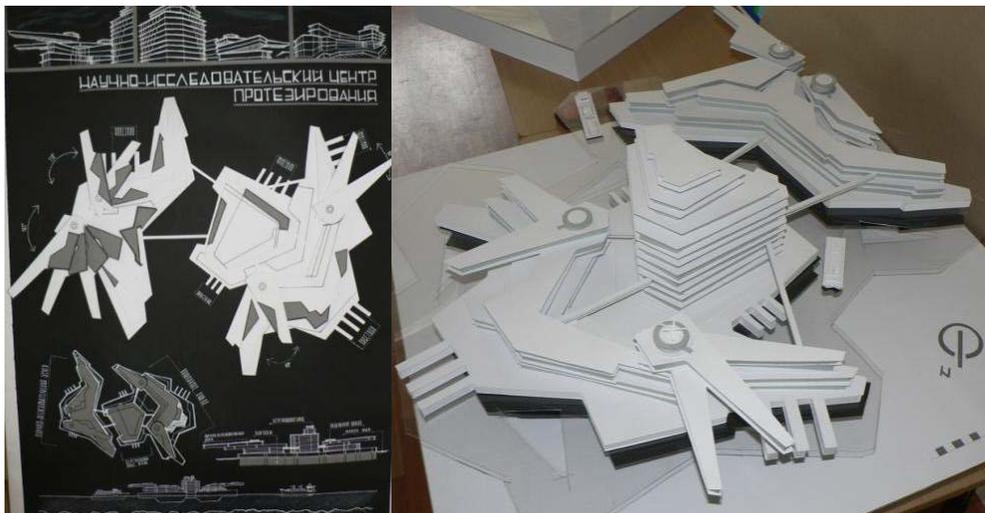
The second stage is the birth of an idea, the formation of an image. At this stage, it is asked to form a clear statement in order to be able to represent the idea graphically. At the same time, at this stage student works on the verbal-associative image of keywords, definitions, and phrases of the design statement. For achieving the desired visual result, the student must prepare a

diverse amount of graphical solution that reflects his concept idea the most, and choose the most suitable representation.

The third stage is the formation of the concept, the sketch proposal. The creation of a design concept is a totally individual process of the student, and the professor should not influence the solution of the design. The concept of the project is asked to be represented through the architectural composition, with its relevant accents, and at the same time to reflect it through the mass of the building and the function.

The fourth stage is the pre-final stage when a student must prepare the final project proposal. At this moment, a student must show the idea of his project through understandable architectural images – floorplans, site plans, facades, sections, axonometric and perspective views.

The fifth stage is a diploma presentation. DASHKA includes this stage since it is a necessary part of any future architect – to be able to explain and defend the idea in front of a jury.<sup>63</sup> A diploma presentation is a summary stage of all work a student has performed through the diploma year and the years of education in DASHKA.<sup>64</sup>



Diploma work, 2012, Scientific research center of prosthesis, author Kuzmichev N.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Appendix 1.

<sup>64</sup> Burova T. Yu., Project design – final stage of educational process in children architecture and design school “DASHKA”, National Association of scientists, № 11 (7)/ ARCHITECTURE, 2015, pages 33-35.

<sup>65</sup> Burova, Project design “DASHKA”, page 34.

#### **4. Summary about the school “DASHKA”**

DASHKA is not similar to any other children’s schools in additional education that has appeared, first, as a small circle of KSUAE professors teaching architecture to children, and developed into a school with 2300 students. A school is an alternative place in architecture education without a “statement” to teach solely architecture for students, but smoothly incorporating interest and knowledge in architecture, which results in students applying for architecture universities and successfully entering them. The success of this school is defined by intense training in fantasy and volumetric vision starting with the early stages of education to finishing with the simulation of realistic architecture projects. Various subjects and tasks, friendly atmosphere, encouraging creative space, outdoor city and theatrical activities motivate children to pass through the long-term education during 10 years, develop the skills in drawing, harmonical composition, model making on the professional level, open the talent in creativity, three-dimensional thinking as well as learn the skills useful for life: learning finishing the tasks till the end, the consciousness of any action made; developing stamina, determination, sensitivity to beauty and socializing skills. The devoted paragraphs to intercommunication of school DASHKA with spaces can also teach about details of the project design of such architecture schools – the importance of inclusion of vast corridors and a scene for theatrical events, and outdoor territory for possible workshops exhibitions.

The learning experience about DASHKA draws an idea for possibilities provided by such alternative early education. With help of the school methodology, a student can form a decision about pursuing a professional career in the sphere of architecture from early childhood, as well as learn the necessary skills to fulfill it.

#### 4.1 Photogallery of spaces for the additional education



*From left to right: 1- school library, 2- animation classroom.*



*Exhibition space.*



*From left to right: 1- room of 3D-printing, 2- conference-lecture room.<sup>66</sup>*

<sup>66</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA spaces of additional education, n.d., last viewed 20.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/prostranstva-dopolnitelnogo-obrazovaniya.php>

#### 4.2 Photogallery of spaces for “School” stage.



From left to right: 1- communal space that can transform to lecture hall; 2- corridor.



From left to right: 1- auditorium, 2- entrance to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of “School” stage.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4.3 Photogallery of spaces for “College” stage.



From left to right: 1- recreation zone, 2 and 3 – interiors of corridors.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA interiors of School, n.d., last viewed 20.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/foto/interery-stupeni-shkola.php>

<sup>68</sup> KSUAE official website, DASHKA interiors of School, n.d., last viewed 20.10.2022, <https://www.kgasu.ru/universitet/structure/uos/dashka/intrerery-stupeni-kolledzh.php>

## **5. Studio for KSUAE architecture students TiArch and communal space BFFT.**

### *5.1 Introduction to studio TiArch.*

TiArch - is a studio that is another subdivision of KSUAE opened in 2019. Initiated and led by architect couple Ilnyar and Rezeda Akhtyamovs, it has become another well-spoken place for pursuing architecture education in Kazan. The students of the TiArch studio win international architecture exhibitions including International Design Student Awards 2016 (Re-thinking the Future), Tamayouz International Award 2016, d3 Natural Systems, International VELUX Award 2016, Archiprix International 2017, Archi-World Academy in Munich 2017, TED «PAUSE» 2017, «BIOMIMICRY»: Design Innovation Inspired By Nature 2017, International Finsa Award 2017. Additionally, students of the studio attain experience in internships at world-known studios abroad. Student Alisa Silantieva had an internship in South Korea at the studio Moon Hoon, Anna Andronova had an internship at the Beijing architectural office, Lucia Andreeva had an internship under the guidance of Jose Acebilho in Switzerland and further studied in Barcelona, Diana Bibisheva went to the Netherlands after winning a competition for an internship in the world-famous company MVRDV.<sup>69</sup>

BFFT – it is a creative space where the best architecture students of KSUAE can study the architecture profession by international standards. It also has become a platform for dialogue between architecture students and Kazan citizens. It openly organizes weekly lectures on architecture topics, and anyone in the city is welcome to visit them. Some of the popular topics of lectures are the serial lectures organized by the founder professors about their travels and visits to famous pieces of architecture, and the lectures from the speech of students who had internships in the well-recognized architecture studios of Russia and the world.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Annex 4; E. Fadeeva, Students of KSUAE come by the call of their soul, Business gazeta, 08.09.2017, last viewed: 20.10.2022, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/356630>

<sup>70</sup> BFFT.space official social media page, V Kontakte, last viewed: 22.10.2022, [https://vk.com/bfft.space?from=quick\\_search](https://vk.com/bfft.space?from=quick_search)

### *5.2 History of TiArch and BFFT space.*

In 2016, professor Akhtyamovs created a separate platform for talented and motivated architecture students in order to give a possibility for achieving more productive work and successful results. The studio TiArch started with 6 students and grew to a 40-students-member team in 2020.<sup>71</sup>

The space where the students of TiArch work is called BFFT space, which is an abbreviation of a buffet (in one meaning – canteen, in the other - cabinet, counter). The name of it has a significant meaning – firstly, the studio is situated in the previous canteen of the university, and, secondly, the buffet in Russian culture is a furniture object where the highest quality objects of the house are represented, or in case of the studio – the best architecture projects are exhibited. Opened in 2016 as well, it has become a new modern architecture center for the city of Kazan.<sup>72</sup>

For the creation of the BFFT space, professors have studied the experience of similar space for architects in the schools of France, Sweden, and the Netherlands.<sup>73</sup>

### *5.3 Physical space of BFFT space.*

Besides the reconstruction of the canteen building, an addition was built – a wooden plank façade with an outdoor gallery leading to the new entrance of the studio. The glass curtain was settled between interior and exterior space that defined a new style of design in the whole university complex (further university sponsored other reconstructions in the university based on this style with glass curtain -canteen and architecture library “15”<sup>74</sup>).

The building is separated into two zones – public for visitors including a lecture hall, library, and exhibition zone, and private – studio including a working zone, model making room, kitchenette for students and professors.

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<sup>71</sup> Seen light channel, “TiArch studio of conceptual design, 0.50, Youtube, last viewed: 21.10.2022, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYU\\_5EggBj8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYU_5EggBj8)

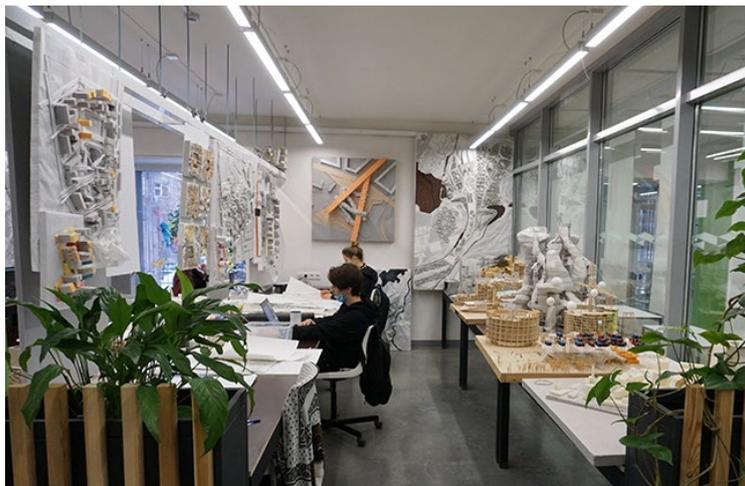
<sup>72</sup> Business gazeta, in KSUAE is officially opened BFFT art-space, 16.11.2016, last viewed: 20.10.2022, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/news/328852>

<sup>73</sup> KazanFirst, Impressive space for Kazan architects, 0.59, Youtube, last viewed: 21.10.2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPdsIrTGkSM&t=7s>

<sup>74</sup> Business online, in KSUAE architects are trained by international standards, 29.01.2021, last viewed: 25.10.2022, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/497231>

Firstly, the visitor enters to spacious lecture hall which depending on the event transforms into a new space. During lectures all chairs are gathered in a row in front of the projected wall to learn new knowledge about architecture in the evenings, during daytime it is an exhibition space for presenting awarded projects of the best students; during holidays it becomes a celebration space where architecture students showcase their musical and theatrical skills.

As for the studio workroom, it is purely connected to the subject of mastering architecture. Each student has his own vast space for work – a table with a vertically hanging panel for pinning inspirational pictures there. Mostly these inspirational images are the personal best projects of a student. A variety of textures are pinned – city models from foam and paper, ink hand drawings, colorful images – as a unique style of each person encouraging students for work as well as inspiring any visitor coming to the studio.



*BFFT.space and Studio TiArch – exterior and interior design of the building.*<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> KazanFirst, Non-standard vision: how future architecture students are taught in Kazan, 18.10.2017, <https://kazanfirst.ru/articles/448559>; Business online, architects by international standards.



*Studio TiArch – exhibition of award-winning projects of students.*



*BFFT. space – lecture of one of the student of TiArch studio.*



*BFFT. space – model making room and personal space of the students of TiArch studio.* <sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Studio TiArch official social media in Instagram, @tiarch\_, last viewed: 10.10.2022, <https://www.instagram.com/tiarch/>

#### 5.4. Connection of TiArch studio with DASHKA

In order to be a part of the studio, students are expected to have developed skills in architectural drawing and concept design. Since the space of TiArch studio is limited and the standards of the works are high, students initially should show their developed stamina, determination in character, and hard skills capabilities including drawing, fantasy and volumetric vision, skills in software. Important to mention, that these requirements represent a connection with DASHKA school, where graduates of it already obtain such skills and have more chances to enter the TiArch team under the guidance of the Akhtyamovs, and at the same time cope with the hard work of the studio. Yarieva Lilya, who has been a student of TiArch for one and a half years, says: *“I felt exhausted working in the studio after the regular classes of KSUAE schedule, TiArch schedule was that we had to work from 9 a.m. till 9 p.m., 6 times a week. The only breaks are the breaks for visiting KSUAE lectures”*.<sup>77</sup>

One of the students, Adelina Gubaidullina, who successfully passed through long-term education in DASHKA and won multiple competitions for children including the architecture festival “Zodchestvo 2015” is successfully studying now in TiArch.<sup>78</sup> One of her achievements in studio TiArch – winning a major international student competition, which is held by the International Union of Architects, UIA HYP-Cup. Every year it is chaired by the world's most famous master architects, in the year of her winning the jury was headed by Wolf Prix, founder and head of the Austrian architectural bureau Coop Himmelb (l)au (2020). The work of Green Max by a team of fifth-year students Adelina Gubaidullina and Anna Alexandrova was highly awarded.<sup>79</sup>

Besides the achievements of the DASHKA graduates, the professors Ilnar and Rezeda Akhtyamovs are connected with children’s school themselves through teaching and research activity in DASHKA. Being students of KSUAE in the past, they were working at the same time in DASHKA as teachers - assistants<sup>80</sup>, and, obviously, this experience could influence them as the professors of studio TiArch today and as the researchers in the sphere of architecture

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<sup>77</sup> Annex 3. , L. Yarieva, Interview with student of TiArch, 28.10.2022.

<sup>78</sup> D. Galiakberova, Children Architecture School “DASHKA” represented their works on XIII International festival “Zodchestvo 2015”, 12.10.2015, <https://kazan.bezformata.com/listnews/xxiii-mezhdunarodnom-festivale-zodchestvo/38805398/?ysclid=I9uws1ltco327162309>

<sup>79</sup> Business online, trained by international standards.

<sup>80</sup> Ryabov, Design practices «DASHKA», page 68.

school spaces with the research work: “Principles of organization of Architecture school spaces based on the pedagogical methodology of Reggio Emilia”.<sup>81</sup>

## **6. Methodology of TiArch studio.**

The methodology of the studio is based purely on the educational concepts of Ilmarinen and Rezeda Akhtyamovs. Professors explain the success of their methodology that they merged into education the best practices of the Soviet experience and the best practices of modern architectural schools of the world. And the confirmation of their working method is the victory in international competitions, internships in the best architectural offices, and further employment of students. For example, several of TiArch students after completing the internship received an invitation to work after graduation in Switzerland and Denmark. There is an example of a successful start of architecture practices as well. Anna Andronova and her husband opened the “DA!” bureau in China and are actively proving their capabilities by winning professional competitions and engaging in teaching activities. However, not everyone leaves abroad after a successful internship. Many students return to work in Russia, graduate students are actively working in Bugulma, Kazan, Moscow and St. Petersburg. In addition, the work and internships of TiArch students in foreign world-class design bureaus allow to keep an understanding of all world architectural trends and to know the insights of famous bureaus. This intercommunication between students who are on their internships abroad, and students who are competition winners in Kazan, helps students to develop each other and stay motivated for reaching international recognition.

One of the accents in architecture education by the vision of Akhtyamovs is the necessity of having an internship during university education. KSUAE university does not include an internship as a necessary part of education, and Akhtyamovs do not agree with this. In general, *“the internship system has been adopted around the world”* – says I. Akhtyamov, he encourages students to participate in internships at internationally known offices since *“there are many grants in Europe and the USA that compensate for the costs of the intern and the company hosting him”*<sup>82</sup>. Even though I. Akhtyamov admits the hardship of bureaucratic actions and material costs of acquiring internships abroad, he states that the bureaus are

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<sup>81</sup> Haziahmetova E., Akhtyamov I., Akhtyamova R., Principles of organization of Architecture school spaces based on the pedagogical methodology of Reggio Emilia, Architecture and Modern Information Technologies, 2019, Vol. 3 (48).

<sup>82</sup> Business online, trained by international standards.

interested in the best students and their skills, and -“*many workshops already know us and are ready to go through all these difficulties and pay salary to our students*”. Professor Akhtyamovs are actively helping students in recruitment process: I.Akhtyamov and a student choose an office for an internship together since each office has its own specifics, together they form a portfolio of projects completed under Akhtyamovs guidance, send it, then go through several stages of selection. The first selection takes place by portfolio, the second, as a rule, includes an online interview in English, and subsequently the student receives an invitation to an internship for 6 or 12 months.

At the same time, students who are the core of TiArch studio are encouraged to participate in architecture competitions. This is another significant aspect of their methodology. In competitions, the focus is on the practice of the skill of generating ideas, and answering tasks of a very different nature. What is especially important, the student learn to work in a team and under tight deadlines that “*are now the competencies that are in high demand*”.<sup>83</sup>

As for the regular “subjects” that students of TiArch studio make focus on include architecture drawing, software studies, mass-volumed modeling, architecture modeling, wood modeling, cityscape modeling, and architecture photography.<sup>84</sup>

The following photographs help to understand the style of students’ work:

- in architecture drawing devoted to the development of fantasy architecture<sup>85</sup>:

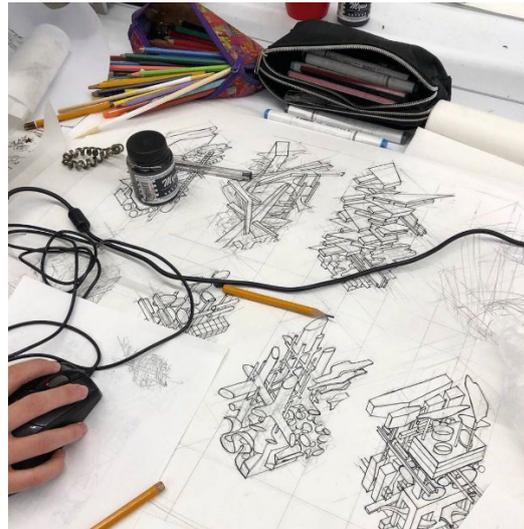


<sup>83</sup> Business online, trained by international standards.

<sup>84</sup> KSUAE, BFFT space, 0.40-2.00, Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhJI7trJ-YM&t=2s>

<sup>85</sup> Studio TiArch in Instagram, @tiarch\_

- work with architecture project development through graphical various approaches:



- work with models of city design development:



- models of architectural projects designed by students<sup>86</sup>:



<sup>86</sup> Studio TiArch in Instagram, @tiarch\_

## **7. Summary about TiArch and BFFT space.**

BFFT.space and graduate students of TiArch are a local hope for high-quality future development in the architecture niche in Kazan, Russia, and the whole international community. Besides being distance locationally from the best European studios and architecture schools, through the professionalism of the professors Akhtyamovs, the studio could reach the level of students in education equal to the best studios in the world. It is proved by the students' achievements who win international prizes and get accepted for working in internationally renowned companies. Specific training in TiArch based on the personal experience of the professors could create a cluster of architects, whose talent and skills are known and accepted worldwide. Even though this studio operates within extra hours of a KSUAE regular schedule and the workload is constantly hard and intensive, it is a space for Kazan architects to obtain a high-quality architectural education, develop skills in architecture drawing, creative design model making, teamwork, and acquire positions in renowned companies.

## **8. Summary about alternative architecture education in Kazan.**

Analysis of both institutions represents the strong connection with Kazan State Architecture University KSUAE, where Children architecture school DASHKA is an official subdivision of KSUAE, TiArch studio – a platform for architecture students of KSUAE for extra training besides regular university education. However, the fact of the appearance of these institutions as an alternative education is just opposite to maternal connection – these are the institutions that do not follow the educational system of KSUAE and demonstrate full independence from it. As a final result, we can see that the professors of both institutions are highly-educated graduates of KSUAE, and with their own experience and motivation, architectural and pedagogical skills, they could recognize the empty gaps of KSUAE education and enrich it with their own methodologies and training. The students of both alternative institutions show high results in architecture achievements in studying abroad, winning international competitions, or achieving internship experience in top companies.<sup>87</sup> The methodologies of both alternative architecture institutions focus on the development of hand drawing, model making, volumetric and fantasy vision. This knowledge as a result can be an inspiration for those who would like to find and try new approaches in architecture education, and get acquainted with the best methodological practices.

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<sup>87</sup> Annex 4; Business online, trained by international standards.

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## ANNEX 1

*Interview with a graduated student of DASHKA, 19.10.2022.*

### **ARTHUR MUHAMETSHIN**

Arthur has passed the education during 7 years in DASHKA school and graduated with honors, further had education in preparatory course of KSUAE for 8 months, and successfully passed entry exams to KSUAE for Bachelor Architecture degree with highest scores. Arthur has passed 2 years of education with honors, and stopped education in order to lead his own business in online education. Despite Arthur has chosen to not continue architecture profession, fact that whenever he starts any project finishes with a success speaks out. Arthur grates school DASHKA for teaching life skills that he uses today with leading a business.

#### **1. At what age did you start your architectural education at DASHKA?**

Started at 10 y.o. First time I had contact with DASHKA is when parents took me to participate in the entry exam. They decided to lead me to DASHKA, because they found my notebook from when I was 5 y.o. - they saw how I was studying and drawing planning of building, I was drawing in a notebook all floorplans of my friends' houses, I was walking in the house with ruler, surprisingly, it was my play and interest of that age. My dad told me that when I came to exam, there were 90 people entering in total, and only 6 ppl were selected for education including me. It was at stage of 'School'. The exam was to draw anything I wanted, and my drawing was the house in section with sewage and other technical detail – as much as I could to draw at the age of 10 years. Seeing my exam drawing, teachers immediately approached to my dad and stated that I got in.

#### **2. How many years did you study and why did you continue studying for (your number) years?**

I continued to study till I was 17 y.o., till final stage of DASHKA, and graduated successfully with honors.

I was interested in everything there. I loved the people there, the type of people were much more interesting than in my regular school. I loved the classes, I loved the atmosphere, I felt

much more psychologically comfortable there than in regular school, since there was the atmosphere of development, and support; atmosphere, that we could do everything in future in life. As well as, that if we become architecture students – we can create any architecture creation. I think that was the most valuable – atmosphere that allowed to dream.

During regular school, everyone put a thought that after secondary school is a stage of obscurity and vague future, but in DASHKA in stage “School” we were enlightened that we are on the right way that we chose to be the architects. Even though at the later stages of school in DASHKA, we were telling all the truth of hardships of the architecture profession, at least in child and teenage age it was motivating.

I was a strong student, I had best works, best marks, my work was always praised - this way I could feel my self-expression, that’s another side that motivated me.

**3. Do you remember any methods/training/practices/tasks at different stages that were the most developing and motivating for you? And why?**

I loved we were taught to study not-traditional way. For me was a first shock when we were given a task to listen music and draw it. It is in general changes the perspective on the world. You start to see the city differently - through colors, and imaginary figures. It motivated me to lead Instagram page with my drawings, make non-standard photos, search things that inspire me tremendously in the city. That time I already have realized that my school peers have not seen the things I could notice in life. I even stated once in post in social media that “no matter where you are from, matters from what angle and perspective you see the world. In any place there are beautiful-non beautiful parts, and I saw only beautiful parts.” DASHKA has helped me to see beauty of the world and non-standardization a lot starting from teenage age.

Studying of connection of incompatible things was the strongest in their methodology. As mentioned, task with listening music and drawing it. Other example was model making. I remember the task – to show your mood through model, through form. Again connecting abstractly the life realistic images with forms, it helped to focus on learning high quality content creation – asking and answering the question of why this certain form, why it has certain features and shapes etc. Lately I could feel the learnt skills I could connect with other sides of life –in general education, I could develop flexible and opened mindset about how every detail can mix with each other, and there is nothing rigid and incompatible in life.

**4. What topics did inspire you the most to study and why?**

The favorite class for me was model making – I enjoyed seeing in volume, seeing the picture from all views, for me it is most grounded and understandable form of creation, where I can control my decisions. I spent lots of time on it, and at the diploma I created a high quality hand model that can be viewed by separate parts, it became a part of DASHKA methodological examples.

**5. What was the theme of your diploma at DASHKA, tell us about your experience, what was your idea, how the teachers supported you.**

Diploma topic– eco-campus near the protected national park of Laishevo region, Tatarstan. Concept – creation of a living and educational space with focus on ecological concern, other words, sustainable architecture. I could clearly say now, I was concentrating on visual part of architecture the most during the process, less to functional design of each building. Analyzing it now, I believe it was indeed successful, it was an elegant finish of my 7 years education. I made a high quality work, showed my artistic strength, modeling skills. I on purpose focused on demonstrating my skills of style and architecture taste than my technical details. I was very inspired with my work.

Also final presentation has definitely taught me how to speak about my ideas, “sell” the idea. I use it every day now in business. Last year of education was hard, I remember our teacher M.S. Latipova explained us that we always must defend our idea no matter how great it is initially; must learn to show that most architecture decision must stay as it was designed. Even though atmosphere throughout education was friendly, the fact that teachers were suppressing and pushing us last year was a great learning experience.

**6. How did professors influence your educational process? Can you name specific professors who have influenced you and why?**

S.V. Novikov and A.N. Moskaleev were the most inspiring professors for me, they had their personal methodology, but the most valuable – they were extremely involved into teaching, motivated to share their experience and knowledge, giving great constructive commenting to our projects, as well as were fun to be nearby with, were laughing with us equally. I could ask any question and find an answer. Stepan Viktorovich (Novikov) feels for me as close as godfather, we still keep in touch; he led me all the way through DASHKA, he long-term supported and helped me, further when I was in Kazan Architecture University KSUAE as well

he was guiding me with advise and teaching- he was truly a mentor for me throughout architecture professional life.

**7. How has the space of the school affected you?**

As mentioned earlier, it was an artistic atmosphere, a lot of art and best works were exhibited, encouraging me.

**8. Tell me about what skills you think you learned the most at school and which ones influenced your later career?**

Main and the best skill I have learnt is a project planning, learning to finish work from creation till finish, and learning finishing stages of the work no matter what. Also, learning skills of adaptivity – that vector of creation can change dramatically with each work stage, and you must be flexible to work on project again and again, finishing each stage with certain result. Critical and analytical thinking, working with research before the start of the work, ability to generate ideas, learning the mechanism of idea creation and elaboration, learning to manage with deadlines, speed-creation, creation of project for couple days, learning how to defend my idea – all are the final results of my education in DASHKA. Skills I still use in my life.

**9. Where did you participate from DASHKA? Which competitions, workshops?**

Everywhere where it was possible – I was extremely motivated in every event DASHKA was organizing.

**10. How did the DASHKA motivate you to go to study architecture in KSUAE?**

DASHKA has truly motivated me for architecture profession but didn't prepare me specifically for KSUAE university education. Even though DASHKA is a subdivision of KSUAE, but it is a totally different in atmosphere, and not connected or subsequent to KSUAE education. Even though diploma work in DASHKA was helpful and indeed had similarity with real architecture project, education and projects in the KSUAE university turned out less motivating, therefore I started my own business, and thanks to skills of life I've learnt in DASHKA, I have a great success with any project I take today.

## ANNEX 2

*Interview with the professor of all stages of the school DASHKA, 23.10.2022*

### **MARINA LVOVNA LAGODA**

Teacher in school DASHKA in all stages of education (“Studio”, “School”, “College”) during 17 years. Taking active part in creation of educational methodology for students, creating the tasks. In stage “School” teaching subjects: “Composition” and “Model making”, in stage “College”: leading the Diploma year students.

#### **1. Tell about yourself and why do you enjoy teaching in DASHKA?**

Finished architecture university KSUAE in specialization of architecture and design. Later I worked as a graphical designer and at the same time started to work in DASHKA. I have been teaching in DASHKA for 17 years for all stages of education in “Studio”, “School” and “College”, as well as I am the professor responsible for “College” stage.

I enjoy communication with children, when you can create the tasks for them, and children do their best to complete the task – this is the most valuable. The response of children motivates me, they can come after class and hug you (about stage “Studio” students). My work is truly a joy.

#### **2. How do you create tasks for children?**

Tasks constantly change, but the main rule of the tasks, for example, for “Studio” children are to be possible to fulfill. Children should feel that they cope with any type of work. Secondly, it should be a captivating content and idea of the task, so children could be motivated to fulfill the task. For the students of later stages of “School” and “College”, the classes are less oriented on entertainment content but education-related. Students grow up themselves, and they become more captivated with acquiring processes and techniques of the task.

#### **3. What kind of the subject do you teach for each stages?**

In stage “Studio” there is no separation between classes, it is a general creative education with diverse tasks including all techniques and methods.

In “School” stage appear more school-like structure with subjects: “Model making”, “Drawing”, “Composition”, “Coloristics”, “History of Architecture” and “Musical aesthetics”. In stage “College” we add subject “Technical drafting”.

**4. Do each teacher use his own methodology in the stages of “School” and “College”?**

Yes, there is an opportunity for teachers to express themselves and take part in the creative process of methodology creation and application, guided by the general requirements of the school that students should fulfill.

**5. What kind of skills do you want to teach the students through your education in school DASHKA?**

For “Studio” stage – art and drawing skills, compositional skills, volumetric-imaginary skills. Tasks can be connected with art and architecture as well.

For “School” stage – same skills adding introduction to architecture project creation, color combination, architecture history. In classes we develop abstract and fantasy thinking.

For “College” – skills of architecture and design project fulfillment through final Diploma project.

Our education differ tremendously from regular art school in the city, they more prepare students to be artists and sculptor makers, but in our school focus of work is more on abstract and volumetric thinking. We also teach that the task does not obtain only one rigid solution, but that students can have diversity of solution and they can develop each of them. We encourage to generate multiple idea creation.

Besides the hard skills, we try to input the best qualities to the character of students, make them familiar with being kind and friendly to each other. I think that’s what stands out in DASHKA, that students can feel positive atmosphere here, feel “free”. I believe, art cannot develop without friendly environment, we teach this. Sometimes we have children who have hardships in socializing, and with DASHKA students become more communicative and change.

## **6. How do you select students to your school?**

Now we have 2300 students in total. For the “Studio” stage we do not make the selection, we give opportunity for every child unless only we do not have available space. In “School” stage we take an exam in “Composition”, but in general we anyway take mostly anyone, because even if a student does not show any talent or not interested in classes much in the beginning, with the continuous fulfilled tasks, student get interested in process, he becomes more successful with studies and start to open his creative abilities. Sometimes can be opposite that student has capabilities, but with time he get not interested and stop education, though, it happens rarely.

In “College” stage selection is more serious, we cannot take a student with weak capabilities.

## **7. Can you stop education with a student who does not show any capabilities in creative tasks with time?**

Every student should fulfill the given tasks, of course, this is the requirement for not failing. Or if the student has bad behavior we can consider the expelling but it is very rare.

## **8. Which kind of spaces and rooms you have in the school ?**

We have 30 auditoriums for classes in 2 buildings (address: Ershova, 31B, 420061), 3 more auditorium we plan to open by New Year. In total we will have 2500m<sup>2</sup> of the educational area, meaning about 1m<sup>2</sup> per student – very dense. We also have common spaces for recreation on each floor – the biggest one is on 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Younger students enjoy these kind of spaces, but older students of stage “College” already less interested in common spaces but with individual spaces for personal work. We think how to plan such spaces for them today.

## **9. What plans do you have in future for development of DASHKA?**

We envision to give additional opportunities in education, insert more of the modern subject. We already teach new skills in classes of “Cartoon animation”, “Graphical design (using tablet)”, “Basics of composition, model making and theatre”. In future we want to develop computer technology, classes with 3D-printing (we already had some sessions). Additionally, course in object design application, work with wood, plaster. We already have a project of such studio where children will be able to make their own objects – pottery and carpentry studios. Children develop fast today, and we do our best to reflect it in the methodology.

## ANNEX 3

### *Interview with the student of TiArch Studio.*

#### **LILIYA YARIEVA**

Lilya is a graduated bachelor student in Architecture Design from KSUAE university in 2021. During her studies, she worked in TiArch Studio and for 1,5 years she got awarded in multiple competitions. Simultaneously during her bachelor, she worked in Kazan well-recognizable office “Orchestra Design”

#### **1. How did you get admitted to TiArch and how long did you work in the studio?**

First and second year at KSUAE I studied in the group lead by the professor I.Akhtyamov in subject of “Architecture Drawing”. After second year of education, he has invited me to be part of TiArch studio based on my successful performance in “Architecture Drawing”. In total I spent in Studio 1,5 years but left it due to intensity of work and other personal reasons.

#### **2. How much time do you need to dedicate for work in the Studio?**

6 days a week, with free day on Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 9p.m., breaks are allowed during lunch time and visiting university subjects and lectures.

#### **3. Why were you motivated to work in TiArch?**

The atmosphere was motivating, I was inspired by experience of other students who are seen in international level and in mass media. Other than that, I was truly supporting the opposition feeling towards the KSUAE outdated education in architecture that shares TiArch has. Professors Akhtyamovs represent the modern and international-like vision on architecture education that inspires the most.

#### **4. What were the main skills you have developed under guidance of Akhtyamovs?**

I would say - the ability to work with various architecture concepts, and learning the complex and fulfilling approach in design.

#### **5. What were the hardships in working in TiArch?**

Every student has his own hardships, but the hardest process for me was the right representation of the idea and the process of project development, managing with time

#### **6. What achievements did you reach with TiArch Studio?**

Together with a team of BFFT.studio students we won a competition from Strelka KB dedicated to the projects of shelters for homeless animals, and also received mentions from the international competition HIP CUP and much more. Apart that, were noted by the organizers of the Sky City competition, and also passed to the regional final competition of the “Saint-Gobain”.

## ANNEX 4

### *Analysis of students of the studio TiArch and their works.*

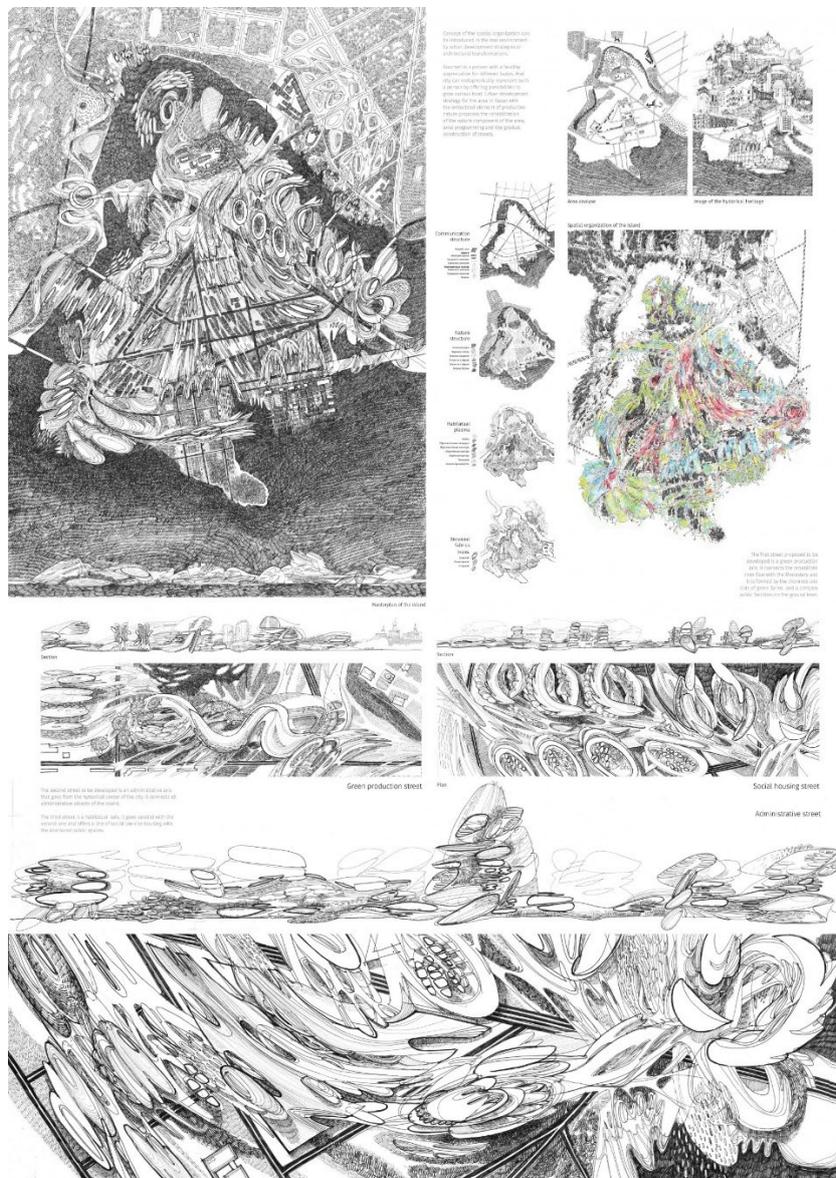
#### **ALISA SILANTIEVA**

Graduated with a Bachelor's degree from KSUAE in 2017, had an internship at Moon Hoon. Further, continued her Master's degree in Bartlett School of Architecture, ULC

After successful graduation, she returned to work in Russia, working now as an architect in the leading bureau Atrium.

During KSUAE, some of the famous competitions she won or got nominated: ARCHIPRIX 2017, Young Talent Architecture Award 2017.

*Example of nominated work from international competition ARCHIPRIX 2017.<sup>88</sup>*

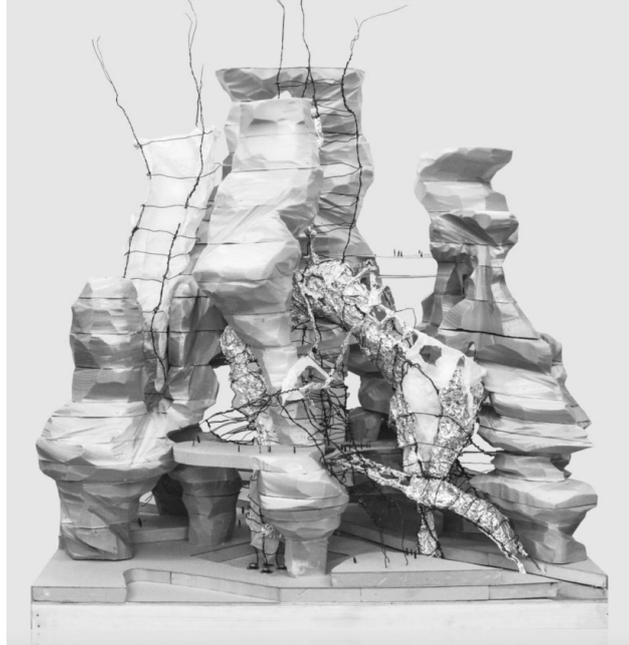


<sup>88</sup> Archiprix, ALSISA SILANTEVA.ABOUT HER GRADUATION PROJECT FOOD AND THE CITY: CULTURE AND SAFETY, 2017, Archiprix International - Interview: Alisa Silanteva

## MILYAUSHA GARAEVA

Graduated with a Bachelor's degree from KSUAE in 2016, had internships and work experience in bureaus of BIG (2017), Jean Nouvel (2018), today works in OMA studio.

*Example of model city design and project design during work in TiArch<sup>89</sup>:*



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<sup>89</sup> Mila Garaeva, Architectural portfolio, 20.07.2019, last viewed: 10.10.2022, [https://issuu.com/milyaushagaraeva3748/docs/issuu\\_1](https://issuu.com/milyaushagaraeva3748/docs/issuu_1)