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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Melnikov House: Saving an Avant-Garde Icon

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Iconic Houses Lecture Tour Europe

The 5th edition of the Iconic Houses Lecture Tour Europe takes place from 7 -15 October 2019, when Pavel Kuznetsov, Director of the State Museum of Konstantin and Viktor Melnikov and Deputy Director of the Schusev State Museum of Architecture in Moscow will tour six iconic houses in six European cities with his lecture on the Melnikov House in Moscow.

#### Lecture Itinerary 2019

Monday 7 October	Villa Stenersen in Oslo, Norway
Tuesday 8 October	Haus Ungers, UAA at the Baukunstarchiv in Dortmund, Germany
Wednesday 9 October	Haus Ungers, UAA at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne, Germany
Thursday 10 October	Sonneveld House at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Monday 14 October	Villa Müller at Study and Documentation Centre Norbertov, Prague, Czech Republic
Tuesday 15 October	Villa Tugendhat in Brno, Czech Republic

#### The Melnikov House

The Melnikov House, designed by architect Konstantin Melnikov (1890-1974) for himself and his family, is an icon of the Russian architectural avant-garde. The experimental cylindrical structure was built between 1927 and 1929 to test Melnikov's concepts for mass-produced housing. Melnikov believed that the essence of his house lay in the balance and equivalence of weight, light, air and heat. The original layout, elegant spatial arrangement, and ingenious engineering techniques are combined in a unique architectural form that still looks modern. Retaining some historic elements of the 20th century, the house also reflects the tragic life of this solo architect in a collectivist society.

Pavel Kuznetsov will discuss the history of the Melnikov House from its inception in the early 20th century through establishing the museum in 2014 and conservation project nowadays. He will explore the newly found information that uncovered the architectural, engineering, and philosophical ideas lying behind Melnikov's ambitious plan to build an architectural manifesto in 1920s Soviet Russia.

## Film

Fragments of the documentary 'Konstantin Melnikov' (1999) by Jet Christiaanse and Marjo Leupers accompany the lecture to see the person of Melnikov in a historic context of the 20th century through the eyes of architectural historians and Melnikov's son, the artist Viktor Melnikov (1914-2006). The film is already a piece of its time when the future of the Melnikov House and other buildings designed by Melnikov was uncertain.



## Pavel Kuznetsov

Pavel Kuznetsov, is an economist by education, and a researcher in Soviet avant-garde architecture by vocation. He lives in a constructivist apartment in a house commune in Moscow and works as deputy director of the Schusev State Museum of Architecture. Since 2014, he has overseen the collections and archives of the Melnikov House and its transition from a private home to a public museum. As director of the State Museum of Konstantin and Viktor Melnikov he also directed the pre-conservation survey of the Melnikov House, supported by a grant from Keeping it Modern, an initiative of the Getty Foundation. His book, *The Melnikov House: Icon of the Avant-Garde, Family Home, Architecture Museum* was published in Berlin in 2017. When not researching, he was the first Russian to successfully swim the English Channel (in 14 hours, 33 minutes, 25 seconds).

## Book

### ***The Melnikov House - Icon of the Avant-Garde Family Home Architecture Museum***

This book, authored by Pavel Kuznetsov, gives a detailed account of its creation and history right through the 20th century, the transitional state from residential dwelling to museum, and the house's current condition while still awaiting an in-depth survey and conservation work. The volume contains rich archival materials as well as recent photographs. It describes the challenges and choices of museumification. Many memorial objects from the house are linked to the professional and family life of the architect and published for the first time. Dom Publishers, ISBN 978-3-86922-436-7.

## About the Iconic Houses Lecture Series

The Iconic Houses Lecture Series launched in 2014 in five cities in Europe to raise awareness about modern house museums and their frequent struggles to survive. As speakers, we welcomed the directors of and experts on some of the world's most Iconic Houses, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, Philip Johnson's Glass House and Eileen Gray's Villa E-1027. The initiative in Europe was taken by five house museums: Sonneveld House, Haus Ungers, Villa Stenersen, Villa Tugendhat and Van Schijndel House, followed in 2018 by Villa Müller. After five successful tours in Europe, Iconic Houses is launching its first Iconic Houses Lecture Tour to three venues in the US and Canada in February 2020, with Pavel Kuznetsov's lecture on the Melnikov House. All previous lectures can be found on the Iconic Houses website: <https://www.iconichouses.org/lectures>.

## About Iconic Houses

IconicHouses.org makes life easier for fans of 20th-century architecture, even acting as the ultimate architecture travel wish list. The website provides a handy reference for 150 of the world's most iconic modern house museums and private homes that you can visit by appointment, some even accommodating overnight guests. It's also a bucket list for planning your next country or city trip.

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## Note for the editors / not for publication

For more information, interview requests with Pavel Kuznetsov or high res images, contact Natascha Drabbe at the Iconic Houses Foundation: [info@iconichouses.org](mailto:info@iconichouses.org) • +31 622 69 07 11 (EST) • [www.iconichouses.org](http://www.iconichouses.org) • Ertskade 105 • 1019 BB AMSTERDAM • The Netherlands

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