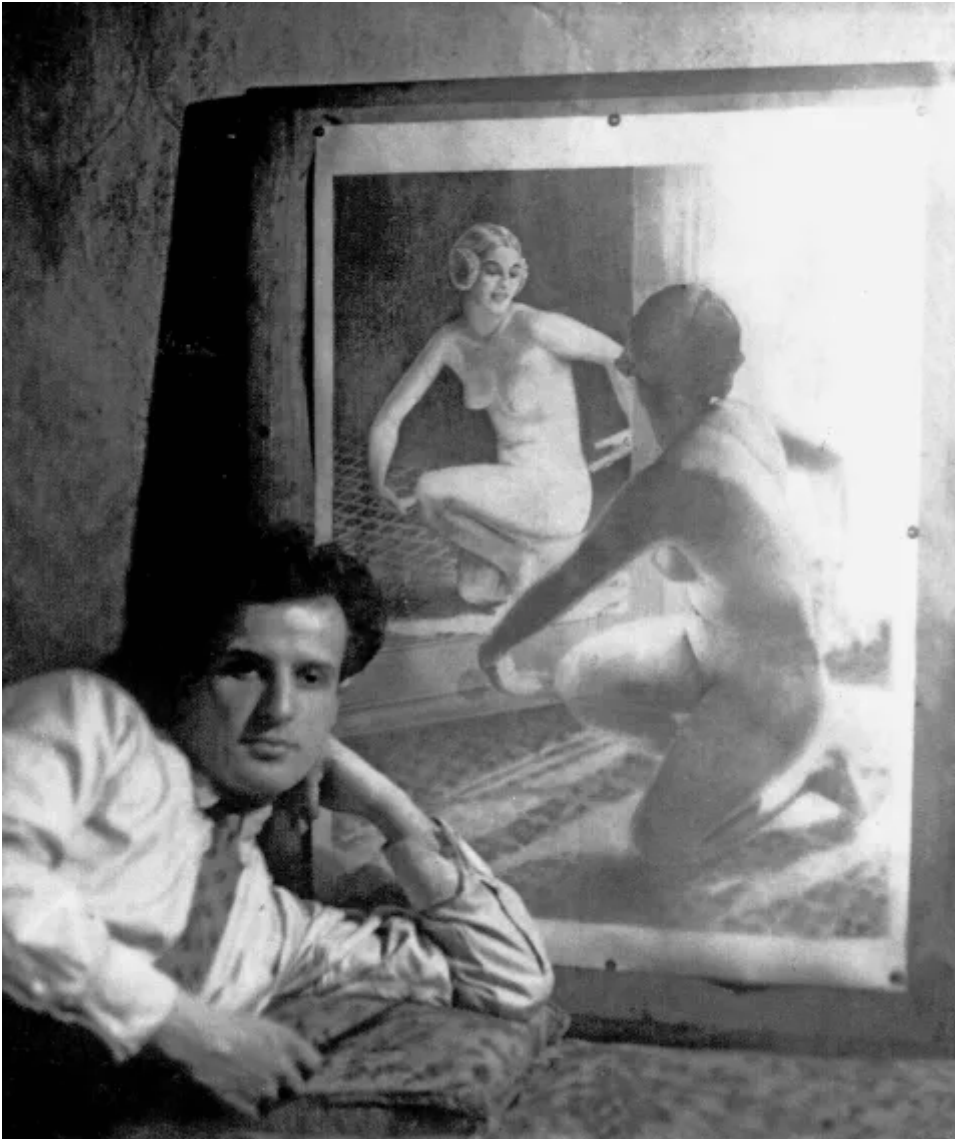


Lasar Blekhshtein



This photograph was taken in 1937. You can see me during my last year at the College.

I finished my school in 1930. But at that time it was very difficult to enter a college: it was necessary to have worked for 2 years before entrance exams.

All my classmates (I already told you) found their work at different factories as turners, mechanics, etc. But it was impossible for me because I had only one leg, therefore I found job of a copyist at the design office at ELECTROSILA factory.

[Electrosila Factory is a Leningrad Corporation for construction of electric machines - one of the largest USSR factories in this sphere.] Half a year later I became a draftsman (designer).

At ELECTROSILA they arranged the first Special Design Office in the USSR. Different people were taken to the office: 6 persons from ELECTROSILA factory, several dozens of arrested doctors and professors. A General was the office chief.

For fulfilling ordinary (simple) tasks they sent there a lot of students of Electrotechnical College. [The Electrotechnical College was founded in 1891.]

Those people designed 2 mighty projects. I was so sorry that at that time I had not enough knowledge to adopt their practices and methods.

At that time they also arranged evening courses at ELECTROSILA (a branch of the Electrotechnical College). I had no chances to enter it: my brother was in prison, and Mom was a handicrafts person.

At that time my nationality was not an obstacle for entrance; but the facts from my biography were. Those learned scholars finished their work in 1932 and the Special Design Office was closed.

The former chief presented me a set of clothes for my good work. You see, at that time it was a problem to buy clothes (even a handkerchief): everything was on cards and salaries were crummy. And the General gave me a lot of things: from socks to winter coat, caps, suits, etc.

But I thanked the General and said that I wanted to study: 'You know my biography, I never made secret of its facts. I guess they will not let me enter a college.' - 'Why didn't you submit your application?' - 'It is useless.' He answered: 'Do it.' And I handed my documents over to the College entrance examination.

Later I did not find my name in the list of new students. I came to the General 'They did not take me, I told you.' The General gave me a petition (from GPU). It was GPU that killed millions of people under the guidance of Stalin.

It was terrible (at that time people used to say that half a country was in camps and half a country was on duty). With the help of that paper I entered the College (evening course).

Soon I found out that our training there was inadequate, therefore I continued as a full-time first-year student of the Polytechnical College. [The Polytechnical College was founded in 1899.] I graduated in 1937 from the faculty of measuring technique and started my labor activity.