

Architecture around 1900 in Central Europe

#5 Interior design

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
WIRTH INSTITUTE FOR AUSTRIAN
AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN STUDIES

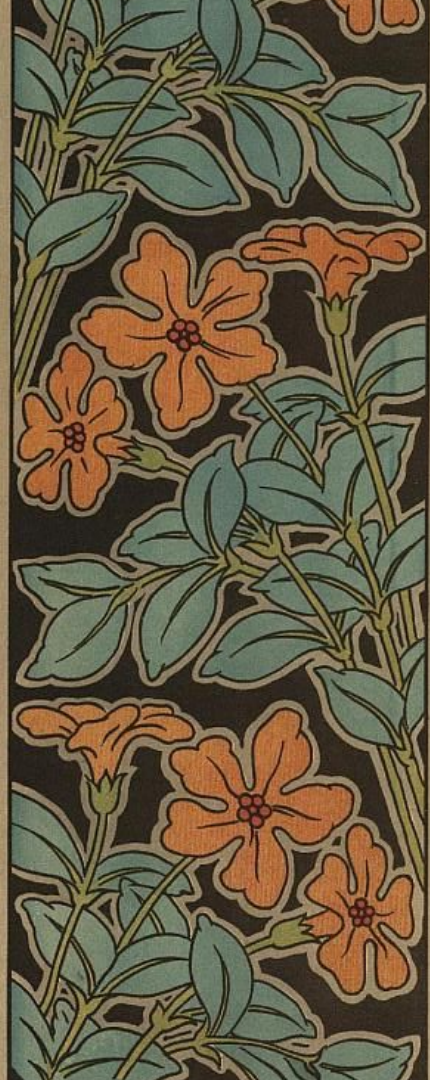


Architecture around 1900 in Central Europe

In this series on popular culture, we will once again revisit one of the most inspiring moments in the history of European culture. The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was **a special period for art in Central Europe** due to various artistic trends and an increased cultural exchange between countries politically associated with Austria-Hungary.

The architecture style of this time largely dominates the face of contemporary European cities. Many important and characteristic buildings (such as train stations, museums, universities, and parliaments) were designed by then architects, while main boulevards and plazas were designed by city planners.

Similarly to our previous series, we will present a panorama of **the Belle Époque** through examples from Central European countries.



How to decorate train stations?

When architects began designing buildings with new, previously unknown functions in the 19th century, interior design presented a considerable challenge.

The exterior of buildings could often imitate well-known styles, for example, a variation of city palaces. The interiors could be modelled on traditional patterns only to an extent.



Otto Wagner (AT), unrealised project of City Museum of Vienna, 1912, Wien Museum

What should the waiting room of a train station look like? How should factory halls be designed? How should hotel interiors be arranged comfortably? These (and many others) were the challenges facing interior designers.



Erwin Pendl (AT), *Guest room in Sanatorium Steinhof in Vienna*, circa 1907, Wien Museum

Neostyle glamour

Architects of large public buildings designed in the Neostyle had a relatively simple task. The interiors simply needed to be harmonized with the chosen historical costume.



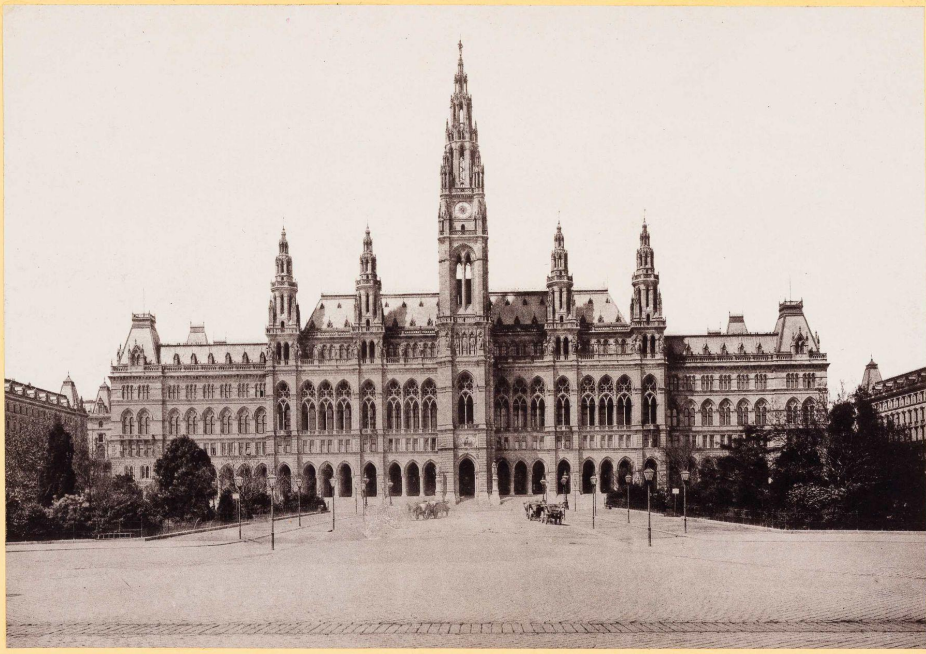
Wien.

Nr. 38. Festsaal im Rathhause.

Verlag der Central-Buchhandlung Max Herzig, Wien. Phot. von E. Jaffé & A. Albert, Wt.

Interior of the Vienna City Hall,
1886, Wien Museum

Wien.

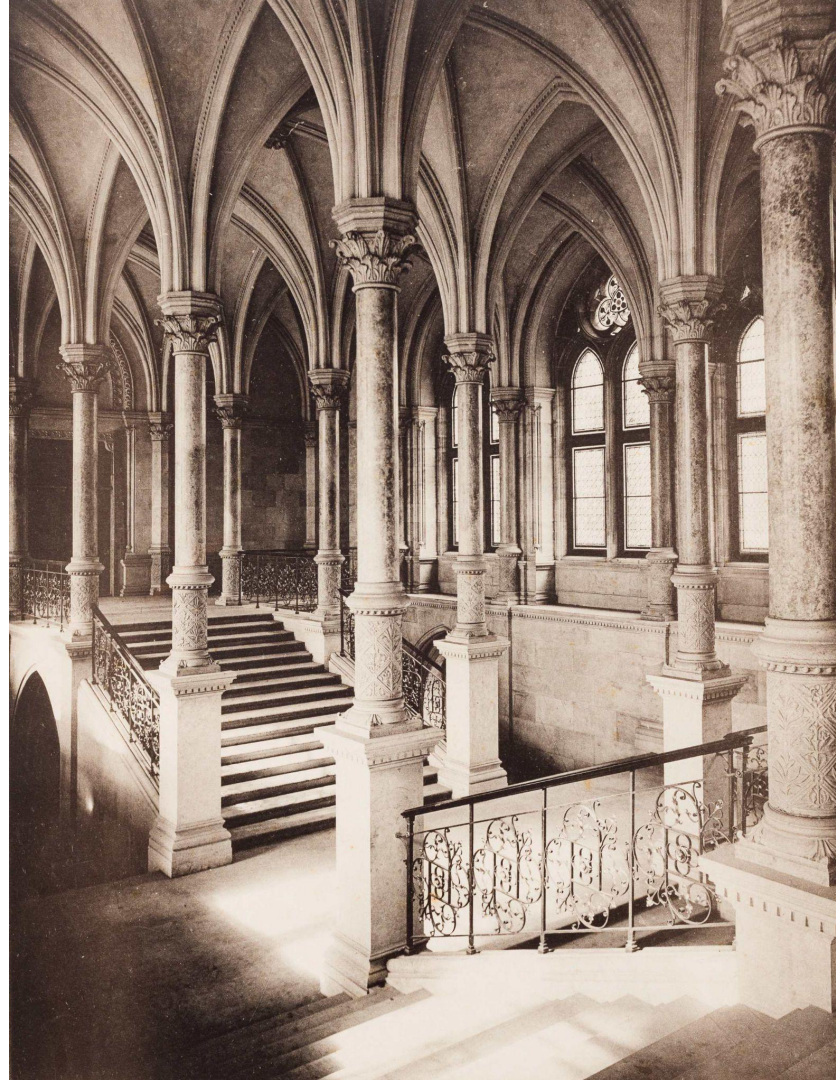


Nr. 8. Rathaus.

Verlag der Central-Druckhandlung Max Herrig, Wien.

Phot. von E. Jaffé & A. Albert, Wien.

Vienna City Hall, photo by E. Jaffé & A. Albert, circa 1890, Wien Museum



Staircase in the Vienna City Hall, 1886, Wien Museum

Café New-York

Budapest



Café New York in Budapest, 1900,
Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism



Interior of the Café New York in Budapest, photo by
August Stauda (AT), after 1894, Wien Museum

Neo-Baroque theatres and opera houses are good examples. The halls were decorated with gilded sculptural decorations, and the vaults were covered with allegorical paintings. Often times, the decor was complemented by a curtain painted by a well-known artist (such as those created by Henryk Siemiradzki for the theatres in Cracow and Lviv). Thus, various artists played a part in shaping of the interior.



Henryk Siemiradzki (PL), Stage curtain for the Cracow theatre, sketch, 1893-1894, National Museum in Warsaw



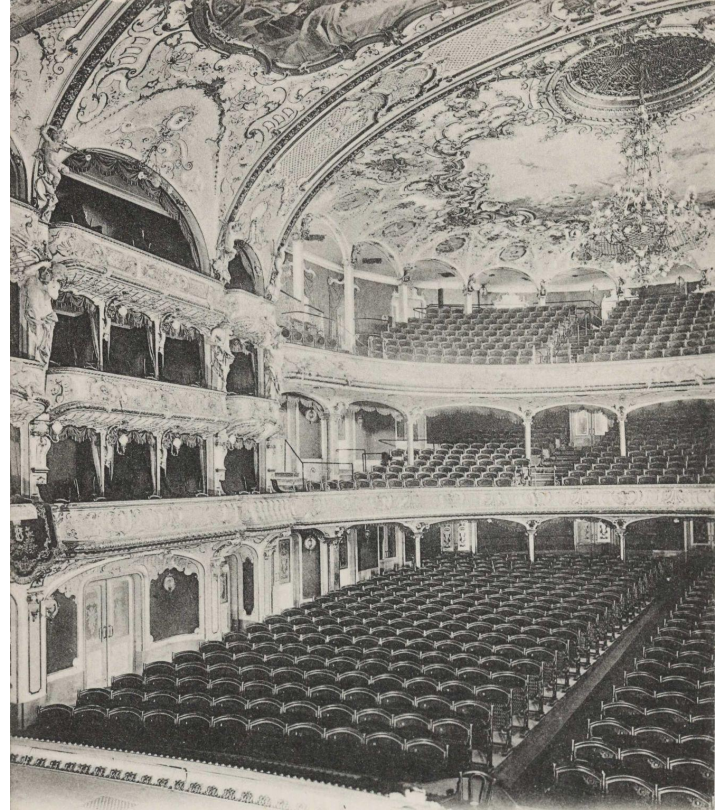
Theatre in Cracow, photo by Tadeusz Rząca (PL),
after 1910, Museum of Photography in Cracow



Interior of the theatre in Cracow, after 1900,
Cracow Museum



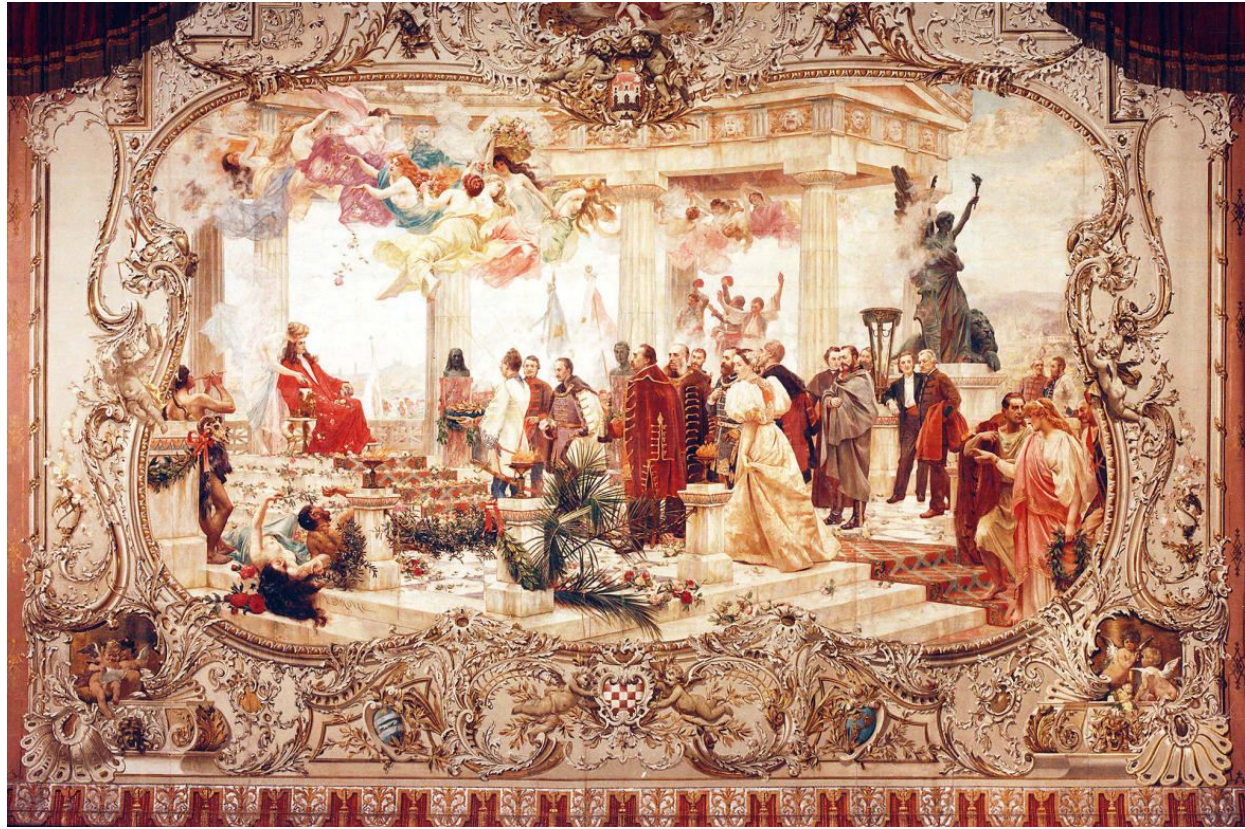
Volkstheater in Vienna, photo by August Stauda (AT), circa 1900, Wien Museum



Inneres des deutschen Volkstheaters. Wien VII.

Interior of the Volkstheater in Vienna, before 1905, Wien Museum

In the case of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb (designed by Fellner & Helmer), the mural above the auditorium was painted by Austrian artist Alexander Demetrius Goltz, while the curtain was created by the Croatian painter Vlaho Bukovac.



Vlaho Bukovac, Stage curtain in the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, 1895

Interior revolution

The design of public edifices or grand aristocratic residences gave room for architects and artists to pursue a coherent vision and keep the whole in the chosen style.

Salon in the Palace of Aladár Andrássy in Budapest, photo by Antal Weinwurm (HU), circa 1900, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



Of course, it was different in the case of ordinary middle-class interiors. An eclectic tenement house housed several or more private apartments, the decor of which was entirely up to the taste (and financial resources) of its residents.

Interior of flat in Cracow, 1907,
National Museum in Cracow



Technological and social changes or industrial development did not, however, leave the interiors of middle-class housing without a mark. Decor was changed due to electricity, industrialization, capitalism, and even... overseas discoveries of naturalists.



Carl Moll (AT), *Anna Moll at her desk*, circa 1903, Wien Museum

Factory-made or craftsmanship?

Previously, furniture and ceramics were made in local artisan workshops. The Industrial Revolution enabled mass production of goods and lowered prices. Stores and trading houses began importing products from distant factories, and the development of the postal service and railroad made mail order sales possible.



Entrance to furniture shop, photo by August Stauda (AT), circa 1898, Wien Museum

Mass imitation and the desire of factory owners to maximize profits often negatively affected the quality of products. The British Arts and Crafts Movement advocated reforming design and bringing beauty to everyday objects. Among the most famous designs of William Morris, who sought to renew Arts and Crafts, were decorative wallpaper and fabric patterns. This aesthetic soon strongly influenced the Art Nouveau movement.



Printed textile *Honeysuckle* designed by William Morris (GB),
produced by Morris & Company, 1876,
MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



Tape ornaments designed by Pál Horti (HU), before 1907, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



16 / 53 Photograph of a dressing table and chairs in the English style in front of wallpaper after William Morris, from the workshop of M. Niedermoser & Sohn, Vienna, circa 1899-1900, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Fashionable accessories

Mass-produced accessories responded to current trends in home decor. One example is patterned wallpaper, which was an essential element of many homes in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Modern machinery made it possible to apply the pattern mechanically and to print entire rolls of paper quickly.



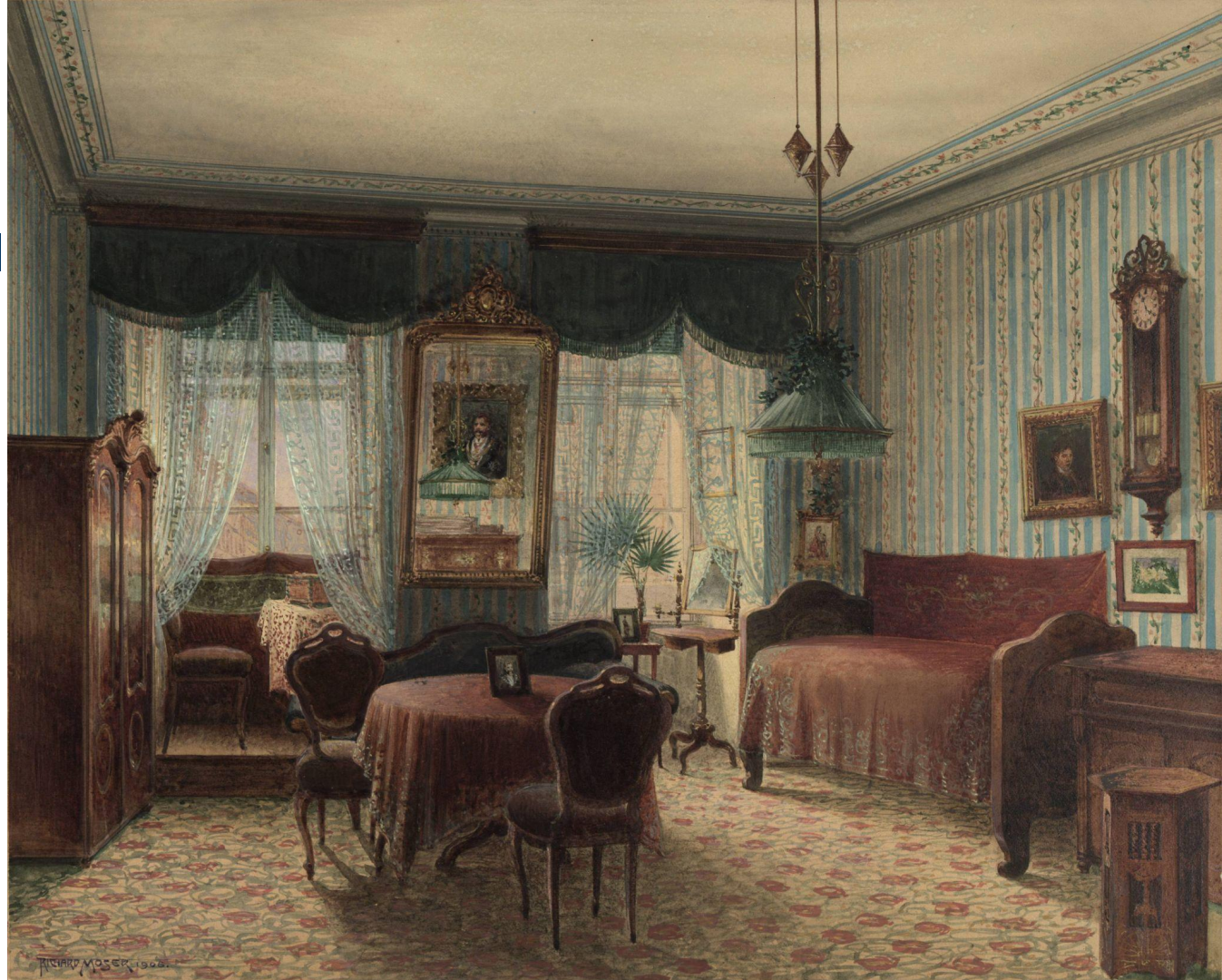
Young woman in front of the mirror, circa 1888, National Library in Warsaw

Wallpaper printing press,
Machinery Hall at the
Centennial International
Exposition in Philadelphia,
illustration from "Harper's
Weekly", 1876, Library of
Congress



THE CENTENNIAL—WALL PAPER PRINTING PRESS, MACHINERY HALL.—PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE CENTENNIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPANY.—[SEE PAGE 1008.]

Richard Moser (AT), Sleeping room
of Josef Strohbach (Mayor of
Vienna), 1906, Wien Museum





Wallpaper designed by Pál Horti (HU), before 1899, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



Wallpaper designed by Vojtěch Preissig (CZ), 1903, Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague



Wallpaper designed by Vojtěch Preissig (CZ), 1899, Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague

Potted plants, especially fashionable palm trees or ferns, also became a characteristic novelty in interiors. This was brought about by a simple invention in the first half of the 19th century. London physician Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward accidentally discovered that plants could grow in a sealed glass container. Miniature greenhouses (the so-called Wardian case) made it possible to safely transport tropical species from distant colonies to Europe.



Gardening exhibit in Warsaw, photo by Konrad Brandel (PL),
1866, National Museum in Warsaw

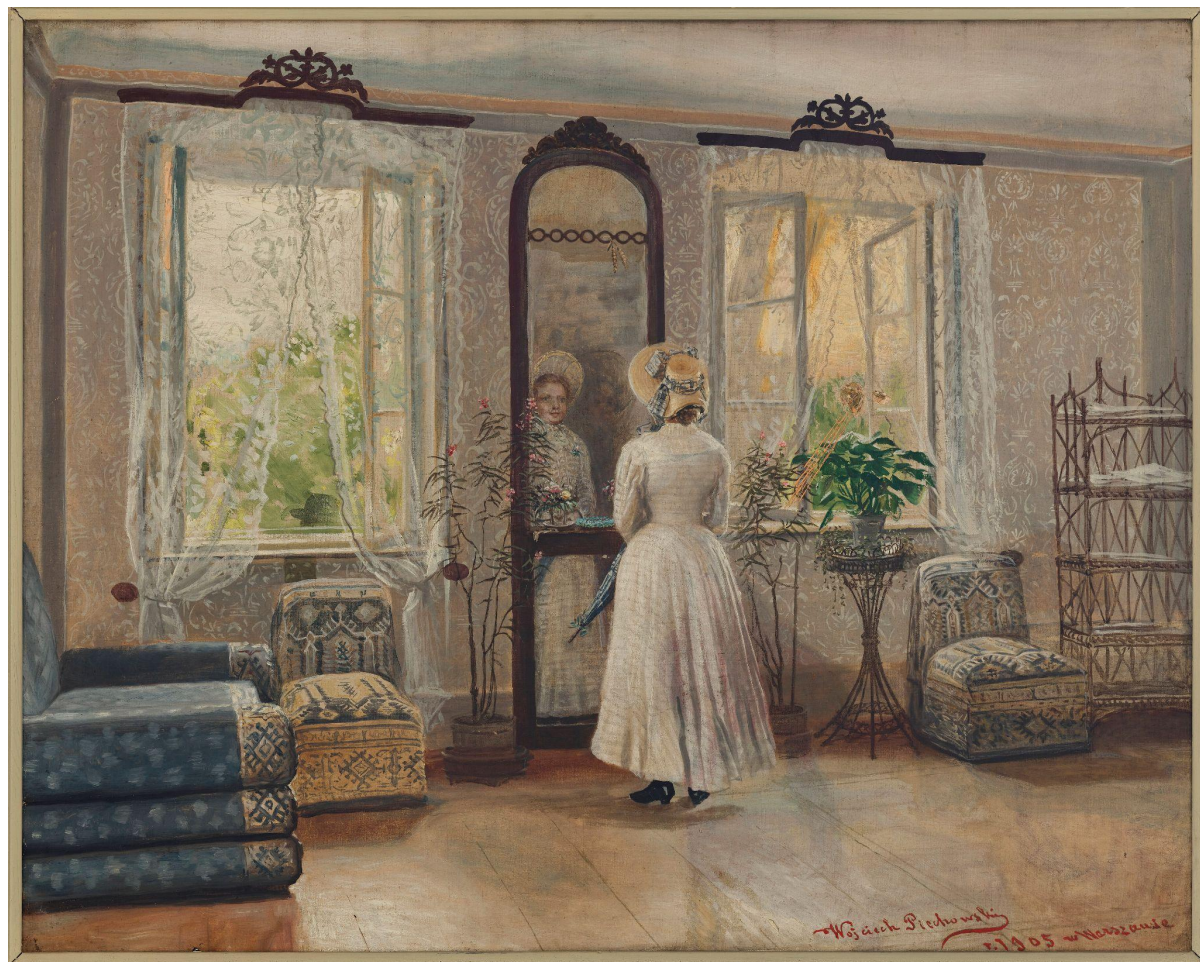
Erwin Pendl (AT), *Living room in Rosen-Villa, Sanatorium Steinhof in Vienna*, circa 1907, Wien Museum



Soon even less affluent city dwellers could afford to keep potted plants on their own window sills. Specialized glazed cabinets and decorative pot-holders were designed for customers with bigger wallets.



Erwin Pendl (AT), *Room with veranda in Villa Hermann, Sanatorium Steinhof in Vienna*, circa 1907, Wien Museum



Wojciech Piechowski (PL), *Sunday in the countryside*,
1905 National Museum in Warsaw



Flower pot for palm, illustration from German magazine,
end of 19th century, National Museum in Cracow

Thonet Brothers

The development of technology and factory production, along with increasing urbanization, also changed the furniture market. Perhaps the most spectacular example of success are Thonet chairs – still highly valued today.

Michael Thonet experimented in Germany with the production of bentwood furniture. In the middle of the 19th century – encouraged by the Austrian Chancellor Klemens von Metternich – he moved to Vienna where he established his own workshop. In 1853 he passed it on to his sons and the company became known as Gebrüder Thonet (Thonet Brothers).

Chair no. 221, designed by Gebrüder Thonet (Thonet Brothers),
after 1898, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



The Thonet patented wood bending technique enabled industrial production of light and comfortable chairs – the opposite of the old, massive, carved furniture. Soon, a factory was opened in Koryčany, (today Czech Republic), followed by other factories in Central Europe.

Wszystkie Właściciele Król. Mości Wielceznia Honoru Wilejowskiej
FABRYKI MASYWNE GIEŁYCH
 WYROBÓW Z DRZEWA BUKOWEGO

BRACIA THONET

WYKONAWCZY
 WYKONAWCZY
 FRANCISKA JOSEFA I.

WENSKIE SĄDOWY WILJES
 WIEDEŃSKIE GOSPODARSTWO
 SĄDOWY SĄDOWY
 SĄDOWY SĄDOWY
 MOSKWA
 ODESSA
 WARSZAWA
 AMSTERDAM
 BERLIN
 BRNO
 BRUKSELA
 BUDAPEST
 FRANKFURT
 GRAC
 HAMBURG
 KOLONIA
 LONDYN
 MADRYT
 MARSZELLA
 MEDYOLAN
 MONACHIUM
 NEAPOL
 NEW-YORK
 PARYŻ
 PRAGA
 RZYM
 CHICAGO

AKSTERDAM 1883
 ANTYWERPIA 1885
 BOSTON 1882
 WIEDEŃ 1882
 KNOGOWROD 1889
 MEDAL 1891

POZA KONKURSEM
 CZECHOSŁOWACKI WYSTAWA
 W WIEDNI 1894
 PARYŻU 1890

POZA KONKURSEM
 CZECHOSŁOWACKI WYSTAWA
 W WIEDNI 1894
 PARYŻU 1890

POZA KONKURSEM
 CZECHOSŁOWACKI WYSTAWA
 W WIEDNI 1894
 PARYŻU 1890

Wynalazcy Wiedeńskich mebli giętych
 i założyciele
 tej gałęzi przemysłu.

GŁÓWNE FABRYKI:
 W KORYCZANACH, BYSTRYCY 7/8, HALEKOWIE, WSTĘPNE W MORAWACH,
 W UGRZCZEWIE, W WIERZCZACH, W FRANKENBERGU W HESSEN-KASSEL,
 I W NOWO-RADOMSKU (KRAJ POLSKIE)

FABRYKA
 NOWO-RADOMSK, GUB. PIOTRKOWSKA
 JEDYNY SKŁAD FABRYCZNY W WARSZAWIE / MARSZAŁKOWSKA 141

Advertisement of the Gebrüder Thonet (Thonet Brothers) factories in Polish magazine “Wędrowiec”, 1903, National Museum in Warsaw

The most popular model turned out to be the simple chair no. 14, which was awarded a gold medal at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1867. This was not only due to its timeless design, but also to its well-thought-out production process. The chair consisted of several elements that could be produced separately. Disassembled into parts it took up little space, which made it easy to transport.



Chair no. 14, designed by Michael Thonet
(DE), circa 1860-1870, Wien Museum

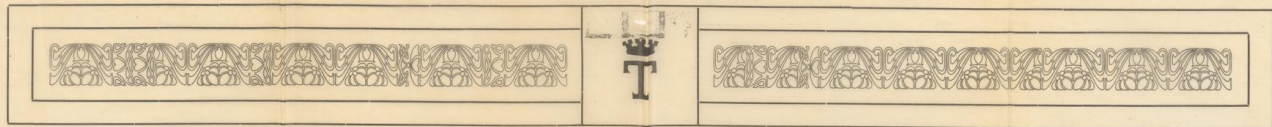


Portrait with old fashioned chair, photo by Ivan Standl (HR), circa 1890, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb



Two portraits with Thonet chair no. 14, photos by Ivan Standl (HR), 1870s, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb





Stuhl No. 54 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 55 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 95E 41x40 cm mit Stützen und Fußbögen
 Stuhl No. 95F 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 95H 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, mit Stützen
 Stuhl No. 95I 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 95J 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 95K 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 95L 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, mit Stützen
 Stuhl No. 261 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen



Stuhl No. 263 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 266 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 292 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 293 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 303 41 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 342 41x40 cm mit Fußbögen, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 343 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 347 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 348 41x40 cm mit langen Fußbögen, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 352 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen



Stuhl No. 353 41x40 cm mit langen Fußbögen, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 364 41x40 cm mit langen Fußbögen, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 371 41x40 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Stuhl No. 380 38x37 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Hocker H 1 38 cm
 Ledersessel L 3 38 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Kaffeehausstuhl K 11 39 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Kaffeehausstuhl K 12 38x37 cm Ringverbindung, ohne Stützen
 Kaffeehausstuhl K 12 41x40 cm mit langen Fußbögen, ohne Stützen
 Kaffeehausstuhl K 14 42 cm mit Polster-Einlegeisitz



Drehhocker No. D 1 41 cm
 Armlehnsessel No. 95F 46x45 cm
 Armlehnsessel No. 99 46x45 cm
 Armlehnsessel No. 343 46x45 cm
 Schreibstuhl No. B 42 47 cm
 Schreibstuhl No. B 3 50 cm
 Schreibstuhl No. B 53 47 cm
 Schaukelstuhl No. S 12 45x45 cm

Advertisement of the Gebrüder Thonet (Thonet Brothers) chairs and armchairs, circa 1925, Wienbibliothek im Rathaus

Vienna turned out to be an excellent location for the furniture business. More and more cafés, restaurants, and hotels needed aesthetically pleasing and durable sets of chairs and armchairs.



Chair no. 13, designed by Gebrüder Thonet (Thonet Brothers), circa 1882-1890, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Cafe Reichsrat in Vienna, photo by Michael Frankenstein & Comp., circa 1880, Wien Museum





Chair no. 18, designed by Gebrüder Thonet (Thonet Brothers), circa 1890-1918,
MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Gustav Zafaurek (AT), *Katharinenhalle im
Dreher-Park*, circa 1885, Wien Museum

Art Nouveau luxury

The aesthetic of everyday luxury objects was strongly influenced by Art Nouveau. Firstly, it was an extremely decorative style that looked great in interiors.



August Patek (AT), Poster for carpet factory, 1908,
Museum of Applied Arts in Prague

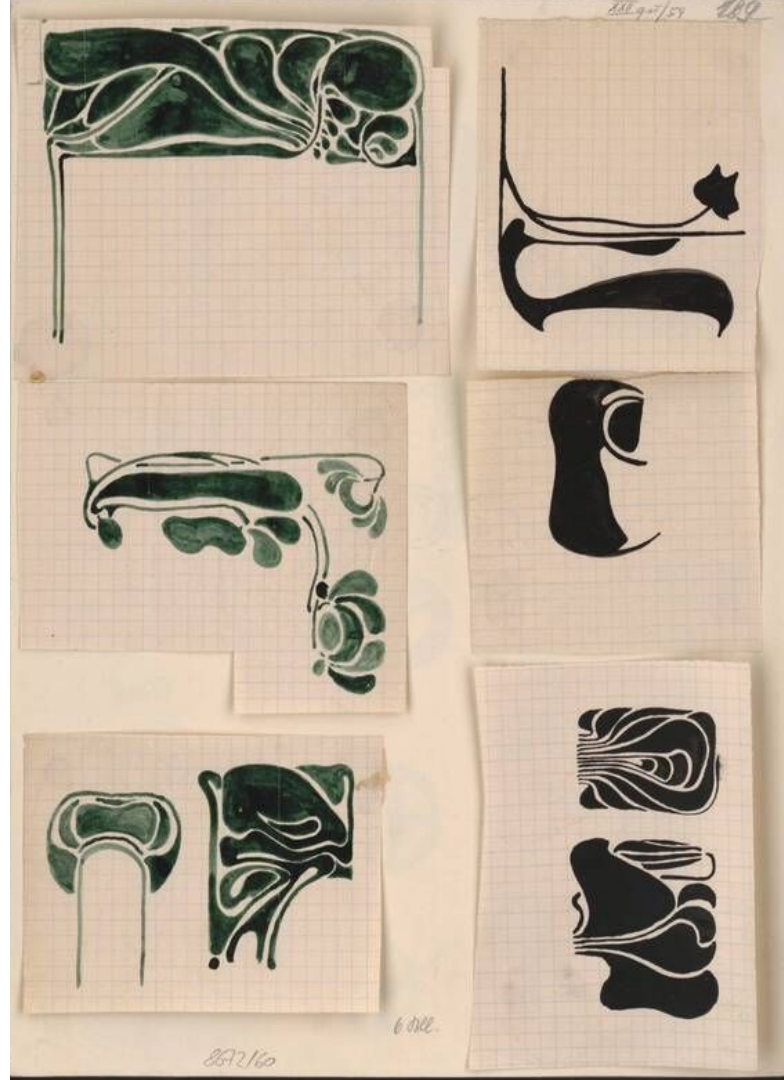
Dining room furniture designed by
Pál Horti (HU), Turin National
Exhibition of Decorative Art, 1902,
Museum of Applied Arts in
Budapest



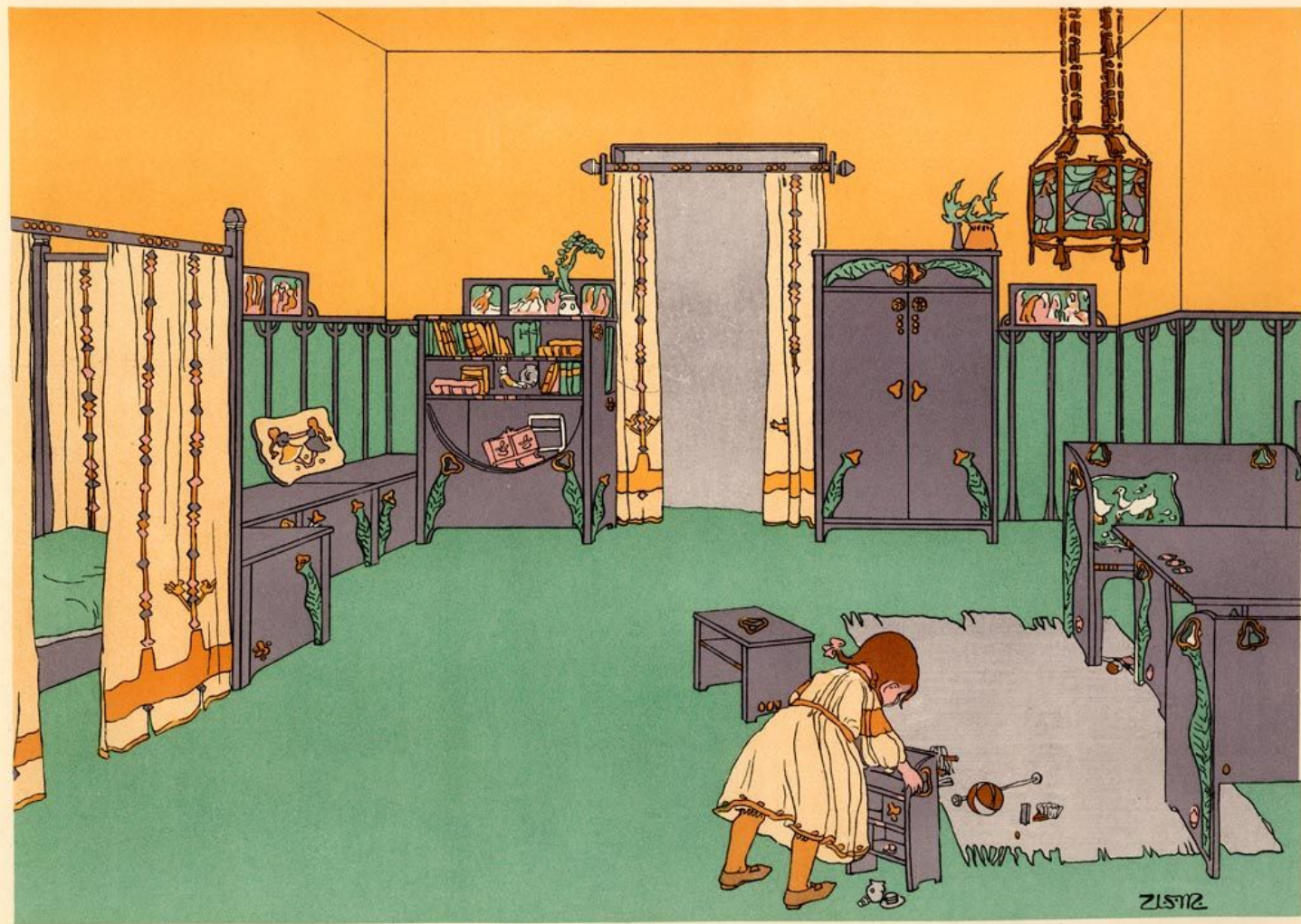
Met 29 Cdg 59.

Secondly, the artists were not limited to one field of art. They usually dealt not only with painting or drawing, but also designed stained-glass windows, furniture, interiors, posters and advertisements, fabrics, book covers and magazine illustrations, stage designs and costumes, to name a few. They often strove to create a complete work of art, which was to materialize the synthesis of arts.

Decorative designs by Koloman Moser
(AT), circa 1900, MAK – Museum of
Applied Arts, Vienna



Mariska Undi (HU), Design for children's room interior, 1903, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



Lamps, glass, ceramics, clocks, furniture, wallpapers... The typical Art Nouveau motifs could appear anywhere: flowing lines, floral ornaments, shoots of plants, silhouettes of women with swirling hair, slender birds (swans, cranes) or insects (shiny dragonflies, butterflies).

Vase designed by Antonija Krasnik (HR),
E. Bakalowitz und Söhne Glassworks, Vienna,
1902–1905, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb



Table clock, circa 1900, Museum of
Decorative Arts in Prague



Liqueur set, circa 1905,
Museum of Decorative
Arts in Prague



Vase designed by Anna Boudová Suchardová (CZ),
1900, Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague





Salon furniture designed by Pál Horti (HU), Christmas Exhibition of The Association of Applied Arts, 1900, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



Sideboard, circa 1900, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb



Design for cushion with lotuses
by Pál Horti (HU), before 1898,
Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



Vase designed by Hans Bolek (AT), 1913,
Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague



Decorative lamp, circa 1900, Museum of
Decorative Arts in Prague

Ceramics and art glass with intense colours, rounded shapes and decorative lines were also produced by Zsolnay, at the beginning of the 20th century – the largest ceramics factory in the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire.



Vase-tulip, produced by Zsolnay factory,
1899, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest

Ornamental plate, designed by
Lajos Mack (HU), produced by
Zsolnay factory, circa 1910,
Museum of Applied Arts in
Budapest





Bordure tile, produced by Zsolnay factory, circa 1900, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest



Vase, produced by Zsolnay factory, circa 1890, Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest

Striving for absolute artistic consistency could pose to be a problem when the form started to outweigh the comfort of use. Sometimes the interior started to look more like a “stage design” matching the artist’s vision. It is said that the furniture designed by Stanisław Wyspiański – one of the leading artists of the Young Poland movement – was not very comfortable.



Armchair designed by Stanisław Wyspiański (PL),
1905, National Museum in Cracow

Living room at the flat of the family of Tadeusz Żeleński in Cracow, designed by Stanisław Wyspiański (PL), 1904, National Museum in Warsaw

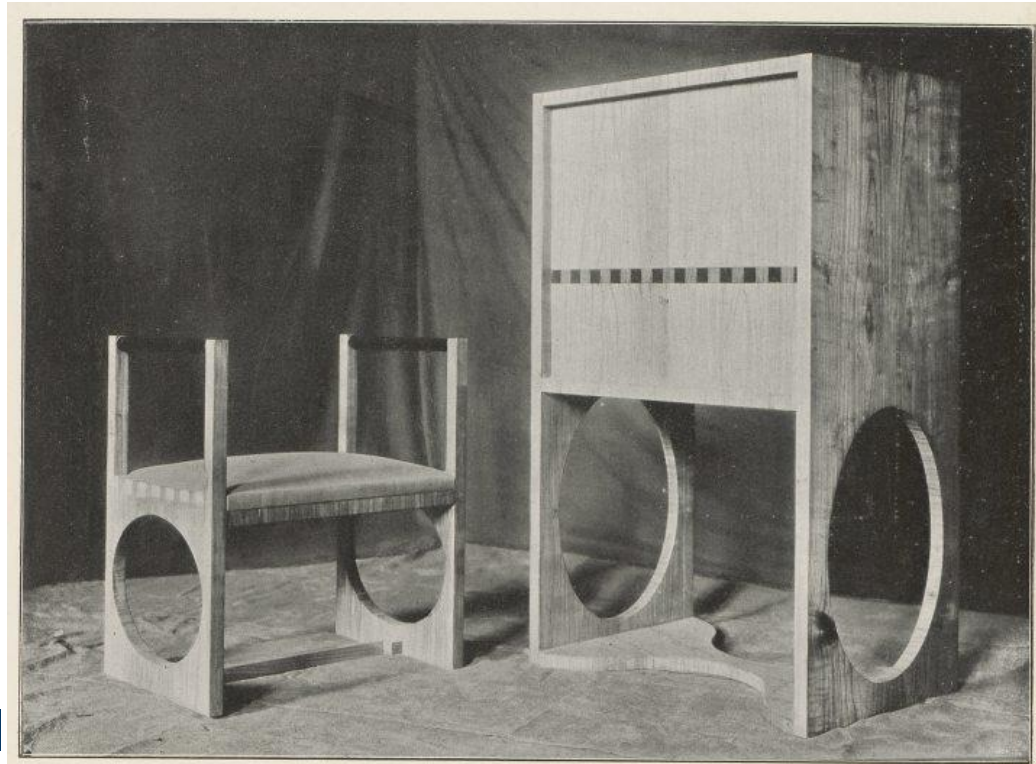


STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI. KRAKÓW. SALON W MIESZKANIU PP. TADEUSZOSTWA ŻELEŃSKICH W KRAKOWIE. MEBLE Z DRZEWA JAWOROWEGO POLITUROWANEGO W KOLORZE NATURALNYM, WYKONANE W PRACOWNI ANDRZEJA SYDORA W KRAKOWIE.

Geometric elegance

At the beginning of the 20th century some designers began to depart from such rich ornamentation. They proposed furniture constructed from simple geometric solids, distinguished by symmetry, sparse decoration and large flat surfaces.

Bedroom furniture designed by Karol Tichy (PL), from the competition of the Municipal Technical and Industrial Museum of Cracow, 1909, National Museum in Warsaw



KAROL TICHY. WARSZAWA. — MEBLE DO POKOJU SYPIALNEGO, Z KONKURSU ROZPISANEGO PRZEZ MIEJSKIE MUZEUM TECHNICZNO-PRZEMYSŁOWE W KRAKOWIE. ROBOTĘ STOLARSKĄ WYKONANO W PRACOWNI ANDRZEJA SYDORA.

Exhibition of the “Polish Applied
Art” Society in the building of
the Zachęta Fine Arts Society in
Warsaw, 1908, National Museum
in Warsaw



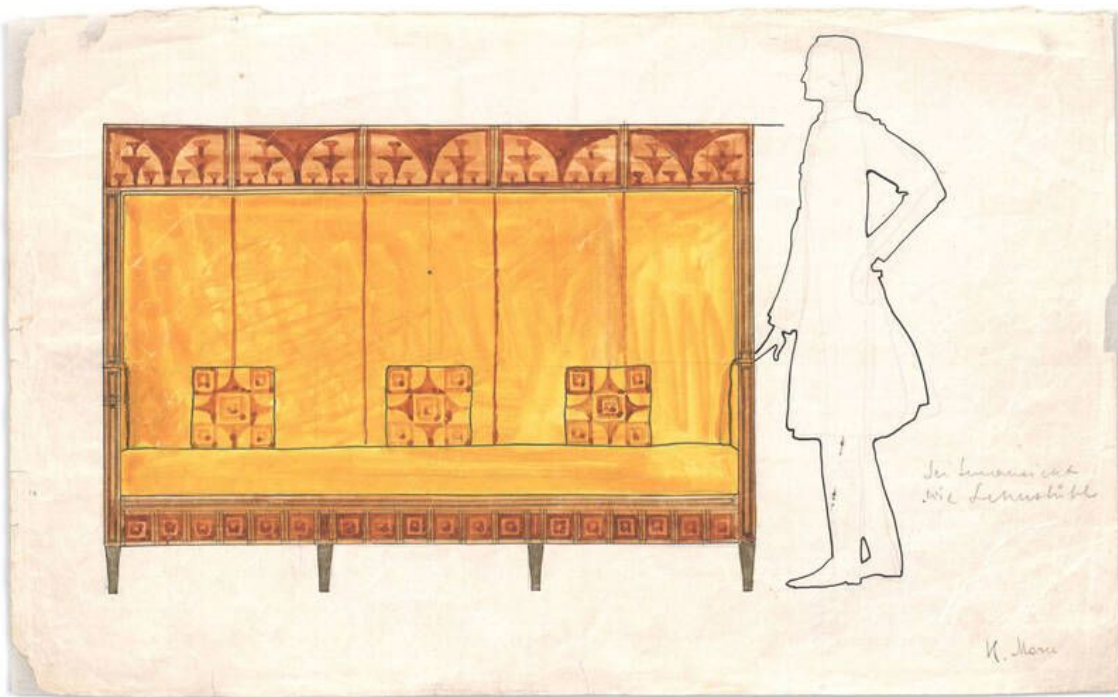
Bedroom designed by Szirontai
Lhotka (HU), Exhibition of
Interior Design, 1912, Museum
of Applied Arts in Budapest



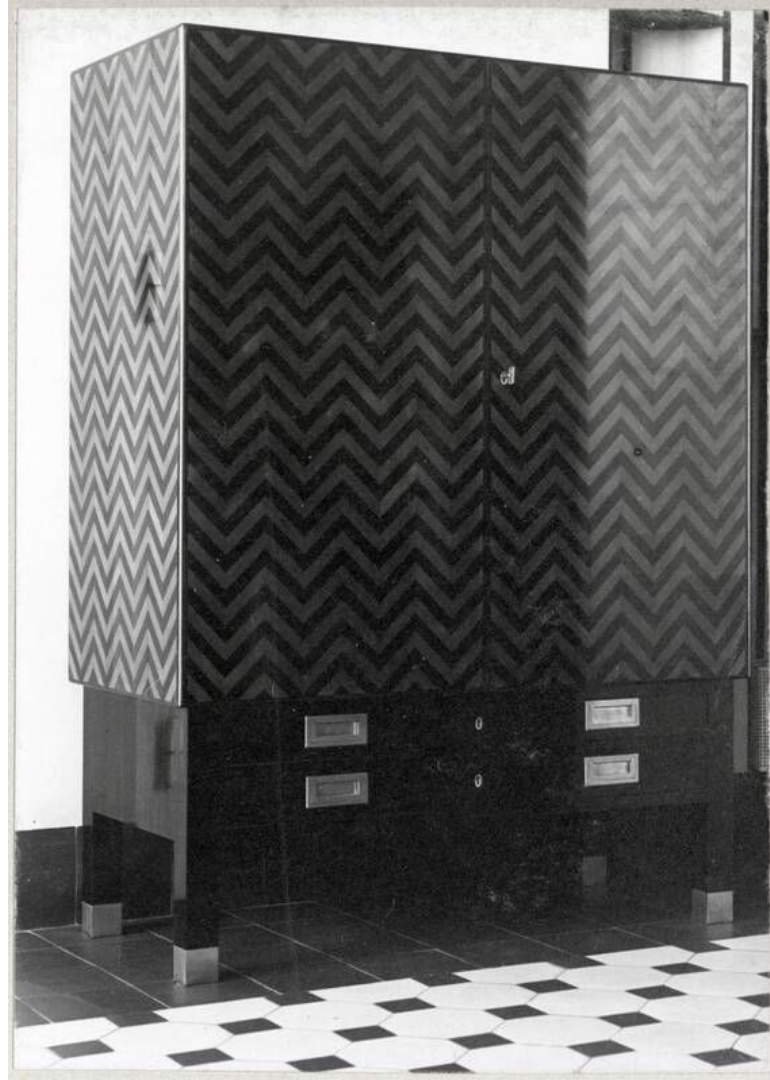
This direction was followed, among others, by artists associated in Wiener Werkstätte, a craft workshop founded in 1903 by Josef Hoffman and Koloman Moser. The furniture, fabrics and jewellery designed by them were categorized as luxury products.



Metal workshop of Wiener Werkstätte, circa 1904,
MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



Sofa designed by Koloman Moser (AT), Wiener Werkstätte, circa 1902-1903, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



Sideboard designed by Koloman Moser (AT), Wiener Werkstätte, Vienna, 1904, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna

Lamp designed by Fanny Harlfinger-Zakucka (AT), Wiener Werkstätte, 1910, Austrian National Library



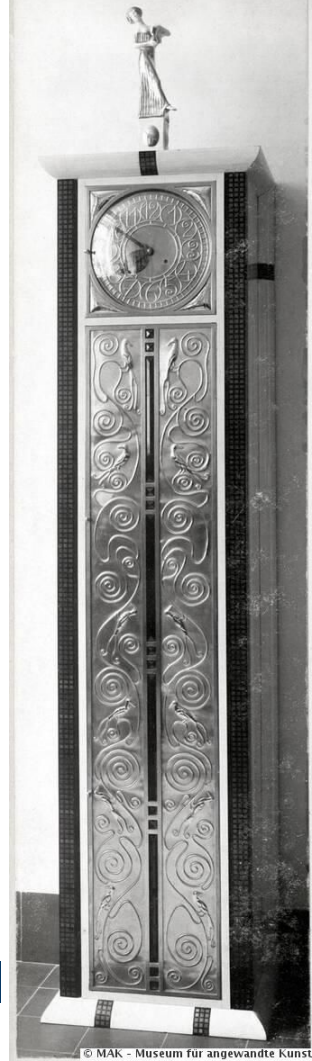
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Moosblumen (Moss Flowers), textile designed by Felice Rix-Ueno (AT), Wiener Werkstätte, 1924, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



© MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst

Clock designed by Josef Hoffmann (AT) and Carl Otto Czeschka (AT), Wiener Werkstätte, 1905–1907, MAK – Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna



© MAK - Museum für angewandte Kunst

Towards Art Déco and modernism

Decorative geometrization was also used by artists creating in the art déco style, which gained popularity in the 1920s.

Armchair designed by Wojciech Jastrzębowski (PL),
Polish Hall, International Exhibition of Modern
Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris, 1925,
National Museum in Warsaw



Later, modernists called for even stronger emphasis on the construction of products and a complete rejection of ornamentation. They focused on usefulness and ergonomic solutions. For them, ideal furniture was multifunctional, mobile and at the same time simple. They willingly used modern materials such as metal, bakelite or linoleum for interiors.



Armchair (polyvinyl, beech, chrome-plated steel pipes),
after 1927, Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb

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