

Museum

No 167 (Vol XLII, n° 3, 1990)

**Museums and art nouveau :
an ill-known heritage revives**

museum

Museum, a quarterly published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, is an international forum of information and reflection on museums of all kinds.

The English, French and Spanish editions are published in Paris, the Arabic edition in Cairo, and the Russian edition in Moscow.

No. 167 (No. 3, 1990)

Quotable quotes

'Speak to a switched-on museum director in any Western country and you're not speaking to a desiccated antiquarian. You're speaking to someone who's a mixture of public relations man, marketing expert, part-time scholar, broadcaster, journalist and money-grubber.'

Stephen Bayley, Chief Executive of the Design Museum, London

'One thing seems certain: art-market prices will rise in 1990.'

La Repubblica, Florence, 31
December 1989/1 January 1990

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Typeset by Coupé, Sautron
Printed by Vanmelle, Ghent
Printed in Belgium

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Subscriptions:

The Unesco Press,
Sales Division,
7 place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, France

Each issue: 48 F. Subscription rates
(4 issues or corresponding
double issues per year): 156 F

Copies of articles that have appeared in *Museum* may be purchased from: Institute for Scientific Information, (Att. of Publication Processing), 3501 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

MUSEUMS AND ART NOUVEAU

An ill-known heritage revives

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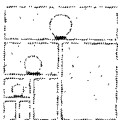
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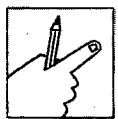
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From the Editor

'To each time its own art . . .'

Over the main door of the Vienna Secession building, that turn-of-the-century heart of the Austrian and central European version of art nouveau, striking gilt letters spell out a credo for all to see:



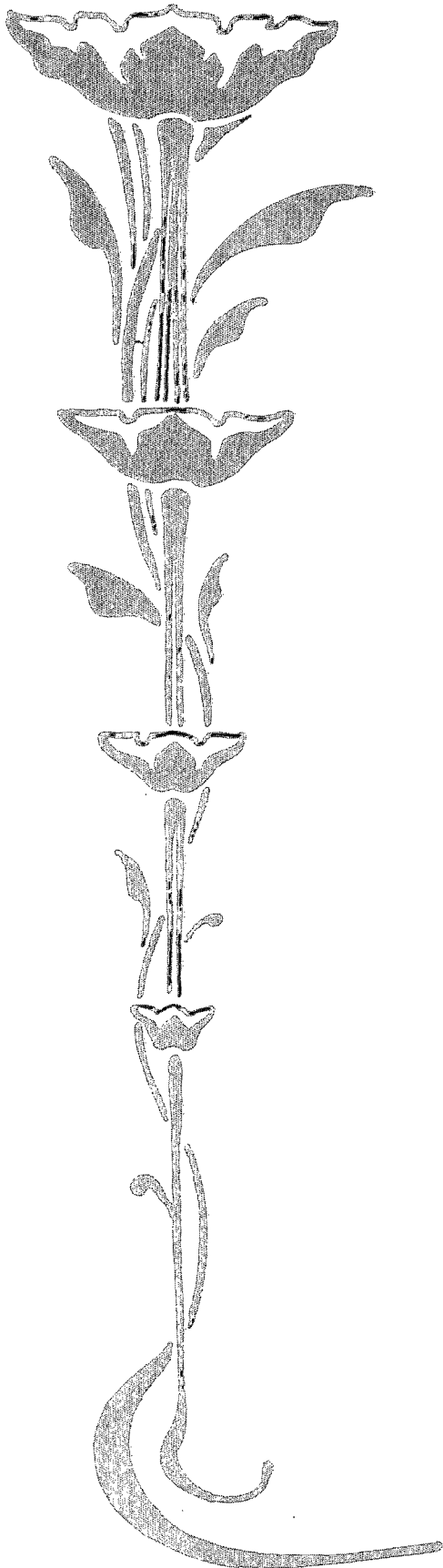
(To each time its own art, To art its freedom.)

Break-away as much as breakthrough in terms of design, architecture and craftsmanship, art nouveau was very much of its time—an epoch when aesthetics strongly rejected much of the past and even the present, which Secessionists and other art nouveau partisans and practitioners saw as pompous and therefore stifling to creativity. Marking their mutant intentions, but also because they were viewed by many as exotic, bizarre or just out of place, several variations of art nouveau came to be known by hallmark names that vividly expressed their supposed abnormality.

It was not by chance, then, that these names were often borrowed from a foreign language. The Finns abbreviated the German 'Jugendstil' (youth style) into 'Jugend'. English-speakers, with many people who speak Spanish, thought the strange style sounded more acceptable in French and came up with 'art nouveau' (now so fully accepted—outside Spain at least—that readers will not find it italicized in the English or Spanish editions of this number of *Museum*¹). The French returned the compliment, if that's what it was, and called it 'modern style', which the Russians, understandably disconcerted, obligingly re-gallicized to produce 'stil moderne'. The Italians, meanwhile, persisted in their preference for the English term 'liberty', while the Czechs, Hungarians and Yugoslavs embroidered on the Viennese word 'Sezession'.

This linguistic intermingling was amusing, but also bore a deeper meaning. Art nouveau often drew inspiration from folk sources and contributed to national revival movements. Paradoxically, it also emerged, through its constant and mutually enriching exchanges of people, ideas and objects, as the first major international architecture and design movement of our century. Truly international since, contrary to a still-widespread

1. It should be pointed out that Spanish art historians generally refer, when speaking of the Spanish movement, to *modernismo*. See, for example, Cristina and Eduardo Mendoza, *Barcelona modernista*, Barcelona, Editorial Planeta, 1989.



2. See the article by Hans-Dieter Dyroff on page 182 of this number.

misconception, art nouveau was by no means limited to Europe and North America. The presence of Argentina, Chile, Cuba and Japan in this number of *Museum* bears witness to its cosmopolitanism. To demonstrate, and inform readers about, the still little-known international scope of the movement is one reason why we have opened our pages to art nouveau.

Another is to share the aesthetic and intellectual pleasure almost unflinching present when one looks at, and learns and thinks about, art nouveau production, so varied in size (a drawer handle, a city neighbourhood) and type (architecture, furniture, ceramics, textiles, and so on) and yet unified by its whirly conception of plasticity and its all-inclusive approach to production (every detail of a house, not just the overall design, conformed to its canons). The conception and approach were not, it should be added, devoid of humour, another source of pleasure. Art nouveau's reaction to what it saw as the stuffy pomposity of its predecessors was to laugh. The omega shape widely used for its doors and windows fully justifies the movement being called, as it was at a recent Unesco-aided meeting, 'architecture with a smile'.²

Its whimsy was stopped dead by the horror of the First World War. Architecture has not really ever dared to smile since, and many precious artefacts and buildings that survived the first great conflict were destroyed during the Second World War. These facts could hardly be omitted from a Unesco treatment of art nouveau, and deserve serious thought by anybody reading a Unesco magazine.

A final reason for devoting the main theme of this *Museum* to art nouveau is that its destruction has not stopped. Its lovely buildings, in particular, continue to be disfigured, even razed, usually to make way for architecture that is anything but smiling. The cause is generally ignorance and the best antidote to ignorance is knowledge—one reason why we have intentionally selected some lesser-known museums for coverage in this number.

Perhaps more insidious than the wrecking, art nouveau is also subject to neglect through indifference. There is an example ten minutes' walk from Unesco Headquarters. In a mews of the seventh *arrondissement* of Paris a tall wrought-iron fence, through whose bars twisted like leaping tongues of fire one can see the Eiffel Tower, is being allowed to rust into oblivion. Its value is known but no one seems to care.

Without wishing to be a manual, this number of *Museum* is organized so as to suggest, with examples, different ways museums have and are therefore able to become more involved in protecting and presenting the unique art nouveau heritage.

First comes a series of art nouveau buildings that are themselves museums. The Viennese Secession was designed, and is still used, to house and show art. In contrast, the Maison Horta (Brussels) and the Villa Raichle (Subotica, Yugoslavia) were each originally built as the dwelling-cum-studio of their architects, for whom they are now named. But if the first is now a museum about its creator, a museum successful to the point of saturation, the second is given over to modern art, 'contemporaneity' being seen as the link between container and contents. The Ernst-Ludwig-Haus at Darmstadt (Federal Republic of Germany), originally put up as the centrepiece of an artists' colony, is now opening as a museum devoted to that innovative but all too short-lived group of creators. When Maxim Gorky first saw the art nouveau Moscow town house in which he was to live and work he exclaimed that it was a preposterous building; but once ensconced he seems to have lived quite happily there. The story of a residence that is now a municipal museum in Mar del Plata (Argentina) shows how art nouveau reached South America at a time when the rich were *very* rich and there was no problem of Third World debt or currency restrictions (for

them, at least; one wonders in what sort of houses the workmen who built the Villa Ortiz Basualdo lived).

Playing their traditional role with not very traditional material, museums are also collecting and displaying art nouveau objects. In several cases these are, logically enough, decorative arts museums or sections of museums. While there was sufficient clairvoyance in Trondheim (Norway) for a museum to commission directly an entire room interior from Henry Van de Velde, others reported on here in Atlanta (United States), Berlin (German Democratic Republic), Budapest and Havana have, in the main, had to build up their collections painstakingly, even beginning at a time when art nouveau was still considered to be in bad taste. In addition to decorative arts collections, museums and archives of architecture (covered here are Helsinki and, in France, Nancy) are helping to preserve and make known the work of art nouveau creators.

Turning to some additional dimensions of our theme, people visiting or otherwise interested in museums in the Netherlands are offered an intriguing explanation of why art nouveau seems to have been less active in that country than in many other European countries. Another article shows how art nouveau came to and expressed itself in Japan, and leaves one with the impression—and hope—that an architecture museum covering art nouveau among other trends may see the light of day in that country. We are also pleased to report how Canada brought some illicitly exported art nouveau home.

Finally, there is a report on the work and prospects of the Unesco-assisted International Study and Action Project on Art Nouveau/Jugendstil Architecture, in which art historians, museum professionals, architects and other specialists from eighteen countries have been taking part; it is they who suggested that *Museum* devote a number to the theme.

To each time its own art . . .

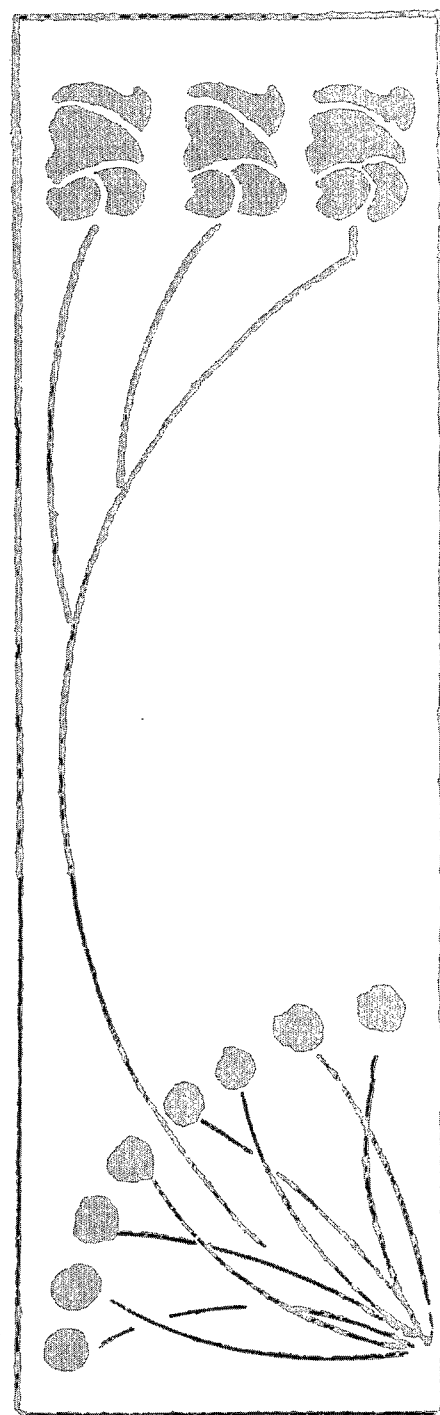
Because art nouveau was eminently of its own time it, in turn, was superseded by other movements, particularly art déco: curve and curl gave way to sharp angles. But history has shown that art nouveau was not just a passing fad, even though it spent more than half a century out of favour with contemporary taste. Now, thanks in good part to the work of museums, it is reviving. Is this a cyclical occurrence? Will art nouveau go out of style again in another ten or fifteen years, obliging museums to put their Lalique, Tiffany, Gallé, Van de Velde, Eliel Saarinen, Guimard, Horta and company back into the storerooms?

Many specialists think not, or at least hope not. The vision, the artistry, the freshness, the whimsy—these features, among others, have helped bring art nouveau back into view. Will they endow it with enduring value and appeal?

To each time its own art . . . nouveau?



Deborah Hayes



P.S. We are pleased to welcome three new members to our editorial Advisory Board : Nancy Hushion (Canada), Tomislav Šola (Yugoslavia) and Shaje Tshiluila (Zaire).

The Horta house in Brussels: a problematic success

Cécile Dulière

Born in Brussels, has a doctorate in philosophy and history, and a degree in archaeology and the history of art. As a classical archaeologist participated in the Belgian excavations at Apamea in Syria (1965-69) and in preparing the corpus of ancient mosaics of Tunisia (1970-74). Curator of the Horta Museum 1975-80 and edited the memoirs of Victor Horta in 1985. At present she has a post of special responsibility with the cultural heritage department and is professor at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Brussels.

Paradoxically, the Horta Museum came into being just when the reputation of art nouveau in Belgium had reached its nadir. In 1965, the demolition of the famous *Maison du Peuple* erected by Horta between 1895 and 1899, coming as it did on top of other losses, at last aroused the indignation of history of architecture specialists and precipitated the beginning of a healthy reversal of public opinion.

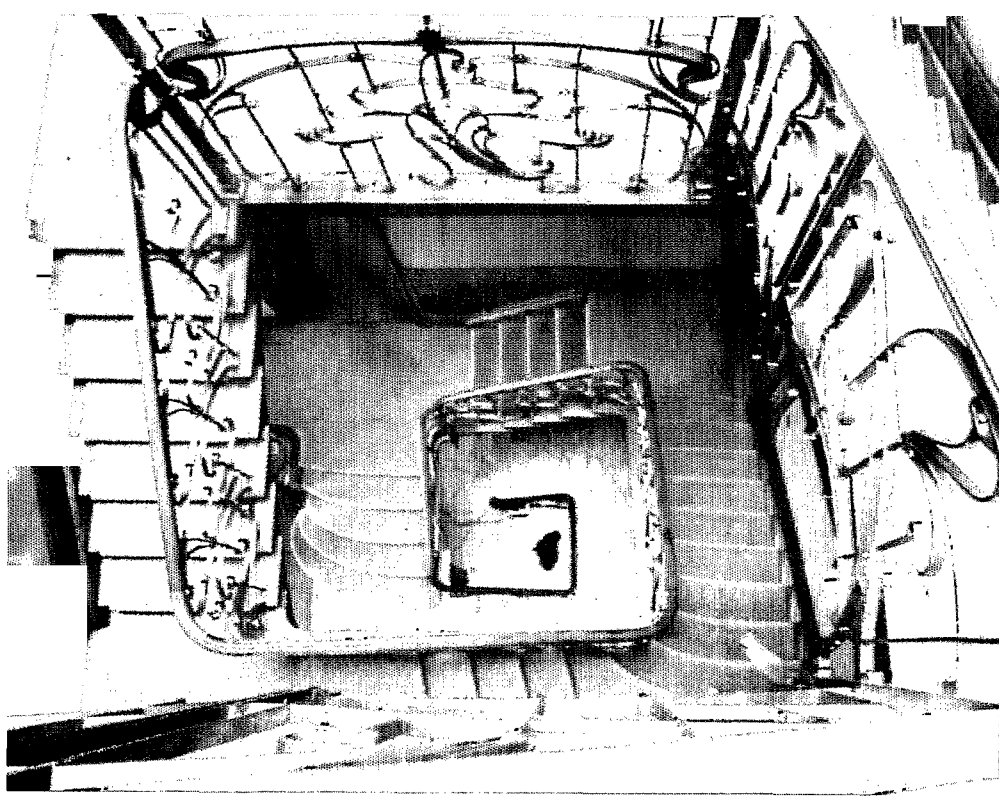
It was thanks to the architect Jean Delhaye, a faithful and determined pupil of Horta, that the commune of St-Gilles acquired the personal home of Victor Horta situated at 23-25 rue Américaine in Brussels, and converted it, in 1969, into a museum open to the public. The studio next door was purchased in 1973 and in the same year a retrospective exhibition of all Horta's works was organized in the two buildings, now joined once again. Not long before, in 1970, Paolo Portoghesi and Franco Borsi's fine monograph had appeared. It was dedicated to Horta's work and based on records, drawings, documents and photographs in the new museum. Despite the impressive launch, there were very few visitors to the museum to begin with—less than 1,000 a year.

Victor Horta (1861-1947) was at the height of his creative period when in 1898 he purchased two adjoining plots of land (with a frontage of 12.5 metres and 40 metres deep) on the Rue Américaine in St-Gilles, a part of Brussels then being developed. He decided to construct two separate buildings on this site. The two different façades clearly reflect this idea. The one on the right, more austere and with extensive windows, was the part which housed his professional premises—the studio—while on the left, the living area, slightly wider (6.57 metres as opposed to 5.93 metres for the studio), was more decorative and more cheerful. The balcony, suspended from the second-floor loggia by tie-beams, is slightly off centre, being more to the right so as to

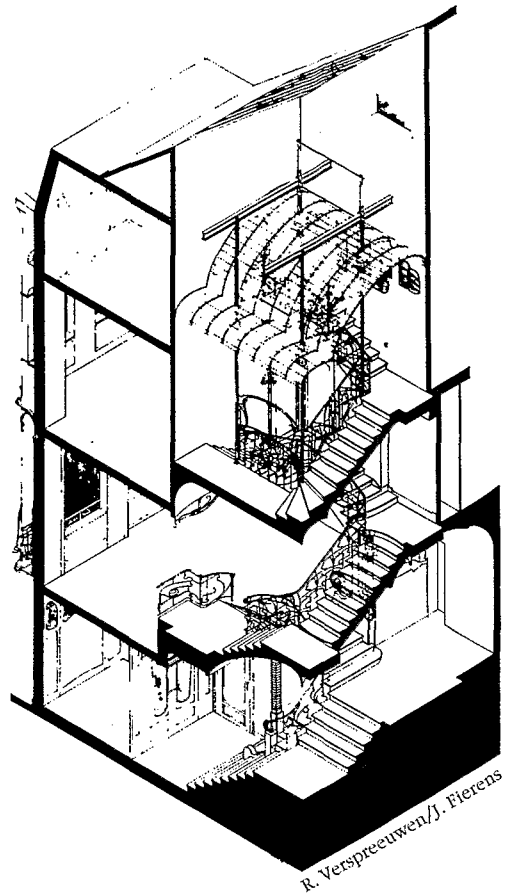


Horta Museum

Front view of the Horta Museum. On the left the house, on the right the studio.



The central part of the staircase.



Axonometric cross-section of the house.

R. Verspreuwen/J. Fierens

suggest the unity of the two buildings. These were linked by an unobtrusive doorway on the ground floor and by a well-delineated passage on the first floor (living-room), and shared a common garden.

'My best years'

Since he was building for his own use, Horta was completely free to give full rein to his creative imagination. Faced with the very small surface area and stimulated by this difficulty (just as Hector Guimard was with his synagogue in Paris), he demonstrated a boldness in his architectural style that was even greater than the daring he had just exhibited in the larger homes for his clients, Solvay (1894) and van Eetvelde (1895). Taking the staircase as the living centre and hub of the house, he opened up the interior space from it by dispensing with walls. Thus around the spiralling stairs, the floors are linked together in a series of subtle changes of level. Through the skylight above the stairwell, the light from above filtered down through a gold-tinted glass ceiling into the very heart of the house. When, in his memoirs written towards the end of his life, Horta spoke of 'the curved glass ceiling which at all times gave a golden tinge to the top of the staircase, the walls of which

were yellow with white and gold decorations', he noted in the margin 'my best years'. There is no doubt that the house echoed the joyfulness that was a part of his life at that time.

In fact, Horta lived only a short time in this double home, built to his plans right down to the minutest detail. He moved in in 1901 and extended the house into the garden in 1906 at the time of his remarriage, then sold it in 1919 after his return from four years in the United States. The furniture followed him to his successive residences until his death in 1947. The house was thus empty of his furniture but fortunately, subsequent owners kept the original decoration as Horta had left it (wall-paintings, panelling, stained-glass windows, metal fittings). This was not the case with the adjoining studio, which changed hands several times and underwent unfortunate modifications. Thanks to the acquisition of furniture and lights by the Commune of St-Gilles and, more recently, thanks especially to the go-ahead association of the Friends of the Horta Museum (set up in 1980), the look of the two houses is constantly being improved and is approaching its original state.

I was not there for the founding and early days of the museum since I did not become curator until 1975. At that time there were only a few thousand visitors

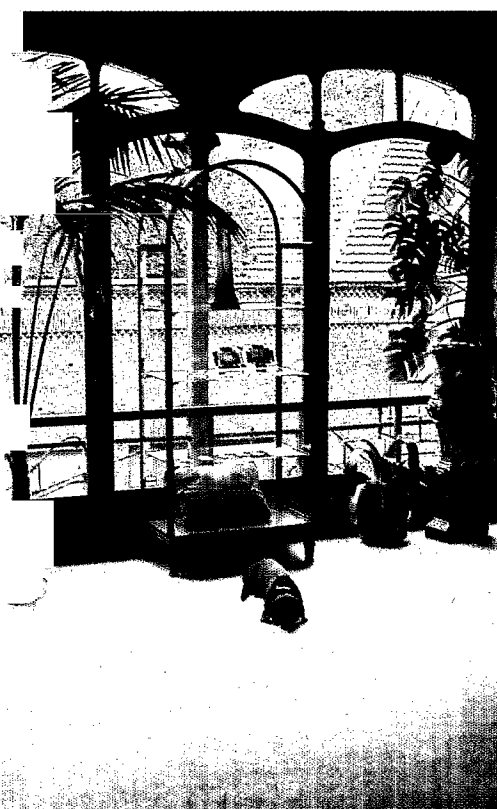
each year and it was frequent for individual visitors who had already got as far as the dining room to ask where the museum was. The preconceived idea of a museum being a grim place mainly full of display cabinets is still strong! Having said this, it has been (almost) a daily pleasure to see the reactions of the different visitors.

Generally speaking, old people who in their childhood and youth had known and even lived in art nouveau interiors, albeit at that time the style was already in disrepute, have difficulty in considering it as a style. At the very most, it is just a curiosity to rekindle memories (which can prove to be interesting for a better appreciation of the era). This does not apply to the younger generation unfamiliar with the era in question and who have for the most part been brought up in modern, standardized apartments. They thus look upon it as an interesting 'historical' style, as they would that of Napoleon III or the Baroque or Rococo periods. Little by little, therefore, school visits became more frequent and students from art schools or architectural institutes, generally sketch-pad in hand, waxed very enthusiastic over the intricacies of the decoration. On the other hand, one of the main interests of high-school children was to open the doors marked 'no entry'. This contrasted with the rela-



Dining room and multi-purpose sideboard.

First floor of the studio with showcases and plants.



tively rare groups of young children (6 to 12) who used really to marvel at all the research done to complete a 'real house' with every smallest personal detail attended to, so different from the stereotyped interiors they were used to.

In the dining-room they were particularly fascinated by the finesse of its single fitted piece of furniture which, at one and the same time, was a sideboard, show-case, serving hatch, plate-warmer and extra open gas-heater. They regretted not being allowed into the kitchens (traditionally situated in the cellar, but in this case converted into a flat for the museum caretaker). Another disappointment was the bathrooms. The bathroom area in residences decorated by Horta is very functional but not striking to the eye and is discreetly incorporated into panelling.

Visits systematically organized for groups of young blind people proved to be a particularly interesting experience. As they explored with their sensitive fingers the staircase and its banister from the top of the house to the bottom, they interpreted the contrast of the materials used—marble, iron, different woods such as mahogany and sycamore—in terms of their texture and warmth. They appreciated the smallest details of the differences in the iron-work, the change of rhythm that increased from landing to landing, the continuity of the curves and counter-curves enlivened by what is well known in Belgium as the 'whiplash'. This sensory transposition and these analogies deepen what sight already reveals of all that is sensuous in Horta's art and in his way of using and combining materials.

Door handles disappeared

Horta would never have imagined nor appreciated his own home (even less his studio) being overrun with visitors. He had, of course envisaged making a favourable impression on his future clients by designing, on the first floor, a passage directly connecting his studio and office to the sitting-room, where discussions could be carried on in a more comfortable atmosphere. The extreme originality of the white enamelled bricks covering the dining-room walls, and the juxtaposition of this modern material—really more appropriate for a kitchen or a bathroom—with metallic structures that were not only visible but painted in yellow and gold into the bargain, could hardly have been appreciated by any client, even if offset by exquisite honey-coloured panelling. It appears that here

Horta wanted to exaggerate somewhat in his combination of visible materials so that his own home would be seen as a sort of advertisement or 'poster' for his reputation as a modern innovator.

He thus anticipated visitors but he did not lay out the interior with the movement of groups or the consequent surveillance problems in mind. Later, when working on plans for the Fine Arts Museum in Tournai (which he modified in 1911 after the scandal caused by the theft of the *Mona Lisa* from the Louvre) he based his ideas on the layout of the prisons of the time and designed the museum as a single-storey star. Just one custodian was enough to keep an eye on all the exhibition rooms if he remained inside the area delineated by the central mosaic.

His home in the Rue Américaine was obviously planned differently, yet on the ground floor and first floor, the fluidity of the interior and the optical cohesion were such that from a central point one could take in the whole dining-room on the garden side and the whole raised living-room on the street side, together with the bottom of the staircase leading from the entrance and then going up towards the upper floors. This was where the reception desk (selling entry tickets) with the main custodian was strategically positioned. Things became more complicated when one went up to the floors where the interior was more compartmentalized and more private, and was given cohesion by the stairwell. Here were the bedroom, the small lounge, the bathroom and the children's bedroom and winter garden (the attic floor is not open to the public).

The large number of different rooms and their very different sizes were hardly conducive to the installation of a camera-surveillance system. Because of the difficulty of keeping an eye on these private areas, all the easily pocketed knick-knacks and small objects, which traditionally cluttered up the furniture and fireplaces at the time, were done away with. Judging by old photographs Horta's house was no exception to the rule. The interior gained by being cleaner and neater and fits in more with present-day tastes. Removing those objects meant that the decorative features and subtleties that formed an integral part of the house and were deliberately included by Horta could now be seen to better advantage. They included the panelling and fitted furniture, the lights, wall paintings, stained-glassed windows, etc. In a home in which each detail had been designed

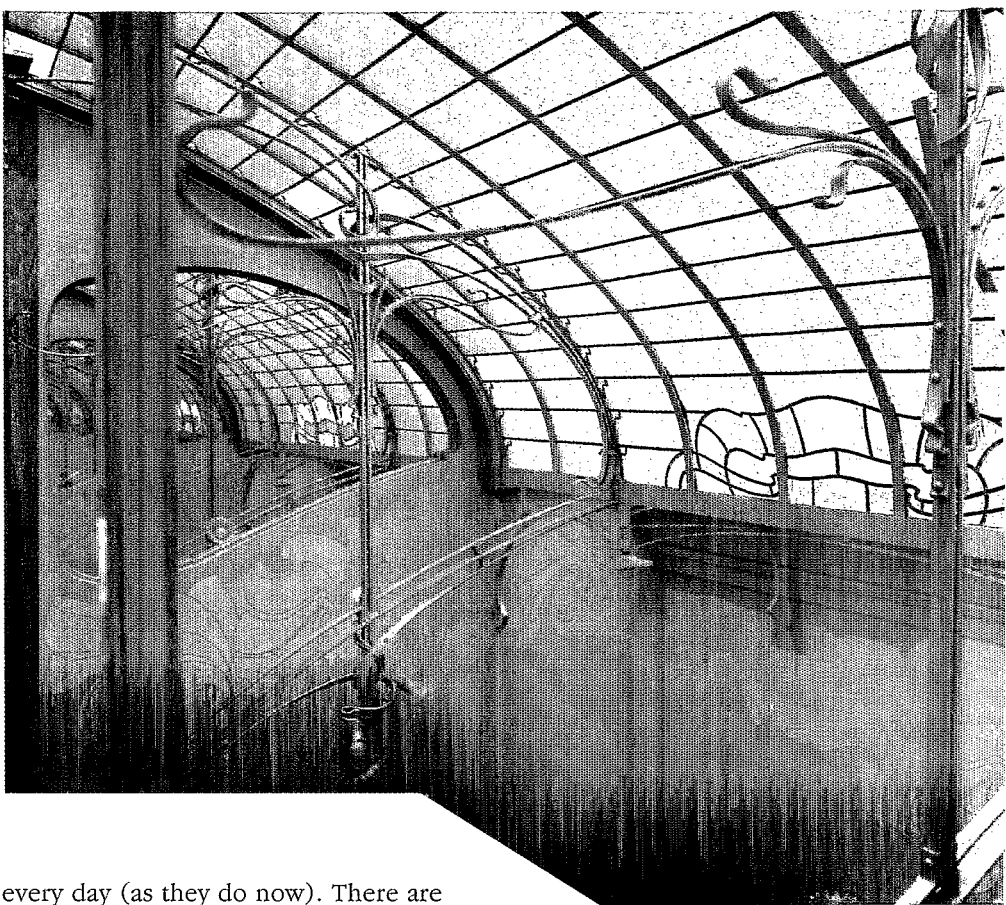
and produced as an original item, it proved essential to check that the hinges, window catches and, above all, door handles were properly fixed. Some door handles have unfortunately disappeared, unscrewed by undesirable visitors. An instructive display of objects and materials, this time in display cases (designed by Horta for the former Wolfers shops), is in the studio.

***'Keep the stem,
throw away the leaves'***

One difficulty when welcoming senior citizens, who were coming more and more frequently, was the lack of extra seats. Walking round and climbing staircases, however well planned, is tiring and visitors need to sit down, catch their breath, admire a detail, enjoy a view. It was obviously impossible to allow the public to sit on sofas and delicate armchairs designed by Horta, even if they literally held out their arms to you. This was a hard but necessary rule for conservation purposes. What about adding extra seats? It seemed impossible to put in functional seats, no matter how sober and discreet they might be, without them clashing with the decor, whose harmonious impact was so strong. Horta tells us, in his memoirs, how Armand Solvay, exasperated by the slow progress with the finishing touches to his new town house, had wanted to buy furniture in fashionable shops to gain time. It turned out that nothing looked right, and he finally had to be patient and wait for the furniture to be finished by Horta himself.

The only items not created by Horta which fit in perfectly with the decor are the plants. They combine with and accentuate the overall aspect by providing a contrast to it. Horta used to say, 'I keep the stem of the plant and throw away the leaves.' He had a charming little winter garden built right on the top floor of his home. Since plants and bouquets of flowers do not really interest kleptomaniacs, the curator is free to put them in various places, as the lady of the house would have done in bygone days. In fact, it seems that a museum house such as Horta's ought rather to be run by a female curator. A man has little idea of the enormous work involved in the cleaning and daily upkeep of such a house (even without the knick-knacks), built at a time when domestic help was plentiful and easily recruited, and when it was not envisaged that large numbers of visitors would be walking all over the house

L. Schrobilgen



The curved glass ceiling over the stairwell.

every day (as they do now). There are carpets to be vacuumed, panelling to be polished, and the glasswork, ironwork, parquet floors, marble and mosaics all need exacting and daily attention.

With the number of visitors increasing each year (more than 35,000 in 1988) it is not at all easy to find a solution to the basic problem of lack of room. The physical congestion of this sublimated space destroys any possible appreciation of it. For example, the wonderful viewpoint that Horta arranged at the top of the staircase, with a series of mirrors endlessly reflecting the golden decor of the glass ceiling, is in fact a minute landing suitable for only one or two people, or a maximum of three, at any one time.

***Should admission
be limited?***

The simple solution was to use all the existing floor space so that the public could circulate round the museum as easily as possible. The Commune of St-Gilles, faced with a growing flood of visitors (and the increased earnings that resulted), gave up using the ground floor of the studio, which had previously been kept for temporary exhibitions by local artists. For two years now this ground floor has been part of the museum and in this large space, immediately to the right of the

entrance, is a well-stocked bookshop and further documentation Horta's work (ironwork, casts, documents). It is now possible to reduce the number of people in the house when there is a crowd. The staircase poses the most serious problem. Everyone is obliged to use the stairs and gathers in this area, which is the very heart of the house. Horta suspended the staircase from four gilded metal pilasters, secured to two horizontal beams, hidden behind the curved glass ceiling and so creating an extraordinary effect of lightness. It is legitimate to ask just how strong this arrangement is, given the unforeseen and constantly increasing load put on it.

In conclusion, the experience of the Horta Museum poses in an acute form the problem of a private house converted into a public museum, visitors to which it is hoped to increase more and more. It is an unequalled architectural feat which can be appreciated only from the inside as one walks round but it is not the size of a cathedral, a temple or a museum specially planned for the presence and movement of a large number of people. Since it was not built



G. de Keyser/Friends of the Horta Museum

to welcome the ever-increasing flood of admiring visitors and being also the only beautiful art nouveau building in Brussels open freely to the public, the building might finally end up as a victim of its own success unless it is decided to limit the number of visitors—something which no one has so far wanted to do.

P.S. The congestion of the museum does not, however, prevent me from inviting readers of *Museum* to come and visit it. Musée Horta, 25 rue Américaine, 1050 Brussels. Open every day (except Mondays) from 2 to 5.30 p.m. ■

The sitting room

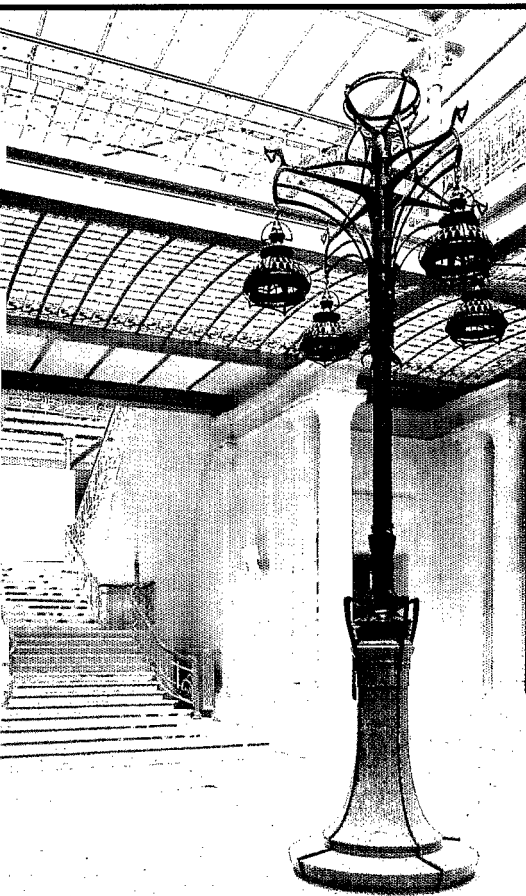
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ACL

Door-handle in the dining room.



Sintjulus Architect

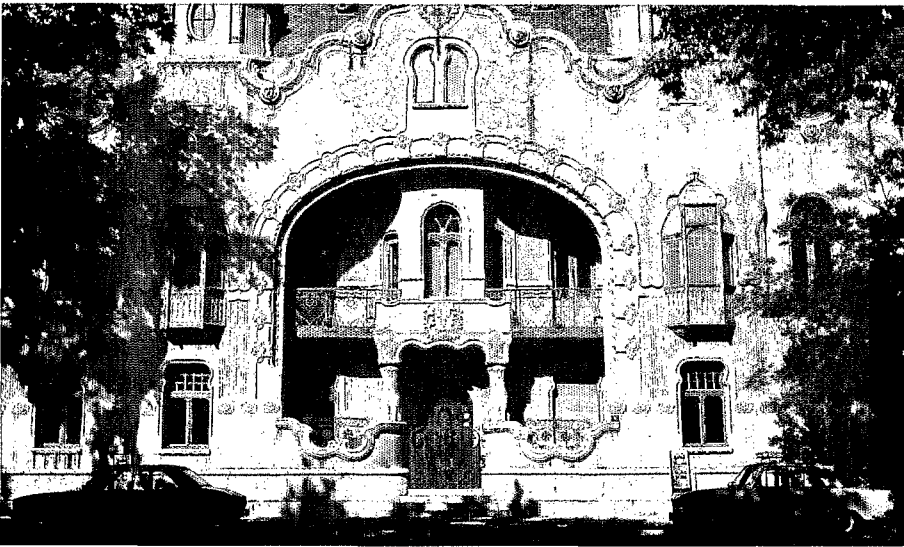
Cartoon strips and art nouveau

The old Wacquez store, built in Brussels by Victor Horta in 1905, has been restored and was reopened in October 1989 as the Belgian Cartoon Strip Centre, which has museum (as well as other) functions. Thus a huge space (4,000 m²) created by the Belgian art nouveau master has been made accessible to the public.

Charles Wacquez ran a wholesale textile business and asked Horta to build for him, on a large lot conveniently located in the city centre, a two-level store mainly to be used as a warehouse. Stone was used for the façade and monumental entryway meant to impress clients, but the entire interior consists of thin metal pillars holding up luminous glass skylights.

To transform this store into a cartoon-strip centre, a very 'respectful' restoration has been carried out. Cartoon strips, nicknamed 'the ninth art', are a dynamic and specific sector of the Belgian publishing industry. They have, then, also come to the rescue of the last extant commercial building designed by Horta. After the store closed in 1970, the building suffered severe deterioration. But its revival is not illogical since the present-day 'ninth art' shares with art nouveau a taste for graphic creativity and a sometimes wild imagination.

The Villa Raichle: a gamble in more ways than one



The passer-by's eye is caught, drawn, challenged, enticed . . . Subotica's Villa Raichle was built with love as much as with money.

Photos by courtesy of the author

Kata Martinović Cvijin

A specialist in contemporary architecture and art, working at the Subotica Modern Gallery housed in the Villa Raichle; takes part in the *International Study and Action Project on Art Nouveau/Jugendstil Architecture* described in the article by Hans-Dieter Dyroff on page 182 of this issue.

Subotica, a town of 150,000 people in the northernmost part of Yugoslavia, is known as 'Secession City' for its role in enriching the Hungarian variant of the Viennese version of art nouveau architecture.

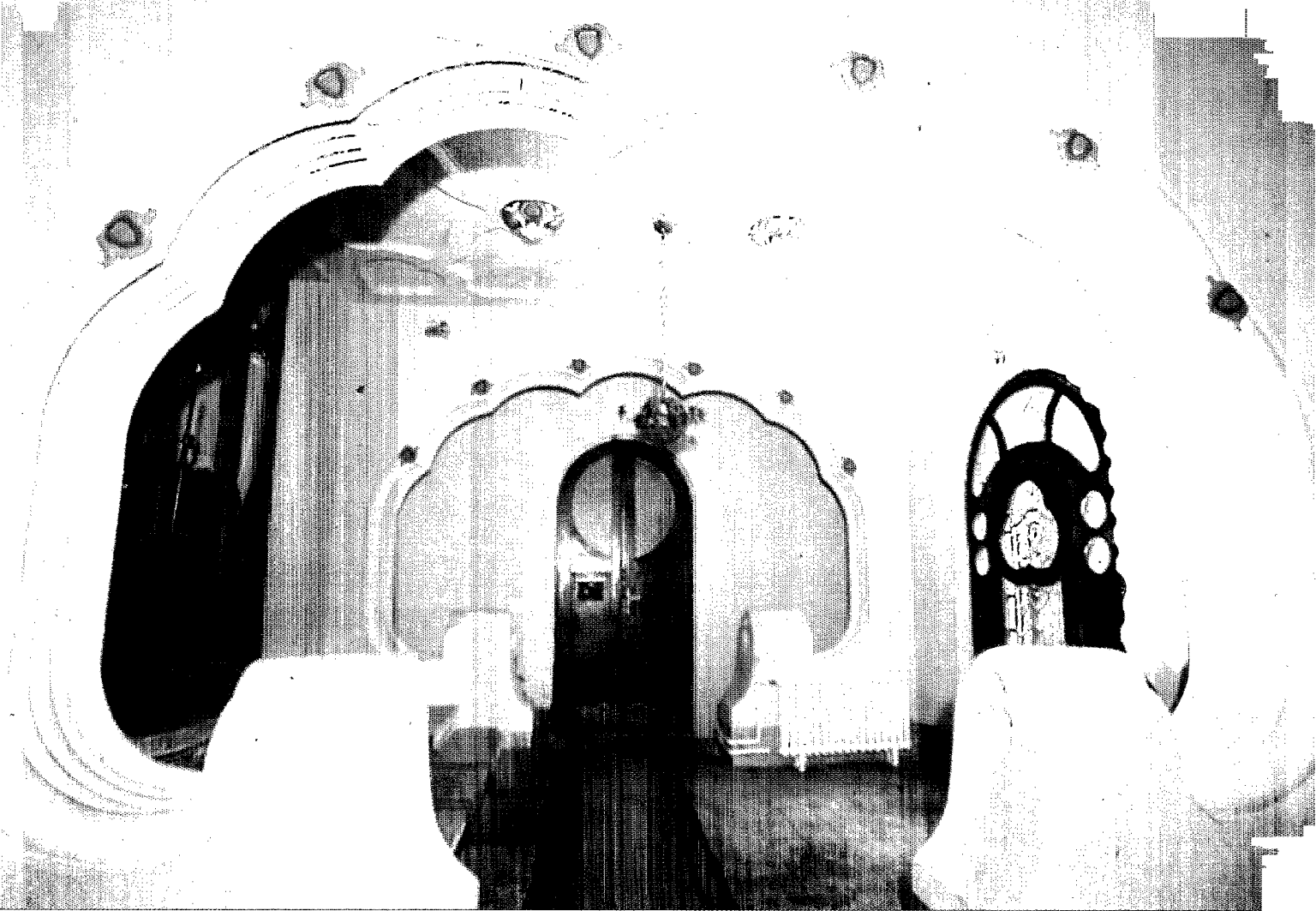
You leave the railway station and pass century-old plane trees. As suddenly as unexpectedly, your eye is caught—then enticed, challenged—by the daring shapes and unusual colours of a remarkable building standing at the axis of Lenin Park. Not left to linger on the overall profile of the structure, the eye is immediately drawn to the monumental entrance placed at the centre of the two-storey façade and representing a stylized heart form—only fitting, when you consider that the house was built with love every bit as much as with money.

The monumental size of this portal (it surely cannot be called a mere door) conjures up as if by magic the impression, in this relatively modest building, of gates to baroque castles and manor houses. In the lower, rounded parts of the 'heart' bordered by ceramics, interlacing flowers are inserted into a fence made of wrought iron. The wide arch of the monumental portal follows a line of ceramic flowers, in fact a combination of hearts and tulip petals. The outer gateway, nearest to the street and reached by pink marble steps, has again the shape of an over-dimensioned heart made

of wrought iron and filled in with interlacing flowers of tortuous, restless lines. The main entrance portal is flanked by columns shaped in the Tuscan style, which support a closed loggia on the first storey and balconies on each side of the loggia. The decoration of the iron fence of the balcony is sumptuous, and the dominant motif is—yet again—a stylized heart. The balcony walls as well as numerous flower details of the façade are a mosaic composed of precious golden and cobalt-blue Murano glass.

Both sides of the main portal are lined with strangely shaped windows on both the ground floor and upper storey. These windows, bordered with ceramic material, have segmental arch shapes. Between them, a line of ceramic flowers is inserted.

In an unusual development of the history of European art, the urbane style of Viennese Secession is characterized here exactly by the pattern of decoration which has been in use in the everyday surroundings of Hungarian peasants through many centuries. Being thus deeply involved in the course of development of Hungarian avant-gardism, and working for himself and for his soul (this was to be his own dwelling), the architect rejected at once all the restraints and stereotypes imposed by different orders, and created as long ago as 1903 these staggering and embarrassing



forms, which defy the essence of building materials and rules of construction. But who was he?

Luckily, a refused permit

The designer's name and the year of completion of this unique building were long obscured by a veil of oblivion, or at least ignorance. Only now have investigations led to the surprising finding that the building, which by form, colouring and decoration reminds us of a sculpture rather than an architectural creation, is the relatively early work of the Subotica architect Ferenc J. Raichl. Although it has been attributed to many outstanding architects of the Hungarian Secession, this building (which now houses our modern art museum) is undoubtedly the work of that local architect, who designed it for himself as both home and office.

Ferenc J. Raichl was born in 1869 at Apatin, a small town on the Danube. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Budapest. After several study tours of Europe, he settled down in Subotica in 1896, having married the daughter of a merchant who was a member of the municipal senate. The buildings constructed by him in Subotica at that time were either in the luxuriant Baroque style, with many non-functional details (semi-columns, cartouches or domes) or according to the norms of classicism with, however, decorations following the Vienna Secession style. The result was such success and wealth that he felt able to decide to build a town house for himself and his family, suiting both his taste and his requirements.

With this purpose, in 1903 he submitted to the

municipal engineering office designs and a request for a building permit. Although the proposed ground plans were acceptable (and are virtually those of the building as we know it today), the relatively conventional façades he proposed were found to be out of line with the prevailing municipal rules and the permit was refused. Raichl was furious; his spite inspired him, luckily for us, to create a new design that was daringly novel in terms of overall conception and appearance, façade finishing, and unusual building materials. Although used to construct a synagogue the previous year, such a new approach, amply inspired by the Secession movement, was hitherto unknown in Subotica's private residential buildings.

The new request, however, scrupulously followed the municipal regulations and could not be rejected. Indeed, a far-sighted official of the engineering bureau even went so far as to note not only that 'no objections can be raised to the designs submitted' but also that 'on the contrary, *they are even necessary from the aesthetic point of view . . .*' (my italics). No time was wasted and, a bare month after the first request had been submitted and turned down, work began on the Villa Raichle.

Raichl was greatly influenced by the creator of the Hungarian variant of Viennese Secession, Ödön Lechner, who acquainted him with the avant-gardism of Hungary which—striving for liberation from Austrian political domination—tried to articulate its national identity in art, through colours, shapes and material drawing on folk traditions. The Secession colours (blue, yellow and red in strange combinations) and unusual materials (glass, wood, ceramics) were, in fact,

identified with the colours and materials applied as building decoration in the villages of Transylvania. Transylvania was, for the Hungarian artists, a place still unspoiled by European civilization, where time had come to a standstill in the Gothic period. It served, thus, as an inexhaustible treasure trove for investigating the original hand-made products and building structures, the wooden ones having pride of place.

This leads me to return to the villa's façade. The main accent in its first storey is placed on the green-painted trapezoidal wooden loggias found on either side of the main portal. The influence of Transylvania and the Hungarian variant of Secession is quite obvious in these loggias decorated with perforations taken from the country gates of Transylvania, which are variations on the heart from, this (as readers will now have surely grasped!) being a leitmotiv throughout the building.

Wood, marble, stained glass, alabaster

The Villa Raichle's interior was fitted out and furnished sumptuously. Still living in Budapest today, the architect's daughter Ilma remembers her father as a person charmed by life, who did not run after profit and fame but who, as something of a bohemian as well as a bon vivant, wanted to enjoy every detail of the space where he and his family lived. He spared no effort to furnish their home in Subotica with an invaluable collection of artistic objects and paintings. When, after the ups and downs I shall briefly retrace in a moment, he finally abandoned architecture at the age of 86, he promptly turned to . . . painting! His watercolours and other pictures are still kept by the family.

Lack of space precludes a detailed inventory here of what can be reconstructed of the villa's interior as it was in its heyday. A sampling can, however, give an

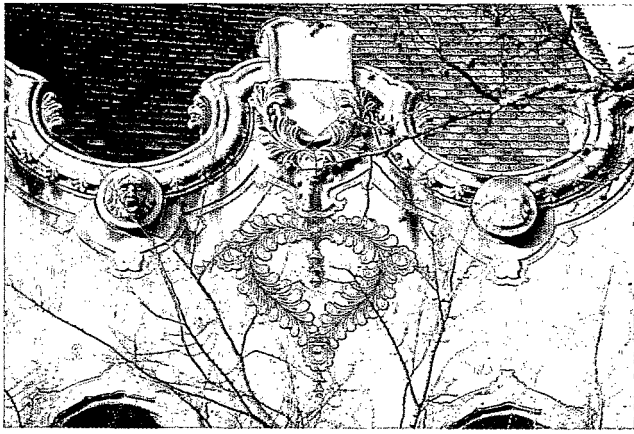
idea of what it must have been like. Intriguing features on the ground floor included: a telephone room; a dumb-waiter for carrying food up to the master's quarters; an entrance corridor decorated with massive parabolic arches as well as heart-shaped (again) interlacings on the plastered walls, not to forget stained glass windows of red, blue and green hues; a marble staircase leading to the upper storey and a great dining room that doubled as ballroom, decorated by a high wainscot carved with Hungarian folk motifs and furnished with sculpted wooden benches whose cloth covering bore flower designs still to be found on the cloaks of Hungarian shepherds today.

Especially precious in this room are the two open fireplaces with beaten metal doors and purple, green and blue alabaster plates inserted into flower perforations. In the evening, the play of the flames must have produced a special, almost mysterious atmosphere in this room, with the light deflected and diffused by the glassed-in winter garden at one end of the room and, at the other, apsidal end, vertical prismatic rows of glass panels.

Then, still on the upper floor, there were the men's smoking room furnished in Turkish style, the billiard room with brocade wallpaper, an intimate music salon (combining dark woodwork and dark green wall covering) and the women's room, with a frosted window giving onto the staircase through which the lady of the house could discreetly observe the comings and goings of her visitors. Almost last, but certainly not least, was the master bedroom. Ilma Raichl remembers it as big enough to contain two double beds with baldachins, a sofa, deep-seated armchairs and a huge wardrobe, among other pieces of furniture.

The Raichl family's enjoyment of this luxury was to be short-lived. The architect had invested a great deal of money in the villa; a fee owed him for designing a castle for an important landowner went unpaid; and he had a penchant for gambling. Bankruptcy became





inevitable. All his property was confiscated in 1908 and put up for auction, the house itself being taken over by a bank holding shares in his brickworks. Raichl had no choice but to gather up what possessions remained and move away, ultimately to Budapest, where he made a new fortune, continued to collect art and gamble, and died in 1960.

'A man without a head'

Tempest and confusion—such was to be the fate of the Villa Raichle after the departure of its builder/owner in 1908. Already in that year, journalists began agitating for the acquisition of the house by the city and for its transformation into a museum or art gallery. It 'would fully serve the purposes of a culture palace and it could become an everlasting decoration and pride of the town', wrote one. Another called it 'undoubtedly the leading building, and the most beautiful, in Subotica', and urged that 'the town should buy this palace created by an artistic-minded architect in a moment of inspiration . . . and lay [there] the foundation of a culture palace . . . because without culture even the most colourful and wealthiest town is like a man without a head'.

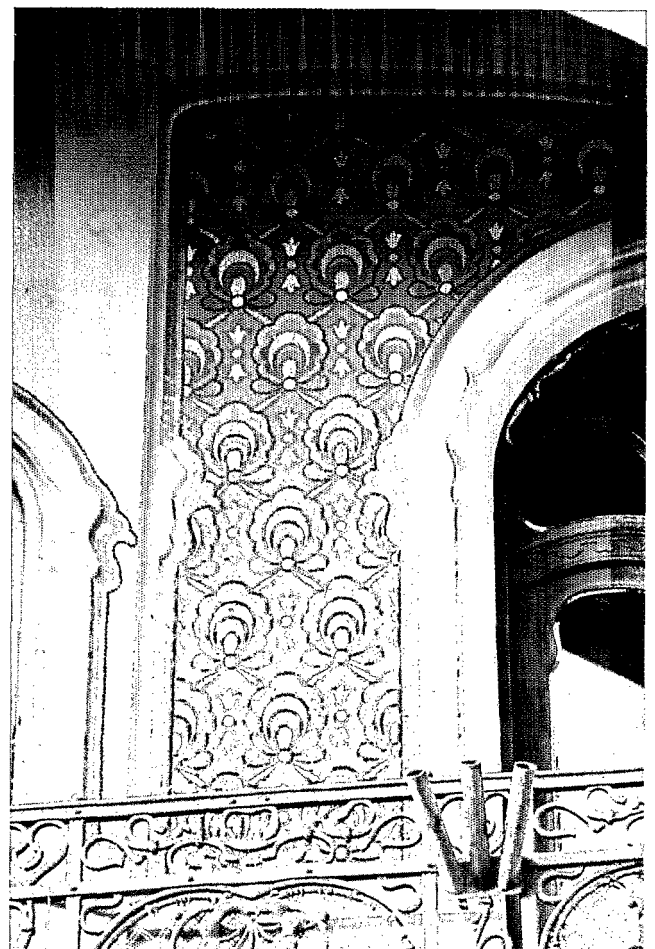
But the Villa Raichle was not to become a museum; at least not yet. The rich proprietress of a slaughterhouse, Thérèse Hartmann, acquired the building only to have it gambled away (yes, again!) by her son Joseph. Thereupon it passed into the hands of a pharmacist, Emil Schossberger, in whose possession it remained until 1949, when it was expropriated and the decision was taken to convert it into a municipal museum (the man regained his head).

After extensive repair and reconversion work, the Municipal Museum installed its natural science collection on the ground floor and moved its archaeological and ethnological collections into exhibition space on the upper storey. The Municipal Museum grew rapidly, its collections becoming richer and its related activities becoming ever wider. In 1968, the building was found to be too small, and the Municipal Museum moved to the City Hall, also built (in 1908-10) in the style of the Hungarian Secession variant. In the same year the Villa Raichle was declared a historical monument, and in 1969 responsibility for it was entrusted to the Modern Gallery.

In the following years it proved impossible to stop the deterioration of the building, and problems with heating, humidity and insulation caused continuing

damage. Renovation was carried out beginning in 1984 and in so far as possible the original decorations were restored or reconstructed, including of course the heart-shaped motifs, with the help of the Intermunicipal Institute for the Protection of Historical Monuments, which is located in Subotica. The original disposition of the rooms was left essentially unchanged, but some interior aspects could not be renewed, original elements having been irretrievably lost. Thus rooms were functionally adapted to the needs and activities of the modern art gallery henceforth housed in the building.

Is there a contradiction here? At first sight, the modern-day nature of the contents may seem to be at variance with the turn-of-the-century style of the container. Yet both bear witness to the notion and élan of 'contemporaneity', which in fact links the Villa Raichle to the paintings, drawings, sculptures and ceramic works now exhibited in it. That, at any rate, is our gamble—the last one, we hope, to affect the fate of this wonderful building for a long time to come. ■



The Ernst-Ludwig-Haus in Darmstadt: from art colony to museum

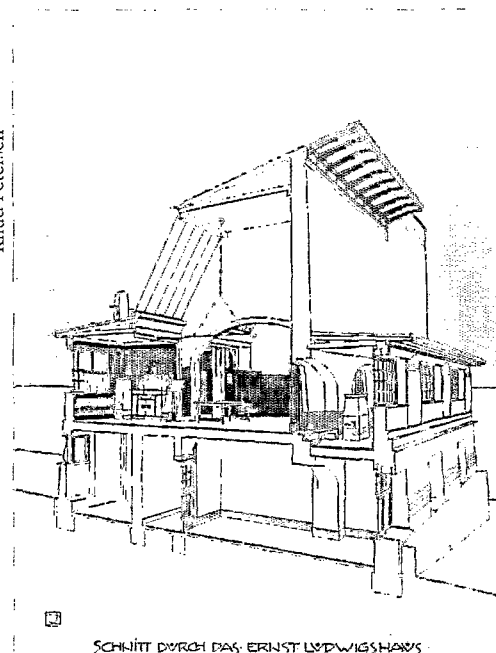
Renate Ulmer

Born in 1957 in Tübingen; studied history of art, archaeology, German literature at Karlsruhe and Heidelberg; took a Master's degree with a thesis entitled: 'Patriz Huber—A Member of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony'. In 1987 received a Doctor's degree with a thesis on: 'Biblische Themen in der Kunst des Expressionismus.' Since 1989, curator at the Städtische Kunstsammlung Darmstadt—Museum der Darmstädter Künstlerkolonie.

In 1899, Ernst-Ludwig, Grand Duke of Hesse, established an artists' colony in his capital, Darmstadt. The young regent, who became ruler in 1892 at the age of 23, had rather cosmopolitan and modern inclinations. During his youth he often spent the summer in the household of his grandmother, Queen Victoria. While in England Ernst-Ludwig may well have become familiar with the contemporary ideas and achievements of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement and acquired a taste for the latest English interiors. In 1897 he commissioned C. R. Asbee and M. K. Baillie Scott, two leading British designers, to decorate some rooms in his Darmstadt residence.

The Grand Duke's plans were, however, much more ambitious. He wished to make his capital into a cultural and artistic centre, above all a centre of the latest in crafts and design, and in so doing to revive the decorative arts of his principality. There were also economic considerations: Ernst-Ludwig wished to improve the quality and update the design of Hessian arts and crafts in order to stimulate the demand for them. There was, particularly in Darmstadt, considerable production of furniture before the First World War.

For all these reasons the Grand Duke decided to designate the Mathildenhöhe, a former princely park on a small hill to the east of the city centre, as an artists' colony. The formal establishment of the Darmstadt artists' colony took place in July 1899, when Ernst-Ludwig put seven artists under contract: the sculptor Rudolf Bosselt, the painter Hans Christiansen, the decorative painter Paul Bürck, the interior designer Patriz Huber, the sculptor Ludwig Habich, the painter and interior designer Peter Behrens and the architect Joseph Maria Olbrich. The seven



Cross-section of the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus. Kunstbibliothek mit Museum für Architektur, Modelbild und Grafik-Design, West Berlin/Knud Petersen

members of the colony (afterwards and until its end in 1914 the members were to change frequently), whose ages ranged from 20 up to 33, were granted a small salary.

1901: 'A Document of German Art'

In November 1899 plans were announced for the colony's first major exhibition to be held in 1901 under the title *A Document of German Art*. Ernst-Ludwig sold eight concessions on the Mathildenhöhe to some artists and private persons to build houses. These houses, conceived down to the tiniest detail, would themselves be the major exhibition objects. To organize the enterprise, and design the buildings and most interiors, the Grand Duke enticed Joseph Maria Olbrich from Vienna. The amicable relationship he quickly developed with Ernst-Ludwig

Reconstruction in progress during 1989 with a view to re-opening in 1990, this time as the Museum of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony.



Photo kindly provided by the author

soon helped establish Olbrich as undisputed leader of the Darmstadt artists' colony. He was also the only architect among the first members of the colony, and had already had a brilliant career in Vienna as the most promising pupil of Otto Wagner and designer of the Viennese Secession building.¹ Olbrich was not only well known as an architect but also much in demand for graphics work and all kinds of design objects. He soon became the Grand Duke's chief adviser on artistic matters and received, in addition, several private commissions. He designed most of the houses on the Mathildenhöhe, including the famous 'wedding tower'. He died suddenly, at 40, in 1908.

In his essay 'Our Next Deed', Olbrich put forth his ideas for the organization of the Mathildenhöhe:

At last [we have] a small, enthusiastic community willing to work, in a town that is fortunate enough to possess neither a Crystal Palace nor an Academy, doubly fortunate, in fact, because it also lacks the confined norms and standards of our Fine Arts. Free from all associations, free from all subservience and obligations to Art Ministries, free from the quarrel between old and new, trusting in a people who perceive simply, from whose strength these ideas will take a form that doesn't correspond to today's dominant trend, but moves far ahead and embraces the future. The colony must find its purpose and duties in the creation of independent works of art that help express a happy 'life principle' with the greatest feeling and simplicity. A wide space with abundant trees and flowers, the Grand Duke's Math-

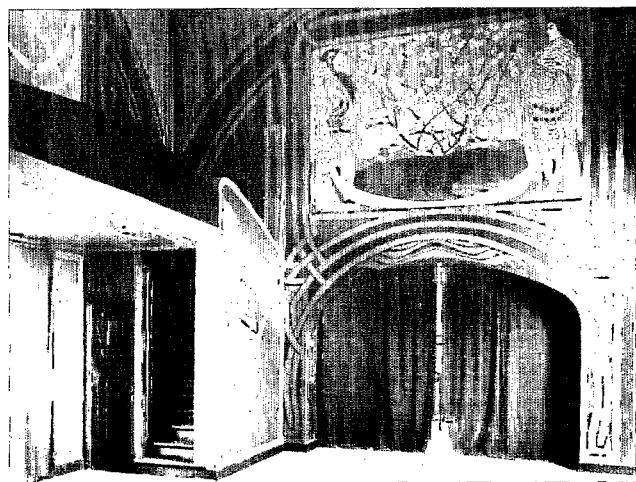
ildenhöhe provides the framework. Upon the highest strip of land the house for artists' studios will be built; there it will be like a temple, with work as a holy service. Eight large studios with small apartments, a small theatre, a gym and fencing halls, guest rooms, showers and baths are all provided for in a single long building. On the sloping land below: the houses of the artists, peaceful places, to which, after a hard day's work, the artists will come down from the temple of diligence to mix with others. All the houses will be grouped around a forum with specially laid-out paths, gardens, lamps, fountains and flower beds, all bound in a oneness. . . . To attain this, to create all this, is the specified intention of the courageous, striving spirit that we so fortunately now find embodied in the work of the colony. To complete this gratifying and beneficial task is 'our next deed'.

The impressive studio building that Olbrich spoke about was the first construction of the colony. The ceremony to mark the laying of the corner-stone took place in March 1900. This focal point of the Mathildenhöhe was to be called the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus because the Grand Duke defrayed the costs. Only one year later, after an extremely short time for preparation and actual building, the public exhibition *A Document of German Art* was opened on the 15 May with a solemn festival in front of the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus. Situated on the southern slope of the Mathildenhöhe, it was a long horizontal building. A series of red and blue brick steps led up to the dominant central entrance

portal of the white plastered studio building with its striking southern façade. To enhance the expression of its monumentality, all exterior walls were tapered off at different angles.

The distinctive 'omega' shape of its main entry was to become a characteristic motif of Olbrich's Mathildenhöhe houses. This portal was flanked by two huge stone statues representing *Kraft und Schönheit* (strength and beauty) in the form of a man and his wife carved by colony member Ludwig Habich. Two more statues representing Victory, executed in bronze, iron and copper by Rudolf Bosselt, were placed within the porch above the door. Inscribed on the bow of the portal was a quotation from the Austrian poet Hermann Bahr: *Seine Welt zeige der Künstler, die niemals war, noch jemals sein wird* (The artist will show his world, which never was, nor ever will be). Around the doorway, Olbrich designed a gilt stucco decoration of triangles and circles. Climbing up the wall of the front side was a frieze of stenciled ornaments, and on the back side were stucco ivy garlands. Inside, beyond the porch, was a central hall painted with allegorical murals by Paul Bürck.

Corridors ran from the entrance along the full length of the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus, lit by a low horizontal series of casements. Separate access was thus possible into the eight studios on the building's main level. On the lower level were the administrative and recreation rooms (fencing and gymnastics) and apartments for the two young-



The central hall with murals by Paul Bürck in 1901; these were later destroyed.

Photo kindly provided by the author



The main entrance with statues of *Strength* (on the left) and his wife *Beauty*, after postwar reconstruction in 1950.

est colony members, Paul Bürck and Patriz Huber. For the second exhibition of the colony, in 1904, two more sculpture studios were added at the back of the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus.

The building, which Olbrich had called a 'temple of work', was remarkably advanced for its time. Whereas contemporary critics praised the impressive façade, they considered the north side with its functional studio glazing as too poor.

Bombing, reconstruction

During the Second World War, the city of Darmstadt was almost totally destroyed. In September 1944, the Mathildenhöhe buildings were heavily damaged by bombs. Of the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus, only the ground floor and the exterior walls of the upper floor remained. The wooden roof-truss as well as the studios, apartments and the hall were gutted by fire. In September 1950, the Darmstadt city parliament (the owners of the concession, the Grand Duke having died in 1936) decided to rebuild the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus as part of the German Academy for Literature. Because of financial straits and also the negative attitude in the 1950s towards art nouveau (then considered in bad taste), Olbrich's studio house was rebuilt with some grave deviations from the original structure. The walls were rebuilt in a simplified manner, that is, lacking various details such as the stucco and painted ornaments and mouldings. Only the porch and main entrance with their characteristic art nouveau decoration, which still remained, were restored. Inside, the formerly two-storeyed studios were divided into two floors. The back was totally changed by the installation of apartments and the enlargement or reduction of the size of the windows. Institutions like the German Werkbund were headquartered in the Ernst-Ludwig-Haus.

After thirty-five years of intensive postwar use, a total revamping of the building became necessary. Furthermore, plans were afoot to establish a museum dedicated to the work and history of the artists' colony. The decision was therefore taken to reconstruct the building in its original shape with all the authentic details, which was announced in 1986. The original floor plan with a central hall and studios on both sides would be reinstated, thus providing exhibition spaces. From the beginning, it was clear that the enterprise would be difficult and lengthy.

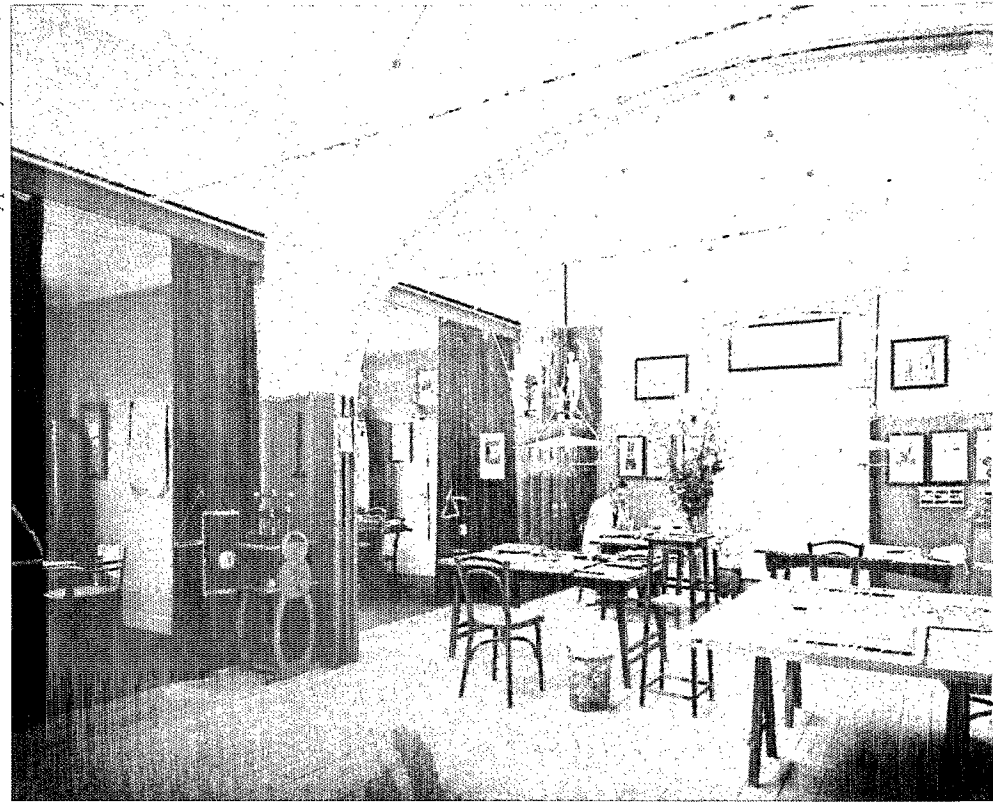


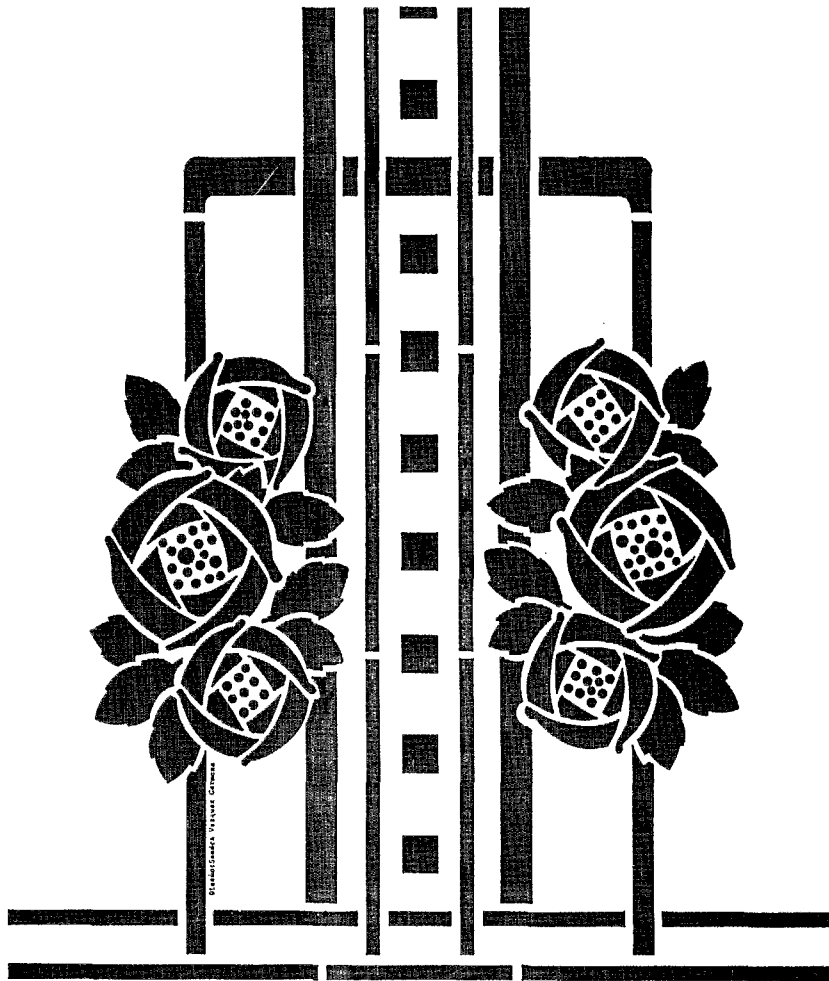
Photo kindly provided by the author

Investigations showed, for example, that the old quarry-stone foundations and the insulation were deficient and that other aspects of the construction did not conform to current norms. Following original photographs, drawings and documents the details of the exterior walls were reconstructed. A major problem was determining the right colour for the stenciled friezes. To replace the murals in the central hall painted by Paul Bürck, which were definitively lost, a wainscoting designed by Olbrich (for another of his buildings on the Mathildenhöhe) was fitted.

After three years' work, the Ernst-Ludwigs-Haus is to be opened as the Museum of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony on 6 May 1990, one week short of ninety years after its first inauguration. Design objects, sculpture, paintings and graphics from all twenty-three artists who joined the colony in the years from 1899 to 1914 are presented, demonstrating an interesting variety of style and materials. Attention is focused on all kinds of interior decoration: furniture, glass objects, ceramics, metalwork, textiles and more. Written comments, illustrations and historical documents will help to explain the history and importance of the Darmstadt artists' colony as a centre of the European part of the art nouveau movement. ■

An artist's studio with small adjoining apartment in 1901.

1. See page 181.—Ed.



In the huge expanse of South America a villa converted

Graciela di Iorio

Born in Buenos Aires in 1951; an architect who has specialized in art and the conservation of old buildings. She is General Secretary of ICOMOS, Argentina, and Principal Adviser at the Municipal Art Museum in Mar del Plata, situated in the Villa Ortiz Basualdo.

Let us begin with some historical background. Mar del Plata, on the coast of the Province of Buenos Aires is at present the most important Argentine seaside resort.

In 1886, with the arrival of the railway, it really began to develop. As its summer climate was a welcome change from the heat of Buenos Aires, whole contingents of upper-class families moved with their belongings to Mar del Plata, and around 1905 began to build residences there. Country residences became as numerous as seaside ones, creating an atmosphere similar to that enjoyed by the fashionable inhabitants of Buenos Aires who had visited Europe. Locally settled architects, for the most part French and British, created an attractive array of architectural styles, the most important and picturesque of their kind in the country.

In 1909 Doña Ana Elia de Ortiz Basualdo entrusted the design of her residence in Mar del Plata to the French architects Luis Dubois and Pablo Pater. The work was carried out by an Italian, Leandro Bianchini. The exterior of the villa was palatial, similar to a French

manor house and influenced by the châteaux of the Loire. Situated on the highest point of one of the hills of the town, it dominated the coastal landscape.

In 1919 the villa was remodelled to provide more room for the extensive family, and at the same time it was modernized to fit in with the refined setting of the new town. Under the supervision of the architect G. Gamus and the fashionable builder Alula Baldassarini, the villa was structurally reinforced and transformed into an Anglo-Norman summer-house, thus giving it better protection from the strong sea winds. Its interior design, entrusted entirely to the Belgian architect and decorator Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, was very avant-garde for the period.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, frequent trips to Europe by Buenos Aires families became more difficult and dangerous, and the town of Mar del Plata became very much in vogue because of its definite European flavour. At the end of the war, trips to Europe were resumed and many of the residences were closed all year round.

This was however not the case with the Villa Ortiz Basualdo, which even up to the 1960s was never short of family visitors.

Gustave Serrurier-Bovy

When we refer to Belgian art nouveau, the names of Victor Horta and Henry Van de Velde immediately spring to mind. It was Van de Velde who made known the creative work of Gustave Serrurier, emphasizing his outstanding style, which already in 1910 heralded the beginning of art déco in 1925. Decorative changes from curves to straight lines began in the years before the First World War, a trend on which Serrurier firmly set his seal.

An architect from Liège who at the age of 36 married Marie Bovy, Serrurier had very special ideas on decoration. From then on his activities, which had previously been only of a commercial nature, took on a new dimension. He set up a furnishing centre to produce his own furniture. Morris, Ruskin and Viollet Le Duc influenced his creations.

His works were shown at numerous exhibitions, and his original style caused quite a sensation. The clarity of his design, his emphasis on functionality, his architectural style and his preference for simple rather than sophisticated designs singled him out as being an extremely talented artist. It was said of him that 'this cultured man has kept the qualities of intelligence and technical competence of the craftsman from Liège, but he is also endowed with friendliness, precision and integrity'.

At this time Van de Velde strongly maintained that decorative art was not an art of minor importance. It was in this context that in 1895 Serrurier brought forward the idea that art does not only belong to the rich but that, on the contrary, the people at large participate in artistic life. His experiments were very successful. His works became known in London, Berlin and Paris, so much so that at the World Exhibition in Brussels in 1897 Henry Van de Velde, Paul Hankar, Georges Hobé and Gustave Serrurier-Bovy were chosen as representing Belgian art nouveau.

Because of his intense activity in Paris, Serrurier decided to open a branch gallery there, called 'Art in the Home'. Here he received many commissions from France as well as from abroad. An Argentine, an enthusiastic admirer of the house that Serrurier had built for himself in Liège, commissioned an exact reproduction of it, complete with interior decoration and



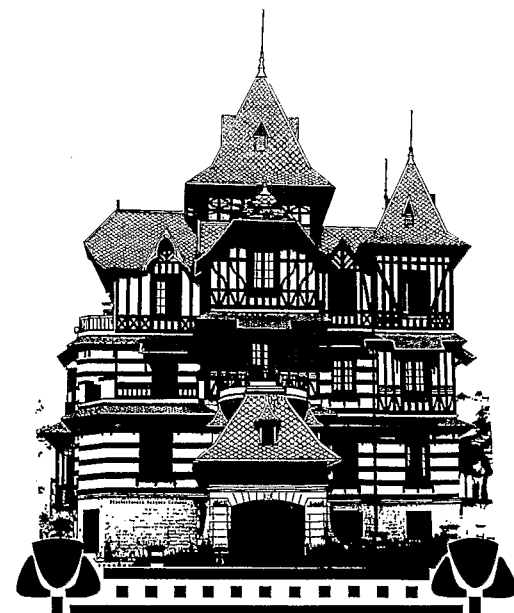
Photos kindly provided by the author

furniture, for his villa in Mar del Plata. This Argentine was actually a member of the Ortiz Basualdo family. When everything was dispatched from Liège, the convoy of an impressive number of packing-cases caused quite a sensation locally. This was where the original furniture in the Ortiz Basualdo villa came from. The interior of the villa richly illustrates Serrurier-Bovy's creative vision. Perhaps the most surprising thing is that it has remained intact for eighty years, conserved far from its Belgian context, and is probably one of the largest complete collections to be so preserved. Dining-room, entire bedrooms, the living-room, the music balcony, all furnished with curtains, tapestries and wall fabrics, fully reflect his global approach to decoration, notwithstanding the great distance from the place where all these items had been produced, and their transport overseas to their future destination in what was a small villa in the huge expanse of South America.

The dining-room, now being renovated.

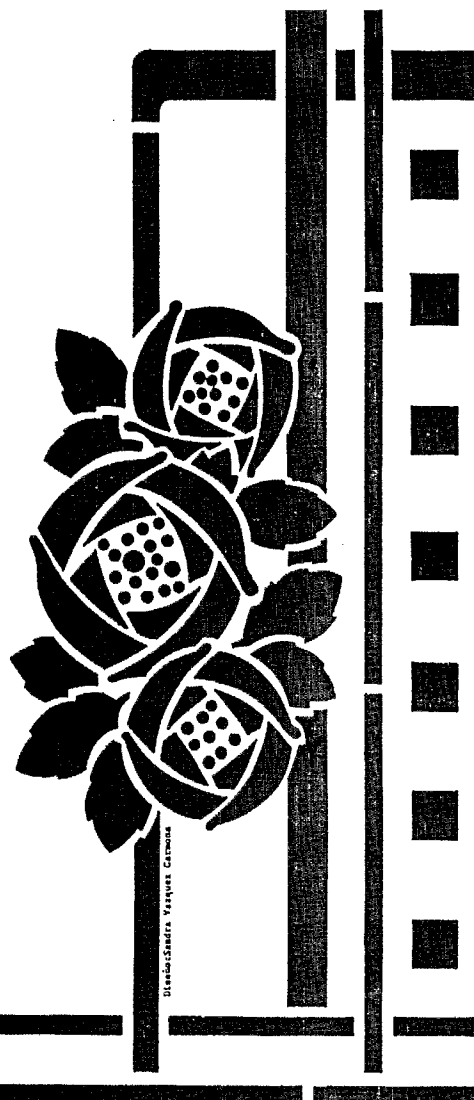
Conversion into a museum

One of the most important aspects of the new life given to the residence and its contents is the reconstruction of the



MUSEO MUNICIPAL DE ARTE JUAN CARLOS CASTAGNINO
VILLA ORTIZ BASUALDO
 MAR DEL PLATA - ARGENTINA
SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN Y CULTURA. PRESIDENCIA DE REAL FUERZOS

An important area with a magnificent staircase, the favourite feature of the masters of art nouveau.



Diseño: Sandra Vazquez Carmona

Decorative details.
Drawings by Sandra Vazquez Carmona

contemporary context in Mar del Plata. This attracts an enormous amount of visitors.

It should be noted that Serrurier-Bovy's existence, and the importance of his work, are still little known in Argentina, and international recognition of their worth has been achieved thanks to the help of experts such as Stephan Tschudi-Madsen and Grégoire Watelet. This means that the museum has a special responsibility for promoting the study of the artist and his work, and disseminating any information that will help to make them better known. To this should be added a comprehensive approach taking in the different aspects which explain the customs and cultural patterns of the people from Mar del Plata and their summer visitors.

Bearing in mind the characteristic features of the surrounding community, special attention has to be paid to determining the community's identity and preserving its heritage. One experimental way of doing this, which has been favourably received by the public, is to invite the community from time to time to make available on loan to the museum objects held in the town which can be exhibited on various

themes. This gives rise to a great volume of exchanges in which both local people and tourists participate, yielding a great number of new ideas which are followed up by the museum's team of technicians.

This shows the need to programme a wide variety of events at frequent intervals, while also taking into account the conservation and security of the museum. Outreach activities have to be planned with this in mind. The Serrurier-Bovy collection is also to be shown in an exhibition being organized in Argentina on Belgian art nouveau by ICOM and ICOMOS in collaboration with the Belgian Government. The museum has, in addition, works of art that are part of the heritage of the municipality of Mar del Plata; these are exhibited in areas of the villa suitable for the purpose.

The education programme

The museum's activities cover various levels of education: primary- and secondary-school levels study the question of the heritage, combining a knowledge of the town with that of the period when the villa was built. This is

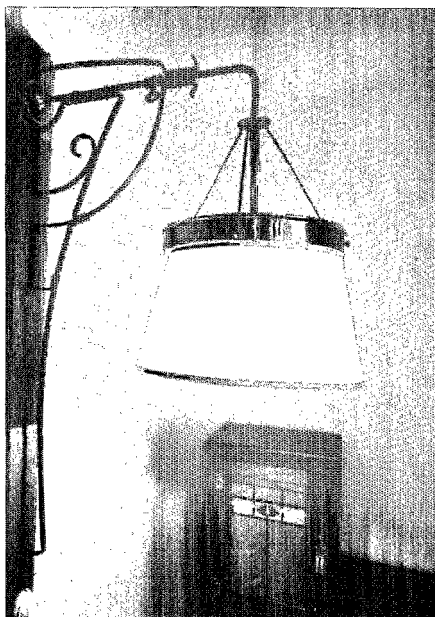
Detail of the lighting in one of the main bedrooms.

done by means of traditional tours, workshops for students, and special programmes for teachers, who use the museum as a source for updating their knowledge. There are also outreach activities to make the museum's collections known, and exhibitions making use of the museum's own audio-visual and video material. (The series is entitled *The Museum Visits the Town.*)

At the tertiary level there are special facilities for those studying architecture and tourism at the local university.

The museum also provides interdisciplinary courses and seminars at undergraduate and postgraduate level, with the help of experts from national and international organizations such as ICOM and ICOMOS, on very specialized subjects relating to the museum's special fields: craftsmen speak on old construction techniques, the conservation of old buildings on the Atlantic coast, and so on. In this way, the museum brings together highly qualified researchers and thus becomes a learning centre at different levels, covering areas not touched upon by other institutions.

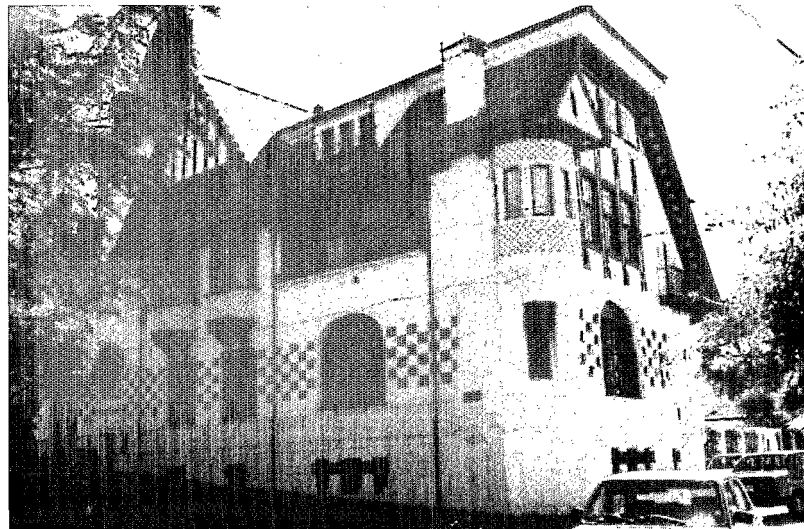
The activities organized in the museum are not solely on traditional museum subjects. They include exhibitions of gastronomy, dress, toys, objects from everyday life, etc. They combine questions of the heritage and the past, or use them as a starting-point to introduce or elaborate on aspects of the villa and its history from different angles, in order to obtain greater understanding of the subject. The restored parts of the villa and laboratory are also used as a means of making members of the public aware of the specific tasks of conservation and involving them in the experimental approach we have described. To this end, the museum receives contributions from its Friends' Association and from other national and international sources. ■



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... AND IN CHILE

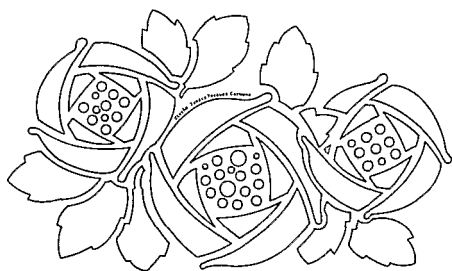


This house was commissioned by the Zanellis, an Italian family who had settled in Valparaíso, and built in 1916 by the architects Renato Schiavon and Arnaldo Barison. Both were from Trieste and had travelled to Chile in 1907, bringing art nouveau with them, as it were, to help rebuild that city after it had been devastated by the 1906 earthquake.

The mansion was later acquired by a wealthy merchant, philanthropist and art collector of Yugoslav origin, Pascual Barburizza. Known as the Palacio Barburizza, it was taken over by the municipality and, on 8 July 1971, inaugurated as the new seat of the city's Fine Arts Museum and School.¹



1. See also article on Valparaíso's museums in *Museum* No. 166.—Ed.





'What a preposterous building!' The Gorky Memorial Museum

Lidia Petrovna Bykovtseva

Holds a Master's degree (Kandidat) in philosophy; Director of the Gorky Memorial Museum of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; Honoured Cultural Worker of the RSFSR. Has published books and articles on Gorky's life and works and on aspects of Soviet literature.

All photos by Alexander Zakharchenko

In a quiet, unfrequented part of the historic centre of Moscow stands an unusual house, the architecture of which contrasts starkly with the buildings round about and attracts the attention of every passer-by. From 1931 to 1936, it was the home of the great Russian and Soviet writer Maxim Gorky,¹ and has now been converted into a memorial museum.

The building containing the Gorky Apartment Museum² was constructed in 1902 by the Moscow architect Fyodor Shekhtel'³ for the millionaire businessman and entrepreneur S. P. Ryabushinsky in the art nouveau style, which had spread rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—and not only in Europe as may be gathered from his issue of *Museum*.

Shekhtel' was the greatest exponent of Russian art nouveau. The Ryabushinsky residence (as the house came to be known in the history of art and architecture) is recognized by experts as the finest example of the style in Moscow.

The house stands in its own grounds so that it can be walked round and viewed, like a sculpture, from all angles. Its distinctive features are asymmetry, diversity of scale, picturesque shapes and flowing lines. Round the building, a small garden is laid out with lilac bushes, lime trees, maples and flowering plants. The interior is richly decorated with stucco ceilings, inlaid doors, stained glass, frescos, etc. The stained glass and many details such as door handles, window fastenings, indoor balcony railings were designed by Shekhtel' himself.

Although the house contains so much, the decoration in no way gives

the impression of a jumble of disparate items. The elements do not clash with one another or with the architecture. The Ryabushinsky residence has its own logic, completeness, harmony and beauty. The architect designed the interior rationally and skilfully, with an eye to comfort and convenience.

An unexpected tenant

When Gorky returned home after nearly ten years abroad, he chose Moscow as his permanent place of residence. He was deeply involved in grandiose projects for a series of books (*History of Cities, The Poet's Library—Large and Small Series, History of the Civil War, History of a Young Person*) and periodicals (*Our Achievements, Collective Farmer, Abroad, Literary Studies*) and played an active part in drawing up publishing plans. A home was chosen for Gorky independently of him. Account was taken of his age, health, strenuous creative work and above all the fact that at home he would be involved in a lot of organizational and public activity. Ryabushinsky's spacious former residence in its quiet surroundings seemed to fill the bill in every way.

The writer himself expressed no wishes or requests about where he would live. However, when on 14 May 1931, he was driven straight to his newly assigned home, he had scarcely crossed the threshold when he exclaimed: 'What a preposterous building!'

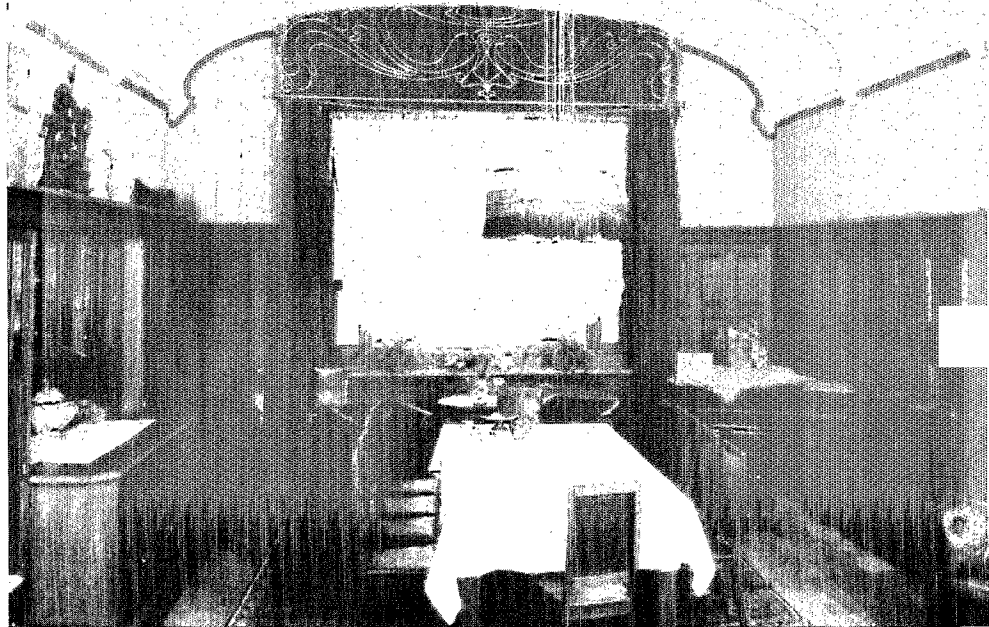
Romain Rolland, who visited Gorky on 29 June 1935, was struck by the incongruity of the writer's humble fig-

1. Maxim Gorky's real name was Alexei Maksimovich Peshkov (1868-1936).

2. The Gorky Apartment Museum is a branch of the nearby Gorky Literary Museum, run by the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. There are also Gorky museums in the towns of Gorky (formerly Nijni Novgorod), Kazan and Kuybyshev (formerly Samara) and in the village of Manuilovka in the Ukraine.

3. The architect F. O. Shekhtel' (1859-1925) executed both private and public commissions. Besides the Ryabushinsky residence, other outstanding samples of his work in Moscow are the Z. Morozovaya residence (nowadays the centre for receptions given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR), the Arts Theatre (1902) and Yaroslavl Station (1902-04). Finishing off the interior of Ryabushinsky's residence continued until 1906 and in this, Shekhtel' was assisted by the architect I. A. Fomin (1872-1936).

View of the Gorky Memorial Museum from Alexei Tolstoy Street. The windows are unusually effective. They are of various sizes with finely worked window-frames (which reproduce as it were the interwoven branches of trees). They are disposed along the front of the house at various distances from each other and at various heights from the ground so that it is difficult to tell how many floors there are. The broad mosaic frieze depicting the orchids beloved of art nouveau was made following Shekhtel's designs.



ure in his allotted home. Rolland's Moscow diary contains fresh impressions of their meeting, written on that very same evening: 'The big house where Gorky lives does not belong to him. It was built by the business magnate Ryabushinsky in a barbarously extravagant style that repels him [Gorky].'

The building housed a variety of institutions after the 1917 October Revolution: the Gosizdat (state publishing house), the All-Union Society for Foreign Cultural Relations and a children's boarding school. The building was repaired and furnished prior to Gorky's arrival. At his request, only very minor changes were made. In the dining-room, for example, the enormous fireplace, which reminded the writer of 'a giant gaping maw', was removed. The main entrance was closed and people began to use the courtyard entrance, where there was a garage and where Gorky's appearances attracted less curiosity.

Gorky gradually settled into his new residence and began to feel at home. 'I can work here', he used to say, and for him that was the main consideration.

The writer's own rooms—his study, library and bedroom—were on the ground floor. On the first floor lived the members of his family (his son Maxim with his wife Nadezheda and their two daughters, Martha and Darya), a close friend of Gorky's, the artist Ivan Rakit-sky, and Olimpiada Chertkova, who nursed the ailing writer for many years and ran the household. The Ryabushinsky's former chapel on the second floor under the roof (the family were Old Believers) was used as an artist's studio

by Gorky's son and daughter-in-law.

The family gathered each day in the dining-room (the largest room in the house) for breakfast and lunch, and at tea-time. It was here that they entertained friends, relaxed, listened to music and celebrated family occasions. Here, too, were held the big writers' assemblies and business meetings with publishing staff, journalists and people from all walks of life who came to visit Gorky. His home became a virtual institution in its own right and one of the cultural centres of Moscow.

His family went on living in the house after the writer's death on 18 June 1936 in his dacha at Gorky, near Moscow. The writer's private rooms were left untouched. His daughter-in-law saw to it that everything was carefully preserved as it had been in Gorky's lifetime.

Renovation: problems begin

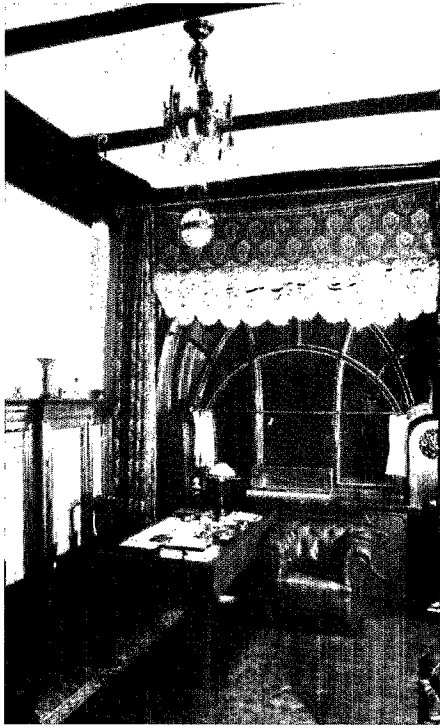
A museum was opened in the house on 28 May 1965. It was the latest addition to a series of museums commemorating great Russian writers, which included the Pushkin Apartment Museum on the Moika Embankment (Leningrad), the Tolstoy Homestead Museum at Khamovniki (Moscow) and the Chekhov Museums at Yalta and Moscow.

In contrast to the other museums, however, from which many original objects had been lost as a result of various circumstances and where a considerable amount of renovation and reproduction work was necessary, the Gorky Memorial Museum was uniquely authentic.

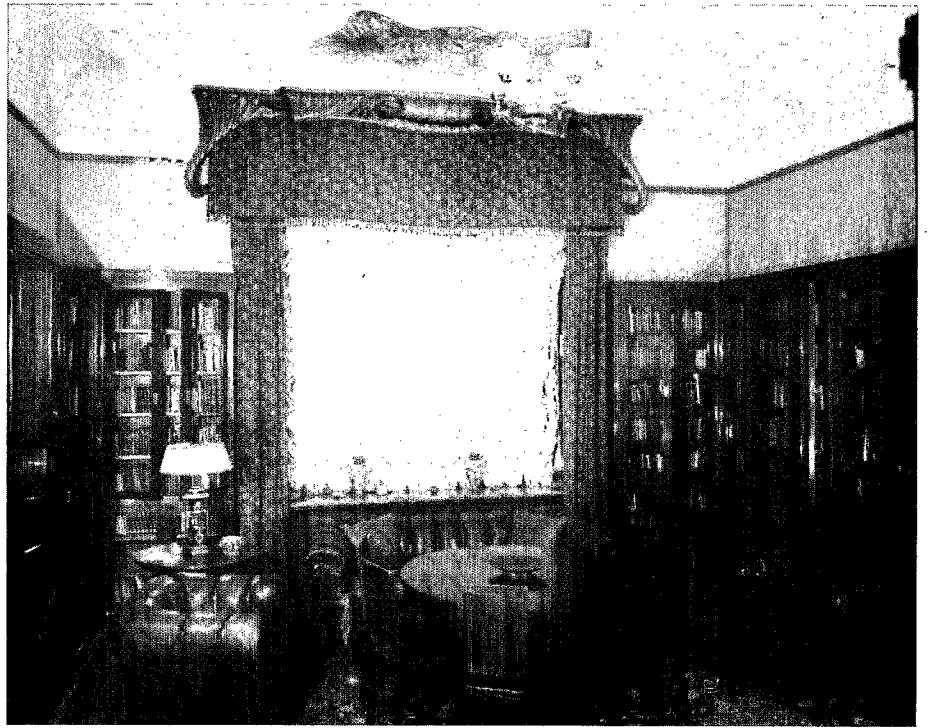
Dining-room. The oak panelling is still in position, typical of art nouveau interiors. In particular, the furniture of the Ryabushinskys has been preserved—a large and small sideboard in dark oak, standing along the walls, and a large movable dining table and chairs. Gorky's usual place at table is indicated by his table setting (the one nearest the window, with the large sideboard behind).

The marble staircase leading to the first floor rises like the surge of a mighty wave on the crest of which a chandelier, like Medusa, has turned to stone.





Gorky's study. The corner with his writing desk.



The library.

In March 1977, however, the Gorky Apartment Museum had to be closed because of the building's poor state of repair. It took six years' hard work by builders, architects, artist-restorers and museologists to carry out full-scale repairs, replacing all the wiring and plumbing, renovating the building and restoring the varied and complex decor. It was at this point that problems arose.

At first, it seemed that the museum's main purpose—keeping the surroundings of the writer's last apartment in their original state and preserving the atmosphere of the time—was incompatible with the equally valid principle relating to architectural monuments whereby it had to be cleared of later accretions and restored to its original condition.

For example, a painted ceiling was discovered beneath a layer of plaster-work in the library. When it had been cleaned, a marvellous unity was revealed as well as the co-ordination of the decorative detail—the stucco moulding and carved wooden framework of the ceiling—with the general architectural and artistic design. The frieze on the first-floor landing, pleasing to the eye with its soft warm colours, was also cleaned. The capital of the column on the landing was restored to its original silvery shade. The murals in the former chapel on the second floor were fully restored and a small lantern light was discovered. It would certainly have been unduly pedantic to ask the

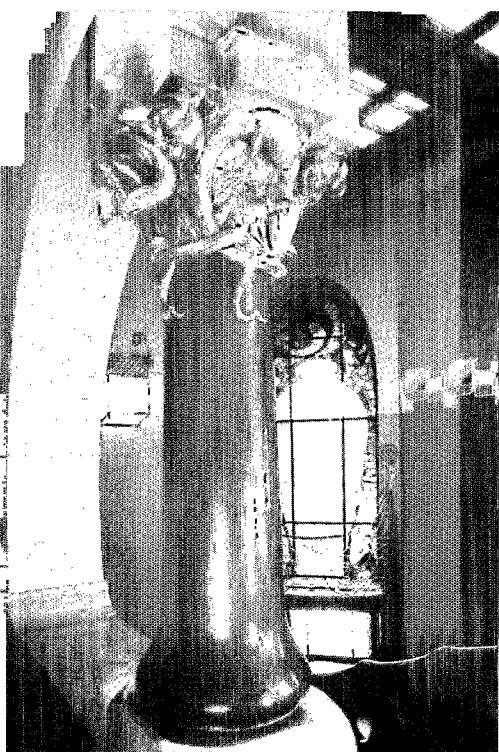
restorers to whitewash and plaster over the exposed painting again just because Gorky had never seen it.

In solving their particular problems, the architects, restorers and museologists did not go in their own separate directions but sought to meet each other half way. As a result, they decided that it was legitimate to remove the wall put up on the ground floor in the memorial part of the house in the 1930s to partition off a small space under the stairs that was fitted out as a bathroom. It was unanimously agreed that this temporary addition to meet temporary needs should be removed. As a result of this decision, a stained-glass window was revealed in all its beauty and the staircase itself, which had rested heavily on the additional wall, discovered its former lightness and seemed to rise and hang in the air.

The high wooden fence concealing the house and garden was also pulled down and once again, as in former times, the wrought-iron railings in the form of running spirals, made to Shekhtel's design, were revealed to the gaze of passers-by. Part of the railings had been preserved and the missing pieces were reconstructed.

The museum springs to life again

On 23 March 1983, the Gorky Memorial Museum was reopened to the public. All the ground-floor rooms are open to visitors—the writer's study, library and



Porphyry column on the first floor. It is topped by a capital in the form of a sculptural composition of water-lilies and lizards.

bedroom and the dining-room and secretary's office. The storerooms and offices are on the first and second floors.

Gorky's study and library shed a very full light on the author's character. The most remarkable item in the study is Gorky's writing-desk. It is unlike the common run of desks, with no plinths or drawers, very large and high. It was custom-built, following the model of the kitchen table that was Gorky's first desk in Nizhni Novgorod, at the beginning of his writing career. Subsequently, wherever he happened to be living—Sorrento (Italy), Tesseli (Crimea) or Gorky (near Moscow)—he ordered just such a writing desk to be made.

All the articles on the desk were tidily arranged by the author himself—an efficiently organized workplace and an example of external order reflecting inner clarity of purpose and composure. Gorky's working day lasted ten to twelve hours with no days off—hence the scale of his achievements. On the opposite wall, Gorky himself hung Pavel Korin's *Panorama of Sorrento*. Above the landscape is a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's painting *Madonna Litta* by Alexander Korin. The paintings testify to Gorky's love of Italy, whose hospitality he had enjoyed for so long. There is also a small portrait of Stendhal, a writer whom Gorky greatly admired and whose books he took with him everywhere and constantly re-read.

Next to the study is the library. The

only remaining features of the original interior are the green damask on the walls and the painted ceiling. Specially made plain bookcases line the walls. As there was not enough room for all the books, additional bookcases were placed in the hallway and on the stairs leading to the first floor. Gorky's private library contains 12,000 books on many subjects, including philosophy, history, ethnography, medicine, the natural sciences, art, religion and so on, with of course a wide selection of Russian and foreign literature.

Nowadays the museum is full of life and is visited by a large number of individuals and groups. Musical evenings are organized, just as in Gorky's lifetime. Here you can meet people who were once Gorky's guests. The Gorky Apartment Museum celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary in May 1990. This unique cultural centre, a combination of architectural monument and

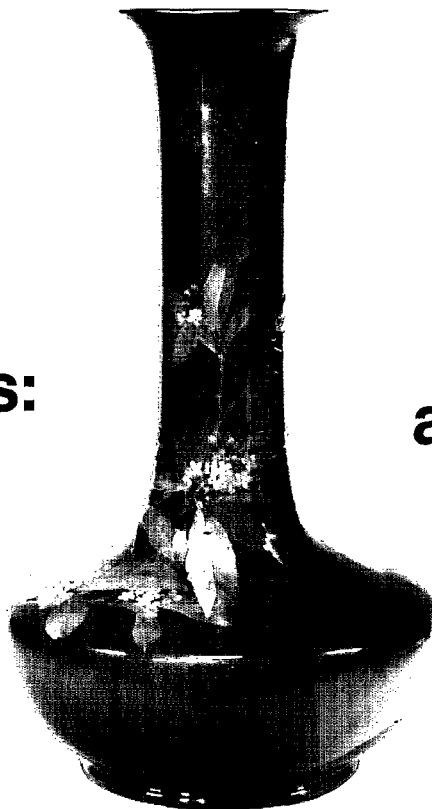
memorial museum, invariably impresses visitors, regardless of their age, social status, education and interests. ■

Main entrance. The design of the mosaic in the entrance hall makes use of Greek patterns.



Glass to fabrics:

Vase by the Rockwood Pottery Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, United States, 1889.



art nouveau in Berlin

Wolfgang Hennig

Born in 1947; studied pedagogy, museology and history of art in Leipzig and Halle. Has worked at the Berlin Arts and Crafts Museum since 1971, in charge of the art nouveau collection, which has been very much enlarged by him. He is an internationally appreciated expert on glass (Middle Ages to twentieth century) and on art nouveau and art déco production in all materials.

In the German Democratic Republic, the inventories of a great number of museums feature works from the period around 1900 which have become museum property as a result of decades of collection effort. They include paintings, drawings, works of graphic art and sculptures, as well as arts-and-crafts products. Larger-sized inventories of arts-and-crafts works can be found in Dresden, Karl-Marx-Stadt, Leipzig and Berlin. Unquestionably, however, the largest collection of works dating from the art nouveau period in the country is in the possession of the Berlin Arts and Crafts Museum, whose importance is only hinted at by the photos accompanying this article.

The history of Berlin's art nouveau collection goes back to the nineteenth century when the museum, under its director Julius Lessing (1872-1908), developed into an institution of international importance. One of its characteristic features, given its focus, was of course not only to acquire historical testimonies of past centuries but also contemporary art and products from firms which could serve as models for artisans, manufacturers and artists.

The increasing number of national and international exhibitions of those years enabled museum experts to obtain a comprehensive insight into the latest developments. For example, the museum made major purchases at world expositions such as the one held in Paris in 1900, where 130 major pieces of arts and crafts from inside and outside Europe were bought for 35,000 gold marks for the museum's department of contemporary art. In addition, the museum drew on the advice of Samuel Bing in Paris, one of the most famous proponents of modern art, in its purchases and had him act as a mediator. Great store was set by exclusive exhibits which emphasized the peculiar features of an artist or of a workshop. This was how a collection of international standing in the field of contemporary art originated in those years.

As a result of the change in tastes after the First World War, and a renewed preference for older pieces, the art nouveau collection left the exhibition rooms to be housed in the reserves after the Arts and Crafts Museum moved to the Municipal Palace of Berlin in 1920/21.

The precious and the mass-produced

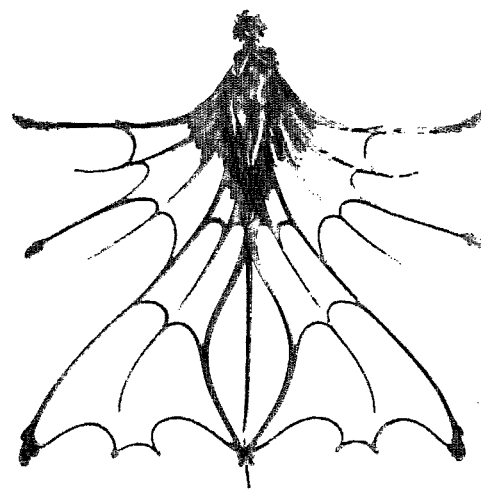
During the Second World War the art nouveau pieces suffered the same fate as all the other collections of the museum: many of the works were packed, transported to other places and thereby destroyed. Only seven of the once-important acquisitions of the art nouveau period remained in the collection after the end of the war; 327 other intact art objects did not return to the Arts and Crafts Museum, their original abode. Later they went to West Berlin where they were incorporated into the Prussian cultural property foundation.

The history of today's collection started in the 1960s, when the Arts and Crafts Museum had found a new home in the Köpenick Palace (1963), the Berlin Palace having been destroyed during the war. The first occasional purchases were made in its early years at Köpenick. In 1966 the collector Georg Brühl, of Karl-Marx-Stadt, made a generous gift, donating to the Arts and Crafts Museum 686 pieces made from a great variety of materials. This donation established a basis upon which a collection could be built up. When in 1971 it became possible to employ a specialist to take care of the holdings, intensive work started on building an art nouveau collection. Given the situation, no attempt was made to acquire major pieces only. The new collection guidelines provided for the greatest possible variety in all groups of materials. All fields of arts and crafts and of the industrial products of that period were collected with a view to demonstrating the impact of the new style both by way of the precious individual piece and thanks to mass-produced industrial articles.

In the ensuing years the collection grew considerably. The most important acquisition of the 1980s was the collection of Alfred Daus. In 1982 the museum acquired 428 pieces from the estate of this Berlin collector, who had maintained close links with the museum for many years, drawing on funds provided by the German Democratic Republic Cultural Fund. In 1986 Georg Brühl, on the twentieth anniversary of his original gift which was marked by an exhibition, decided to donate another 327 works representing all fields of applied art dating from around 1900.

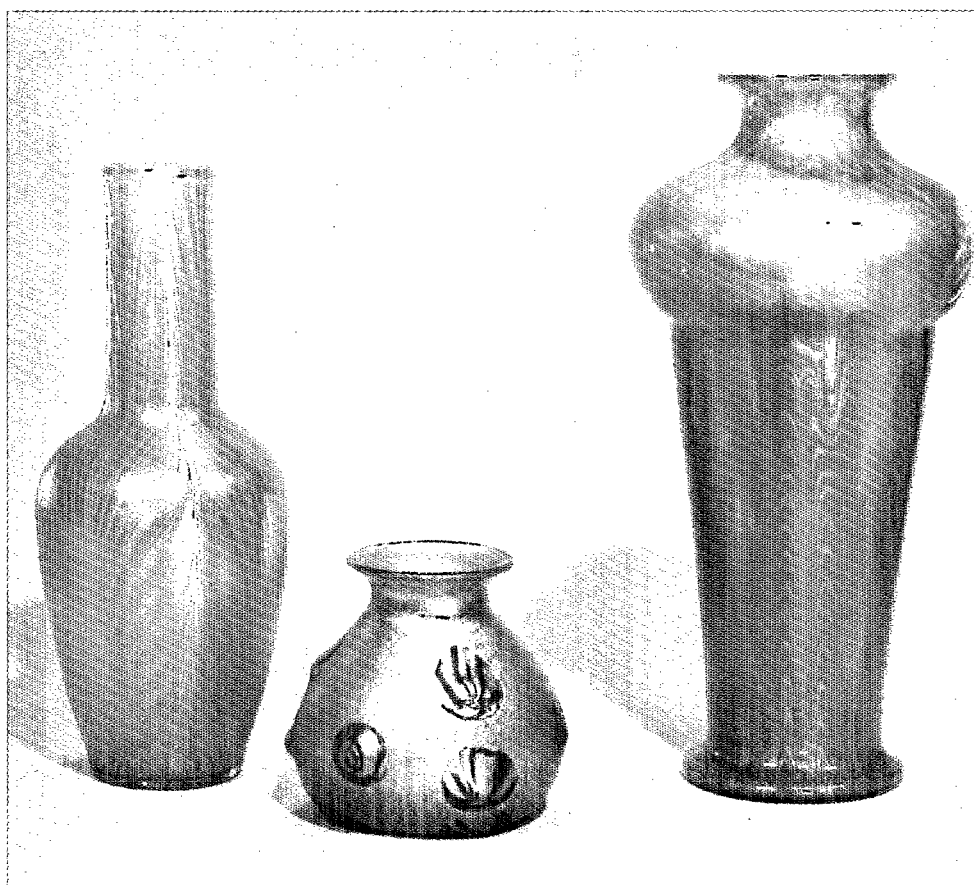
Gallé, Tiffany, Van de Velde

At present the art nouveau collection comprises some 5,000 pieces. The inventories are divided into the following sections: glass, porcelain, earthenware, faïence, crockery, stoneware and furniture, metals and textiles. With about 1,300 items, the glass collection is the largest. The great variety of glasses, techniques of treatment and workshops of origin provides a wide-ranging survey of glass production at the turn of the century. Almost all the important artists in glass of that period are represented by works. The French covered glasses with cut, polished and etched surfaces as well as amalgamations and enamel painting, which gave an important impulse to art nouveau glass art. Seventy-five glasses allow an insight into the creation of the most famous French artist in glass of that time, Emile Gallé of Nancy, while thirty-six specimens by Daum Frères represent the programme of manufacture of that other important glassworks, also based at Nancy. In fact, most of the glass enterprises from France and what was then German Alsace-Lorraine are represented in the collection.



Ornamental grill by René Jules Lalique, Paris, 1900.

Three vases by Emile Gallé, Nancy, 1895-1900.





Three vases by Johann Lütz Witwe, Klostermühle, 1898-1908.

Unfortunately, the work of the American Louis C. Tiffany can only be shown by one window-pane and three vessels. Nevertheless, glasses from Bohemia, which were greatly influenced by Tiffany's glass creation, occupy considerable space, beginning with products of the Johann Lütz Witwe glassworks at Klostermühle, southern Bohemia, which are modelled on designs of outstanding Viennese artists such as Josef Hoffmann, Dagobert Peche and Michael Powolny, or of the Prague painter Marie Kirschner who worked in Berlin. Germany's own glass production is illustrated.

The porcelain collection reflects the great variety of porcelain manufactures, particularly in Germany. Present in the collection are objects expressing the intensive innovative efforts of the industry at the turn of the century, exemplified by experiments with crystal glazing and by sets modelled on designs by Henry Van de Velde, Richard Riemerschmid and Konrad and Rudolf Hentschel in Meissen. But new ways were also opening up in the field of porcelain sculpture, and the museum holds the centrepiece called *Wedding Procession* created in Berlin after designs by Adolph Amberg and consisting of twenty figures, one jardinière, two girandoles and two fruit bowls; this is regarded as one of the most perfect works of art nouveau porcelain sculpture.

The truly pioneering factories in the field of art nouveau porcelain design were those in Sweden and Denmark, which developed new ways of glass painting, in particular with light, subdued and invariably broken tints and by choosing for ornamentation subjects of the native flora and fauna. The work of

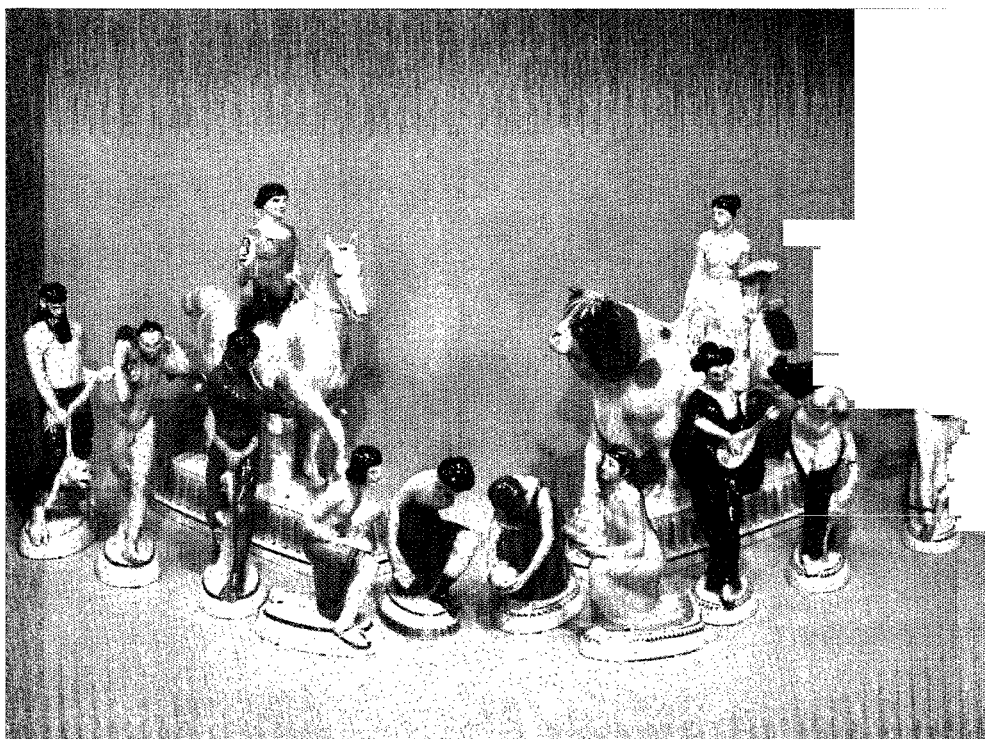
Scandinavian innovators is documented by pieces from the Royal Porcelain Factory of Copenhagen called Bing and Grøndahl, and the Rörstrand porcelain factory.

Folk art and Japanese inspiration

At the turn of the century a very broad variety of earthenware, faience, stoneware and crockery was produced. Ceramic articles originated in almost all European countries and in North America in the most varied forms, ornamentation and with bright glazing of great charm. In these fields too the Berlin Arts and Crafts Museum collection offers a host of the most varied examples. The French, who were especially fond of experimenting, acted as trail-blazers here. Mention need only be made of Alexandre Bigot with his coloured stoneware works, Albert-Louis Dammouse with his coloured plaster-cast painting on stoneware and Clément Massier, an expert in lustre ceramics.

A typical Dutch contribution from among the many high-quality pieces of pottery is the quasi or eggshell porcelain of the Aardewerf-fabriek Rozenburg in The Hague, a particular fascinating feature of which is its paper-thin wall and the bright yet subtle bird and flower ornamentation suggestive of Javanese batik. In those years German pottery was also quite varied. Max

Parts of the centrepiece, *Wedding Procession*, from the Königliche Porzellanmanufaktur, Berlin, designed by Adolph Amberg.



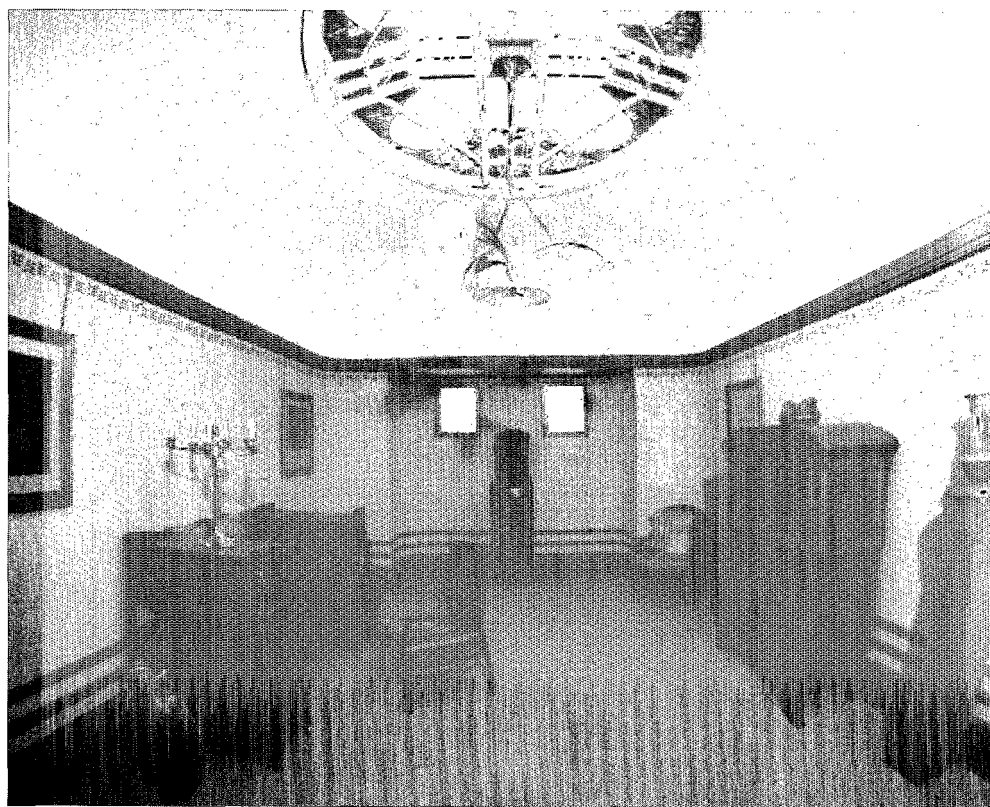
Laeuger created earthenware with applied floral decoration strongly influenced by folk art. A totally different view was represented by Richard Mutz whose stoneware vessels owed their appeal to interesting glazing in subdued colours, inspired by Japanese pottery.

Our inventory of metal and ornamental works also testifies to the versatility of the arts and crafts at the beginning of the century as do the other fields of collecting. Works by Henry Van de Velde, Heinrich Vogeler, Peter Behrens and others show different conceptions of form and ornamentation. Over 150 pieces of Kayser pewter after designs by Engelbert Kayser, Hugo Leven, Karl Geyer and others illustrate the great significance of the firm of J. O. Kayser & Son at Krefeld-Bockum and Cologne. The Kayser pewter pieces feature a floral relief style which was widely admired beyond the national borders and influenced other manufacturers in Germany. Works in brass, bronze and iron richly illustrate the high creativeness of artists and workshops in Europe.

A broad spectrum is also offered by articles of clothing, interior decoration textiles, embroidery and fabric patterns. It is easy to give a clear picture of the different trends in the development of art around 1900 by comparing British and Austrian or French and German fabrics. The focus of the furniture collection is on German products after designs by Henry Van de Velde, Richard Riemerschmid, Bruno Paul, Albin Müller, Otto Eckmann and others. On the other hand, furniture modelled on designs by Emile Gallé, Louis Majorelle, and Tony Selmersheim with Charles Plumet, represents a series of French attitudes.

Lack of space makes it impossible to show visitors to the permanent exhibition the great breadth and variety of art nouveau production represented in the collections of the Berlin Arts and Crafts Museum. Consequently, from the beginning a storage hall that houses a major part of the inventory was laid out as a study area to enable specialists and interested visitors to see unexhibited aspects of the collection by appointment. ■

A Van de Velde room at 64 degrees north



The Van de Velde interior.

Jan-Lauritz Opstad

Director of the Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum, Trondheim, Norway.

Many visitors who come to the Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum (Museum of Applied Art) at Trondheim, central Norway, are surprised to find a room specially designed for the museum by the Belgian architect Henry Van de Velde in 1907/08. The museum owns a large art nouveau collection, built up in the 1890s and the years just after the turn of the century, and the Van de Velde room is one of the highlights of the collection.

To understand why the museum has such a large art nouveau collection, we need to look at its history. It was founded in 1893 and its first director was the art historian Jens Thiis who, in 1909, became the director of the National Gallery in Oslo. He was only 25 years old when he started to constitute the Museum of Applied Art at Trondheim. He was a true European and while director of the museum he lived for several years in Florence and Paris from where he directed the museum. This was only possible because the chairman of the board believed in him and his ideas, namely that the museum should concentrate on contemporary applied art.

All photos: Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum

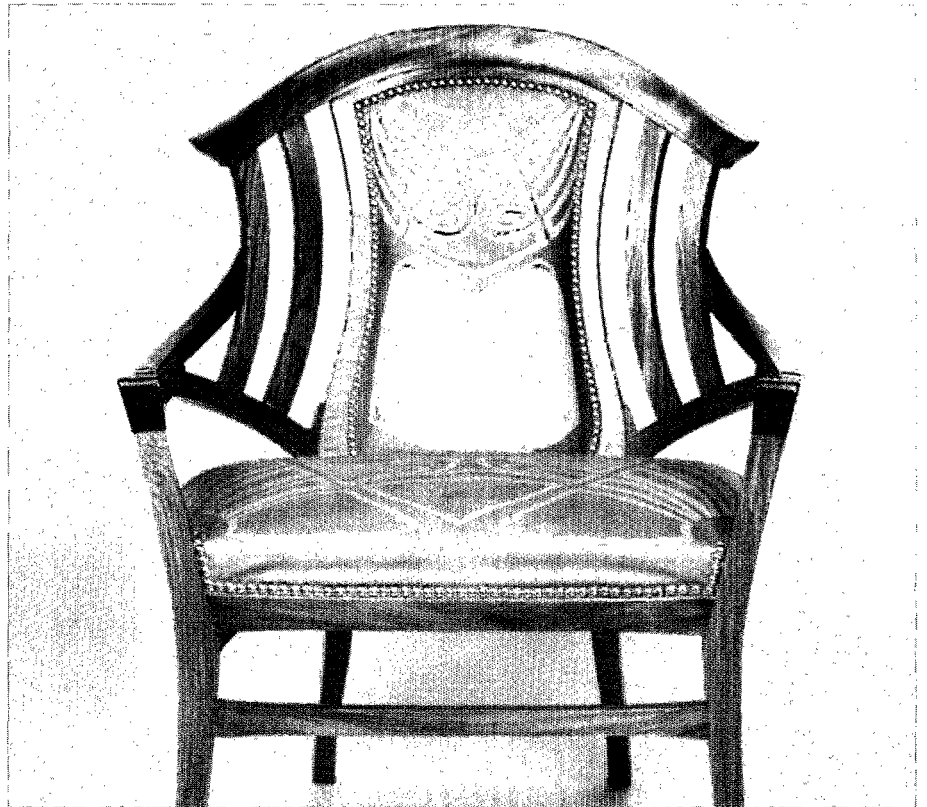
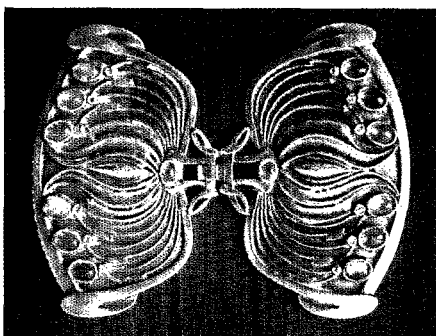
Always have debts!

The restricted means for purchasing items for the collection were, in fact, mainly used for contemporary works. Jens Thiis always spent more money than he was granted, but his purchases were always defended by the chairman of the board. Because he spent more money than he should have, he had to explain why it was important to purchase the pieces acquired. He did so in private letters to the chairman of the board or in more official reports to the board members. These letters and reports are still in the files of the museum, and they are very valuable today in helping to form a picture of the art nouveau of the period. We find very faithful descriptions of exhibitions and workshops, and evaluations on different works of art. The report on the Paris Exposition of 1900, for example, is of extreme importance.

In one letter he tells about a visit he paid to William Morris, and he explains what happened when he told his host that he was a museum director. Morris refused to sell him anything because he was afraid that his works would be copied if they were exhibited in a museum! So Jens Thiis had to purchase most of the Morris pieces he ultimately acquired elsewhere, for example in Berlin, Hamburg and Paris.

Jens Thiis was a friend of Samuel Bing in Paris and an eager customer at his shop 'Art Nouveau'. The museum also purchased Japanese works of art to show the influence on the art nouveau style. Of the auction of Japanese works of art from Bing's own collection in 1906, at which Jens Thiis was present, he gives an interesting description in a report sent to the board of the museum.

The collection of works by Henry Van de Velde also includes smaller pieces, such as this silver belt-buckle adorned with moonstones and diamonds. Purchased at Hirschwald, Berlin, in 1902.



Chair designed by Henry Van de Velde. The batik covering was made by Johan Thorn-Prikker. Purchased at the Paris Exposition of 1900.

This needed more money for purchasing and asked the board if he could contract debts. To support his wish, the director of the Hamburg Museum of Applied Art, Justus Brinckmann, sent a telegram to the chairman of the board of the Trondheim museum: *'Ein Museumsdirektor muss immer Schulden haben. Wer nicht Schuld macht, der taugt nicht.* [A museum director must always have debts. The ones that have no debts are worth nothing.]

Chamber of horrors?

The museum moved to new premises in 1900. In the new building were installed two interiors dedicated to two of the most important contemporary artists: William Morris and Henry Van de Velde. In the interiors there also were works by other artists, but the two were dominant. The Morris room was decorated with printed curtains and wall tiles by him, while the Van de Velde room was decorated with Japanese silk wall coverings.

A new floor was added to the museum in 1908. In connection with this rebuilding Jens Thiis asked Henry Van de Velde to design an interior to accommodate the pieces of furniture and other works of art purchased from

him earlier. This interior became an important part of the contemporary collection. The ceiling was of stained glass designed specially for this room. The chandelier was also a Van de Velde creation. At one end of the room there were two stained-glass windows by Louis C. Tiffany, between them was a bronze urn by Gustav Vigeland, and on the walls were three woodcuts by Edvard Munch. The rest of the objects were by Henry Van de Velde. On the new floor two new rooms were also installed, one devoted to William Morris and the other to French art nouveau. In both rooms Japanese works of art were exhibited together with European.

In 1968 a new and modern museum building was erected. Only the Van de Velde room was moved to the new building. The Morris room and the French room, which had 'only' been designed by Jens Thiis, were not moved; nevertheless, a gallery for art nouveau in general was installed.

Today the Van de Velde interior attracts much attention from the general public and scholars alike. It gives a good impression of the style of Henry Van de Velde and of the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total creation). The interior has also, through its more than

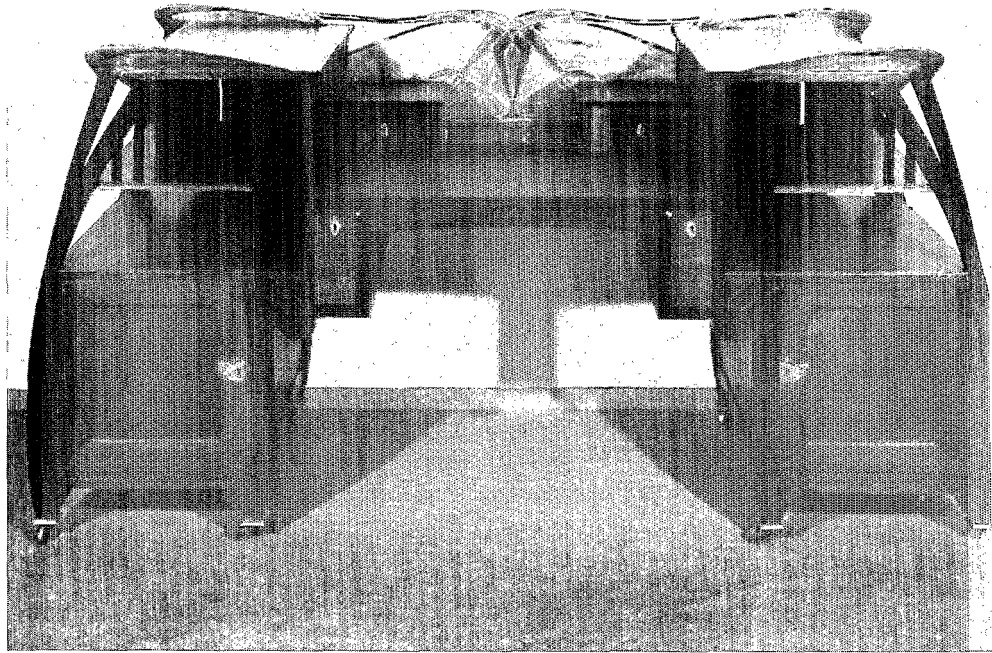
eighty years of existence, elicited different attitudes from both the public and art historians.

In 1908 it was looked upon as being very radical in a bourgeois town like Trondheim. On the other hand, its influence on architects has been great. This interior, together with the many changing exhibitions of contemporary crafts and architecture in the museum, resulted in the construction of many interesting and advanced buildings in the art nouveau style in Trondheim. Museum people, chiefly in Scandinavia, found the display of the modern collections at the museum to be a model. Later on, in the 1920s and 1930s the interior was regarded by the public as rather bizarre and as a curiosity. It was described almost as a chamber of horrors.

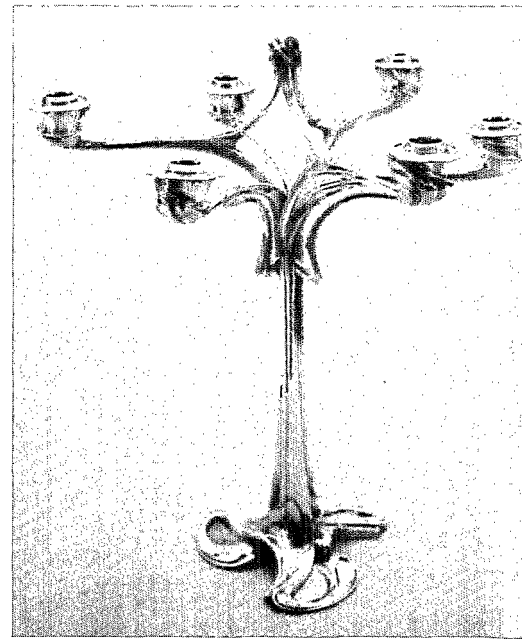
As the art nouveau style regained respect in the 1950s and 1960s, the room again came into esteem. The fact that the room was moved to the new museum building in 1968 shows that it was regarded as an important part of the collections and as an autonomous work of art, though the other two art nouveau interiors were not moved as whole entities to the new building.

The museum is now known for its art nouveau collections, and many visitors come to see them. Today they are an important part of the material on permanent show to the public. We note that it is the young generation that is most enthusiastic about the art nouveau displayed in the museum.

There remains, however, a major problem: the dilemma of conservation versus display in the Van de Velde room. Until two years ago the room was open to the public. At that time the room had to be roped off so that the public could only look at it from the far end. This is not a very pleasant way of seeing it, but if the room is to be preserved for coming generations it is unfortunately necessary to restrict visitors' contact with it. ■



Desk designed by Henry Van de Velde.
Purchased at the Paris Exposition of
1900.



Silver-plate candelabra designed
by Henry Van de Velde. Purchased at
Hirschwald, Berlin, in 1902.



Poster for an 1898 exhibition at the Museum of Applied Arts—the dawn of twentieth-century art in Hungary.

*In Budapest:
museum or
'gypsy palace'?*

Éva Csenkey

Curator of the Ceramics Department of the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest.

Ödön Lechner's building for the Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, the assistance the museum has given to art nouveau, and its efforts over the years to accumulate pertinent art objects, have both stimulated and been buoyed up by the unflagging interest now shown by specialists and the public alike for this movement. Not only do these works of art represent deep values typical of art nouveau, but they are also symbols of an approach especially relevant to our own time—the very days passing as I write this article for *Museum*, as it turns out. Their creators identified themselves with the essence of an all-European artistic revival and at the same time they drew upon intrinsic national resources and traditions. They did not play a particularly dominant role beyond what were then our borders, but they did help Hungarian culture become an organic part of, and an active participant in, international integration, and not remain only a passive recipient of cultural innovation.

The Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, which was established between 1872 and 1878, formed a bridge

between the past and the future and between the best achievements of the European and Hungarian cultures both with the objectives it set as an institution and with the artistic nature of its own building which was erected between 1891 and 1896. The museum was guided by mature, bold and ambitious ideas. Its creators chose to acquaint themselves personally with the values of the past, make them their own and join the 'revival' trend within historicism. They aimed at creating an authentic, national art which strove to be modern at the same time, and to occupy a place in the vanguard of artistic development. They in fact succeeded in achieving these aims at the end of the nineteenth century, a lucky upswing period of Hungarian history, when the country accumulated a fair amount of wealth. And they left a splendid heritage to the generations yet to come.

The Budapest Museum of Applied Arts was established as the third of its kind in Europe, inspired by the examples of the London and Vienna museums of applied arts. Its creation was also motivated by the

expressly didactic purpose of educating artists and industrial designers, and to promote public understanding. The so-called Joint Committee of One Hundred was set up to improve the 'deplorable state of Hungarian industrial art' by starting a specialized museum. This body obtained the support of the national parliament and the capital city administration, and at the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition it made considerable purchases for the new museum. Its first exhibition was opened in 1874; and the Department of Religion and Public Education assumed responsibility for it in 1878, assigning regular grants to it annually.

Prominent representatives of Hungarian cultural life who supported the museum quoted exemplary precedents, the initiatives of the Industrial Society and the Society for the Protection of Industries (Iparegylet and Védegylet) in the 1840s, the so-called Reform Era. Support for domestic industrial art was to be a means of achieving national progress and independence. However, after the defeat of the 1848/49 bourgeois revolution and the national struggle for independence it was only with the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy following the 1867 *Ausgleich* (compromise) that there was at least a chance to do away with backwardness and to embrace bourgeois development. Thereafter, feverish changes led to the establishment of specialized amateur societies, new organizations safeguarding certain interests and professional unions to support industry, which was just then ridding itself of the guild system, and to promote industrial art in particular. The unequivocally progressive Society of Industrial Arts (Iparművészeti Társulat) was formed in 1885. Its specialized journal, *Industrial Art (Művészi Ipar)*, appeared occasionally from 1885; from 1897, it was published monthly under the title *Hungarian Industrial Art (Magyar Iparművészet)*. In addition to discussing historical and theoretical questions it was a true chronicle and propagator of contemporary efforts.

Headquarters of industrial arts development

Jenő Radisics (1856—1917) worked at the Museum of Applied Arts from 1881 onwards. In 1886 he became director of the institution; between 1896 and 1917 he worked there as director-general. Due to the happy combination of his excellent personal qualities and the favourable circumstances, his wide-ranging activities brought about the golden age of the museum.

The museum archives have preserved the report he wrote to the ministry on returning from the exhibition of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. In this document he drew up a programme for all his subsequent activities displaying an approach which prepared the period to follow historicism:

It is impossible to achieve sufficient results where the individual and his character fade away. We will have to do without the spontaneity and freshness we admire in old works of art as long as we fail to reinstate the individual in his rights with all his characteristics. . . . Artists have to be created in the first place. This can be achieved through visits to studios, museums and exhibitions . . . but a lasting effect can only be achieved through training.

Close co-operation between the Museum of Applied Arts and the School of Applied Arts was achieved in the new building they shared from 1896 on. This building really became the headquarters of industrial arts development at the time, as it accommodated not only the museum and the school, but also the offices, journal and exhibitions of the Society for Industrial Arts.

Jenő Radisics perceived the borderline between historicism and the birth of the new art, the beginning of a new era, in the course of which the pupils of the past became the masters of the future. Here is the enthusiastic but very precise diagnosis he established of the 1889 Paris World Exposition in the columns of *Industrial Art*:

The Paris World Exposition . . . is an extremely important milestone in the history of modern industrial art [and] a symbolic forerunner of epoch-making events. . . . There are only a few of us here who are of this opinion, but perhaps the events will testify that we have not been mistaken.

The collections of the Museum of Applied Arts were augmented not only by the treasures of the past, but also by the prominent works of contemporary artists as a result of Jenő Radisics' good offices and personal connections. Acquisitions included, among other items, objects from the Sèvres factory, and pieces made by T. Deck, Emile Gallé, Delaherche and C. Massier, which indicated a revolutionary change in ceramic art from both technical and aesthetic points of view.

In April 1898 a highly impressive and representative exhibition was opened to start a new era unequivocally, with the title *Modern Art*. According to the introductory words of the catalogue it aimed at acquainting the public with 'the new trend initiated by Van de Velde and his associates', the dawn of twentieth-century art. Radisics personally chose the participants for this great international show. Louis C. Tiffany, for instance, brought along a new collection consisting of nearly fifty pieces. At that time, the museum also acquired significant works from among pieces from the Royal Porcelain Factory in Copenhagen, the Rörstadt Porcelain Factory and the Scherrebeck weaving shop as well as A. Charpentier's statuettes, F. Hansen's tapestry and Samuel Bing's collection. In November of the same year (two years before the turn of the century), an exhibition was held of objects that had won prizes at the British National Competition. Its influence probably helped Hungarian industrial artists to win awards, in turn, at the 1900 Paris World Exposition with pieces created in the spirit of the new style.

In 1901, Jenő Radisics put on display the objects acquired at the Paris World Exposition—128 items altogether. Commemorating the anniversary of this triumph of art nouveau in Hungary, the Museum of Applied Arts organized a reprise showing of this joint collection in 1975. Meanwhile, Hungarian contemporary art was regularly presented in the museum at its Christmas and spring exhibitions, a joint effort mounted with the National Society for Industrial Arts. Regular purchases accompanying the exhibitions laid the foundations for the art nouveau collection of

the Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, a collection now significant in its quantity and of a very high quality by international standards. Subsequently, the collection was extended by further additions of precious bequests and private collections as well as individual purchases.

Not in French or Belgian taste

The building of the Hungarian Museum and School of Applied Arts was inaugurated by Franz-Josef, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary on 25 October 1896, during the celebrations commemorating the millennium of the Hungarian Conquest. Its architect was an extraordinary individual, Ödön Lechner (1845-1914), who recalled the objectives he set as a young man in his mature autobiography, published in 1911:

The conviction was gaining strength in me that our efforts will definitely be crowned by success, without having to rely on any previous style. As no style ever has existed from time immemorial, each style having had to start at some time, so we may easily witness the birth of a new trend, the bursting into bloom of a Hungarian style.

At a very young age Lechner unexpectedly dissociated himself from the traditional career of academic graduate architect, however much success such a career might have promised him. From then on, the only thing he was interested in learning from history was how a new style is born and how it changes in a powerful culture. Quoting his own words, in 1875 he 'fled to Paris, almost running' to study French architecture, which 'continued to develop constantly and was ever-moving, as life dictated'. After his return to Hungary, in the 1880s, he tried to break away from the eclectic and allegorical architectural fashions in all his commissions. With a personal and emotional approach, he made a subjective, dream-like synthesis of the historical forerunners. It was due to his 'free and highly personal' approach that he won the competition inviting designs for the Museum of Applied Arts, jointly with his fellow architect, Gyula Pártos.

With this design, he expounded the idea of the eastern origins of the Hungarian people very clearly and poetically, applying the new forms and ornamentation exuberantly. The reminiscences of Indian and Moorish architecture and the elements of the Hungarian ornamental art preserved in folk art were perhaps not blended so successfully here as in his later buildings. Lechner himself afterwards found the museum, or more exactly its entrance, 'too Indian', like his contemporaries, who called it a 'gypsy palace' in derision. Yet this is the building now considered to be the first example of true Hungarian art nouveau, a style created by Lechner.

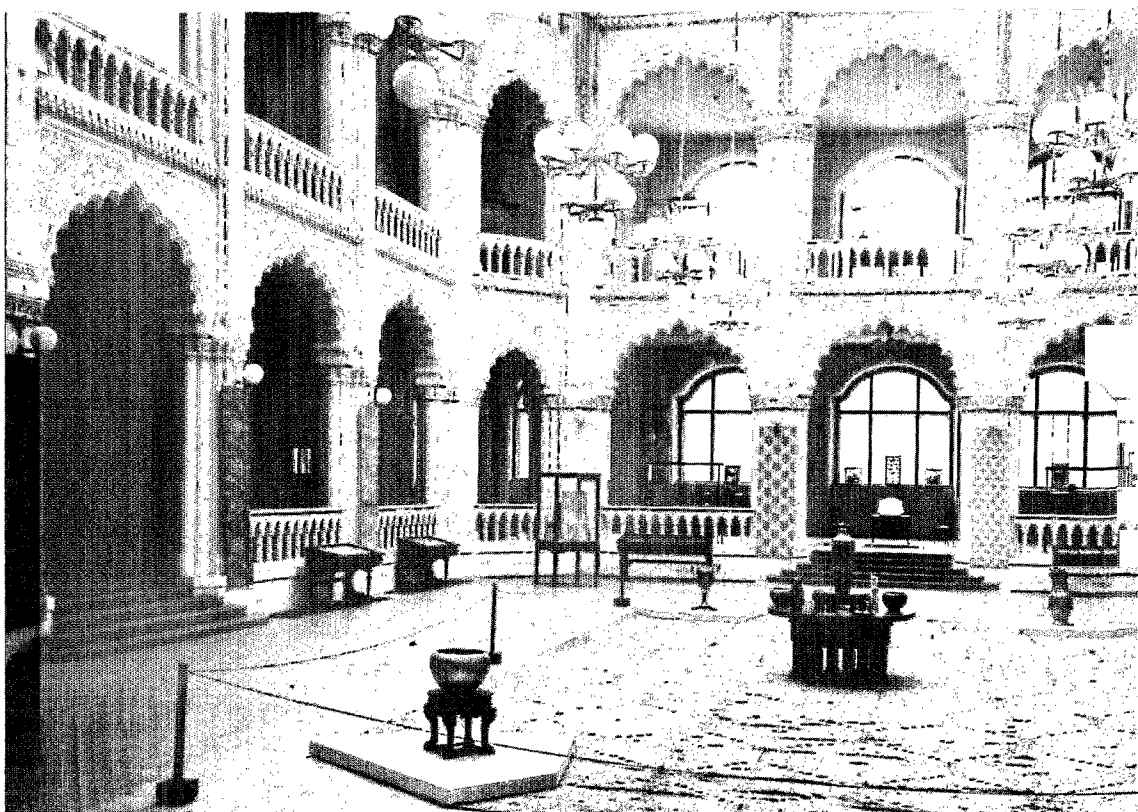
The plans of his buildings show his deep and inherent attraction to tradition, and other fundamental characteristics of his personality as well: serenity and

balance. He found a novel solution to the dilemma of fitting a quasi-symmetrical building on the irregularly rectangular site of the Museum of Applied Arts. The side wings of the building embrace the huge central glass-roofed hall like two out-stretched arms, giving a general impression of symmetry. Another 'find' for someone living in Hungary, where high-quality stone is scarce, was to choose ceramics (also evocative of eastern images) as facing material. The whole surface of the museum is covered with finely fashioned brightly glazed (or unglazed) ceramic elements sporting flower patterns. The roof is also covered with shiny coloured glazed tiles. The ornamented crest tiles, ceramic elements of the battlement and the decorative chimneys crown the building lightly and poetically, reinforcing the general romantic impression it makes.

The main entrance is withdrawn into a deep portico lined with columns. This is under the central part of the façade and exercises an effect frankly akin to suction—or seduction! It is devoid of any restraint or moderation and exuberantly colourful. Beneath a capriciously patterned ceiling decorated with flowery motifs, a bright yellow balustrade meanders up the stairs in front of walls covered with red metallic-lustre tiles. Here, everything seems symmetrical, yet also wild and vigorous, as if the road led into a dark grotto of an eastern love temple. Beyond the main door, a huge, light *enfilade* of spaces welcomes the person entering, the halls opening into each other one after another and creating the impression of a single unit. The reception area also gives a spacious feeling: the glance of a person standing there may run up to the coloured glazing covering the roof or take in the light and airy glass-domed central hall, which rests on a steel structure, as well as the circular galleries. After the somewhat barbaric and sensuous impulses of the entrance, the building in its entirety addresses the visitor in an elevated plane here. This part is enthralling, open and pure.

Paradoxically, there is no motif or form in the whole building that could justify aligning this work of Ödön Lechner with art nouveau in the Belgian or French taste. It is deeply rooted in historicism and has a definitely romantic character. It is also characterized by the use of up-to-date structures and the incorporation of the principles of functionalism. A fundamental specificity is that instead of the bourgeois heritage of classicism he chose the national traditions of folk art as a starting point for the creative process, again following a romantic penchant. From the 'exotic' Orient he did not integrate *japonisme*, as often happened in art nouveau elsewhere, but the Sassanid style, which he considered his own (mythical) heritage. Already in 1918, Lajos Fülep made a most striking assessment of Ödön Lechner's art:

When looking for the national, he found the international; when looking for the Asian, he found the European; when looking for the individual, he found the universal; and when looking for the ancient, he found the up-to-date.



Art nouveau revived in the museum's Moorish decor, 1959.

Europe before it was 'disunited'

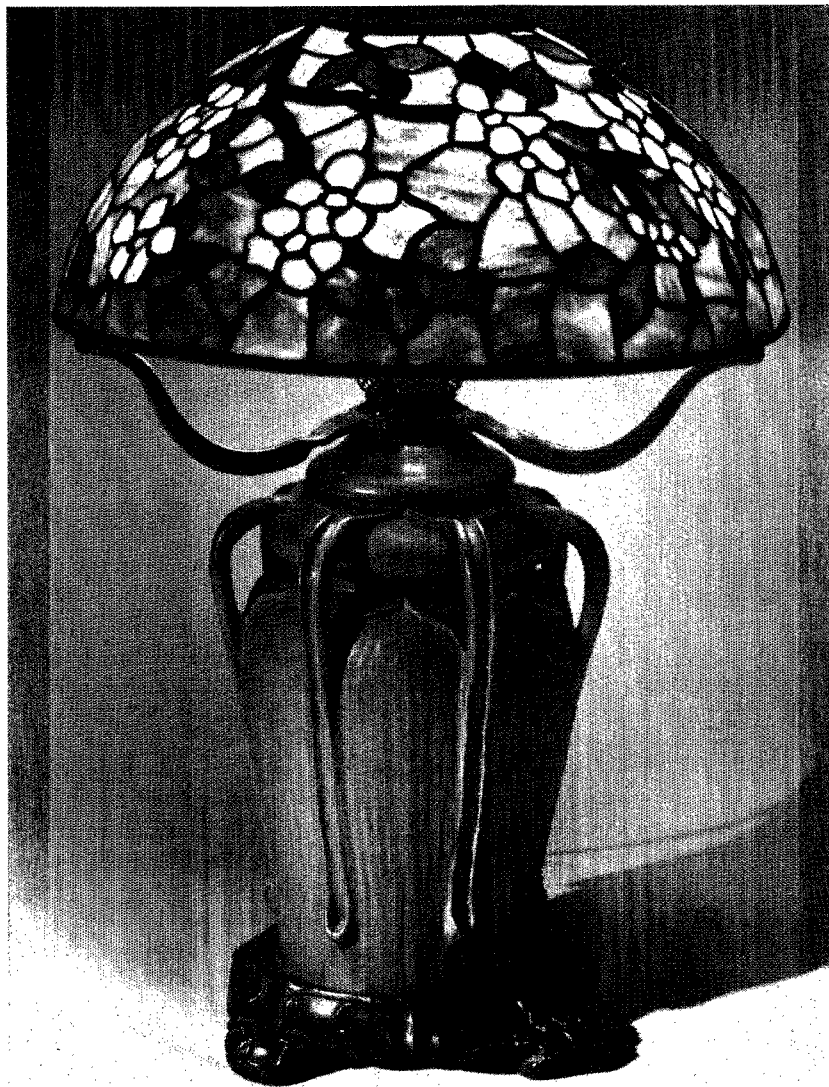
Today's revival of art nouveau in Hungary is closely associated with the Museum of Applied Arts. This is where the first exhibition of fine and decorative arts displaying more than 400 items was held in 1959. It aimed to start and stimulate scientific treatment of the material. The efforts to gain historical and aesthetic recognition had to cope with circumstances that were unfavourable in several respects. As early as the second decade of this century, the internal development of Hungarian art turned resolutely against art nouveau, in the spirit of the powerful vanguard of early art déco and functionalism. After the First World War, our mutilated and economically hard-pressed country had a prevailing mood that was anything but favourable to the intellectual and aesthetic flights of fancy of bourgeois liberalism or radicalism.

Later, the social stratum that maintained the value system of bourgeois culture was disrupted. The proletarian dictatorship, which took power in 1948, following the Soviet pattern, sought to wipe out everything that was associated with what it stigmatized as 'bourgeois traditions'.

In the consolidation phase of the 1960s, the turn-of-the-century period—and art nouveau in particular—came to be seen in a new light as a result of newly begun research as well as publications, exhibitions in museums and the scientific activities of the Documentation Centre for the History of Arts and its successor, the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Art nouveau exhibitions based on Hungarian museum collections that were mounted abroad played an especially important role here. As a matter of fact, they were our only forums of international exposure in this area and, at the same time, they provided an opportunity for Hungarians to demonstrate their European character.

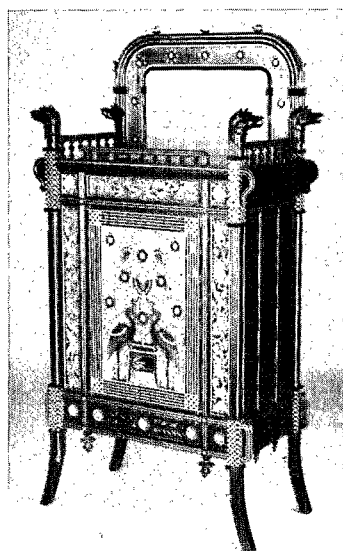
Until now, our research into art nouveau has been bound to restrict itself to a national scope, as has also been the case in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia, though we have compared our results with

the peaks of British, French, German and, occasionally, Viennese art nouveau. The time has now come for us to re-examine the turn-of-the-century culture and its powerful art nouveau style within their original framework, a multinational context, that of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. With Vienna playing a leading role, and due to the interdependent exchanges within that multinational political setting and beyond, some cultural achievements of greater impact and significances were made than we have so far been able to explore with exhibitions and publications. Behind the phenomena and the national particularities emphasized to date, a pattern of similarities pervading the whole region awaits (re)discovery. If this dimension is kept in mind, the increasing interest in art nouveau, among both art historians and members of the public at large, could well prove to be far more than a passing fashion. With this art Europe looks down the years to us from a time before it was 'disunited'. Art nouveau may no longer serve as a pattern or example for new creativity; but it can certainly still be drawn upon as a rich—and unifying—cultural resource. ■



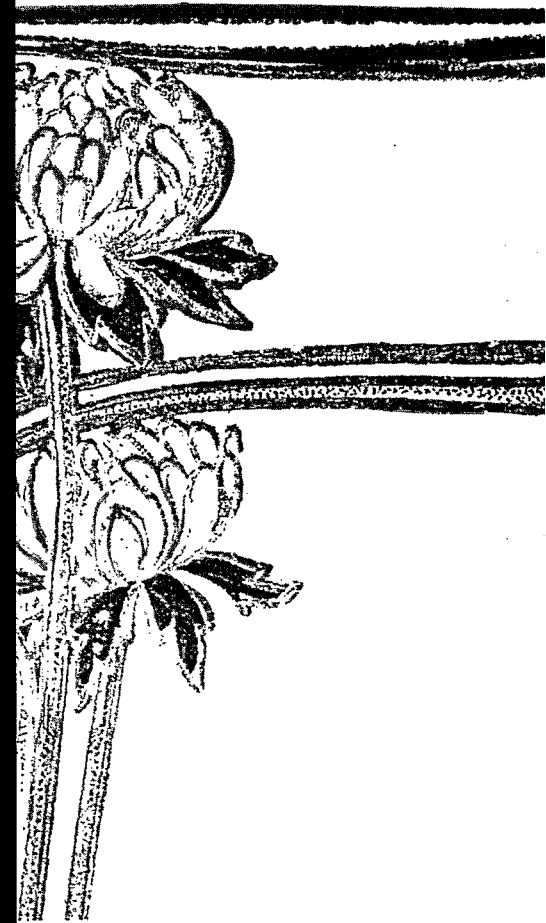
Lamp produced after 1902 by the Boston Tiffany Studios for the Grueby Faience Company.

The High Museum of Art, in Atlanta, Georgia, features these three outstanding pieces, acquired in 1984, in the Virginia Carroll Crawford Collection which, in turn, is part of its permanent holdings, and kindly granted *Museum* permission to reproduce these photographs.



Cabinet created by Herter Brothers, New York City, about 1880.

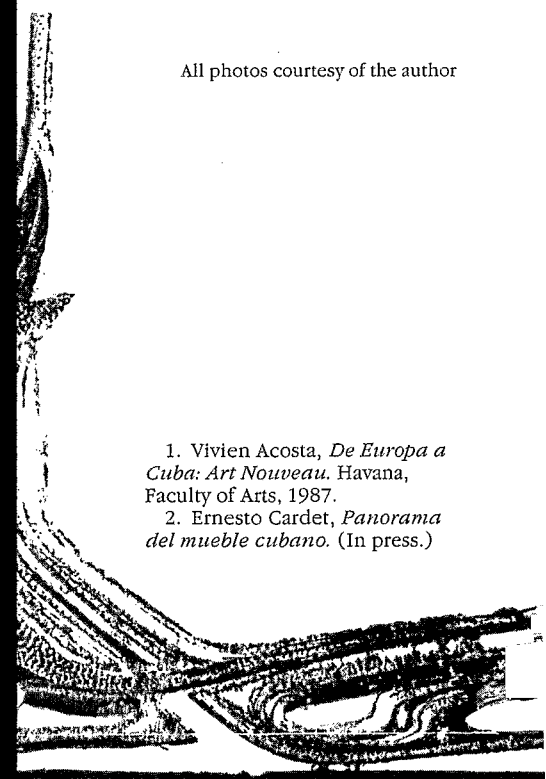
Covered box made by the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Corona, New York, between 1898 and 1902.



Rebeca Gutiérrez

Born in Havana in 1943. Has a degree in the history of art from the Arts Faculty of the University of Havana. In 1966, worked in her field in the National Museum of Fine Arts. From 1967 to 1974, Head of the Department of Visual Arts at the National José Martí Library. In 1974, began working in the Museum of Decorative Art and, since 1980, has been the Museum's Director. Member of the Cuban Committee of ICOM.

All photos courtesy of the author



1. Vivien Acosta, *De Europa a Cuba: Art Nouveau*. Havana, Faculty of Arts, 1987.
2. Ernesto Cardet, *Panorama del mueble cubano*. (In press.)

Cuban echoes

Art nouveau emerged from the blending and influences of different peoples' artistic designs. It emanated from their ideas and from the subsequent expression of those ideas. Art nouveau left an indelible mark on an era of Cuban culture, both in its works of art and its buildings.

The peak of art nouveau in Cuba was reached in the first decade of the twentieth century. It was reflected, above all, in the buildings on the principal avenues at that time, in the typographical design of periodicals and commercial advertisements. Even though the popularity of the new style spread all over the island it must be pointed out that no contribution was made to enriching its existing features. In its application to all types of Cuban artistic expression it made, as elsewhere, use of asymmetrical forms, sinuous outlines, female figures, floral and vegetal shapes and at times had an oriental flavour.

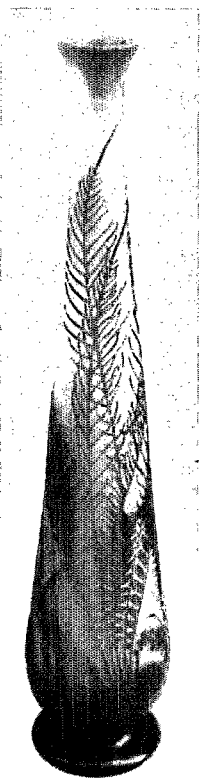
In architecture the only sign of art nouveau was its appearance in decorative features on façades of buildings, whose structural shapes were in no way modified. 'It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to find a Cuban building with a use of space or any internal design feature that can be described as art nouveau. One usually finds truly neoclassical structures that have been dressed up in the ornamental finery of the time.'¹ Despite this, Cuban architects did not escape the influence of art nouveau, which rapidly appeared on façades, main doors, railings and balconies. The Cuban architects Mario Rotlant and Eugenio Dedió were deemed by various specialists to be the most important figures at that time because of the 'purism' of their works.

Graphic and decorative arts; pottery

In the graphic arts art nouveau was widely used, especially in lithographs for cigar and cigarette boxes, which were decorated in an art nouveau style with a certain tropical flavour quite appropriate for the boxes of the distinctive nationally produced Havana cigars. Magazines also exhibited this new artistic form in their typography, vignettes and advertisements, using stylized floral and vegetal features. One cannot leave unmentioned the drawings by Conrado W. Massaguer, a Cuban cartoonist, who kept alive the essence of this style in the typography of the magazine *Social* and in his own work. Nor can we forget Jaime Valls, who, in his work for the magazine *El Figaro*, gave the advertisements the characteristic features of art nouveau. This movement, which started at the beginning of the century, was to reach its peak around the 1920s, expressing itself in various forms of decorative art.

At the start of the century the style of Cuban furniture combined with another style that, despite its rather slow start in Cuba, was by its conception and its up-to-date nature the first step towards the modernization of interior decorating in Cuba: this style was art nouveau (known at the time as 'art-nou', and 'modernistic'—which indicated its Catalan origin), and it was used for some major pieces in Cuba.²

Of course, the country continued to import, and it is in furniture that a great quantity and diversity of known art



Decorative vase, by Emile Gallé, France, twentieth century. From the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art.



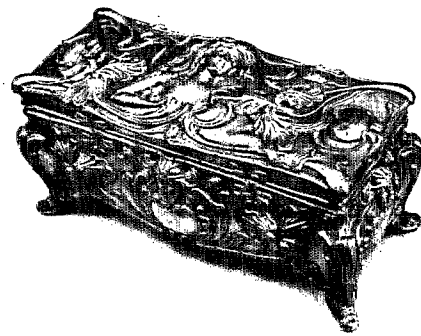
Lithographs on cigar boxes from La Flor de Astor factory.



nouveau examples, such as pieces from Vienna, Thonet armchairs, chairs of various kinds, umbrella stands and iron tables, are preserved.

Pottery in Cuba had not got further than a few local kilns, and it was in the first decades of the twentieth century that the development of artistic pottery really began, ending years later. For this reason the majority of porcelain and earthenware works were brought from Europe, originating from different manufacturers such as Sèvres, Royal Dux Bohemia, Vienna, various Spanish workshops and others. In the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art in Havana there is only one example of Cuban pottery decorated with art nouveau designs. It is a work of art that does not contribute to the style but simply makes use of a stylized Cuban orchid motif with sinuous leaves, on a classically shaped vase, which are redolent of art nouveau.

This style is to be seen in many other pieces of Cuban decorative art. Mention must be made of the stained-glass windows, fans and articles of clothing in which Europeanized tastes and styles were always present. As we have seen, the art nouveau style came to Cuba and permeated all levels of society. It was a style that appealed greatly to the taste of Cubans, which explains the existence today of the large number of objects that reflect it.



Chest, by J.B., France, twentieth century. From the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art.

Decorative figure manufactured by Royal Dux Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, twentieth century. From the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art.

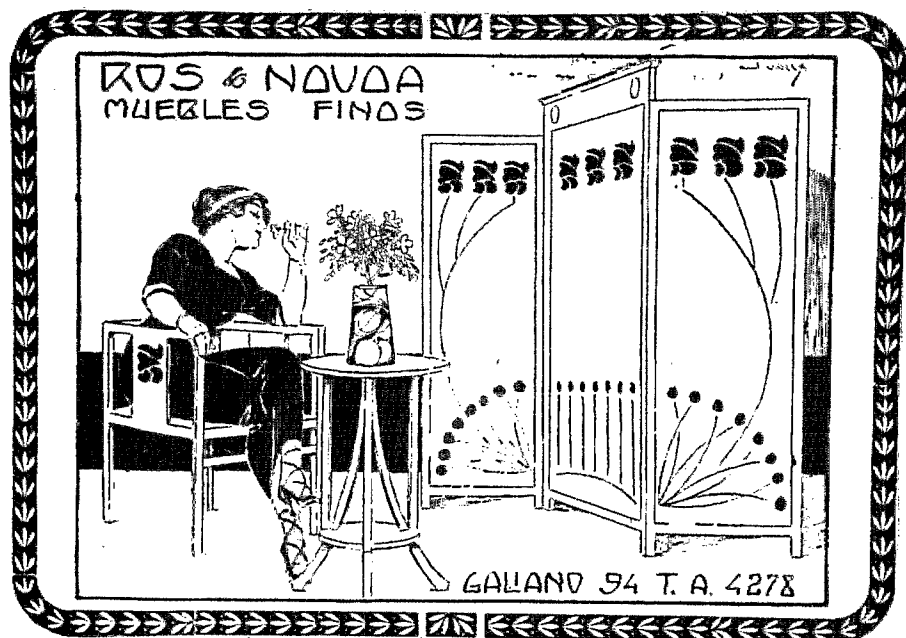


Cuban ceramic vase, 1930, by Jaime Xart and Castor González Darna. From the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art.

In the museum: de luxe and ordinary items

In 1964 the first display of the art nouveau collection was organized, for the inauguration of the Museum of Decorative Art. Years later in 1978, this was repeated with an exhibition that took over all the temporary rooms in the museum and included items from private collections. From that day on efforts have been made to enlarge the collection.

The art nouveau collection in the Museum of Decorative Art reflects the foreign influence mentioned throughout this article. The collection of European pottery contains samples of many different makes, through which the different influences in the style (art nouveau, *modern' style*, *Jugendstil* and *Sezessionstil*) can be studied. Exceptional works of art such as a flower-pot made by Zsolnay-Pecs are examples of the great variety in our present collection. Noteworthy in the crystal collection are the works of the school of Nancy, France, headed by Emile Gallé, and those of Louis C. Tiffany in the United States. Detailing the pieces in our collection would be a lengthy matter. The silver-plate section, with objects from north American workshops such as from Tiffany & Co., gives an idea of the variety of designs for tea sets, cutlery sets and decorative glasses. The lamp section contains pieces by



Advertisement for Ros & Novoa furniture, designed by Jaime Valls, in *Bohemia*, 28 December 1913.

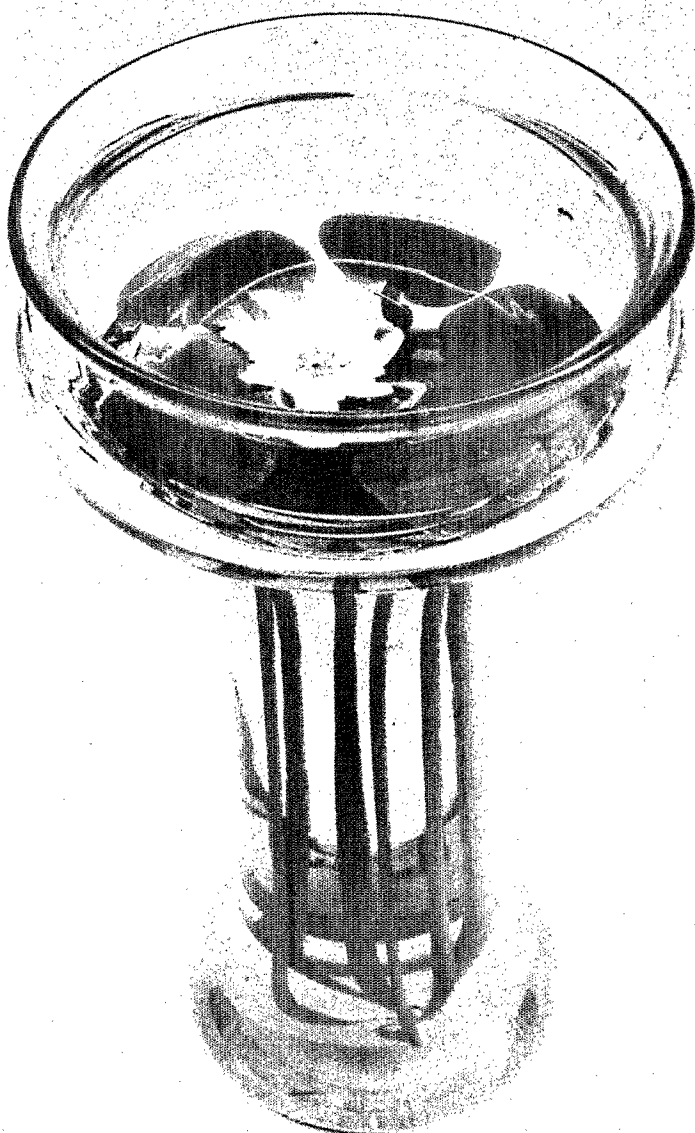
Gallé, Richard and Tiffany. The jewellery section has small trinkets such as brooches, buttons and tiepins. The postcard section contains a wide collection of postcards from Europe and the Americas, and the fan section ranges from luxury fans to the most ordinary paper ones. There are also Swiss, American and French clocks.

Works in the art nouveau style are being collected all around the country and stored in the appropriate museums as valuable pieces that form part of Cuba's cultural heritage. ■

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Decorative goblet, by Louis C. Tiffany, United States, twentieth century. From the collection of the Museum of Decorative Art.



The Museum of Finnish Architecture



Modern in the 1940s, still modern today: Eliel Saarinen's 1904 railway station in Helsinki.

Sirkka Valanto

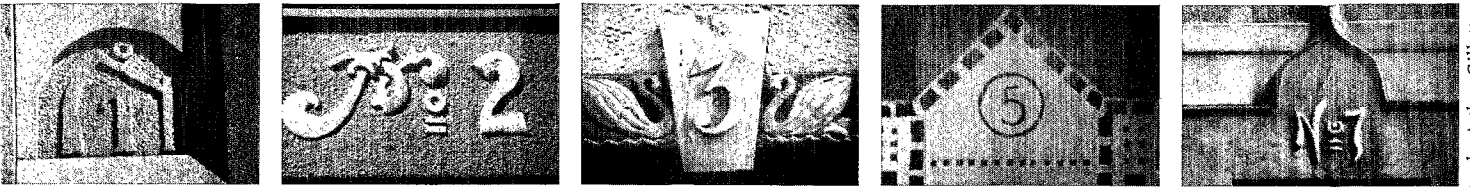
Head of the Archives Department, Museum of Finnish Architecture.

Perusal of the history of the Museum of Finnish Architecture reveals the relatively important role played by art nouveau architecture in its activities from the very beginning. The museum's first exhibition, in 1955, actually organized before the institution was officially founded, featured Eliel Saarinen's architecture in Helsinki. Today we find ourselves in the situation where the second Eliel Saarinen exhibition, opened in Helsinki in 1984, has just finished a great international tour which took it all over Europe and North America. Between these exhibitions there have been a number of large and comprehensive presentations and publications on two other major Finnish architects of the art nouveau period, Lars Sonck and Armas Lindgren. The

Museum of Finnish Architecture has thus been active in making art nouveau architecture well known.

In this article the terms 'art nouveau' and 'national romanticism' are used side by side, without analysing the differences between them; in Finland they mingled with each other, and features of both could be seen in one building at the same time. National romanticism has been explained as a part of art nouveau, but the use of separate words is justified because it is more accurately descriptive.

Our museum is the second oldest architecture museum in the world, after the Stusev Museum in Moscow. The idea of establishing such a museum in Finland was put forward on several occasions starting from the turn of the



All photos by Arthur Gillette.

century. The first concrete result was the foundation of the picture archives, the predecessor of today's museum, by the Association of Finnish Architects in 1949. Its purpose was, above all, to collect photographic material, mainly on modern architecture. There were no museological ambitions then. Apart from assembling a few sets of material left by early masters, which were threatened with destruction, there was no talk of starting a drawings collection. The process of founding a real museum began in 1954 and led to the official establishment of the present institution in 1956. The picture archives constituted the initial 'capital' of the new institution, and operations were launched with the 8,066 photographs that the archives donated to the museum, as well as the collection of Eliel Saarinen's drawings that Loja Saarinen, his widow, had in 1951 donated to the future museum of architecture.

The purpose of our museum is to promote interest in architecture and spread knowledge and understanding of it. The museum maintains archives and collections of drawings, photographs and records, a library and a research department, arranges architectural exhibitions, carries out publishing activities and provides information services. The exhibitions and publications constitute the most visible part of the activities, which are based on the archives and the collections.

Every important Finnish architect represented

Art nouveau architecture is richly represented in the archives, but it has no special role; it is merely an important part of a larger collection. The photographic archives contain some 70,000 black-and-white photographs of both old and new architecture and a wide range of slides. In addition to photographs, there is a record of architectural competitions, containing competition material and documents, jury deliberations and photographs of the entries. The town plan archive holds copies of major Finnish town plans obtained from various archives. The object collection includes furniture

designed by architects, such as Eliel Saarinen, and tools used by them. The library has a large collection of architects' correspondence and notes.

The collection of drawings is a fair reflection of Finnish architecture, though the emphasis is on the twentieth century. Nearly every important Finnish architect is represented. The oldest documents are drawings by Carl Ludwig Engel from the 1820s. At the other end of the scale there is the Viljo Revell collection, which was donated by his firm *in toto*, and which contains nearly all his work. The drawings collection has been augmented mostly by donations, and all the estate donations and other extensive collections are from the twentieth century. Alvar Aalto's drawings are preserved in the special foundation named after him, but the drawings of all the other important architects who no longer have their own practices are in the museum itself.

A small part of the collection dates back to the nineteenth century, but from the 1890s onwards the collection is considerably bigger. To be able to understand its significance it has to be related to the history of Finnish architecture, which is relatively young. There are virtually no architectural drawings in existence dating from before the nineteenth century since at that time the country had practically no trained architects. In the early nineteenth century most of the few architects practising worked at the Supreme Board of Public Building in Helsinki. It was only at the end of the century that the number of architects started to increase notably. It also became possible to study architecture in Finland. Before that, architects had had to study abroad, and all the leading architects had been foreigners.

From the turn of the century the collection contains increasing amounts of material from the major architects. The renunciation of historicism and the dawn of national romanticism can be seen in the joint projects of the firm of Gesellius-Lindgren-Saarinen. After that firm disbanded, the careers of its members can be followed separately since there is an extensive collection of drawings by both Eliel Saarinen and Armas

Art nouveau designers played a 'numbers game' throughout Helsinki.

A country church? It could have been but wasn't. In fact, it was the Finnish pavilion at the 1900 Paris Exposition, designed by the trio Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen.



Museum of Finnish Architecture

Lindgren in the archives. There are more than 500 drawings by Saarinen, and more than 1,000 drawings by Armas Lindgren. Lars Sonck was another leading architect of the time, and his collection is one of the museum's largest, containing most of his national romantic works and all his later works up to the 1940s, covering thus a period of over fifty years.

The Helsinki railway station competition marked the turning point of Finnish architecture: the competition and ensuing violent public debate on principles of 'modern architecture' may be seen as having finally buried national romanticism. Of the competition entries, the museum has only Frosterus's and Strengell's, significant but unrewarded. There are several drawings by Eliel Saarinen connected with the later stages of the lengthy design process of the railway station. Sigurd Frosterus's whole architectural career is reflected in the archives. While Saarinen and Sonck were the paragons of national romanticism, the architecture of Selim A. Lindqvist was influenced by rationalism and Viennese art nouveau. The Lindqvist collection is also quite large.

A stable interest in art nouveau

As I see it, and our situation may differ from that in other countries, the present interest in art nouveau in Finland is neither increasing nor decreasing but remains continuous and stable. To an art historian like myself the significance of art nouveau and national romantic architecture belongs to something nationally self-evident. The architecture itself has long been valued, but knowledge and understanding of its contents and real meaning have altered. Today it is undisputed that the Hvitträsk site built and lived in by the Cresellius-Lindgren-Saarinen trio is a national monument as are Tampere Cathedral and Helsinki railway station. Neighbourhoods built in the art nouveau and national romantic styles are the most desirable residential areas in Helsinki. The buildings in this style are restored with reverence, for example, the State Hotel at Imatra by Usko Nystrom. There was a time when art nouveau architecture was being demolished, but the preservation battles seem to have become rarer nowadays. The problem now is more one of badly done and misconceived renovations and changes, which have attacked art nou-



Museum of Finnish Architecture

veau as well as other historically important architecture.

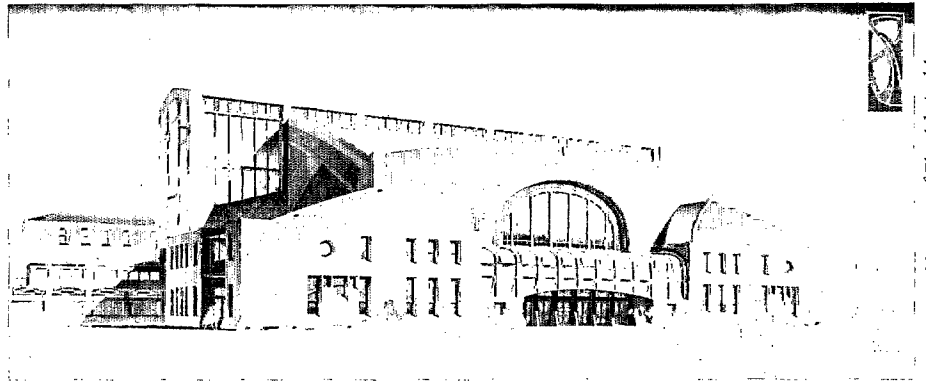
There are many explanations as to why art nouveau architecture is so soundly established in Finland. The birth of national romanticism has traditionally been attributed to the political situation in the country in the late nineteenth century, with the struggle for national identity. Indisputably the phenomenon was connected with threats to our national existence; and architecture as well as other arts were used politically in order to manifest Finnishness during the Russian oppression. The Finnish pavilion at the Paris Exposition of 1900 by Gesellius-Lindgren-Saarinen, was one of the finest manifestations of national romantic architecture. It was the first time that Finland went on show at a fair with its own building, separate from Russia's. At the same time, the fine arts, music, literature and industrial arts were also flourishing. In architecture, art nouveau and national romanticism became so popular that whole districts in many towns were built homogeneously in these styles. They were used by trained architects as well as by master builders. National romantic characteristics, such as heavy masses, natural stone and squared rubble techniques, mythological figures, however, started to fade after the Helsinki railway station competition in 1904, whereas international influences continued to be felt in art nouveau.

National romanticism was long ex-

plained only from national premises, even though other influences in architecture, for example, from the United States, were openly admitted at the beginning of the century. This was somehow forgotten until, in the 1950s, a new generation of art historians started to analyse this architecture in a new way. Research into the subject took a fresh turn: university studies were made in the 1950s and 1960s on Lars Sonck, Selim A. Lindqvist, Sigurd Frosterus and Eliel Saarinen. Thanks to these, the international connections of art nouveau were rediscovered, which was something of a sensation at the time.

Also, outside academia the 1950s were an important period for the recognition of art nouveau. Eliel Saarinen's drawings were donated to Finland, which led to an exhibition in Helsinki and later in Moscow. Our museum was founded, and the great collections of Lars Sonck, Sigurd Frosterus and Armas Lindgren were installed there. A wider audience became aware of the significance of national romanticism and art nouveau in Finnish art, architecture and the applied arts in 1972, when a major exhibition, *Finland 1900*, was mounted by the Museum of Finnish Architecture, the Finnish Art Academy and the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design. It is revealing to recall that it was at about the same time that Hvitträsk was opened as a museum after being almost forgotten for years. Since Eliel Saarinen emigrated to the United

Prospective design for the Villa Hällberg on Aland Island by Lars Sonck, 1897.



Competition entry by Sigurd Frosterus and Gustaf Strengell for the Viipuri railway station (1904).

Museum of Finnish Architecture

States in 1922 it had only been used temporarily, and after his death it changed owners.

The continuing popularity of national romantic and art nouveau architecture in Finland may be explained by the fact that it was the first original Finnish style. In her research, Ritva Wäre has analysed the reasons which, in the 1890s, led to the efforts to find a uniquely Finnish style. Earlier styles, except for the vernacular, had been a reflection of international trends; there had been eclectic historicism, revivals and empire, all of which were brought to Finland from abroad.

Even if the original political message has lost its meaning for people today, it is obvious that there is something in national romantic architecture that touches them very deeply and strongly, something that makes it feel evident and important even today in Finland. Perhaps it is the tradition that started with the stone walls of medieval churches or the logs of timber cottages which, despite international influences, makes it feel familiar and explains why it is so much more widely accepted than, say, the achievements of functionalism.

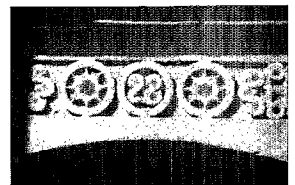
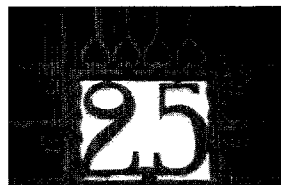
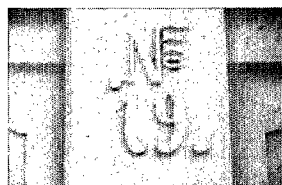
Where do we go from here?

As art nouveau architecture is now firmly established in Finland, there are not likely to be any major changes in general attitudes towards it in the future. Nobody is going to try to deny the importance of Helsinki railway station or Tampere Cathedral. What is going to happen is that our knowledge of this architecture will be deepened as new research results appear. The

Museum of Finnish Architecture has no special plans regarding art nouveau. Just behind us are the comprehensive exhibitions of Eliel Saarinen, Lars Sonck and Armas Lindgren. In the near future, a detailed book on Eliel Saarinen's architecture in Finland is to be published as a result of a long research project by the museum.

It is probable that the museum collections already contain all the relevant material of art nouveau to be found in Finland and which is not contained in other archives. Some unexpected discoveries may of course turn up in the future. There is material in the collections, however, which needs more careful cataloguing than has been carried out so far. Hopefully this can be done in the future, but the current interest in this is minor compared with some other architectural phenomena.

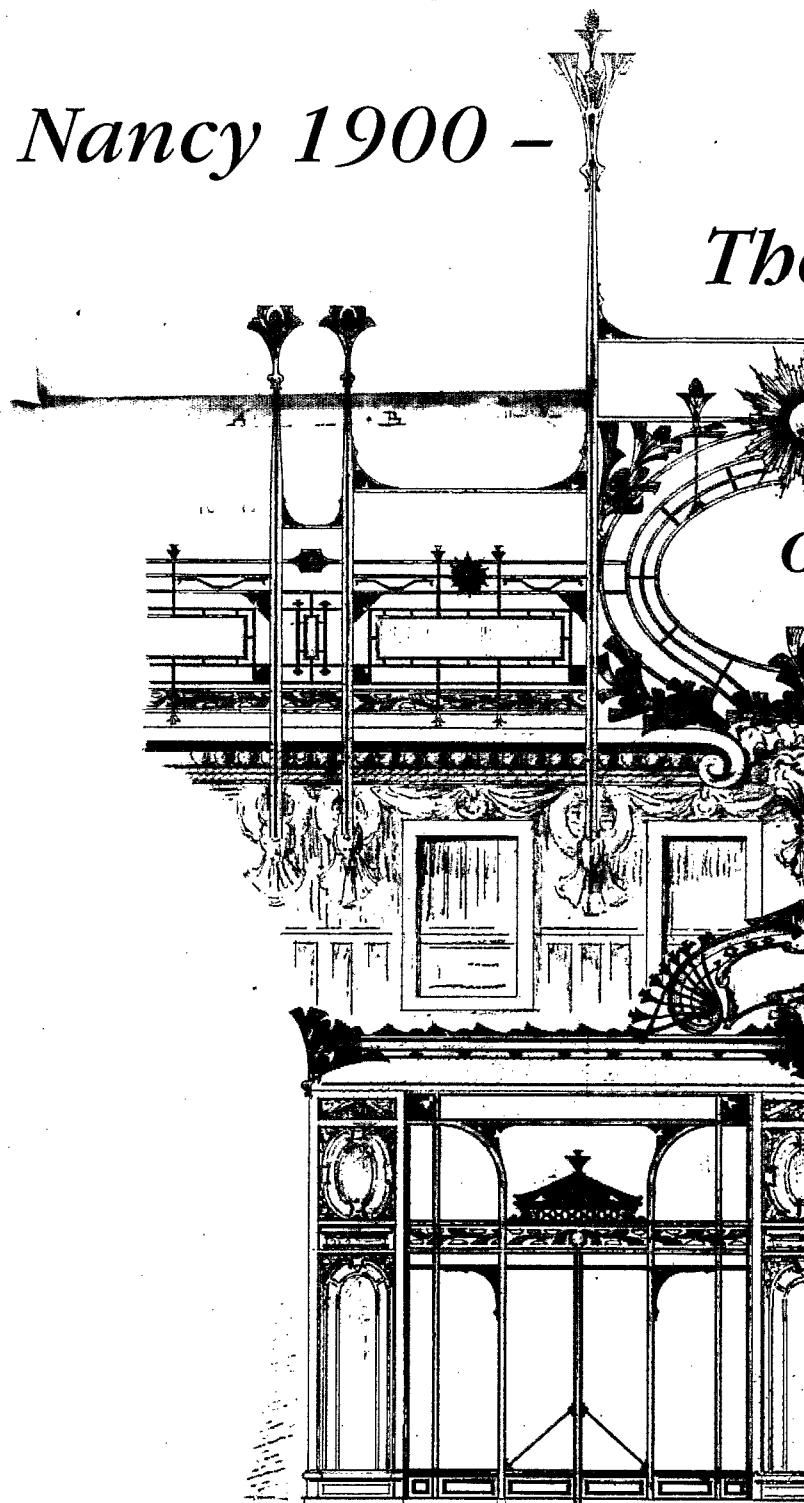
What is still needed is to widen our knowledge of art nouveau. So far, research has concentrated on the 'big stars'; still unknown is the more modest and anonymous mainstream that flourished all over the country designed by architects and master builders. ■



Nancy 1900 -

The beginnings

of an archive



All photos by Inventaire de Lorraine SPADEM

Les Magasins Réunis, Épinal. Detail of the lateral façade; unexecuted design. Private collection.

Vincent Bradel

Trained as an architect, has worked as a researcher at the Laboratory of the History of Contemporary Architecture. On graduating in 1981, was first employed at the French Institute of Architecture. From 1983 to 1986 assisted, as deputy commissioner, in preparing the *One Canal, Many Canals* exhibition organized by the National Fund for Historical Monuments and Sites and the Ministry of Amenities, Housing, Transport and the Sea. In 1987, was commissioned by the Modern Archives of Lorraine Architecture to prepare an exhibition of the work of the Nancy architect Joseph Hornecker. At present writing a thesis on urbanization processes in Nancy since the mid-nineteenth century.

1. It is actually much more than a catalogue, being a genuine guide for walkers and an interesting innovation in exhibition literature.—Ed.

Since its inauguration in 1976 the exhibition, *Nancy Architecture 1900—The Architects and Their Patrons*, organized by the Inventaire de Lorraine in conjunction with the Nancy School of Architecture and School of Fine Arts, has been touring the world, securing international recognition for a heritage long ignored by the people of Nancy themselves. It now seems quite natural to associate the work of architects such as Emile André (1871-1933), Lucien Weissenburger (1860-1929) and some others with that of Gallé, Prouvé, the Daums, Majorelle, Vallin and Gruber. But the Museum of the Nancy School has not yet included architecture in its display. Lack of space is certainly the main reason, but it must also be recognized that there are certain historical reasons, such as the secondary role played by Nancy architects in the emergence of the Nancy School and—above all—the failure of the history of architecture to keep pace with the history of art. Now that archives have begun to be compiled it should eventually be possible to place the art nouveau work of Nancy architects in its proper perspective.

The formation of a heritage and its archive

One quickly realizes on leafing through the *Nancy Architecture 1900* guide¹ that none of the works presented, or at least very few, existed before that date. It is as though up to 1899 Nancy's architects remained impervious to the influence of Emile Gallé (1846-1904). This conclusion

seems to be born out by the decision of Louis Majorelle (1859-1926) to call on the services of a young Parisian architect to design a house for him in Nancy. The house, named 'Jika', was by Henri Sauvage (1873-1932). It delivered such an eye-opening slap in the face that in the first decade of the century Nancy experienced a late flowering of villas, private mansions and other residential and commercial buildings all claiming some kind of link with art nouveau.

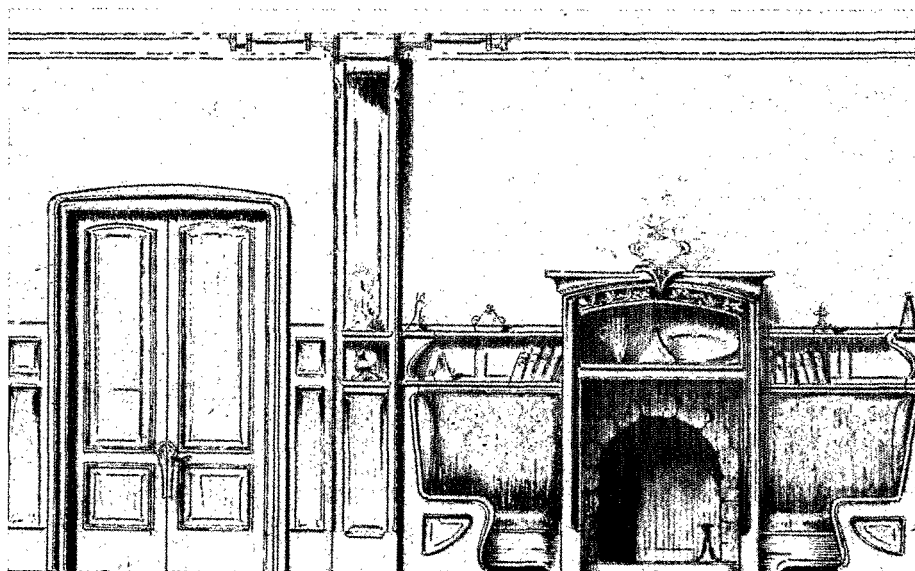
It must be recognized, however, that most of the initiators of these projects lacked the financial resources of their counterparts in Brussels and Paris. For example, the most characteristic façades of the period frequently concealed quite traditional interiors, while suites of furniture in the latest style were placed within walls dating from another era. Such one-off combinations did not, therefore, necessarily imply the existence of a unified style, a typical feature of art nouveau elsewhere. In fact, the architecture seems to serve as the basis for a form of collaboration in which each contributor remains independent rather than a focal point for the amalgamation of all the decorative arts involved. From here to its classification as a minor form of expression of the Nancy School is only a short step, and one that some have not hesitated to take.

This interpretation of the facts probably goes some way towards accounting for the late recognition of this part of Nancy's heritage. But what about the amnesia and blindness that prevailed until the early 1970s? The opening of the Nancy School Museum in 1963 had no impact on the series of demolitions started off in 1968 by the destruction of the very fine Paul Luc house, designed and executed between 1902 and 1906 by Henri Gutton (1851-1933) and Joseph Hornecker (1873-1942). A number of buildings from this period, including some of considerable stature, were rescued in the nick of time in 1974 by being placed on the supplementary inventory of historical monuments. But salvation finally came two years later with the public success in Nancy of the *Nancy Architecture 1900* exhibition. The spate of demolitions then gave way to the first restoration campaign. The next task was to safeguard the second memory of the new heritage, the paper memory that traced the background to the finished work. Several collections of records were discovered, but there were simply no facilities available to house them properly. In Nancy, as elsewhere in France, the history of

modern architecture and of the people associated with it was in its infancy. It therefore took some ten years for the idea to mature and gain acceptance as a result of the course of events. It was due to the scale of the problems posed by the donation of the archives of Jean Prouvé (1901-84), one of the best-known heirs of the Nancy School generation, that the Modern Archives of Lorraine Architecture was established in February 1987, at the initiative of the Nancy School of Architecture and the Inventaire de Lorraine, with the help of the City of Nancy and the Municipal and Departmental Archives. Quite by chance, the papers of one of the architects brought to the attention of the public by the *Nancy Architecture 1900* exhibition came to light at the very same time from the depths of a cellar.

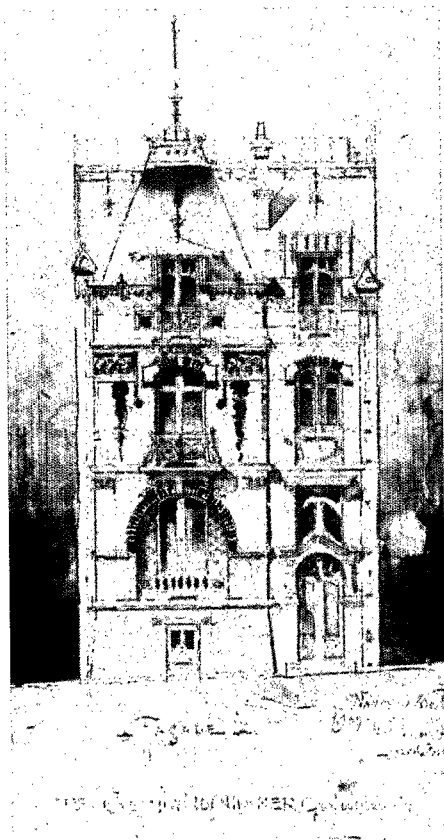
A foretaste: the Hornecker collection

Joseph Hornecker's story is above all one of quite exceptional social and professional success. He was the son of a businessman of modest standing; he arrived in Nancy in 1901; and had already stepped into the limelight by



1907. Not content with winning the competition for the reconstruction of the Grand Théâtre in Nancy's famous Place Stanislas, Joseph Hornecker became in the same year the appointed architect of the most important regional bank and was commissioned to construct an entire mining centre by one of the most enlightened industrialists of Lorraine. This unprecedented success was due to a masterly knowledge of his field acquired through brilliant studies at the National School of Fine Arts, and

The Paul Luc house, Nancy (1902-06; demolished in 1968). Interior decoration plan for the hall. Drawing attributed to the Louis Majorelle studios. Private collection.



The Geschwindenhamer house, Nancy (1903-04). Design for the façade. Private collection.

Ground-floor bay.

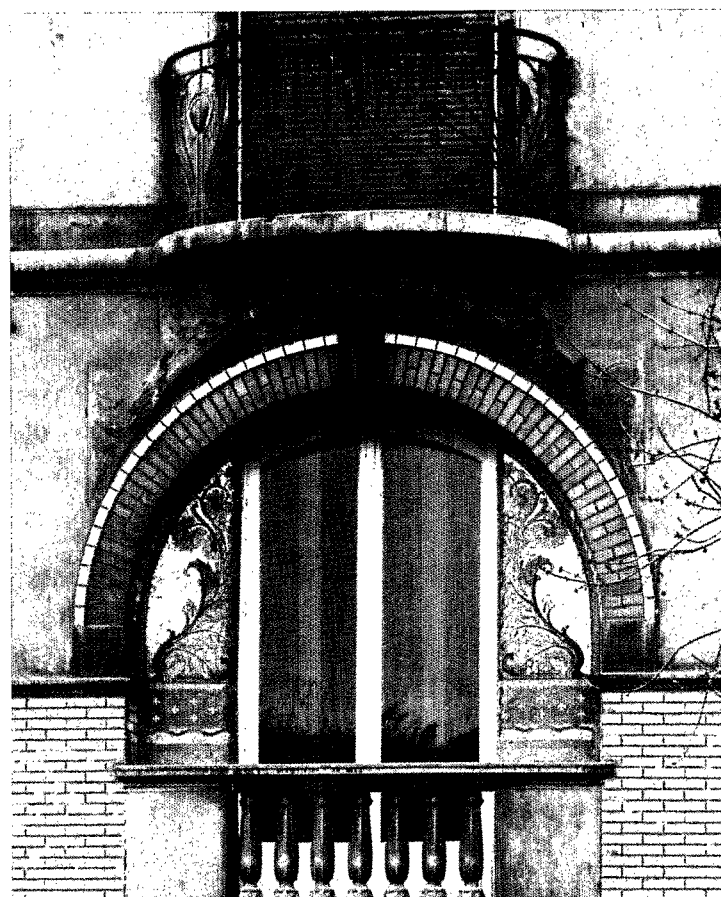
Detail of the front entrance.

also to a crucial encounter. Henri Gut-ton, an École Polytechnique graduate in engineering, an architect when the fancy took him, a town councillor and a member of both the Société Industrielle de l'Est and the Société des Architectes de l'Est, lost no time in introducing his future successor into Nancy society and acquainting him with art nouveau, which he had discovered himself not long previously. Hornecker's apprenticeship was therefore somewhat hasty and rough-shod though the results (for example the Geschwindenhamer house) are not without interest. Although his eclectic approach to art nouveau is still discernible in the 1908 project for the decoration of the façade of the Magasins Réunis at Epinal, Joseph Hornecker was one of the first of the Nancy architects to abandon that approach for a subdued neoclassicism, which remained his preferred mode of expression right up to the end of his career in 1930. In this respect his work is certainly not the most representative of the influence of the Nancy School. Nevertheless, it is a reflection of the main currents of thought of the era. The pastiche of the Grand Théâtre in Nancy marks its author as a devotee of aca-

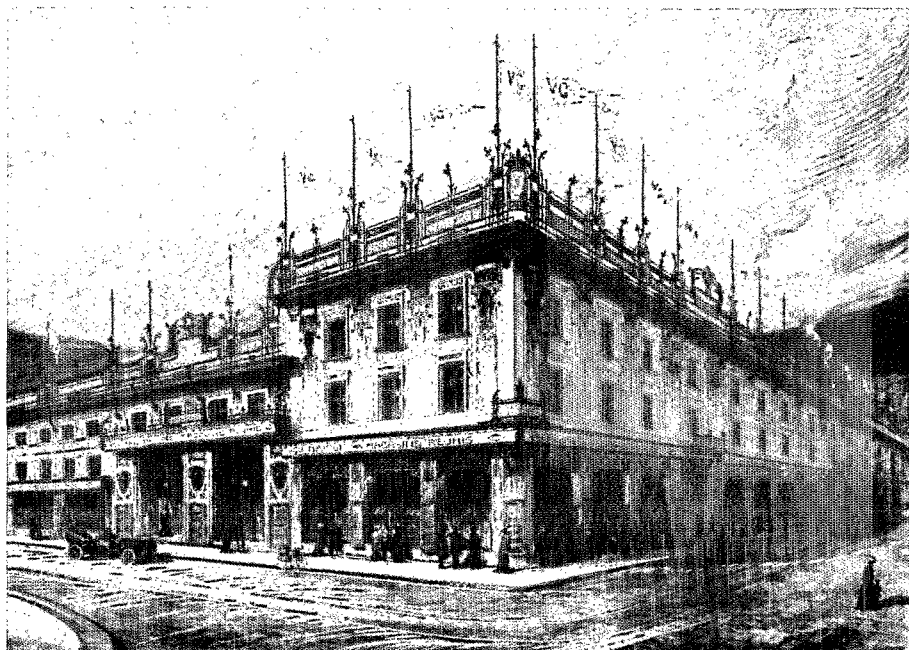
demical principles, and the reinforced-concrete structure revealed by the photographs of the site identify him as a local pioneer in academism. Here and elsewhere, Hornecker displays his loyalty to the doctrinal pragmatism advocated by his theory professor at the School of Fine Arts, Julien Guadet.

The Modern Archives of Lorraine Architecture

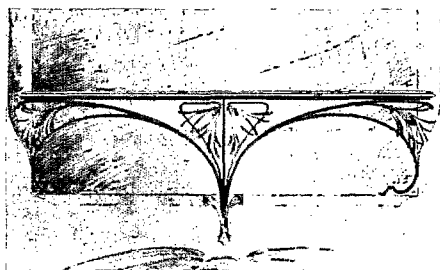
As noted in the press release issued on the establishment of the Modern Archives of Lorraine Architecture, the safeguarding and presentation of the architects' records brought to light through the *Nancy Architecture 1900* exhibition remains a priority. As a result of the broadening of knowledge concerning the heritage and history of modern architecture, however, the founding members of the Modern Archives have, as a matter of course, extended the scope of their association to include all architects working in Lorraine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, this is not an isolated step. It is a programme forming part of the co-operative arrangements between the Archives de France, the Direction de l'Architecture and the



Les Magasins Réunis, Épinal (1908-09; destroyed in 1945). Overall view. Partly executed design. Musée d'Orsay.



The Paul Luc house, Nancy. Window-rail design. Undated unsigned blueprint attributed to Edgar Brandt. Private collection.



French Institute of Architecture, which was given tangible form in 1988 through the establishment of a centre of archives of twentieth-century architecture. Needless to say, their ambitions (and resources) are not the same. In fact, the association's strength lies in the complementarity of the expertise of its member institutions. This means that projects are executed on the basis of co-operation between the researchers at the School of Architecture, especially those at the Laboratory of the History of Contemporary Architecture, the photographic and documentary services of the Inventaire de Lorraine and local archives collections.

Tracking down, preserving and presenting are the aims the association has set itself. Although it is still too soon to discuss the future of the collections that have been traced, whether or not they illustrate art nouveau, we may usefully consider how collections already donated have fared, for example, the Hornecker collection, which was put in the hands of the Laboratory of the History of Contemporary Architecture for scientific examination. Research on the collection donated and on subsidiary public and private collections

led to the organization in spring 1989 of an exhibition of original drawings, together with a travelling exhibition and a locally co-published catalogue. Thirteen years after the success of the *Nancy Architecture 1900* exhibition this première was very warmly welcomed in all quarters, a sure sign that art nouveau continues to gain growing public admiration.

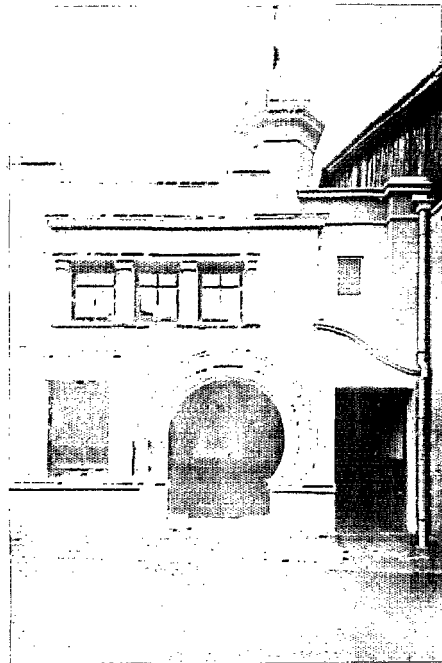
Furthermore, the laboratory work has produced a whole range of documents, which can now be consulted at the Inventaire de Lorraine's documentation centre. The drawings were catalogued, photographed, studied and even exhibited or published and then returned to their owners or storage centres. Some may think it a pity that the association did not acquire the means to build up a collection, but its decision was a practical one. There is no harm, however, in cherishing hopes of the opening of an architecture room in the Nancy School Museum—surely quite a modest aspiration. Indeed, why not open an exhibition gallery on contemporary architecture in Lorraine on the lines of the Archives of Modern Architecture Gallery in Brussels? ■

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A report from Japan

All illustrations kindly furnished by the author



The Kamimoto Barber Shop in Osaka, built in 1903 by Yutaka Hidaka; no longer extant. (From the *Journal of Architecture and Building Science*, No. 214, October 1904) Tokyo, Architectural Institute of Japan.

Hiroyasu Fujioka

Holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees as well as a doctorate in engineering, from the Tokyo Institute of Technology. Since 1984 has been Associate Professor at the Department of Architecture at the same institution, specializing in modern and Western architecture. Sponsored by the Japan Foundation, has lectured in Hungary, Ireland and Spain, and was a visiting scholar to the University of Washington, Seattle, United States. His articles have focused *inter alia* on the history of museums in Japan, the search for an authentic Japanese architecture in the modern period, and problems of the recent conservation movement in Japan.

In Japan we have as yet no institutions such as the Musée Horta or the Musée d'Orsay to preserve and display works of art nouveau architecture and art. Indeed, no significant steps have been taken in this country toward recognizing the importance of this artistic movement or preserving such works. I will therefore devote some words to the basic history and characteristics of art nouveau architecture in Japan. It seems safe to say that practically nothing about Japanese art nouveau architecture has been published outside this country thus far. But since it is widely known that Japanese art works (*ukiyo-e* prints and handcrafts in particular) were among the important stimuli leading to the emergence of this style in Europe, it is surely meaningful to observe—turn about is fair play!—the art nouveau architecture that was built here in Japan.

Art nouveau architecture arrives in Japan

The 1900 International Exposition in Paris, it is generally believed, prompted the introduction of art nouveau to Japan. Many Japanese artists and architects were studying in Paris and other parts of Europe at the time, and they were exposed to and affected by the new style. Yasushi Tsukamoto (1869-1937), an assistant professor of the architecture department of Tokyo Imperial University who spent three years studying in Europe, visited the art nouveau pavilion (displaying pieces from the Bing Company collection) three times and he purchased sketchbooks and some of the works displayed.

Immediately after the 1900 Exposition, the impact of art nouveau on Japanese arts and crafts began to be felt. In the field of architecture, two buildings were constructed in 1903 which affirmed its influence. One was the Kamimoto Barber Shop in Osaka. The façade, though remarkably rigid overall, incorporates the curved lines, asymmetry, and flat surfaces indicative of the style. The other was in the interior of the Kawaguchi branch office of the Sumitomo Bank (designed by

Magoichi Noguchi, Yutaka Hidaka, and Kōzaburō Kigo; no longer extant). The three architects involved in the design of these two buildings were affiliated with the building and repair division of Sumitomo, one of the country's largest and most prestigious financial concerns. The chief member was Noguchi (1869-1915), who had travelled around Europe and the United States in 1899 and 1900; it is known that he lived in England for a time and had also been to Scotland. Like Noguchi, most of the architects who began art nouveau architecture in Japan had either been to Europe around 1900 or knew personally people who had.

In the first decade and through the first half of the second decade of the twentieth century, art nouveau was fashionable in Japan. It was not used in buildings intended to be stately or dignified, but in shops, residences, and exposition pavilions. In 1910, the project for widening Nihonbashi Boulevard, one of Tokyo's main thoroughfares, was completed, and new shops sprang up on either side, quite a number with façades decorated in the art nouveau style. The first art nouveau residence to be built was the Western-style mansion of Count Chiaki Watanabe (completed in 1905 and designed by Kōzaburō Kigo; it has been moved and preserved, and today is the Toyota Memorial Hall at Tateshina, Nagano). Art nouveau designs were used for the circulation-duct grilles under the floors, for the handrails and lighting fixtures, and in the details of the second-floor study.

The earliest examples of the use of the art nouveau style in exposition pavilions were the Kirin Beer shop at the Tokyo Kangyo Exposition in 1907 (designer unknown, no longer extant) and the Machine Pavilion at the Tenth Prefectural Federation Exposition in 1908 (designed by Sone & Chūjō architectural firm, no longer extant). At the Tokyo Taisho Exposition in 1914, there were many pavilions (also no longer extant) showing the distinct influence of the Vienna Secession movement. The designer of these structures was Seiichirō Chūjō (1869-1936) of the

Sone & Chūjō architectural firm. Chūjō had spent three and a half years in England beginning in 1903.

Perhaps the most famous building in the genuine art nouveau style in Japan is the Yukinobu Fukushima Mansion designed by Goichi Takeda (1872-1938). This residence exhibited the art nouveau style everywhere, from its gates to the stained-glass windows and the motifs of the floor tiles. Takeda had studied in Europe from 1901 to 1903; in 1901 he visited Glasgow, where he saw and greatly admired the works of C. R. Mackintosh, among them the Glasgow Art School building. While in Great Britain, he submitted a design to a local drawing contest that clearly suggests the influence of Mackintosh.

Characteristics of Japanese art nouveau architecture

The art nouveau style in Japan was in most cases dominated by flat, straight-line designs and partial use, such as for decoration. There were few buildings that made such ample use of three-dimensional curves and curved surfaces as did the works of Victor Horta and Hector Guimard. Most featured the flat, straight-lined designs typical of Mackintosh's style and the Vienna Secessionists. When curved lines were used, they tended to be quite restrained. Apparently, as we can see in articles in professional journals of the day, Japanese architects felt an affinity with flatness and straight lines, seeing them as linked to their own indigenous architectural tradition. Decorations in the art nouveau style were often created from motifs drawn from flora and other natural forms. The adoption and transformation of motifs from nature into two-dimensional decorative forms had been widespread in Japan, especially in residential architecture, from the Middle Ages; Japanese architects must, therefore, have felt an affinity for art nouveau decoration that they did not have for other styles.

The second feature of Japanese art nouveau architecture was that it represented a partial stylistic influence;

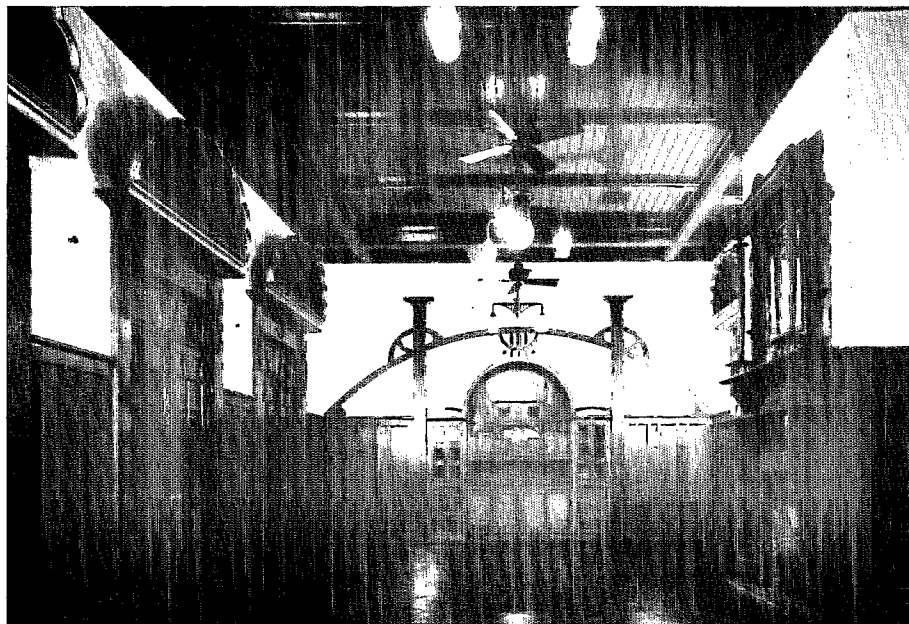
with the exception of the Fukushima Mansion, it was utilized mainly for certain decorative details. The idea of total design advocated and practised by William Morris, and realized in the works of Horta and Mackintosh applying art nouveau principles to whole structures down to the last detail, was not taken up in Japan. In that sense, it was not so much the expression of a new world view as just one more new decorative style; Japanese architects thought of art nouveau in terms of decorative motifs which they thought appropriate for creating a casual atmosphere. While Goichi Takeda made the most thoroughgoing use of art nouveau motifs in his Fukushima mansion, he was simultaneously doing designs in other styles. Even for him, art nouveau was just another style among the many at his disposal. The concept of structural rationalism of Viollet le Duc was also known among some architects in Japan, but none attempted, as did Horta, to apply it to art nouveau architecture.

If art nouveau had any lasting impact on Japanese architecture, it was probably that it smoothed the transition from historicist to modern architecture. The Japanese Government had invited the Englishman Josiah Conder, recipient of the respected John Soane Prize, beginning in 1877 to teach at the Imperial College of Engineering (later the School of Engineering, Tokyo Imperial University), where he was responsible for the training of Japanese architects in Western-style architectural design. What he taught was the historicist architecture practised in Europe at the time.

Art nouveau helped Japanese architects to recognize the aesthetic qualities of two-dimensional design and asymmetry. It also showed them that it was possible to design Western-style architecture that did not rely on the tastes of the European past, and that there was room for pioneering a new style that was more than simply a collage of historical styles. Contemporary Japanese architects were aware of the influence of Japan on art nouveau itself, and while their interest tended to focus solely on Western architecture, the perspective of art nouveau helped reopen their eyes to the merits of their own traditions.

Art nouveau architecture in Japan today

Since it is common practice in Japan to demolish shops and houses as soon as they become old and dilapidated and to dismantle pavilions as soon as exhibitions are over, the number of extant buildings in the art nouveau style is extremely small, though there may be many more that incorporate partial art nouveau decoration and detail. The best known extant examples are the Chiaki Watanabe mansion mentioned above and the Western-style mansion of Kenjirō Matsumoto, designed around 1912 by the Tatsuno & Kataoka architectural firm. The exterior of the Matsumoto house features half timbers, as does the Watanabe mansion, but the art nouveau style has been used here and there in the interior. This building is now in the possession of the Nishi-



Dining-room at the Western-style mansion in Kita-Kyushu, designed for Kenjirō Matsumoto c. 1912 by the Tatsuno & Katoka architectural firm; extant. (Courtesy of Akihisa Masuda.)

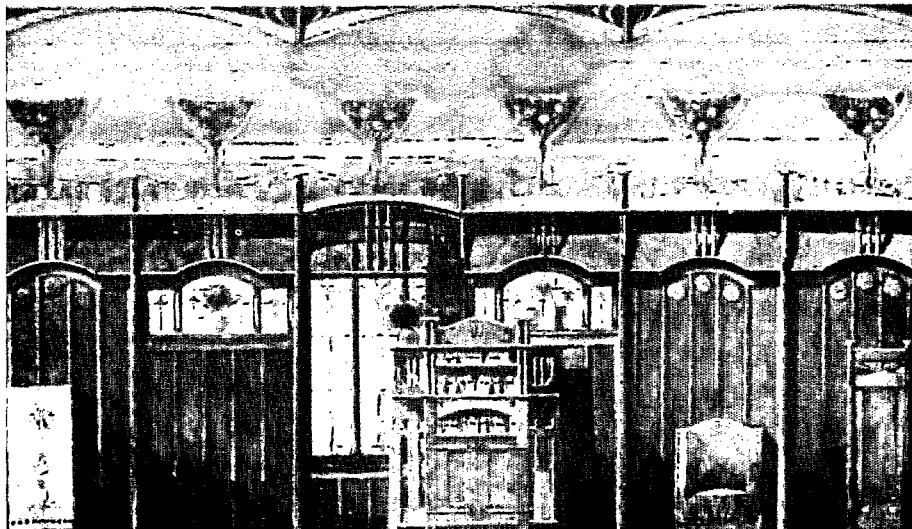
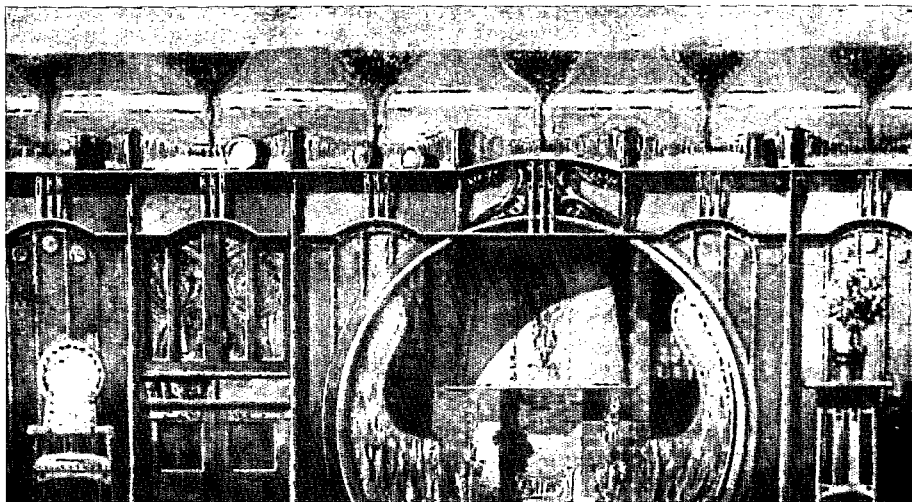


The Fine Arts Pavilion of the Tokyo Taisho Exposition, 1914. The work of Seiichirō Chūjō; no longer extant. (From the *Journal of Architecture and Building Science*, No. 330, June 1914.) Tokyo, Architectural Institute of Japan.

Nihon Kogyo Club and has been designated an important cultural property (that is, the government supports its permanent preservation). Still there are no plans to convert either of these buildings into museums. Interest in preserving historic structures and opening them to the public is increasing somewhat in Japan, however, and there are many cases where public buildings designated for preservation are converted into museums or archives. Both the Watanabe and Matsumoto mansions are privately owned, however, and at present their owners neither wish to open them to the public nor lack the financial resources necessary for their maintenance. This leads us to believe that, unfortunately, there is little chance of an example of art nouveau architecture being made into a museum in the near future.

In addition, the tables and chairs and other furnishings once created for these buildings have almost all disappeared. Our main sources on art nouveau in Japan are thus provided by the architectural journals of the day, along with collections of drawings and blueprints. All the issues of the Architectural Institute of Japan's organ *Kenchiku zasshi* (*Journal of Architecture and Building Science*) are available beginning with its inaugural issue in 1887; and collections of other architectural journals have been preserved. The many art-nouveau-style plans included in *Kakushu shōten kenchiku zuanshū* (*Collection of Various Kinds of Store Architecture Elevations*) (1907) give us a good idea of the impact of art nouveau on Japan at the time. The Kigo Collection, including some 11,000 design sketches of and related to Kōzaburō Kigo, is preserved in the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library, and among them are many sketches and

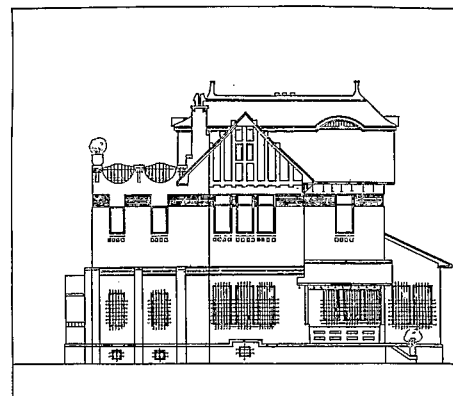
Yukinobu Fukushima Mansion, 1907, designed by Goichi Takeda, no longer extant. (From *The Works of Dr Goichi Takeda*, Kyoto University, 1933.)



full-scale drawings done for the Watanabe mansion.

Research on Japanese modern architecture has made rapid progress in the last ten years or so, and scholars now have a fairly firm grasp of the whereabouts and extent of pertinent documents. Since there are so few extant examples of art nouveau architecture, these documents are all the more important for research. Projects need to be undertaken to compile and maintain catalogues of these documents. If the creation of an architectural museum becomes a reality in Japan, as is to be hoped, it is fully possible—and certainly desirable—that it include a section on art nouveau where these documents could be displayed. ■

Submission for a British drawing competition, 1901. (From *The Works of Dr Goichi Takeda*, Kyoto University, 1933.)



1572 and all that

Why so little art nouveau in the Netherlands?

Maria Brekelmans

Born in 1965 at s'-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands. Studying economics and history under a management option of the cultural studies programme at the University of Amsterdam. Wrote this article while doing an internship at *Museum*.

While we were putting together this number of *Museum* I got to thinking—and reading—about the fate of art nouveau in the Netherlands. In this process a lot of questions came to mind, the same questions, I suppose, that people who care about art nouveau and are visiting or otherwise interested in Netherlands museums might ask themselves. So I would like to make this a kind of open letter to those people.

A main question pops up if you take a walk around, say, Amsterdam with art nouveau on your mind. There is, of course, the American Hotel at the Leidseplein, a nice example of art nouveau, which found its most important Dutch expression a little farther along, in H. P. Berlage's Beurs (Stock Exchange). But the main and best buildings in Amsterdam are not art nouveau. The Rijksmuseum, for example, is in the arts-and-crafts style, as is the Central Station. In fact, compared with cities farther away from the metropolises of art nouveau, Jugendstil, Secession and so on than the Netherlands, cities like Helsinki, Bucarest and St Petersburg (now Leningrad), the Netherlands seem to be relatively poor in art nouveau architecture. Why should this be so?

For one thing Dutch artists and architects seemed to be less interested than those of other countries, and were somewhat out of step with the forward movement of the vanguard of innovation in taste that was sweeping Europe around 1900. There appeared no Horta, Van de Velde, Wagner, Olbrich, Guimard, Gaudi, Lavirotte, Gesellius, Lechner or Saarinen in the Netherlands. But this only raises another question: Why this exceptional attitude towards art nouveau? To find a beginning of an answer, I think we need to look back into our religious, social and cultural history, back to the Reformation in 1572, in fact.

No bomb-throwing

From that year until 1795, the Low Countries were sharply divided into two parts, northern and southern. The Protestant northerners practised total discrimination against Roman Catholics in their half of the country, disallowed artistic production in their style, and in fact closed down their churches and other buildings. The two halves of the country were re-united when the French occupied it and, in 1795, created the Batavian Republic, though religious freedom was not granted by Dutch law until 1848.

The result of this long oppression was a staleness and an emptiness in cultural as well as social and political life. Nevertheless, when it again became possible to build and rebuild churches, schools and houses, the Catholics looked back to the latter Middle Ages and began by using its Gothic style. Similarly, they seemed more open than others to the revival of the arts-and-crafts taste around the middle of the nineteenth century.

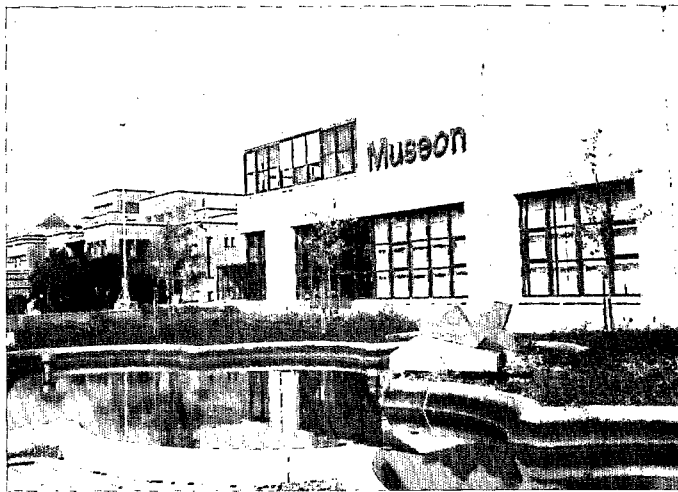
One of the most important workshops in this field was that of the Cuypers & Stolleberg Company, managed by P. J. H. Cuypers, who was greatly influenced by the theories and work of Eugène Viollet le Duc on Gothic architecture. He also followed a principle later to be close to the heart of art nouveau, what the Germans called *Gesamtkunstwerk*—the building as a total work of art in which the exterior and interior are designed and decorated by the same hand.

Cuypers gave considerable help to the Dutch arts-and-crafts movement, and lent art nouveau a hand as well, by actively supporting the reform of the applied arts in his teaching at the Quellines and Rijksmuseum schools and in training designers, for example in integrating iron as a monumental element of architecture. His work on the Rijksmuseum and Central Station in

P. J. H. Cuypers aged 90.



Photo kindly provided by the author



Arthur Gillette



The Municipal Museum and the Museum in The Hague—modern neighbours sixty years apart.

Amsterdam even got him into trouble in the late 1870s and early 1880s; the Protestant community was upset because it didn't want public buildings 'tainted' by what it viewed as a Catholic style.

Yet, compared with some leaders of the new art and architecture movements in other countries, Cupyers was not a bomb-thrower. When I showed the picture of Cupyers, posing at 90 on the steps of the Roermond Town Hall, (see page 179) to the Editor of *Museum* he laughed and told me what the French composer Eric Satie, who was fun-loving, said about another French composer, Maurice Ravel, who was a serious dreamer: *'Toute sa vie Ravel a refusé la Légion d'honneur, mais toute sa musique l'a toujours acceptée.'* (All his life Ravel refused the Legion of Honour, but every bit of his music always accepted it.)

Lard nouveau

So the Netherlands had some art nouveau but never really plunged head first into the movement. I have suggested some historical reasons for this, but I think there is also what I could call an anthropological reason, something about our character. Simply put, we are not a terribly flamboyant people.

The magazine *Avis aux artistes* brought the term 'art nouveau' to the Netherlands in 1895 by reporting on an exhibition held in Paris. The curved motif, so basic to the style, was very badly received by Dutch artists. They compared it to stringy pasta and suggested it was less suited to artists than to what are known in Dutch as 'bacon

butchers'. They proposed that the movement should, for this reason, be called 'lard nouveau', and generally wanted none of its decorative madness, which they felt would disrupt the balanced unity they sought in an object's decoration and form, and undermine the practical utility of an object, which was also one of their aims.

This being said, they did feel that the old styles were up a blind alley and were ripe for some renewal. As a result, a mixture of styles was imported, and even some curved motifs did manage to sneak through, though they were tamed by placing them in an orderly and uncomplicated rhythm.

Order and simplicity characterized the work of the man who was probably the country's leading art nouveau exponent, H. P. Berlage. He was influenced by the Social Democrats' concern for the social implications of architecture and they, on their side, looked to him to give practical expression to their concerns. His architecture and related elements (such as furniture) took three main ideas into account: the need of modern cities to have a clear and uncluttered infrastructure (e.g. blocks of houses and straight streets); for financial reasons, great amounts of decoration are not possible; and, in any event, luxury becomes superfluous in a community that is striving to build an equitable social system.

Berlage's structures were, therefore, simple, flat and clean-lined. Although curved motifs do occur in his buildings they are uncomplicated, as is his approach to decoration in general. When art nouveau foundered, Berlage was not so attached to it as to go down

with the ship. In fact, his preference for clean, uncluttered lines made it very easy for him to make the transition to art déco, announced for example in the 1925 Municipal Museum in The Hague, which still has a modern air about it even when compared with its neighbour, about sixty years younger, W. G. Quist's Museum.

So please do not come to the Netherlands looking for a feast of art nouveau in our buildings or museums. There is one consolation, however, because, as the French say, 'What is rare is dear.' When you do come upon a piece of art nouveau in our country perhaps you will want to look at it longer and more closely than if you were in one of the settings dealt with in other articles in this issue of *Museum*. ■

The Vienna Secession: 92 years old and still going strong

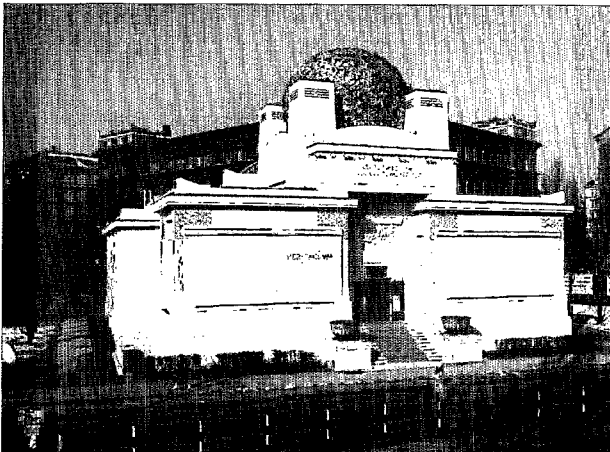
In 1897, a group of innovative Viennese artists—Gustav Klimt, Kolo Moser and others—broke away from the dominant, historicist-oriented Künstlerhaus (artists' house) society to form their own Association of Austrian Artists in the Visual Arts. It bore the provocatively official nickname 'Wiener Sezession' (Vienna Secession) and soon needed a home of its own in which, as specialist Sabine Forsthuber has put it, 'the smug Viennese art scene would be confronted with the current trends in contemporary art'.

Thanks to open-minded patrons, 1898 saw the construction according to plans drawn up by the Secessionist Joseph M. Olbrich, student and colleague of the Secession master architect Otto Wagner, of an exhibition hall simply called Wiener Sezession. Its early fireworks included exhibits by Oskar Kokoschka, Auguste Rodin and, logically, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whose 1900 art nouveau tearoom (done with his wife) gave impulse and inspiration to the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna workshops) movement launched three years later.

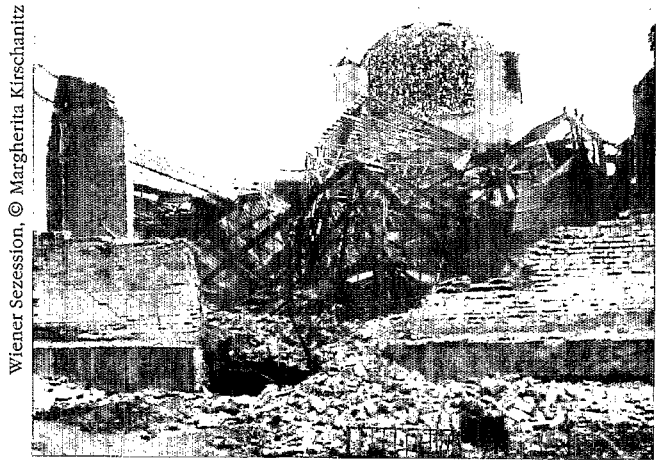
Passing time and Nazi politics brought more downs than ups. The movement scuttled itself in 1939—to rejoin the Künstlerhaus!

Rebirth came with the end of the Second World War, as did rebuilding, the Wiener Sezession having been reduced to ruins by bombs. In the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s artist's balls were again held, live artists' workshops were staged, and Christo's *Running Fence* was—how can we describe it?—given free rein. And these are but a few examples of Vienna Secession's continuing commitment to the avant garde.

The Wiener Sezession—92 years old and still sticking out like a thumb, enduringly bizarre if no longer sore.

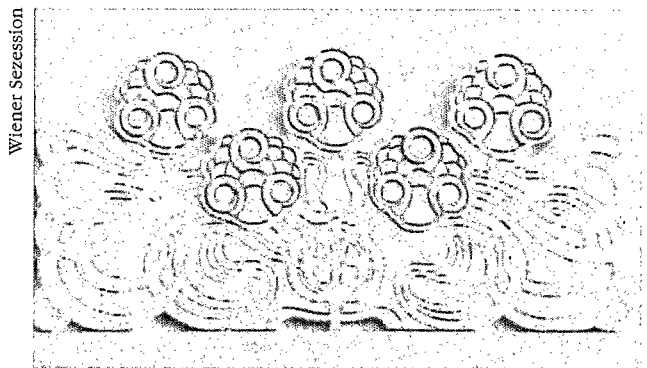


Wiener Sezession/Bruno Reiffenstein



Wiener Sezession, © Margherita Kirschanitz

The Wiener Sezession after the Second World War.



Wiener Sezession

Detail—seldom forgotten, and pleasantly provocative, in art nouveau architecture.

In 1985/86, renovation took place. According to Sabine Forsthuber, 'a merely imitative reconstruction of every architectural and decorative detail was intentionally avoided, and the architect in charge, Adolf Krischanitz, opted instead for a reconstruction based on [Olbrich's original] typology of the building'.

So there it is today, on its original site near Vienna's famed Ring, a white box dripping with incised plaster vegetation and curlicues, and crowned with a circular airy cupola of gilt leaves. It is now an accepted part of the Viennese scene. But it still stands out like a thumb, no longer sore perhaps, but most assuredly and enduringly (and endearingly) bizarre. The Wiener Sezession: 92 years old and still going strong.



Architecture with a smile – an international study and action project

Hans-Dieter Dyroff

Specialist in art history, now Chief of the Culture Section of the German Commission for Unesco, Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany.

Ålesund, Norway (where one of the Project's meetings took place), was ravaged by fire in 1904. A catastrophe, no doubt, but one that enabled the destroyed wooden buildings to be replaced by all art nouveau architecture, as in the case of this building.

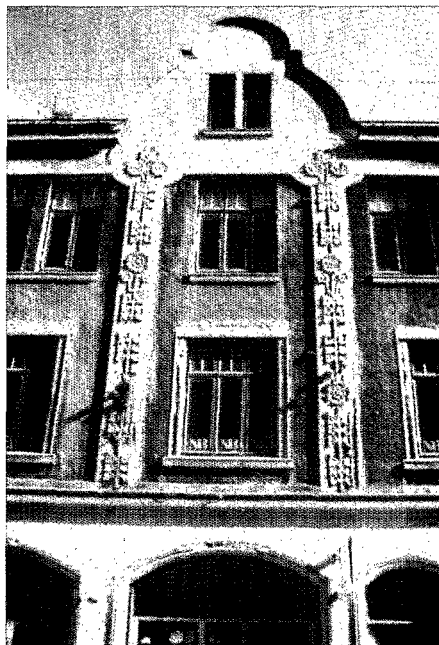


Photo kindly provided by the author

The idea of organizing an international study and action project on art nouveau/Jugendstil architecture originated some five years ago in the Hungarian town of Kecskemét with its magnificent turn-of-the-century buildings, among them Ödön Lechner's town hall looking rather like a fairy-tale castle. This remote town in the Puszta, famous for its fruit, wine, and liquor as pleasing as its architecture, revealed to a visiting Unesco group its splendid Jugend (youth-style) architectural works. Though uniquely Hungarian, these buildings are the product of a closely knit network of international influences and exchanges. They bear witness to a powerful movement that took hold of art and culture all over Europe at the beginning of the century. The dynamics of this movement also spread to other continents, where people set out to find new ways of architectural expression.

Definition of style

A cultural dialogue between peoples, cultural interdependence, and changing identities, which are today called for in Unesco's programme, were already a reality in the creative developments of that time, as reflected in the art nouveau movement. These trends manifested themselves both internationally and in a great variety of domestic creations.

The Unesco-aided Art Nouveau Project was born under a lucky star because, sooner than expected, it generated great interest and found friends and sponsors in many countries. The German Commission for Unesco (Bonn), as co-ordinator from the start, elaborated an initial plan which met with wide approval at the twenty-third session of the General Conference of

Unesco held in Sofia (1985), and was supported there by the Chairman of the Commission for Culture who recommended it warmly to all Member States. A number of delegates declared their readiness to co-operate with the project immediately.

A first European Experts Meeting under the project (Heiligkreuztal, Federal Republic of Germany) was held in 1986 and defined the movement as an architectural style, a difficult endeavour given the great diversity of artistic creators and processes involved. On the one hand, there was the perspective of exclusivity which described the phenomenon as a combination of outstanding artistic skills with a view to creating an 'all-inclusive work of art'. But then this somewhat narrow definition had to be extended in order to include those architects and builders who did not exactly create outstanding works of art but who played an important role in shaping entire quarters of one or another town and in giving this style its international influence by contributing much creative work both through their influence on others and their reliance on and adaptation of models from elsewhere.

In this connection, I cannot stress too strongly the great influence that the numerous magazines of that time had on the architects, like the German *Jugend*, which documented the new trends in the arts with many photographs, and laid the necessary theoretical groundwork.

As a lot of the buildings of this period are still endangered today—some are ignored, even being demolished, as I write these lines—the experts representing a number of National Commissions for Unesco were willing to accept a wide spectrum of architecture as belonging to the art nouveau/

Jugendstil movement (like a university with several faculties). This was a question of principle and underlined the importance of international co-operation and exchange of experiences, as they entail a learning process, even for experts, broadening their horizons and promoting their readiness to accept new, hitherto unsuspected criteria.

Research and documentation

Given the worldwide spread of the art nouveau/Jugendstil architectural style, the project was extended and, since 1987, has become an interregional effort. It was included in Unesco's programme and budget for 1988-89, largely because it was considered to be a pioneering project for the conservation of twentieth-century architecture.

At the General Conference of Unesco (at its twenty-fourth session, Paris, 1987), which adopted the programme and budget just mentioned, the work of the art nouveau/Jugendstil project met with a very positive response as can be seen by reviewing the statements of delegates. Representatives of the Soviet Union stressed, for example, that the project offered a unique opportunity to rediscover cultural identities and continue dialogue.

Since 1988, questions of research and documentation designed to improve the preservation, restoration and presentation of art nouveau/Jugendstil architecture have become a central focus of the project. Obtaining as much information as possible about the buildings, and groups of buildings, concerned, and evaluating this information, is an important precondition for any preservation programme. Only on the basis of such findings can a monument be saved and revived. A detailed step-by-step approach has been defined. It has turned out that an extensive knowledge of historical materials and techniques as well as international exchanges play a very important role in this context. The experimental use of new materials at the turn of the century is an essential aspect, because, among other reasons, the sources (e.g. quarries), workshops and methods that produced such materials have now disappeared. Many concrete activities to be undertaken by the co-operating countries were discussed from this angle when the project group held its Second Plenary Experts Meeting at Kecskemét in April 1988.

Exhibitions

It soon became obvious that basic international dissemination activities had been neglected in the project, and that representative photographic documentation had to be collated, which could then be exhibited as testimony to the architectural achievements as well as a stimulus for preservation efforts. Based on a jointly discussed and adopted approach, the National Commission for Unesco of the German Democratic Republic mounted an exhibition which, so far, has been shown in its country of origin, in Finland and in the Federal Republic of Germany. The other co-operating countries also intend to present their art nouveau heritage and the results of their preservation activities in a similar fashion, perhaps at a major international exhibition.

The project group, which now comprises eighteen countries, has achieved much to date. Exchanges of opinions and experiences have been documented in publications, newsletters and press releases. The documentation produced also comprises bibliographies that reflect the current state of research activities in various countries, lists of monuments, experts, firms, materials, and many other important categories of information. The whole project has now become a major interregional undertaking which has contributed to generating and disseminating better and broader knowledge, through mutual co-operation, and to safeguarding and preserving specimens of style

With not a minute to lose in saving the art nouveau architectural heritage, the 1989 project meeting adopted its report on a train racing across the Finnish countryside from Imatra, where it had deliberated to Helsinki, whence participants were to depart.

of architecture that took a particular interest in the human being.

Action to come

The Third Plenary Experts Meeting (Helsinki-Imatra, Finland, May 1989) decided both to continue research and dissemination activities (it recommended the publication of this number of *Museum*, for example), and to use accumulated experience for the preservation of an art nouveau building in a developing country thanks to a joint international intervention. Now in a new, action-oriented phase, this project will contribute to understanding and improving the environment of today and tomorrow by helping to recall and protect various art nouveau/Jugendstil expressions—summed up at the 1989 Finnish meeting as 'architecture with a smiling face'.

Museum readers wishing to know more about—even participate in—this 'smiling project' (as it were) can contact the Division of Cultural Heritage, Unesco, 1 rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France.¹

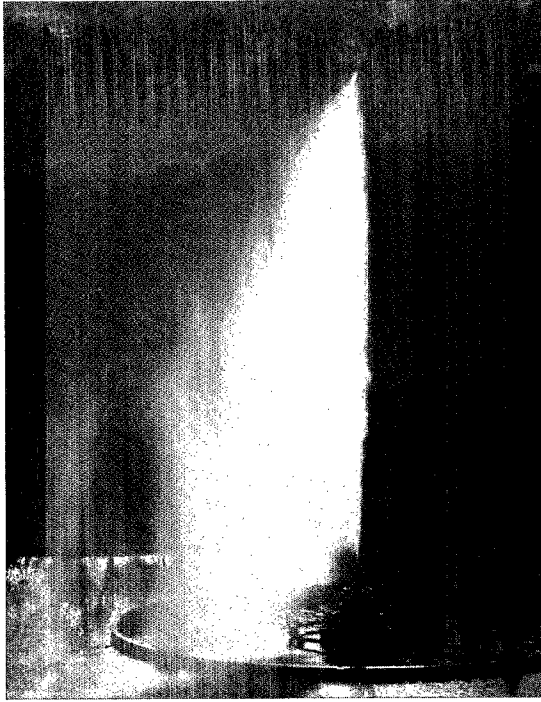
1. Readers will surely want to refer to the August 1990 issue of the *Unesco Courier*, also devoted to art nouveau, — Ed.



Deborah Hayes



FEATURES



Arthur Gillette

*Pyongyang:
'a most
beautiful land
under heaven'*

Pyongyang: nature in the heart of the city.

This article was prepared by the National Commission for Unesco of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



Arthur Gillette

Sketching 'a most beautiful land under heaven'.

Capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Pyongyang is proud of its ancient history and has long been a focal point of the culture, wisdom and talents of the Korean people. Situated on a wedge of land between the Taedong and Potong rivers, the city is surrounded by superb scenery and has been known through the ages as 'a most beautiful land under heaven'. It developed during the period of Kocchoson, the first ancient Korean state, which was established some time before the eighth century B.C. In A.D. 427, it became the capital of the Koguryo state, when the Korean nation became the strongest in its history.

At that time, Pyongyang was an impregnable fortress surrounded by a stone wall some sixteen kilometres in circumference, which protected a prosperous centre of politics, commerce, culture and communication known throughout the Orient. During the later, Koryo period (918-1392), it became the second capital of state, ruling over the western region. Then, in the Li Dynasty (1393-1910), it served as the

seat of government for Pyongyang Province.

Today, relics and remains of the past testifying to a brilliant culture are to be found throughout the city and in districts near by. For instance, fossilized human skeletons from the Stone Age such as Ryokpo Man and Mandal Man have been discovered in the vicinity, including the Komunmoru find that goes back some 600,000 years. Other relics from the New Stone Age and the Bronze Age bear witness to the fact that in the Pyongyang area the earliest Koreans were already struggling to conquer nature and create culture soon after the birth of humanity. From this remote period through the Middle Ages and into modern times, artefacts and remains show diligent and talented labour: buildings, colourful murals and paintings, astronomical charts, and other works of science, technology and industry.

Many of these works have been destroyed over the centuries by successive foreign invaders who plundered and burned. That is why the Workers' Party

of Korea and the government have framed a policy of excavating, collecting and protecting the nation's cultural heritage, as well as developing it and passing it on to coming generations. A main plank in this cultural platform has been the establishment and development of museums. As befits a capital, Pyongyang boasts several fine ones. They have been situated in such a way that their environment—as well as their contents—contributes to the fulfilment of their educational and recreational as well as cultural missions. Thus, the Revolution Museum is located on a high hill, and the Central History Museum and the Art Gallery are to be found at the heart of Pyongyang, in Kim Il Sung Square, while the Ethnographic Museum is appropriately located in the historical conservation zone, which has such monuments as a medieval gate and pavilion.

From the Old Stone Age to 1 March 1919

What, you may be wondering, is on display in Pyongyang's museums? To begin with the Central History Museum, we have exhibitions that systematically range through the creative activities and the struggles of the Korean people from the Old Stone Age right up to the popular uprising of 1 March 1919. In the Hall of the Feudal Era, for example, one can find relics stemming from the beginning of the first century B.C. to the middle of the nineteenth century. Another room includes materials related to the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle in the time of the bourgeois national movement, the latter half of the nineteenth century and up to the 1919 popular uprising. It should be noted that the aim is to show and explain Korean history not only to Korean workers but also to foreign visitors.

The Ethnographic Museum houses displays that demonstrate the homogenizing effect of history on the Korean nation throughout the steps of its historical development. The Art Gallery is also arranged to show successive stages of artistic evolution.

It is fair to say that our museums leave deep impressions on the thoughts and feelings of visitors. One foreign visitor stated that the Central History Museum made its themes 'easy to understand', and another remarked that the Ethnographic Museum showed our customs 'vividly'.

A main concern of all our museums is to take good care of the relics in their



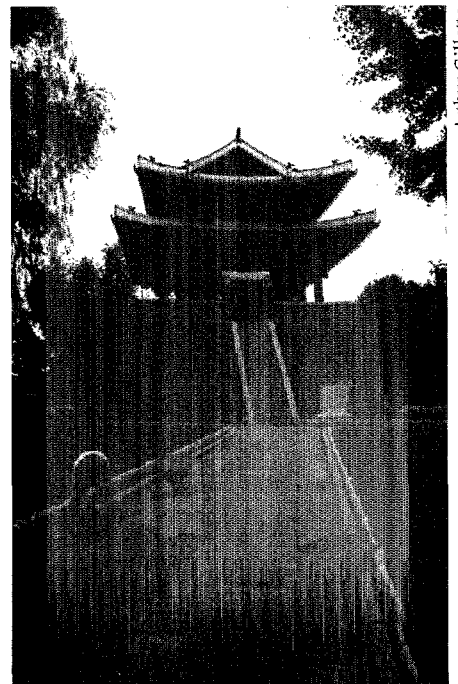
Cloth 'map' of the medieval walled city of Pyongyang.

National Commission for Unesco of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

charge through research and scientific and technical measures. It is, however, still difficult to protect the artefacts entirely from deterioration. They differ in kind and composition and we have yet to solve certain problems involved in securing total environmental protection.

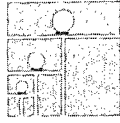
We feel that each country's historical relics and remains are both treasures of each national culture and the heritage of humankind. In consequence, mutual exchange of information and co-operation stressing the latest experiences—and particularly successes—in conserving relics in the world are important. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has played a crucial role in this area and those responsible for Pyongyang's museums look forward to further development of such information exchange and co-operation. ■

Maintaining the heritage: the medieval Daidong Gate.



Arthur Gillette

WFFM CHRONICLE



World Federation of Friends of Museums
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Newsbrief Meeting in Paris on 19 November 1989, the Council of the World Federation of Friends of Museums adopted a recommendation concerning the decision of the Federal District Court of Indianapolis, United States, about four sixth-century Byzantine mosaics from the church of Kanakaria in Cyprus. The Council took note with satisfaction of (a) the fact that the museum to which these mosaics were offered for sale refused to buy them and (b) the Indianapolis Court's decision, which ordered the restitution of these Byzantine mosaics to their rightful owner in Cyprus. The Council recommended that its members draw inspiration, in their action aimed at preventing the purchase by museums of stolen cultural property, from this decision, which reflects the spirit of the Unesco Convention of 14 November 1970 concerning illicit transfers of ownership of cultural property. The Council further recommended that federations and associations that belong to the WFFM should bring this recommendation to the attention of all their members.

On 20 November 1989, under the 'pyramid' of the Musée du Louvre, the *Museums 2000* collection, created under the auspices of ICOM and the WFFM, was presented to the press in the presence of the Director of French Museums, the Director of the Musée du Louvre, representatives of Unesco and members of ICOM and the WFFM. In this multilingual collection devoted to different museums, 1989 saw the publication of the first four titles concerning respectively the *Fine Arts Museum of Ghent, Belgium* (French/German/English/Flemish), *The Musée Condé at Chantilly, France* (French/German/English/Japanese), *The Museum at The Hague, the Netherlands* (French/Dutch/German/English) and *A First Visit to the New Louvre, France* (French/English).

A request to join the WFFM has been put forward by the United States Foundation for the World Federation of Friends of Museums. The aim of this non-profit foundation is to seek financial means to benefit American associations of friends of museums and the World Federation of Friends of Museums.

Museums and patronage in Greece: four women – one passion

Lilian di Demetrio Thouvenin

Graduate in the history of art from the University of Trieste. Has worked as a journalist and correspondent in Athens. Followed archaeological excavation campaigns for some years, representing a Greek press group. Is now Paris correspondent for a number of Italian newspapers.

Four of the most original museums, four of the best-run foundations, four institutions with very ambitious aims in research and education—these outstanding achievements are the work of four women.

In a country where the government administration often seems inflexible and programming difficult, private institutions have managed to adopt an approach to museography which is dynamic yet at the same time respects traditional and cultural values. Inspired by their love of art, these four women, who are in many ways so different, have been guided by their enthusiasm for their task and a desire to safeguard the archeological heritage of their country.

These four institutions are Joanna Papantoniou's Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, the Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation at Andros, the Museum of Ancient and Cycladic Art founded by Nikolaos and Dolly Goulandris, two branches of the same fam-

ily of shipping magnates, internationally renowned as patrons of the arts, and the Natural History Museum established by Angelos and Nicky Goulandris, who bear the same name but are not related to the former families.

The Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation

The Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation was created at Navplion in 1974 by Joanna Papantoniou, who is already known to readers of *Museum* for her article published in 1983 describing the objectives of her foundation, which, in 1981, received the European Museum of the Year Award.

The Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation is remarkable in that for the past fifteen years it has been infusing fresh life into the concept of the folk museum, giving it a new dynamic profile unknown among Greek museums at the time it was established. 'As I see

it,' says Joanna Papantoniou, 'the museum should not only be a place for exhibiting objects but also a laboratory for research, with educational programmes.' She succeeded in involving the local authorities, a rare occurrence in those provinces where, as in the county town of Argolis, life is quiet, far removed from the stresses of the modern world.

At the end of last century, no one could have anticipated the ultimate destination of her great family residence. It was here that the early members of the family, who were the sole suppliers of bread to the army, had their oven. Joanna Papantoniou's father, a chemist, later set up a tinned-food factory, which is still prosperous today and which provides 25 per cent of the resources needed to run the museum, the rest being derived from the museum's own income.

Joanna Papantoniou is backed up by a reliable team of ten people. We asked whether they had encountered any difficulties in the course of their career on account of being women. Joanna Papantoniou, speaking for the rest of the team, replied that their professionalism had protected them from this type of problem.

Naturally, the European Museum of the Year Award in 1981 opened many doors, with the result that the state, which had hitherto practically ignored the foundation, granted it a small subvention.

The foundation has several spheres of activity: exhibiting the museum collection; research on cultural material; dancing and music; educational activities and the sale of goods.

Since the museum was opened, the collections have been extended and now total 15,000 articles, all documented. 'If you exhibit a costume,' explains Joanna, 'you must not overlook its natural origins, whether they be the textiles such as wool, cotton or silk or the loom upon which it was woven. If the loom is made of olive wood, the different aspects of its production should not be left out either. This principle also applies to the study of dancing, which leads on to music and musical instruments.'

The Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation, Andros

In the Byzantine period, Andros had considerable intellectual influence, thanks to the philosophy academy

whose students included the Emperor of Byzantium, Leo I. The monasteries, of which traces still remain, sustained a thriving spiritual community. This was the cultural tradition that Elise Goulandris and her husband Basil wished to revive by establishing their foundation.

When the foundation was established, its purpose was to create a permanent centre for art education, following modern museological principles according to which any museum, large or small, should not only be a place for exhibiting objects but also a cultural centre within which an artistic, aesthetic and social message may be put across.

The construction of the building, on severe and sober lines, was entrusted to the architect Papadachi, a pupil of Niemayer. Its museographic design, educational layout, laboratories and security system place it among the most homogeneous of all museums in the Greek islands. But the state considered that the management of the museum should remain under its control. The museum therefore reverted to national status, which limited its function to conservation of the heritage rather than allowing it to pursue the policy of dynamic action that its founders would have preferred.

The building of the Museum of Contemporary Art marked the second phase of the cultural campaign on the island waged by Elise and Basil Goulandris, whose purpose was also to promote modern Greek art, hitherto confined to the capital city of Athens. This museum, which was designed to give a complete overview of the evolution of contemporary Greek art, was completed in three years, because this time the foundation was free of all state control.

The third part of Elise and Basil Goulandris's project was the creation of the Museum of Modern Art. In response to the enthusiasm of the younger generation of Greeks for modern art and with a view to the education of artists who could not afford to go abroad, this museum was designed as a temporary exhibition gallery. Once again, despite the many bureaucratic difficulties which hampered its realization, Elise Goulandris won her case.

This beautifully designed white marble building, standing opposite the Museum of Greek Art on a plot of land belonging to the family, is constructed on several levels and blends perfectly with the adjacent architecture of the ancient Venetian citadel.

In 1989 the number of visitors to the

gallery exceeded that of the Athenian Pinakothek. Quite an achievement!

The Angelos and Nicky Goulandris Foundation

When the Natural History Museum was created twenty-five years ago by the Angelos and Nicky Goulandris Foundation, the Greek public seemed almost totally indifferent to the natural environment, which was taken for granted. But when the threats to that environment proved lethal, attitudes began to change.

At a time when the forests were steadily deteriorating for lack of adequate policies (Greece spends only 0.4 per cent of its national budget on safeguarding its forests) and through a series of often deliberate forest fires (only 18 per cent of the national territory is at present covered by forests, the lowest percentage in Europe), Nicky Goulandris and her husband Angelos, with the help of a reliable team, carried out the most comprehensive study ever made on Greek forests. This took the practical form of an exhibition at the Congress Centre at Zappeion in 1988, which attracted 500,000 visitors in three months and undoubtedly helped to raise the level of public awareness.

What action can be taken on all fronts to ward off irreparable damage to the country? Greece does in fact have a great many wetlands, but the government policy of draining lakes did not take into account the need to protect those resources. It took a public information campaign to make the regional authorities aware that these wetland areas were essential for biological exchange and that it was important to preserve the deltas and estuaries of the smaller rivers. Every year during their migration from north to south, over 480 species of migrant birds nest in these areas. Supported by the World Wildlife Fund, Nicky Goulandris and her team organized an eye-opening exhibition which visited more than thirty provinces in the country.

The Natural History Museum is the only museum of its kind in Greece to have been established and to be financed and managed by a private institution. Owing to its private status, the museum was not at first entitled to assistance from the European Community. Fortunately this situation is now changing, and in 1989 it was possible to submit six research programmes, four of which were approved.

Greece is richer in botanical species than Switzerland, a fact of which most people are unaware. For that reason, one of the foundation's first activities was to make an inventory of national plant species together with maps of the 200 species of trees and shrubs found nationwide, from sea-level to the summit of Mount Plympus.

As regards exhibitions, the museums, which was completed in 1938 with the opening of the ornithological gallery, has a comprehensive collection of animal and vegetable species and likewise of geological, mineral and palaeontological formations. The collections of insects, reptiles, birds, seashells, rocks and minerals thus give an all-round picture of the natural resources of the country, one of the richest in the Mediterranean basin. The vast library, the herbarium, which is among the most varied in the world, and the documentation centre all provide young biology students with instruments of research.

The Nikolaos Goulandris Foundation

It was Joanni Papadimitriou, the eminent Greek archaeologist whose inspired flashes of intuition and exceptional discoveries left their mark on Greek archaeology throughout the 1950s, who first sensed that, beneath her gentle

exterior, the young Dolly Goulandris had a true collector's vocation.

These were Dolly Goulandris's neophyte years, devoted to excavation campaigns, in the wake of Joanni Papadimitriou, who himself followed in the footsteps of Heinrich Schliemann, and to the purchase of objects from the classical period; until the day when, during her walks in the Cyclades Islands, she came across the strange idols that the peasants, who had no idea of their significance, found in their fields, which were in fact unexplored burial-grounds. 'The purity of design and simplicity of form fascinated me by their very modernity,' explained Dolly Goulandris. 'My aim was to prevent these still unknown works from finding their way abroad.' The traditions and customs of these people are still unknown, for they have left us no written testimony. It is probable that they did not yet speak Greek. Dolly Goulandris explains the significance generally attributed to these statuettes: the experts have interpreted them as substitutes for human sacrifice, or as figures expressing reverence for ancestors or representing the spirits which guided souls to the realms of the dead.

Nor do these monstrous figures represent the powers of darkness, as in other civilizations. If ever such symbols reached the Aegean, they were soon transformed and given a more noble anthropomorphic form. Perhaps the

sparkling light of the Aegean has something to do with this. So far, 3,000 idols have been found. They have been scattered among different museums throughout the world, but the Goulandris collection with its 200 specimens is by far the richest and most complete.

These statuettes, known throughout the world, include *The Flute-player*, *The Thinker*, *The Warrior*, *The Hunter* and *The Man with the Glass*.

Pending the establishment of the Nikolaos Goulandris Foundation, and, with its collaboration, the building of the Museum of Cycladic and Ancient Art to give these works a home, the collection travelled throughout the world. 'These exhibitions taught us a great deal about museography,' explains Dolly Goulandris. 'The Japanese style of exhibiting, so delicate and sensitive, is quite different from the American conception which is extremely dramatic. We have, however, inclined towards the latter in the final presentation of our collection.'

But the mainstay of the foundation, a private institution run entirely by the Goulandris family, is still Dolly herself. Her foundation aims not only to preserve and display the collection but also to promote new exhibitions to make the Cycladic civilization better known, such as, in October 1990, the most comprehensive exhibition ever organized. ■

RETURN AND
RESTITUTION

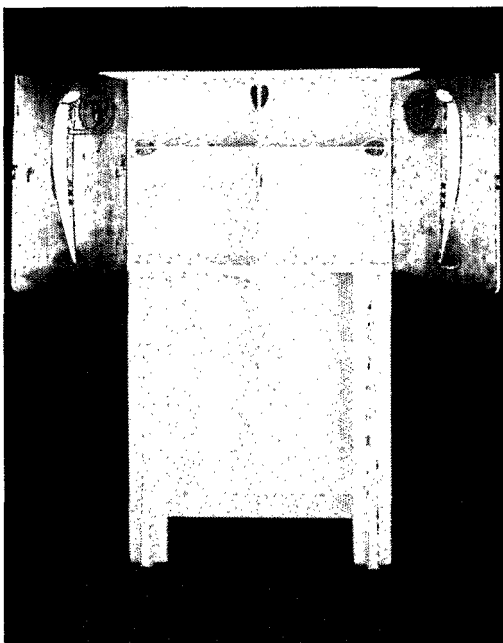


OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

Canada brings art nouveau home

This large cabinet was one of a pair made for a certain Mrs Rowat by the renowned Scottish designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Dating from 1902, it found its way from Canada to a Monte Carlo auction in 1983. Having determined that the auction firm had neglected to obtain an export permit and using its power to stop transfer abroad of significant cultural property,

the Canadian Government was able to halt the sale of this and four other pieces. Under the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the government provided major assistance for the acquisition of the cabinet, which is now in the collections of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.



Earthquake, flood, cyclone – is your museum ready?

Jane Hutchins

B.A. in art history and M.A. in textile materials. Was Chief Conservator of the Textile Conservation Centre of the Museum of American Textile History. Currently Conservator of Textiles at the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, Massachusetts.

Barbara Roberts

Has been successively Conservation Officer at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Assistant Conservator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Conservator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. At present a freelance consultant conservator.

A hurricane can knock down a tropical museum in fifteen minutes; ten years may be required to rebuild. Just to find out the state of collections after Mexico City's last earthquake, more than a week was needed. In a longer time span, are you aware that, if present trends continue, rising ocean levels could flood out many cities—and their museums—a century from now?

Is your museum now willing and able to help prevent or mitigate the damage of natural disasters to the cultural property in its charge? The question is neither fanciful nor unduly alarmist. It arises from a hard-headed analysis of objective data—the kind of data that recently led the United Nations to take action.

In December 1987, the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly designated the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The relevant Assembly Resolution (42/169) states:

The objective of this Decade is to reduce through concerted international actions, especially in developing countries, loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters . . . [and] its goals are: (a) to improve the capacity of each country to mitigate the effects of natural disasters expeditiously and effectively, paying special attention to assisting developing countries in the establishment, when needed, of early warning systems; (b) to devise appropriate

guidelines and strategies for applying existing knowledge, taking into account the cultural and economic diversity among nations; (c) to foster scientific and engineering endeavours aimed at closing critical gaps in knowledge in order to reduce loss of life and property; (d) to disseminate existing and new information related to measures for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters; (e) to develop measures for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disaster through programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer, demonstration projects, and education and training tailored to specific hazards and locations, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those programmes.

In the Resolution, the General Assembly created a mandate for the Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction by calling on governments

to establish national committees, in co-operation with the relevant scientific and technological communities, with a view to surveying available mechanisms and facilities for the reduction of natural hazards, assessing the particular requirements of their respective countries or regions in order to add to, improve or update existing mechanisms and facilities and develop a strategy to attain the desired goals.

It is generally agreed that there is a deep and instinctive need for communities affected by disastrous events to rebuild and to save as much as is possible of their cultural identity and holdings. There is a need to renew community landmarks and to piece together the past with the present, and the present with the future. For instance, we were most interested to learn that within the first days after the recent earthquake disaster at Spitak and Leninakan (USSR), the community began to rebuild and conserve the fountain in the central square and the cathedral.

Given this instinctive concern, and taking into account the launching of the Decade, the ICOM International Committee for Conservation has formed a Standing Committee to make recommendations on the subject of natural and man-made hazard reduction techniques and information as they effect cultural property. We have been considering the following as elements of a possible strategy in this regard: co-ordination, funding, goals and timing.

Look up from your microscopes!

The United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) is the agency assigned to co-ordinate the various groups that are addressing the numerous and complex issues that this subject embraces. Within the United Nations, there are agencies with differing objectives, all of which have a bearing on cultural sites, property and museums, and those who work with such structures and collections, for example, UNDRO and Unesco as well. The range of interest also encompasses non-governmental organizations such as ICOM and ICOMOS.

Those of us who relate to ICOM through the activities of the Conservation Committee are familiar with ICCROM, IIC and other conservation and museum groups and associations. We have contact with curators, art historians, librarians, conservation scientists, museum or site administrators and archaeologists but we rarely step over into the territory of hazard-mitigation specialists. This is a pity, since natural and man-made hazards have the potential of destroying whole collections or sites in fractions of a minute.

We need, therefore, to look up from our catalogues, microscopes and administrative concerns and recognize that disasters have not one iota of respect for who belongs to which organization. They cause untold difficulties for people of every discipline. There are survival issues, cultural property security concerns, curatorial nightmares, preservation and conservation questions with no answers and the general spectre of an international museum community that is unprepared. We are not ready and able to mobilize enough architects, engineers, hazard-mitigation specialists, registrars, rescue teams, art handlers or structural engineers (to name but a few), necessary professions to cope with the potential (probable?) demand. If a major natural or man-made emergency happened tomorrow the museum community would have no mechanism for international or national self-help. There is little or no pre-planning for a co-ordinated response.

Few if any of us know in detail of the activities and information forthcoming from wind engineers, seismic engineers, satellite forecasting, insurance appraisers and adjusters, dam builders, flood-plain specialists, search-and-rescue squads and those who are experienced in lifting huge slabs of collapsed masonry to retrieve the injured or, in our case, damaged cultural property, as well as members of the public who enter our museums with the assumption that they are going to leave them alive!

Let us be optimistic and assume that your museum did survive an earthquake, flood, cyclone, tsunami, or nuclear or other accident. Have you considered that it may well be on an administrative list somewhere as a shelter for the injured or homeless?

We museum professionals have no major and pervasive mechanism in place for informing our colleagues either nationally or internationally of assistance, materials, trained conservators, conservation scientists or experienced museum personnel are required before or after an emergency.

Goals: practical, cost-effective, achievable

In thinking of what will be an international undertaking, we are well aware that the Committee will have to focus on practical, cost-effective and achievable goals, and that our recommendations should assist in building bridges between before-the-event

planning, salvage and long-term preservation and rehabilitation procedures. Initially, the Committee will address the following goal areas:

Improvement of all levels of *co-ordination* for planning and response at diplomatic and governmental levels, as well as with those handling the emergencies *in situ*.

Encouragement of the formation of *national hazard-reduction groups*. These groups should provide initial disaster-response information, organize *response teams*, and be able to handle requests for assistance in co-operation with their National Committees for the Decade (if such are set up) and the chairpersons of their ICOM National Committee.

Promote the publication of *basic information* that gives practical, pertinent assistance to those coping with fire, flood, earthquake, tidal wave, hurricane or other natural disasters.

Work to identify and/or establish public and private *funding* sources and to raise awareness at government and administrative levels of the need to plan ahead to protect and preserve cultural property.

What now?

We have circulated a letter to the chairpersons of all of the ICOM National Committees requesting their support and suggestions as to the names of people at government, institutional or local levels who have a particular interest in preserving cultural sites, museums, libraries, archives and works of art who may be willing to work with us on the Standing Committee or in forming the national committees or groups referred to above.

The members of all such committees should be prepared to contact their colleagues nationwide and encourage collaboration between those with knowledge in the various specialities that are concerned with hazard-reduction techniques, emergency planning or clean-up operations associated with natural hazards. The national committees should be in contact with the ICOM Standing Committee but, more importantly, with the other national committees formed for this purpose.

We stress that we must keep suggestions and solutions simple, practical and cheap. If we terrify directors and administrators with huge budget requirements we will ensure that cultural property continues to be placed at risk.

To conclude, we wish to make two practical pleas. First, that *Museum* soon

devote a number to the implications for museums, and their roles in preventing and mitigating disaster damage to cultural property in their charge.¹ Secondly, that interested individuals and bodies contact us, even if only to obtain further information, at the following address:

Barbara Roberts,
2413 Fifth Avenue West,
Seattle,
WA 98119,
United States of America.
Telephone: (1)(206)281.9090
Fax: (1)(206)284.8026

1. *Museum* is at present looking into the possibility of producing such a number, - Ed.



'Limit the damage.'
Drawing by Julien

AND WHAT'S MORE . . .

About 'an unnecessary museum'

Dear Sir,

I do not agree with what Kenneth Hudson [*Museum*, No. 162] seems to be trying to demonstrate, with examples to prove his point, when he maintains that large museums are, as a rule, bad rather than good, and that in any case it is doubtful whether they are necessary, either for the individual visitor or for society.

Unlike him, I believe that big museums suitably laid out and intelligently run, can be a wonderful way of extending an individual's interests and providing education for the community as a whole.

It may be assumed that if a museum is big, it houses large collections and so has a great deal to offer an interested public. This means that it must be organized in such a way as to show off the wealth and variety of its collections and enable the museum-goer to appreciate them fully. To do so, all available means—and there are plenty of them—must be used effectively to prepare, direct and guide visitors so that they can derive the utmost enjoyment and benefit from their visit.

What must be avoided is the temptation for visitors to dash from room to room, from one end of a vast establishment to the other, with the sole aim of being able to say to themselves, and to others, that they have seen (or 'done', as some would say) this or that great museum. Conceivably, when the actual structure of the museum is such that it can be divided up rationally, entry tickets could be issued not for the whole museum but for individual departments or collections. This could easily be done, for instance, in a large museum occupying separate buildings, like the County Museum in Los Angeles, and would encourage museum-goers to choose what they want to see according to their personal preferences or as their curiosity dictated.

I am prepared to go along with Kenneth Hudson when he says that the Louvre, for all the masterpieces it contains, and perhaps because of them, is 'in many ways a very bad museum' and that it can ultimately be expected to be no more than 'a giant storage depot'. On the other hand, I would certainly not put the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in the same category. Having watched it develop over the past forty years or so, I would be more inclined to call it an exemplary achievement. With the constant modernization of its facilities, its successive extensions in order to improve the presentation of existing collections and make room for new acquisitions, its reception and information services and its artistic and educational programmes, the Metropolitan Museum has become a full-scale cultural centre, continually developing and accessible to all. Is it really such a bad thing for a large museum to be a sort of 'black-market mini-university'? Giving everyone a chance to educate themselves, and enjoy doing so, does not seem a reprehensible aim to me at all.

There are of course small museums that are admirable. But unless they specialize in one particular field, or house richly endowed private collections, they are all too often—for want of adequate facilities and funds—a disappointing hotchpotch, little better than a poorly illustrated encyclopedia of universal art.

Henri MAZAUD

Dear Editor,

Mr Henri Mazaud's very reasonable letter is an excellent illustration of the value of *Museum's* new 'Frankly Speaking' feature. A civilized international forum for this kind of difference of opinion was urgently needed and you are to be congratulated on having provided it.

I am sorry, however, that Mr Mazaud has chosen to avoid the specific issue of La Villette. I should have greatly appreciated his comments on this grotesque monument to human vanity. Perhaps he does not think of it as a museum and, if so, my sympathies would be with him. As it is, may I make one or two comments on big museums in general and on the Metropolitan in New York in particular? To be depressed by giant objects, giant events or giant institutions is no doubt a matter of temperament. The big causes me personally to wither, to go into my shell, not to flourish. My instinct is to protect myself against it, much as I would against an out-of-control road-roller that I saw advancing down a hill towards me.

I set a particular value on charm, the quality which creates a bridge between myself and the known or half-known, and human beings apart, charm and very large size simply cannot co-exist. The Palais de la Découverte has charm; La Villette does not. Museums cater, or should cater, for the emotions, just as much as for the intellect, and my fundamental objection to very large museums is that they inevitably over-intellectualize the process of communication. It is possible, theoretically, to consider a large museum as a federation of small museums, and to say that one should visit only one of these small museums at a time, but I think this is psychologically very difficult. A large museum is organized as a large museum, not as a cluster of small museums, and the visitor is always conscious of the parts of the museum which he is not visiting. One cannot escape size, one cannot blot it out of one's consciousness.

As for the Metropolitan, I have never been able to make up my mind whether I am visiting a museum with a shop attached or a shop with a museum attached. Which is the dog and which is the tail? On the whole, I think the museum is the tail. The Americans, of course, like it this way, because they have a passion for shopping which never ceases to amaze me.

Kenneth HUDSON

Nothing is trifling in museum work

Lidia Kondrashova

Head of the Scientific Information Department of the State Museums of the Moscow Kremlin and obviously a careful reader of the remarks book.

In the spring of 1986, the formal opening took place of a new exhibition in the Armoury of the Kremlin in Moscow.¹ The country's oldest treasure house had been completely modernized. The new exhibition was highly rated both by our colleagues and by the visitors to the museum.

About a month later, however, something unexpected happened. The text on the labels began to disappear since the bronze-coloured coating of the paper had merged with the black lettering. The first to notice this were the tour guides, and then visitors to the museum began to write about the labels in the remarks book. Here are a few of their comments:

1. See M. P. Tsoukanov, 'The New Exhibition in the Armoury of the Kremlin in Moscow', *Museum*, No. 154, 1987.

We should like to thank the staff of the Armoury for this marvellous gift to the people of Moscow. The Kremlin's amazing treasure house sparkles with beauty. Thank you! But what a great pity that it is virtually impossible to read the labels; the small lettering and the very brief information dampen the effect.

I liked the new exhibition in the Armoury very much. We take our hats off to the extraordinary skill of our ancestors. It's a shame that it is quite impossible to read the inscriptions underneath the exhibits. I should like to have seen more explanatory historical texts.

We have been very lucky. Today, our whole family visited this fantastically beautiful museum, the Armoury. We are very grateful to the first-class guide for his excellent account of the museum's history and the jeweller's art. It's too bad that there are practically no guide-

books about the museum and the little information in the rooms about the exhibits. The tiny labels are practically invisible.

The curators, art historians and designers gave very careful attention to solving this apparently insignificant but in actual fact very important problem. As a result of their efforts, changes were made in the size and the legibility of the print of the labels, extra information was added to them and a suitable paper was chosen and tested. All the labels in the Armoury have been changed and in each room there are explanations in Russian and English. It is a pleasure for us to see that the visitors to the museums of the Kremlin have contributed to improving the display of its treasures. ■

Just out:

Directory of Museums in Africa



The *Directory* is a complete and unique guide to museums in forty-seven African countries.

The *Directory's* aims are twofold. First, it seeks to encourage local communities to use museum resources. Secondly, it provides visitors and scholars from other parts of the world with a detailed view of the diversity of African culture.

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