

## Download Part 5

Die Österreichischen Werkstätten present Olga Kronsteiner's

# The History Encyclopedia

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## WW Gesamtkunstwerke

### Sanatorium Purkersdorf (1905/06)

The Sanatorium Purkersdorf was built between 1904 and 1905 in the middle of the Vienna Woods, on the city boundary of Vienna. The building and its interior decoration document stylistically the zenith of the purism propagated by Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann: emphasis on the constructive element as well as simplification and restriction to a few basic cubist forms.

During its construction, the sanatorium was regarded as being a mixture between a modern hotel and a contemporary clinic. The decoration of the rooms – "a glossy or tiled washable white world" – was in line with the latest medical technology. The library, dining rooms, lounges, games rooms and writing rooms were furnished elegantly from designs by Moser and Hoffmann.

A contemporary critic noted, "It is really a pity that you have to be a little unsound of mind in order to be blessed with a wonderful white cubicle in Purkersdorf".



Dining room of the  
sanatorium  
© Collection  
Heimatismuseum Purkersdorf



Bentwood chair from the  
dining room, by J. & J.  
Kohn.  
© Christie's, "Masterworks:  
1900-2000", New York, 8th  
June 2000

### **Das Sanatorium Purkersdorf today**

Unfortunately the sanatorium did not remain in its original state. Towards the end of the Second World War the building was used as a hospital and was then requisitioned by the Russian occupying forces in 1945. It was purchased by the Protestant Church in 1952, turned into a hospital for internal medicine and the spa rooms turned into an old people's home. The pavillions in the south-east corner of the grounds had to be pulled down as they were unsound.

In 1975 everything was closed down, the buildings and the park fell into disuse. The site was finally divided up into plots and in 1991 the Augsburg master builder Klaus purchased the sanatorium and the park. In 1995 the exterior of the Hoffmann building was renovated, the top floor, which had been added by Leopold Bauer in 1926 was removed. In the near future 130 apartments are to be built on the site.

Info tip: <http://www.purkersdorf-online.at/kultur/sanatorium.php3>



Reconstructed model ([Atelier Hnizdo](#))  
of the sanatorium.  
© Atelier Hnizdo

### **Palais Stoclet (1906–11)**

Suzanne and Adolphe Stoclet, a young couple living in Vienna, knew the villas which had been built by Josef Hoffmann on the Hohe Warte to the north of the city centre towards Kahlenberg and commissioned him to build a villa. Then Stoclet's father died and Alphonse had to return to Brussels to take over the family business.

Before the Sanatorium Purkersdorf was completed the Wiener Werkstätte was commissioned to design a town house in Brussels; an object of art was to be constructed, only the most precious materials were to be used and only the most skilful craftsmen and ingenious artists to be employed. The exterior walls were panelled with Norwegian Turili marble, the interior walls with yellow-brown Italian Paonazzo marble. After a construction period of five years, the most characteristic and brilliant achievement of Vienna Art Nouveau was complete.



Street front of Palais Stoclet (1906 - 1911) in Brussels.

© from: "Wien 1900 - Kunst, Architektur, Design", Kirk Varnedoe, Taschenverlag 1987



View of the dining room of Palais Stoclet with mosaics by Gustav Klimt.

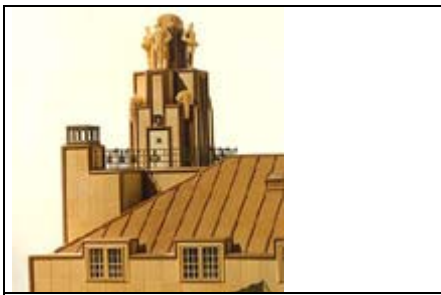
© from: "Wien 1900 - Kunst, Architektur, Design", Kirk Varnedoe, Taschenverlag 1987

### **Palais Stoclet today**

The work of art erected in the Avenue de Tervueren in Brussels between 1905 and 1911 still stands today. In Spring 2002 Madame Stoclet, a direct descendant of Baron Alphonse Stoclet, died.

Since then rumours have been heard that the family intends to sell the building, which has been classified as a historical monument since 1976 and is not open to the public. Experts estimate the purchase price to be around EUR 80 million.

Amongst the interested parties are the city of Brussels, which would then have a prestigious embassy building in the European capital and the Republic of Austria, whereby ideally the object of art would become a museum.



Reconstructed model([Atelier Hnizdo](#))  
Detail of tower and terrace.  
© Atelier Hnizdo

## Cabaret Fledermaus (1907)

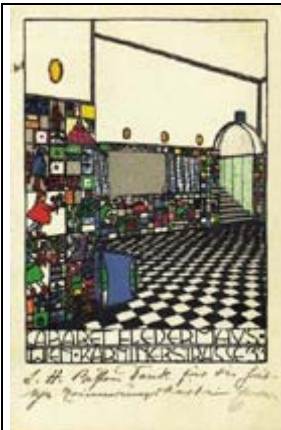
Cabaret Fledermaus, completed in 1907 was designed as a profitable undertaking and not merely for the private enjoyment of the Wiener Werkstätte artists. It was financed by way of advance payments from the Stoclet project. The striving for a object of art was seen earliest and in its purest form here.

Interior decoration was carried out in all the rooms at the theatre. Cloakroom, walls and the bar were covered in a mosaic designed by Bertold Löffler and Michael Powolny made of 7,000 pieces of majolica – a ceramic orbis pictus comprising caricatures, portraits, allegories, mythical creatures and ornaments, which contemporary critics termed "humoristic jabbering".

The cabaret stage in the basement – close to the Loos Bar (1908) – on the corner of Kärntner Strasse and Johannesgasse existed until 1913.



Reconstructed model ([Atelier Hnizdo](#)) of the entrance area of Cabaret Fledermaus  
© Atelier Hnizdo



Interior view of the Cabaret by Josef Diveky for a [postcard](#) for the Wiener Werkstätte (No. 74).  
© Markus weissenböck, 27th April 2002



Reconstructed model ([Atelier Hnizdo](#)) of the kidney-shaped main auditorium with boxes and galleries.  
© Atelier Hnizdo

## WW Artists

### **Dagobert Peche (1887–1923)**

From 1911 on, the former pupil of the Vienna Arts and Crafts School produced a large number of designs (first freelance and from 1915 on as an employee). Peche saw the longed-for challenge in the wide variety of materials and fields covered by the Wiener Werkstätte in its different areas of production. In the relatively short time during which he made an important contribution to the "image" of the Wiener Werkstätte (until his death in 1923) Peche designed, amongst other things, more than 110 patterns for material and over 45 wallpapers; lace and embroidery also accommodated his inclination towards frivolity.

In 1917 Peche was put in charge of the recently opened WW branch in Zurich (until 1919). Far from the Austrian doctrine of "form without ornament" the artist found a new lease of life. The contemporary critic Leopold Wolfgang Rochowanski noted, "His fantasy has a thousand hands, a thousand wings, is unbounded in its growth. In Josef Hoffmann's work everything stands on the ground, in Peche's work everything goes upwards".



**Michael Powolny (1871–1954)**

A founder member of the Vienna Secession, after his studies at the Arts and Crafts School Powolny first worked as a sculptor. In 1906, together with Bertold Löffler he established the "Wiener Keramik" company, whose products were sold by the Wiener Werkstätte.

Stylistically, Powolny's simple and precise models dominated the WW's programme until 1917, when the Künstlerwerkstätten started their own production of ceramics. Cherubs, in every imaginable form (e.g. four seasons), black and white decorated dishes and boxes, figures, etc. were amongst the most famous articles.

While Michael Powolny was teaching at the Vienna Arts and Crafts School (1909 – 1912) the subject "ceramics" became one of the most important departments. He trained a whole generation of specialised artists including Vally Wieselthier, Robert Obsieger, Lucie Rie-Gomperz and Walter Bosse.



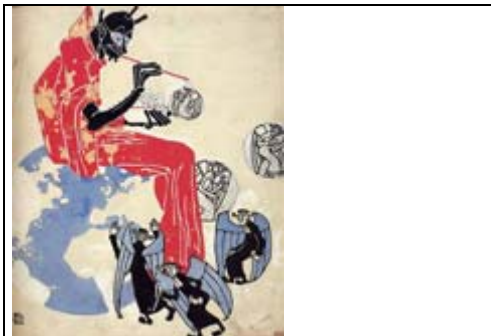
Four seasons' cherub "Spring", design approx. 1907, by Wiener Keramik.  
© Dorotheum, Art Nouveau, 30th November 2001

### **Bertold Löffler (1874–1960)**

A graduate of the Vienna Arts and Crafts School, Löffler studied under Franz von Matsch and Kolo Moser; from 1900 on he worked as an illustrator for the satirical weekly magazines "Lucifer" and "Der liebe Augustin" amongst others.

Experienced in virtually all disciplines, Löffler devoted himself to poster art and book illustration as well as to fresco painting and to ceramics. Together with his college friend Michael Powolny he worked for the WW – in 1906 they established the ceramic art company "Wiener Keramik" (WK) together; the following year he took over the master class "Malerei" (painting), which he conducted until his retirement in 1935.

Although Löffler himself was active in the field of ceramics at the beginning, he left this area to other artists such as Emil Meier, Olga Sitte or Ida Schwetz-Lehmann after the establishment of the WK.



"The Angel Maker", Design for "Lucifer"-title page, 1903.

© Bertold Löffler - Vagant zwischen Secessionismus und Neobiedermeier", exhibition catalogue, ed.. Erika Patka, Vienna, 2000

### **Vally Wieselthier (1895–1945)**

During her studies at the Vienna Arts and Crafts School Vally Wieselthier began working for WW in 1917. At first she worked on unique ceramic articles and series in the Künstlerwerkstätten and later worked on commissions in her own studio.

In a similar way to the works of other potters (Susi Singer, Dina Kuhn, Gudrun Baudisch, Herta Bucher) her works led to a stylistic about-turn in the WW: glazing was the decisive and main creative factor. In 1932 the artist emigrated to the USA and her style changed: the characteristically refreshing expressiveness became paralysed, a shift in colours towards earthy hues was seen. From 1940 on she earned her living from small consumer items and decorative articles which she sold at Lord & Taylor's among other shops.



Ceramic original, Figure of a woman (design 26.4.1927) by Wiener Werkstätte.  
© Dorotheum, Art Nouveau, 18th November 1997

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Note: These recommendations will be supplemented regularly:

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