Chapter Four

Semperian Trajectories. Architectural Development of Design Museums

Markian Prokopovych

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Introduction

The time when the majority of museums of industry, technology, and design were built was one of conceptual uncertainty. The general confusion within the stylistic system of references caused by the industrial overproduction of consumer goods that, this book argues, was one of the underlying causes for the emergence of the discussion on new industrial design in the first place, had its architectural counterpart. What, due to the modernist critique, we tend to see now as a 'crisis' of historicism in architecture was a period of extraordinarily productive and pluralist debate, the aim of which was to establish the most adequate application of historic models to modern architectural technology and to new architectural functions in more general sense. Gottfried Semper stood at the roots of this debate and served as central to subsequent architectural solutions. What in Vienna, but also elsewhere, came to be called an architectural 'mélange of styles,' was one of the outcomes of this debate, in which museum architecture played an important part. What should the ideal museum building look like? Should its façade and interior refer to specific historic periods that represented the flourishing of art and artisan craft in a symbiosis with technology? Should it proudly acknowledge local or foreign forefathers and if so, which ones? Or perhaps should it display its 'true' function on its façade as well as in its interior – the one that would correspond to the specific nature of its collections – rather than a historicist 'mask'? These were the questions that needed to be grappled with, and the museums examined in this study need to be understood in this larger discussion. As architects and some of the educated public grew increasingly tired of the mélange, proponents of architectural modernism offered specific solutions to the question of style applicable, they claimed, for all public architecture.

The perception, from the early twentieth century onwards, that museums of design and applied arts were outdated institutions of *historic* artefacts no longer able to represent technological advancement or educate the public on matters of good taste, was sometimes also projected onto their architecture. This, however, should not let us assume that the architectural solutions their founders privileged were inadequate in *their* own time. Furthermore, even within the architectural profession, the debate on style in German-speaking Central Europe goes back to the 1820s and the publication of Heinrich

Hübsch's essay of 1828 *In What Style Should We Build?*[1] As this chapter aims to show, museums of design and applied art need to be seen in a broader temporal framework than the fin-de-siècle debate on 'true' architecture or even the historicist debate on style. They drew inspiration from industrial exhibitions that date back even earlier, and for a significant amount of time their collections, originating from purchases at these exhibitions, were stored in termporary locations. Architectural choices for these locations, the people who made them, and specific architectural solutions need to be taken into account as well, if we are to understand how these museums functioned, developed, and how they displayed their collections to the broader public. In the following, the museums' longer history will be approached from an architectural standpoint by paying attention to time-specific models and solutions, the role of architects, the effect their buildings had on the professional and broader public, and whether and how they incorporated the earlier experience, locally and from elsewhere. Once purpose-built structures were constructed, however, their architectural form was often more Semperian than we tend to think. This chapter thus undertakes a critical reassessment of that Semperian tradition through analysis of museum architecture, paying particular attention to the important studies by Rebecca Houze.[2]

Changing Sites of Industrial Design

Early industrial exhibitions in the Habsburg lands did not take place in purpose-built structures. Rather, as was the case, for example, with the 1791 Prague industrial exhibition in the Clementinum, they were arranged in public buildings often connected in some way with spaces of knowledge and sciences. Some of these buildings would subsequently play an important role as locations for further exhibitions, until purpose-built pavilions and, later, museums were erected.[3] Alternatively, as was the case with the first industrial exhibition in the Veltrusy estate near Prague in 1751, they often took place at aristocratic residences outside the large cities and often in connection with an imperial visit. Originally a Baroque château from the early eighteenth century, the Veltrusy estate was an important work of the Bohemian Italian architect Giovanni Battista Alliprandi (1665-1720) under the guidance of one of Bohemia's wealthiest and politically most influential landowners, Count Rudolf Chotek of Chotkov and Vojnín (1706-1771). Chotek, the Supreme Chancellor and an important figure in the

[1] Hübsch, 'In What Style Should We Build?' in Hübsch et al, *In What Style Should We Build? The German Debate on Architectural Style*, trans. Wolfgang Herrmann (Los Angeles, 1992) pp. 63-102.

[2] Rebecca Houze, 'The Textile as Structural Framework: Gottfried Semper's Bekleidungsprinzip and the Case of Vienna 1900,' *Textile*, 4.3 (2006) pp. 292-311; idem, 'Hungarian Nationalism, Gottfried Semper, and the Budapest Museum of Applied Art,' *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 16.2 (2009) pp. 7-38.

[3] The 1854 Convention of German Farmers and Foresters (*Versammlung der deutschen Land- und Forstwirthe*) took place in the same hall of the Clementinum. See Noback, *Ueber die erste Gewerbe-Ausstellung*, p. 9.

service of Maria Theresa, oversaw the empire's finances and business policy. In 1754, Empress Maria Theresa visited the estate on her Bohemian tour, and it was for that occasion that the exhibition of Bohemian industry was organised in and around his mansion.

The role of unoccupied grounds beyond the city centre, often (but not always) together with aristocratic residencies, remained important for the arrangement of industrial exhibitions. In this regard, there was hardly anything special about the Habsburg Empire: already the first industrial exhibition in France, in 1798, took place in Paris's Champs de Mars, which served as a model for subsequent similar arrangements across the European continent, including the world fairs. A good example of how this type of location survived into the second half of the nineteenth century is the 1868 exhibition in Prague's Žofín Island. Organised by *Vojtěch Náprstek for* the Prague Chamber of Trade and Commerce, it took place in and around another aristocratic residence, the Žofín Palace.[4] The island's owner, Václav Novotný intended to turn his property into a place of recreation for the city's inhabitants. An elegant two-storey Neoclassical palace, with its own concert hall and meeting room, it would later be reconstructed and enlarged as a Neo-Renaissance building in 1884 and continued to serve as a site of many important cultural events in Prague. Until the construction of the Municipal House (*Obecní dům*) in 1912 it served as an important focus of cultural life for the Prague Czech community.

The use of remote locations can be explained not merely by the availability of free space or building but also by the longer tradition of arranging them there in connection with the recreation of the upper classes in appropriate locations. Away from the city centres and the rapidly urbanising suburbs, such locations reflected both the socialising practices of the exclusive circles of wealthy patrons and industrialists and the fact that inner cities were not yet seen as ideal sites for such practices. As temporary trade exhibitions grew bigger and drew an increasingly larger and more heterogeneous public, larger terrains outside or on the outskirts of cities became preferred sites for provincial, national and world fairs, at which industrial production and design was also exhibited. Vienna's Prater park as a location for the 1873 World Fair, the Városliget park for the 1896 Millennium Exhibition in Budapest and the site in Prague's Holešovice for similar events in the Bohemian capital fall into this pattern. At the same time, the wish to locate more *permanent* collections in or in the vicinity of the city centre was also clearly evident: for example, the first 'General or Central Exhibition of Industrial Products' (*Allgemeine oder Central-Gewerbsproducten-Ausstellung*) in Vienna took place in 1835 in

[4] On Vojta Náprstek's involvement in the Paris 1867 exhibition, Prague museum collections of applied arts and design, and the events at the Žofín Island see Milena Secká, *Vojta Náprstek. Vlastenec, sběratel, mecenáš* [Vojta Náprstek. Patriot, collector, patron] (Vyšehrad, 2011) pp. 164-165, 283-284; Zdeněk Šolle, *Vojta Náprstek a jeho doba* [Vojta Náprstek and his era] (Prague, 1994) pp. 151 and 176.

the Redouten Halls (*Redoutensäle*) of the Hofburg. The 1829 Prague trade exhibition, similarly, took place in a palace of Count de Ledebour in the so called Lesser Town on the west bank of the Vltava river.[5] A number of exhibitions also took place in or in connection with the Town Hall: for example, the antiquities exhibition organised by the Arkadia Association in 1861 at the Old Town Hall, which is considered one of the local stimuli for the establishment of a permanent exhibition of decorative and applied arts in Prague or the first specialist exhibition of textiles, organized by Prague phasmacist and city council representative Joseph Dittrich in 1872, took place in the large hall of the Prague Town Hall.[6] Prior to the construction of the Museum of Applied Arts, the permanent exhibition of decorative arts was arranged at the centrally located Portheim Palace in Prague's New Town.[7]

Larger industrial exhibitions abroad and the world fairs, which were some of the main sites for the display of design, influenced the setup of the subsequent permanent museums in many distict ways. The relation of museum buildings to exhibition architecture is complex. It would be difficult to overestimate the impression of the architecture of the Crystal Palace at the 1851 Exhibition on contemporaries. This controversial building provoked strong feelings in celebrities such as Semper and John Ruskin, as well as all in all the journalists who enthusiastically reported on the exhibition to the public.[8] It fundamentally challenged the way one thought of architecture and served as a stimulus for a broader discussion on taste, art production and display. The Crystal Palace was exceptional, foreshadowing in many ways the paths towards architectural modernism, but subsequent exhibition pavilions in London and Paris, and also Austria-Hungary were much more conventional architecturally. Despite extensive use of cast-iron construction and the enormous glassed domes of the main building of the 1862 Great London Exposition, for example, its facades were historicist designs built in brick. The Paris *Palais de l'Industrie* (1855), built purposely to surpass the Crystal Palace, or the Grand Palais of the Universal Exposition of 1900 also boasted historicist façades. Similarly, the South Kensington Museum, which was seen as a model for most of the subsequent institutions in Central Europe and elsewhere, owed little to the Crystal Palace architecturally.

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[5] Noback, *Ueber die erste Gewerbe-Ausstellung*, p. 13.

[6] Ferdinand Břetislav Mikovec and August Vilém Ambros, eds, *Katalog der Ausstellung böhmischer Alterthümer unter dem Protektorate Sr. Exzellenz des Herrn Grafen Anton von Forgács, k. ungarischen Hofkanzlers u.s.w. veranstaltet vom Verein Arkadia in Prag* (Prague, 1861); Noback, *Ueber die erste Gewerbe-Ausstellung*, p. 14.

[7] Alena Adlerová, et al. *Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum v Praze – Kunstgewerbemuseum in Prag – Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague – Musée des arts décoratifs in [sic] Prague – Музей декоративного искусства в Праге: 1885-1985* (Prague, 1985).

[8] See, for example, John Ruskin's criticisms in *The Opening of the Crystal Palace Considered in Some of Its Relations to the Prospects of Art* (London, 1854).

The apparent ubiquity of Neo-Renaissance architecture at subsequent European world fairs, including the 1873 fair in Vienna, can be explained, in a general sense, as a return to the practice of 'dressing' (*Bekleidung*) that architects like Semper considered the very essence of architecture. Hence, with the exception of industrial pavilions, such as the Rotunda in Vienna (1873), or the Industrial Hall in Prague (1891), iron and glass structures were not perceived as ideal for exhibition pavilion architecture. Industrial pavilions might have been influenced by Paxton, but pavilions representing state institutions and in particular those dedicated to art and culture were usually more conventional: the Art Pavilion of the Vienna Fair (1873, Figure 4.1) and the Palace of Art at the 1894 Provincial Exhibition in Lemberg (Figure 4.2) illustrate this point.

Exhibition pavilions inspired architects who designed museums of applied art by the novel way architecture was employed for the purposes of display. However, there were occasional infuences in the other direction, too: the new architectural language developed in the process of designing museums was employed at later industrial exhibitions. The Hungarian decorative and applied arts installation at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris designed by *Zoltán Bálint* and *Lajos Jámbor, both* students of Ödön Lechner, is a case in point.[9] Admittedly, the influences were limited to the interior and it struggled to meet a positive public reception; the applied arts section was infrequently attended and visitors seem to have had problems in dealing with the 'new Hungarian design' in a space in which rather conventional artefacts were exhibited.[10] Yet it stood in marked contrast to the Pavilion of Hungarian history, a pastiche of several popular medieval buildings, including the Vajdahunyad Castle from Transylvania. In addition, the employment of architectural methodology first developed by Lecher while working on the Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, speaks of a space of intellectual exchange between the sites of temporary exhibition display of applied art and its more permanent institutions such as museums.

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[9] Rebecca Houze, '"A revelation of grace and pride". Cultural Memory and International Aspiration in Early Twentieth-Century Hungarian Design,' in David Raizman and Ethan Robey, eds., *Expanding Nationalisms at World's Fairs: Identity, Diversity, and Exchange, 1851-1915* (Routledge, 2017) pp. 149-150, 153 and 155.

[10] János Gerle, 'Hungarian Architecture from 1900 to 1918,' in Dora Wiebenson and József Sisa, eds, *The Architecture of Historic Hungary* (Cambridge and London, 1998) pp. 223-225. Also see Miklós Székely, 'The Resetting of the Main Historical Group from the Millennium Exhibition to the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1900,' in *Ephemeral Architecture in Central Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Budapest, 2015) p. 44; Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' 19. Also see Miklós Székely, 'A Capital in the Margins: Concepts for a Budapest Universal Exhibition between 1867 and 1917,' in Marta Filipová, ed., *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (London and New York, 2016) pp. 23-44.

Towards Permanence

While the museums of design drew inspiration from the art and industry displays at provincial and world exhibitions, they were often confined to small and largely inadequate spaces provided by municipal governments. Where an aristocratic residence was not immediately available, buildings of imperial or municipal power as well as other museums became prime locations. For example, in Vienna the Museum for Art and Industry was first situated in the former Tennis Court Building (*Ballhaus*) of the imperial court complex (Figure 4.3). Centrally located and in close proximity to the court and the municipal administration, it was previously used by the imperial building chancellery (*Hofbauplatzkanzlei*) in the eighteenth century and a number of other government bodies and private offices in the nineteenth. Crammed into this location from 1864 to 1871, the museum collection was finally moved to the newly constructed building on the Ringstrasse, and the Tennis Court was given to the architectural bureau of Semper and Karl von Hasenauer (1833-94) for the construction of the imperial museums of art and natural history.[11] In a situation when so many new institutions were being established and built, the available building stock in the ownership of either the city or, in Vienna, the royal court, was often offered to them without any particular regard of its adequacy. Grandiose ambitions often needed to be put aside until much later when, in the wake of Ringstrasse urban restructuring, some privileged museums would acquire their new locations in prestigious new cultural quarters and zones.

At the same time, the architecture and the interior arrangement of these historic buildings also needed to be adapted for the purposes of the musem even if their location there was temporary. That adaptation rarely included massive reconstruction works that would fundamentally transform architecture; rather, it was usually limited to minor changes. In Vienna, for example, it took only two months to complete the reconstruction works of the Tennis Court Building.[12] Heinrich von Ferstel, a leading Viennese architect, was entrusted to oversee the adaptation. Yet on matter how innovative such adaptations were, the temporary locations offered only limited possibilities for an adequate display, which was often cited by the directory board as a major shortcoming. For example, the *Festschrift* published to celebrate the opening of the new building in Vienna in 1871 explicitly stated that, hitherto, ‘due to the limitations of the room size it was not possible to set up these collections

[11] Adam Wandruszka and Mariella Reininghaus. *Der Ballhausplatz* (Vienna, 1984) p. 33; Also see Felix Czeike, *Historisches Lexikon Wien: I* (Vienna, 1992) pp. 239-240; idem., *Wien: Kunst & Kulturlexikon* (Munich, 1976) pp. 37-38, 47-48.

[12] Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes am 4 November, 1871 / Das Kaiserl. Königl. Österreichesche Museum für Kunst und Industrie* (Vienna, 1871) p. 6.

strictly according to the systems adopted and implemented in the catalogs,' with the hope that 'in the new building this will be implemented.'[13]

In Budapest, the Museum of Applied Arts was founded in 1872 but the collection was first stored in the National Museum, and from 1877 and, until the construction of the magnificent building by Ödön Lechner in 1896, in the *Régi Műcsarnok*, a Renaissance revivalist exhibition hall. In Prague, the Museum of Decorative Art used the spaces of the Rudolfinum from 1872 until 1900. In other crownlands, the shortage of adequate buildings even more acutely felt. In Reichenberg, for instance, the North Bohemian Industrial Museum was first located in a school attic, then in the first floor of a bookstore, then in two further temporary locations, one of which was the grounds of the botanical garden, until, finally, the purpose-built building was erected in 1898.[14] In Cracow, Baraniecki's first exhibition of industrial design was held in the Town Hall, and later on, during the reconstruction of the medieval Cloth Hall in the main square the idea of locating the future museum on its premises along with the National Museum and the offices of the Society of Friends of Fine arts gained currency.[15] However, this did not happen: in Cracow, art galleries carried particularly high prestige and hence were graced by much more attention and funding than a museum of design. The situation highlighted that while one individual's enthusiasm could result in the establishment of a new cultural institution, the municipality's public declarations of support for local industries and industrial design contrasted with the realities of what they were willing to contribute. The museum's initial location in a Franciscan Cloister (Figure 4.4) was small and hugely inadequate, and continued to be until it eventually moved to the elegant new building on 9 Smoleńsk street in 1913. By the early 1900s its collections were kept in piles of boxes so enormous and disorganized that not even the director nor the curator could keep proper records any longer. Visitors were reportedly repulsed by the miserable look of the dilapidated entrance gate and the odour of mold from the exhibition premises, and the director's own cramped office offered a view of a dirty wall in the backyard.[16] The shortage of municipal acknowledgement and material support thus ensured that the museum remained a civic,

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Gustav E. Pazaurek, *Das Nordböhmische Gewerbe-Museum 1873–98. Denk-Schrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museums-Gebäudes* (Reichenberg, 1898).

[15] Zbigniew Beiersdorf, 'Muzeum Przemysłu Artystycznego w Krakowie [The museum of design in Cracow],' *Rocznik Krakowski* LVII (1991) pp. 129-145.

[16] Beata Krzaczyńska, ed. *Zapomniane muzeum. Adrian Baraniecki i Muzeum Techniczno-Przemysłowe 1868-1950* [Forgotten Museum: Adrian Baraniecki and the Museum of Technology and Industry, 1868-1950], (Cracow, 2013) pp. 29-33.

non-aristocratic initiative, set quite apart from the newly instituted historicizing rituals of the municipality.[17]

The very precariousness of the situation in which the museums found themselves is evident in the statement, repeated in sources across the empire, that the construction of the building would bring more security to the new institutions. For example, this was the formulation of a request of the deputation of the Vienna museum's governing board (*Curatorium*), addressed to the Empreror Francis Joseph in 1867, to secure the provisional land slot for the new building 'so that this blossoming institution, which has developed so nicely in the short time, would also be secured for a more distant future and remain capable of further development.'[18] Another example that links exhibitions and the calls for permanent museum buildings comes from István Keglevich (1840-1905), a rather controversial Hungarian aristocrat, opera director and president of the Hungarian Society for Applied Arts.[19] Writing on the Parisian *Exposition des arts de la femme* in 1892 which, he stressed, 'only the French could have organized with such understanding and chic,' Keglevich described what in his view was a profound difference between 'French ways' of doing things and those at home. The exhibition, he noted, was housed in the *Palais de l'industrie* with its splendid rooms and its vast number of ever-changing exhibits which, he noted, had 'always aroused [his] envy.'[20] When one turned one's eyes upon Hungary and the condition of the state of applied arts, conversely, one was left with no option but to make a little 'cry of pain':

> [Each of the] two institutions whose task it is to nurture Hungarian arts and crafts, the Applied Arts Museum and the Arts and the Arts and Crafts Society … has beautiful but very incomplete collections but no space to exhibit them, so that a large part of the most beautiful gems pile up in cellar holes or is eaten by moths; [there are] neither reading nor drawing rooms, no sufficient staff, no corresponding collection of books and pictures. And yet one could have learned from the example of Vienna what a tremendous upswing a well-designed and managed museum can bring to the arts and crafts.[21]

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[17] Markian Prokopovych, 'The City and the Museum: Cracow's Collections and their Publics in the Long Nineteenth Century,' *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018) pp. 166-86.

[18] Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes*, p. 16.

[19] Further see Markian Prokopovych, *In the Public Eye: The Budapest Opera House, the Audience and the Press, 1884-1918* (Vienna, 2014) pp. 83-107, 194-220.

[20] Stefan Keglevich, 'Feuilleton. Exposition des arts de la femme,' *Pester Lloyd*, 24 August 1892, p. 5.

[21] Ibid.

In the Galician capital Lemberg, it took a particularly long time to even begin to think about purpose-built accommodation for the collection of the applied art and design. The idea was first voiced in 1873 by architect and future rector of the Technical Academy, Julian Zachariewicz (1837-1898), in tandem with the leading industrial and handcraft corporations in the city. The year, of course, was significant and the committee members purchased a number of items at the Vienna World Fair, which formed the basis of the collection.[22] The committee stressed specifically that 'the tasks endowed upon it will not be completed until this institution, which is so important for the local industry and crafts, is ensured its own accommodation and development' and it was for that reason, it was argued, that the museum should be incorporated into the structures of the municipal government.[23] This not only reveals the extraordinary importance, for the development of design, that contemporaries allocated to purpose-built institutions, but also sheds light on the role in this process of the municipal government in less economically advanced regions such as Galicia.

'The new building of the City Industrial Museum, surrounded by a wooden skeleton of scaffolding erected for the completion of its exterior or façade, is close to completion,' pronounced the journalist of *Ilustracya Polska*, which reported on the move of the Industrial Museum from its temporary location in the Lemberg Town Hall in the early 1900s. The museum collection as well as other institutions that would move into the new building, he continued 'will no longer remain in previous dark and small locations, especially [the collection of] the Industrial Museum, rich in beautiful artefacts and monuments of the past thrown together, forgive the expression, like a cart of hay in two dark and small rooms of the Town Hall.' At the moment, the journalist noted, the exposition gave the impression of being some kind of an antique shop, whereas, when adequately displayed in the new location, they would be very valuable for future generations.[24]

The aim of the journalist was to report on the state of the collection and to document, for future generations, as he reasoned, a situation that would soon be history.[25] These comments are particularly

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[22] Maciej Matwijów, 'Muzea lwowskie wczoraj i dziś [Lwów museums yesterday and today],' *Niepodległość i Pamięć* 24 (2006) pp. 175-196. Also see Jakub Lewicki, *Między tradycją a nowoczesnością: architektura Lwowa lat 1893–1918* [Between tradition and modernity: Lwów architecture in 1893-1918] (Warsaw, 2005) pp. 77-82, 98-100, 140-142.

[23] *Statut Miejskiego Muzeum Przemysłowego we Lwowie* [Statute of the Municipal Industrial Museum in Lwów] (Lemberg, 1874) p. 5.

[24] K.P., 'Miejskie Muzeum Przemysłowe [Municipal Industrial Museum],' *Ilustracya Polska*, 19 December 1902, pp. 1-2. For the actual content of the permanent exhibition with a detailed floor plan, see *Przewodnik po Muzeum Artystyczno-Przemysłowem we Lwowie* [Guide to the Design Museum in Lwów] (Lemberg, 1907).

[25] K.P. 'Miejskie Muzeum Przemysłowe [Municipal Industrial Museum].'

interesting because they pinpoint the frustration with the perceived everyday situation in many museums that existed for decades before the construction of purpose-built structures. Furthermore, they suggest the need for specific interior arrangements, in what appeared to contemporaries as an exceptional shortage of space, to make the display meaningful for the viewer. The dark, heavily draped rooms of the Town Hall were just too small for what in the early twentieth century would qualify as adequate display of 'artefacts from Old Poland and home industry' and 'modern art and industry as well as artefacts acquired at the last Parisian exhibition.' Although not as problematic as in Cracow, the Lemberg museum also changed radically once the new building was constructed (Figure 4.5).

Apart from exhibition pavilions, the other obvious model for the architectural design of the museums in the Habsburg Empire was Vienna. With the imposing buildings of the museum and school designed by one of the leading Ringstrasse architects Heinrich von Ferstel (Figure 0.1), and its 1873 exhibition, Vienna was admired by many architects, no doubt helped by the fact that they learnt their craft there. This included Josef Schulz (1840-1917) and Josef Zítek (1832-1909), for example, who would later work in Prague, as well as Tadeusz Mączyński (1874-1947) and the Zagreb architect Hermann Bollé (1845-1926).[26]

Design museums also served as architectural models for each other. Not only were many of them connected via the all-Austrian Federation initiated by Julius Leisching in 1899 in Brünn, they actively borrowed from each other and museum professionals went on tours to learn from each others' experiences prior to the start of the construction. For example, Tadeusz Stryjeński (1849-1943), director and designer of the new building of the Museum of Industrial Art in Cracow, went on such a tour in 1907 to Lemberg, Graz, Klagenfurt, Linz, Prague, Nuremberg, Brünn, Liberec, Opava, Trieste and Gorizia. His verdict, in this instance, was that since most of these museums had been constructed at least a decade earlier, they were architecturally inadequate for contemporary purposes and for Cracow in particular.[27] We do not know whether this unusually dismissive attitude was dictated by modernist aesthetics, professional arrogance or a specific local agenda. Nevertheless, the fact that his tour included practically all museums of significance in Austria Cisleithania – and only one outside – suggests he had a sense of a common cultural space that transcended provincial or ethnic boundaries. A closer look at such architectural practices complicates the well trodden narrative of museums as engines of nationalism in that it highlights in how far they actually borrowed from each other both architecturally and more generally in terms of models and management.

[26] There were occasional exceptions. Ödön Lechner trained first in Budapest and then in Berlin.

[27] Beiersdorf, 'Muzeum Przemysłu Artystycznego,' p. 156.

The urban topography of design museums is not always easy to decipher. Although the original wish to have the new museum buildings close to the city centre seems to have been honoured, their location was often marginal in terms of their proximity to the institutions of power, in comparison with museums of fine arts and even sciences. In Vienna, Eitelberger and Ferstel's 1866 proposal to integrate the museum into the planned Kaiserforum was rejected.[28] The suggested alternative location, where the new building would eventually be constructed, was a former barrack grounds and military exercise field. Of course, this would become a part of the Ringstrasse and neighbour locations such as the City Park, which were much more representative of the spaces of the educated middle class. However, at the point of inception locating the future museum site on that section of the future boulevard was more in line with the previous fashion of removed aristocratic residences and their estates. In both Budapest and Zagreb, the museum buildings are also located on the 'Ring.' The circular street admittedly had a much less representative meaning in the Hungarian capital, while in smaller Zagreb the centrality of new cultural institutions was less important, especially because they were all part of the same urban planning project of the 'horseshoe' (Figure 4.6) designed by Hermann Bollé, the architect of the Museum of Arts and Crafts.[29] In Prague, both museum and applied arts school were built next to the Rudolfinum, although this was more a matter of chance rather than part of comprehensive plan. Research into press reports confirms this hypothesis: for example, in 1898, during the ceremony of the laying of the founding stone of the completed building of the Museum of Applied Arts, the speakers and the journalists only referred to the connection of the 'imposing building' with the Rudolfinum, without ever mentioning the school.[30] The locations in Cracow and Reichenberg were more peripheral; the museums in Brünn (Figure 4.7) and Lemberg (Figure 4.5), however, were situated much more centrally. While it would be tempting to argue for the relative prominence of the industrial circles and the place of industrial design in the culture of the Moravian capital, this argument is complicated by the fact that, in Lemberg, the museum building also offered

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[28] Sabrina Rahman, 'From Domestic Designs to Global Living: Imperial Innovations at the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, 1864–1914,' *Museum History Journal* 6.1 (2013) p. 91. See also Rainald Franz, 'Vom Kaiserforum zum Exerzierplatz: Die Errichtung und Architektur des k.k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie am Stubenring,' in Noever, ed., *Kunst und Industrie*, p. 91.

[29] Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (Princeton, 1998) pp. 12-14; Snješka Knežević, "The Green Horseshoe in Zagreb," in Vladimir Maleković, ed., *Historicism in Croatia* (Zagreb, 2000) pp. 100-115; Dragan Damjanović, *Arhitekt Herman Bollé* (Zagreb, 2013) pp. 545-552.

[30] 'Feier der Schlußsteinlegnng zum kunstgewerblichen Museum,' *Prager Abendblatt, Beilage zur Prager Zeitung*, 3 December 1898, p. 3. At the same time, during the construction of the school building the Prague municipal government did consider several architectural and urban planning solutions to the emerging new square and its transport connections to the rest of the inner town. See, for example, 'Regulirung des Tummelplatzes,' *Prager Tagblatt*, 21 August 1883, pp. 3-4.

space to other urban institutions and even accommodated the municipal fine arts collection. The location of these museums is therefore not only linked to the interests of the industrial class, and might be better explained by their function as important locations in their respective cities.

While clustering museums was certainly not among the contemporary urban planners' priorities, the Semperian model of situating a crafts school and an applied art museum in immediate proximity to each other was certainly considered in several locations, and often included as a requirement in architectural competitions. In Vienna, while it quickly became evident that the construction of a new, more adequate museum building was necessary, the founding of the design school made these demands even more pressing. At first the school and the museum were at a distance from each other, which made communication between them sparse and time-consuming, and the use of the museum collection for the declared educational purposes practically impossible. It was decided not to place them in the same building due to the complexity and cost of construction.[31] In consequence, two buildings, the museum and the school, would be built in immediate proximity to each other, designed by the same architect and even with a structure connecting them, but six years apart. Despite its less prestigious location, the Museum for Art and Industry would become the first public museum to be constructed on the Ringstrasse.

In Budapest, the previously scattered school departments functioned within the same building designed by Lechner from 1896, and in Prague it was the *museum* that was constructed in the vicinity of the school, seventeen years after the latter had already been set up. In other, smaller, Habsburg cities the pattern is no longer evident and locations were dictated by other local considerations. In Lemberg, for example, the two institutions that co-existed at the premises of the Town Hall in 1876-1892 were given their own separate buildings in immediate proximity: the School of Design and Applied Art (1892) was designed by Gustaw Bisanz and the Industrial Museum by Józef Kajetan Janowski (1832-1914) followed in 1903. This, however, changed in 1904, when a new, much larger building designed by Władysław Sadłowski (1869-1940) was inaugurated on a more distant location. In Kolozsvár, the city followed the Budapest pattern by locating both the museum and the school in the newly constructed museum building, designed by Lajos Pákey (1853-1921).[32] Similarly, Hermann Bollé's building of the Museum Arts and Crafts in Zagreb (Figure 4.8) incorporated a crafts school.[33] In Brünn, the Museum of Applied Arts (founded in 1873 but with a permanent building from 1883)

[31] *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes*, p. 16.

[32] Dávid Gyula, 'Tervrajzok és rajztervek. Pákei Lajos (1853–1921) hagyatéka' [Blueprints and drawing plans. The legacy of Lajos Pákei (1853-1921)], *Keresztény Magvető* 119.1 (2013) pp. 80-89; Katalin Murádin-Beyer, 'Pákei Lajos kéziratos önéletírása' [Manuscript autobiography of Lajos Pákei], *Pavilon* 8 (1993) pp. 42-49.

[33] Damjanović, *Arhitekt Herman Bollé*, pp. 545-552.

was close to the German Technical School (founded as a Technical College in 1849 but with a permanent building in 1860) but further apart from the Applied Arts School, founded the same year as the museum, and the Czech Technical School (founded in 1899, with a permanent building in 1911).[34] In smaller Reichenberg both the drawing school (*Kunstgewerbliche Fachzeichenschule*) and the museum moved locations many times until, due to financial difficulties, the school was integrated into another institution, the weaving school.[35]

Gottfried Semper, the Crystal Palace and the Ideal Museum

Few concepts have been as influential for the development of modern architecture as Gottfried Semper's notion of 'dressing.'[36] Taking its root in Semper's idea of the four elements of architecture, in which one element, enclosure, originated in textiles, the idea of 'dressing' was developed into a full-fledged theory in which *all* architecture was taken to have its origins in weaving. For Semper, there was little left in architecture symbolically apart from its 'dress,' or what later modernist critics preferred to call a 'mask': it was precisely this that determined the building's aesthetic and symbolic meaning. In practice, however, the 'dress' became culturally specific and, for Semper and his generation of architects, it often came down to the architectural 'mélange' typical of the Vienna Ringstrasse. The concept became particularly significant in central Europe where the ideas of modernization were so often intrinsically linked to the development of applied arts and textiles in particular. Architects working in Semper's shadow, including those active in Austria-Hungary, were equally concerned with expressing the characteristics of textile in the design of buildings.[37] Semper's 'aesthetics of the mask' was particularly popular in part because its architects could use it to refer to the old, feudal world that was still very much present in public memory.[38]

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[34] Further on Brno institutions, see Rampley, 'German Industriousness.'

[35] Roman Karpaš et al., *Kniha o Liberci* [The book of Liberec] (Liberec, 2004) p. 232.

[36] Gottfried Semper, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts: Or, Practical Aesthetics*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Michael Robinson (Los Angeles, 2004) pp. 237-47. On the formation of the concept of *Bekleidung* by Semper, see especially Heidrun Laudel, 'Das Bekleidungsprinzip - Sempers Künstlerisches Credo,' in Rainald Franz and Andreas Nierhaus, eds, *Gottfried Semper und Wien: die Wirkung des Architekten auf "Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst"* (Vienna, 2007) pp. 17-37. Also see Rebecca Houze, 'The Textile as Structural Framework: Gottfried Semper's Bekleidungsprinzip and the Case of Vienna 1900.'

[37] Houze, 'The Textile as Structural Framework,' p. 293.

[38] Ákos Moravánszky, 'The Aesthetics of the Mask: The Critical Reception of Wagner's *Moderne Architektur* and Architectural Theory in Central Europe,' in Harry Francis Mallgrave, ed., *Otto Wagner: Reflections on the Raiment of Modernity* (Santa Monica, 1993) pp. 199-239.

Semper's preferred architectural cladding was Renaissance revivalism: in line with his belief that there was a correspondence between society and architectural style, the Renaissance, especially the Italian Renaissance, was the most adequate representation of the bourgeois and democratising society of the nineteenth century.[39] In this respect, Semper's ideas were rather typical of the Liberal era: as highlighted by Schorske and others, it was common to associate Renaissance revivalism with constitutional law (*Recht*) and liberal culture within the postulates of Ringstrasse historicism. But the Renaissance was also understood differentially and could just as well connote the wealthy mercantile Italian elite the Ringstrasse *nouveaux riches* aspired to be, although they also liked to draw parallels with local Baroque palaces.[40] For Eitelberger, additionally, the Renaissance evoked a time when artists were still artisans, and when the value of the fine and applied arts were congruent.[41] The Ringstrasse historicist mélange had a sense of fluidity that allowed for a very loose treatment of styles and their unrestrained combination. When Semper died in 1879, his death seems to have served as a powerful impetus for the conceptual development of dress as an architectural principle. In one important sense, however, the architecture of the Viennese Secession, as well as other strands of Art Nouveau were perhaps even more 'Semperian' than Semper himself: not only Otto Wagner and other prominent Viennese architects, but also Ödön Lechner in Budapest, designed what Rebecca Houze has called 'textile-like façades.' Wagner's design for a Budapest synagogue (1870-1873) was among the first to exhibit such qualities, and was followed by the signature apartment blocks on the Vienna Wienzeile, especially the so-called *Majolikahaus* (1898) and the Post Office Savings Bank (1904-1906). Lechner's Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest (Figure 0.2) also fell into this category.[42] Following this strain of thought, some scholars have argued that even radical modernist architects such as Adolf Loos were influenced by the Semperian idea of architectural dressing, but instead of cladding the building in a culturally appropriate 'mask,' they understood it as the means to protect those inside from the tensions of the contemporary world.[43] This general theoretical discussion on architectural design had implications for museum architecture in the following respects.

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[39] Moravánszky, *Competing Visions*, pp. 66, 86-87. Also see Gottfried Semper, 'Über Baustyle,' in Semper, *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin, 1884) p. 422; Mari Hvattum, *Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism*, p. 154.

[40] Schorske, *Thinking with History: Explorations in the Passage to Modernism* (Princeton, 1998) pp. 116-117; idem., *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, pp. 36-62.

[41] Eitelberger, 'Die Kunstentwicklung des heutigen Wien,' in *Gesammelte Kunsthistorische Schriften*, Vol. I, p. 13.

[42] Houze, 'The Textile as Structural Framework,' pp. 295-299.

[43] Christopher Long, *The New Space: Movement and Experience in Viennese Modern Architecture* (New Haven and London, 2016) p. 54.

First, the era of the construction of most of the museums of applied arts and design fell between two important thresholds: the publication of Semper's *Style* (1861-1863), in which the idea of dress was fully developed, and the construction in Vienna of Adolf Loos's famous residential and commercial building for the Goldmann and Salatsch clothing store, the so-called 'Looshaus' in 1909. The large majority of the design museum buildings, as well as much smaller institutions such as the Marosvásárhely Industrial Museum (now: Târgu Mureș) of the Székely Land (1893), were constructed in some version of Neo-Renaissance. The latter was also Eitelberger's preferred idiom, and such stylistic preferences highlighted the intellectual outreach of Semper's (and Eitelberger's) ideas to other centres of the Dual Monarchy. There are obvious stylistic similarities between the Vienna museum and the Budapest Technological Museum (Figure 4.9), both of which display some elements of the briefly fashionable Romanesque revivalism (the so-called *Rundbogenstil* – the 'round-arched style'), while the Neo-Renaissance buildings in Brünn, Prague, Kolozsvár, Zagreb and Lemberg all exemplify a recurrent type.

There are also unusual solutions, such as, for example, Reichenberg, where the overall Neo-Renaissance façade of the Industrial Museum (Figure 4.10) is interrupted by the stylized copy of a medieval town hall tower and toppled by a picturesque high roof with numerous turrets. The original design by celebrated Prague-based architect Friedrich Ohmann (1858-1927) was deemed insufficiently 'Germanic' by the museum administrators; instead, Hans Griesebach (1848-1904) and August Dinklage (1849-1920), proponents of German Renaissance revivalism based in Berlin, were commissioned.[44] However, even exceptions such as the Reichenberg museum do not disprove the general rule that Neo-Renaissance continued to serve as a defining model for such museums – something of which Semper would have strongly approved. Hence, trying to trace stylistic similarities is superfluous in an era when architects considered the entire arsenal of historic styles adequate for a design of a new building, and when they all tended to privilege Neo-Renaissance revivalism. Later museums, notably in Budapest (1896) and Cracow (1913), espoused different architectural languages, but even the architectural competition for the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts included a number of Renaissance revivalist submissions, and the selection committee was quite hesitant in making its eventual choice, praising some of the other projects for corresponding better to the specified requirements.[45] Had the Cracow museum been built in 1888 as first proposed, and not 1913, it would

[44] 'Bau des nordböhmischen Gewerbemuseums in Reichenberg,' *Der Architekt* III (1897) p. 17; Gustav Pazaurek, *Das Nordböhmische Gewerbe-Museum 1873-1898. Denkschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museums-Gebäudes* (Reichenberg, 1898).

[45] Piroska Ács, '*Keletre magyar*': *Az Iparművészeti Múzeum palotájának építéstörténete a kordokumentumok tükrében* ['Go East Hungarian': The history of the construction of the building of the Museum of Applied arts in the mirror of contemporary documents'] (Budapest, 1996) pp. 11-20.

probably have been a Renaissance revivalist design as well.[46] Such architecture has been subsequently criticized for being stylistically and conceptually inadequate, but in its time it represented cutting edge ideas developed by Semper and others.

Semper, who was in London at the time of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and was even involved in the designing of several pavilions for the Crystal Palace, was deeply influenced by its symbolism also in an architectural sense. Like many of his contemporaries, he disliked and was fascinated by it at the same time. He wrote of the confusion and disorder induced by the building as 'a kind of Babel' and 'the clear manifestation of certain anomalies within existing social conditions.'[47] There was nothing pejorative in his judgment of the Crystal Palace, however, because 'the task of the architect was to erect a glass-covered vacuum,' and the principle of a glass-covered open space was actually advanced by the technology used during its construction. He also believed it was eminently appropriate for its purpose, since it would practically suit 'anything one wishes to bring into it,' and it was hence 'to a certain extent the embodiment of the tendency toward which our age seems to be moving …' This tendency was the capitalism that seemed to be so all-absorbing; the building likewise seemed infinitely extendable to absorb its entire environment. Contemplating the future use of similar glass structures, Semper admitted that they had some value, or 'special architectural meaning' in his terminology, in that they allowed to combine what he called 'Anglo-Saxon domestic arrangements' with palatial architecture. 'Perhaps,' he mused, 'the integration of this motive will succeed and through it individual Saxon dwellings can be grouped around a communal hearth.'[48] The influence of this idea, mentioned by Semper in the footnote of *Science, Industry and Art*, is clearly evident in the design of most exhibition structures in Habsburg Central Europe and beyond.

Although Semper admitted that ultimately there could have been no better plan devised for the general Industrial Exhibition and although his involvement with it might not have been entirely fulfilling, it served as a great stimulus for some of his most influential theoretical works, including *The Ideal Museum*, which proposed a specific museological plan. Article 14 of the manuscript includes 'a Square, the four Corners of which are the junction prints, with other Collecions which together will mutually Complete themselves [*sic*].' (Figure 4.11)[49] Semper offers here a sophisticated spatial arrangement within the structure of the museum, albeit using a somewhat confusing terminology. Unfortunately, the drawing and the explanation Semper provided are rather convoluted. The reader is left to wonder whether the four smaller squares within the square are supposed to

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[46] Krzaczyńska, *Zapomniane museum*, pp. 21-22; Beiersdorf, 'Muzeum Przemysłu Artystycznego,' p. 146.

[47] Gottfried Semper, 'Science, Industry and Art,' p. 130.

[48] Semper, 'Science, Industry, and Art,' p. 165.

[49] Harry Francis Mallgrave, 'Introduction,' in Semper, *Ideal Museum*, pp. 8-12.

represent separate museum rooms, sections or wings, and whether the arrows leading from the four sides – which represent the basic elements, textile, carpentry, masonry and ceramics – are also to be understood as vistas or main corridors of the actual building. Is the vaunted symbolic hearth, the core of every building according to the Semperian system, at the centre of the square? Is this what in practice would become the glass-vaulted central yards and main staircases of the actual museums? But perhaps such musings are counterproductive. After all, Semper himself admitted that an ideal collection might never be achievable. Bearing in mind that the manuscript was not written for publication, it is perhaps not surprising that most of the museums actually built did not follow Semper's sketch. Nevertheless, we do know that these ideas were later further developed in *Style*. We also know that Eitelberger was aware of the manuscript because he was told about it by Josef Zítek, and he then asked Semper directly to send him a copy.[50] Combined with Semper's proposal for the re-use of the Crystal Palace as a joint museum and art school, and his suggestion for 'Saxon dwellings' combining glass structures, elements of palatial architecture and an obligatory hearth, *The Ideal Museum* served as a powerful blueprint for the design of museums.

Heinrich Ferstel, the Museum of Art and Industry and Other Architects

Alongside Semper, the other name central to the development of Vienna architecture and museum design in particular was Heinrich Ferstel, the designer of the Museum of Art and Industry and a close associate of Eitelberger for many years. Not only had Eitelberger written a number of works celebrating Ferstel's contributions to architecture, they actually worked together on a number of public buildings.[51] Ferstel, eleven years Eitelberger's junior, had been an admirer of the scholar since his university years.[52] Furthermore, Eitelberger and Ferstel, both deeply impressed by the architectural development of Britain and the Low Countries, were at the forefront of critical discussion surrounding Vienna's urbanization at the time of the Ringstrasse construction, and contributed significantly to the redefinition of the 'bourgeois family home' in the local context. Their collaboration on the design of the Museum of Art and Industry was thus one of a number of programmes and also explains why no other architect apart from Ferstel was ever sought to design the new building.

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[50] Mallgrave, 'Introduction,' p. 12.

[51] Rudolf Eitelberger, 'Heinrich Ferstel und die Votivkirche,' in *Gesammelte kunsthistorische Schriften* (Vienna, 1879) Vol. I, pp. 271-348; Rudolf Eitelberger and Heinrich Ferstel, *Festschrift bei der Gelegenheit der feierlichen Enthüllung seines Denkmals im k.k. Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie* (Vienna, 1884).

[52] Norbert Wibiral and Renata Mikula, *Heinrich von Ferstel* (Wiesbaden, 1974) p. 164.

Much celebratory prose was written at the time about the architecture of the museum building on Stubenring, the lucky choice of the Italian Renaissance for the façade and the interior, the sgraffiti of the frieze by Karl Schönbrunner, the majolica medaillons with the portraits of famous artists, the frescoes of the main staircase by Ferdinand Laufberger and other important historicist decorations. For example, the *Festschrift* written for the opening of the building, written in a dry descriptive language with the exception of passages of praise for the emperor, the aristocracy and the clergy in their role in the establishment of new cultural institutions, enumerated a number of architectural features: the glass roofs in the exhibition halls that allowed sufficient amount of daylight, the second glass roof construction that allowed to reduce heating costs, and the 'simplicity' of the brick shell:

> Along with excellent construction, a great simplicity of the architectural approach was also proscribed. The decision was made to use bricks and stone only sparingly, the use of which remained limited only to the pedestal, the portal and … the window framing. But the very simple profiling and almost complete avoidance of sculptural ornamentation demanded some decorative substitute, and [this substitute], quite fittingly for the building dedicated to applied art, was found in the sgraffito painting in partial combination with inserted majolica medallions … By means of this sgraffitto technique the plaster, which had been generously applied in this building, found a certain harmony, some sort of connection, with the brick and the stone... All this is wonderfully reflected in the character of the Italian Renaissance. The glazed ceramics, which were set here in the form of medallions bearing the heards of famours artists and art technicitans or the inscription boards in the friezes were executed with predilection towards early Florentine Renaissance … [These ceramics] had been elevated to the most noteworthy species of architectural decoration.[53]

It was further argued that the use of such techniques that 'had served for centuries for the embellishment of architectural creations admired until today' was justified by the purposes of the building that embodied the aim to elevate and enhance applied art 'be it here today only for the sake of experimentation and for the revival of such valuable decorative methods of bygone ages.'[54] It is difficult for the contemporary reader to understand how such an obviously historicist argument could be seen as fitting the functions of the museum at the time. How can sgraffitto paintings or ceramic medalions representing great artists of the past – or, for this matter, inscriptions commemorating Donatello, Rafael, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, Dürer, Fischer von Erlach, Schinkel or

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[53] Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes*, p. 21.

[54] Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes*, p. 21.

even van der Nüll – be adequate for a museum of the applied arts of the *present*? How can frescoes on classical subjects, such as the one by Laufberger depicting a goddess of beauty surrounded by the representations of architecture, painting and sculpture be adequate for a bulding dedicated to applied art? Yet, adhering to a Semperian concept of dress, the decoration was meant to convey its symbolic meaning to observers. It is in this sense that the *Festschrift*'s insistence on the value of simplicity, solidity and adequacy in the museum's façade and interior is to be understood. The supporting columns in the exhibition halls, it insisted, were constructed from material such as solid granite and marble: an early incarnation of the modernist discourse on 'true' or 'honest' architecture. [55]

Architects and discussions about architecture played an important part of the Museum for Art and Industry's activities. It was, for example, at the request of the architectural societies of Prague and Pest that it hosted their annual exhibitions in the 1860s.[56] Architects were often invited to present their work at the open lecture series organized by the museums across the empire. Eitelberger himself lectured about the legacy of the architects of the Vienna opera house Eduard Van der Nüll and August Sicard von Sicardsburg in Vienna, or about the architectural school of Émile Trélat in Paris. Friedrich Schmidt, the architect of Vienna Town Hall, spoke on Gothic architecture and its influence on the applied arts, and on the architecture of St Stephen's Cathedral. Ferstel was also invited to lecture at the museum.[57] Given a mindset in which applied arts and traditional crafts were seen as inferior, this was not particularly surprising and reflected traditional cultural hierarchies that privileged professions such as architects and fine artists. Consequently, architecture was also one of the main subjects of study at least in some of the design schools of the museums, and architects became both prominent professors and guest lecturers there. Indeed, architects were also over-represented in the senior positions at the schools of design and applied art.

Department Stores and the Meaning of Museum Architecture

By the end of the nineteenth century museums of applied art and design were in implicit rivalry with the other descendants of commercial industrial fairs, the department stores, or *Warenhäuser* as they were known in the German-speaking world, over the attention of the public. Like Adolf Loos's celebrated Goldman & Salatsch building in Vienna (the *Looshaus*), museums implicitly strove to

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[55] Leslie Topp, *Architecture and Truth in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Cambridge, 2004) p. 159.

[56] Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes*, p. 10.

[57] Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, *Festschrift zur Eröffnung des neuen Museum-Gebäudes*, p. 10-12.

establish that they were 'not a warehouse.'[58] Unlike the *Looshaus*, however, which claimed to be 'an elegant shop,' the museums presented themselves as institutions the purpose of which was not simply to display but to *cultivate* good taste, and to do this *through* their display. It is therefore interesting to look at how the two types of institutions attempted to transmit meanings through their architecture to their publics, and also at how these messages were actually received.

Owned by retail firms and constructed entirely for the purposes of commercial display, department stores sprang up in the late nineteenth-century Habsburg cities and divided public opinion. In Vienna, the first new department store belonged to Philipp Haas & Söhne (Figure 4.12), and was built in 1866 / 1867 by August Sicard of Sicardsburg and Eduard van der Nüll (architects of the Vienna Royal Opera House). The company had branches that sold textiles and furniture in Lemberg, Prague, Graz and Linz. Other well-known Viennese department stores included Rothberger (1895) and Gerngroß (1904), both designed by the respected Fellner and Helmer architectural bureau, Friedrich Schachter's Warenhaus Stephan Edsers (1895), Max Katscher's Warenhaus Herzmansky (1897) and of course the Goldman & Salatsch building (1909). Further examples included the Great Paris Department Store (*Párizsi Nagy Áruház*), built in 1882 and then rebuilt in 1911, in Budapest, and the Mikolasch Passage (*Pasaż Mikolascha*) in Lemberg (Figure 4.13). Designed by famous architects, using luxurious materials and employing the latest technology, department stores became central places for leisure and commercial purchase for the wealthy middle class. Like their early nineteenth-century precursors, the Parisian arcades of which Walter Benjamin wrote extensively, *Warenhäuser* were part of the bourgeoning culture of spectacle and consumerism, and served in many respects both as counterpoints for contemporary museums.[59]

The conflict between museums and the department stores was prefigured in the Great Exhibition. For Thomas Richards has demonstrated how the Crystal Palace was torn between attempts at scientific categorisation and the spectacular display that the public already knew so well from department stores: 'Like an eighteenth-century philosophe, [Prince Consort] Albert wanted a watertight logical arrangement, while, like the managers of nineteenth-century department stores, the planning commission envisioned a system, as the *Illustrated London News* put it, "by which articles of a similar kind from every part of the world could be disposed in juxta-position." The consuming public could not have agreed more wholeheartedly with the commission's compartmentalization of things, flocking

[58] Adolf Loos, *Mein Haus*, p. vii, quoted in Leslie Topp, *Architecture and Truth in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, p. 152. Also see Gerhard Meißl, 'Altväterisches oder modernes Wien? Zur Diskussion um die Warenhäuser und de Warenhaussteuer in Wien zwischen 1890 und 1914,' in Andreas Lehne et al., ed., *Wiener Warenhäuser 1865-1914* (Vienna, 1990) pp. 61-84.

[59] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA and London, 2002).

to exhibits that featured small numbers of finished articles and virtually boycotting [those] exhibits, which had made the mistake of following Albert's scheme.'[60]

Department stores' purpose manifested itself in dazzling, spectacular architecture. They usually featured almost completely glassed rows of shopwindows and doors with an exposed iron structure at least on the lower or lower two floors. Their purpose was structural as well as commercial: they were designed to let maximum light into the interior as well as to make the displayed items easily visible from the street for potential clients. This reproduced the effect of exceptional lightness and transparency that so delighted the visitors of the Crystal Palace and that was decidedly novel.[61] Despite such an embrace of modernity, the remaining exterior was usually designed in some or other historical revivalist idiom, with Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Baroque as the preferred choices, lavishly decorated and aiming at a picturesque effect: the examples are abundant, from the columned façade of the Haas Haus (1867) with its stucco garlands and arched windows to the elborate corner entrance of Rothberger (1895) (Figure 4.14) to the Corinthian splendor of Herzmansky (1897). Such stystic choices reflected the same social aspiration as the new appartment houses on the Ringstrasse, with an additional association Neo-Baroque had with fashion and luxury consumption. In the interior, the centerpiece was often an exuberant staircase under a glass dome. Generously decorated, accompanied by gilded balustrades and surrounded by numerous candelabra, it often gave the impression of palatial grandness – a feature often pointed out in the press.[62] There are numerous instances that demonstrate how popular these new spaces were within some of the client public. For example, commenting on the newly inaugurated Gerngroß department store in Vienna in 1904, built, it was believed, by following modern Belgian examples, the journalist of the *Wiener Zeitung* even suggested that the building was actually *wienerisch* (in Viennese style) and would please the public: the architects, he argued, showed that they 'can impress a homely and friendly stamp on a sober commercial building.'[63]

In contrast to the *Warenhäuser*, the architecture of design museums, institutions that claimed greater cultural authority, was much more inward looking and meant to instill different attitudes in the public. Rather than displaying their objects from the façade to the passers by, it strove to communicate the institution's function from the design of the façades. That design changed over time but continued to refer to the symbolism of those historic artistic movements and personalities that were seen as

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[60] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*, pp. 32-33.

[61] 'Warenhaus-Architektur,' *Wiener Zeitung*, 11 October 1904, p. 4. Also see Topp, *Architecture and Truth in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, p. 152.

[62] Topp, *Architecture and Truth in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, p. 159.

[63] 'Warenhaus-Architektur,' *Wiener Zeitung*, 11 October 1904, p. 4.

antecedents, or alternatively displayed ornamentation or other kinds of decoration evoking the traditional crafts, design or applied arts. Museum architecture enticed the visitor to *venture in* rather than gaze at the objects available for sale from the street level. Unlike department stores, design museums attempted to offer a kind of sanctuary from the commercial world outside and the entry into the museum was therefore often marked with almost sacral spaces of the vaulted entry halls and glassed-roofed main staircases. '[Industrial exhibitions, and even more] the museums of art and industry are not there for drifters walking on the street, loafers and easthetic ladies; they are [less for the education and improvement of the taste of the consuming public than, rather] for those in industry and industrialists, for their education and work… to serve their interests and uses.'[64] In this sense and despite their proclamations to the contrary, they were offering a chance to avoid the challenges of modernity rather than to embrace it. But of course there were obvious parallels, too, with the department stores. For the latter also used grand staircases as focal points, in which new building technologies such as reinforced concrete were guided by the aim to maximize daylight and visibility and to offer the customer specific vistas towards the objects on display.

This was an unequal and tough competition. In the less developed crown lands, where the technology employed for the construction of department stores was even more exotic and where the goods and services they provided had a connotation of modernity, mystery and luxury, the architecture of these spaces acquired an almost surreal quality.[65] For example, a character in the interwar novel by the Polish writer Jan Parandowski reminisced about the impressions of Lemberg's Mikolasch Passage in a somewhat nostalgic, almost Zweigian fashion: 'Entering the arcade, he always experienced excitement, as if in anticipation of a surprise. So many things have happened under this glazed roof, under the patronage of mysterious figures, painted with great extravagance of crimson and gold on two enormous paintings, placed under the central vault!'[66] Yet it would be too easy to dismiss design museums as incapable of impressing the public with their architecture. The 'exhibitionary complex' was there – if for no other reason, because this was the time when the public was prepared to be easily impressed. The contemporary press is replete with excited reports on the imposing, overwhelming

[64] Carl Richter, *Kunst und Wissenschaft in Gewerbe und Industrie* (Vienna, 1867) p. 34.

[65] On the Lemberg Mikolasch Passage, see Iwona Kawalla, 'Sklepy w realnej i symbolicznej przestrzeni Lwowa w pierwszych dekadach XX wieku' [Shops in the real and symbolic space of Lwów in the first decades of the 20th century], *Visnyk of the Lviv University*, History Series, Special issue 'Lviv. Misto, suspil'stvo, kul'tura' [Lviv. City, Society, Culture], 10.1 'Lviv / Lwów / Lemberg yak miski prostory: uyavlennia, dosvidy, praktyky' [Lviv / Lwów / Lemberg as city spaces: imaginations, experiences, practices] (2016) pp. 215-216; Witold Szolginia, *Tamten Lwów 2: Ulice i Place* [That Lwów 2: streets and squares] (Cracow, 2011) p. 142.

[66] Jan Parandowski, *Niebo w płomieniach* [Sky in flames] (Warsaw, 1981) p. 35.

architecture of design museums. For example, the *Wiener Zeitung* reported enthusiastically in 1871 on the new building of the Museum of Art and Industry:

> The exterior is kept in the simplest forms; the only adornment of the bare brick building consists of graffito friezes … and in glazed terracotta medallions and tablets, which are meant to remind of famous artists and artisans of all times and nations... Hence we see here that the building was not only ideally pronounced, but also practically verified by applying two previously barely utilised techniques on a larger scale. The interior is all the richer. … The domestic art industry ... will find in the splendid building, which was dedicated to it with the grace of His Majesty and the liberality of the government, a new impetus for further vigorous striving forward on the way which has already been proscribed to the institute of the Austrian Museums, rewarded with such splendid successes.[67]

Excitement seeps through the seemingly dry and technical prose with which the journalist described the dimensions and decorations of the vestibule with its frescoes, the arcade courtyard with its glass roof and pillars, and the staircase. This was, quite simply, 'a truly imposing sight. The conditions are quite noble, the construction of the highest solidity, the materials most excellent, the whole decoration praiseworthy.'[68] Similarly, *Słowo Polskie*, the Lemberg newspaper of the National Democratic Party, particularly favoured and supported by industrialists, artisans and the educated classes, published an article devoted to the architecture of the new design museum in 1904 by Józef Kajetan Janowski. Situated on the main boulevard of the city it was inaugurated in the same year as Vienna's Gerngroß department store.[69] The façade employed a Neo-Renaissance design and the site was far from advantageous, despite being centrally located: it was obstructed on one side by the wing of the enormous headquarters of the Treasury Directorate. Nevertheless, the journalist noted how impressed everyone was with the effectiveness of the presentation:

> On the front above the portal, there is rich statuary by the sculptor Antoni Popiel representing the genius of work, trade and art; two figures, of sculpture and painting, sit between the columts wonderfully and perfectly, while … reliefs and sculptures above the windows on the ground floor [are] molded in cement... In front of the entrance there is a wide terrace with flights of stairs descending in three directions and two … stone pedestals for future gas

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[67] 'Das k. k. österreichische Museum für Kunst und Industrie,' *Wiener Zeitung*, 4 November 1871, p. 6.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Jakub Lewicki, *Między tradycją a nowoczesnością: architektura Lwowa lat 1893–1918* [Between tradition and modernity: Lwów architecture in 1893-1918], pp. 77-82, 98-100, 140-142; Maciej Matwijów, *Walka o Lwowskie dobra kultury w latach 1945-1948* [Fight over Lwów's cultural heritage in 1945-1948], p. 18.

> lanterns. The vestibule and the main staircase are rich architectonically and make an imposing impression.[70]

As with the Vienna museum, the Lemberg article went on to marvel at the architectural qualities of the staircase and the main halls, singling out typically the richness of the local stone used for construction, and the adequacy of the glass ceiling for allowing daylight and gas lighting for the evenings, the iron construction of the central roof and the locations of the specific offices and the adequate display of the collections.[71] The fairly dry language of a provincial newspaper commenting on the new museum building is no match for the wealth of press on the department stores and passages of the capital. Nevertheless, the terminology employed to characterize a building that, in 1904, would be seen as hopelessly outdated by the proponents of architectural modernism, indicates how much it was appreciated by the local public. Fin-de-siècle design museums might have lost out to the commercial architecture of department stores and the radical architecture of modernism *in the long run*, but at the time of their construction they were still capable of exercising a powerful appeal on their public.

Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest: An Exception?

> On Üllői Street, on the corner of Kinizsi and Rákos Lanes, with a surface area of 9,291 square meters, stands a monumental, magnificent building, the new home of the Royal Hungarian Applied Arts Museum. The imposing palace, whose construction cost 1,264,500 florins, was built in three years – 1893 to 1896 – in a style that happily blends the splendid forms of Hungarian architectural decoration with various other styles, without, however, allowing one style to prevail. The inauguration and the laying down of the founding stone of this newest magnificent building was solemnly celebrated yesterday morning in the presence of His Majesty the King.[72]

This newspaper report from the *Pester Lloyd* on the official inauguration of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts in 1896 (Figure 4.15) succinctly sums up the main features of the building's reception in subsequent literature that has been questioned only recently. A 'magnificent building,' 'imposing palace,' this *Prachtbau* was seen as a particularly successful architectural solution that incorporated

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[70] 'Gmach Muzeum Przemysłowego' [The building of the Industrial Museum], *Słowo Polskie*, 1 September 1904, p. 4.

[71] Ibid.

[72] 'Schlußsteinlegung beim Kunstgewerbepalais,' *Abendblatt des Pester Lloyd*, 26 October 1896, p. 3.

the national element into a lucky stylistic amalgam. In many respects, even the public that knew and admired the innovation of Vienna Secession was confronted with a building whose splendour was of a different kind: instead of the worn-out revivalist canon, the curved lines of the façades with their bizarrely shaped windows, colourful ceramic tiles that seemed to spill from the bright green and yellow roof, the central cupola, and especially the interior alluded to oriental architecture. References to some of the motifs from Hungarian traditional culture were obvious but the latter in particular was the result of Lechner's reflection upon the display of Indian art at the South Kensington Museum in 1889.[73] Subsequent reports in the professional periodicals and the mainstream press also highlighted its extraordinary effect on contemporaries, how it stood out in contrast with the surrounding block and how fundamentally Hungarian its architectural language was. For example, the architect Emill Fittler, who would serve as director of the School of Applied Arts in Budapest a year later, remarked in 1896 that the new building's 'interesting, colourful facade' emerging from the scaffolding 'sharply separated it from the building block around it' and noted that its 'carefully crafted details of Magyar character ... seemed to indicate that the institution to which it was to be entrusted was devoted to the development of national art in the national directon.'[74]

Yet was Lechner's stylistic mélange so truly exceptional? Would the Emperor Francis Joseph, who would refuse to leave the Hofburg through the Michaelerplatz entrance gate in order to avoid seeing the offensive Looshaus a decade later, have agreed to unveil it and visit it again in 1900 (Figure 4.16), had it been as radically different as many of its contemporaries preferred to describe it?

The story of the construction of the Museum of Applied Arts is well known, and there is very little in it that is exceptional in comparison with other Habsburg design museums.[75] Nearly two decades after the foundation of the museum, in 1890, an architectural competition was called for the construction of the new building. It was specified that architects had to accommodate the museums of applied arts and ethnography, as well as the applied arts school, in the same building. There would be a joint reading room, a drawing room and a library but otherwise the three institutions would remain independent from each other spatially. The museum required, apart from the foyer, an 'imposing' glass-covered central courtyard of 800-1000 square metres, rooms for specialised and temporary exhibitions, a gypsum copy room, further rooms for permanent collections and one more 'representative meeting room.'[76] Of the 12 designs submitted, some by such respected historicist

[73] Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' p. 11.

[74] János Gerle, *Lechner Ödön* (Budapest, 2003) p. 142.

[75] Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism.' For a contemporary account, see, for example, 'Das neue Palais des Kunstgewerbe-Museums,' *Pester Lloyd*, 25 October 1896, p. 5.

[76] Ács, '*Keletre Magyar*,' p. 12; Gerle, *Lechner Ödön*, p. 135.

architects as, for example, Albert Schickedanz (1846-1915) and Alajos Hauszmann (1847-1926) (who would later design the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest), the committee saw none of them as fulfilling their expectations, but it was decided that, after significant modification, the project 'Look East, Hungarian!' (*Keletre magyar!*) by Ödön Lechner (1845-1914) and Gyula Pártos (1845-1916) could be considered.[77] The appointment of the former, in particular, was bound to provoke attention, as Lechner was at the time the most prominent representative of the new Hungarian architecture that blended Art Nouveau with other stylistic canons, especially the ones that were at the time considered oriental, in an attempt to forge the Hungarian style.

The decision to award the commission to Lechner, however, delayed the construction for three years and the inauguration nearly missed the Millenial celebrations in 1896. In fact, construction works continued for months after the inauguration, and the building divided the opinion of the local public; while some admired Lechner's architectural genius, others thought it was in poor taste. For example, the journal *Építő Ipar* (Architectural Industry) published an article by, as it turned out, one of the unsuccessful participants in the competition, Frigyes Schön, who criticised Lechner's design for what he saw as a deviation from 'pure style' (i.e. historicism), and as a 'slave to fashion.'[78] For many years, many could not come to terms with the edifice. In the words of Károly Kós (1883-1977), another eminent Hungarian architect of the generation that superceded Lechner, the museum building was a 'gypsy palace' at which he nevertheless could not help but stare.[79]

Until recently, scholarly interpretation of the Museum of Applied Arts has been strongly influenced by the contemporary reports that saw its architecture as quintessentially modern but also national and as the one that promoted applied arts as an embodiment of new, modern Hungary. This is partly due to the fact that while, later in his professional career, Lechner was sidelined by representatives of more conservative architectural schools and the political elite in Hungary, he had a great influence and even a following among some of the architects of the younger generation such as István Medgyaszay (1877-1959), Lajos Kozma (1884-1948), Béla Lajta (1873-1920) and even Kós, who continued to use some of his most interesting innovations in other public buildings across historic Hungary.[80] Already the proposal's name, 'Look East, Hungarian!' indicated that the building was searching for a new language beyond the conventions of historicism. Although Lechner doubted that

[77] Ács, '*Keletre Magyar*,' pp. 11-20.

[78] Ács, '*Keletre Magyar*,' p. 19.

[79] Beáta Fabó and Anthony Gall, *Napkeletről jöttem nagy palotás rakott városba kerültem. Kós Károly világa, 1907-1914* [I came from the east to a big palace-laden city. The World of Károly Kós, 1907-1914] (Budapest, 2014) p. 41.

[80] For a good summary of this approach see Gerle, 'Hungarian Architecture from 1900 to 1918,' pp. 225-232.

as an individual architect he could create one by himself, he did believe that its making was necessary. In a polemical essay in 1906 he argued that 'there has not yet been a Hungarian language of form but it will exist' and this statement became a signature of his entire legacy.[81] Of the many later statements about the museum's architecture, in press as well as in more professionalized academic circles, perhaps the view of the museum's second director Jenő Radisics is representative: 'The façade speaks to us in a language that expresses that the modern art of our country is particularly Hungarian; its power is inspired by our own artistic past; it proudly proclaims that Hungarian decorative art engages us in a new vision and provides us with the opportunity to affirm its eminent qualities.'[82] Alternatively, the building has been analyzed as a sort of deeply individualised – even maverick – version of Art Nouveau.[83]

Recent studies have revised Lechner's legacy in a broader comparative framework of European Historicism, Art Nouveau and Orientalism. The search for a national style was a defining characteristic of the entire European continent in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Houze has argued convincingly that the Museum of Applied Arts should be understood as a much more transitional building, a kind of bricolage, by Lechner the historicist deeply influenced by Semper's idea of dressing, as well as by cultural nationalism and oriental ornament, evolving into Lechner the secessionist.[84] Nevertheless, his general oeuvre and his Museum for Applied Arts in particular have so often been analyzed from the perspective of exceptionality that we often forget how intertwined his ideas were with those of other architects of his time. Semper, for example, was fascinated with oriental ornament to an almost obsessive degree; others, too, were particularly impressed with the exhibition of Indian artefacts at the Great Exhibition and his thoughts on style partly derive from his reflection on that display.

However, they also carry more general connotations for the role and function of ornament in contemporary architecture. Semper's view that Europe's progress was largely scientific and technological, but not artistic, corresponded with contemporary convictions that different cultures and

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[81] Ödön Lechner, 'A magyar épités' [Hungarian architecture], *Jövendő* 1.33 (1903) p. 32; idem, *Magyar forma-nyelv nem volt, hanem lesz* [There has not yet been a Hungarian language of form but it will exist] (Budapest, 1906). Also see Gerle, *Lechner Ödön*, p. 33.

[82] Quoted in Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' pp. 10-11.

[83] Ilona Sármány-Parsons, 'Ödön Lechner: Maverick, Dreamer, Patriot. An Architect of Modernisation,' in Zsombor Jékely, Zsuzsa Margittai and Klára Szegzárdy-Csengery, eds, *Ödön Lechner in Context: Studies of the International Conference on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of Ödön Lechner's Death* (Budapest, 2015) pp. 37-38; Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' p. 7.

[84] Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' p. 20.

societies found themselves at different stages of development. Semper's contemporary Owen Jones, whose theory of ornament and 1863 designs of the Oriental Court of the South Kensington Museum laid the foundation of modern design, also believed that oriental design was more accomplished and better adapted to the contemporary market.[85] Drawing inspiration from oriental artefacts that were believed to have been untouched by industrialization was thus a way, for Semper and others, to return Europe to its due place of artistic hegemony that it had lost due to industrialization. The colourful façade of the Budapest museum is the representation of this ideal. Furthermore, in a city that had previously seen a number of exoticising Neo-Gothic and Neo-Renaissance buildings, such as Frigyes Feszl's Romantic Vigadó Concert Hall (1859) that included quotations from traditional Hungarian folk costume, and Ludwig Förster's and Otto Wagner's 'Moorish' synagogues (1859 and 1872), its appearance might have seemed extraordinary in the context of its immediate surroundings bloc, but not Budapest's architectural landscape overall.

Even Lechner's lavish use of Zsolnay ceramics, which gained an international reputation for Hungary in the late nineteenth century with its porcelain and pyrogranite, for the 'dressing' of the Museum of Applied Arts, is just another manifestation of the Semperian preoccupation with craft. Pyrogranite tyles might have been the very latest technology, but Lechner might have rather considered their use as a reference to a technique with deep roots in Hungarian folk art, combining diverse patterns from Hungary's different historic regions and further afield in order to map out Hungarian history through architectural language.[86] Even more than ceramics, however, he was fascinated by Semper's favourite medium, textiles:

> Take, for example, Hungarian gala dress. It had its origins in the primitive language of form of our people and in the course of time it has become such an exquisite form of dress that it satisfies a certain demand not only in Hungary but in the clothing of all cultured nations of the world. … Hungarian festive dress is a mature, developed, generally accepted concept although it originates from simple forms which other disciplines (architecture, painting and arts and crafts) could well develop.'[87]

Lechner's efforts were part of a larger trend in Hungary at the time, and an artistic projection of an effort led by leading art historians such as József Huszka, who believed in the Persian and Indian

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[85] Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of Its Global Reproducibility* (London, 2008) pp. 116-17.

[86] Lechner explained his fondness of ceramics also by the production of the decorative brick factory that belonged to his family. Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' p. 9.

[87] Lechner, *Magyar forma-nyelv,* quoted in Houze, 'Hungarian Nationalism,' p. 22.

roots of Hungarian culture.[88] This theory was later discarded, but when the Museum of Applied Arts was created it was in full swing. In choosing the 'modern' gala dress rather than other traditional garments as a main source of inspiration, Lechner was making a statement about the building's modernity.[89] Certainly, in comparison with earlier museum and exhibition buildings in Budapest such as the Régi Műcsarnok and the Technological Museum by Alajos Hauszmann (1887-1889), for example, which were so much more embedded in Ringstrasse historicism, the Museum of Applied Arts stands out as an extraordinarily individual statement. Furthermore, it represents an important threshold in Lechner's own career as an architect: it was there, among other buildings designed at approximately that time, that he developed his programme that would eventually lead to the establishment of a distinct architectural school in Hungary. No wonder that it was subsequently hailed by many modernists as a precursor. However, if we carefully consider its typical – for this kind of museum – floor plans, as well as the connotations of successful stylistic blending, and the fact that it conformed to the predominant historical interpretation of national history and was part of an artistic tradition that drew inspiration from the Ottoman period in Hungarian history, the museum suddenly appears much more conventional than routinely presented. Few texts indicate better how the building fitted in the complex cultural space of the late Habsburg Empire than the actual founding stone charter:

> We, Francis Josef I, by the grace of God the Emperor of Austria, the King of Bohemia ... and apostolic King of Hungary have appeared today in the splendid palace of the museum and the school of applied arts, which is one of the outstanding creations of domestic architecture completed at the time of the millenium of the Hungarian state, on the occasion of the laying down of the founding stone, in order to offer this building to its beneficial cultural purpose. This mighty edifice will be a lasting witness of the fact that Our beloved Hungary ... strives towards the forever increasing level of national work through the great sacrifices brought to institutions that nurture public taste. May the genius of tireless, patriotic and enthusiastic aspiration live in these halls and increase its fruitful influence of the arts upon the blossoming of Hungarian industry. May the Almighty grant that out of the valuable designs accumulated here and out of the workmanship of the young men trained here there would spring a rich

[88] József Huszka, 'A régi hazai ornamentika' [Our old national ornamentics], *Magyar Iparművészet* (July 1899) pp. 149-157.

[89] Houze ('Hungarian Nationalism,' p. 23-24) also points out the classic tripartite horizontal division of the façade, with the rusticated ground floor, as well as several other architectural elements, as a clear debt to historicism.

source for the development of our art industry and the prosperity of our thousand year-old beloved Fatherland.[90]

Conclusions

Once constructed, design museum buildings were attacked from several positions, one of which was architectural modernism in its various incarnations. This chapter has argued, however, that in order to understand the meaning and connotations of museum architecture for its contemporaries, their history needs to be disconnected from such modernist critique. First of all, the appeal of their architecture needs to be put in a larger context of other, earlier sites of industrial display, from remote aristocratic mansions and town halls to industrial exhibitions and world fairs. These sites were also variously inadequate for the display of applied arts and design, and often accompanied by the fundamental lack of space and concept. The Semperian solution to what many understood as the inadequate architecture of the 1851 Great London Exhibition was borne out of the epoch of historicism with its own specific postulates of taste and measure. But this solution was also a response to the immediate situation at home, where the condition in which applied art and design collections were temporarily stored and displayed endangered their very existence and future. Architects, who were often involved in the adaptation of temporary sites for museum purposes, were perhaps even more aware of these dangers than others.

The Neo-Renaissance façades and interiors of the Museum for Art and Industry, and the numerous other buildings that followed, spoke the only language available to them at that moment and the only language that their public was prepared to understand: historicism. They followed Semper's ideas about the ideal museum in other respects, too. First, they were spatially structured in such a way as to accommodate his idea of the four basic materials and often aimed to display their collection by classifying their objects according to these materials. Second, they centred around a large, vaulted interior courtyard that served as a symbolic 'hearth,' or central space in the Semperian system. Third, their approach was that the museum and its art school should be interconnected and function within the same space – either in the same building or in adjacent buildings. Finally, they offered their own architectural solutions for the public used to the consumerist spectacle that made them worthy competitors – even if in an unequal battle, with the department stores and other manifestations of

[90] 'Schlußsteinlegung beim Kunstgewerbepalais,' *Abendblatt des Pester Lloyd*, 26 October 1896, p. 3. This study did not find evidence to support an otherwise quite common interpretation that the Viennese Court and the Emperor allegedly disliked the building (see, for example, Gerle, 'Hungarian Architecture from 1900 to 1918,' p. 225).

capitalist modernity. Given the similarity of their phraseology in the press reports on the *Warenhäuser* and the design museums, it is remarkable that so little comparative literature exists on them that is specific to the Habsburg regions. Of the voluminous literature on the Looshaus alone, very little is concerned with its function as a department store, an area that requires further academic scrutiny.

Later on, in the very last years of the nineteenth- and the first decade of the twentieth century, when the new architectural language of Art Nouveau presented itself as a challenge to historicism, architects, who were always at the forefront of the making of design museums, incorporated this new knowledge and linked it to the local context, often in connection with the search for the national style, carefully treading the thin line between what they understood as modernity and tradition. The search for a national style was a common phenomenon but it had particularly interesting developments in Austria-Hungary, including some of the museums discussed in this chapter. Yet even with these later cases, as the example of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts shows, the fundamental postulates that defined the very nature of design museums, remained Semperian throughout.

Hence the museums of design fell into a crisis in the early twentieth century neither because their architecture was outdated, nor because department stores simiply displayed better, nor because their public lost interest, nor even because, as would be tempting to conclude for later examples such as Budapest, Lemberg and Cracow, the architectural practices became increasingly desparate as a consequence of the fragmentation of the cultural sphere of the late Habsburg Monarchy. Rather than architecture, other factors were the cause of the crisis. It might have simply been that, as our imperial furniture maker Samuel Kramer argued in connection to Hungary, one could not 'make political capital out of a museum of art industry.'[91] In other words, and put simply, in contrast to fine arts galleries that were comprehensively graced with imperial and state support and patronage, once the buildings were constructed and political speeches made, there remained little political will to actually support the institutions.

[91] Kramer, 'Ungarisches Landesmusenm für Kunstgewerbe,' p. 6.