



**MAK**

Press Release

## **WAYS TO MODERNISM**

**Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact**

Press Conference    Tuesday, 16 December 2014, 10:30 a.m.  
Opening              Tuesday, 16 December 2014, 7:00 p.m.  
Exhibition Venue    MAK Exhibition Hall  
                              MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna  
Exhibition Dates    17 December 2014 – 19 April 2015  
                              Tue 10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m., Wed–Sun 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.  
                              Free admission every Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

With the exhibition *WAYS TO MODERNISM: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact*, the MAK will be presenting a final high point in the year of its 150th anniversary. Conceived around the legendary works of Josef Hoffmann (1870–1956) and Adolf Loos (1870–1933), the exhibition will offer an impressive portrayal of the development of Viennese modernism into a global brand. With their radical, consistent, and incisive oeuvres, Hoffmann and Loos, among most influential figures in Vienna around 1900, developed two completely contrary alternatives for modernity in art, architecture, and design, both of which were spectacular for their time. *Ways to Modernism* not only focuses on the thinking and key works of these two visionaries, but also the historical background of their ideas and their continued resonance in works by internationally renowned architects and designers to this day.

The process of industrialization and democratization in Vienna around 1900 formed the backdrop for the ideas of Hoffmann and Loos, whose “creative” and “economical” paths offered two successful approaches to the growing importance of the consumer’s individual identity. Hoffmann interpreted architecture and design as artistic projects, while Loos saw art as an autonomous area far removed from the manufacturing of everyday buildings and household items. Hoffmann sought to produce modern art, while Loos aimed to create modern culture.

Josef Hoffmann believed in the power of the aesthetic and generated artistically fully composed, finely crafted environments in architecture and household items. Adolf Loos, by contrast, devoted himself to evolutionary and emancipatory ideas and believed

that the purpose of architecture and design was to create a lasting and unobtrusive background to allow individuality to emerge. He viewed established types of household items and architecture that did not need to be artistically redesigned as the best means to this end. Hoffmann and Loos owed their success to the artistic and intellectual milieu of the metropolitan culture of Vienna around 1900 and a synergy of like-minded groups: culturally open and economically powerful new social classes came together with a young, avant-garde, and internationally well-connected community of artists.

In this environment, Hoffmann and Loos's oeuvres went on to make influential contributions to the heated international debate on the "right" direction for the modernist movement. The Vienna Secession invited prominent English, French, German, and Belgian artists to its exhibitions. Along with the Wiener Werkstätte, Hoffmann created the *Stoclet House* (1905–1911) in Brussels, one of the most prominent works of the international art nouveau movement. After living in the United States for three years, Adolf Loos brought a completely new image of modern culture back to Vienna, which he spread in polemical newspaper articles and demonstrated in the famous *Looshaus* (1910–1911) on Michaelerplatz. His brilliant writings continue to be read and regarded as the "Old Testament" of modernism.

### **Exhibition Concept**

In five chapters, the exhibition *WAYS TO MODERNISM: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact* shows how these successful, modern theories of civilization and living emerged on the path to greater individual freedom, and how their influence continues to be felt today.

With a selection of key buildings, furnishings, household items, and writings, the exhibition begins by outlining the achievements of forerunners to the modernist movement, including Theophil Hansen and Otto Wagner. Their work formed the foundation upon which the artists of the Vienna Secession, which was co-founded by Josef Hoffmann, and Adolf Loos, the group's antipode, built their oeuvres. As examples, the exhibition includes the work of the architect Theophil von Hansen for Archduke Leopold at Schloss Hernstein in the 1870s. The focus of this introductory segment to the exhibition is on architects' reactions to the crisis in the applied arts in the wake of industrialization as well as the development of a genuinely modern language of form.

The second chapter of the exhibition, *Otto Wagner*, is entirely devoted to the "father of Viennese Modernism." The essence of Wagner's strategy of design is presented with a selection of his most important works, including the reconstruction of the facade and the interior of the "Die Zeit" dispatch office (1902), numerous original pieces of

furniture, and design drawings for his most important buildings. *WAYS TO MODERNISM* highlights Wagner's pioneering achievement of defining the prototype for nearly every type of building of the modern city for the first time in Vienna as an expression of the modern lifestyle.

*Modern Lifestyles*, the third and central chapter in the vast MAK Exhibition Hall, covers the high point of Viennese modernism in the years between the founding of the Secession in 1897 and the completion of the movement's most important works around 1910. Hoffmann and Loos initially took similar approaches, but soon developed in divergent directions, as evidenced by reconstructions and models that illustrate their contrasting interpretations of important building commissions. These include unique pieces of furniture as well as the modern city building as exemplified by the residential and commercial "Loos building" (Vienna, 1910–1911) as well as the *Stoclet House* (Brussels, 1905–1911), a mansion designed by Hoffmann for the banker Adolphe Stoclet.

In this area of the exhibition, for the first time reconstructions of two interiors that were created around the same time will be compared. They offer an instructive demonstration of these two divergent approaches: In the bedroom of the Salzer apartment designed by Josef Hoffmann (Vienna, 1902), all the objects are organized in a strict system of square ornamentation. In the bedroom of Loos's own apartment (Vienna, 1903), by contrast, the predominantly haptic aesthetic of the curtains and carpets, which were not designed by Loos, creates an intimate atmosphere.

The parallel worlds of these two paths to modernism are exemplified in the exhibition by the portraits of some of the patrons of the Vienna Secession and Adolf Loos, which are contrasted here for the first time. Gustav Klimt's *Portrait of Gertrud Loew* (married as Eisler von Terramare and later Felsövényi, 1902) exemplifies the Secessionist position, while Oskar Kokoschka's *Portrait of Fred Goldman* (which shows a child with his parents' hands, 1909) and his oil painting *Old Man* (Father Hirsch, 1909) offers a psychological portrayal of the patrons of Adolf Loos.

The fourth chapter, *New Viennese Ways*, illustrates the inspiring potential of Josef Hoffmann's aesthetic approach and Adolf Loos's evolutionary and emancipatory strategy. Beginning in 1910, a new generation of architects forged new paths to modernism that built on the work of Hoffmann and Loos. They either synthesized the two approaches based on how people live or radically emphasized the industrial and collective models. The contrary positions of the Secession and Adolf Loos are evident in the reconstructions of the opulent *Boudoir d'une grande vedette*, Hoffmann's contribution to the 1937 World Fair in Paris, and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's

*Working single woman's apartment* (1927–1928). These new, humane, and socially responsible approaches are illustrated in works by Oskar Strnad and Josef Frank. The internationally oriented Austrian avant-garde is represented by Ernst Plischke and the Vienna offices of Singer & Dicker.

The fifth chapter of the exhibition, *Resources*, shows the continued influence of Hoffmann and Loos's ideas after 1945. A section on the rediscovery of the two pioneers of modernism in the 1960s is followed by a demonstration of the growing independence and the ubiquity of forms and ideas of Viennese modernism in the now firmly established consumer society. Postmodernism in the 1970s and 1980s experimented extensively with these ideas, as evidenced in works by Hans Hollein and Hermann Czech, among others. Contemporary architecture, by contrast, increasingly emphasizes the economical and emancipatory path of modernism; examples in the exhibition include ready-made concepts by Lacaton & Vassal (Paris), floor plan strategies by Werner Neuwirth (Vienna) which were influenced by Loos, and self-empowerment projects by architects such as Anna Heringer (Laufen, Germany).

A catalog will accompany the exhibition: *WAYS TO MODERNISM: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact*, edited by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Matthias Boeckl, and Christian Witt-Döring, in German and English, including numerous essays by international experts, 336 pages, MAK, Vienna/Birkhäuser, Basel, 2015. Available at the MAK Design Shop and online at [MAKdesignshop.at](http://MAKdesignshop.at) for €39.60.

Visual materials on the exhibition can be downloaded from [MAK.at/press](http://MAK.at/press).

#### PREMIUM SPONSORS



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## Supplemental Program

### TALK SERIES

On the occasion of the exhibition, experts on Josef Hoffmann and Adolf Loos will explain their ways of thinking and working and will discuss the survival of these two contrary approaches in contemporary works by architects and designers.

Sat, 10.1.2015, 4 p.m.

#### **Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact**

Talk with guest curator Matthias Boeckl and MAK Curator Christian Witt-Döring, moderation by Isabella Marboe

Sat, 24.1.2015, 4 p.m.

#### **Markus Kristan: Adolf Loos vs. Josef Hoffmann**

Adolf Loos and Josef Hoffmann were born at almost the same time in 1870 and only a few kilometers apart in Moravia. After a short resumption of their friendship, lasting rivalry took root at the end of 1898 and continued until the death of Loos in 1933. Yet they had several traits in common: they were both architects and designers of arts and crafts objects—for which they are world-renowned today—who revered Otto Wagner, were both friends with Josef Frank, and both had an uncompromising artistic outlook.

Sat, 28.2.2015, 4 p.m.

#### **Friedrich Kurrent: Adolf Loos and Josef Hoffmann – Rediscovery**

Tue, 10.3.2015, 7 p.m.

#### **Hermann Czech: Loos's Concepts with 100 Years of Hindsight**

Loos's concepts and terms are an open system. If transitions are borne in mind, then Loos's polemics also apply to advanced modernity. (Josef Frank's discourse prevents "Loos's concepts" from becoming doctrinaire.)

Sat, 18.4.2015, 4 p.m.

#### **Werner Neuwirth: Producing and Portraying as Architectural Substance**

A structure is inconceivable without form, but construction forms don't grow on trees: first, a form must be found. Every reification naturally follows a certain logic of production and, simultaneously, every work is subject to a semantic reception. In their diverse ideal weighting of producing and portraying, architectural stances differ, ranging from precisely defined forms to cultural abysses.

### **GUIDED TOURS**

Tue, 6 p.m.

Sat, 3 p.m.

Sun, 3 p.m. *WAYS TO MODERNISM* part 1 & 4:30 p.m. *WAYS TO MODERNISM* part 2

### **EXPERT GUIDED TOURS**

Tue, 20.1.2015, 6 p.m.

Tue, 14.4.2015, 6 p.m.

with guest curator Matthias Boeckl and MAK Curator Christian Witt-Döring

### **FILM SCREENINGS**

Tue, 24.2.2015, 6 p.m.

**OUR WAY TO HUMANITY. Josef Hoffmann – Master of the *Gesamtkunstwerk***

(Length: 59:18 min.)

Subsequently: Matthias Boeckl in conversation with Friedrich Kurrent

Sat, 14.3.2015, 4 p.m.

**LOOS ORNAMENTAL**

(Length: 72 min.)

With the aid of notebooks and sketchbooks, as well as analyses of architectural works and sculptures, the film shows 27 structures and interior decorations by Adolf Loos that are still intact. His offensive against the ornamental decoration of buildings became a cause of dispute in architectural theory.

### **MAK ON TOUR Special**

The MAK ON TOUR Special follows Josef Hoffmann and Adolf Loos's traces in architecture and overall design and takes a close look at the pioneering role of Otto Wagner.

Every tour begins with a guided tour through the exhibition in the MAK. Afterwards, we travel by foot or by bus transfer to various historical buildings, where another guided tour and viewing awaits the tour participants.

### **Tour Overview**

**TOUR 1:** Adolf Loos at the Heart of Vienna: the Looshaus on Michaelerplatz

Fri, 16.1.2014, 2 p.m., Price € 20

**TOUR 2:** Otto Wagner the Pioneer—Part 1: The WAGNER:WERK Austrian Postal

Savings Bank Museum

Fri, 30.1.2014, 2:30 p.m., Price € 20

**TOUR 3:** Wagner the Pioneer—Part 2: The Otto Wagner Hospital (Center for Community Medicine at Baumgartner Höhe) and Otto Wagner's Church Am Steinhof

[www.wienkav.at/ows](http://www.wienkav.at/ows)

Sat, 14.2.2015, 2 p.m., Price € 30

**TOUR 4:** Convalescence in the Countryside: Josef Hoffmann and the Sanatorium Purkersdorf

Sat, 7.3.2015, 2 p.m., Price € 30

**TOUR 5:** "New Living" 1932: The Werkbundsiedlung in Vienna

Sat, 21.3.2015, 2 p.m., Price € 30

**TOUR 6:** Adolf Loos in the Countryside: The Looshaus am Kreuzberg (Lower Austria)  
Sun, 12.4.2015, 11:30 a.m., Price € 40

It is also possible to have lunch or coffee and cake at the Looshaus, or even to go for a short walk nearby.

Limited attendance, registration for all tours is imperative:

MAK Marketing, T: +43 1 711 36-231 or [marketing@MAK.at](mailto:marketing@MAK.at)

Prices include admission to/guided tour of the MAK and for the participating institutions as well as a bus transfer to and from the MAK for Tours 3 to 6.

MAK Annual Ticket holders receive a 20% discount per tour.

For more information and updates on the different tours, go to [MAK.at](http://MAK.at)

Program is subject to change!

Press Fact Sheet

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Guest Curator	Matthias Boeckl
Curator	Christian Witt-Döring, MAK
Catalogue	<i>WAYS TO MODERNISM: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact</i> , edited by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Matthias Boeckl, and Christian Witt-Döring, German/English, including numerous essays by international experts, 336 pages, MAK Vienna/Birkhäuser Verlag, Basel 2015. Available at the MAK Design Shop, and online at MAKdesignshop.at for € 39,60.
Admission	Regular price: €7.90 / reduced price: €5.50 / family pass: €11 Free admission for children and young people up to 19 years old
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