



EUROPEAN UNION



Press Release

POST-OTTO WAGNER **From the Postal Savings Bank to Post-Modernism**

Press Conference	Tuesday, 29 May 2018, 10:30 a.m.
Opening	Tuesday, 29 May 2018, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Exhibition Hall MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	30 May – 30 September 2018
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

To mark the 100th anniversary of Otto Wagner's death the MAK exhibition *POST-OTTO WAGNER: From the Postal Savings Bank to Post-Modernism* directs its focus on the lasting influence of his epochal works on other architects and designers. Wagner is considered to be one of the most important pioneers of early Modernism: His rejection of the use of historical styles, his globally respected writings on architecture and urban planning, and his excellent structures are still inspiring today. The MAK exhibition takes a look not only at the interaction between Wagner and his contemporaries, but also at his influence on his students and later generations of architects and designers in particular.

With buildings like the Imperial Royal Austrian Postal Savings Bank, the St. Leopold Church at the Steinhof, and the structures of the Viennese metropolitan railway Wagner became one of the most important architects on an international scale. The Austrian Postal Savings Bank (1904–1912), one of his main building projects, distinctively stands for the notable connection between traditional forms of construction and contemporary engineer's architecture which he initiated. This key work of Viennese Modernism marks the central starting point of the MAK exhibition. Wagner used constructive elements as form giving principles, with the equally ornamental and functional use of aluminum bolts he gave the building's marble plated façade the impression of the machine age. Even still today the furniture which he designed for the Postal Savings Bank serves as a model for furniture design.

His modern view of architecture also made Wagner a proponent of the Union of Austrian Artists Secession. His school and his atelier produced globally renown architects such as Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich, Josef Plečnik, Max Fabiani, Leopold Bauer, Hubert Gessner, István Medgyaszay, Jan Kotěra, Pavel Janák, Rudolf Perco,

Karl Ehn, Marcel Kammerer, Emil Hoppe, Otto Schönthal, Ernst Lichtblau, and Rudolph M. Schindler.

Influences and parallels can also be found in the work of many architecture icons of both more recent architectural history and of Post-Modernism, such as Superstudio, Frei Otto, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Shin Takamatsu, Walter Pichler, and Hans Hollein.

The exhibition *POST-OTTO WAGNER: From the Postal Savings Bank to Post-Modernism* approaches the multivalent network surrounding Otto Wagner's architectural legacy in three sections which can be viewed in any order:

Plan and Methods: Dimensions of the Metropolis

With comprehensive urban projects like the expansion of the Danube Canal (1898–1908) and the Vienna Metropolitan Railway with its stations which are seen as objects of interest (1894–1901) Otto Wagner made lasting changes to the Viennese cityscape. Convinced that the technological forms of the engineer had to be artistically transformed by architects he thought of urban development in particular in new dimensions. The decades around the turn of the twentieth century were also internationally the time of the “great plan.” After the success of the Chicago World's Fair (1893) spaciously planned city visions emerged worldwide, such as Daniel Burnham's plan for Chicago (1909), the city developing competition for Canberra (1912), Eliel Saarinen's design for Helsinki-Munkkiniemi (1915), and Hendrik Petrus Berlage's plan for Amsterdam South (1914).

In his study *Die Großstadt* (1911) Otto Wagner wrote down his ideas for an unlimited metropolis. Until today Wagner's large-scale projects with their monumentality and symmetry and almost baroque-style character, and his so-called “cellular conglomerates” which as networks and grids have remained a dominating thinking pattern in urban development have continued to influence the planning of cities. In theory and in the experimental architecture of the 1960s and 1970s the modern grid-planned city was regarded with an equal amount of criticism and enthusiasm.

Colossal public housing complexes which were built by students of Wagner in the Red Vienna era, such as Karl Marx Hof (Karl Ehn, 1927–1930), Karl Seitz Hof (Hubert Gessner, 1926–1933), and the Rabenhof (Heinrich Schmid and Hermann Aichinger, 1925–1928) still bear witness to the monumental city visions which Otto Wagner communicated at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts at the turn of the twentieth century.

Type and Style: Forms of the Metropolis

After 1900 Otto Wagner tended toward increasingly clear and simple solutions in architecture. With the so-called “Nutzstil” [Functional Style] which he developed and

whose forms were to be derived from materials, construction, and function, Otto Wagner ultimately overcame Historicism, engineering structures, and finally the style of the Vienna Secession. In contrast, after the First World War his students took up the stylistically diverse approaches of Modernism and developed them further. On the one hand they oriented themselves on regionalism, the homeland style, and national styles (like Czech Cubism), while on the other hand they found interest in the International Style as well as in traditional solutions like Classicism and the Biedermeier style. Vienna after 1900 was therewith a laboratory for style pluralism and individual stylistic approaches, such as those of Josef Plečnik and Max Fabiani, which once again became topical in Post-Modernism.

Starting not only from Wagner an innovative type of metropolitan office and residential buildings, department stores, and hotels established itself in Vienna and in Central Europe. An example of these new building tasks is not least the famous House on Michaelerplatz (1910–1911) designed by Adolf Loos.

Technology and Material: Constructions of the Metropolis

Characteristic buildings like the Postal Savings Bank, the apartment building known as the “Majolika House” in the Linke Wienzeile, dressed with its glazed ceramic tiles (Otto Wagner, 1898–1899), the Neumann department store on Kärntner Straße (Otto Wagner, 1895/96, destroyed), the Zacherlhaus (Josef Plečnik, 1903–1905), and the commercial building Portois & Fix (Max Fabiani, 1900) stand in this section of the exhibition as examples of the innovative approach to constructive possibilities, manufacturing techniques, and materials which Otto Wagner promoted.

Not only staff members and students like Max Fabiani, Josef Plečnik, and István Medgyaszay let themselves be inspired by Wagner’s handling of façades. Obvious parallels can also be seen in the works of important representatives of Post-Modern architecture, such as Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. The meaningful aspects of the façades of their post-modernist buildings can be considered separate from their structure—in the sense of an American culture of billboards.

The exhibition is accompanied by the publication *POST-OTTO WAGNER: From the Postal Savings Bank to Post-Modernism* by Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Iris Meder, and Ákos Moravánszky, edited by Christoph Thun-Hohenstein and Sebastian Hackenschmidt, German/English, ca. 300 pages with numerous color illustrations. MAK/Birkhäuser Verlag, Vienna 2018. Available as of the end of June at the MAK Design Shop and at MAKdesignshop.at.

WAGNER:WERK Museum Postal Savings Bank

With support from the BAWAG P.S.K. and SIGNA the Postal Savings Bank, as one of Otto Wagner’s main works, could be included as a real building in the exhibition. Visi-

tors to the MAK can enjoy free admission to the exhibition at the WAGNER:WERK Postal Savings Bank Museum—reopened on occasion of the MAK exhibition and with additional curation by the MAK—from Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Press photos are available for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://www.mak.at/en/press).

The exhibition is realized with financial support from the European Regional Development Fund, and is part of the project “Bilaterale Designnetzwerke” within the framework of the program INTERREG V-A Austria-Czech Republic.

Kindly supported by



SUPPORTING PROGRAM

Regular Exhibition Tours

Saturdays, 2 p.m.

Dialogue Tour

Tue, 5 Jun 2018, 6 p.m.

Curator Sebastian Hackenschmidt in conversation with Ákos Moravánsky, Expert Advisor of the exhibition

Tue, 11 Sep 2018, 6 p.m.

Curator Sebastian Hackenschmidt in conversation with Claudia Cavallar, Exhibition Design

Architecture Walks

Short guided tour through the exhibition in the MAK, followed by a walk with experts in Vienna's urban space

“Wagner’s Tracks: Along the Wienzeile” with Claudia Cavallar, exhibition designer and architect, and Maria Welzig, architectural historian

Sun, 24 Jun 2018, 2–ca. 4:30 p.m.

“On the Ringstraße of the Proletariat” with Iris Meder

Sun, 2 Sep 2018, 2–ca. 4:30 p.m.

“Communicating Façades” with Claudia Cavallar, exhibition designer and architect

Sun, 9 Sep 2018, 2–ca. 4:30 p.m.

Costs: € 28

WEDNESDAYS AT THE MAK

Wed, 19 Sep 2018, 3 p.m.

Guided tour through the exhibition, followed by further discussion at the restaurant Salonplafond im MAK

MAK on TOUR

to the Austrian Postal Savings Bank

Short guided tour through the exhibition in the MAK, followed by a visit at the Austrian Postal Savings Bank by Otto Wagner with Anne Marie Gusmik, formerly PSK Vienna

Sun, 3 Jun 2018, 2–ca. 4 p.m.

Sun, 16 Sep 2018, 2–ca. 4 p.m.

Fri, 7 Sep 2018, 5–ca. 7 p.m.

Total price: € 28 or € 26 for MAK Annual Ticket holders

PROGRAM FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES

MINI MAK Tour

Guided tour for the whole family (ages 4+)
Sun, 17 Jun 2018, 11 a.m.

MAK4FAMILY

Workshop for the whole family (ages 4+)
Sat, 9 Jun and 8 Sep 2018, 2–4 p.m.

MAK Design Kids

Workshop for 8- to 12-year-olds (unaccompanied)
Sat, 1 and 15 Sep 2018, 2–4 p.m.

MINI MAK Summer Vacation Activities

in collaboration with wienXtra
Tue, 3 – Fri, 6 Jul and Tue, 10 – Fri, 13 Jul 2018, 10:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Press Data

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Curator	Sebastian Hackenschmidt (Curator MAK Furniture and Woodwork Collection)
Expert Advisors	Iris Meder (Architectural historian and freelance curator) and Ákos Moravánszky (Professor emer. of architectural theory, ETH Zurich)
Publication	<i>POST-OTTO WAGNER: From the Postal Savings Bank to Post-Modernism</i> , cooperatively conceived, designed and written by Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Iris Meder and Ákos Moravánszky, with Christoph Thun-Hohenstein and Sebastian Hackenschmidt as editors. German/Englisch, ca. 280 pages with numerous color illustrations. MAK/Birkhäuser Verlag, Vienna 2018. Available as of the end of June at the MAK Design Shop and at MAKdesignshop.at for € 39.95.
MAK Admission	€ 12 / Reduced € 9 / Family Ticket € 15 Tuesday 6–10 p.m.: Admission € 5 Free admission for children and teens under 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head) Sandra Hell-Ghignone Lara Steinhäuser Veronika Träger T +43 1 711 36-233, -212, -229 presse@MAK.at , MAK.at

Vienna, 29 May 2018