

# The Arts Policy of the Habsburg Empire in the Long 19th Century – "for the Good of Internal Peace within the Empire"

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## Abstract

The Long 19th Century saw the development of modern arts policy in many European countries and also in the Habsburg monarchy. Although the creation of national codes was not yet completed at that time, the measures adopted for the promotion of the arts did play an important role in the cultural development of Central Europe at the turn of the century. In fact, the efforts of various generations of politicians and administrators aiming at creating some sort of cultural identification patterns, which were oriented to

the common State, left their mark in the collective memory. Most notably, a remarkable effort was made to give broader parts of the population access to the arts. Hence, the promotion of the arts soon became one of the tasks of the modern "cultural State", whose effects were going to last beyond the end of the Monarchy. The basis for these common communication spaces was not to be found in a Habsburg-Austrian "*Leitkultur*" (core culture) focused on Vienna, but in the acceptance of the cultural diversity existing in this area.

## The neo-absolutist reforms

[1] In 1885 Franz von Suppé was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Franz Josef. The justification for this was his services to the operetta, in particular with his march "O Du mein Österreich" with which he had "sung his way into the hearts of the Austrian people". The identity-forming effect of his compositions meant he was predestined to win high accolades, for operetta composer Suppé fit nicely in the scheme of promoting Austrian patriotism.<sup>1</sup>

[2] Proof of the paradigm of funding art for political purposes can be found in many arts policy decisions from as early as the 1850s. Art was increasingly considered capable of reconciling the nation. Cultural and especially arts policies should, it was believed, work to the benefit of the concept of the state as a whole, creating awareness and compensating for centrifugal tendencies.

[3] The subject of my article is the development of a national arts policy operating independently of the court and therefore following its own logic.<sup>2</sup> This separation was undertaken by contemporaries at the time, although the transitions are fluid: it is not always possible to distinguish clearly between the two areas – Court and State. Another separation was even more difficult, namely separating the national arts policy and the arts funding by the provinces and municipalities. Whilst, due to the almost uniformly limited funding, the latter was almost entirely ignored, despite major regional differences, funding for the arts by the provinces remained an important factor in the national arts policy right until the end of the monarchy.

[4] During the Vormärz period, the national arts agenda was managed by the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste). Since it failed to satisfactorily fulfil this role, in March 1848 affairs relating to the arts became the responsibility of the new Ministry for Religion and Education, where the arts and arts policy were initially accorded only a subordinate role, with art not even being listed as a separate area in the allocation of business. The Viennese arts academy thus lost both its political and its administrative functions and became a purely educational establishment. Although less well-known than his educational reforms, Minister Leo Graf Thun-Hohenstein also set new standards in the field of the arts during the 1850s, largely emanating from his artistically minded brother Franz Anton, who was appointed department head and undersecretary for arts affairs in October 1850.

[5] On 1 March 1850 the *Wiener Zeitung* reported on expert discussions concerning the reorganisation of public arts funding. Renowned figures from the Austrian arts scene were convened to advise the Minister of Education, among them Franz Anton Thun-Hohenstein, the later director of the Academy of Fine Arts Christian Ruben, artists Joseph Führich and Leopold Kupelwieser, architects Eduard van der Nüll and Paul Eduard Sprenger, and the patron of the arts Rudolf Arthaber. Their task was to put the arts policy of the Habsburg monarchy on a modern footing. The result was a memorandum, probably written by Franz Anton Thun-Hohenstein, which

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<sup>1</sup> Austrian State Archive, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Ministry for Religion and Education (CUM), Unterrichts-Präs. 525/1885, Imp. Res. of May 14, 1885 on the report by Conrad of May 9, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> See in detail Andreas Gottsmann, *Staatskunst oder Kulturstaat? Staatliche Kunstpolitik in Österreich 1848–1914*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2017 and Jeroen Bastiaan van Heerde, *Staat und Kunst: staatliche Kunstförderung 1895–1918*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 1993.

was published in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 1 March.<sup>3</sup> The arts would no longer be funded on a scattergun basis; decisions on the awarding of grants would no longer be taken by the Academy of Fine Arts but by the ministry and experts convened for the purpose.<sup>4</sup> Arts funding would henceforth not be seen as social assistance for mediocre artists unable to earn their living, but would be a tool for training internationally renowned artists. Targeted funding measures and reforms in the education system would result in new opportunities for the arts and make it possible to keep up with international developments. All of this, of course, set against the background that up until the mid-19th century Austria's output of arts and crafts was nowhere near that of Germany and even further behind that of France and England. The economically liberal State discerned significant exploitable economic potential in this: modern Austrian arts and crafts production would be given the opportunity to open up new markets in western European countries and the State would lay the foundations for this. Drawing lessons in primary schools and specialist schools in the capitals of the monarchy would provide commerce and industry with a large pool of people with artistic training.<sup>5</sup> The proposals put forward in a document by the Thun-Hohenstein brothers received imperial sanction in October 1850 as "the principles for the organisation of art education at the higher and elementary levels".<sup>6</sup>

[6] The position of director of the reformed Viennese Academy of Fine Arts was awarded to a person who had already made a name for himself as the head of the Academy of Arts in Prague and enjoyed close links to what was then the leading arts scene in Munich: Christian Ruben. Within a very short time he was able to improve the quality of the academic art lessons, making him one of the most important persons in the Viennese art scene for many decades, and he remained head of the academy until 1872.

[7] Alongside appointing teaching staff, the awarding of grants to artists constituted a significant means of steering the arts policy. In addition to organising state exhibitions, the Academy had also taken over responsibility for allocating grants from the Vormärz government. At 1,200 *Gulden*, the best-endowed grants were the "travel grants" which enabled artists to spend several years in Rome. Leo Thun-Hohenstein justified this exceptionally high level of funding on the basis of the expense faced by young artists in the Eternal City.<sup>7</sup> However, it was important to Thun-Hohenstein that the grants should no longer be linked exclusively to Rome, but that artists should

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<sup>3</sup> *Wiener Zeitung*, no. 52, 1 March 1850, 639-641, and no. 53, 2 March 1850, 652-654.

<sup>4</sup> "Ministerrat 20.4.1850/4 No. 325", in: *Die Protokolle des österreichischen Ministerrates 1848–1867*, ser. II: *Das Ministerium Schwarzenberg*, vol. 2: 8. Jänner 1850 – 30. April 1850, eds. Thomas Kletečka and Anatol Schmied-Kowarzik, with the cooperation of Andreas Gottsmann, Vienna 2005, 319.

<sup>5</sup> Thun-Hohenstein, "Ministerrat 5.8.1850/5 No. 377", in: *Die Protokolle des österreichischen Ministerrates 1848–1867*, ser. II: *Das Ministerium Schwarzenberg*, vol. 3: 1. Mai 1850 – 30. September 1850, eds. Thomas Kletečka and Anatol Schmied-Kowarzik, with the cooperation of Andreas Gottsmann, Vienna 2006, 190-191.

<sup>6</sup> Austrian State Archive, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA), Kab.Kanzlei 4023/1850, Imp. Res. of October 8, 1850 on the report by Thun-Hohenstein of September 29, 1850. On the reform of the Academy of Fine Arts see Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens. Erziehung und Bildung auf dem Boden Österreichs*, vol. 4: *Von 1848 bis zum Ende der Monarchie*, Vienna 1986, 256-259. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

<sup>7</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 226/1854, Thun-Hohenstein report of January 14, 1852.

also use them to become familiar with the artistic output of other countries. Neogothic being the latest modern style, he considered it more important for architects to travel to Germany, France and England than to visit Rome<sup>8</sup> and believed that Austrian art should become more open to international developments in general. Nonetheless, most of the recipients of these grants continued to prefer Rome as a place to study. One of the few exceptions was Heinrich Ferstel, who spent a year studying in France. In terms of painting, the State was particularly interested in historical painting, so that historical artists had a good chance of being awarded a Rome grant; recipients included Joseph Trenkwald, Eugen Blaas and Eduard Engerth. State sponsorship was particularly important for historical painting, as the paintings, which were usually large-scale, could, for the most part, only be produced thanks to State commissions. However, it was not only painters and architects who travelled to Rome but also sculptors, among them Carl Kundmann. The next most important field of action was the awarding of scholarships for studies at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Grants were available for young artists from throughout the Habsburg Empire. However, at only 600 *Gulden*, these grants were significantly lower than the Rome grants.<sup>9</sup>

[8] The Thun-Hohenstein reforms in the 1850s laid the foundations for the arts policy right through to the artistic highpoint at the turn of the century. The stated aim was to train artists who would be able to compete in the international art market. The reform of the Academy of Fine Arts, the appointments of Franz Anton Thun-Hohenstein as the arts advisor and of the Thun-Hohenstein confidante Christian Ruben as the president of the Academy all show how the State's line of action shaped the reform, although this was soon replaced by a more pragmatic approach. There are many reasons for this. Some of the measures failed to bring the hoped-for success. The position of trust which Ruben enjoyed with the minister strengthened the involvement of the Academy. The teaching appointments by the ministry meant that the arts policy could be steered in a particular direction, which went even beyond the actual reforms. However, Leo Thun-Hohenstein's attempts to shape the artistic tastes of his age were to prove overly ambitious.

## Patriotism and the Austrian Style: the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry

[9] In 1863 the Viennese art historian Rudolf Eitelberger,<sup>10</sup> who had attended the Great Exhibition in London on behalf of the Austrian government, reported on the many successes enjoyed by the Austrian exhibitors, but criticised the still inadequate linking of science and industry in Austria, especially the lack of interaction between art and commerce necessary for mass production of arts and crafts. He proposed founding an Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (*Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie*) as a new stimulus, with the arts and crafts exhibits displayed in the museum serving as objects of study for artists and craftsmen. They were, for the most part,

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<sup>8</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2825/1851, Thun-Hohenstein report of August 8, 1851.

<sup>9</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1695/1875, Thun-Hohenstein report of May 1, 1857.

<sup>10</sup> Eva Kernbauer et al., eds., *Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg. Netzwerker der Kunstwelt*, Vienna 2019; the papers of a conference on Eitelberger held in Olomouc in 2017 are published in: *Zprávy památkové péče* [Denkmalpflegeberichte] 87 (2018), no. 2.

taken from existing Imperial collections and put together in a new collection. Eitelberger intimated that he could establish the museum within eight months; the cost of running it would be financed by the sale of tickets, catalogues and photos. Another link to England existed in the person of the architect of the Ringstraße, Gottfried Semper. He had been involved in the World Fair in London in 1851, in the interior design of the Crystal Palace and the design of the South Kensington Museum, and, compared to Friedrich Schmidt, represented a more modern direction, not based purely on the teaching of historicism.<sup>11</sup>

[10] The government, under the leadership of Archduke Rainer and Anton Schmerling, backed Eitelberger's plans in the hope that the new museum would improve Austria's standing.<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Eitelberger was appointed director and Archduke Rainer remained the protector of the museum for 35 years until he was forced to relinquish the position.<sup>13</sup> A museum board was set up, which included not only Eitelberger but also the head of the department of art affairs, Gustav Heider.<sup>14</sup> The museum was temporarily housed in the former Ballhaus of the Hofburg.<sup>15</sup> Heinrich Ferstel was responsible for the necessary architectural adaptations, and the museum opened in May 1864.<sup>16</sup> However, Eitelberger wanted to separate the museum from the context of a court collection and establish it as an independent national museum as quickly as possible.<sup>17</sup> For this purpose, Ferstel was commissioned to build a museum in the Neo-Renaissance style in a central location near the *Stubentor* (Stuben Gate).<sup>18</sup>

[11] The Austrian Museum of Art and Industry was the first of its kind on the continent, giving Vienna a pioneering role.<sup>19</sup> Eitelberger proposed purchasing items with both national and international provenance, the acquisitions including works from the Universal Exhibition in Paris. An important factor for Eitelberger was the impact on the public: school art lessons were to be

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<sup>11</sup> Rainald Franz, "Das System Gottfried Sempers. Reform des Kunstgewerbes und Grundlagen für ein Museum für Kunst und Industrie in ihren Auswirkungen auf das Österreichische Museum", in: *Kunst und Industrie. Die Anfänge des Museums für Angewandte Kunst in Wien*, eds. Peter Noever, Hanna Egger, Rainald Franz and Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel, Ostfildern-Ruit 2000, 41-52.

<sup>12</sup> Helena Koenigsmarkova, "Kunst und Industrie. Wien – Prag", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Noever et al., 235-242: 255.

<sup>13</sup> Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel, "Zur Gründungsgeschichte des k.k. österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Noever et al., 52-89: 70.

<sup>14</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 757/1863, Imp. Res. of March 7, 1863 on the report by Rainer of March 3, 1863. See also the handwritten letter to Archduke Rainer of March 9, 1863, in: AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 1971/1863.

<sup>15</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1864/1863, Rainer report of June 8, 1863. See also HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei, 4771/1863.

<sup>16</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei, 2973/1864. Initially planned for the 9th May, it had to be postponed until 21st May. On this, see Eitelberger's report to Schmerling of May 6, 1864, in: HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei, 3325/1864.

<sup>17</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei, 8626/1864.

<sup>18</sup> Rainald Franz, "Vom Kaiserforum zum Exerzierplatz. Die Errichtung und Architektur des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie am Stubenring", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Peter Noever et al., 90-102.

<sup>19</sup> Tanja Prisig-Marshall, "London – Wien. Einfluß und Wirkung der englischen Idee. Das Vorbild South Kensington Museum", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Peter Noever et al., 30-40: 37.

supported and promoted through specimen collections; the opening times were even adapted to suit lesson times. A series of lectures based on popular science was instituted and topics relating to the arts and crafts were addressed in a magazine aimed at a broad public. Following the example set by the South Kensington Museum, touring exhibitions were also introduced. In the summer of 1869 alone, six different arts and crafts exhibitions stocked with items from the museum's collections were staged throughout the Habsburg Empire. Efforts to link all major arts and crafts initiatives within the Habsburg Empire with the museum in the following years are clear.

[12] Eitelberger ran the museum until 1885, when he was forced to retire for health reasons, dying shortly afterwards. The former deputy director Jakob von Falke was appointed as his successor, followed in 1895 by Bruno Bucher. Both of these appointments were designed to ensure continuity; it was only with the appointment of Arthur Scala as director in 1897 that a new direction was taken. For many years, Scala had headed the Oriental Museum (Orientalisches Museum, since 1887 Österreichisches Handelsmuseum), which had been established as a result of the Vienna World's Fair in 1873 and where, in the context of the development of Austria's trade relations with Oriental countries, particular emphasis was placed on arts and crafts production. The ever-increasing orientation towards trade policy at the museum, with which Scala was no longer able to identify, was the reason for his move to the Austrian Museum (Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie). For the ministry he represented a perfect compromise between tradition and modernity; taking the more radical step of appointing the deputy director, art historian Alois Riegl, who advocated a rejection of historicism and greater artistic freedom, was seen as a step too far.<sup>20</sup> Riegl accused art history and its "progenitor" Eitelberger of having created a backwards-looking diktat of "good taste" and claimed that the constant pursuit of historical styles meant that artists no longer dared to create something new. With his rejection of historicism Riegl opened the door to the modern age; his fate reminds us of Ferdinand Waldmüller's destiny, the Biedermeier artist, half a century earlier.

[13] Waldmüller had already protested against the official arts policy, and against neoabsolutism in particular, during the Vormärz era and, in contrast to Eitelberger's historic maxims, had rejected forced copying of the Old Masters, instead advocating a more intensive study of nature. Waldmüller spoke of "moral abuses" and academic training that was "killing art rather than bringing it to life". The prime objective of art is to be seen in the originality of its creations not in copying and plagiarism, he protested. In 1857 he was the subject of a disciplinary procedure and suspended from the Academy (Akademie der bildenden Künste) as a result of these criticisms. He would later claim that he had become inconvenient for the Thun-Hohenstein brothers and their sycophants.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For detailed information see Diana Reynolds Cordileone, *Alois Riegl in Vienna 1875–1905. An Institutional Biography*, Farnham/Burlington 2014. On the rejection of the appointment of Riegl by the Education Minister see the report by Gautsch of May 30, 1897, in: HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2259/1897.

<sup>21</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 6486/1862. See also Werner Telesko, *Das 19. Jahrhundert. Eine Epoche und ihre Medien*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2010, 165.

[14] Because of their critical stance towards the official state cultural policy both Waldmüller and Riegl sacrificed their professional careers and died bitter men, even if Waldmüller was rehabilitated just a few months prior to his death. Thus, initially together with Waldmüller, Riegl brought the historic Ringstraße era dominated by Eitelberger to a close. During his career Riegl had to face many disappointments. Especially the fact that he was not appointed director of the Austrian Museum (Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie), where he had been active from 1885 to 1897, was regarded by him as a personal insult. However, his subjective feeling is not reflected by the objective evaluation of the role he played for the development of a modern conception of art in Austria. The sheer number of activities that he conducted at the University of Vienna shows how deeply involved he was in several reforms concerning art politics. From 1894 he worked as professor; he was then appointed full professor of art history in 1897 as the successor of Prof. Eitelberger, from whom he emancipated and distanced himself in terms of content. In fact, Riegl was in favor of a radical departure from historicism. He believed that artists needed to be free from the burden of the past in order for them to create forward-looking art. He attached great importance to the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry for its role in the artistic renewal of Austria.<sup>22</sup>

[15] In practise the transition to contemporary art, as expressed by the Secession, was much more evolutionary than might first appear. This change of paradigm also had two further aspects, the importance of which extends beyond art history in the narrowest sense. It resulted – and in this Riegl's influence was even greater – in a complete rethinking on the preservation of monuments in a counter-movement away from modernity and towards conservation. Riegl's 'modern' theory thus also had strong 'conservative' implications. In all important cases, as General Conservationist he used to personally review each and every original object and to supervise the implementation of the conservation measures. Riegl is also known in the scientific field for his outstanding contribution to the preservation of historical monuments. Moreover, he strongly supported the implementation of a legal framework to be applied in this sector.<sup>23</sup>

[16] The third component was a political one: as modernism superseded historicism this was accompanied by a decentralisation of the arts sector and arts policy. Whilst during the age of the *Historismus* and its driving force, the Austrian Museum (Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie), the focus had been primarily on Vienna with an at least implicit German centralism, this was now replaced by equality in artistic terms for formerly peripheral regions. Theoreticians hoped to find the true "Austrian Style" here. However, the question of whether this would subsequently have led to 'unity in diversity' or to artistic regionalisation and nationalisation cannot be answered definitively. The "Austrian Style" of modern art preached and encouraged by the Austrian Museum during the Scala era was in fact multinational and had its roots in folk art; that is to say, compared with other countries, and Germany in particular, it had many highly

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<sup>22</sup> Diana Reynolds, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil des Historismus für das Leben. Alois Riegls Beitrag zur Frage der kunstgewerblichen Reform", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Noever et al., 20-29: 21.

<sup>23</sup> See also Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History. Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918*, University Park, PA 2013, in particular 186-211.

original features.<sup>24</sup> In this albeit changed manner, they remained true to Eitelberger's goal of an "aesthetic reconciliation" as a means of overcoming political conflicts within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, the strategy had changed and the canon of what the Museum deemed to be of good taste lost any claim to be absolute. Eitelberger had bound the Museum's aesthetic mission – educating public taste – to its political mission of training Austrian citizens. This strategy had to be abandoned and greater diversity permitted, without, however, abandoning the underlying aims of creating an "Austrian Style" and of "aesthetic reconciliation". This did not happen entirely voluntarily, since the technical colleges for the crafts had become places where the Austrian idea imparted from Vienna clashed with local, nationally-dictated cultural characteristics; and they opposed the Viennese efforts towards hegemony and the canon of good taste drawn up by the Austrian Museum.<sup>25</sup> In the integration of "folk art" mediated by the technical colleges, Eitelberger had seen an opportunity: appreciation of folk art had long been an important component in the Museum's efforts to create an Austrian cultural identity separate from the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>26</sup> The change of paradigm in the arts policy thus involved abandoning the claims to lead from Vienna, which had hindered artistic development, but was by no means synonymous with abandoning the vision of creating an Austrian artistic style.

[17] The Scala era falls into this period of reorientation of the arts policy. This is also evident in the retirement of the long-standing protector of the museum, Archduke Rainer. Both this position and the board were abolished, and in their place an advisory board made up of a few internationally renowned experts was convened to support the director in bringing about a fundamental change in the museum's policy. Education Minister Arthur von Bylandt-Rheydt demanded a repositioning of the museum's arts policy, for "the work of the Austrian Museum can no longer simply have as its aim improving the taste of the public and those who produce arts and crafts and giving them the best possible knowledge of bygone artistic epochs".<sup>27</sup> In March 1909 Scala was pensioned off, replaced by his former deputy Eduard Leisching, who ran the museum in the final years of the monarchy in keeping with the direction taken by Scala.

[18] From the very beginning, the Austrian Museum enjoyed close links with the School of Arts and Crafts (Kunstgewerbeschule), which was divided up into four faculties: architecture, painting and drawing, sculpture, and ornamentation.<sup>28</sup> Thanks to the exceptional artists who taught here (including the director Josef Storck and the teachers Ferdinand Lauf[en]berger, Otto König, and Wilhelm Hecht) the school very quickly built up a prestigious reputation, even transcending the borders of the Habsburg Empire. The constantly increasing numbers of students necessitated additional appointments and an expansion of the premises, but also a restructuring and

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<sup>24</sup> Diana Reynolds, "Die österreichische Synthese. Metropole, Peripherie und die kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen des Museums", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Noever et al., 203-217: 205.

<sup>25</sup> Reynolds, "Die österreichische Synthese", 210.

<sup>26</sup> Reynolds, "Die österreichische Synthese", 212.

<sup>27</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 4217/1898, Bylandt-Rheydt report of November 22, 1898.

<sup>28</sup> Ulrike Scholda, "'Die ausführende Hand der Theoretiker': Die Verbindung von Kunstgewerbeschule und k. k. Österreichischem Museum für Kunst und Industrie unter ihrem Direktor Josef von Storck", in: *Kunst und Industrie*, eds. Noever et al., 219-234: 219.



adaptation of the course content. The Viennese School of Arts and Crafts became the central training institute for teachers at the technical schools for arts and crafts throughout Cisleithania, the numbers of which were exploding, but which also oriented themselves primarily towards local production, such as the glass industry in Bohemia. The system was hierarchical, with the technical colleges for training craftsmen and skilled workers being the lowest level, the national schools of arts and crafts in the regional centres for training artists and teachers above them, and, as the crowning glory, the School of Arts and Crafts in Vienna.<sup>29</sup> The system encouraged artistic exchange since the teachers trained at the School of Arts and Crafts returned to the local schools in the crown lands, and the Austrian Museum bought the best works by students and examples of regional folk art for its collections in Vienna. Thus, on the one hand historicism from Vienna impacted upon the crown lands, but at the same time folk art motifs fed back from the crown lands, with both playing a decisive role in the creation of modern art – what Reynolds calls the "Austrian synthesis".<sup>30</sup> On the one hand, the dense network of technical colleges demonstrated the State's tolerance and its liberality regarding the diversity of its peoples, on the other hand, it helped to integrate the different nationalities in an Austria defined by its culture.<sup>31</sup>

[19] However, an end to historicism meant that a new direction had to be taken. The criticism of historicism rejected strict compliance with the forms of earlier ages, which, it was claimed, inhibited artistic abandon, independence and flowering. The art industry, too, demanded independent artistic ideas and was constantly in search of something new.<sup>32</sup> However, it was not until the death of Eitelberger in 1885 that a reorientation at government level to counter the growing distance between the schools of arts and crafts (Kunstgewerbeschulen) and the industry became possible. Even Director Storck, who remained largely captive to the historical ideals, spoke in 1896 of "liberating oneself from the compulsion to produce copies". The transition to modernity came when Storck retired and Felician Freiherr von Myrbach von Rheinfeld was appointed director and succeeded in appointing Josef Hoffmann and the Secessionists Arthur Strasser, Koloman Moser and Alfred Roller to the staff of the School of Arts and Crafts.<sup>33</sup>

[20] Myrbach, born the son of the president of Bukovina in 1853, had completed his training at the Military Academy, had worked at the Institute of Military Geography and had made a name for himself as the illustrator of the book *Unter den Fahnen: die Völker Österreich-Ungarns in Waffen*.<sup>34</sup> Since this had been translated into multiple languages and issued to the state schools, it enjoyed a wide distribution. Parallel to his military career, Myrbach had studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts and had lived in Paris, working as a freelance artist for a time. He had become a teacher at the Viennese School of Arts and Crafts in 1897. After his appointment as

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<sup>29</sup> Reynolds, "Die österreichische Synthese", 208.

<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, "Die österreichische Synthese", 205.

<sup>31</sup> Reynolds, "Die österreichische Synthese", 217-218.

<sup>32</sup> Scholda, "'Die ausführende Hand der Theoretiker'", 222.

<sup>33</sup> Scholda, "'Die ausführende Hand der Theoretiker'", 233.

<sup>34</sup> For this he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Franz Josef in 1889. AVA, CUM, Unterrichts-Präs. 1503/1888.

director he proved to be an active reformer who reorganised the school. However, his departure was less auspicious, as he was pensioned off in 1904 following an unresolved disciplinary procedure in response to allegations about his administration. Oskar Beyer was appointed as his successor.

## Honouring artists

[21] From the 1860s on, deserving artists were regularly honoured with Imperial orders or titles, as, for example, the artists involved in the construction of the Altlerchenfeld church in 1861, among them Joseph Führich and Eduard van der Nüll.<sup>35</sup> Orders were usually conferred on artists upon completion of prestigious buildings for the State or on deserving teachers at the monarchy's art schools. Honours rained down on artists in all fields upon completion of the buildings on the Ringstraße; hardly anyone went away empty-handed, not even the administrative officials. However, the awards were not granted on a scattergun basis: thus Theophil Hansen was initially refused an honour for his allegedly disastrous Academy building, and sculptor Viktor Oskar Tilgner was not honoured because his "artistic direction was pretentious"<sup>36</sup> – although he still received government contracts. The highest number of awards was given for the construction of the Hoftheater (Burgtheater), the court museums and the parliament building.

[22] A common international form of recognition for artistic works was prizes and medals, which were usually awarded in connection with exhibitions. In 1857 Education Minister Thun-Hohenstein reintroduced the *Hofpreismedaillen* which had been suspended in 1850.<sup>37</sup> They were to be awarded exclusively for outstanding works of art,<sup>38</sup> although the criteria were only definitively defined in 1867. The awards were issued every three years; there were to be three gold and three silver medals for painting, sculpture, and architecture.<sup>39</sup> Conferring titles was another way in which the State expressed its appreciation of deserving artists, and some were even raised to the nobility, as happened, for example, with Friedrich Schmidt, Theophil Hansen and Edmund Hellmer. After having been awarded many orders, Otto Wagner was appointed chief government building officer (Oberbaurat), and ultimately, when already over seventy, privy councillor (Hofrat). Wagner's works may often be "controversial", but they are "always interesting", wrote Minister of Culture Hussarek in his justification.<sup>40</sup>

[23] 1887 saw the introduction of the "Austrian Decoration for Science and Art" (Ehrenzeichen für Wissenschaft und Kunst), which could be awarded without regard to social status – it could even be conferred to women, Maria Ebner-Eschenbach received the honour in 1899. However, it was

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<sup>35</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2902/1861, Schmerling report of September 9, 1861.

<sup>36</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2156/1877, Stremayr report of June 9, 1877; regarding the Academy building, see HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2095/1877, Stremayr report of June 1, 1877.

<sup>37</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2381/1857, Thun-Hohenstein report of June 28, 1856.

<sup>38</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 883/1858, Thun-Hohenstein report of March 4, 1858.

<sup>39</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1284/1867, report by the Education Minister (deputy head Adolph Ritter v. Kriegs-Au) of March 16, 1867.

<sup>40</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei, 2568/1912, Hussarek report of October 19, 1912.

not presented by the Ministry of Education but by the Imperial Office of the Royal Treasurer, not directly controlled by the State.<sup>41</sup> One of the first to receive this honour was architect Karl Hasenauer.<sup>42</sup> In 1891, a year before his death, the now blind artist Leopold Karl Müller was awarded the distinction,<sup>43</sup> and Caspar Zumbusch received it in 1892 upon completion of the Radetzky monument.<sup>44</sup>

## Monuments policy – the politics of monuments

[24] Besides the completion of the Ringstraße buildings, the main reason for honouring artists was the design and construction of monuments. This underlines the importance accorded to monuments in historicism: their central task was to monumentalise history. In the 19th century monuments were put at the service of the public and thus acquired political significance.

[25] Since Austria did not have its own arts foundry, the statues initially had to be made abroad. Even during the boom in monuments that accompanied the Ringstraße era, setting up an arts foundry (Kunsterzgießerei) in Vienna was not economically viable. Nevertheless this became a prestigious state project in the early 1860s. The famous sculptor Anton Dominik von Fernkorn became its first director, but was forced to retire from this post for health reasons in 1866, at which point management of the institution passed to his two colleagues, Franz Pönninger and Josef Röhlich. Fernkorn continued to use the foundry for his works, but the factory made heavy losses right from the start.<sup>45</sup> At the beginning of the 1880s the Lower Austrian Trade Association took a critical look at the institution and proposed annexing it to the Technologisches Gewerbemuseum (Technological Museum of Trades), where it would become the centrepiece of the section devoted to the metal industry.<sup>46</sup> These plans were finalised, and in 1883 the foundry thus faced closure as an artistic institution. Minister Conrad, however, who also considered the foundry outdated as an artistic institution, suggested that it instead be transformed into a technical workshop and completely privatised.<sup>47</sup> Not only Conrad but also many of the experts he consulted considered a metalworking institution to be more important than an arts foundry.<sup>48</sup> However, this faced opposition from the sculptors; the board of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry demanded that the foundry be nationalised. Conrad hesitated and now proposed combining technical and artistic interests.<sup>49</sup> Under these conditions the Lower Austrian Trade Association lost interest and Minister Conrad found himself forced to postpone the decision for an

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<sup>41</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 591/1887 (draft statute) and 1186 and 1187/1887 (final statute).

<sup>42</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2005/1888.

<sup>43</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 407 and 516/1891.

<sup>44</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 705, 861 and 869/1892.

<sup>45</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 500/1866, Belcredi report of February 10, 1866.

<sup>46</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei B54c., handwritten letter to Finance Minister Dunajewski, and HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 487/1882, Dunajewski report of January 27, 1882.

<sup>47</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 889/1883, Conrad report of February 25, 1883.

<sup>48</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 1582/1883, Conrad report of April 25, 1883.

<sup>49</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 1794/1883, Conrad report of May 12, 1883.

indeterminate period.<sup>50</sup> The foundry ran into ever greater difficulties, not least because of the unfortunate management by Pönniger, and in 1896 it was taken over by the industrialist Arthur Krupp. However, even he was unable to rescue the institution from its precarious state, especially as the boom in monuments of the historicist era was now over. Production ceased completely in 1908, this time without any protest from artistic circles. The arts foundry had been created at the initiative of the State and was only able to survive with state support.

[26] An important political objective behind the promotion of monuments was to stimulate imperial patriotism by commemorating people known throughout Cisleithania. Artists, especially musicians, were particularly well suited for this goal.<sup>51</sup> In the second half of the 19th century, Maria Theresia and her role as the mother of the country were accorded great importance and were celebrated in a number of monuments, Caspar Zumbusch's being the most noteworthy. After the Austro-Hungarian compromise in particular, the empress was seen as an integrative symbolic figure.<sup>52</sup> However, there was also an increasing national codification, as with the monuments in Prague for example, where, in the years leading up to the First World War, the Wenceslas monument on Wenceslas Square and the Hus monument on Old Town Square were clear signs of a national Czech consciousness.

[27] For the state administration, lotteries represented the most cost-effective form of support for funding monuments. In Vienna, from the second half of the 19th century, state supplements from the City Expansion Fund (Stadterweiterungsfonds) could also be called upon for this purpose. The erection of the Schiller monument, for which funding of 30,000 *Gulden* was needed, resulted in a major decision being taken in 1872: on the basis of its remit to "beautify the Imperial residence", the City Expansion Fund was "available for such projects".<sup>53</sup> Consequently, the Beethoven and Mozart monuments were financed by the City Expansion Fund, as were the memorial to the liberation from the Turks in St Stephen's Cathedral, the Liebenberg, Gutenberg, Raimund and Anzengruber monuments, to cite just the most important. A contribution to the cost of the Johann Strauss monument was also made in 1908, albeit a smaller one.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 4769/1883, Conrad report of December 19, 1883.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Stefan Riesenfellner, *Steinernes Bewußtsein. Die öffentliche Repräsentation staatlicher und nationaler Identität Österreichs in seinen Denkmälern*, Wien 1998; Richard Bösel and Selma Krasa, *Monumente: Wiener Denkmäler vom Klassizismus zur Secession: eine Ausstellung des Kulturkreises Looshaus und der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina*, Wien 1994; Walter Krause, *Die Plastik der Wiener Ringstraße von der Spätromantik bis zur Wende um 1900*, Wiesbaden 1980 (= *Die Wiener Ringstraße – Bild einer Epoche*, 9/3); Gerhardt Kapner, *Die Denkmäler der Wiener Ringstraße*, 2nd ed., Wien/München 1969, and Elisabeth Springer, *Geschichte und Kulturleben der Wiener Ringstraße*, Wiesbaden 1979 (= *Die Wiener Ringstraße – Bild einer Epoche*, 2).

<sup>52</sup> Werner Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich. Die Habsburger und ihre Geschichte in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2006, 84-102.

<sup>53</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 944/1872, Lasser report of March 6, 1872. On the Schiller monument see Werner Telesko, *Kulturraum Österreich. Die Identität der Regionen in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2008, 171-173.

<sup>54</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1876/1908, Bienenrath report of June 1, 1908.

## Supporting art through exhibitions

[28] The "state exhibitions" of the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste) had been an important means of controlling the arts policy since the Vormärz era. The first exhibition of this type was held in 1813 and from 1822 they were held bi-annually.<sup>55</sup> They offered young artists the opportunity to exhibit their works publicly and to make a name for themselves in the art world. Following a pause due to the revolutionary years and the reform of the Academy, the tradition was resumed in 1858. It was not only the works of young artists that would be displayed, but also those of internationally established artists, which would be an inspiration and an example for students at the Academy. State prizes would attract artists from at home and abroad. The Ministry made 10,000 *Gulden* available for acquisitions, the intention being that these works would be put into a separate collection and thus form the basis for a future gallery of modern art. The decision on acquisitions was made by a commission from the Ministry of Education headed by the arts advisor. However, by the second exhibition in 1859, the number of visitors had already dropped drastically and further exhibitions were not attempted until 1864.

[29] Minister of State Schmerling, who was also responsible for arts affairs, now deliberately deviated from the criteria established by Thun-Hohenstein in 1850. In his opinion, including foreign works of arts in the exhibitions of the Academy of Fine Arts and in its acquisitions had impacted negatively on Austrian artists; from now on, as in the Vormärz era, such support should only be available to young talented artists. However, the new concept also failed to take off and the exhibitions were not resumed until a suitable exhibition space was created with the establishment of the Künstlerhaus on Karlsplatz in 1868. From that time on, the Austrian Artists' Society (Genossenschaft der bildenden Künstler Wiens) was accorded an important role in organising state exhibitions, thus putting into effect the idea that had first been expressed in the 1850s of increasing the collaboration of artists' associations in the exhibitions. – A similar concept devised at that time by the Austrian Art Association (Österreichischer Kunstverein) had, however, failed. Relying entirely on the income generated, the association had been forced to take financial criteria into account, for which it was criticised. The association was not serving "true art", wrote Minister Thun-Hohenstein in 1855, but was only encouraging "public curiosity"; such associations were merely "a communal saleroom for art dealers" which mainly benefited fashionable artists.<sup>56</sup> – The state exhibitions were subsequently reorganised in a hybrid form: the Austrian Artists' Society (Genossenschaft der Bildenden Künstler) no longer organised the exhibitions on its own behalf, but on behalf of the State, receiving the necessary funding to do so.

[30] Initially the challenge of organising a major "state exhibition" with a representative cross-section of contemporary art every three years proved too much of a challenge for the Artists'

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<sup>55</sup> Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich*, 30. On the court exhibitions and the acquisitions policy see Thomas Kletečka, "Staatliche Kunstförderung zu Beginn der franzisko-josephinischen Epoche", in: *Collective and Individual Patronage and the Culture of Public Donation in Civil Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries in Central Europe*, eds. Milan Hlavačka, Magdaléna Pokorná and Tomáš W. Pavlíček, Prague 2010, 90-129: 93-99.

<sup>56</sup> "Ministerrat II v. 20.10.1855/1 No. 312", in: *Die Protokolle des österreichischen Ministerrates 1848–1867*, ser. III: *Das Ministerium Buol-Schauenstein*, vol. 4: 23. Dezember 1854 – 12. April 1856, ed. Waltraud Heindl, Vienna 1987, 152-157.

Society. This enabled the Academy of Fine Arts to re-establish itself in this field; in 1877, on the occasion of the completion of the Academy building on Schillerplatz, an exhibition of a "primarily historic and Austrian character" was held. Representatives from the Empire's art schools were invited; the exhibition was to provide an overview of the Academy's achievements since it was founded, and its patrons were the Minister of Education and supporters of the Academy such as Nikolaus Dumba and Hans Wilczek.<sup>57</sup>

[31] Since the Künstlerhaus had been available as an exhibition venue for over a decade, the prerequisites for a grand state exhibition were met. The first was to be held in these premises in 1882 and a budget of 30,000 *Gulden* was proposed for acquisitions. Eitelberger countered the finance minister's criticism of this high budget with the argument that state exhibitions had been a significant component of the State's arts policy since 1812 and that they promoted the concept of the Austrian state. Arts funding, so Eitelberger claimed, was an important means of defusing national disputes.<sup>58</sup> The Künstlerhaus itself had been built with significant state funding: the site was provided by the City Expansion Fund and a portion of the income from the state charity lottery was made available to the Austrian Artists' Society to cover the construction costs. In return the Society had to make the premises available for the state exhibitions, which would be organised by the Society and subsidised by the State.

[32] A subsidy of 30,000 *Gulden* was also provided for the exhibition celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1888.<sup>59</sup> From the late 1880s the system of state exhibitions in the Künstlerhaus became a matter of routine, giving the Artists' Society a monopoly over the art policy in Vienna as regards organising exhibitions. At the throne jubilee exhibition in 1898, many members of the Artists' Society were honoured,<sup>60</sup> and at the anniversary exhibition in 1908 celebrating Emperor Franz Joseph's sixty years on the throne, the catalogue featured the Imperial eagle to show the links between the Artists' Society, the state and the Imperial house.<sup>61</sup>

[33] Participation in exhibitions abroad was also subsidised by the ministry. One of the first of these exhibitions was that of the Munich Trade Association in 1875, where particular emphasis was given to the Austrian arts and crafts industry.<sup>62</sup> The next opportunity to present Austrian art and the arts and crafts industry on the international stage – after a much smaller exhibition in Amsterdam in 1877<sup>63</sup> – came in 1878 with the Universal Exhibition in Paris. Since Austrian artists were not in a position "to ensure worthy representation out of their own pockets", the State

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<sup>57</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 543/1875, Stremayr report of February 6, 1875, and HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 195/1877, Stremayr report of January 2, 1877.

<sup>58</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 676/1881, Eitelberger on June 23, 1881 on the report by Finance Minister Dunajewski of June 7, 1881.

<sup>59</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 3535/1887, Gautsch report of September 19, 1887.

<sup>60</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2969/1898, Bylandt-Rheydt report of July 29, 1898.

<sup>61</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 445/1908, Bienerth report of February 7, 1908.

<sup>62</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 5165/1875, Stremayr report of December 7, 1875.

<sup>63</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 654, 688 and 700/1876.

intervened with subsidies<sup>64</sup> because the exhibition was considered an important international opportunity to present their achievements.<sup>65</sup>

[34] Whilst participation in arts and crafts industry exhibitions was coordinated by the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, the art exhibitions were organised by the Artists' Society, thus also according it a significant position in organising exhibitions abroad. Significant state subsidies were provided for this: 12,5000 *Gulden* were required for Austria's participation in the art exhibition in Antwerp, of which 4,500 *Gulden* went on insurance and transport costs alone.<sup>66</sup> In 1886 the Artists' Society received 10,000 *Gulden* for participation in the Berlin Jubilee Art Exhibition;<sup>67</sup> the high level of subsidy – the Minister of Education had originally applied for as much as 15,000 *Gulden* – was a politically motivated attack on the Treasury. The Berlin exhibition was expected to open up new markets to native artists.<sup>68</sup> The list of Austrian artists honoured in Berlin represented the full spectrum of art in the Habsburg Monarchy: it included Heinrich von Angeli, Viktor Tilgner, Rudolf Alt, Josef Tautenhayn, Josef Václav Myslbek, Emil Jacob Schindler, Otto Wagner, Anton Müller, Rudolf Weyr and Tina Blau.<sup>69</sup>

[35] Over the following years, however, funding became more difficult as the number of exhibitions grew continuously. Nonetheless, it was considered important not to miss out on participation in the Munich International Art Exhibition in 1888; the Artists' Society saw Munich as a direct rival in matters of art, so it was absolutely necessary that Austria be represented.<sup>70</sup> Despite this, Austrian art was under-represented: whilst the Habsburg Empire exhibited 110 works of art, Italy showed 302 works and Germany (not including Bavaria) as many as 386.<sup>71</sup> This was largely due to Emperor Franz Joseph's jubilee exhibition, which was being held in Vienna at the same time, a significant financial and organisational challenge for the State. In addition to major international exhibitions, there were many specialised exhibitions, such as "L'art de la femme" in Paris in 1892, with a particular focus on women in the arts industry and commercial training for women.<sup>72</sup> The last important world fair from the artistic point of view was held in Paris in 1900; Austrian participation was once again coordinated by the Artists' Society.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 4059/1876, Chlumecky report of November 7, 1876.

<sup>65</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 502/1877, report on the arts and crafts exhibition in Amsterdam.

<sup>66</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 278 and 357/1885.

<sup>67</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1521/1886, Gautsch report of April 10, 1886.

<sup>68</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 301/1886, letter from the Artists' Society of February 10, 1886.

<sup>69</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1306, 1357/1886 and 608/1887.

<sup>70</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 368/1888 application by the Artists' Society for funding.

<sup>71</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2345/1888, overview of acquisitions at the Munich International Art Exhibition.

<sup>72</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1459 and 1557/1892, Foreign Ministry report on the Paris exhibition.

<sup>73</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 912/1896, Artists' Society report of December 30, 1895.

## Arts policy and Modern art

[36] Criticism that regional and national diversity was not adequately taken into account in the Habsburg Empire's arts policy began as early as the 1890s. Even before this, in November 1883, Eitelberger – as an Austro-German liberal a reliable witness – had complained that the achievements of the artists involved in the construction of Prague's National Theatre had not been sufficiently recognised:

*It does not seem to me quite right if the achievements of artists in the crown lands are overlooked by the central government in Vienna and outstanding achievements by artists and industrialists receive no public acclaim.*<sup>74</sup>

However, these complaints went unheard, and it was only a decade later that Education Minister Bylandt-Rheidt suggested that a second committee be set up alongside the well-established Arts Commission (Kunstkommission) to take better account of the various arts policy interests. The minister felt that there were too many public figures and not enough arts managers and regional experts in the Arts Commission; it boasted some well-known names among its members such as Otto Wagner, Nikolaus Dumba and Antonín Dvořák. Thus, the Arts Council (Kunstrat) was established with the imperial decree of 17th July 1898 to function as a second body to advise the ministry on arts affairs. It comprised artists, art experts and patrons of the arts – 42 members from throughout the empire. These included August Eisenmenger, Siegmund L'Allemand, Caspar Zumbusch, Edmund Hellmer, Josef Václav Myslbek, Otto Wagner, Friedrich Ohmann, Emil Förster, Otto Benndorf, Joseph Alexander Helfert, Arthur Scala, Nikolaus Dumba, Zdenko František von Thun-Hohenstein and Josef Hlávka.<sup>75</sup> Some of its members were also members of the Arts Commission.

[37] The Arts Council met once a year, chaired by the minister or the pertinent section head. Its remit included major state commissions for works of arts, the acquisition of art, the auditing of the art department's annual reports, the organisation or subsidising of art exhibitions, the funding of art and art history publications and other artistic undertakings, the awarding of grants to artists, and general issues relating to art education, art and monument conservation and museum matters. Its focus was on the fine arts as it was felt there was less need for intervention in literature and music. With only annual meetings, the Arts Council was merely able to issue conceptual guidelines. However it provided important arts policy stimuli. In the second meeting in 1900, for example, arts advisor Karl von Wiener strove to counter accusations that the ministry was disadvantaging Czech art. As a result, in deciding what to send to the Universal Exhibition in Paris, committees were set up not only in Vienna but also in Prague and Krakow to select representative works by Bohemian and Polish artists. The Arts Council also passed a resolution whereby approval from the Education Ministry had to be obtained for all decisions involving artistic matters, which was intended to strengthen the ministry's position as the deciding body in national affairs relating to the arts.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 1199/1883, Eitelberger on November 30, 1883.

<sup>75</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2747/1898, Bylandt-Rheydt report of July 5, 1898.



[38] The Arts Council's decisions were criticised by many contemporaries, and it was no longer convened after 1905, though new members were still appointed to it.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, it left its mark on Viennese modernism. In the long term, however, it was the Arts Commission which prevailed as the ministry's central advisory body on matters of arts policy.<sup>78</sup> In addition to the Arts Commission and the Arts Council, ad hoc committees with a limited remit were convened to advise the ministry on particular events or for particular tasks as needed.<sup>79</sup>

[39] A second important stimulus for modernism was the founding of a gallery for modern art. The idea was not new: "A public gallery is to some extent a school, a component of the people's education", wrote Eitelberger in 1877. Proposals to establish a state gallery had been put forward repeatedly in Austria since the time of Thun-Hohenstein. But it was not new even then; the potential of art museums as a national monument had already been recognised in the French Revolution.<sup>80</sup> In Austria, however, the Imperial museums dominated and the Academy gallery was too small and not sufficiently funded to take on the task of being a national museum. It was only after the turn of the century that the dream could be realised. The Moderne Galerie became the most important state museum to be founded after the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie.

[40] In 1900 a committee comprising several well-known artists, including Otto Wagner, Edmund Hellmer and Alfred Roller, was set up to devise the concept for the museum. What was demanded was a complete reorientation of the arts policy, from ways of supporting artists to how to promote the arts. The Moderne Galerie thus "belongs to the present and the future, not the past", and as a consequence the main trends in modern European art should be represented in it. In order to set it apart from the *k. k. kunsthistorische Hofmuseum*, the earliest date for the collection period was set as 1850.<sup>81</sup> Implementation of the concept initially failed over issues regarding the site and funding, but not for want of works to exhibit, as the ministry had been deliberately acquiring works for the new museum for years: since 1868 works of modern art acquired using state funds had been entrusted to the Academy of Fine Arts' gallery. In 1902 Emperor Franz Joseph provided temporary accommodation in the Lower Belvedere. The finance minister approved an initial budget of 15,000 *Kronen*, and there was thus nothing to prevent the opening of the temporary museum. In his report to the emperor on 6th April 1903, Education Minister Hartel pointed to comparable institutions in other countries: the Musée du Luxembourg

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<sup>76</sup> Van Heerde, *Staat und Kunst*, 75-92 and Elisabeth Springer, *Geschichte und Kulturleben der Wiener Ringstraße*, 599-603.

<sup>77</sup> AVA, Unterricht-Allgemein, fasc. 3073 "Kunstrat".

<sup>78</sup> AVA, fasc. 3072 "Kunstkommission", nos. 46326/11 and 2903/15. On this, see also files on the appointment of members to the Arts Commission, minutes of meetings etc.

<sup>79</sup> Josef Neuwirth, "Kunstpflge", in: *Österreichisches Staatswörterbuch. Handbuch des gesamten österreichischen öffentlichen Rechtes*, eds. Ernst Mischler and Joseph Ulbrich, vol. 3: K-Q, 2nd ed., Vienna 1907, 322-326. See also Van Heerde, *Staat und Kunst*, 66-68.

<sup>80</sup> Telesko, *Das 19. Jahrhundert*, 255-256.

<sup>81</sup> AVA, Unterricht-Allgemein, 30996/1901, fasc. 3164 and 3165; quotation in fasc. 3164.

in Paris, the Berlin National Gallery, the Neue Pinakothek in Munich. The need for a similar modern gallery in Vienna was becoming ever more urgent.

[41] From now on, any new acquisitions of modern art were to go directly to the Moderne Galerie. Originally a radical solution was planned, namely the construction of a monumental museum building by the City of Vienna, where all the works owned by the city and the province could be displayed alongside the national collection. The period chosen was to "showcase the artistic creations starting from Your Majesty's glorious ascension to the throne".<sup>82</sup> However, the planned collaboration between the province of Lower Austria and the City of Vienna failed, and the provisional accommodation in the Belvedere became a permanent solution. This resulted in a reorientation of the museum. Friedrich Dörnhöffer, the former curator of the copper engravings collection of the Court Library was appointed director. Dörnhöffer was considered a proven expert, who pointed out the lack of a "systematic collection of Austrian art from the more distant past" and proposed that the original remit of the museum be expanded and the designation that had been used until then, the Modern Gallery, be replaced with a name more fitting to the new purpose of this institution. The "Austrian State Gallery" (Österreichische Staatsgalerie) was ultimately considered the best name as it fully expressed the new art history orientation of the museum.<sup>83</sup>

## Arts policy and a sense of national identity

[42] Arts funding was also a prestigious area for regional politics, although the financial means available for this were minimal. Funding was therefore limited to music associations, acquisitions for regional museums and the maintenance of theatres. Furthermore, these funds were reliant on state subsidies, so the Governor's Office played a key role, although from the outsider's perspective the autonomous regional administration was at the forefront.

[43] In the early 19th century the most important tool for promoting a transnational regional identity was the museum.<sup>84</sup> The model for all subsequent regional museums was the Joanneum in Graz, which was founded in 1811 as the Inner Austrian National Museum and was a gift from Archduke Johann to the Styrian estates. The Bohemian National Museum followed this model in 1818/1820, as did the National Museum in Ljubljana in 1821/1831, the Tyrolean *Ferdinandeam* in 1823, the *Francisco-Carolinum* in Linz in 1833, the *Carolino-Augusteam* in Salzburg in 1835 and the *Rudolfinum* in Klagenfurt in 1845/47. During the second half of the 19th century, however, the understanding of a nation changed; national patriotism was replaced by an ethnicity-based concept of a nation. The Bohemian National Museum now became the Czech National Museum, giving the new museum building a national political significance, thus following on from the establishment of the Prague National Theatre in this respect. Similar developments in other arts institutions in Bohemia were to be avoided. For this reason, the Prague Modern Gallery, which

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<sup>82</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 1010/1903, Hartel report of April 6, 1903.

<sup>83</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 3669/1911, Hussarek report of December 13, 1911.

<sup>84</sup> Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich*, 57. See also Marlies Raffler, *Museum – Spiegel der Nation. Zugänge zur Historischen Museologie am Beispiel der Genese von Landes- und Nationalmuseen in der Habsburgermonarchie*, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2007, 16.

was established in 1901 with a subsidy of 2 million *Kronen* from the State, was explicitly dedicated to both of Bohemia's ethnic groups. Emperor Franz Joseph used this opportunity to underscore his intention "in this way to employ the reconciliatory power of art for the good of internal peace within the Empire",<sup>85</sup> to be achieved through "completely even-handed treatment of both ethnic groups".<sup>86</sup>

[44] This was also the aim of the Prague Academy of Fine Arts which had developed out of the former *Malerakademie* maintained by the *Gesellschaft patriotischer Kunstfreunde*. In 1882 the State purchased a plot of land on *Kronprinz-Rudolfs-Quai*<sup>87</sup> from the city of Prague to construct a spacious new building for the *Malerakademie*. The new building, which opened in 1887, was to cost half a million *Gulden*.<sup>88</sup> The Painters Academy continued to be run by the Society of Patriotic Friends of Art and received an annual subsidy of 5,000 *Gulden* from Bohemia, on condition that "parity of languages be retained at this academy". Since this sum was far from adequate, on 1 October 1896 the academy was nationalised and converted into an academy of fine arts under the control of the Ministry for Religion and Education.

*The academy of the arts is to be an Utraquist institution and parity of both of the national languages commonly spoken in Bohemia is to be strictly retained, with the Minister noting that all of the teachers being considered for the academy are fluent in both languages,*

wrote the minister in his report.<sup>89</sup> Despite constant national political disputes, and although efforts to make the institution a purely Czech one while at the same time establishing a German academy of arts for Bohemia intensified from 1905 onwards, the Prague Academy of Fine Arts retained its Utraquist character. However, the Czech side accused the government of planning to "create a German art with significant financial support from the state". This would debase purely Czech art and "germanize the Prague Academy of Arts", a Czech submission suspected in 1907, while stating that "art is as national as language".<sup>90</sup>

[45] As can be seen from these examples, maintaining transnational access in the sphere of the arts also became increasingly difficult, but during the Long 19th century generations of politicians consistently opposed the nationalisation of art education and arts funding. The reasons behind this were primarily political, and were not based on an awareness that art can only thrive in intraregional contexts and through international networking of artists; this aspect should not be underestimated with regard to the image of the Habsburg Empire as a cultural nation that was promoted for both internal and external political reasons. Ultimately, the arts and culture sector was too weak and the other influences reflecting the spirit of the times too strong for cultural

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<sup>85</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 910/1901, handwritten letter from the Emperor of April 13, 1901 concerning the report by Koerber of April 10, 1901.

<sup>86</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 2023/1902, Körber report of July 31, 1902.

<sup>87</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 586/1882, Conrad report of February 2, 1882.

<sup>88</sup> AVA, CUM, Unterricht-Präs. 4825/1882, Conrad report of December 10, 1882.

<sup>89</sup> HHStA, Kab.Kanzlei 3948/1896, Gautsch report of September 3, 1896.

<sup>90</sup> AVA, Unterricht-Allgemein, Fasc. 2880, 42980/1907, summary of the Czech arguments by the Governor's Office, October 17, 1907.

policies alone to succeed in bringing about a general political reconsideration of the value of transnational access to the arts. Nonetheless, compared to other areas of policy, the cultural policy of the Habsburg Empire was successful and the lasting effects influenced the artistic output of Central Europe well into the 20th century.

### About the Author

Born in Vienna in 1961, Andreas Gottsmann studied history and political science at the University of Vienna, where he obtained his PhD in 1988. From 1989 to 1997 he was a researcher at the Austrian Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, from 1997 to 2001 and again from 2007 to 2013 a senior researcher at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Institute for Habsburg and Balkan Studies), for which he is currently preparing the publication of vol. X (*Das kulturelle Leben*) of the book series *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*. In 2009, Andreas Gottsmann completed his habilitation in Austrian history at the University of Vienna with a thesis on the Catholic Church and the Nationality Question in the Habsburg Monarchy. Working as a researcher in modern and contemporary history at the Austrian Historical Institute in Rome from 2001 to 2007, he has been appointed its director in 2013. Among his fields of interest are: history of government, Austrian-Italian relations, Church-State relations, nationality policy and cultural policy in the Habsburg Monarchy.

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