



EUROPÄISCHE UNION



Advance 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 seen as the "Father of Modernism": His rejection of the use of historical styles, his writings on architecture and city planning, which were well-received world-wide, and his buildings, were inspiring, not only for his contemporaries and students, but also for following generations.

Far more than a solo exhibition, the MAK show deals not only with Wagner's most important works, but also with architectural icons of Post-Modernism and the present in whose works Wagner's inheritance can be seen. The Austrian Postal Savings Bank (1904–1912), in which Wagner succeeded in creating a connection between the "art of building" and contemporary architectural engineering, is recognized as a key work of Viennese Modernism. Wagner used constructive elements as form-giving principles, the façade, covered with marble, was given the impression of the machine age through the ornamental use of aluminium bolts. Original designs, plans, and models, as well as furniture which Wagner designed especially for the building, reflect the importance of the building in the exhibition.

Architects of world-wide importance emerged from Wagner's school and atelier, a list including Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich, Max Fabiani, Leopold Bauer, Hubert Gessner, Jan Kotěra, Josef Plečnik, Otto Schönthal, and Rudolph M. Schindler. His modern conception of architecture also made Wagner an ally of the artist association "Secession."

Starting from the circle of Wagner's Viennese contemporaries—including Ludwig Baumann, Friedrich Ohmann, and Adolf Loos—with the works of world-renowned architects like Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Louis Henry Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Frei Otto, Hans Hollein, and the group ARCHIGRAM, the exhibition draws a chronological arc from the turn of the century over post 1945 architecture up to the present.

In three interwoven chapters, the exhibition *POST-OTTO WAGNER: From the Postal Savings Bank to Post-Modernism* approaches his architectural legacy.

Plan and Method: Dimensions of the Metropolis

In the chapter of the exhibition entitled “Plan and Method: Dimensions of the Metropolis” large urban development projects, like the Vienna Metropolitan Railway (1894–1901) and the expansion of the Danube Canal (1898–1908), illustrate Otto Wagner's renunciation of the design vocabulary of Historicism and its influence on future urban planning. On the one hand, his almost baroque-style large-scale projects, with their monumentality and symmetry, not only formed the basis for the designs of the Wagner School and Red Vienna, but also found parallels in the “Civic Centres,” the American government and administrative centres. On the other hand, the so-called “cellular conglomerates” have, up until today, established themselves as a dominating thought pattern in urban development. In contrast to the concept of the picturesque city, they led to a decidedly monumental metropolis.

A further focus of this section of the exhibition is on Otto Wagner's study *Die Großstadt* [The Metropolis] (1910/11) and the international interest in his “great plan” in urban development. International examples, like the plan for Chicago (1909) from Daniel Burnham, the urban planning competition for Canberra (1912), Eliel Saarinen's design for Helsinki-Munkkiniemi (1915) or Hendrik Petrus Berlage's plan for Amsterdam-South (1914), all show the idealistic goals of early Modernism.

Type and Style: Forms of the Metropolis

The chapter “Types and Style: Forms of the Metropolis” investigates the question of how Modernism manifested itself in form. After 1900 Otto Wagner tended toward increasingly clear and simple solutions in architecture. In contrast, after the First World War his students reached toward the stylistically versatile approaches of Modernism and developed them further. They oriented themselves on the one hand, on regionalism, homeland style and national style (for example Czech cubism), and on the other hand, they

were interested in the International Style, as well as traditional solutions, like Classicism or Biedermeier. Shortly after 1900 there were already individual stylistic approaches in Vienna, for example those of Josef Plečnik or Max Fabiani, which only became relevant once again in Post-Modernism.

Otto Wagner's rejection of Historicism allowed for significant innovations in city planning. In Central Europe, and in particular in Vienna, the type of metropolitan office and residential buildings, department stores, and hotels established itself. Adolf Loos' world-famous building at Michaelerplatz (1910–1911) is exemplary of this new type of building construction.

Technique and Material: Constructions of the Metropolis

Starting with characteristic buildings, like the Postal Savings Bank, the Zacherlhaus (1903–1905) from Josef Plečnik and the commercial building Portois & Fix from Max Fabiani (1900), this chapter investigates the innovative use of new materials and manufacturing techniques. Wagner was the first to recognize the increasing importance of technology and engineering which manifested itself in the new constructions and working materials. He finally completed his break with Historicism with the demand for so-called "Functional Style", the forms of which resulted from the materials used, the constructions themselves, and their function.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication in German and English.

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

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

The BAWAG P.S.K. and Signa Holding were gained as partners for the exhibition.

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Curator	Sebastian Hackenschmidt (Curator, MAK Furniture and Woodwork Collection)
Expert Advisors	Ákos Moravánszky (Professor emer. of architectural theory, ETH Zurich) and Iris Meder (Architectural historian and freelance curator)
Publication	In progress
MAK Admission Fees	€ 12 / Reduced € 9 / Family Ticket € 15 Tuesday from 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 T +43 1 711 36-233, -229, -212 presse@MAK.at www.MAK.at

Vienna, 10 January 2018