

Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities

Ph.D. THESIS

Abstract

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**The Story of the Interior Decorator House Friedrich Otto Schmidt in Vienna
(1858 – 1918)**

1. The Ph.D. thesis outlines the circumstances and antecedents of the beginnings of the Viennese company F. Schmidt & Sugg.
2. The interior, which was displayed by the F. Schmidt & Sugg on the opening exposition of the building k. k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, was one of the very first German neorenaissance interiors on the Continent, and had a great influence. The thesis identifies the hitherto unknown furniture by photographs and emphasizes its significance.
3. The thesis outlines the character of the upholsterer-decorating firm and the most important dates of its story in the 1870s – 1880s searched out by this work.
4. The starting of the career of the second generation in the company management. Max Schmidt's starting in Paris, Cologne and Budapest as an *architecte decorateur*. Trading with Japanese and other bric-a-brac objects and oriental carpets.
5. The relationship between the firm and the Kassa bishop Zsigmond Bubic during the first half of the 1890s, the renovations of Esterhazy properties and other commissions.
6. The developing Reform of the applied art in Vienna: the spreading of "anglomania" in interior decorating on the Continent and in Vienna. Analysis of the role of the Handelsmuseum led by Arthur von Scala and the princely house Liechtenstein.
7. The Viennese scene of the applied arts between 1897 – 1903: the struggle between the conceptions of the Secession and of the conservative aristocracy. Although having a close connection to the Secession, the Friedrich Otto Schmidt decorating house became an instrument of the latter. Analysis and description of the Schmidts' exhibition activity.
8. Conservative modernity: a specific phenomenon in Vienna. The art and texts of Adolf Loos and his complex cooperation with the company Friedrich Otto Schmidt.
9. Analysis of a specific archaic interior decoration style, cultivated by the Friedrich Otto Schmidt after the turn of the century, which was based on the involvement of stone objects in interiors. The discussion of the import of Italian stonecuttings.

10. The description and characterization of the Schmidts' widespread net of connections with European – German, French and English – interior decoration and antiquity firms.

11. The thesis outlines a peculiar technique of the late revivalism on the example Friedrich Otto Schmidt: collecting original objects, the reproduction and combination of these – often by changing the original genre. Examples: imitation of stoves, imported Italian stonecuttings, the symbiotic relationship with the house Liechtenstein and a creating of a group of late Renaissance furniture and mantepiece by copying the objects of the Paris Musée Cluny.

12. The thesis outlines the way the firm Friedrich Otto Schmidt built up a strong and long term relationship with higher upper class customers and aristocrats: the commissions by the family Gutmann and Hapsburg.

13. The thesis describes the international expansion of the company: establishing the affiliation in Budapest and an outlet in Berlin.

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