

From *Wiener Kunst im Hause* to the Wiener Werkstätte: Marketing Domesticity with Fashionable Interior Design

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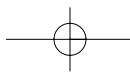
Acknowledgments

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Footnotes begin on page 22.

In 1903, Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, design professors at the Vienna Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Applied Arts) and members of the Vienna Secession, founded the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops), the fashionable interior decorating company that would become the commercial standard for the new art of Vienna.¹ This venture, which sold modern textiles, furnishings, and eventually clothing, to a fashionable Viennese clientele, grew, in part, out of the well-received exhibitions of household furnishings organized by Hoffmann's and Moser's students at the Kunstgewerbeschule between 1900 and 1904. The students, five women and five men, who together comprised "Wiener Kunst im Hause," (Viennese Art in the Home) created integrated domestic interiors which they displayed at such prestigious venues as the *Paris Exhibiton of 1900*, and the fifteenth *Vienna Secession Exhibition*, held from November to December of 1902.² The *Wiener Kunst im Hause* exhibitions were praised by critics for the simple practicality and affordability of their designs, as well as for their feminine creativity. Porcelain coffee sets and embroidered table linens in particular, designed by the women in the group, seemed to evoke traditional, healthy Austrian folk art with their simple, colorful patterns. Domestic interiors were understood by the public as intrinsically feminine spaces that were most authentically designed by women, and Secessionist professors capitalized on the immediate critical acclaim that their female students received. The *Wiener Kunst im Hause* exhibitions not only represented the most modern trends in Austrian applied arts education, they also served as an important bridge to the commercial world—the world of elegant furnishings manufacturing, whose wealthy industrialists and businesspeople were the most important patrons of the new art of the Vienna Secession and Wiener Werkstätte.

Advertisements designed by Kolo Moser, for example, for companies such as Backhausen and Sons, an artistic textile manufacturer, were published in the secessionist periodical *Ver Sacrum* in 1899, and reflect the close relationship between the new art and the commercial world in Vienna at the turn of the century. One explanation for the success of *Wiener Kunst im Hause*, and by extension, of



the Wiener Werkstätte, lies in the fact that domestic interior design in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was considered inherently feminine. The modern interiors on display largely designed by women enjoyed a certain legitimacy. It was the traditional role of the bourgeois Viennese lady to order and arrange her furnishings—beautifying or “dressing” her home as she would herself. Her home’s style or character was seen as an extension of her personality. Domestic interior design, therefore, by virtue of its perceived relationship to femininity, was also positioned within the realm of women’s fashion. Indeed, it was in women’s fashion magazines that the innovative designs of *Wiener Kunst im Hause* and the Wiener Werkstätte were emulated and made available to the public in popular forms, confusing the boundaries between modern art and fashion.

A number of turn-of-the century Viennese cultural critics including Jacob von Falke, curator of the k.k. Oesterreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Imperial Austrian Museum for Art and Industry), and modernist architect Adolf Loos wrote at length about the relationship of women to domestic interior design. Loos, for example, believed that Viennese women should take a more active role in the arrangement of their homes, following the model of what he considered to be healthier and more modern American housewives.³ Von Falke’s enormously popular, frequently reprinted book, *Die Kunst im Hause* (Art in the Home), first published in 1871, was an instruction manual for women’s interior decoration, the final chapter of which was entitled, “The Woman’s Occupation as Beautifier.” Von Falke’s essays were published not only in the academic journal, *Mitteilungen des k k. Oesterreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie*, but also in the popular women’s magazine, *Wiener Mode*, where they were eagerly read by a female audience.⁴

In an introductory article published in the first issue of the Secession-influenced design journal, *Das Interieur*, editor and architect Josef Folsenics described a “true Viennese interior.” Its most significant characteristic, he writes, is “*Gemütlichkeit*,” a kind of cozy comfort. In the early nineteenth century, the *gemütlich* Viennese interior was epitomized by the Biedermeier style:

Artist and housewife were united in a single person. Just as the young beauty could spend hours alone in front of the mirror, in deep, naive, contemplation of aesthetic questions—which hairstyle, which posture best suited her—so had she also, gradually, according to her aesthetic experience, turned her home into the charming garment of her intimate life.⁵

Modern architects such as Otto Wagner, and his students, Josef Hoffmann, Josef Olbrich, Josef Urban, and Otto Prutscher, embraced the Biedermeier style for its relatively simpler forms and clean lines, as well as for its association with a simpler domestic life.

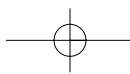




Figure 1
Else Unger. Secretary desk, 1900. Photograph published in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk III* (1900): 117. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.

“These men have outlined a new style,” Folsenics wrote, in the same article, “and now women can return to their rightful role as interior designers.” Folsenics implied, however, that although women do possess an innate talent for home beautification, based on their intimate understanding of aesthetics through the perusal of their own beauty in the mirror, and of their talents in choosing their own wardrobes, they also possess the weakness to lose their aesthetic sensibility in times of artistic decline, specifically because of their tendency to follow fashion. Because of the recent infusion of artistic insight by (male) Secessionist designers, women, he believed, could once again make use of their decorating talents. This new style, in fact, Folsenics wrote, “is much like a Viennese woman,” curvy and sensuous, yet intimate and ultimately more domestic than urban or cosmopolitan.⁶ Folsenics’s introduction reveals his strong ambivalence toward women, who, on the one hand, served as models of domestic artfulness yet, on the other, were incapable of true innovation, which must be accomplished by men. *Wiener Kunst im Hause* provided an interesting antidote to this conservative point of view, presenting interiors that were not only designed by women, but that creatively inspired the work of male teachers at the Kunstgewerbeschule. *Wiener Kunst im Hause* provided a new model for reconciling modern art and commerce, the domestic and the urbane.⁷

The Paris Exhibition of 1900

In 1900, an exhibition of student work from the Kunstgewerbeschule was sent to the *Paris Exhibition*. Works by talented female students, Else Unger and Gisela von Falke among others, were presented in a room designed by Josef Hoffmann. The decorative objects were displayed as if arranged in a private home, rather than for sale in a department store, or as permanent exhibits of an art museum. English art critic Gabriel Mourey wrote that the Kunstgewerbeschule, led by Josef Hoffmann, had presented the “only truly modern and national style” at the *Paris Exhibition*. He attributed the successful fresh and cohesive quality of the designs to the school’s rejection of all past and foreign influences, and to their peculiar mode of exhibiting complete “interiors” rather than individual works.⁸

One of the favorite objects at the exhibition was a secretary desk designed by Else Unger in a carved wooden hydrangea motif (figure 1).⁹ This piece utilized the curvilinearity and botanical patterns that had come to be associated with the modern movement in Vienna, and with “secessionist style” in particular. Vienna art critic Ludwig Hevesi described the feel of the new work as fresh and alive in contrast to the static, more historically based works of just a few years before. “The motifs are taken from less frequently tread areas of botany,” he wrote. “The plants are seen with freer eyes and depicted in a fresh, ornamental mood.”¹⁰ This new era of

Figure 2

Heinrich Comploj, Gustav Schneider, August Patek, and Otto Prutscher. Appliqué textiles designed for the Kunstgewerbeschule Pavilion at the *Paris Exposition Internationale of 1900*. Photograph published in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk III* (1900): 119. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.



modern art was exemplified by the work of the young, female designers.

This preoccupation with fresh new life was closely related to the artistic program of the Vienna Secession, which proclaimed youth, growth, and organic rejuvenation with their motto, “Ver Sacrum,” (Sacred Spring), and with their visual imagery.¹¹ The Secession building, an exhibition hall designed by Josef Olbrich to house the group’s work, for example, featured a plasterwork frieze of growing trees surrounding the front entrance, which grew into a Jugendstil gold leaf dome of airy leaves and branches. The Secessionists often chose the image of a young woman, exemplified by Gustav Klimt’s 1898 painting of *Nuda Veritas*, to embody their ideas of creative transformation. It is not surprising that Secessionist professors at the Kunstgewerbeschule were attracted to the work of the very real young women students, whose designs displayed a similar fresh and vibrant character. This “primitivism” of looking to young women students at the Kunstgewerbeschule for inspiration had its counterpart in the exhibitions of traditional folk embroidery held at the Oesterreichisches Museum. In a review of the *Special-Ausstellung Weiblicher Handarbeiten* (Special Exhibition of Women’s Handcrafts) organized by Jacob von Falke in the spring of 1886,

textile curator Alois Riegl praised the display of colorful, lively regional embroidery which, he believed, represented the future direction of artistic innovation.¹² Court embroideress Emilie Bach, in her contribution to the exhibition catalog described this work as like a “wildflower bouquet.” “In every case,” she wrote, “an eminent feel for style and a naïve, healthy artistic sense is expressed in these works, which is not always characteristic in the homes of educated, urban residents.”¹³ Native peasant embroidery seemed to offer a fresh new spirit of artistic creativity in the same way that the innovative designs by women students at the Kunstgewerbeschule reflected the secessionist program of artistic regeneration.

The most striking aspect of the room at the *Paris Exhibition* was its use of oversized ornamental motifs in appliqué textiles (figure 2). The traditional appliqué embroidery technique of embellishing furniture coverings, cushions, upholstery, and drapery, by stitching cut pieces of cloth onto a cloth background, was extended to cover the walls as well. The modern Viennese interiors displayed at the *Paris Exhibition of 1900* revealed a growing interest in the use of textiles and traditional handwork not only as decorative objects to be incorporated into designed rooms, but as models for the organic, flexible dressing of an interior space. This application of textile “dressings” to the walls of the pavilion directly relates to the German architect Gottfried Semper’s influential “Bekleidungsprinzip” (Principle of Dress), which was of theoretical significance to Otto Wagner and his students, including Josef Hoffmann. According to Semper, the textile arts represented the earliest form of man’s art-making tendency, which would evolve into architecture. Woven mats, for example, which were originally hung to divide the space of a room, eventually became structural walls, which retained the woven texture of fiber in new materials, such as brick or stone.¹⁴ Because textile arts such as lace, tapestry, and embroidery represented the seeds of artistic creativity, they took on a central role in programs for the reform of applied arts institutionalized at the Oesterreichisches Museum under the advice of Semper, who brought his ideas to Vienna in 1864.

The effort to improve the national industrial arts in Austria from the 1860s through the turn of the century took place largely through the Oesterreichisches Museum and Kunstgewerbeschule.¹⁵ The first generation of curators at the Oesterreichisches Museum, especially Jacob von Falke and Alois Riegl, actively collected many historical textiles including medieval French tapestries, Belgian lace, oriental carpets, and embroidered court costumes, ecclesiastical garments, and altar decorations from the sixteenth century.¹⁶ They promoted public interest in the textile collection through exhibitions and scholarship. At the same time, from the 1860s through the 1880s, the first generation of professors and administrators at the Kunstgewerbeschule, most significantly the architect Josef Ritter von Storck, fostered courses in textile design—primarily in orna-

mental drawing for lace and embroidery patterns. Auxiliary craft schools were established in Vienna concurrently with the courses offered at the Kunstgewerbeschule that specialized in teaching traditional textile-making skills. The k. k. Fachschule für Kunststickerei (Imperial School of Art Needlework), run by the famous court embroideresses Emilie Bach and Therese Mirani, educated a generation of young women in traditional and exotic embroidery techniques, often executing contemporary designs drawn by students at the Kunstgewerbeschule. Josef Ritter von Storck, in addition to his duties as a professor at the Kunstgewerbeschule, established and ran the Centralspitzencurs (Central Lace Course), a workshop devoted to studying historical lace patterns and techniques, and to producing contemporary lace designs.¹⁷

In 1897, a second wave of professors, curators, and administrators greatly changed the profiles of the Oesterreichisches Museum and the Kunstgewerbeschule which, since their inception, had reflected the aristocratic and liberal bourgeois tastes of mid-to late-nineteenth-century Vienna by supporting and perpetuating a predominantly neo-Renaissance aesthetic. The new modernists, including the director of the Oesterreichisches Museum, Arthur von Scala, and the director of the Kunstgewerbeschule, Felician von Myrbach, rejected the academic, historicist style associated with architects such as Gottfried Semper and Josef Ritter von Storck. Instead, they supported contemporary international designs by young architects such as Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, Henry van de Velde, Charles Ashbee, and Charles Mackintosh. Interestingly however, despite the change in preferred furniture and architecture style, the modernists retained and even amplified the Oesterreichisches Museum's and Kunstgewerbeschule's interest in reviving the traditional textile arts. This is clear, for example, in Riegl's review of the 1886 *Special-Ausstellung Weiblicher Handarbeiten* mentioned above.

The second, modernist generation of professors and administrators at the Kunstgewerbeschule was heavily influenced by the Vienna Secession of 1897. Felician von Myrbach, himself a painter and original member of the Secession, appointed several of his most influential colleagues—theatrical set designer Alfred Roller, architect Josef Hoffmann, and designer Koloman Moser to be professors at the school, and to teach innovative new courses in furniture, glassware, metalwork design, and flat-pattern drawing. Many of the secessionist professors' most talented students, such as Else Unger, Marietta Peyfuss, Berthold Löffler, Max Benirsche, and Dagobert Peche—a substantial number of whom were young women—would go on to form a third generation of modern designers at the Wiener Werkstätte.



Figure 3
Josef Hoffmann. Katalog der VIII. Ausstellung der Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs Secession, 1900. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.

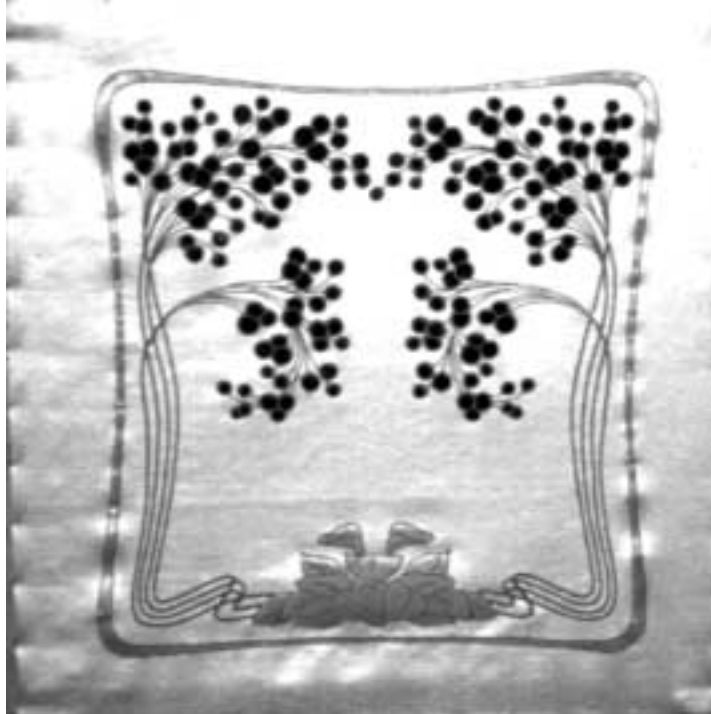
Lace-making, tapestry-weaving, and embroidery were activities that traditionally had been carried out by women, and the Secessionists looked to their female students at the Kunstgewerbeschule and female colleagues at the k.k. Fachschule für Kunststickerei for inspiration and collaboration. As is clear from the statements above by Loos, von Falke, and Folsenics, modern artists and critics attributed to women an inherent artistic sensibility in the decorative domestic realm. Modern designers at the Kunstgewerbeschule, therefore, wanted to tap into the feminine artistic sensibility to create genuinely artful decorative designs for the home without succumbing to the influences of mass-production. But the designs produced by the Kunstgewerbeschule and later Wiener Werkstätte were immediately perceived as “fashionable” by both the artistic elite and popular audiences, and were quickly appropriated by the fashion world in the form of clothing and embroidery patterns “in the modern style.” The quick acceptance of “modern style” by women’s fashion magazines at the turn of the century, and the concurrent influx of young female art and design students at the Kunstgewerbeschule, raises many questions about the role of women at the intersection of “art” and “fashion” at that time. Why were the male Secessionists so attracted to the textile arts in the first place? Why did they mistrust women’s occupation of these realms, and how did they try to control them? In what ways were they motivated by a particularly feminine engagement with fashion, even as they reacted against it? The problematic relationship between creating modern designs to be used for clothing and domestic spaces, while simultaneously resisting fashion, can best be examined by looking more closely at the relationship between feminine dressing up the self and dressing up the home. It was this tension that the Secessionists so expertly exploited in their art and designs.

The Exhibition of Domestic Interiors and Embroidery at the Vienna Secession and Kunstgewerbeschule, 1900–1901

Following the successful showing of Austrian decorative arts at the *Paris Exhibition*, the Secessionists held an exhibition of their own which further highlighted new innovations in furniture and interior design. This eighth Secession exhibition, held in November and December of 1900, featured works not only by Josef Hoffmann and Kolo Moser, but also by the Belgian designer Henry van de Velde, Charles Ashbee’s Guild and School of Handicraft from England, and the Glasgow artists Charles Rennie Macintosh and Margaret MacDonald, each of whom were greatly admired by the Austrian group. Hevesi wrote that seeing the Secession exhibition after the chaos and turmoil of Paris was like a “vacation in the country.”¹⁸ The exhibit, with its narrow, calico-covered catalog, decorated with small, interesting vignettes, was a delight for the viewer (figure 3). The fact that the catalog for an interior design exhibition was

Figure 4

Marie Stempkowska. Embroidered pillow cover, c.1900–1901. Photograph published in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk IV* (1901): 237. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.



covered with printed cloth is significant. Not only was it covered with cloth, but a different printed textile was used for the cover of each copy, further drawing attention to the material, and deliberately identifying the exhibition with the fabric itself.

Hevesi's comments signal the implicit dichotomy between the unhealthy, modern city and the healthy, timeless, therapeutic countryside, which runs through much of the discourse surrounding the reform of applied arts at the turn of the century. Viennese designers at the *Kunstgewerbeschule* and *Wiener Werkstätte* sought to infuse modern, urban style with a naïve, feminine, domestic comfort, which was represented by the embroidered cloth traditionally used to decorate peasant homes. Colorful dish towels, draperies, tablecloths, and bedspreads, designed by women students at the *Kunstgewerbeschule*, were used to soften and warm the domestic living space, and evoked an immediate response from viewers who responded to them sensually. These textiles provided the sense of "*Gemütlichkeit*" that Josef Folsenics desired in his call for a new type of modern Viennese interior.

The 1901 annual exhibitions of the *Kunstgewerbeschule* and other arts and crafts schools from throughout the empire, including the *k. k. Fachschule für Kunststickereien*, once again featured furniture and textile designs by women artists. Critical acclaim for pieces such as an embroidered cushion cover by Marie Stempkowska, reaffirmed the success that the female students had enjoyed at the *Paris Exhibition* (figure 4). Kolo Moser's students were especially singled out for their work on textile designs. Therese Trethan, Marietta

Peyfuss, Jutta Sicka, and Else Unger represented the new “feminine strength” (*weiblichen Kräfte*) at the Kunstgewerbeschule. The Oesterreichisches Museum’s purchase of several pieces of student embroidery from the exhibition, including a border design by Jutta Sicka and tablecloth by Marietta Peyfuss, attests to the success of the show.¹⁹ In a review of the exhibition for *Wiener Mode*, one critic wrote, “The feminine strength towers in all the classes of the School of Applied Arts. The women have been prepared by long tradition for the arts that lend themselves to the decoration of the home and the beautification of the everyday.”²⁰ The interest in innovative new interior design was closely related to its perceived femininity. It made use of more feminine forms, such as curvy lines and flowers, and it potentially could be very well designed by women, who were already used to the intimate beautification of themselves and their living spaces.

That fall, *Wiener Mode* began to feature embroidery and textile designs by women from the School of Applied Arts in the needlework section of the magazine, explicitly linking the new art movement with femininity and fashion. The magazine always had contained a section of needlework patterns, but beginning around 1898, stylish, contemporary embroidery designs were printed on the back covers of the magazines in colorful illustrations, as if to indicate that the trend in modern embroidery design signified the

Figure 5

Design for an embroidered pillow cover, 1900. Published in *Wiener Mode* XIV/4 (15. November 1900): back cover. Reprinted with permission of the Historische Museen der Stadt Wien.



Figure 6 (left)

Marietta Peyfuss. Tablecloth, c.1900–1902. Published in *Wiener Mode* XVI/1 (1. October 1902): 14. Reprinted with permission of the Historische Museen der Stadt Wien.

height of fashion (figure 5). When women art students at the School of Applied Arts began to gain notoriety in 1901, *Wiener Mode* eagerly reproduced their textile patterns, including tablecloths by Therese Trethan and Marietta Peyfuss (figure 6), as if to indicate that the new style was not only chic, but also legitimate. These patterns had been designed by women, it was presumed, who would understand the nature of embroidery better than their male colleagues. In the fall of 1901, the modern Viennese architect Leopold Bauer wrote an article, which appeared in *Wiener Mode* entitled, “Modern Needlework in the Living Room.” He wrote that one must become the architect of one’s own home. The housewife brings color and decoration into the apartment with flowers and embroidery.²¹ In this way, the housewife and interior designer were quite explicitly linked.

Riding the wave of popular, stylish embroidery design, the curator of textiles at the Oesterreichisches Museum, Moriz Dreger, in collaboration with Josef Hoffmann and Kolo Moser, published a short-lived periodical, *Wiener Kunststickereien* (Viennese Art Embroidery), which appeared in four separate issues in 1901 (figure 7).

Figure 7 (below)

Kolo Moser. Cover of *Wiener Kunststickereien*, 1901. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek.

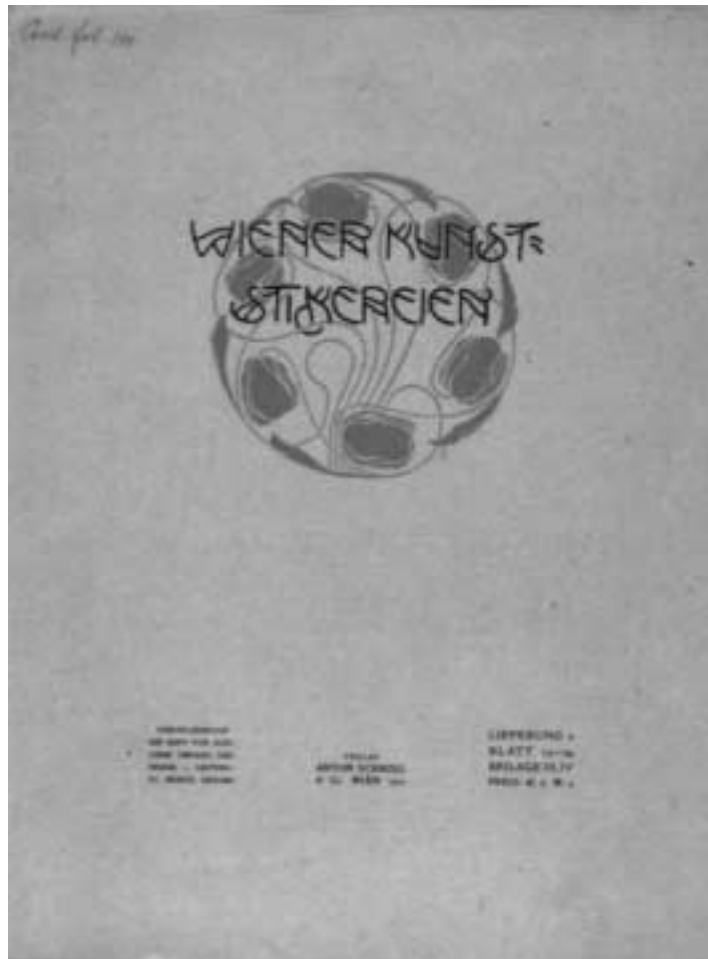


Figure 8 (right)

Marietta Peyfuss. Design for an embroidered chair covering, 1901. Published in *Wiener Kunststickereien III* (1901), color plate 25. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek.

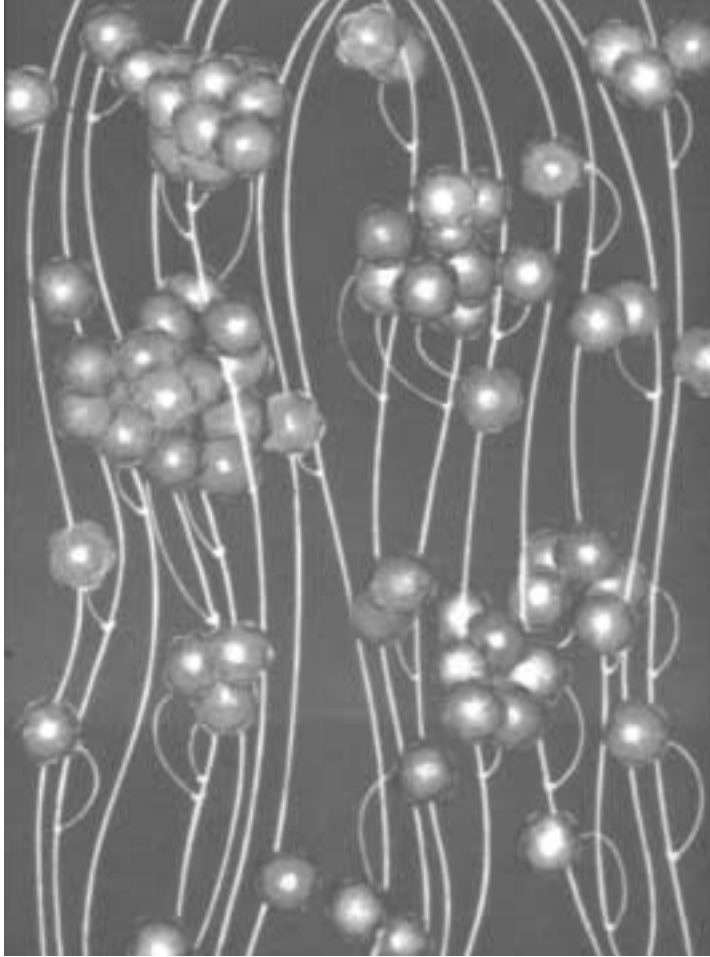


Figure 9 (below)

Emma von Strassgi-Lederer. Embroidered chair covering after a design by Marietta Peyfuss, 1901. Published in *Wiener Kunststickereien III* (1901), figure 7. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek.



The magazine was printed as a large, elegant set of color plates illustrating modern embroidery patterns by such artists as Jutta Sicka, Marietta Peyfuss, and Else Unger. Specifically, the magazine illustrated the collaboration between design students at the Kunstgewerbeschule, such as Marietta Peyfuss, and embroidery students and teachers at the k.k. Fachschule für Kunststickereien who executed their designs (figures 8 and 9). *Wiener Kunststickereien* seemed to elevate the preexisting format of the needlework section of a magazine such as *Wiener Mode* to the form of a high decorative art journal with an elite artistic, rather than simply popular, readership. *Wiener Kunststickereien* also may be seen as the natural outcome of a long-standing national program for the reform of applied arts in Austria, which frequently focused on the elevation of the national needlework industry. This new journal combined the Oesterreichisches Museum's interest in traditional needlework with the Kunstgewerbeschule's program for innovative modern design, while drawing unmistakable connections to the world of women's fashion.

Figure 10

"Wiener Kunst im Hause." Dining room designed for an exhibition at the Wiener Kunstgewerbeverein, 1901–1902. (Porcelain coffee service designed by Jutta Sicka). Photograph published in *Das Interieur III* (1902): 103. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.



Wiener Kunst im Hause

In the winter of 1901–1902, a group of graduates from the Kunstgewerbeschule, including many who had participated the previous year in the Paris and Kunstgewerbeschule exhibitions, formed an exhibiting group, "Wiener Kunst im Hause," and together displayed three fully furnished interiors at the Wiener Kunstgewerbeverein (Union of the Applied Arts), an organization to promote the wares of commercial manufacturers. The interiors on display included a bedroom, men's room, and dining room (figure 10). The group of ten students was divided equally between male and female members, but it was the work produced by the women, Else Unger, Gisela von Falke, Jutta Sicka, Therese Trethan, and Marietta Peyfuss, that received the most attention. While the men composed the rooms and designed furniture, the women produced the majority of the decorations including rugs, linens, porcelain, and silver. The primary aim of the exhibition was to show that rooms could be designed tastefully and outfitted with good, modern products on a modest budget. The Viennese art critic, Ludwig Abels, wrote that the highly commercial, department store atmosphere of the Oesterreichisches Museum's annual Winterausstellung (Winter Exhibition) had compared very unfavorably with the innovative *Wiener Kunst im Hause* display at the Kunstgewerbeverein. This critic found the women's work, especially the linens, even more interesting than that of the men.²² The Viennese feminist journal, *Dokumente der Frauen*, praised the equal participation by men and



Figure 11
 "Wiener Kunst im Hause." Room designed for the fifteenth Secession Exhibition, 1902. Photograph published in *Das Interieur* IV (1903): 28. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.

women in *Wiener Kunst im Hause* as a great step forward for the women's movement. Interior design, the authors speculated, might even be a field in which women could be leaders.²³

Wiener Kunst im Hause displayed their work again the following season at the fifteenth Secession exhibition, which was held in November and December of 1902. This time, the group was even more widely reviewed with numerous photographs of their work published in the architectural journal *Das Interieur*, including the main room, with a detail of appliqué curtains by Jutta Sicka (figures 11 and 12). Views of the rooms now show the rectilinear treatment of furniture and wall decoration most readily associated with Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte, after its establishment in 1903. The broken lines in the *Wiener Kunst im Hause* interior from 1902 intriguingly resemble stitched seams (figure 13). This is a motif that Hoffmann continued to use throughout the following decade in



Figure 12 (above)

"Wiener Kunst im Hause." Curtains designed by Jutta Sicka for the fifteenth Secession Exhibition, 1902. Photograph published in *Das Interieur IV* (1903): 227. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.

his many private apartments, offices, and shops of the Wiener Werkstätte, and culminated in his design of the sumptuous Palais Stoclet in Brussels (1905–1911). The Kunstgewerbeschule's emphasis on traditional needlework suggests that many of the school's teachers and students, including Hoffmann, Moser, and the members of "Wiener Kunst im Hause," were constantly engaged with the conceptualization, design, or production of the textile arts, and that this engagement permeated the entirety of their work. In the *Paris Exhibition of 1900*, walls and furniture were treated with embroidered and appliquéd textiles that took on patterns derived from the graphic arts. Here, the wall has been treated graphically with a motif derived from the textile arts—working cloth with needle and thread.

That a group of former Kunstgewerbeschule students, especially female students, would be invited to exhibit at the Secession indicates the significant level of prestige and recognition the designs were given. Because the male professors at the Kunstgewerbeschule were so focused on the reform of embroidery patterns and techniques, and the use of traditional women's textile arts in the home, they were especially excited by the success of their female students. That the male professors admired and were perhaps even inspired by their female students is evident in their frequent marriages.²⁴ Privately, many of the secessionists including Kolo Moser and Gustav Klimt, and their wives, collected samples of exotic embroidery and textiles, which may have had a significant influence upon their work. Gustav Klimt's enigmatic combination of floral, organic, and geometric motifs in his portraits or dining room frieze for the Palais Stoclet, for example, may be seen as derived from embroidery patterns that he and his companion, Emilie Flöge, collected.²⁵ Klimt's beloved spiral form, for example, with which he embroidered his famous smock, was standard in much traditional Central European needlework. Furthermore, the rooms arranged by *Wiener*

Figure 13 (right)

"Wiener Kunst im Hause." Room designed for the fifteenth Secession Exhibition, 1902. Photograph published in *Das Interieur IV* (1903): 231. Reprinted with permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst.





Kunst im Hause served as an important precedent for the establishment of the Wiener Werkstätte one year later.²⁶

Marketing Modern Interior Design at the Wiener Werkstaette and in the Popular Press

When the first Wiener Werkstätte showrooms opened in 1904, they adopted the model of the well-furnished home, which had been used by *Wiener Kunst im Hause*. These spaces included soft carpets and armchairs, upholstered in artistic textiles, for customers to relax in while gazing at the elegant glass cabinets displaying modern silver and porcelain wares. Walls were decorated with chic fashion illustrations. Ladies trying on clothing could walk around the shop barefoot comfortably on the soft, felt-covered floors. The stylishly outfitted interiors of the shop encouraged customers, such as Fredericke Maria Beer and Sonja Knips, wealthy patrons of the Secession, to mentally design their own aesthetically coordinated homes, furnished with products ranging from draperies, upholstery fabrics, and carpets to dishes, light fixtures, silverware, and shoes. Beer and Knips both had their portraits painted by Gustav Klimt, and commissioned apartments designed by Josef Hoffmann and outfitted by the Wiener Werkstätte. These patrons enacted the turn-of-the-century "*Gesamtkunstwerk*," in which the domestic living space became a theater of modern life. All spatial and visual elements including the structure of a building, its interior and furnishings, and the costume of its inhabitants were conceived as a single aesthetic statement. The best-known example of the secessionist *Gesamtkunstwerk* is Josef Hoffmann's mansion for the Stoclet family in Brussels, built between 1905 and 1911. The sumptuous dining and music rooms of the Palais Stoclet exemplified the theatrical spaces of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, celebrating sight, sound, and taste in a symphony of sensual harmonies that paralleled the operas of Richard Wagner, from whom the concept originated (figure 14). In his designs for the Palais Stoclet, Hoffmann was particularly attuned to fashion and to the Viennese identity of the new style of interior, even designing a dress for Madame Stoclet so that she would not clash with her living room décor as she had while wearing a French Paul Poiret gown.

The relationship between fashion and architecture in Vienna is well-documented, and has been of particular interest to scholars of the past decade whose work typically has focused on Adolf Loos.²⁷ Loos wrote a great deal about fashion, and was himself preoccupied with clothing in such a way that the concept of dress constantly informed his architectural designs. Loos's belief that understated dress was the most appropriate disguise for modern man extended to the stark, unconventional façades of his shops and private residences. The subtleties of Loos's interiors, however, reflect his more complicated understanding of architectural space as a garment that allows its inhabitants to psychologically negotiate

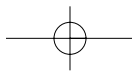




Figure 14
Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte.
Palais Stoclet, 1905–1911. Interior view of
dining room. Photograph published in *The
Studio* LXI (1914): 189 ff. Reprinted with
permission of the Oesterreichisches Museum
für angewandte Kunst.

their place in modern life. Loos's interiors simultaneously, as George Simmel suggests, allow one to display one's individuality, while assuming a degree of anonymity; they are both public and private; and domestic and urban.²⁸ Although Loos was extremely hostile towards the Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte, especially for the latter's reliance on excessive ornamentation, his understanding of the interior as a form of dress was quite similar to Josef Hoffmann's, and grew out of the same architectural theories of cladding introduced by Gottfried Semper in the mid-nineteenth century, and further developed by Otto Wagner in the early twentieth.

In his essay, "The Principle of Cladding," Loos, repeating Semper's theory, writes:

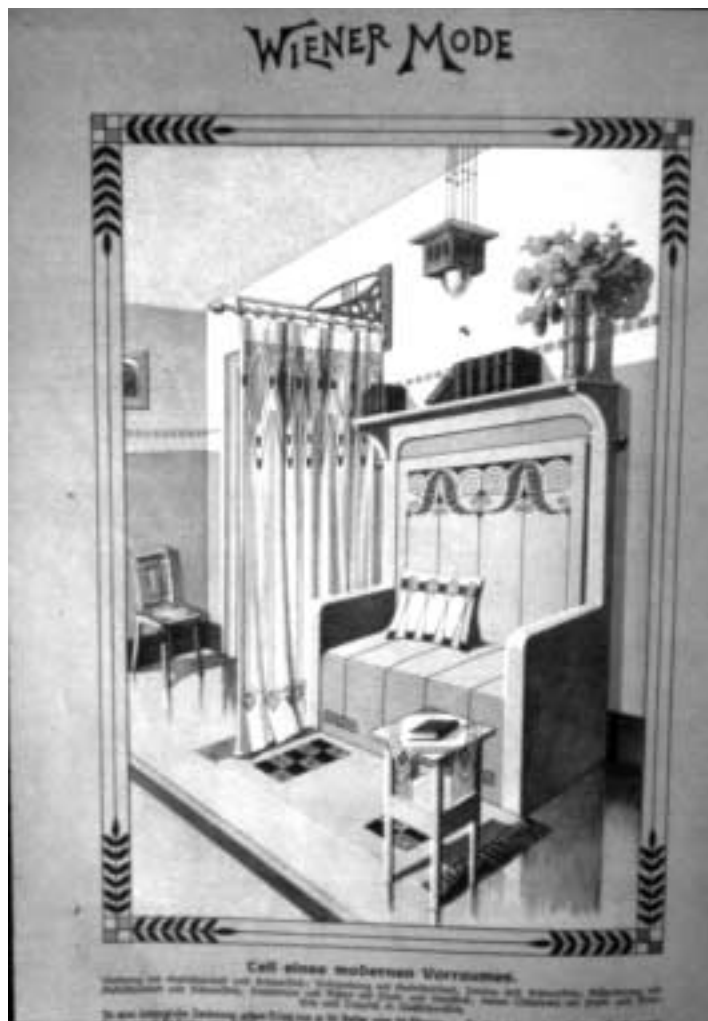
The architect's general task is to provide a warm and livable space. Carpets are warm and livable. He decides for this reason to spread out one carpet on the floor and to hang up four to form the walls. But you cannot build a house out of carpets. Both the carpet on the floor and the tapestry on the wall require a structural frame to hold them in the correct place. To invent his frame is the architect's second task.²⁹

Just as Josef Folsenics called for a "*gemütlich*" Viennese interior, Loos desired a "warm and livable" interior space. This interior must be comforting and sensual, allowing the viewer or inhabitant to

respond to it physically and psychologically. The interior also is a private, domestic, feminine space—a space for intimate conversation, sexual relations, and reproduction. It is a protective refuge from the public space of the modern city, yet it also mediates between the two realms. Different rooms served different purposes; while bedrooms were considered the most intimate and feminine spaces of a private residence, the social space of the dining room and the intellectual space of the library were coded masculine. The salon functioned as a space in which women would socialize while dressed in more relaxed and intimate garments, hovering on the boundary between public and private.

The Wiener Werkstätte's fashionability was the secret of its success. The close relationship between a specifically feminine dressing up in fancy clothes and dressing up the home in a splendid garment had its roots in the national Austrian decorative arts institutions, which fostered and promoted women's traditional textile arts, and recognized women's traditional role in home decoration.

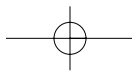
Figure 15
Fashionable interior design, 1909. Published in *Wiener Mode* XXIII/2 (15. October 1909): back cover. Reprinted with permission of the Historische Museen der Stadt Wien.





Around 1908, *Wiener Mode* began to feature embroidery and textile designs for comprehensive room decorations on the back covers of the magazines (figure 15). By this time, the Wiener Werkstätte was well established, and the room designs in *Wiener Mode* reflected the modern aesthetic in their choice of colorful or black and white geometric motifs. On the one hand, the popular interior designs in *Wiener Mode*, which usually were not attributed to a specific designer or design workshop, may be seen as a dilution of the modernist secession style of the Wiener Werkstätte. On the other hand, they cannot simply be understood as the last step in the decline of artistic idea to popular culture. Rather, the popular fashion magazine as a vehicle for perpetuating both commerce and culture already was well in place by the time the Secessionists began to market their new designs through the Wiener Werkstätte. Designers including Josef Hoffmann, Kolo Moser, and their students at the Kunstgewerbeschule responded to this mechanism as much as it responded to them. The design of artistic interiors and furnishings, and the marketing of fashionable goods, must be seen, rather, as a complementary process that allowed both ends to fuel one another creatively.

The modernist interest in textile arts and interior design in Vienna would not have emerged and blossomed as it did had it not been for the constant driving force of fashion, which provided a space for women to engage physically, either as designers or consumers, with the aestheticization of themselves and their living spaces through cloth and needlework. A domestic comfort was recovered in Vienna at the turn of the century by physically wrapping living spaces in pieces of embroidered cloth. The garment—especially the feminine garment—was a common metaphor for the interior living space at the turn of the century. It is important to recognize, however, that this form of feminine dress had as much to do with the idea of “cladding” a space in cloth—a flexible, organic, fiber material—as it did with a particular style or fashion of clothing. Cloth itself has a long history of associations with the feminine, and as Semper interprets it, with our inherent creative tendencies. The textile-based style of interior decoration promoted by *Wiener Kunst im Hause* and perpetuated by the Wiener Werkstätte was derived from women’s traditional handcrafts, which the Secessionists admired, imitated, relied upon, and fostered in their educational programs, publications, and exhibitions.



- 1 The Vienna Secession was comprised of nineteen artists; among them Gustav Klimt, Kolo Moser, Josef Hoffman, and Josef Olbrich; who chose to step down from the exhibiting group of the Vienna Academy of Fine Art in 1897, because of biases they perceived against exhibiting "modern" works both at home and abroad. The Secessionists then built their own exhibition hall, the famous Secession Building, designed by Josef Olbrich (1898), inscribed with the programmatic motto, "To Each Age Its Art, To Every Art Its Freedom." The Secessionists held twenty-three exhibitions between 1897 and 1905, when the original members, the so-called "Klimt group," once again seceded from their own organization. Many histories of the Secession have been written. Among the most useful are Ludwig Hevesi, *Acht Jahre Secession (März 1897–Juni 1905): Kritik—Polemik—Chronik*, Otto Breicha, ed. (1906; reprint, Klagenfurt: Ritter Verlag, 1984); and Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (1961; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1981).
- 2 The ten students, Jutta Sicka, Marietta Peyfuss, Else Unger, Gisela von Falke, Therese Trethan, Leopold Forstner, Wilhelm Schmidt, Hans Vollmer, Franz Messner, and Michael Powolny; are named in "Wiener Kunst im Hause," *Das Interieur* IV (1903): 28–29.
- 3 One of the most comprehensive monographs on Adolf Loos, which includes accounts of his visits to America and his admiration of American culture is Burkhard Rukschcio and Roland Schachel, *Adolf Loos: Leben und Werk* (Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 1982).
- 4 See, for example, the first in an eight-part series, which ran from August 1892 to August 1893: Jacob von Falke, "Unsere Wohnung. Ihre Verzierung und Ausstattung. Einleitung: Stil und Stilisieren," *Wiener Mode* VI/21 (1. August 1892): 761–763. This essay is modified from von Falke's book, *Die Kunst im Hause: Geschichtliche und Kritisch-aesthetische Studien über die Decoration und Ausstattung der Wohnung* (Vienna: C. Gerold, 1871).
- 5 "Künstler und Hausfrau waren in einer Person vereinigt. So wie die junge Schöne, wenn sie allein war, stundenlang vor dem Spiegel stehen konnte, um in naiver Vertiefung in ästhetische Fragen herauszubekommen, welche Frisur, welche Haltung, welche Bewegungsform ihr am besten steht, so hat sie auch auf dem Wege erfahrungsgemässer Aesthetik allmählig ihr Heim zum reizenden Kleide ihres intimen Lebens ausgestellt," Josef Folsenics, "Das Wiener Interieur," *Das Interieur* I (1900): 3–6.
- 6 "Wer den Typus der echten Wienerin kennt, der weiss, dass im Glanze feuriger Augen, im Rosenschimmer blühender Wangen, in den wichen Welenlinien des lachenden Mundes eine Seele schlummert, die mit der Innigkeit und Natürlichkeit ihres Empfindens allen Sinnenreiz der äusseren Erscheinung wie mit einem warmen milden Lichte überstrahlt. Diese persönliche Eigenart hatte stets die Tendenz, sich auf das ganze Leben zu übertragen, auf den gesellschaftlichen Verkehr, auf die öffentlichen Vergnügungen und vor Allem auf das Familienleben und das echte Wiener Interieur," Josef Folsenics, "Das Wiener Interieur," 6.
- 7 Christopher Long, in his article, "Wiener Wohnkultur: Interior Design in Vienna, 1910–1938," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* (Fall/Winter 1997–1998): 29–51, discusses the Viennese emphasis on domestic comfort, "*Gemütlichkeit*," in the years between the wars as a reaction against the unified, hard-edged, functionalist style championed by the Bauhaus, as well as by Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte. Although the Wiener Werkstätte did embrace a model of interior design based upon unified rectilinear forms, I believe that the workshop's general interest in domestic design, stemmed from the same Viennese desire for *Gemütlichkeit* that Long suggests was at the root of the more popular and eclectic designs by Oskar Strnad and Josef Frank between the world wars.
- 8 Gabriel Mourey, "Round the Exhibition—IV. Austrian Decorative Art," *The Studio* XXI (Oct. 1900–Jan. 1901): 112–113.
- 9 Ludwig Hevesi, "Die Kunstgewerbeschule auf der Pariser Weltausstellung," *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk* III (1900): 117.
- 10 "In anderen aber ist der neue Stil schon lebendig. Die Motive werden aus weniger zertretenen Theilen der Botanik geholt, die Pflanzen mit freierem Auge angesehen und mit einer frischeren oramentalen Laune verwendet," Ludwig Hevesi, "Die Kunstgewerbeschule auf der Pariser Weltausstellung," 121.
- 11 By choosing the title "Ver Sacrum" for their periodical, the Secessionists not only evoked the sacred rebirth of the world in springtime, but also recalled a Roman ritual in which the elders pledged their children to save society in times of national danger. By "seceding" from the exhibiting society of the Academy of Fine Arts, the young artists pledged themselves to save culture from their elders. Their own Secession was based on the Roman model of the *secessio plebis*, in which the plebs defiantly withdrew from the republic, rejecting the misrule of the patricians. See Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, 214–5.
- 12 Dr. A. Riegl, "Die Ausstellung weiblicher Handarbeiten im Oesterr. Museum (März, April, Mai 1886.)," *Mittheilungen des k. k. Oesterr. Museums für Kunst und Industrie* I/6/249 Juni 1886): 115.
- 13 "...in allen Fällen äussert sich in diesen Schöpfungen ein eminentes Stylgefühl und ein naiver, gesunder Kunstsin, der den gebildeten Bewhonerinnen der grossen Städte nicht in allen Fällen von Haus aus eigen ist," Emilie Bach, "Die nationale Haus-Industrie" in *Special Ausstellung weiblicher Handarbeiten im k. k. Oesterr. Museums für Kunst und Industrie. (März, April, Mai 1886.) Führer und Bericht*, (Vienna: Verlag des k. k. Oesterr. Museums für Kunst und Industrie, 1886), 23.
- 14 Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil in technischen und tektonischen Künsten, oder Praktische Aesthetik. Ein Handbuch für Techniker, Künstler und Kunstfreunde. Band I. Die Textile Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1860–1863).

- 15 Today these institutions, which originally were joined, exist separately as the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK) and the Hochschule für angewandte Kunst in Wien.
- 16 Jacob von Falke, "Die Sammlung von Webereien und Stickereien im oesterreichischen Museum," *Mittheilungen des k. k. Oesterreichischen Oesterreichisches Museums für Kunst und Industrie* 1/2 (15. Nov. 1865): 19–24.
- 17 For an institutional history of the Kunstgewerbeschule, see Gottfried Fliedl, *Kunst und Lehre am Beginn der Moderne: Die Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule 1867–1918* (Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz Verlag, 1986).
- 18 Ludwig Hevesi, "Aus der Sezession. Achte Ausstellung der 'Vereinigung,'" in *Acht Jahre Sezession*, 282–283.
- 19 Today, many of the embroidered works purchased by the Oesterreichisches Museum in 1901, including those mentioned above, are part of the permanent textile collection of the Oesterreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK).
- 20 "In allen Classen dieser Schule ragen die weiblichen Kräfte ganz besonders hervor. Sie sind durch langjährige Tradition gerade für die Künste vorbereitet, welche zum Schmuck der Wohnung, zur Verschönerung der Alltäglichkeit dienen," Miss Eddy, "Die Ausstellung der Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule II," *Wiener Mode* XIV/23 (1. Sept. 1901): 969.
- 21 Leopold Bauer, "Moderne Handarbeit im Wohnzimmer," *Wiener Mode* XV/1 (1. Oct. 1901): 18–21.
- 22 Ludwig Abels, "Kunstgewerbliche Ausstellungen (Winterausstellung im Oesterreichischen Museum und im Kunstgewerbeverein)," *Wiener Mode* XV/7 (1. Jan. 1902): 331–332.
- 23 "Wiener Kunst im Hause," *Dokumente der Frauen* VI/17 (1. Dec. 1901): 491–492.
- 24 Alfred Roller, for example, married his student, Mileva Stoisavlirvics; Kolo Moser married his student Dita Mautner-Markhoff.
- 25 Examples of this embroidery collection and an account of Klimt and Flöge's activities together may be found in a number of sources, including, Wolfgang Fischer, *Gustav Klimt und Emilie Flöge: Genie und Talent, Freundschaft und Besessenheit* (Vienna: Verlag Christian Brandstätter, 1987).
- 26 This influence is acknowledged in Werner Schweiger, *Wiener Werkstätte: Kunst und Handwerk 1903–1932* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1995), 20–22.
- 27 Examples of recent work on Loos's relationship to fashion include: Janet Stewart, *Fashioning Vienna: Adolf Loos's Cultural Criticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA and London: M.I.T. Press, 1994); Mary MacLeod, "Undressing Architecture: Fashion, Gender, and Modernity" in *Architecture: In Fashion*, Deborah Fausch, et al, eds. (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 38–123; and Mark Wigley, "White Out: Fashioning the Modern" in *Architecture: In Fashion*, Deborah Fausch, et al, eds. (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.)
- 28 The German sociologist Georg Simmel makes this point, for example, in his 1904 essay "Fashion" in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, Donald N. Levine, ed. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 294–323.
- 29 Adolf Loos, "The Principle of Cladding" in *Spoken into the Void: Collected Essays 1897–1900*, trans. Jane O. Newman and John H. Smith (Cambridge, MA and London: M.I.T. Press, 1982), 66–69. This passage also is quoted and remarked upon in Beatriz Colomina, "Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interiors of Adolf Loos," *AA files* 20 (Autumn 1990): 5–15.