Finding aid for the Josef Franz Maria Hoffmann papers, 1895-1950

Carl Wuellner
Descriptive Summary
Title: Josef Franz Maria Hoffmann papers
Date (inclusive): 1895-1950
Number: 850997
Creator/Collector: Hoffmann, Josef Franz Maria
Physical Description: 3 Linear Feet (6 boxes)
Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles 90049-1688
reference@getty.edu
URL: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/askref
(310) 440-7390
Abstract: Correspondence, manuscripts, photographs and other papers of the Austrian designer and architect, Josef Hoffmann, document his involvement in the arts and crafts movement and his writings in art education. The bulk of the papers date to the 1920s and 1930s.
Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.
Language: Collection material is in German
Biographical Note
Josef Franz Maria Hoffmann (1870-1956) was one of the most influential architects and designers to emerge from Austria in the early twentieth century. He graduated with distinction in 1895 from the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, where he was a student of Otto Wagner. Two years later, along with Gustav Klimt, he became a founding member of the Vienna Secession, a group dedicated to creating more exhibition opportunities for avant-garde Viennese artists. Hoffmann began teaching at the Vienna Kunstgewerbeschule in 1899, a position he held until 1936, and was artistic director of the Austrian Werkbund until 1933. He and fellow artist Koloman Moser founded the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903. This renowned artist-run group of workshops was devoted to the melding of handicraft with high design, and took as its primary goal the complete integration of environment, architecture, art, furniture, and objects of daily life. Although a great success artistically, it was plagued by frequent fiscal difficulties, and in 1931 its financially-strapped workshops ceased operation. Hoffmann remained active as a designer and lecturer until the end of his life. He died in Vienna.
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Preferred Citation
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http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa850997
Acquisition Information
Acquired in 1985
Processing History
The Hoffmann Papers were partially processed by staff at the Getty Research Institute in 1985. Carl Wuellner completed the processing of the archive and wrote the finding aid from October-December, 1995.
Scope and Content of Collection
The Josef Hoffmann papers document Hoffmann's career as an architect, designer, and educator. They date from the year he graduated from the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts to only a few years before his death. The bulk of the material is from the 1920s and 1930s, and includes many of Hoffmann's writings for public presentations in the years 1924-1932. There are also letters and correspondence, photographs, architectural drawings, printed matter and ephemera. Much of the material is not dated.
Upon Hoffmann's death, this collection passed to his friend and biographer, Leopold Wolfgang Rochowanski. Later it passed through the hands of rare-book dealer Oscar Schreyer, who scripted English summaries of a number of the manuscripts and letters. There are also photocopies of many of the original papers, though these were not part of the collection initially. Specific manuscripts and letters from the collection are referenced in Eduard Sekler's catalogue raisonné of Hoffmann's architectural work as "Estate L.W. Rochowanski." (see Bibliography)

The papers deal with the following topics: the relationship between craft and art; handicraft-oriented vs. machine-oriented means of production; the dignity inherent in manual labor; the evolution of the Wiener Werkstätte and its roots in the example of Otto Wagner; the Viennese Secession and the English Arts and Crafts Movement; management of the Wiener Werkstätte; art education; furniture, interior, and fashion design; architecture and architectural projects; the Kunstgewerbeschule; the Viennese Academy; and the Austrian Werkbund.

**Subjects - Names**
Hoffmann, Josef Franz Maria

**Subjects - Corporate Bodies**
Wiener Kunstgewerbe-Schule
Wiener Werkstätte
Oesterreichische Werkbund
Akademie der Künste

**Subjects - Topics**
Furniture design
Decorative arts -- Austria
Architecture -- Austria -- 20th century
Arts -- Study and teaching
Arts and crafts movement

**Genres and Forms of Material**
Photographs, Original
Photographic prints -- 20th century
Architectural drawings -- 20th century

**Contributors**
Vágó, József
Singer, Susi
Snischek, Max
Roller, Alfred
Schroeder, Any
Hoffmann, Josef Franz Maria
Rix, Kitty
Kopriva, Erna
Powolny, Michael
Likarz, Maria
Pech, Dagobert
Loew, Jakob
Lurje, Victor
Baudisch, Gudrun
De Fiori, Ernesto
Düller, Martin
Jastrzembiec, Ludwig

**Bibliography**
Series I. **Letters from Hoffmann 1925-1938**

**Scope and Content Note**

Letters arranged chronologically by subject, most neither dated nor addressed, many with typewritten English synopses prepared by Oscar Schreyer. These letters document Hoffmann's differences with the administration and management of the Wiener Werkstätte, his role in the Austrian Werkbund and his reasons for leaving it, and his attempts to defend himself against official criticism after the annexation of Austria in 1938. (see Box 3 for photocopies)

**box 1, folder 1**

**Four letters, ca. 1926-1931, n.d.**

**Scope and Content Note**

To Hermann Neubacher (president of the Austrian Werkbund and member of the board of the Wiener Werkstätte) regarding the current state of the design arts (1931); to Heinrich Bischoff (1931); and two unaddressed and undated, discussing the Stoclet House, Brussels, as a model, and elucidating the idea that education should be a process of integrating all of the arts into everyday life.

**box 1, folder 2**

**Six letters, 1928, n.d.**

**Scope and Content Note**

One letter concerns financial constraints imposed on an exhibition of the Wiener Werkstätte (1928); five undated letters debate how to surmount the financial difficulties of the Werkstätte and maintain the quality of the educational program.

**box 1, folder 3**

**Seven letters, undated**

**Scope and Content Note**

Includes a letter to Làszlò Gabor explaining reasons for leaving the Austrian Werkbund (quoted in part in Sekler, 209, as "Estate Rocho[wanski]," see Bibliography); a fragment of a letter, no addressee, expresses concern that the Werkbund is growing too far from its roots as a native artists' cooperative; a letter to "Sehr geehrter Herr Ministerialrat" written after the 1938 annexation of Austria, in which Hoffmann defends himself against official criticism; and a letter to "Hochgeehrter Herr Bundespräsident," explaining political reasons for refusing to accept an award from the state at an exhibition in Paris (cited in Sekler, 516, n.16, as "Estate Rocho[wanski]," (see Bibliography.)

Series II. **Letters received, 1902-1940**

**Scope and Content Note**

Twenty-four postcards and letters from friends, colleagues, students, and unknown correspondents, all of a personal, informal character, arranged chronologically. (See Box 3 for photocopies.)

**box 1, folder 4**

**Twenty-four items, 1902-1940, n.d.**

**Scope and Content Note**

Letters and postcards of an informal, personal nature received from students, friends, and colleagues. Correspondents include Dagobert Peche, Adolph Vetter, Camilla Eber-Birke (plus 2 photos), and Alfred Roller.

**box 5, folder 1-15**

**Photocopies of many of the above letters.**
Series III. Manuscripts by Hoffmann, 1895-1938

Scope and Content Note

Sixty-six manuscripts (forty-two holographs; seven holographs with annotated typescripts; seventeen typescripts) are arranged chronologically by subject. Mostly unpublished, these are drafts and transcriptions of speeches, lectures, essays, articles and memoranda. English synopses prepared by Oscar Schreyer accompany the majority of them. Subjects include most of the topics listed above. (see Box 3 for photocopies)

box 1, folder 5

Seven items, 1895-1924

Scope and Content Note

Included are partial typed drafts of two early articles published in Der Architekt I (1895) and III (1897); a handwritten draft of an article published in Das Kunstblatt 8 (1924) on the schooling of architects; three handwritten and one typed manuscript, reprinted in Sekler as follows: Speech About Otto Wagner, 1909; My Work, 1911; and Vienna’s Future, originally published in Der Merker, December 1919. See Bibliography.

box 1, folder 6

Ten items, 1926-1933, n.d.

Scope and Content Note

Writings on the Wiener Werkstätte, including essays on the following topics: the role of the artistic manager in an organization such as Wiener Werkstätte (1928); artistic principles of the Werkstätte (1930); the Werkstätte in its historical context (1933); the Werkstätte in its Austrian/Viennese context (undated); why the city of Vienna should lend financial assistance to the Werkstätte (1926 and undated)

box 1, folder 7

Five items, 1933-1935, n.d.

Scope and Content Note

Writings on Hoffmann’s relationship with the Austrian Werkbund and the Neuer Werkbund Österreichs, the group he formed upon resigning from the Austrian Werkbund, including an essay expressing his differences with the Austrian Werkbund (1933) and two introductions to Das befreite Handwerk, the first exhibition by the Neuer Werkbund Österreichs (1935 and undated.)

box 1, folder 8

Seven manuscripts, undated

Scope and Content Note

Includes essays/speeches on the following topics: how interior decoration should complement the way we live in the modern world; the interiors of the Werkbundsiedlung Wien housing colony; the fragmentation of the contemporary system of art education; the integration of art, industry, and handicraft to create a national style.

box 1, folder 9

Notes: Eight items, 1933, n.d.

Scope and Content Note

Notes on various topics in architecture and fashion, including the following: the blending of practicality and aesthetic appeal in workers’ clothing to enhance the inherent dignity of labor (undated); the re-establishment of the defunct Wiener Werkstätte (undated); the absurdities of thoughtless imitation of past styles in the arts and architecture (undated); a new concert hall and international cultural complex for Vienna (undated); the Vienna Ringstraße and the urban landscape (undated). There is also a forward to an unidentified architectural book (1933).

box 2, folder 1

Manuscripts: Four items, 1926, n.d.

Scope and Content Note

Essays/speeches on the following topics: the differing qualities of mass-produced and handicraft objects; that a return of hand-craftsmanship will yield objects of high quality and useful design (undated); the future of Kunsthandwerk (1926); the decline in quality of everyday objects due to commercialized, mass-produced imitation of older styles (1926).
box 2, folder 2  
**Manuscripts: Ten items, 1932, n.d.**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Essays/speeches on the following topics: that all branches of art and architecture should be products of their own time and place; that the traditional workshop is the ideal setting for this approach to making art (undated); that architecture should incorporate traditional local materials as well as modern technical innovations (1932); and that comfort and convenience for all should take precedence over lavish splendor for a few (undated.)

box 2, folder 3  
**Manuscripts: Sixteen items, 1938, n.d.**  
**Scope and Content Note**  
Essays/speeches on the following topics: unification of the various academies and schools of art (1938 and undated); that artistic talent can only be inspired and awakened from within by a competent teacher (undated); that a degree from the Kunstgewerbeschule be held equal to that from a University (undated).

box 5, folder 1-15  
**Photocopies of many of the above items.**

Series IV. **Printed matter, 1919-1945**

**Scope and Content Note**  
Four newspaper clippings of articles written by Hoffmann, 1931-ca. 1945, covering such topics as the artistic mission of the Wiener Werkstätte, the encouragement of women artists, the reconstruction of Vienna after World War II, and the place of the arts and crafts in modern culture. There are eight items about or referring to Hoffmann, including published journal articles about Hoffmann's architectural work, pamphlets and exhibition flyers, ca. 1919-1934.

box 2, folder 4  
**Printed matter, ca. 1914-1934**

**Scope and Content Note**  
Offprints and tear sheets about Hoffmann's work. Of special note is a checklist of works shown in an exhibition held at the Österreichischen Museum in honor of Hoffmann's sixtieth birthday (1930.)

box 2, folder 5  
**Clippings, ca. 1931-1945**

**Scope and Content Note**  
Four newspaper clippings of articles written by Hoffmann. Of interest is a newspaper article in which Hoffmann encourages the participation of women artists in the arts and crafts movement. Also a clipping of an article in which Hoffmann pleads for a sensible approach to rebuilding the city of Vienna after World War II.

box 3, folder 1-15  
**Photocopies of many of the letters, some manuscripts in Boxes 1-2.**

**Architectural drawings, photographs and graphic arts, undated**

**Scope and Content Note**  
Four architectural drawings, bearing the Wiener Werkstätte stamp, for a casino/hotel with adjacent house in Kapfenburg, Austria. There are approximately 195 photographs, in two binders, including portraits of Hoffmann and other artists associated with the Wiener Werkstätte; photographs of ceramics, glassware, textiles, lamps and other functional and decorative objects designed by Werkstätte artists; three photographs of architectural drawings; and one color lithograph by an unknown artist labeled "Herta Zuckerman, Aged 14 Years."

box 4  
**Photographs, undated**

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**Finding aid for the Josef Franz Maria Hoffmann papers, 1895-1950**
Scope and Content Note

Binder contains approximately ninety-five photographs. Includes portraits of Hoffmann and other artists associated with the Wiener Werkstätte; and photographs of architectural drawings, ceramics, glassware, textiles, lamps and other functional and decorative objects designed by Werkstätte artists, A-P. Artists whose works are included: Gudrun Baudisch, Herta Bucher, Lotte Calm, Otto Czechska, Alice Ehmann, Mathilde Flögl, Erna Koprina, Maria Likarz, Jakob Löw, Victor Lurge, Dagobert Peche, Michael Powolny.

box 5

Photographs undated

Scope and Content Note

Binder contains approximately one hundred photographs. Includes photographs of artists associated with the Wiener Werkstätte; and photographs of ceramics, glassware, textiles, lamps and other functional and decorative objects designed by Werkstätte artists, R-W, and collaborative works, unidentified works. Artists whose work is included: Felice Rix, Kitty Rix, Rochowanski, Irene Schaschl, Hedwig Schmidl, Any Schröder, Susi Singer, Max Snischek, Grete Spanring, Vally Wieselthier.

Architectural drawings, undated

Scope and Content Note

Four design drawings bearing the stamp of the Wiener Werkstätte, labeled "Bau: Casino in Kapfenburg für Herrn Consul Böhler."

box 6*, folder 1

Plan: Parterre des Hauses Gallerie des Saales

box 6*, folder 1

Plan: Souterrain des Hauses Parterre des grossen Saales

box 6*, folder 1

Plan: 1 Stock des Hauses dach des Saales

box 6*, folder 1

Elevation: Haupt Ansicht

box 6*, folder 2

Color lithograph, undated

Scope and Content Note

with the Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule stamp, artist unknown, labeled "Herta Zuckerman, Aged 14 Years."
Series V. Ephemera 1909-1950

Scope and Content Note
Twelve items referring to Hoffmann, to objects produced by the Wiener Werkstätte, and to the role of the Werkstätte in Viennese cultural life, 1909-1950, arranged chronologically. Also invoices and receipts from the Wiener Werkstätte, 1928-1930.

box 2, folder 6

Manuscripts: Twelve items, 1909-1950
Scope and Content Note
Includes an annotated typescript of an article by Ludwig Jastrzembiec on the poet Peter Altenberg, with a handwritten dedication to Hoffmann (1909.) Also a typed list of tributes to Hoffmann by other noted architects and artists in honor of his eightieth birthday (1950.)

box 2, folder 7

Invoices and receipts, 1909-1950
Scope and Content Note
Twelve items, principally between the Wiener Werkstätte and the firm of Franz Unterberger (1928-1930.)