THE FIRST MODERN REVIVAL OF ARTISAN BLACKSMITHING AND ITS DEMISE

ECLECTICISM & HISTORICISM

Wikipedia

Wikipedia

'It is only good for God to create without toil; that which man can create without toil is worthless: machine ornaments are no ornaments at all.' - John Ruskin, Stones of Venice, 1853

'The evolution of culture marches with the elimination of ornament from useful objects.' - Adolf Loos, Ornament and Crime, 1910,1923

'What we need is large-scale industrial production, not the magic of the small workshop, the zeal of the individual craftsman, and the good old craft traditions.' - Friedrich Naumann, a co-founder of Deutsche Werkbund, 1912

Expositions: 1851 London | 1867 Paris | 1878 Paris | 1889 Paris | 1893 Chicago | 1900 Paris | 1925 Paris | 1937 Paris | 1964 New York

VICTORIAN

J. Starkie **Gardner**
United Kingdom
1844-1930

Essay | Restoration

Louis **Van Boeckel**
Belgium
1857-1944

Bel. Wikipedia

Note: At the 1900 Exposition, he won the highest award, the Grande Médaille d'Or, among the 378 worldwide blacksmiths.

Julius **Schramm**
Germany
1870-1945

De. Wikipedia

Note: While the 1922 folio 'Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration' depicts the evolving Art Deco style, Schramm's works reflect a Germanic neo-classicism. Similarly, his USA trainee, Francis Whitaker, to the right, will be conservative, keeping to the master's style over the decades.

Note: His work includes the grave decorations for Czar Alexander III and for Queen Marie-Henriette, the staircases of the Khedive Palace in Cairo and the Benedictine monastery on Mount Olive, Jerusalem, parapets of the National Bank of Athens, the cathedral of Santo Rio in Buenos Aires and the White House, USA.

Francis **Whitaker**
USA
1906-1999

Wikipedia

GOTHIC REVIVAL

Eugene **Viollet-le-Duc, Architect**
France
1814-1879

Wikipedia

Pierre **Boulanger**
France
1813-1891

Fr. Wikipedia

Cyril **Colnik**
Austria-USA
1871-1958

Museum

COLONIAL REVIVAL (USA)

Samuel **Yellin**
Poland-USA
1884-1940

Wikipedia

Donald **Streeter**
USA
1905-1998

Archive Essay

LITERATURE

The Preponderance of Folios

1896: Jean Tijou's 1693 A New Booke of Drawings, is reprinted. The original had influenced British smiths for two centuries.

1902: Wilhelm Rehme publishes the folio Moderne Kunstschmiede in Art Nouveau style of northern Europe.

1903: Designer Wilhelm Ehlerding publishes a folio of designs in Germany's Jugendstil style.

1910: Emile Robert & Ernest Borderel publish a folio of their company's work, mainly in the Art Nouveau style.

1910: Architect Silvio Gambini publishes a folio of designs in Italy's Liberty style.

1910: Louis Perroux publishes a folio of designs in the French classical styles. It is reprinted in 1997.

1923: Gaston Fleury publishes a folio of early Art Deco ironwork by Parisian smiths.

1925: Henri Clouzot publishes two folio volumes of work by Parisian smiths of the 1925 Art Deco Exposition.

1928: Raymond Subes publishes a folio catalogue of his company's work (Borderel & Robert) in the Art Deco style.

1930 & 1933: These folios of work by Parisian smiths reveal the influence of Modernism - Ornament is vanishing.

1939: Bestetti e Tumminelli publish the folio 'I fabbri battuti di Alessandro Mazzucotelli', spanning Art Nouveau to Art Moderne.

1856: Owen Jones authors the influential 'The Grammar of Ornament', as a counter to Neo-Classicism and the Gothic Revival.

1863, 1885: France's Albert Racinet authors 'L'Ornement Polychrome,' a collection of past masterpieces of design across cultures.

1864: The Library of the Museum of the Decorative Arts, Louvre, opens. It includes 'scrap-books' of designs and published photographs.

1897: Emile Robert authors 'The Art of the Smith, Ancient & Modern' in his effort to restore the trade in France.

1911: J. Starkie Gardner authors 'English Ironwork of the XVIIth & XVIIIth Centuries' among other texts on metalwork.

1900's: Alexander Speltz authors compendia of ornament across several styles of the world.

1920: Le Musee Le Secq des Tournelles opens in Rouen, France. 1924: Henri-Rene D'Allemagne publishes the museum's catalogue.

1928: Raymond Subes authors a history of ironwork from the 11th to 19th centuries. It is reprinted in 1949.

1929: Gerald Geerlings authors 'Wrought Iron in Architecture', a historical survey.

1945: The Paris smiths, famous for the 1925 Exposition, continue to produce ironwork 20 years later and through the war years.

1951 & 1961: These books and others reveal the preeminence of Raymond Subes in the 20th century.

1851-1853: John Ruskin authors 'The Stones of Venice', which criticizes industrial capitalism and promotes medieval craftsmanship.

1854-1872: Eugene Viollet-le-Duc authors two volumes on architecture, supporting the Gothic Revival, the use of iron in architecture and 'form follows function'.

1893: William Morris and colleagues publish essays on various topics on the decorative arts.

1895: Samuel Bing opens La Maison d'Art Nouveau for the sale of objets d'art of Japan, Europe and USA.

1910's: Wallace Nutting's photographs, books and catalogues spur the Colonial Revival in the USA.

1910,1923: Adolf Loos authors 'Ornament and Crime', criticizing the excess of ornament in architecture and design. See quote above.

1923: Le Corbusier authors 'Towards a New Architecture', advocating for and exploring the concept of modern architecture.

1928: Albert Sonn authors 'Early American Wrought Iron', indicative of the Colonial Revival.

1929: Karl Blossfeldt publishes his photographic collection, Urformen der Kunst, which influences craftsmen worldwide.

1935, 1941: Julius Schramm authors "The Artist-Blacksmith's Craft' and 'My Life as Artist-Blacksmith', translated into English in 1995, with preface by Francis Whitaker.

1951-1967: Germany's Fritz Kuhn authors numerous books, influencing a new generation of smiths.

1960: Reyner Banham authors 'Theory and Design in the First Machine Age', a definitive account of the origins of modern architecture.

REACTION TO THE ABOVE

ARTS & CRAFTS

Frank **Koralewsky**
Germany-USA
1872-1941

Essay

Carl **Jennings**
USA
1910-2003

AAA Interview

1860 | 1890 | 1910 | 1922 | 1928

ART NOUVEAU

The 1900 Exposition Universelle was the site of demonstrations by Emile Robert as part of his successful effort to restore the trade in France.

ART DECO

The 1925 Exposition Internationale of Arts Decoratifs and Industrielle is the apex of the revival. Wrought ironwork is ubiquitous.

ART MODERNE

The 1937 Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques includes the Pavillon of Metal, for which Raymond Subes is the primary designer.

Emile **Robert**
France
1860-1924

Fr. Biography

Raymond **Subes**
France
1893-1970

Fr. Wikipedia

Fr. Essay

John **Ruskin, Art Critic**
Britain
1819-1900

Wikipedia

Edgar **Brandt**
France
1880-1960

Fr. Wikipedia

Manfred **Bergmeister**
Germany
1927-2019

De. Wikipedia

Paul **Kiss**
Romania-France
1886-1962

Fr. Essay

Note: USA's Fred Gichner acquires Kiss' works for business and family display in Washington, DC, USA.

Other **Art Deco**
France
1925

Nics Freres
Adalbert Szabo
Eduard Schenk
R. Desvallieres

Note: In the late 1920's, Kiss' designer Paul Feher joins Rose Iron Works of Cleveland.

Alfred **Habermann**
Czech
1930-2008

De. Wikipedia

PRE-RAPHAELITES

William **Morris, Craftsman**
Britain
1834-1896

Wikipedia

Alberto **Calligaris**
Italy
1880-1960

It. Blog

Fritz **Kuhn**
Germany
1910-1967

Alessandro **Mazzucotelli**
Italy
1865-1938

It. folio

Note: Architect Silvio Gambini (above) collaborated with Mazzucotelli. To the right is a Gambini design.

Toni **Benetton**
Italy
1910-1996

Museum

Carlo **Rizzarda**
Italy
1883-1931

It. Web Site

Note: In 2001, the museum of his work and art collection re-opens in Feltre, Italy.

Gilbert **Poillerat**
France
1902-1988

Essay by J. Kahr

Antonio **Gaudi, Architect**
Spain
1852-1926

Photo Essay

Eduardo **Chillida**
Spain
1924-2002

Wikipedia

Prologue

For one hundred years, artisan smithing had waned under Neo-Classicism and industry's mass production of cast iron. However, the banality of 1851 and 1867 Expositions stirred reformers, who would return to nature for inspiration. Handicraft would become an antidote to industrialism.

Condensed Timeline of Western Styles

Wikipedia

- Structural Expressionism
- Postmodernism
- International Style
- Art Moderne
- Art Deco
- Art Nouveau
- Edwardian / Victorian / Gothic Revival — ECLECTICISM & HISTORICISM
- Neo-Classicism
- Roccoco
- Baroque
- Renaissance
- Gothic
- Romanesque

1000 1200 1400 1600 1750 1800 1850 1900 1925 1940 1950 1980

Rise and Fall

Within the new styles and technologies, artisan smithing flourished. At the 1925 Art Deco Exposition of Paris, ironwork was supreme and Edgar Brandt was a definer of the style. Yet, at that very moment and place, Le Corbusier was introducing his L'Esprit Nouveau pavillon, devoid of ornament.

Le Corbusier

Epilogue

With the victory of Modernism and the defeat of ornament, artisan smithing again declined. The aesthetic of the machine displaced that of the handicraft. New battles will ensue: tradition vs. technology

REACTION TO ALL OF THE ABOVE

CUBISM
FUTURISM

BAUHAUS

FUNCTIONALISM

INTERNATIONAL STYLE

1890's Mechanical power hammers become prevalent.

1900's Oxygen-acetylene welding becomes prevalent.

1920's Stainless steel and aluminum become prevalent.

1930's Electric welding becomes prevalent.

TECHNOLOGY

Early 1800's Cast iron displaces wrought ironwork.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION | OPENING OF JAPAN...JAPONISM | RESTORATION OF MEDIEVAL SITES OF PARIS | NEW IMPERIALISM | COLONIALISM | WORLD WAR I | GREAT DEPRESSION | WORLD WAR II

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