

Third German Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Dresden (1906)

Abstract

Held in Dresden in 1906, the Third German Arts and Crafts Exhibition signaled a new direction in design and interior decoration and led to the founding of the German Werkbund the following year. The Werkbund, whose members included Peter Behrens (1868-1957), Fritz Schumacher (1869-1947), and Hermann Muthesius (1861-1927), advocated a renewed emphasis on the functionality of everyday objects and increased attention to the quality of German craftsmanship. Their enterprise was a protest against what they saw as the physical and spiritual degradation of modern life as well as a call for artistic, ethical, and social renewal.

That the exhibition poster was so clearly inspired by the *Jugendstil* (i.e., the floral motifs, the figure's flowing hair and dress) is ironic, since that German Werkbund championed a new style that supplanted it. The poster was designed by Otto Gussmann (1869-1926), a professor at the Dresden Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Among his most famous students were Max Pechstein (1881-1955), a member of *Die Brücke* [The Bridge], and Otto Dix (1891-1969). Gussmann, it is interesting to note, was also a "passive member" of *Die Brücke*. (The group had a two-tiered membership system: the artists themselves – Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Max Pechstein, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff – constituted the active membership, while their patrons and supporters constituted the passive membership. In exchange for an annual contribution, passive members received portfolios of original prints, a membership card, and other perks.)

Source



Source: Poster, artist: Otto Gussmann, 1906. Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen Berlin, <https://id.smb.museum/object/2829413/dritte-deutsche-kunstgewerbe-ausstellung-dresden-1906>

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