Third German Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Dresden: Dining Room by Henry van de Velde (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.

The Belgian architect and designer Henry van de Velde (1863-1957) had trained as a painter but was so strongly influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century that he eventually turned his attention to applied arts and interior design. In 1900, he left Belgium for Germany, where his career took off. In 1906-07, he was named director of the School of Applied Arts [*Kunstgewerbeschule*] in Weimar (the predecessor to the Bauhaus) and participated in the Dresden exhibition with the dining room shown here. Van de Velde was one of the most important representatives of the *Raumkunstbewegung*, a movement in architecture and interior design that grew out of the *Jugendstil*. The *Raumkunst* [or “space art”] movement concerned itself with a variety of architectural spaces: domestic interiors, sacred architecture, and public buildings. In successful *Raumkunst*, all aspects of the interior – from construction elements like walls, floors, and ceilings, to lighting fixtures, furniture, and art objects – served the needs of the given space [*Raum*] with a complete, harmonious, and unified interior being the ultimate goal.

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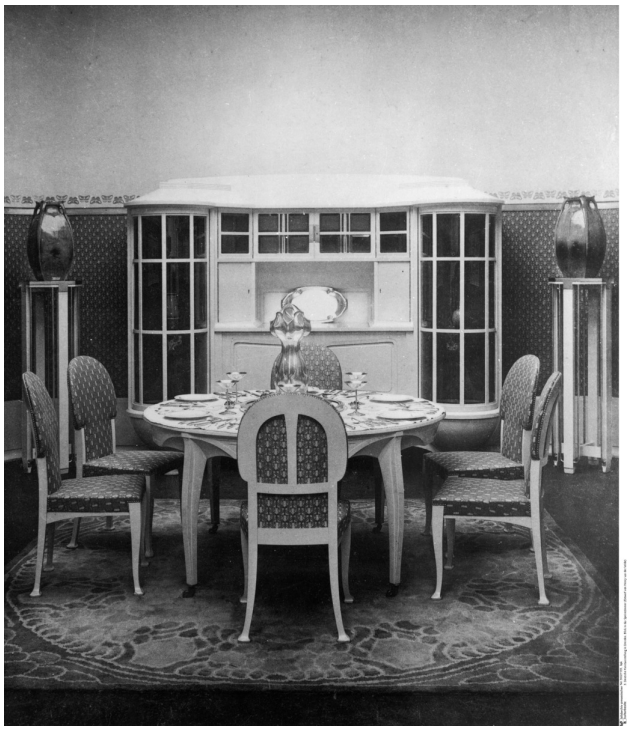

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Recommended Citation: Third German Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Dresden: Dining Room by Henry van de Velde (1906), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/wilhelmine-germany-and-the-first-world-war-1890-1918/ghdi:image-2169> [November 18, 2026].