

From Commission to Completion. The role of patrons in the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

By Peter Trowles, Taffner Mackintosh Curator, Mackintosh Research Curator, The Glasgow School of Art

The Glasgow-born architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh was clearly very talented but talent on its own is usually never quite enough.

Successful designers, architects and even artists rely heavily on patrons, benefactors and clients who are prepared to buy and invest in new art, or commission new buildings. Although a client needs to be satisfied that the designer or architect involved can meet his or her expectations, the designer or architect meanwhile is looking for clients prepared to allow them a degree of artistic licence.

Mackintosh was certainly fortunate that at the peak of his career, between 1895 and 1910, he was provided with an almost constant supply of work, most of it linked to his employer, the architectural firm of Honeyman and Keppie. Mackintosh had some clients such as Miss Cranston, owner of a series of Glasgow tea rooms, who was perfectly happy to employ him on a regular basis and over many years. Here Mackintosh was given an unparalleled freedom to implement his most adventurous designs. Other more conservative clients were less enamoured with this style of working and the issue of design and even cost was only ever resolved after Mackintosh had been forced to rein in his artistic aspirations.

As one would expect, no two designs were ever the same and for Mackintosh the journey from commission to completion inevitably involved many twists and turns. However, even when Mackintosh was forced to compromise and this was something that he struggled to accept throughout his career, the resulting work still exuded a recognisable quality and style.

Henry Hirsch, un collectionneur fidèle mais méconnu d'Emile Gallé.

Par Valérie Thomas, Conservateur du Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy

Emile Gallé bénéficia de son vivant, d'une importante clientèle privée, française et étrangère qui passa commande et acquit de nombreuses pièces de mobilier, de céramique ou de verre. Parmi cette clientèle, plusieurs collectionneurs, amateurs de l'œuvre de l'artiste nancéien, sont connus et ont fait l'objet de recherches et d'études récentes, c'est le cas du critique d'art et fonctionnaire, Roger Marx, du propriétaire des Magasins Réunis, Eugène Corbin, Parmi ces derniers, un collectionneur a joué un rôle important auprès d'Emile Gallé, en particulier dans les dernières années de sa vie, il s'agit du magistrat Henry Hirsch (1862-1944). Originaire d'Epinal, lorrain comme Gallé, le magistrat se passionna pour l'œuvre de l'artiste nancéien qu'il découvrit lors de l'exposition universelle de 1889 à Paris et devint l'un de ses plus fervents acheteurs, commanditaires et amis. Mais Henry Hirsch joua également un rôle non négligeable auprès de son ami, lui donnant des conseils juridiques pour son entreprise ou lors de la création de l'association Ecole de Nancy en 1901, le renseignant sur l'activité artistique de la capitale lorsque la maladie éloigna ce dernier de Paris. Il fut à l'origine de la commande des deux derniers chefs-d'œuvre d'ébénisterie de Gallé : la vitrine Libellules (Musée d'Orsay) et le lit Aube et crépuscule (Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy) et réunit un important ensemble de verreries de l'artiste, échantillon de sa production verrière dont le Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy possède une quinzaine de pièces. Après la mort de Gallé en 1904, Henry Hirsch participa par le prêt d'œuvres lui appartenant, aux quelques hommages rendus au chef de file de l'Ecole de Nancy et tenta entre les deux guerres, de faire partager son intérêt pour l'œuvre de son ami, dans une période pourtant marquée par une forte désaffection pour l'Art nouveau.



Commandes privées et commandes publiques chez Louis Majorelle.

Par Roselyne Bouvier, Professeur d'histoire de l'art, Ecole des Beaux-Arts d'Epinal

S'il apparaît difficile de dresser la liste des commanditaires de Majorelle, par absence d'archives, il est par contre incontestable que l'ébéniste / industriel d'art nancéien tient une place en vue dans la société de son temps. Clientèle locale, parisienne ou étrangère, modeste ou au contraire très aisée, tout dit une renommée et un succès bien établis.

De 1880, quand Louis Majorelle reprend la direction de l'entreprise familiale jusqu'aux années 50, les commandes publiques et privées se succèdent régulièrement, nombreuses et variées, et permettent ainsi de situer une activité bien ancrée dans le contexte architectural, industriel et commercial de son époque. Quelques exemples particulièrement significatifs seront analysés et commentés.

Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hesse and by Rhine, initiator and patron of Jugendstil.

By Hans-Günther Patzke, Historian, Ernst-Ludwig-Gymnasium, Bad Nauheim

As a centre of modern art Darmstadt, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, surpassed in importance most of the bigger German cities at the turn of the 19th century. Its reputation as a stronghold of Jugendstil, the German variant of Art Nouveau, Darmstadt owed to the initiatives and patronage of Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig (1892 – 1918), a prince who was generally esteemed because of his liberal-minded, progressive views. His main achievement in the sphere of arts was the artists' colony on the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt. The new forms of architecture and decorative design developed by the artists there were to give impulses to the crafts. The Jugendstil buildings erected in Bad Nauheim between 1905 and 1911 may be regarded as the most impressive example of Ernst Ludwig's patronage of art outside Darmstadt.



Patronage among the Lodz Factory Masters.

By Anetta Kepczynska-Walczak and Bartosz M. Walczak, Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning, Technical University of Lodz

At the beginning of the 20th century, Lodz was still a young town in the making lacking traditional structure of society. Particular pattern of its development and growth, with the population increasing from 800 to 500.000 over one century meant that it were newcomers and nouveaux riches who formed image of the city and its cultural life. What is more, Lodz was a diverse community of four ethnic groups: Poles, Germans, Jews and Russians. The co-existence of people of different backgrounds resulted in fascinating cultural melting-pot that made Lodz architecture of that period particularly interesting. The first generation of Lodz inhabitants were craftsmen who settled here and transformed their workshops into manufactories, developed by their sons into modern factory complexes often larger than anywhere in Europe. The architectural and artistic commissions had to show and prove their new social position. This can best illustrated by the following anecdote, which says that one of the richest industrialists asked by an architect what architectural style would he prefer for his new residence, replied proudly he had enough money to build it in all styles available. It was the third generation – the grandsons – usually well educated at foreign universities who had more refined artistic tastes and were able to use their social and economical position to become trend setters of the Art Nouveau style. The process is illustrated with the examples of such families as the Grohmans and the Kindermanns.

L'Hôtel Ciamberlani à Bruxelles – Quand le maître d'ouvrage participe à la création architecturale.

Par Claire Fontaine, conservateur-restaurateur indépendant de peintures murales et peintre décorateur, Bruxelles

En 1897, l'architecte Paul Hankar construit un hôtel de maître pour le peintre idéaliste Albert Ciamberlani. L'alliance de ces deux personnalités marquantes sera à l'origine d'une des très belles façades du paysage Art Nouveau bruxellois. Le vocabulaire formel est inédit ; non seulement par la forme et la division des fenêtres et par l'usage des matériaux mais aussi par l'intégration d'étonnants sgraffites polychromes comme composante architecturale. Ciamberlani conçoit ces sgraffites en y figurant son monde idéal alors qu'il fait ses débuts comme peintre monumental.

Barcelona, city of modernista women.

By Isabel Segura Soriano, Doctor in History, Barcelona

Modern Barcelona was built with the help of women. One of its hallmark buildings, now a symbol of Catalan Modernista civil architecture and known as La Pedrera, by Antoni Gaudí, was financed by Mrs Segimon. Mrs Segimon was no exception. Many other women financed and had their say on the design of buildings and the choice of Modernista architects to build them. Beyond architecture, the ethics and aesthetics of modernity pervaded women's publications (such as the magazine Feminal) with writers like Caterina Albert (better known by her male nom de plume, Victor Català, painters like Lluïsa Vidal and a long, very long etc.



Latvian Society and Ziemeļblāzma Anti-alcoholic Society - architecture and activities created through private financial support.

By Anita Anteniške, M.Arch., and Jānis Krastiņš, Dr.Arch., Riga Technical University

Culture and art activities were of vital importance for developing Latvian nation at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Two cases of public buildings following the same goal of culture and creativity support among professionals and general public will be examined in this study. Latvian Society of Riga, the initiator of famous nationwide Song festivals and the nest of several museums and independent state idea itself, was financed by private donations of its members and supporters. The still existing house for the society was built in 1909 (designed by E. Laube and E. Pole) expressing features of both late Art Nouveau and Neo-classical revival.

Construction of one of the largest Art Nouveau buildings in Riga – Ziemeļblāzma society building – together with adjacent house for writers (now housing a music school), kindergarten and several other facilities was a private donation by Augusts Dombrovskis, industrialist, politician and greatest philanthrop in Latvian society at the time. His own involvement in art and culture strongly influenced the architecture of the edifice built in 1913, while the officially the author of the building is unknown.

Both buildings have been used for various purposes during the after-war period. Latvian Society has taken back their building, and careful renovations have been done during the last years, while municipal-owned Ziemeļblāzma still has to wait for a revival.

CIC Banque SNVB, plus que partenaire.

Par Thierry Marois, Directeur général adjoint, Banque CIC-SNVB

Regard rétrospectif sur une politique engagée il y a plus de 25 ans par une banque qui n'a cessé d'appuyer, à sa mesure, un grand nombre d'opérations de restauration et de valorisation du patrimoine nancéien.

Depuis la fin des années 1970 avec le financement de la restauration d'une véranda de Jacques Gruber, jusqu'à nos jours, la SNVB n'a pas cessé d'être présente par des opérations diverses et variées, témoignant de son rôle de partenaire, au-delà du simple acte financier. Florilège et explications sur des actions déployées tant pour ses collaborateurs que ses clients.

