

## Weiner Werkstätte: 100 years old

*Museums, galleries and auction houses are all celebrating the anniversary*

VIENNA. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of Wiener Werkstätte (1903-32) and the occasion has triggered a flurry of activity by museums, decorative art galleries and auction houses. Indeed, the studio's founders would be astonished to see the highly specialised secondary market that flourishes for their works today.

In their time, because they concentrated on the beautiful rather than the commercial aspects of their production, several futile injections of capital failed to prevent the studio going into liquidation in 1932. Now demand is high for the furniture, jewellery,

silver and a multitude of objects of daily use that were produced, including fashion-wear or children's toys.

Among the museum shows, the Künstlerhaus is showing highlights from its outstanding collection comprising early works by Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser. Vienna's Museum of Applied Arts, MAK, opens "Yearning for beauty" on 10 December, focusing on the studio's forward looking

marketing strategy.

The auction rooms are joining in, and on 25 November the Dorotheum is offering a gold-plated silver and lapis lazuli brooch by Josef Hoffmann. Designed in 1907, it is fresh to the market (est. €50/70,000). Another Hoffmann piece is a white-painted table in Art Deco style designed for the studio's own fashion department (€25/35,000). The same sale also includes about 30

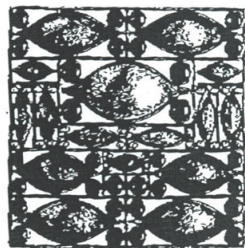
Wiener Werkstätte objects.

Two days later Wiener Kunst Auktionen at Palais Kinsky will hold a sale of roughly 100 Wiener Werkstätte items. A five-piece silver coffee service decorated with fruit by Dagobert Peche is expected to fetch up to €80,000. A very rare, classically shaped silver vase by the same designer is a telling example of this artist's extraordinary strength (€30/50,000).

Meanwhile, galleries are also dusting off their best Wiener Werkstätte pieces.

The most expensive is at **Bel Etage**: a macassar ebony fall-front writing desk with geometrical inlay that was only identified as being by Josef Hoffmann after an illustration was found in a magazine published in 1912. The smallish, cupboard-like rarity was part of Villa Ast which is one of the Gesamtkunstwerke built and furnished by Hoffmann around 1910. It is priced at €500,000.

**Kunsthandel** Patrick Kovac has assembled a group of works by Hoffmann.



Josef Hoffmann, brooch 1907. Est. €50/70,000

Among them is a small, functional and simple white painted table that once belonged to the equipment of Sanatorium Purkersdorf (€12,000).

Ceramics, with their colourful, casual styling, were only produced at a later stage in the studio's existence. A selection can be found at **Galerie bei der Albertina**, ranging from small items to full-blown sculpture at prices between €4,000 and €123,000.

**Margarete Heise-Sapper**