

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Joseph Maria Olbrich 1867-1908 Architect and Designer of Early Modernism

Institute Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt
7 February – 24 May 2010

“...AN UNFATHOMABLE GENIUS, AN UNSURPASSED TALENT OF SUPERHUMAN CREATIVITY...”
Otto Wagner, 1908

The exhibition Already in his spectacular early work, the Vienna Secession building (1898), Joseph Maria Olbrich succeeded in creating an architecture with trailblazing effect which was described by Nikolaus Pevsner as a “pioneer of modern design”. Ten years later, his final works – in particular the famous ensemble of Exhibition Building and Wedding Tower on the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt (1908) – formed a bridge to the age of architectural expressionism.

In between lies a decade of prolific creativity in which Olbrich proved himself as a universal artist. Fully committed to the concept of the ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’, alongside a wide range of architectural tasks, he also designed interiors, gardens, a wide range of household and decorative articles as well as graphic presentations. The very first architecture exhibition ever was realised in 1901 on the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt according to Olbrich’s plans. This made him a role model for architects such as Bruno Taut, Erich Mendelsohn and Le Corbusier.

The retrospective “Joseph Maria Olbrich 1867-1908. Architect and Designer of Early Modernism” in the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt is the first comprehensive exhibition in 27 years of the works of this great innovator of architecture and lifestyle around 1900. Alongside milestones of architectural history, the exhibition shows the astounding total oeuvre of the native Austrian.

The catalogue The catalogue, edited by Ralf Beil and Regina Stephan, with texts by Ralf Beil, Werner Durth, Joseph Imorde, Gabriele Kaiser, Markus Kristan, Ulrich Maximilian Schumann, Franz Smola, Regina Stephan and others, is published by Hatje Cantz Verlag, 456 pages, 512 images, 24.5 x 30.5 cm, hardcover, €39.00 at the museum cash desk.

The audio book The volume “Joseph Maria Olbrich” appears in the series “Art to Hear” (Kunst zum Hören) by Hatje Cantz, 64 pages., 49 colour photos, 22 x 22 cm, bound, with CD, €16.80

Further stations for the exhibition Leopold Museum Vienna, 18 June - 27 September 2010

AN EXHIBITION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LEOPOLD MUSEUM VIENNA AND THE KUNSTBIBLIOTHEK – STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN