

Josef Hoffmann and the Katagami  
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(abstract)

Beyond doubt Josef Hoffmann was one of the leading personalities in the Viennese art movement around and after 1900.

He was in the front rank in redefining art and decorative art and remained active until after World War II.

Even if we deal with a very specific part of his designs, we may not forget, that he was an architect and understood himself as an architect.

But always in a larger sense: architecture and live form a kind of "Gesamtkunstwerk" (total art work).

On the one hand he was teacher - more than 400 students could call him their master - on the other hand he was the never tired soul of the Wiener Werkstätte, who's co-founder he was in 1903.

While he created and inspired ideas of experimental architecture, critically acclaimed, the biggest part of his creativity in the field of pattern- and textile design belonged to the Wiener Werkstätte, starting a textile printing department around 1910.

Especially between 1918-1930 a group of artists around Josef Hoffmann invented numerous designs, inspired by different sources: we recognize floral motives, having their origins in the popular arts (Volkskunst), but also Japanese patterns were an important source! And these could be studied from Japanese stencils / Katagami.

Mainly the work in the twenties show inspirations from Japanese designs.

Normally we act on the assumption, that teachers have big creative ideas and students follow.

But we know that a Japanese architect - Isaburo Ueno - worked in Hoffmann's Studio. And still his importance has not been discussed.