
Hedvig Dvorszky

SUMMARY

HUNGARIAN INTERIOR DESIGN 1945–2012

After World War II Hungary obviously experienced a very different social and economic situation.

Power over the country was assumed by the victorious Soviet Union which, after complete destruction of parties attempting to restore civilian rule between 1945 and 1948, forced the Soviet methodology on the country.

As a result, all artisan activity, private construction industry and craft activity in the construction industry that thrived between the two World Wars withered.

Under the Soviet regime, the partially functioning manufacturing of furniture, textiles, glass and ceramics was all organized according to a monolithic design philosophy of large factories.

The formerly private designer architect offices transformed into designer offices with numerous consultants, such as Középülettervező Vállalat (Public Building Design Company), Lakóépületeket Tervező Vállalat (Residential Buildings Design Company), and Ipari Épületeket Tervező Vállalat (Industrial Buildings Design Company), and developed a specific profile according to the country's socialist reconstruction slogans.

The designer architect offices, equipped with the new ideas and aptly named, planned and designed huge metropolitan, rural and urban construction investments, such as housing estates, schools, public institutions, hospitals, factories, and hotels, mostly from prefabricated concrete elements.

The Soviet imperial construction caused economic isolation and ceased the previously functioning foreign raw material procurement opportunities, in Europe and other countries.

The purchase of less expensive raw materials that were used for the remaining, massively scaled, country reconstruction programs was common within the so-called Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) framework among the socialist countries which were, in this sense, bound to one another.

The required professional training system underwent a number of politically motivated and frequently changing pressures.

The architects and engineers forming the Budapest University of Technology and a few college-level professional training institutions, for example in Budapest, Miskolc and Pécs, were considered just as relevant as the artist education higher education schools.

This was the typical and uniform approach to complement the professional skills for the industrial activities belonging to the large-scale construction sites.

The experts who were educated to design building interiors were largely from the Magyar Iparművészeti Főiskola (Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts) since the predecessor of this educational institution was the Magyar Királyi Iparművészeti Tanoda (Royal Hungarian Applied Arts Study Hall) with its Műfaragászati Tanműhely (Art Carving Workshops) in existence since 1880.

The joinery and the goldsmith's department both provided specialized knowledge. The tree pruning class that emerged from pattern drawing schools gradually evolved from this specialized knowledge. These departments were followed by decorative painting and decorative sculpture departments.

The Arts and Crafts Society, formed in 1885, was one of the intellectual driving forces of this monarchical system of education. Over time, the Arts and Crafts Society released journals, titled Hungary Crafts.

The Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest, built in 1896, was founded to collect and preserve the increasingly respected works of art and crafts.

Due to this system, by the period between the two World Wars, design teams and related workshops of the same high caliber as the rest of the Empire appeared. These workshops experienced success in Europe, at international design exhibitions and at world exhibitions as well. The Industrial Arts Council, established in 1954, supported the above-mentioned process of the post-World War II situation in terms of attitude control over the design training adapted to socialist habits.

The concept of including art education with crafts and architecture adapted to the complex interior design education and came to the forefront of college education in varying degrees.

The 1964 reform of Pogány Frigyes, the historian architect and professor of international renown, streamlined education and made the introduction of the so-called industrial design education possible. After the political changes in 1989-90, the global economic outlook had a strong impact on education. The countries liberated from the Soviet regime, including Hungary, pursued the teaching and practice of both the architect and the artist at a very high speed.

The society's thinking, accustomed to uniform socialist planners and producers, was unprepared for this process. Society absurdly defended, and often suffered, a series of meaningless privatizations which reorganized the system of customer orders. At the beginning of the 21st century, these little "wild capitalism" typical states in Hungary came to the fore and were in a state of ferment.

The ambitious, Hungarian, two-volume study about the presentation of dominant personalities of the post-Second World War, deals with the decisive factor regarding design processes in higher education.

Gyula Ernyei, designer and former Head of Theoretical Institute of the University of Art/Moholy Nagy Hungarian University of Arts, provides an overview of the education there.

He published a summary of the training, entitled From the Art Carving Workshops to the (complex) Building Department. On the Creative Spaces Education at the School of Applied Arts/ College/University.

Tibor Pál Tóth, an interior designer, furniture designer and honorary professor, wrote Birth of a New Arts Higher Education Institution. In this work, he was the first to write the story of the Alkalmazott Művészeti Intézet (AMI) (Faculty of Applied Art Institute) established within the Sopron Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences founded in 1990.

The study also provides an overview of the prizes donated by the Magyar Alkotóművészek

Országos Egyesülete) (MAOE) (Hungarian Artists Association), as well as the Moholy-Nagy and Lajos Kozma scholarships established after the political transition.

In 2014, AMI will celebrate its 20th anniversary. In the spirit of AMI's anniversary, this study also summarizes the history of this new educational institution.

"The Hungarian interior design 1945-2012" study, by art historian Hedvig Dvorszky, is based on an overview of the evolution of the specific situation of the profession and its processes considering the literature activities of interior designers.

The Magyar Belsőépítész Egyesület (MABE) (Hungarian Interior Design Association) was formed in 2004 to develop knowledge, spread information and organize various events that will bring together several different branches of the Hungarian community of interior designers.

The MABE, in addition to various official institutions, including the Magyar Építész Kamara (MAOE) (Hungarian Chamber of Architects) and Magyar Képző- és Iparművészek Szövetsége (MKISZ) (Hungarian Fine and Applied Artists Association), set a goal of creating a more private forum between the profession and the various contractors, distributors and manufacturers. István Szenes is an interior designer and MABE President. He emphasized in the foreword of the above-mentioned study that MABE started in 2004 and revived again in 2013 to publish a lexicon which includes the graduated interior designer activities in the period from 1945 to 2012.

The editorial board, consisting of interior design staff, decided after full consideration to include only those constituents in the publication who had graduated from MIF/MOME or the Sopron University of Forestry and Wood Sciences (AMI) higher education institutions during the same period.

There was a definite need for this strong editorial position because the editorial board wanted to avoid referring to interior designers of any other level of professional certification and creative quality. The published volume following the submission of the study included articles that

contain short biographies of the artists and professional labor, supplemented by illustrations within the same scope. The comprehensive graphical editing is the work of graphic artist István Kulinyi.

"The Hungarian interior design 1945-2012" study was also sponsored by the Hungarian Academy of Arts Magyar Művészeti Akadémia (MMA) (Hungarian Academy of Arts), a public body established in 2012.

MMA President György Fekete thrived in his promotion of contemporary Hungarian arts and crafts, including interior design with special means, by using the wealth of management skills he gained in his numerous management functions as an interior architect and Professor Emeritus. He always made significant efforts to improve the situation and disseminate results. György Fekete was the student and lecturer at the aforementioned higher education institutions.

The Study with his prologue, in this form, is recommended to the reader as a first processing of the interior design of contemporary Hungarian history.

Hedvig Dvorszky
Editor in Chief