



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Austria

In Austria the new ideas were accepted only in 1897, by a restricted number of artists and artisans who worked in Vienna and founded the group of Viennese Secession. The animators of the group were the painter Gustav Klimt and the architects Josef Maria Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann. Organ of the Viennese Secession was the magazine "Ver Sacrum", founded in 1898. In the field of decorative arts, the major part of furniture, silver, glass, ceramics and metalwork were produced, on their own or entrusting the designs to the most important local manufacturers, by the "Viennese Laboratories" (Wiener Werkstätten), founded in 1903 by Josef Hoffmann (1870-1956).

Austrian Art Nouveau drew inspiration, on one hand from the simple forms of English Arts and Crafts and, on the other from the linearity of the Glasgow school. The style developed almost exclusively according to linear and geometrical forms. Hoffmann's production is characterized by the decorative motif, repeated in an arithmetical fashion on floors, ceilings, tables, curtains and door and window frames of interiors and in the fretwork of the metalwork. He often chose the refined combination of black and white alone. His furniture, for which he used tiger woods, following rectangular forms and straight lines and, in some cases, they have the base covered in beaten brass.

The furniture of Josef Maria Olbrich (1867-1908) also recall geometrical forms, but with softer and circular lines. He realized inlaid panels with fruitwoods and mother-of-pearl with abstract decorations. Koloman Moser (1868-1918), better-known as a painter and a printing and engraving expert, realized objects in acid-engraved glass and covered with enamels and objects in metal. The common characteristic of this production of his is the use of spherical feet as the base of the pieces.

Very soon the importance of ornamentation, in architecture as in the decorative arts, left room for the rational and constructive base and Austria, before the other countries, abandoned Art Nouveau.