

Singer, Franz, 1896 - 1954

Franz Singer was born in Vienna, Austria on 8 February 1896 and studied painting in Vienna under Felix Albrecht Harta (1882-1967) in 1914-15. After military service (1915-17) he studied under Johannes Itten (1888-1967) at the Itten-Schule, his private school in Vienna (1917-19). When, in 1919 Itten moved to Weimar to teach at the newly-opened Bauhaus, Singer enrolled at the school, where she studied until 1923.

While at the Bauhaus, Singer began to collaborate on projects with fellow Bauhausler Friedl Dicker (1898-1944) [whom he had met at the Itten-Schule], including designing for the theatre in Berlin and Dresden from 1920 to 1923. In 1923 they moved to Berlin where they established a design studio, the Werkstätten bildener Kunstatelier, which they ran until 1926. In 1925 Dicker moved back to Vienna where she worked on projects with Anny Wottitz [also known as Anny Moller-Wottitz] and Martha Döberl. In 1926 Singer joined Dicker in Vienna and together they formed the Atelier Singer-Dicker at Wasserburggasse 2, Vienna IX, a successful studio that designed home furnishings, furniture, textiles, interiors, equipment for kindergartens, toys for children with learning difficulties, and a number of architectural projects including the Vienna Tennis Club (1928), and a guest house in the Prater for Count and Countess Heriot (1932). They undertook commissions for the municipality of Vienna, and worked on the project 'Jugend am Werk', a scheme intended for the rehabilitation of young people through handicraft training.

In 1931 personal differences led to the break up of the relationship between Dicker and Singer, however Singer continued to run the Singer-Dicker studio on his own until 1934.

During the years of their association Singer also worked independently as architect and interior and furniture designer. Photographs of a rosewood and mahogany desk, a combined living and dining room, and of a concealable divan bed designed by him for Möbelfabrik Prof. Hartmann & Co., a metal and glass wall lamp, designed by him for Erzgiesterei A.G., and an adjustable standard lamp designed by him are illustrated in 'Decorative Art' 1931 (pp.42, 72, 73, 109); the interiors he designed for a dressmaker's shop are discussed in 'The fashion parlour' by A.S. Levetus in 'Commercial Art' vol.10, no.60, June 1931 (pp.267-269); photographs of the façade and interior of Garrido & Jahne confectionery

shop in Vienna designed by Singer are illustrated in 'Commercial Art and Industry' vol.13, no.75, September 1932 (pp.186-187); and photographs of bathroom fittings, and of apartments in Vienna, designed by him are illustrated in 'Decorative Art' 1935 (pp.112, 136, 138).

In 1930-31 Singer visited London where he designed nursery and stackable furniture. He returned to England in 1934, and over the four years, although maintaining his office in Vienna, worked predominantly in London, where he acted as a consultant for the John Lewis group in London. He also collaborated with Wells Coates in the design of kitchen, bathroom and storage systems; designed children's furniture and school equipment; and made alterations to the Peter Jones department store in London. In addition he worked on architectural and interior design projects with Hans Biel (1907-?) an émigré architect who had previously worked with Singer and Dicker in Vienna.

Following the Anschluss [unification of Austria and Germany in 1938], Singer closed his studio in Vienna and subsequently remained in England. During World War Two he was interned for a period as an alien. His post-war work included the Pavilion Restaurant and Hotel in Scarborough, Yorkshire (c.1950)

Singer died in Berlin in on 5 October 1954. His papers covering the years 1913-50 are held at the Victoria & Albert Museum Archive of Art and Design in London [AAD/1982/3]

Worked in

Austria

UK

Bibliography

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Obituary. The Architect' Journal vol.118, 22 Oct.1953 p.500

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Benton, Charlotte. A different world: emigre architects in Britain 1928-1958. London: RIBA Heinz Gallery, 1995

Guide to the Archive of Art and Design, Victoria & Albert Museum. Edited by Elizabeth Lomas. London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers in association with the

Victoria & Albert Museum, 2001

Links

- Az W. Architektenlexikon Wien 1770-1945 [Text in German]
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- Wikipedia [Text in German]
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Singer_%28Architekt%29
- Artnet <http://www.artnet.com/artists/franz-singer/>
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