

Silke Opitz (Hg.)

Van de Velde's Art School Buildings in Weimar

Architectur and Interiors

Henry van de Velde came to Weimar from Belgium in 1902 at the initiative of Harry Graf Kessler. Kessler, a museum director, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, sister of the philosopher, and Van de Velde, artist and architect, were part of the »New Weimar« movement, which pursued a vision of modern man as expressed in the medium of art. This attempt at liberation from the constraints of historicism, the elitist and purely decorative practice of art and courtly ritual, is reflected in the art school buildings which Van de Velde built in Weimar between 1904 and 1911. The motifs of conventional, prestigious and/or palace architecture are missing in these studio and workshop buildings, if not completely, then at least to the extent that the forms underscored here are those which corresponded to the new rationality of industry, that is to say, bright studio windows similar to those in 19th century factories, but also visible girders which even carry the manufacturer's stamp. It was here that 90 years ago, in 1919, Walter Gropius founded the Staatliche Bauhaus Weimar, and today, the art school ensemble is also the domain of yet another new school, the Bauhaus University Weimar.

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