Box - for the Altmann & Kühne confectionery in Vienna

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	91.168.1
Artist/Maker:	Lukáts, Kató (1900 - 1990) / designer
Date of production:	ca. 1930
Place of production:	Budapest
Materials:	paper
Techniques:	covered with paper; with tassel
Dimensions:	height: 10 cm width: 6 cm length: 4,3 cm

Gyula Kaesz (1897–1967), an applied artist outstanding in several fields, started his career between the two World Wars. His approach expanding furniture design into interior design moved him close to the young generation of Hungarian architects his work is also significant in the field of mercantile graphics, which had its peak during the twenties and the thirties. In fact, it is not important to separate the various branches of arts in his oeuvre, since all his design work was initiated with the same concepts – may it be a villa in Szentendre, a portal of a bank (like that of the National Savings Bank in Budapest), the exhibition pavilion of the Milan Triennial in 1935 or the Paris World Fair in 1937, a room interior, a piece of model furniture or the typography of an advertisement and packaging design. His works, showing the influence of the Wiener Werkstätte, the Darmstadt Artist Colony, the Bauhaus and art deco, were characterised by functionality, simple forms, decorativeness of the used material and reserved ornaments mainly limited to planes and firm lines, furthermore by the presence of both constructivism and playfulness. He taught generations of applied artists to use these principles for decades, not only as a teacher, but also as part of his organization work in the public life of art. He graduated from the Applied Arts School in 1917, in the class of Dénes Györgyi he was a lecturing professor there from 1919. He retired as the director of the College of Fine Arts in 1958 – the introduction of industrial design among the subjects is his achievement. Graphics artist Gyula Kaesz married Kató Lukáts (1900–1990) in 1925 they were both good friends of Lajos Kozma (1884–1948). Their intellectual kinship, approach to design, and the similarity of their roles sketched a special path in Hungarian applied arts between the two wars. Parts of their legacies were acquired by the Archives of the Museum of Applied Arts – hundreds of drawings, prints, study collections, sketches and drafts. The sets of designs, the typographical and advertisement works were in part donated by peers – like textile designer Éva Szabó, architect Frigyes Gabriel and by Kató Lukáts after the death of Kató Lukáts the heirs also donated the texts and manuscripts of lectures and extensive personal and official correspondence (from 1917 until 1987), together with drawings and plans to the museum. Part of the documents and plans also reveal the relation of the couple to the Kner printing house and the Kner family. Outstanding mercantile drawings are the ones by Kató Lukáts for the Stühmer confectionery, the wrap and box designs for Altmann and Kühne of Vienna. The design of the portal and furniture of the firm was the most successful work of Gyula Kaesz, presented at the Milan Triennial in 1935. The cover designs, book ornaments of both artists, and Kató Lukáts' book illustrations recalling the childhood of present generations – Móricz's tales, Gőgös Gúnár Gedeon, (poems for children), Erzsi Gazdag: Mesebolt (Tale Shop), etc. – are all part of the bequest. Thanks to the heirs and to earlier purchases and donations, the furniture collection of the museum presents the achievements of the common work of the couple with the help of some unique products: a painted cabinet 1935, designed by Gyula Kaesz and painted by Kató Lukáts (inv. no. 80.246.1) and a writing cabinet made of walnut, designed by Gyula Kaesz, inlays by Kató Lukáts (inv. no. 94.39.1).
Gyula Kaesz's strong influence, lasting from the 1920s until the 1960s or 1970s is reflected in the works of his students and later peers such as László Juhász and Zsuzsa Kovács (the Ministry of Culture purchased some of their documents for the collection).

Literature

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- Szerk.: Pataki Judit: *Az idő sodrában. Az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményeinek története*. Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 2006. - Nr. 190.

