

Interior photograph - Peacock garden' wallpaper on the corridor, Museum of Applied Arts

Accession Nr.: VLT 38.12.1 

Artist/Maker: Crane, Walter (1845 - 1915) / designer

Date of production: 1898 - 1900

Place of production: Budapest; London

A few square metres of the wall in what is now a corridor towards the director's office in the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest are covered in a colourful wallpaper branded *Peacock Garden*, along with the matching border, *Peacock*. The *Peacock Garden* was designed in 1889 by the renowned English artist, Walter Crane, whose career straddled the centuries, and the same year the wallpaper won a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. An advertisement for the wallpaper, which was manufactured and marketed by the London-based Jeffrey & Co., is held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This wallpaper, along with several other works by Crane, was included in the 1895 exhibition of the National Society of Hungarian Art at Múcsarnok, and three years later in *Modern Art*, an exhibition at the Museum of Applied Arts. According to floor plans of the Museum of Applied Arts at the time, the section of the corridor where the wallpaper survives was originally a small windowless room of the director's residence. It is therefore likely that the wallpaper was purchased by the Museum's then director, Jenő Radisics, in or around 1898. The notion is further substantiated by the fact that the museum's contemporary inventory of glass negatives lists a photograph of the wallpaper border (NLT 2379), and identifies Jenő Radisics as its owner. This is a telling illustration of how Radisics considered the English Arts and Crafts movement's efforts at reviving the arts a model for the Hungarian applied arts of the period, and this conviction informed not only his work as the director of the museum—the exhibition programme and the collection policy—but the very decoration as well of his official quarters. Said Radisics of his admiration for Walter Crane: 'One of our most charming exhibitions was the one that first introduced our audience to the gentle, poetic work of Walter Crane. It was as if spring sunshine had entered our hall with the multifaceted works of this pioneer of modern art, which stem from a sincere conviction.'

Literature

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- Szerk.: Szilágyi András: Walter Crane's Wallpaper in the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts. *Ars Decorativa 20*, 2001. Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 2001. - 45-51. (Dr. Horváth Hilda)
- Dr. Horváth Hilda: Láthatatlan műtárgy. Walter Crane falikárpitja a budapesti Iparművészeti Múzeumban. *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 44. (1995). 1995. - 291-295.
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