Two-storey cabinet - so called Überbauschrank

Furniture Collection

Accession Nr.:	7254
Artist/Maker:	Storck, von, Josef (1830 - 1902)
Date of production:	ca. 1875
Materials:	ash veneer; ebony inlay; maplewood inlay; oak base; oak veneer; palisander (rosewood) inlay; pinewood base; walnut inlay; wrought-iron mounts
Dimensions:	height: 170,8 cm width: 154,6 cm depth: 64 cm

The two-storey cupboard stands on a plinth. The front of the prismatic bottom part has two doors, flanked by lisenes on the corners and in the centre. The doors are surmounted by a protruding corniche, hiding two drawers with stirrup-shaped iron pulls. The top part is narrow, used first of all for the display of ornamental dishes. There are three doored compartments flanked by the corner and the central lisenes. The whole surface of the front is inlaid, showing chalice vases placed in curved compartments in a rectangular frame, with stylised flowers bending from them. The decoration is enriched with other, symmetrically arranged and stylised floral, geometrical and fantastic architectural motifs. This two-storey cupboard is a copy of the Renaissance "Überbauschrank" with the coat of arms of the Reck and Kreps families, which is now in the Stadtmuseum of Cologne (Inv.No. RM 683/1937). It was designed by architect Josef Storck (1830-1902), who was director and professor of the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna. This school was founded almost parallel with the "Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie" (today: Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst. Storck was a renowned organizer and celebrity of the Austrian industrial (and furniture) art in the 1870s and 80s, and from 1876 he was also editor of the "Blätter für Kunstgewerbe" magazine, which was founded by Valentin Teirich. According to the notes of the old inventory book of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts, the two-storey cupboard described above was present at the 1873 Viennese International Exhibition, and had been donated to the Museum in the same year by Baron Hirsch. The cupboard was made in the apprentice school for carpentry in Walachisch-Meseritsch, Moravia, while all the ironwork were produced in the metalwork factory of Hohenbrück (Trebechovice), Bohemia. The Viennese Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie, founded in 1864, was anxious to found new apprentice schools in those parts of the empire where a certain field of applied arts was already popular. Thus, during the 1870s they succeeded in setting up a number of special apprentice schools in various provinces of the empire, such as the drawing schools of Haida and Gablonz in Bohemia, and the woodwork apprentice school of Walachisch-Meseritsch, Moravia. All of these schools were somehow - directly or less directly - connected with the Viennese museum. Several objects from the Viennese Kunstgewerbeschule, made after the designs, drawings or models of the teachers, prove that there was a real demand for the high quality of industrial products. Already at the 1873 exhibition, these pieces had a decisive role in Austrian artistic crafts. In this respect, Professor Josef Storck was a leading personality. The two-storey cupboard described above was modelled on a buffet, or Überbauschrank-type which was fairly popular in sixteenth century Germany. The varied intarsia of those days was introduced by Cologne, at least in North-Germany. The flourishing of Cologne intarsia furniture is put between 1580 and 1600. In the second half of the nineteenth century a great number of these pieces were copied in Cologne in order to satisfy the market for "German Renaissance", a style that again became popular at that time. The original cupboard, bearing the coat of arms of Cologne, had been made in 1599 and was published between 1871 and 1875 in Leipzig by August Ortwein. The drawing of the copy which is now in the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts was published by Josef Storck, in the eighth volume of the 1879 issue of the “Blätter für Kunstgewerbe" magazine, under the heading "Intarsia-Kasten". The faithful imitation lacks only the original date and the coat of arms of the two families.

Literature

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