

## Rolf Achilles in Krems an der Donau

My month's stay in the SAIC Krems an der Donau residency was a great success. I completed what I think is a significant body of work, all of which relates to Chicago and Vienna, Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright and several artists of the Vienna and Budapest Secession.

For making my stay in Krems so easy, I would especially like to thank Sabine Güldenfuß, Elke Pehamberger and Hartwig Knack. I would also like to thank the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for offering me the opportunity to accept a residency in Krems and Shanna Linn for paving the way.

My intention was to document unpublished interior and exterior architectural ornament in Vienna and compare it what I have and continue to document in Chicago. With a residency in Krems it became possible to venture to Budapest and document several under-published aspects of architectural ornamentation there also. The documentation is being turned into a series of power point presentations that will occur later this year and early next year at the Chicago Cultural Center, the Goethe Institute and various other cultural venues in the Midwest and then next Spring in Hamburg, Berlin and Stuttgart. I am also preparing a web site with the comparative information I have documented. In part, my documentation and its presentations are a new direction in presenting detailed decorative and architectural ornamentation to a wider public.

The newly gathered information will help develop a keener awareness of Sullivan, Wright and other Chicago architects working in the 1880s to the 1910s and their influence on the ornamental arts of Vienna and central Europe, an influence that was two sided in that architects and designers from Vienna and Budapest were well published in American publications and also visited Chicago during those years. In short, the argument can be made and will be presented that major aspects of what we now define as Art Nouveau / Jugendstil and Secession had its origins in Chicago and quickly spread to Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and countless secondary cultural centers.

I have enclosed a DVD with several images I consider important documentations of architectural decoration that will later be shown to have Chicago connections.

For example: The great Austrian architect Otto Wagner never visited Chicago but he knew the work of Louis Sullivan well, if his own later use of ornamentation is any indication. Meanwhile Frank Lloyd Wright is not known to have visited Vienna, yet his use of planes and certain architectural details show a keen awareness of the Vienna work of Wagner, Moser and Hoffmann. The Austrian architect Adolf Loos, a key figure of the Vienna Secession, did visit Chicago in 1893 and possibly met Wright during that visit. Loos is known to have had significant conversations with Louis Sullivan, significant enough to eventually

contribute to a book against architectural ornament, a sentiment sometimes near to Wright also.

Rolf Achilles, Chicago, 24 July 2007