

Strand 4: Research and doctoral theses in progress

Definitive abstract for paper presentation at the *coupDefouet* International Congress

The Flourishing of Belgian Ornamental Tiles & Tile Panels in the Art Nouveau Period

The enormous popularity of the decorated industrial wall and floor tile in Belgium is strongly linked to the Art Nouveau style that was put on the map by such prominent men as Victor Horta, Henry van de Velde, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy or Privat Livemont who all experimented with ceramic tile material.

More than in neighbouring countries the Belgian Art Nouveau architecture is, certainly from 1896 onwards, also characterized by the abundance of colourful tile panels in façades, loggias and porticos, and in often very sumptuous interiors.

The Belgian Art Nouveau tile was worldwide exported, within Europe as well as to Latin-America and Asia, and inspired many foreign factories including Spanish and Portuguese workshops or Japanese manufacturers.

L'épanouissement des carreaux en céramique et des panneaux ornementaux de carreaux pendant la période Art nouveau

L'énorme popularité des carrelages céramiques en Belgique est fortement liée à l'Art Nouveau, un style popularisé par des hommes éminents comme Victor Horta, Henry van de Velde, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy ou Privat Livemont qui ont tous expérimenté avec ce matériau.

Plus que dans les pays limitrophes, l'architecture Art Nouveau belge est caractérisée par une abondance de panneaux de carrelages figuratifs, non seulement pour orner façades, loggias et portiques, mais aussi des intérieurs souvent très somptueux, et cela certainement après 1896.

Stylistiquement, la Belgique prend autour de 1900 une place marquée dans la production de carreaux industriels en Europe occidentale. L'influence du symbolisme littéraire et la théosophie y est clairement identifiable, aussi bien que la ligne

géométrique plus abstraite.

Le carrelage Art Nouveau belge a été exporté dans le monde entier et a inspiré de nombreuses usines étrangères, notamment des ateliers espagnols et portugais et même des fabricants japonais.

Curriculum Vitae

Mario Baeck

Mario Baeck (° 1958), Ph.D. researcher in Art History, Ghent University, Belgium, preparing a doctoral thesis on the development of the Belgian industrial wall and floor tile 1840-1940 in a European context.

Published and lectured widely in different languages on various aspects of tile history (See for some papers: <http://independent.academia.edu/MarioBaeck/Papers>). Wrote together with Bart Verbrugge a pioneering study on Belgian Art Nouveau and Art Deco wall tiles (1880-1940).

Was curator for national and international exhibitions in which the Belgian industrial floor and wall tile was put in the picture.

As a member of several tile societies he regularly advises public heritage institutions in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia on tile restoration projects.

Was co-promoter of several master's theses in the field of conservation / restoration of ceramics and on Monuments and Landscapes (Royal Academy of Fine Arts & Henry van de Velde Institute, University of Antwerp)