

Strand 4: Research and doctoral theses in progress

**Women's creativity at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art
(Turin, 1902)**

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The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Arts opened in Turin in 1902 and contributed to the penetration of Art Nouveau in Italy and abroad¹. It was the first international exhibition exclusively devoted to decorative arts. The following countries attended the event, setting up their own section: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden, United States of America, The Netherlands.

More than two hundred fifty among companies, artists, architects and designers came to Turin from all over Europe and the United States to submit their work. The exhibitors were mostly men, nevertheless some women were given the possibility not only to participate, but also to win awards². Twenty-seven creative women exhibited lace and embroidery, weavings, batik fabrics, *velours nacré*, ceramics, graphics, furniture and artistic photographs³.

¹ *Prima Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte Decorativa Modena. Torino. Catalogo Generale Ufficiale*, Torino, 1902; Georg FUCHS, Francis NEWBERRY, *L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs Modernes à Turin*, Darmstadt, Kock, (1903?); Rosanna BOSSAGLIA, Ezio GODOLI, Marco ROSCI (eds.), *Torino 1900. Le Arti Decorative Internazionali del Nuovo Secolo*, (exhibition catalogue, Torino 1994), Milano, Fabbri editori, 1994.

² *Relazione della Giuria Internazionale, 1° esposizione Internazionale di Arte Decorativa Moderna*, Torino 1902.

³ Austria: Gisela Falke Von Lilienstein, J. Ginzkey, Franziska Hofmanninger, Matilde Hrdlicka, Antoinette Krassnik, Jutta Sika, Else Unger; Denmark: Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Brodersen; Germany: Carlotta Brinckmann, Ida Brinckmann; Great Britain: Carine Cadby, Jane Younger, Ann Macbeth, Margaret Macdonald, Jessie Marion King; Hungary: Elza Kövesházi Kalmár, Gizella Greguss-Mirkovszky; Italy: Lina Bianconcini Cavazza and Carmelita Zucchini (Aemilia Ars), Maria Calvi Rigotti, Nerina Masoero; Norway: Frida Hansen; Sweden: Alice Maria Nordin, Katharina Anna Boberg, Inga Thyra Carola Grafström, Selma Giöbel Levina; United States of America: Gertrude Käsebier; The Netherlands: Agathe Wegerif-Gravestein. On women in design see: Isabelle ANSCOMBE: *A Woman's Touch. Women in Design from 1860 to the Present Day*, London, Penguin Books, 1984.

Some of these women were involved in the manufacturing area of several companies of which they were directors, managers or freelance collaborators. Others belonged to decorative art schools and associations. Among those organizations were: the Italian *Aemilia Ars* (1898-1904, Bologna), the Dutch *Arts and Crafts* (1898-1904, The Hague)⁴, the Austrians *Bakalovitz & Söhne* (1845 - Vienna), *Kunstgewerbeschule des K.K. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie Wien* (1869, Vienna), the Slovenian *Krainische Kunstweb Anstalt* (1898, Ljubljana), the Hungarian *Körmöcbanya school of lace pillow* (1882, Körmöcbánya), and the German *Vereinigte Werkstätten für kunst im handwerk München* (1898, Munich).

The Countesses Lina Bianconcini Cavazza and Carmelita Zucchini merged their lace and crochet company (in 1900) with the cooperative society *Aemilia Ars*⁵, whose president was Lina's husband, Count Francesco Cavazza. The purpose of *Aemilia Ars* was the renewal and development of arts through the creation of a stylistic promotional centre linked with the main craft industries of the Emilia Romagna region (hence the name *Aemilia*).

Admitted at the Turin Exhibition thanks to its renown, *Aemilia Ars* work was recognized among the most significant of the Italian section, obtaining a Diploma of Honour. The critics appreciated the rich variety of the articles displayed, showing the balance between the rediscovery of the Italian 15th century tradition and the search for a new style.

Among the furniture, ceramics, wrought ironware, leatherwork, bronze-ware, silverware, jewels and wall decorations, were on show the artistic laceworks and crochets that the two Countesses had commissioned to anonymous Bolognese embroiderers. Through new decorative motifs designed by artists such as Alfonso Pasquinelli, Alfredo Tarantini the Countesses knew how to innovate their production,

The British Carine Cadby, the American Gertrude Käsebier and the Italian Nerina Masoero exhibited at the *International Exhibition of Artistic Photography of Turin* (1902). *Esposizione Internazionale di Fotografia Artistica Torino 1902. Catalogo Ufficiale*, Torino 1902, p. 44-53, cat. n. 847-856, 1033-1040.

⁴ Marjan GROOT: *Vrouwen in de vormgeving. 1880-1940*, Rotterdam, Uitgeverij 010, p. 99-100.

⁵ Carla BERNARDINI, Marta FORLAI: *Industriartistica bolognese: Aemilia Ars, luoghi, materiali, fonti*, Milano, Silvana Editoriale, 2003.

that in previous years had been inspired by the design of the Renaissance lace of their valuable collection. (Fig. 1)

Aemilia Ars exhibited its production in the room decorated by Raffaele Faccioli with “*orifiamme*” motifs, inside the Italian pavilion. The jury appreciated the laceworks but considered the leatherworks, metalwork and jewels to be too traditional. Thus, after the Turin Exhibition, in 1903 the *Aemilia Ars* Board of Directors decided to limit the company’s manufacturing to lace and old stitch embroideries. The products of the two Countesses not only rescued the company, that otherwise would have been forced to close, but obtained numerous awards at St. Louis (1904), Liege (1905), Milan (1906), and Brussels (1910). The Turin exhibition had the merit of guiding the company’s style and production in order to make it more attractive to a modern market.

In the Italian section, other embroideries were appreciated by the Selection Board. The cushions with added embroidery by Maria Calvi Rigotti (Valenza, 1874 - Turin, 1938) were rewarded with the silver medal.

Calvi Rigotti entered the *Albertina Academy of Fine Arts* in Turin where she followed the course of painting of the famous Giacomo Grosso. Having married the architect Annibale Rigotti in 1900, she discontinued painting to devote herself to the decorative arts⁶. As a matter of fact, she shared with her husband - an advocate of the modern movement and a follower of Ruskin and Morris theories - the need for a change in the relationship between art and life. Thus, she innovated fabric decoration and embroidery design, creating simple compositions with precise contours that divide vibrant colour fields. Her motifs are sometimes strict and geometric, sometimes soft and sinuous⁷. While in 1901, at the *Amici dell’Arte* annual exhibition in Turin, she received an award for an embroidered pillow it is reasonable to assume that she took part in the 1902 Exhibition due to the authority of her husband who was directly involved in building the Exhibition.

⁶ *Maria Rigotti Calvi pittrice, 1876-1938*, in Giorgio RIGOTTI: *80 anni di architettura e Arte*, Torino, Tipografia Torinese Ed., 1980, p. 249-273.

⁷ Maria Mimita LAMBERTI: “La mente e la mano: i ricami di Maria Rigotti Calvi”, *Piemonte Vivo*, 4, 1988, p. 2-12; Maria Mimita LAMBERTI: “Le linee dell’Arte Nuova nei ricami di Maria Rigotti Calvi”, *Studi di Storia delle Arti*, 1986-1992, Università di Genova, 6, 1991, p. 21-33.

After the Turin Exhibition, Calvi Rigotti had several opportunities to demonstrate her great talent. Suffice it to mention that she attended the prestigious biennials of decorative art of Monza (1923, 1925, 1927), and she was the only woman invited to the exhibition *Artistes Italiens Contemporaines*, which took place in Geneva at the *Rath Museum*⁸. In the section of decorative arts, along with the hand-blown glassware by Cappellin and the ceramics by Giò Ponti, she exhibited a series of elegant oriental style tea cosies.

Like the Italian *Aemilia Ars* laceworks and crochets, also the Dutch upholstery batik fabrics executed under the direction of Agathe Wegerif-Gravestein for the *Arts and Crafts* shop at The Hague roused a great success in Turin⁹.

Wegerif-Gravestein (Vlissingen, 1867 – Laren, 1944)¹⁰ was married to the *Arts and Crafts* artistic director Chris Wegerif (Apeldoorn, 1859 – Amsterdam 1920), who opened a furniture workshop in order to ensure the necessary unity of the *Arts and Crafts* furnished interiors.

Wegerif-Gravestein had learned the intricate batik manufacturing process under the guidance of Johan Thorn Prikker, the former artistic director of the *Arts and Crafts*. When he left the company in 1900, she continued her research, experimenting with batik on velvet, silk and leather.

Having become the marketing manager of the atelier-batik *Arts and Crafts*, became also increasingly famous as an artist-designer. Her work was characterized by very decorative designs, sometimes stylized, sometimes imaginative and geometric, and she received prestigious international awards. Thanks also to her work, the batik technique was to be internationally considered part of the contemporary applied arts¹¹.

⁸ Mario LABÒ: *Maria Rigotti Calvi. Ricami*, in: *Exposition d'Artistes Italiens Contemporains* (exhibition catalogue), Ginevra, Rath Museum, 1927.

⁹ Marjan GROOT: *Vrouwen in de vormgeving...*, p. 65-68.

¹⁰ Hannecke OOSTERHOF: *Agathe Wegerif-Gravestein (1867-1944): sierkunstenares en schilderes*,

Thesis, Open Universiteit Nederland. Faculteit Cultuurwetenschappen, Heerlen 2001; Marjan GROOT: *Vrouwen in de vormgeving...*, p. 544.

¹¹ Marjan BOOT, Mariette JOSEPHUS JITTA (ed.): *La ligne retrouvée. Le Haags Gemeentemuseum à l'Institut néerlandais*, (exhibition catalogue), Paris, l’Institut néerlandais, 1990.

For the Turin Exhibition she created batik curtain fabrics, pillows and wall paper to be combined with the dark furniture created by her husband, thus, obtaining a degree of merit. Her husband, who completely furnished a hall, won the gold medal. Unfortunately, just two years after the Exhibition, the shop had to close, however, the couple continued to produce Wegerif-Gravestein's batik fabrics.

Similarly to the previous mentioned cases, she had the opportunity to show her products at an international level through the cooperation with her husband. Furthermore, the products of the wives proved commercially longer-lasting than those manufactured and sold by their husbands.

Close to the aims and production of the Italian *Aemilia Ars* was the Hungarian *Körmöcbánya school of lace pillow* that participated in the Exhibition of Turin with several laceworks created by Béla Angyal¹². He was the brother of Emma, one of those teachers who travelled the countryside to teach some basic lace techniques. In fact, in the 19th century, the Hungarian State encouraged domestic industry in order to ensure work for women who lived in the countryside.

In 1882, Emma Angyal opened her famous school in Körmöcbanya, where she was successful in reviving the decorative repertoire of the Hungarian Renaissance helped by her brother, who was the designer of the most popular laceworks. Mostly made of linen thread and only rarely in metallic thread, her bobbin laces were used to make collars, cuffs and hems for tablecloths. This lacework obtained prestigious awards first, at the Millennium Exhibition in Budapest (1896), then at the Paris Universal Exposition (1900), and later in Turin, Milan and Brussels.

In the Hungarian pavilion in Turin Elza Kövesházi Kalmár (Vienna, 1876 – Budapest, 1956) and Gizella Greguss-Mirkovszky (Zajugróc, 1862 - Budapest, 1955) exhibited their works.

The first was a very independent and eclectic woman. After studying Fine Arts in Munich (1896), from 1898 she practiced sculpture and in 1900 she held her first solo

¹² Mária CSERNYÁNSZKY: *The Art of Lace Making in Hungary*, Budapest, Corvina Press, 1962, p. 62.

exhibition at the Art Gallery of Budapest¹³. In Turin she showed five works, including a bronze cachepot decorated by three bull's heads (Fig. 2).

The second, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest, and worked twenty-two years at the drawing school of the capital. She was responsible for the female workshop at the professional school of graphic art, and a member of the *Association of Fine Arts of Munich Kunstgewerbe Verein*. Greguss-Mirkovszky displayed in Turin fifteen *velours nacré* fabrics.

Greguss-Mirkovszky patented the technique of *Velours nacré* she had invented worldwide. Thanks to her works of burnt velvet she won the silver medal in Turin and the gold one in St. Louis. She received medals and other awards in St. Petersburg, Paris, Vienna, Szeged and Pécs.

A similar case of a successful woman's enterprise was that of the association *Krainische Kunstweb Anstalt* for artistic weaving founded by Hedwig Penz in 1898.

In 1902, in the Austrian pavilion¹⁴ several textile works were shown, designed by Rudolf Hammel¹⁵ and handmade by the nineteen female weavers of the Penz's textile factory. The same pavilion hosted the works of several female designers. Gisela Falke Von Lilienstein (1871 -?), Jutta Sika (Linz, 1877 - Vienna, 1964) and Else Unger (Vienna, 1873-Innsbruck, 1930)¹⁶ worked for the shop *E. Bakalovitz & Söhne*, while Adele von Stark (Teplitz, Bohemia, 1859 – Vienna 1923)¹⁷ was Head of the special studio for enamel painting at the *Kunstgewerbeschule des K.K. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie Wien*.

Between 1899 and 1906, the founder of the famous Viennese shop specializing in glassware, Wilhelm Bakalovitz, worked with a large group of artists who were the representatives of the innovative trends of applied art to produce new up-to-date vases,

¹³ LAJOS FÜLEP: "Elza Kövesházi Kalmár", *Művészet*, 1909, p. 162-170.

¹⁴ *Prima Esposizione ...*, n. 54.

¹⁵ R. Hammer was instructor at the special course for teachers at the *K.k. Kunstgewerbliche Lehranstalt*.

¹⁶ Sonja GÜNTHER: "Else Unger", in Angela OEDEKOVEN-GERISCHER, Andrea SCHOLTZ, Edith MEDEK, Petra KURZ (eds.): *Frauen im Design. Berufsbilder und Lebenswege seit 1900 – Women in Design. Careers and Life Histories since 1900* (exhibition catalogue, Design Center Stuttgart, 1989), Stuttgart, Design Center Stuttgart, Haus der Wirtschaft, 1989, p. 46-47.

¹⁷ Sonja GÜNTHER: "Adele von Stark", in: *Frauen im Design...*, p. 40-41.

glasses and glassware. From 1904, for about a decade, the company shifted its production from iridescent glassware, to glassware decorated with engravings, that had a higher commercial value.

Among the artists working for *E. Bakalovitz & Söhne* were also the architects Josef Hoffmann and Joseph Maria Olbrich and the designer Koloman Moser. Hoffmann and Moser were the directors of the architecture and decorative painting schools at the *Wien Kunstgewerbeschule*. The work of von Stark's students was presented, along with those of other students of the school, in various international exhibitions, including St. Louis after Turin.

In Turin Jutta Sika¹⁸ exhibited a ceramic breakfast set inside the dining room by Wytrlik. She had been a student of Koloman Moser at the *Kunstgewerbeschule* in Vienna (1897-1902). A year before the Turin Exhibition, with some of her colleagues, she founded the association *Wiener Kunst im Hause* (1901), a group which operated sales rooms in the inner city of Vienna from 1905, supplying complete home interiors.

From 1911 to 1933 she taught at the *Wiener Gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule*. Due to the graphic skills she had acquired by attending (1895-97) the *Graphische Lehr – und Versuchsanstalt of Wien* she designed postcards¹⁹. She also made pottery for *Winer Werkstätte* and *Böck*, metalwork for *Argentor* and porcelain ware for the companies *Augarten* and *Winer Mosikwerstätte*. The glassware that Sika designed for *Bakalovitz & Söhne* are of particular interest.

For Sika the Turin Exhibition was the first of a long series, and in 1904 she won the bronze medal at the *Universal Exhibition* in St. Louis. In 1920 she became a member of the Association of Women Fine Artists in Austria and also a member of the *Österreichischer Werkbund* and the *Deutscher Werkbund*.

¹⁸ Sonja GÜNTHER: "Jutta Sika", in: *Frauen im Design...*, p. 42-43.

¹⁹ Giovanni FANELLI: *La linea viennese. Grafica Art Nouveau*, Firenze, Cantini, 1989, p. 134; Julie M. JOHNSON: *The Memory Factory: The Forgotten Women Artists of Vienna 1900*, Purdue University Press, 2012, p. 252.

She lived in Florence (1905-1909)²⁰ and in Paris (1914). From the second half of the Twenties, combining Secession and Art Déco style, her work focused on the creation of statues inspired by operetta.

Another women ceramists, the Danish Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Brodersen (Sønder Stenderup, 1863 - Copenhagen, 1945) exhibited in Turin her work for *Bing & Gröndhal*, that won the silver medal due to the artistic modern direction of the painter J.F. Willumsen²¹. Wife of the prominent Danish composer, she grew up on a farm in the countryside, thus she was familiar with farming and animals and from her childhood she had shaped animals from clay. Between 1880 and 1890, she studied at various art schools in Denmark, and later moved to Paris. Carl-Nielsen Brodersen continued throughout her career to shape animals from clay, and she was also the author of several monuments. In 1916 she helped found the Society for Women Artists (*Kvindelige Kunstneres Samfund*) with the painter Anna Ancher²².

The exhibition in Turin granted wide space to the presentation of a multitude of objects produced by the *Vereinigte Werkstätten für kunst im handwerk München*. In fact, its works occupied four rooms inside the German pavilion. Among the founders of this company for the renewal of applied arts there was only one woman, Margarete von Brauchitsch. However she did not exhibit any of her creations in Turin. In spite of this, the German Pavilion (Hamburg room) housed the tapestry designed and made by the two sisters Carlotta and Ida Binckmann. They were admitted to the Exhibition also because they were the daughters of the founder and director of the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg*, Justus Brinckmaan. Furthermore, he was an art collector and a staunch supporter of the renewal of applied arts in Germany.

Ida Brinckmann (Hamburg, 1872 – Bükeburg 1947) designed and produced tapestries and fabrics, and was a teacher in Austria. Carlotta Brinckmann (Hamburg, 1876 – Celle

²⁰ Sabine PLAKOLM-FORSTHUBER: *Elza Kövesházi Kalmár ovvero il rapporto delle artiste austriache con Firenze*, in Maria Chiara MOCALI, Claudia VITALE (eds.): *Cultura tedesca a Firenze: scrittrici e artiste tra Otto e Novecento*, Firenze, Le Lettere 2005, p. 261-275.

²¹ Vittorio PICA, *L'Arte Decorativa all'Esposizione di Torino del 1902*, Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1903, p. 84-85.

²² Birgit JENVOLD (ed.): *Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen*, (exhibition catalogue), Copenhagen, Museet på Koldinghus, 1995.

1965) was a self-taught weaver and, from 1901, she worked as a restorer of tapestries and fabrics for the major Berlin museums²³. In 1919 she opened a laboratory in Bergedorf, that the following year moved to Celle where it remained open until 1961. She also worked as a teacher at various schools of weaving including that of Scherlebeck.

The *Schule für Kunstweberei* in Scherlebeck, located near the Danish border, was founded by Friedrich Deneken. He was the assistant of Brinckmann at the *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg* and later director of the *Kaiser-Wilhem-Museum of Krefeld*. The school had the mission of giving economic and social benefits to the village through the revival of the ancient and popular craft of weaving, modelled on the Swedish and Norwegian tradition.

Already in 1897, the school started the manufacturing of large textile works, based on drawings by renowned artists. However, despite international recognition due in particular to the colours obtained with natural pigments, the school went bankrupt in 1902-1903. From 1905 to 1911, the workshop's activities continued under the guidance of a woman. Maria Lübke bought some projects belonging to the school and put them back into production.

The most admired Art Nouveau tapestries exhibited in 1902 were the ones by Frida Hansen (Hillevåg i Stavanger, 1855 - Oslo, 1931)²⁴. She was one of the two artists who represented Norway in Turin.

In 1900, she achieved international recognition at the Paris Exhibition, her large tapestries and curtains were considered a typical example of Scandinavian Art Nouveau. She was the most international female artist of Norway, and perhaps for this reason the Norwegian Commission selected her for the Exhibition of Turin.

Hansen had her own atelier for almost her entire life, except from 1897 to 1906 when she was Head of *Det norske Billdværi* (Factory of Norwegian Tapestries). The

²³ *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg. Die Jugendstilsammlung*, vol. 1, 1979, p. 132; Giovanni FANELLI, Rosalia BONITO FANELLI: *Il tessuto Art Nouveau: disegno, moda, architettura*, Firenze, Cantini, 1986, p. 184. Inna DUFOUR NANNELLI: *Storie di arazzi e di fiori*, Firenze, Leonardo Arte, 1997, p. 105, 136.

²⁴ Anniken THUE: *Frida Hansen. En europeer i norsk tekstilkunst omkring 1900.*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1986.

production of manufacturing was based on her design and in 1897 she patented a weaving technique that allowed her to make “transparent tapestries”.

Despite the fact she exhibited in Turin many of her tapestries, the famous triptych *Rosso di Sera* (Red sky at night) - woven with threads of copper, silver and gold - never arrived in Turin because it was sold to the Norwegian Prime Minister. The triptych, that appears in the Turin catalogue, was replaced from the tapestry *The Milky Way*. During the exhibition in Paris in 1900, *The Milky Way* was purchased by the Museum of Decorative Arts in Hamburg that almost one year later borrowed it to Turin Exhibition. Nowadays, Frida Hansen is considered the first modern textile artist due to the fact she was the first to use the texture as an artistic independent medium²⁵.

Among the Scandinavian countries, the Swedish Section, housed in Turin in the main pavilion, was considered the most harmonious and original²⁶. The Swedish National Committee selected twenty-four categories of objects. Four participants were women: Alice Maria Nordin (1871 - 1948) was a sculptor, Katharina Anna Boberg (Stockholm, 1864 - therein 1935), Inga Thyra Carola Grafström (Böklund - 1864 - ibid, 1925) and Selma Giöbel Levina (Örebro län, 1843 - Vadstena , 1925) were weavers. The last, had founded her textile manufacturing, that in 1902 became part of the prestigious *Nordiska Kompaniet*.

In Turin, the interest in European schools of decorative art was noticeable. As a matter of fact, an entire room was dedicated to the students and collaborators of the *Glasgow School of Art*. Inside this room Jane Younger, Ann Macbeth, Margaret Macdonald and Jessie Marion King exhibited their works²⁷.

Born to a wealthy family of Glasgow cotton traders, Jane Younger (Glasgow, 1863 – ivi, 1955) was known as a painter, despite this she exhibited embroidered curtains and an embroidered bag. At the Glasgow School, between 1890-1900, Younger was the

²⁵ Jorunn VEITEBERG: *Camera con vista. Donne d'arte in Norvegia 1880-1990*, (catalogo della mostra, Milano 1989), Oslo, Reale Ministero Norvegese degli Affari Esteri, 1989.

²⁶ Vittorio PICA, *L'Arte Decorativa...*, p. 96-102.

²⁷ Alfredo MELANI: “L'esposizione d'arte decorativa moderna in Torino. V. Inghilterra e Scozia”, *Arte italiana decorativa e industriale*, xi, 8, 1902, p. 66; “L'Esposizione internazionale d'arte decorative moderna in Torino. La Sezione Scozzese”, *The Studio*, xxvi, n. 113, 1902, p. 91-103; Jude BURKHAUSER: *Glasgow girls: women in art and design, 1880-1920*, Edinburgh, Canongate, 1990.

student of the embroiderer Jessy Newbery (1864-1948) the founder of the Embroidery Department. The progressive Newbery had supported the individuality of motifs and patterns. In her opinion, the use of complex stitches and valuable materials was not a guarantee of success. Only embroidery design could reach the necessary artistic level to stand out.

In 1902 the results achieved by the Embroidery Department were such that the famous British magazine of fine and applied arts *The Studio* indicated the Glasgow School as a forerunner to considering embroidery as alive and fresh, and not as an art that repeats old patterns and decorative motifs.

Many bedspreads designed by Younger were produced for the Hill House at Helensburgh, designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh for Walter Blackie. Blackie, the prestigious publisher of Glasgow, was Younger's brother-in-law. Perhaps due to Blackie's interest, Jane received commissions for illustrations and *ex-libris*, many of which were displayed at the Glasgow *Society of Lady Artists' Club*²⁸. The fact remains that she had already won numerous awards for her watercolours and had exhibited her paintings at local and international level: at the *Glasgow Royal Institute of Fine Arts*, at the *Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolours*, in Paisley, London and Paris. From 1906 to 1914, Younger held a studio with the illustrator Annie French, with whom her work shows stylistic affinities.

Despite the fact that Younger's work was appreciated at the Turin Exhibition the embroideress Ann Macbeth (Halliwell - Bolton, 1875 – Patterdale, 1948) won the silver medal. In 1901, Macbeth was appointed assistant instructor of Jessie Newbery and the same year she exhibited at the *International Exhibition of Glasgow*.

Enrolled in the School of Glasgow in 1897, Macbeth changed the very idea of embroidery, considering less valuable fabrics suitable for embroidery²⁹. In her view, embroidery was to serve as decoration of those daily use objects. She was asked to train

²⁸ Peter GORDON, David DOUGHAN: *Dictionary of British Women's Organisations: 1825-1960*, Oxford, New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 59.

²⁹ FANELLI, Rosalia BONITO FANELLI: *Il tessuto Art Nouveau...*, p. 178; Ann CALHOUN: *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand 1870 – 1940. Women Make Their Mark*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2000, p. 135, 206.

the teachers of primary schools on the basis of her theories. In fact, since 1903 the art of embroidery has become a subject of study. The outcome of her lectures was the publication of the book *Educational Needlecraft* (published in 1911, with Margaret Swanson). Her tasks at the *School of Glasgow* continued to increase. In the meantime, she was in charge of the metalwork design (1906), bookbinding design (1907-1911), and in 1911 she took on the leadership of the Department of Embroidery. Under her leadership, the Department became one of the most important in Britain³⁰.

In 1914, she was invited by *the Froebel Union* to draw up a working program for to the degree course in handicrafts, hence she wrote a series of related books³¹. She exhibited at the *Glasgow Society of Lady Artists Crafts* and her work was regularly published by *The Studio*.

She received numerous awards and honorary degrees in Paris, Ghent, Budapest and Chicago. Her drawings were commissioned by prestigious companies including: *Alexander Morton & Co.*, *Donald Brothers* of Dundee, *Liberty & Co.* and *Knox's Linen Thread Co.*

Along with Jane Younger and Ann Macbeth, Margaret Macdonald (Topton, 1864 – Chelsea, 1933)³² belonged to the generation of designers formed at Jessie Newbery's courses. During the embroidery courses Margaret Macdonald learned to use simple drawings with curvilinear motives and almost floral abstracts patterns which were far from the historicism that was in vogue at the time.

The years when she attended the *Glasgow School of Art* with her sister Frances Macdonald (Kidsgrove, 1873-Glasgow 1921) were pervaded by a longing for great renewal and enthusiasm. The new director Francis Newbery (1885-1913) focused designer education on the study of the object's function. He also returned to favour

³⁰ Fiona C. MACFARLANE, Elizabeth F. ARTHUR: *Glasgow School Art of Embroidery 1894-1920*, Glasgow, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1980, p. 17-26.

³¹ *The Playwork Book* (1918), Schools and Fireside Crafts (1920), *Embroidered Lace and Leatherwork* (1924), *Needleweaving* (1926) and *The Countrywoman's Rug Book* (1929).

³² Pamela REEKIE: *Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh*, (exhibition catalogue, Hunterian Art Gallery, 1983), Glasgow, University of Glasgow, 1983; Sonja GÜNTHER: "Margaret Macdonald", "Frances Macdonald", in: *Frauen im Design...*, p. 32-39.

disciplines that were prevalently female, such as embroidery, the revival of which was promoted by his wife Jessie.

After attending drawing classes (1890) at the *Glasgow School*, Margaret Macdonald specialized in embroidery and in metal works. In 1894 she opened a studio in Hope Street, with her sister Frances, where they produced gypsum panels and jewellery³³. Meanwhile, the sisters met two architect students of the school, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and James Herbert NacNair. They began a partnership that led to the setting up of *The Four*. In 1899, Frances married Herbert, and a year later Margaret married Charles.

Margaret Macdonald contributed to the overall design of her husband's work and, more precisely, she worked on the design of decorative panels made of fabric, metal and stucco. She also designed furniture and furnishings. Her decorative panels, with embroidery and combinations of different materials, show almost abstract motifs and are among the most modern of the time. Her stucco decorative panels exhibited in Vienna in 1900 exerted a strong influence on Gustav Klimt's work.

In 1901, the Mackintosh couple won the competition *Haus Eines Kunstmfreundes*, therefore when they arrived in Turin, they were already renowned designers. In the Scottish section, they decorated and furnished an entire room, named *The Rose Boudoir*. For this room Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh made two gypsum panels, entitled *The White Rose and The Red Rose*, and *Heart of the Rose*. (Fig. 3) The decorative panels were hung at the opposite ends of the room, photographed and published in the leading magazines of the period. This led Margaret's work to become internationally recognised. The Turin jury unanimously gave the couple the Diploma of Honour, confirming their reputation.

After the Turin Exhibition, in 1903 Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh designed decorative panels for the famous *Willow Tea rooms*. Her finest works were the great stucco panels for the *Ingram Street Tea Rooms* and the panels for the town house of Fritz Wärndorfer in Vienna. Between 1885 and 1924 she participated to over forty

³³ Di HELLAND: *The studios of Frances and Margaret Macdonald*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996.

exhibitions. Her work was widely published by the magazines *The Studio*, *Dekorative Kunst*, *Deutsche Kunst und Decoration* and *Ver Sacrum*.

All Scottish women designers received awards and prizes, but the winner of the gold medal was Jessie Marion King (Bearsden, Glasgow, 1875 – Kikcudbright, Soway Cast, 1949)³⁴.

When Jessie King arrived in Turin she was already a well-known artist³⁵. She began training as an Art teacher in 1891 at the *Queen Margaret College (Glasgow)* and, in 1892, she entered the *Glasgow School of Art*. The school director soon recognized and encouraged her extraordinary talent as illustrator. As a student, she received a number of awards, including her first silver medal from the *National Competition, South Kensington* (1898).

Success came in the late nineties, when her graphics began to be published regularly by the magazine *The Studio*³⁶. These graphic works depicted the fantastic subjects of the legends of King Arthur, the poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites Morris and Rossetti, and the dramas of Maeterlinck. In 1899, King became Tutor in *Book Decoration and Design* at the *Glasgow School of Art*. Her first published graphics were for book covers printed by *Globus Verlag*, a Berlin subsidiary company of the big department store *Wertheim's*, between 1899 and 1902. The international critical acclaim is testified by articles in leading journals and by several exhibitions.

After taking a Grand Tour of Germany and Italy, where she was influenced by Botticelli's works, in 1902 she took part in the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art, in Turin. There she exhibited various objects including, in addition to her celebrated binding for *The Evangile de L'Enfance*, a screen designed with George Logan. Alfredo Melani emphasized the exquisite design, the amiable loveliness, and the originality of the work³⁷. The screen was defined as one of the noble artistic expressions

³⁴ Colin WHITE: *The Enchanted World of Jessie M. King*, Edinburgh, Canongate Books, 1989.

³⁵ Ugo OJETTI: "L'Arte Nuova a Torino", *Corriere della Sera*, 167, 20-21 June 1902; Efisio AITELLI, "Esposizione internazionale d'arte decorativa moderna in Torino", *Natura e Arte*, xi, 21, 1902, p. 620-623.

³⁶ Walter R. WATSON: "Miss J.M. King and her work", *The Studio*, xxvi, n. 113, 1902, p. 176-178.

³⁷ Alfredo MELANI: "L'esposizione ... , p. 66.

of the international exhibition. The jury emphasized King's extraordinary graphic skills³⁸.

After the Exhibition, she devoted herself to multiple productions of art and craft. In addition to illustrations for books, she produced costumes for pageants, decorative stucco panels, graphic and interior design in the "Glasgow Style"³⁹. Prestigious companies commissioned her works, including the *Liberty & Co.* King became a committee member of the Glasgow Society of Artists (1903) and a member of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists (1905).

Her contribution to Art Nouveau peaked during her first exhibitions, Annan's Gallery in Glasgow (1907) and Bruton Street Galleries, London (1905). King was primary a children's book illustrator, but when in 1908 she married Ernest Archibald Taylor - an artist and furniture designer - she also started to design jewelry and fabrics, and to paint pottery.

In 1911, she opened the Sheiling Atelier School in Paris with her husband, and her works in Paris are considered as influential to the creation of the Art Deco movement. After the First World War, the couple returned to Scotland, where King established her studio and her school in Kirkcudbright. This school was then to become a reference point for Scottish design.

Conclusions:

Women's participation in the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art in Turin in 1902 was almost eleven percent. No woman worked as an architect, all the pavilions were designed by men. The works presented by the women were mainly embroidery and lace or decorative fabrics, and very few ceramics and furnishing were created by women.

A few individual cases were women, most of them participating as a member of an organization (school, museum, association). All the women participants had an important artistic background and followed studies of art or decorative arts. Many of

³⁸ *Relazione della Giuria Internazionale...,* p. 138.

³⁹ Gerald LARNER, Celia LARNER: *The Glasgow Style*, Edinburgh, Taplinger Pub. Co , 1978, p. 8-10.



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them were helped to take part in the exhibition by husbands, fathers, brothers, or male relatives, even if they were already recognized artists.

Most of the women who exhibited their works in Turin received awards or accolades, this demonstrates the very high selection to which women were subjected.

After the exhibition in Turin, almost all the women participants carried on their artistic activities and businesses successfully.