

## Collegium historiae artium

Hlavní referující

### Gábor György Papp (Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Téma

## National Architecture and the “Jewish Question” in Hungary 1908–1920: The Case of the Hungarian (Architectural) Society with the So-Called “Hungarian Art Nouveau”

The lecture will present a typical trend in Hungarian architecture at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Namely the way the nation-centric idea that defined 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture came to serve new concepts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, nation states turned to the sciences and the arts in search of support for their pursuit of an identity. In Hungary as well as in other Central European countries, efforts to create national art and architecture were part of this process. The new challenges brought by the big cities built in Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to a questioning of the role of national architecture – and historical approaches in general – in this new architectural discourse. However, due to the fast pace of this shift, tension between architects from the traditional school and the “modernists” piled up. A group of young architects (followers of Ödön Lechner, an outstanding architect in the Hungarian Art Nouveau style) started to gradually distance themselves from the historical approach. The transnational role of modern architecture was again made more “national” by the inclusion of folklore motifs. Another group of architects believed that the answers to the challenges brought by modern life were still to be found within the boundaries of historical shape and form, accusing those who thought differently of not being patriotic enough. The “official” architectural scene (in the shadow of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War) tried to discredit Art Nouveau by saying that it is not part of the history of Hungarian architecture, citing their collection of typical motifs and relating it to the Jewish origin of architects who worked on them. Art Nouveau was interpreted as a misguided curve in style. It is clear, but knowing the political situation of the era not at all surprising, that this antisemitic account of Hungarian architecture, coated by a rejection of Art Nouveau, remained alive all the way until the 1930s.



Kdy

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Kde

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