

# [Fin wagner’s beliefs and his ideas. otto](https://assignbuster.com/fin-wagners-beliefs-and-his-ideas-otto/)

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Fin de Siècle Vienna was arevolutionary time in every sense of the word. A time which was filled withsome of the greatest minds the world has ever come to know. Containing movementsthat led to the evolution of practices such as art, music and architecture. Among these movements was the modern movement, influenced greatly by theAustrian architect Otto Wagner. Using his knowledge of architecture and thevision that he had for the future he would elevate the field of architectureand creativity to a whole new level.

Wagner built his second home, the “ VillaWagner II” in a way that would emulate his impacting vision. Vienna at thistime was also in a state of creative development and attested to the meaningbehind this home. Just with a quick glance, anyone has the ability to see thatit contains key architectural aspects that are tied together to symbolizeWagner’s beliefs and his ideas. Otto Wagner, an Austrian architect is responsiblefor a vast amount of architectural beauty in Vienna that can still be seentoday. Wagner was born in July 1841 and later in his school years went on tostudy architecture at the Viennese Polytechnic Institute and the Royal Schoolof Architecture in Berlin. He began his career as an architect in Viennadesigning buildings in the historicist style which at the time was the traditionalmethod. In 1893, Wagner drew up an entire plan to change the look of Vienna whichwas never fully executed, only his urban rail network the “ Stadtbahn” wasbuilt.

This plan made for the city assisted Wagner in receiving a job as anacademy professor in 1894 where he influenced young minds through his strongbeliefs about the future of architecture. As a teacher, “ Wagner quickly decided to scrapthe Renaissance curriculum in favor of one that pledged to defining a new stylefor modern times. He was the first European professor to ever make such apedagogical change.

“ 1  In 1897, Otto Wagner joined the Vereinigung BildenderKünstler Österreichs(Union of Austrian Fine Artists) also known as the Secession. A group that cameinto fruition because of the conservative and traditional standpoint of theAssociation of Austrian Artists. 2The association’s strong beliefs made the members who were some of thebrightest minds at this time such as Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser, Josef Hoffmann, Joseph MariaOlbrich and more feel that their creative minds and abilities were suppressedby limitations set by the Association of Austrian Artists.

Among this group were painters, sculptors, architects, composers etc., that believed that they could achievemuch more in their craft by exploring outside the boundaries of acceptedtradition. This is made apparentlyclear with the phrase that is written above the entrance of the secessionbuilding which says, “ Der Zeit ihre Kunst.

Der Kunst ihre Freiheit.”(“ To every age its art. To every art its freedom.”). Hoffmann and Moser also founded the “ WienerWerkstätte” which was a fine-arts society withthe objective of reforming the arts. This ideology is what supportedWagner in progressing to a brand-new style of architecture called Modernism.

Otto Wagner held a strong belief thatthe past should never be dwelled upon, life moves forward and we shouldconstantly be looking forward. 3 This new style stood up tothose standards, it was in no way an imitation or derivation of any style fromthe past. In his book Wagner writes “ Modern art must offer us modern forms thatare created by us and that represent our abilities and actions.” 4Although he initiallybegan designing buildings in the Historicist style and later designed buildingsin the style of architectural realism, Wagner is known as a highly influentialfigure in the creation and incorporation of Modern Architecture. Wagner held stronglythat the imitation of style throughout generation showed little enhancement inarchitecture and all types of art.             Otto Wagner being an extraordinaryarchitect built himself and his second wife an extraordinary house in 1913 calledthe “ Villa Wagner II”. This house was built directly next door to his firsthouse the “ Villa Wagner I” and was primarily made for his wife to live in afterhe would die because Wagner was 20 years older than her.

Wagner used industrialmaterials such as concrete and steel to construct buildings and his house dueto the industrialization relative to that time. Mikulas Teich writes that” during this time a surge of technological innovation swept through westernEurope and the Unites States – innovations that reshaped existing industriesand created new ones.” 5At this time, Vienna also incorporated a new Tram, the railway that wasmentioned previously and had begun working on the Danube canal. Historians havecalled this time the Second Industrial Revolution. In the Villa Wagner II thematerials that made the house were not hidden by coverups or art and were openlyput on display. The reason for this being that Wagner had a new belief forarchitecture one beyond the scope of previous generations, Wagner envisionedarchitecture in the most practical and efficient way possible. He writes in hisbook “ The purpose of beauty was to give artistic expression to function.” 6By using these industrial materials, crafting them and molding them into thedesired ornaments, they in themselves would become a beautiful and artisticarchitectural aspect.

The shape of thehouse itself was very simple and resembled a cubic form with a flat roof tocomplete the cube shape. This design would present Wagner’s idea of the futureof architecture, the simplest creation that could be made while displayinggreat functionality. While the house was made to resemble a modernistic style, Wagner had added certain components from other styles of architecture as well. Above the door that leads into the house is a stained-glass painting, thestained-glass is a component of the art-nouveau style. The painting itself Wagnerhad made by Koloman Moser, an Austrian artist who was also part of the Secession. The painting on the house contains different components of Klimt’s painting” Pallas Athena” that possessed aspects of Greek mythology, which resembles the architecturalstyle of classicism. Wagner chose this specific painting to be added because hebelieved Klimt was the greatest artist to ever step on the face of the earth. The Villa also had very tall and narrow windows that were placed in perfectrhythm in order to bring to attention and complement the simple shape of thehouse.

The sides of the house and around the door were filled with smallrectangular glazed blue tiles that created an illusion of columns when theywere placed together. The illusion of columns when in reality there is nothingthere, was another detail that Wagner added that resembles the classical styleof architecture. The house as a whole contained a very small number ofornaments especially compared to his first villa which possessed a great amountof them. In fact, the second Villa some would say was a complete oppositerepresentation of architecture. Observing the transition from the first villato the second helps us understand the development of Otto Wagner’s vision forthe future of architecture. The secession and all of its memberschallenged everything that seemed to be accepted in the creative world. Whetherit was music, art, architecture or anything else, the secession stood forexploring and extrapolating from a world beyond that which everyone wasaccustomed to.

They believed that in order to create “ true” art an evolution ofthinking and new ideas needed to occur those of which that do not stem fromprevious generations. Peter Vergo states in his book “ Art in Vienna” that “ thepeople of the time coming from a feeling of hopelessness later became a peoplethat believed in progress more than they did the bible.” 7This raises an interesting question, if Wagner believed that architectureshould be practical and efficient without extraneous ornaments and that newstyles should strive for the future instead of incorporating from the past, thenwhy does he contradict himself and add in all of these different styles ofarchitecture in the Villa Wagner II. This brings us back to his extraordinarilysymbolic Villa, a structure that in its very essence presented the transitionfrom one form of art to another.

The reason this house is so important can beseen by comparing both of his villas. In his first villa which is flooded with ornamentsand statues you can see his style of architecture, he includes many differentstyles and many ornaments to make the house his own piece of art. The statues, the paintings, the columns and the vast amount of ornaments take center stagein this house. A great number of representations of classical and art-nouveaustyle architecture. Now if you look at his second villa it is very clear thatit contains nowhere near the amount of extraneous detail that the first oneseems to have.

Also, he created the depiction of simplicity while still unitingseveral facets of architecture. This decision was a key indicator toWagner’s idea of the future, by creating a simple structure and having itcoexist with minimal details from other styles of architecture he wasdemonstrating the transition of the old architecture styles into his new one. Astyle that was not in any way an imitation of the previous generations. Wagnerwas illustrating the next step that architecture would take and at the sametime showing that we were almost there by presenting a transition between styles. Wagner’s second villa possesses great significance in projecting the people andthe ideas of that time. The beginning to new beliefs and revolutionary ideasthat would ultimately change the artistic worlds and inspire them to be alittle more original and a little more creative.

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Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999. 6 Wagner, Otto, andHarry Francis. Mallgrave. ModernArchitecture. Otto Wagner: a Guidebook for His Students to This Field of Art. University of Chicago Press, 1988. 7 Vergo, Peter, etal.

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