tions, which he believed could form the basis of new national architecture.[25] The Czechoslovak pavilion in Rio de Janeiro was an example of such vernacularism that became the expression of "a modern artistic current, characterized by the attempt to break free from the old classical models by introducing elements of national culture."[26] This culture was seen as that of the peasants whose linear motifs from embroidery were effectively translated into the building's ornamental decoration and presented as part of the modern artistic expression.

The state in arts and crafts

It is one of the paradoxes of interwar world's fairs, aimed at showcasing universal modernity and progress, that they enhanced the need for national difference and exceptionalism. The Parisian *International Exposition of Industrial Design and Decorative Art in Modern Life* in 1925 exemplifies such developments, as the official goal of the organizer was to establish a new decorative movement, which would emerge in France and be successful commercially on an international scale. France tried to re-establish itself as a producer of applied arts, having to face increasingly strong competition from Britain and Germany, as well as from the USA. To remove the association that France, at exhibitions or elsewhere, adhered to historicism and old-fashioned décor, all imitations of old styles were banned.[27]

The French organizers and exhibitors, however, struggled to agree on what *modern* meant and they presented varied views and understandings of modern art and design. The poet Paul Géraldy, for example, pointed to France's reluctance to embrace modernity wholeheartedly in his review of the Exhibition; he claimed that the modern here tried to negate "France's history and heritage for the sake of fashion."[28] Expanding the notion of France's unique position in the visual arts, the jeweler and designer René Lalique suggested that the decorative arts of the future should be again elitist. "Elitist art," in his interpretation,

25 Vendula Hnídková, *Národní styl, kultura a politika* (Prague: VŠUO, 2013), Marie Benešová, *Pavel Janák* (Prague: Nakladatelství československých výtvarných umělců, 1959), Norbert Kiesling, *Pavel Janák* (Weitra: Bibliothek der Provinz, 2012).

26 Ruth Lévy, *A Exposição do Centenario. E o meio arquitetônico carioca no início dos anos 1920* (Rio de Janeiro: EBA Publicações, 2010), 231.

27 Julia Kostova, "Spectacles of Modernity. Anxiety and Contradiction at the Interwar Paris Fairs of 1925, 1931 and 1937," PhD Dissertation, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2011. Makaryk, *April in Paris*; Marc Gaillard, *Paris. Les Expositions Universelles de 1855 à 1937* (Les Presses Franciliennes, Paris, 2003).

28 Paul Géraldy, "L'Architecture vivante," in *L'illustration*, special section on L'exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes (April 15, 1925), Kostova, "Spectacles of Modernity," 94.

was authentically French and as such could re-establish France as a leader in art and design.[29] At the same time, others called for the new visual language to be more closely linked to French regionalism and local traditions, which—as, for example, Romy Golan has argued—occupied a prime spot at the Exhibition.[30]

Yet despite all the effort to create a uniform new French artistic language, the Exhibition did not come up with any consistent definition or presentation of modernity in art and design. The site of the International Exhibition accommodated a wide array of modernisms that included the various Art Deco pavilions alongside the more restrained architecture as regards the embrace of decoration, like the Lyon and St Etienne pavilions designed by Tony Garnier, the Pavilion of Tourism by Robert Mallet-Stevens, or Le Corbusier's Esprit Nouveau and Konstantin Melnikov's Soviet pavilion. The Exhibition organizers were, nevertheless, far from open to include *all* forms of modernism and for example the non-figurative work of the Bauhaus and De Stijl were excluded from the exhibition grounds. A dissatisfaction with the ban led to a counter-exhibition in Paris, "L'Art d'Aujourd'hui" (The Art of Today), providing an alternative view of what modern, non-narrative art could look like. The exhibition displayed the work of artists from 24 countries, including Fernand Léger, the Delaunays, Natalia Goncharova, Picasso, or Le Corbusier and also several Czech artists living in Paris at the time, such as Josef Šíma, Jindřich Štýrský, and Toyen.[31] On top of that, two artists and art theorists, Karel Teige of Czech origin and Theo van Doesburg from the Netherlands, compiled a call for a protest against the exclusion of De Stijl in the journal *Pásmo* (Zone) published in Prague.[32] Speaking on behalf of the Constructivists and targeting the focus of the Parisian Exhibition on the decorative arts, they called for an organization of a counter-exhibition, congress, international publication and "modern performances" with the aim of eradicating the "applied arts scam" in all areas.[33]

Other Czech critics expressed mixed feelings about the composition of the entire Exhibition as well as about the Czechoslovak participation which for many highlighted the basic issues in the relationship between art and design on the one hand and the diversity of definitions of the modern. The architect Adolf Benš, for example, expressed his skepticism about the displayed decora-

29 Quoted in Kostova, "Spectacles of Modernity," 96.

30 Kostova, "Spectacles of Modernity," 96. Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia. Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 58.

31 Anna Pravdová, "V centru pařížského dění: abstrakce 1924–1934," in František Foltýn et al., *František Foltýn 1891–1976, Košice-Paříž-Brno* (Brno: Moravská galerie and Řevnice: Arbor vitae, 2007), 69.

32 "Výzva," *Pásmo* 7-8 (1924–25): 1.

33 "Výzva," 1.

tive arts in the journal *Stavitel* (The Constructor) after the Exhibition closed. He noted that the event was

> highly educational although mostly in the negative sense. [Here] the program had dissolved into an inorganic breadth, the "decorative arts" had been reckoned with in France and in entire Europe and it became clear how unrelated the general state of culture was with the profusion of the decorative arts.[34]

Around 1925, Benš worked in the studio of Josef Gočár, assisted on the design of the Czechoslovak pavilion and was also in charge of the construction of the national pavilion in Paris.[35] His dismissal of the unnecessary decorativeness arts was accompanied by an embrace of "the logical," pure architecture of Le Corbusier which much more corresponded with the contemporary state of mind.[36] The decorative arts at the Exhibition, Benš continued, were therefore reduced to their obsolete function related to craftmanship, which turned the event into a display of luxury and ornament rather than of practical utilities.

Such reading can be applied to parts of the Czechoslovak pavilion too. Overall, the artistic display in Paris was a mixture of decorative ornamentalism, based on craftsmanship, and moderately avant-garde works. The latter could be exemplified by František Drtikol's photographs of female nudes with abstracted backgrounds and the displays of functionalist architecture designs by Jaromír Krejcar and Bohuslav Fuchs.[37] Most of the artwork on display, however, was comfortably conventional and "tame," if not outright conservative.[38] There was a range of sculptural work that included Jan Štursa's *Victory* of a boy waving a laurel branch. The statue celebrated independent Czechoslovakia and was located on the pavilion roof, while Otto Gutfreund's figurative sculptures referenced the visual language of civilism, which commended everyday life and manual work. Otakar Švec's bronze *Motorcyclist* captured modernity through its emphasis of speed in

34 Adolf Benš, "Mezinárodní výstava dekorativního a průmyslového moderního umění v Paříži 1925," *Stavitel* VI, no. 8–9 (1925): 110.

35 Vladimír Šlapeta, *Benš: Adolf Benš (1894–1982): architektonické dílo Adolf Benš (1894–1982): architektonické dílo* (Prague: Nadace Charty 77, 2014).

36 Benš, "Mezinárodní výstava," 109.

37 Hana Rousová, "Art Deco," in *Design v Českých zemích 1900–2000*: *instituce moderního designu*, eds. Iva Knobloch and Radim Vondráček, 177–200 (Prague: Academia, 2016)., 180. *Catalogue officiel de la section Tchécoslovaque. Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes Paris 1925* (Prague: Comité d'Exposition, 1925).

38 Martina Pachmanová, "Výstavní praktiky státu: export československého umění," in *Budování státu,* 283.

its sleek, abstracted forms emulating movement. This 900kg heavy sculpture was, nevertheless, located somewhat out of the way at the back of the pavilion building, suggesting an ambiguous attitude to this kind of abstracted work [fig. 31].

The large open space on the ground floor was clad in oak panels and featured glass windows by Kysela which depicted references to various crafts like pottering, weaving, painting, or printing and decorative carpets.[39] The space was divided into sections focusing on decorative objects in various materials such as glass, porcelain, embroidery or book binding, with stage design located at the end of the building. The first floor was taken up by the Hall of Honor and equipped with work by teachers and students at the School of Decorative Arts in Prague [fig. 32]. The architect and designer Pavel Janák equipped the space with various sculptural objects in wood and glass depicting Czechoslovak crafts and industries, as well as abstract topics like science, labor, literature or architecture. Janák also supplied glass chandeliers and a model of a fireplace from Slovakia and smaller objects included glass by the designers Josef Drahoňovský (1877-1938) and Jaroslav Horejc (1886–1983) and lace by Emilie Paličková Milde.[40] Kysela's large wall tapestries with allegories of crafts, executed by the designer Marie Teinitzerová (1879–1960), dominated the space.

The exhibition commissioner for the Czechoslovak pavilion in Paris was V. V. Štech, who had previously helped to organize the national pavilion at Rio de Janeiro. Like many of the architects, designers and artists involved in the pavilion, Štech was linked with the School of Decorative Arts, where he taught. And like many others, he was a member of the Association of Czechoslovak Werkbund. One of the best represented artists in the pavilion was František Kysela, who in 1924 became the rector of the School of Decorative Arts. In many respects, the pavilion—and the Czechoslovak exhibits in other halls—therefore became a showcase of the School and its orientation. In the 1920s, many of the studios at the School taught decorative ornament derived from folk art, because these so-called traditional designs were understood as the expression of the nation.[41] This focus was adopted by the state, which was the official representative of the nation, and various official, public-facing activities and commissions were granted to the School.

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39 "Pavillon national," *Catalogue officiel de la Section Tchéchoslovaque. Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes Paris 1925*, ed. Vilém Dvořák (no publisher, 1925), 13.

40 "Pavillon national," 21.

41 Pavla Pečinková, "Chapters from the History, 1895–1946," in *Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová v Praze/ Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, 1885–2005*, eds. Martina Pachmanová and Markéta Pražáková (Prague: VŠUP, 2005), 47.

Fig.31. Otakar Švec, Motocyclist, 1924, bronze, 114x226x96cm.

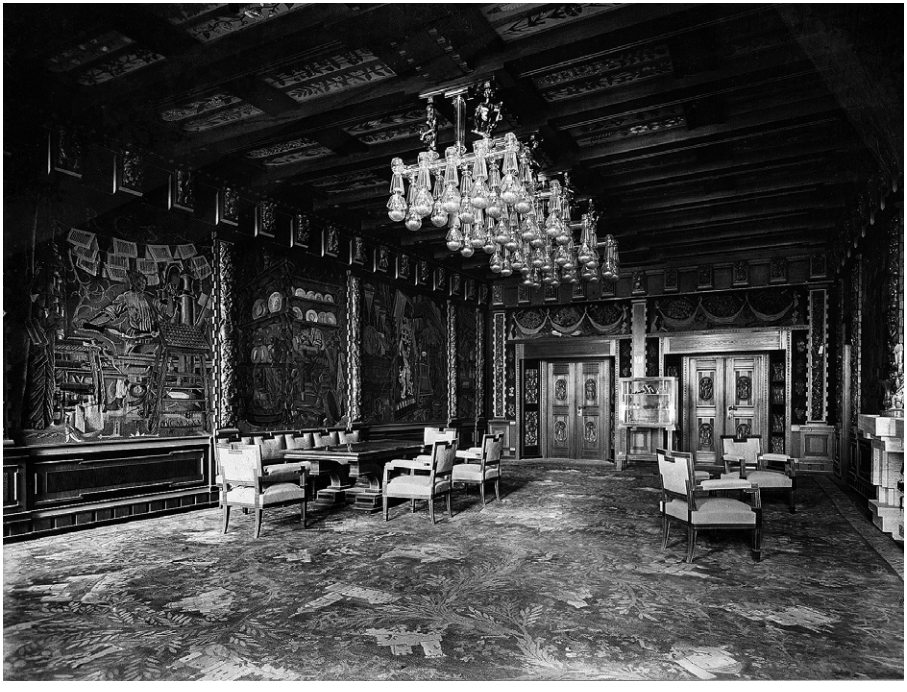

Fig.32. Josef Gočár, Interior of the Czechoslovak pavilion in Paris, 1925.