

# St-Gall : a vocational training centre

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Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss textiles [English edition]**

Band (Jahr): **- (1951)**

Heft 3: **a**

PDF erstellt am: **30.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-798808>

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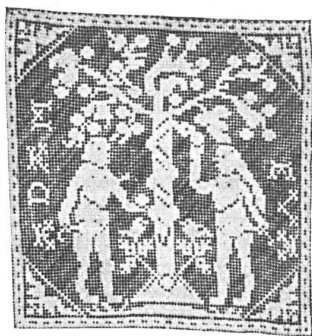
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Filet embroidery of the 18th Century. Iklé Collection.

At the present moment, the artist who wishes to design for the textile industry must satisfy requirements as numerous as they are varied and must possess technical and artistic abilities of a high order. The rapidity of the changes taking place in the field of fashion and in the economic situation demands on his part exceptional powers of adaptation and renewal. It is not surprising therefore that vocational training and development in this field defy all schematic formalism and cannot form part of any programme of instruction intended for the general public.

## St-Gall, a vocational training centre

*The School of Textiles and Fashion of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, St-Gall, by Dr. P. Quensel, director.*

success in their profession, as designers for the embroidery and fabric printing industries, as hand embroideresses and embroideresses on « Lorraine » machines for the decoration of outer- and underwear, as cutters, dress designers and forewomen in establishments making ready-to-wear and made to measure clothing.

It is sixty-five years since the St. Gall school started in its red brick building in Vadian Street. « The pleasure of seeing the school and the Museum at last housed together in large well-built and well-appointed premises, ready to go forward together towards their future development, was evident among all sections of the population. In the course of the celebrations organised on this occasion, the gratitude of the public was eloquently shown towards both builders and sponsors. » The main thanks for this achievement are due to the St. Gall Chamber of Commerce. They were far-sighted enough to understand the interests of the embroidery industry which was developing

Exhibition Hall in the Museum of Arts and Crafts.

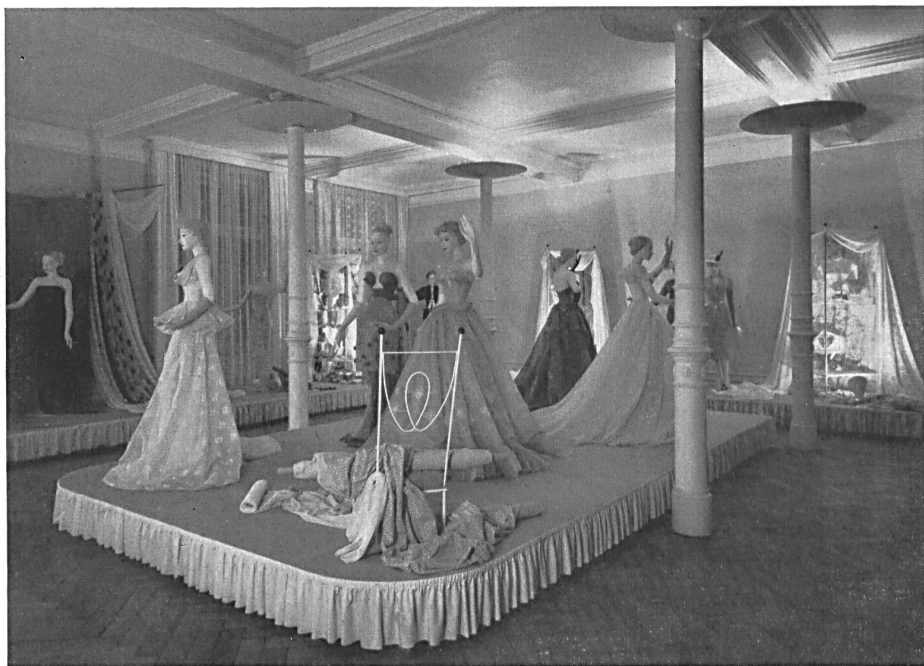


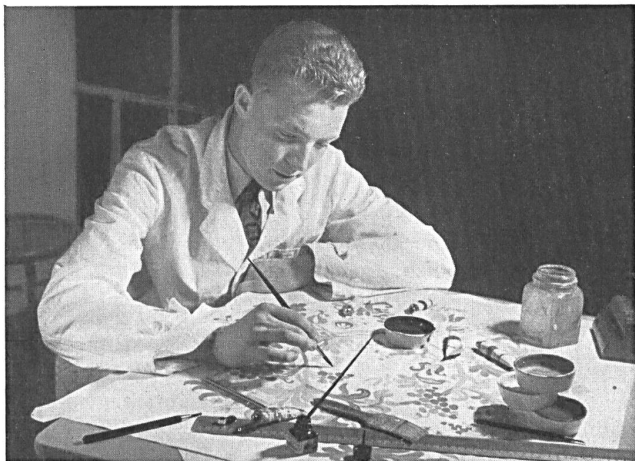
Photo Hege, St-Gall

Under these circumstances, the vocational school fulfils its function when it is capable of giving young men and women special technical knowledge as well as general artistic training, in such a way that in practice the effective collaboration of all those concerned makes possible the creation of textile products which will bear the most critical examination.

Among the Swiss institutes for vocational training in the field of textiles, the St. Gall School of Textiles and Fashion is the ideal vocational and further training school for future textile artists and those who are already working in this field. They find here the guidance and technical facilities that they need in order to perfect their training in certain respects; here, if they work hard, they can acquire the necessary grounding for

at the time and was in urgent need of men and women designers.

But times have changed since then and the syllabus had to be adapted to meet new requirements. The old vocational classes were reorganised on a smaller scale to form one textile section, and about 1930 a fashion section was added to this in order to meet the demands of the clothing industry. These two sections, each completing the other by their close collaboration, to-day form the St. Gall School of Textiles and Fashion. Their programme includes everything from the making of the plan of the weave to the finished material and its transformation into clothing. In this way the danger of amateurism, to which the fashion professions are exposed, is avoided. Many people, full of confidence in their own talents, do



A pupil of the designing class at work.



The artistic embroidery class.

not realise how much real knowledge is needed to put original ideas into effect and give them form and colour.

It is easy enough to learn the technical side of an industry and the artisanal basis of a trade sufficiently well to earn a living. But fashions are continually changing. This constant evolution demands new ideas for fabric designs and styles; artistic ideas are needed. Is inspiration something that can be learnt? Certainly, as long as there is a foundation of artistic talent. But in addition to this, it is necessary for sight and taste to be continually trained and for instruction to be given by example during practical work.

It is necessary therefore for a vocational school to have continually at its disposal new, rich and varied resources and equipment. Switzerland does not possess for example the enormous means that are at the disposal of British centres of information and vocational training for the textile industry. Yet, with the modest means at its disposal, the St. Gall Fashion School is also working towards the solution of the same problems.

A well-stocked library makes it possible to gain technical information rapidly; in it are found works devoted not only to the decorative arts and industry, but also to all that is remotely connected with fashion and textiles, particularly the most up-to-date works, periodicals and reproduction sheets relating to textiles and fashion. Here is a veritable mine of ideas and suggestions in both the technical and artistic fields; and for anyone who knows how to make use of the material put at his disposal, there is the possibility of gaining the most valuable experience.

The « Studio », with its collections of samples which are continually brought up to date, is working towards

the same end. A special section, the famous « Iklé collection », shows laces, embroideries, figured and printed fabrics, costumes and ornaments from all the countries of Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. For an industry in which the « taste » factor plays such an important role, this studio has a special value of up-to-dateness as a basis for putting new ideas into effect or for the training of young designers who, through an acquaintance with old documents and their classical forms, may be led, particularly in the embroidery industry, along the path to the creation of novelties.

Here we must say just a few more words concerning the activity of the Exhibitions Section. The close collaboration existing between the instructional establishment and the centre of studies and information makes it very simple for the institute to fulfil its tasks of propaganda for the Swiss textile industries. If the products of these industries have aroused general admiration for many years at international fairs and exhibitions as well as at the Swiss Industries Fair at Basle, this is due, and not least of all to the attractive manner in which the lace, embroidery and fabrics have been displayed. The arrangement of the objects displayed, the elegance of the models, the originality of the designs and the play of colours and drapes give an attractive overall effect and a fine unity. The St. Gall School of Textiles and Fashion has contributed its share to these results.

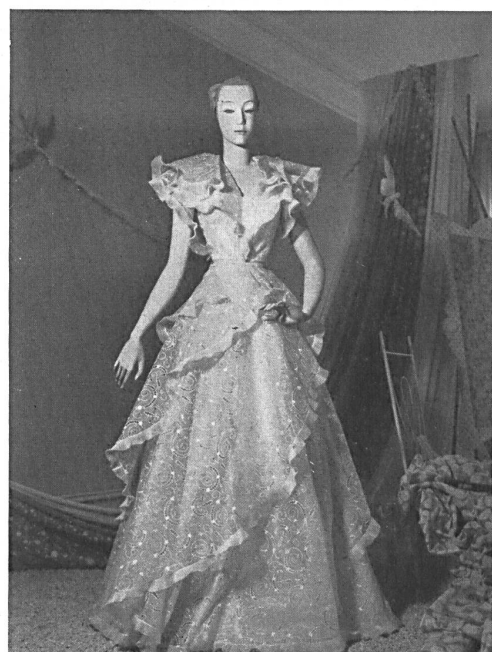
The three points of the programme, instruction, information and propaganda outline the tasks in the field of which the Institute makes its practical contribution with a view to furthering the industrial development of Switzerland.



The fashion class.

Model of a dress and design of embroidery: School of Textiles and Fashion.

Embroidery: Vocational schools of embroidery of Eastern Switzerland.



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