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A Renovated Renaissance: Richard Riemerschmid's Modern Interiors for the Thieme House in Munich

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ABSTRACT *This article explores the apparently anti-modern forces that informed German designer Richard Riemerschmid's approach to the design of modern interiors during the early 1900s. It considers his* Herrenzimmer *(gentleman's study) for Carl Thieme, displayed in 1906 at Dresden's seminal Third German Applied Arts Exhibition, as an example of the defining role that Germany's past played in determining the look and feel of a modern German art – cultural reformer Hermann Muthesius hailed Riemerschmid's interiors as a modern German* Volkskunst*, or "art of the people." The article exposes connections between early sixteenth-century German art, including that of Albrecht Dürer, and modern German design – seemingly*

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strange bedfellows that were accommodated through the visual and material culture of late nineteenth-century Munich. The material of wood symbolized the German cultural character, embodying both a rough materiality and a soulful spirituality that was traceable in Dürer's prints, in the Renaissance-revival interiors of 1870s Munich, and in Riemerschmid's modern Raumkunst, or "room-art."

KEYWORDS: Albrecht Dürer, German Renaissance, machine furniture, modern design, *Raumkunst*, Richard Riemerschmid, *Stube*, *Volkskunst*, wood

During the summer of 1906, Germany witnessed a turning point in the history of modern design. At the Third German Applied Arts Exhibition in Dresden, strikingly modern designs for furniture and household objects, celebrating the extensive use of machine technology, took center stage. Handcrafted products and historicist interiors – which had occupied positions of honor at previous German applied arts exhibitions – were relegated to the sidelines among Dresden's vast network of modern *Raumkunst*, or "room-art." For the first time, progressive, twentieth-century industrial art not only outnumbered but outmoded its nineteenth-century predecessors in the eyes of middle-class Germans.

The centerpiece of Dresden's industrial art program was a new line of furniture designed by the Munich artist Richard Riemerschmid (1868–1957). Riemerschmid's "machine furniture," sparsely and efficiently constructed from serially produced, standardized components fabricated with the aid of machines, was intended to democratize "good design" by providing lower-income households with simple, sturdy, and affordable furniture, as featured in a photograph of Riemerschmid's *Wohn- und Eßstube* – literally, a "living and eating room" (Figure 1). The *Machine Chair*'s humble hints at ornament consisted in the natural wood grain that patterned its surfaces; the round, exposed heads of the pegs that held it together; the supple bowing of the flexed legs upon which it stood; and the slightly upturned toes of its stubbornly planted feet. As it compressed decoration into form and collapsed form into function, the rationally designed, reasonably priced *Machine Chair* promised to liberate the working-class family from bondage to "bad taste."

Alongside this rationalized revelation, Riemerschmid displayed a very different approach to furnishing the domestic interior in a *Herrenzimmer* – a gentleman's workroom or study (Figure 2). Although he designed the study for a private client (Carl Thieme, the wealthy director of a Munich insurance company), Riemerschmid chose to exhibit the complete interior at Dresden in the summer of 1906, before installing it in the Thiemes' Munich villa the following autumn.

Figure 1
Richard Riemerschmid, *Machine Furniture Program I*, Living-Dining Room (*Wohn- und Eßstube*), designed in 1905. 2013 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

The *Herrenzimmer* seems to champion everything that the Dresden exhibition rejected: its emphasis on woodwork appears to glorify traditional crafts, and many of its structural and formal elements seem to perpetuate the nineteenth-century penchant for historicism. Its dark wood paneling and coffered ceiling suggest a nineteenth-century Renaissance-style dining room, and its chairs might feel at home in the rustic revival of an "old-German" *Wohnstube*, or family living room, designed in the 1870s (Figure 3). A closer look at the wood-paneled walls in the 1906 photograph, however, focuses these hazy allusions to an old-fashioned dwelling, sharpening them into direct references to specific aspects of Germany's heritage. In the right-hand portion of the photograph, directly to the left of a large cupboard, hangs a portrait of the celebrated nineteenth-century composer, Richard Wagner. But the picture to Wagner's right digs more deeply into the nation's cultural root system: hanging against the wooden wall is a lithographic reproduction of Albrecht Dürer's *Self-portrait* from the year 1500 (Figure 4).

The presence, at a landmark exhibition of modern design in 1906, of this 400-year-old, meticulously crafted image of a Renaissance artist in a model interior created by the inventor of "machine furniture" may at first seem just as puzzling as the contrast between the study's historicizing furniture and the sleek *Machine Chair* itself. Did

Figure 2
Richard Riemerschmid, Gentleman's Study (*Herrenzimmer*) installed at the Third German Applied Arts Exhibition, Dresden, summer 1906. In Direktorium der Ausstellung (ed.), *Das deutsche Kunstgewerbe 1906*, 159. 2013 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Riemerschmid fail modernism in the apparent anachronism of his Renaissance room? Or is there a way to reconcile the avant-garde appearance and agenda of Riemerschmid's *Machine Chair* with furnishings and figures calculated to revive the spirit of a faded era? In answer, the 1906 sales catalog in which the *Machine Chair* is listed for purchase provides its readers with something like a riddle: it asserts that Riemerschmid's furniture, animated by the "spirit of the machine" would "rebuild the world of Albrecht Dürer, from the inside out" (Naumann 1906: 6). The following pages will investigate the implications of this assertion for the early twentieth-century German interior and explore the ways in which Renaissance culture not only informed but actually enabled an emphatically modernist project. The vision of *Kunst* – art – rooted in the German Renaissance was reincarnated in the twentieth-century German concepts of *Kunstindustrie* (applied art produced by industrial means) and *Raumkunst* ("room-art" or interior art) to arrive at a "New German Art" for everyday living – an *Alltagskunst*.

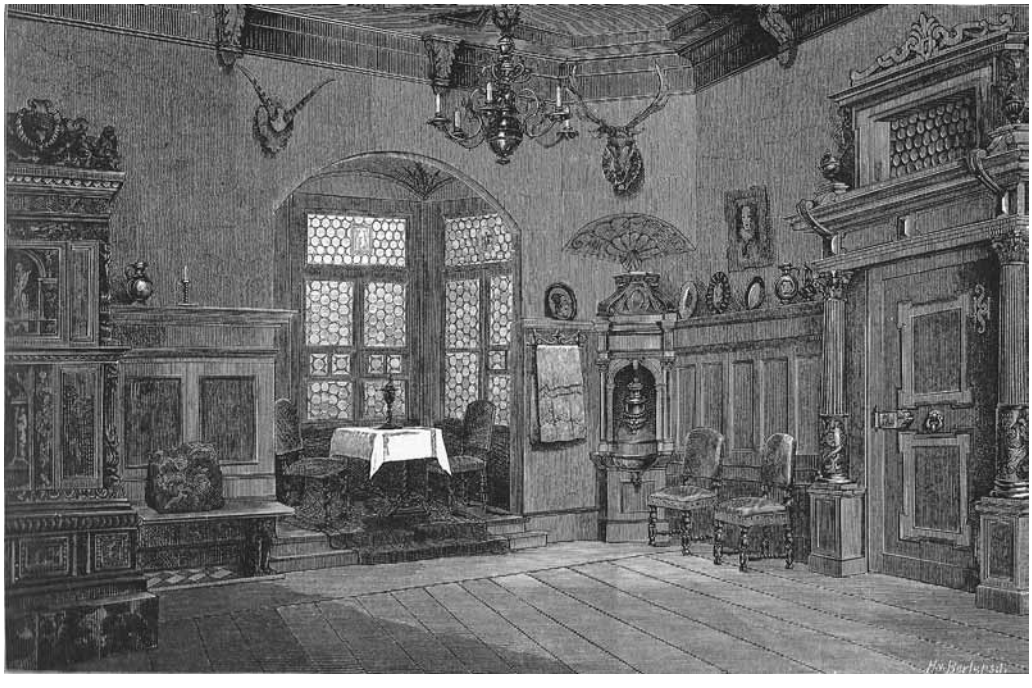

Figure 3
Print of Gabriel von Seidl's "German Living Room" (*Deutsche Wohnstube*), Munich, 1876.
Reproduced in Georg Hirth, *Das deutsche Zimmer der Renaissance*, 45.

Vagueness and Love in *Gründerzeit* Munich

Born into a liberal, cultured Munich merchant family in 1868, Riemerschmid was a child of the *Gründerzeit*. This heady episode in German history, characterized first by euphoric speculation and next by economic depression and social anxiety, followed Germany's 1871 unification as a result of pan-German collaboration and victory in the Franco-Prussian War. The *Gründerzeit*, or "age of the founders," was named for the *Gründer*, the speculators who founded the many new companies that sprouted up on the heels of unification. Underpinning the general sense of euphoric optimism regarding German endeavor was the very real availability of capital facilitated by the French indemnity payment of five million francs, as well as the German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, French territories known for their thriving industries. Economic expansion led to a building boom and an increased demand for everyday objects of all kinds, especially luxury goods to adorn the lavish new dwellings of the nouveau riche *Gründer*. But the wild financial speculation of the *Gründerzeit* led directly to the historic market crash of 1873 and the ensuing *Gründerkrise* (*Gründer*-crisis), an aftermath of recession and general financial instability lasting until 1896.[1]

Unification had fueled a pre-existing desire for a national style, and financial instability stimulated it even further. As the French recovered

Figure 4
Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait*, 1500, oil on board. Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, Germany. Photograph: bpk, Berlin/Art Resource, NY.

from war and began to reclaim their position on the luxury market, the British continued to pose a threat to a German applied-arts industry now weakened by financial downturn. For many Germans, unification had signified not simply the triumph of German military power, but the ascendency of German cultural values at the expense of their French counterparts. In the sobering aftermath of the freewheeling *Gründerzeit*, those with a stake in the fate of German culture began to scan the past more deeply than ever for a way to re-establish German identity in a modern, industrial world.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Albrecht Dürer's half-timbered house in Nuremberg was first opened to the public, the age in which he lived had suggested itself as the right epoch for culture-conscious Germans to replicate in their domestic interiors. During the two decades between the Great Exhibition at London's Crystal Palace in 1851 and the founding of the new Germany, a fascination with all things *altdeutsch*, or "old German," began to occupy the Germanic imagination. According to design historian Stefan Muthesius, the designation "altdeutsch" was linked to the late medieval German Gothic, which Muthesius' great uncle, architect and design reformer Hermann Muthesius, described in 1902 as the inaugural epoch of German art (H. Muthesius 1994 [1902]: 62; S. Muthesius 2009: 224–30). The revived *altdeutsche* decor and decorative objects available to Germans in the 1850s and '60s were seen as unpretentious and middle class. They opposed the elegance of French fashion by celebrating that which seemed inherent, enduring, and uncontrived in German culture.

But after 1871 – celebrated both as the year of unification and as the 400th anniversary of Dürer's birth – nationalistic fervor invested the German Renaissance with an array of historical and geographical meanings. Following unification, Germany developed a fascination with the style of the Renaissance; but what began as an admiration for a "pure" style was quickly corrupted into something much more flexible – and livable. The sixteenth century seemed to present a number of parallels with the 1870s *Gründerzeit*. Dürer's German Renaissance was understood as a period during which art and culture had flowered, not just in the rarefied atmosphere of aristocratic life, but in the middle-class home. Although Germans acknowledged the beauty and elegance of Italian Renaissance art and decor, they believed the German Renaissance to have been more intimate – *gemütlich*, or cozy. This view of a German Renaissance characterized, in the words of the nineteenth-century architectural historian Wilhelm Lübke, at once by "original ability, even native genius, individual freedom" and "a familiar warmth and liveliness," elasticized the "deutsche Renaissance," in 1870s parlance, expanding it to encompass already favored "old-German" medieval and vernacular attributes with ease (Lübke 1873: 967–8). Before long, instead of referring merely to the "deutsche Renaissance," decorators employed the hybridized term "altdeutsche Renaissance" to

describe a composite, yet still thoroughly German, style of decor. To Stefan Muthesius, this shift away from stylistic purity and historical accuracy towards a cozy, old-German pastiche indicated "a greater vagueness, but also a much deeper love" (S. Muthesius 2009: 212).

The southern Bavarian city of Munich folded vagueness and love into a confection of past and present, simplicity and sophistication, amounting to a local style. Munich's status as the united Germany's art capital was conflated in public sentiment with its pre-existing position as the capital of the Bavarian kingdom. Munich served as Germany's gateway to the Alps and its primary tourist destination for Germans and foreigners alike. It offered visitors the cosmopolitan culture of the opera, coffee house, and grand encyclopedic museum, as well as the regional, *altdeutsche* Alpine vernacular of *Lederhosen*, *Dirndl*, and *Bierkeller*. As Stefan Muthesius has recently shown, Munich's folklorists, artists, and architect-designers capitalized on this regional mixture of sophistication and naivety by concocting an "Alpine" style of interior decor that became synonymous with Bavaria during the 1870s. In response to the German unification and in the face of the new Prussian-based central government in Berlin, Bavarians strove to retain and assert their native, regional culture. And while Bavaria's share of the Alps was relatively small, its Alpine material culture soon came to represent Bavaria to outsiders. The Alpine peasant house was the first vernacular building type to undergo ethnographic study in Germany, and the materials, colors, and textures that made up its interior exerted a decided influence on Munich's artists, architects, and designers (S. Muthesius 2009: 265–8).

Munich's local designers wove the two strands of "Munich-ness" – its sophisticated self-awareness and its naive vernacular – into a fresh, yet cozily familiar interior fabric. On July 15, 1876, at the German Art and Art-Industry Exhibition, the Bavarian Applied-Arts Association unveiled the new "Munich Style" of interior decor at Munich's Crystal Palace.[2] Munich architect Gabriel von Seidl exhibited a room at the 1876 exhibition that would become the touchstone of the new Munich movement (see Figure 3).

The Old-German *Stube*: A Model for Modern Domesticity

Seidl's room – officially titled the *Deutsche Wohnstube* (German Living Room), but referred to more casually as the "Seidlzimmer" (Seidl-room) – was essentially a *Stube*, a type of room that had become popular in southern Germany, including the Alpine region, around 1300 and remained a standard component of the southern middle-class house through the sixteenth century. Seidl's *Wohnstube* featured light brown, untreated pine paneling, whitewashed walls, and a carved wood ceiling and emphasized certain material characteristics: coarse wood grain, the lead-glazed ceramic tiles of a large heating stove, and a bottle-glass window that bathed the room in milky light.

The word *Stube*, cognate with the English, "stove," referred to a heated parlor whose central feature was a large, ceramic-tiled stove. In contrast to the other rooms in the late medieval and early Renaissance southern German house, the *Stube* could be heated to a comfortable warmth in the winter (about 20 ºC). In place of an open hearth, the tile-stove not only provided much more efficient radiant heat, it also guaranteed a clean, smoke-free atmosphere, thereby making the *Stube* the most desirable space for family activities, including working, reading, playing games, and eating. Although the *Stube*'s primary function was to create winter-proof warmth, it was also richly punctuated by windows that yielded unusually generous amounts of daylight. The pleasantly warm and surprisingly bright *Stube* quickly became the most prestigious room in the late medieval house; it was not just a room where the family could gather in private, but a space where they might entertain guests (Bedal 2007: 28).

In addition to its tile-stove and ample fenestration, the *Stube*'s third and perhaps most evocative characteristic was the nature and substance of its construction. In order to conserve the heat generated by the tile-stove and counter the effects of the abundant windows, the *Stube* was built as an outsized wooden cabinet set within the existing structure of the half-timbered house. Its floor, walls, and ceiling were all made of solid timber. To enhance its powers of insulation, the *Stube* was generally positioned in a back corner of the house; it was always entered through a vestibule, a hallway, or another room – never directly from the street. The *Stube*'s costly floor-to-ceiling wood construction and state-of-the-art amenities made it the locus of the house owner's self-fashioning and self-presentation. And yet the atmosphere of the south German *Stube* was the opposite of stiff elegance: its wooden ceilings were low, its wooden walls were unornamented, and its wooden floors, bare. Its large tile-stove was minimally ornamented. Aside from built-in wooden benches, wooden tables, and chairs, the *Stube* was generally sparsely furnished. The *Stube* was, in a word, *schlicht* – plain, homely, and homespun. Its construction and materials reflected an individual, and by extension a family, who, far from being aloof and ceremonious, were warm-hearted, content, at ease, and magnanimous.

The second-floor study, or *Schreibstube* (writing room), in Albrecht Dürer's Nuremberg house became a particular attraction for visitors in the 1870s and 1880s. A late nineteenth-century photograph of the study displays what contemporaries understood as *altdeutsche Renaissance* comfort, based on the model of the *Stube*, with its characteristic wooden floor, walls, and ceiling, its bottle-glass windows, its built-in wooden benches, and its few furnishings, also of wood, as well as a bow-legged "Luther chair" and a heavy, scantily carved writing table (Figure 5). The pewter hand-washing basin mounted on the left wall, with its accompanying pewter kettle hanging above, along with the candle chandelier constructed from antlers

Figure 5
Photograph of Dürer's Study (*Schreibstube*) in his house in Nuremberg, *c*. 1896–98. The Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.

and carved wood that dangled from the ceiling, testify to the practical, yet refined nature of the study – a place where the artist could wash his hands of the outside world and engage in interior pursuits.

Dürer depicts this quiet, contemplative inner life – nurtured by the *Stube*'s "creature comforts" – in his copperplate etching of *Saint Jerome in His Study* (Figure 6). The fifth-century saint seems to occupy, in meticulous anachronism, a *Stube* very like Dürer's own: as Jerome stoops over a wooden writing stand placed on a wooden table with inverted U-shaped legs, he works, not merely by the "inner light" radiating out from the nimbus about his head, but by the milky rays streaming in from two bottle-glass windows. As is the case in Dürer's *Stube*, Jerome's study is thoroughly woody: the grained texture of floor, walls, and ceiling have all been carefully etched into the copper plate. Even the built-in wooden benches recall those in Dürer's *Stube*. While no tile-stove is visible in Jerome's *Stube*, it would most likely stand just out of view, to the saint's left.[3]

The tile-stove was a prominent feature of Gabriel von Seidl's *Deutsche Wohnstube*, displayed at Munich in 1876. Seidl's *Wohnstube* was thought to derive from a type of room found in the Bavarian Alps; in truth, it shared its key features with late medieval *Stuben* found across southern Germany (S. Muthesius 2003:

Figure 6
Albrecht Dürer, *St Jerome in His Study*, 1514, engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1919 (19.73.68). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA. Image: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art; source: Art Resource, NY.

275). Its simple board floor, natural wood paneling, hand-washing kettle and basin, and recessed, arched bottle-glass window may be traced directly to the nineteenth-century photograph of Dürer's *Stube* and, further back, to Dürer's etching of Saint Jerome's study. The *Seidlzimmer*, with its high ceilings and more elaborate furnishings, was, however, a better reflection of nineteenth-century taste than a facsimile of sixteenth-century domesticity; still, its bones – the bare pine floor and the untreated wood panels, along with the white-washed plaster above them – identified it as a simple, informal family room meant for everyday living.

Both Dürer's etching of Saint Jerome's study and the staged nineteenth-century photograph of his own emphasize the *Stube*'s lived-in and livable qualities. Jerome's room is a cozy coincidence of order and disorder: while each implement hangs neatly in its proper place on the wall behind his desk, little signs of the benign disarray that results from mental industry abound. Even the sun renders the regular patterns of the bottle-glass windows unruly by reproducing them in gay distortion on the window arches. And the Luther chair in Dürer's own room, pulled out at a slight angle from his desk, suggests that the artist has only moments before gotten up from his work and will shortly return to it.

Unusually for an exhibition room in 1876, the *Seidlzimmer* echoed the impression, given by both Dürer's actual and fictional *Stuben*, of a room in use: a towel hung ready next to the hand-washing basin; the chairs on either side of the little table, fitted cozily into the bay-window nook, were angled invitingly towards the visitor; and the dining table in front of the tile-stove was laid for a casual family meal.[4] This was, in truth, a *Wohn- und Eßstube*, or living and eating room, identical in concept to the "machine furniture" room Riemerschmid would exhibit in 1906 at Dresden (see Figure 1). The artfully staged *Seidlzimmer* set the tone for the *altdeutsche Renaissance* room, which, despite its historicizing name, should be not simply livable in terms of contemporary needs and comforts, but *lively* – animated by character and personality. This sensation of "liveliness" was one of the most significant aspects of the *altdeutsche Renaissance* concept (S. Muthesius 2003: 276). Underscoring the *Seidlzimmer*'s ironic mixture of everyday ease and self-conscious theatricality, observers remarked that the *Wohnstube* seemed to have been "staged for a painter of genre paintings."[5] Here was a room where "our forefathers enjoyed their lives in youthful freshness,"[6] a room whose tile-stove acted as a true "comrade, warm with life" (Hirth 1880: 172).

"Rough and Soulful": Georg Hirth and the Munich Dialectic

The notion of a living past enlivening the present pervaded Munich's applied-arts discourse, which hinged on two descriptive terms: the first was *derb*, meaning rough, coarse, or earthy; and the second

was *gemütvoll* – full of feeling and imagination, or, literally, soulful. The paired terms evoked a specifically Bavarian approach to interior decoration, associated with Munich in particular (S. Muthesius 2003: 274). Bavarians celebrated *Derbheit* – a casual roughness of character – as a regional virtue: it opposed the stereotypes of both the foppish Frenchman and the regimented Prussian, in turn. *Gemütvoll*, on the other hand, stemmed from the noun *Gemüt*, referring to the spiritual capacities of the mind or soul. The adjective *derb* might connote the rough-and-ready construction of a chair or the coarse grain of its wood surface. By contrast, an object of transcendent cultural import, such as a painting by Albrecht Dürer, was *gemütvoll*.

Within the new Munich interior, the *derb* and the *gemütvoll* performed a dialectic. If *Derbheit* advanced a thesis of vernacular materiality, *Gemüt* might be understood as its antithesis. Against the austere *Derbheit* of Seidl's whitewashed walls and pine panels, accents of strong, saturated color provided imaginative, inspiriting *Gemüt*. Discussing the *Seidlzimmer* a few years after its appearance at the 1876 exhibition, the Munich publisher Georg Hirth described how its dashes of color were at the same time embedded in the Germanic past and imperative to the future of German domestic culture:

> How the simple man, living in frugal circumstances in our cold Germany can arrive at a cozy, modestly beautiful, heart-warming domesticity, if we don't seek to reconnect with the classic examples from our "good old days" – this I can't understand. Yes, I believe these models – I'll just mention the sap-green tile stove against the golden-brown wooden wall, and the deep blue stoneware jug on the red-embroidered tablecloth – would have to be invented all over again out of a sense of sheer, natural necessity, if they didn't already exist. (Hirth 1880: 30)

Hirth located these "models" of timeless German domesticity in the new "old-German Renaissance" interiors designed by the group of Munich artists and architects whose leading light was Gabriel von Seidl.

Hailing from the state of Thuringia in the north of Germany, Hirth was an acute observer of Munich's cultural idiosyncrasies. During the late 1870s, Hirth became a major proponent of Munich's *altdeutsche Renaissance* movement and the spokesperson for its designers; in 1880 he published *Das deutsche Zimmer der Renaissance: Anregungen zu Häuslicher Kunstpflege* (The German Room of the Renaissance: Hints on the Domestic Cultivation of Art).[7] This immensely popular manual on interior decoration, revised and reissued numerous times between 1880 and 1900, was filled with illustrations of both historical and contemporary interiors, including a print of the *Seidlzimmer* (see Figure 3). In the Munich *Wohnstube*, Hirth found

the spirit of Albrecht Dürer resurrected, and he assured his readers that this great man who had played such a significant part in the rebirth of art in the German lands during the sixteenth century now wanted to "live again in and through us" (Hirth 1880: 23).

It was this sense of *liveliness* – the notion of a German past reanimated right before the viewer's eyes – that informed Hirth's discussion of the Munich style. For Hirth, "altdeutsche Renaissance" was something more than one of many "styles," it was an expression of "character." Just as a person might be "full of character," Hirth suggested, so a room – when modeled on this salient epoch in German cultural history – could emit the same sort of expressive richness that one commonly associated with a warm personality (Hirth 1880: 10). Warmth was, in Hirth's estimation, the key to German character; he asserted that during the Renaissance period, while "southerners" (Italians) had devised "cool," academic theories on interior decoration, "northerners" (Germans) had warmed these theories up by putting them into domestic practice on northern soil – where warmth was a necessity (Hirth 1880: 25).

In the context of German domestic life, warmth had developed over the centuries as a condition at once physical and psychological. The tile-stove, radiating smokeless heat and presiding over the nexus of physical comfort in the half-timbered south-German house, had defined the purpose and function of the sixteenth-century *Stube*, but by the advent of Seidl's nineteenth-century old-German Renaissance *Wohnstube* and Hirth's publication of *Das deutsche Zimmer der Renaissance* (The German Room of the Renaissance), the stove had become more than an old-fashioned amenity: it was now an agent of coziness – a "comrade, warm with life." Warmth was inherent in the German term *Gemütlichkeit*, most frequently translated as "coziness." But through its etymological relation to *Gemüt*, *Gemütlichkeit* implied something far beyond mere physical comfort. Though generally evoked through contact with material things, *Gemütlichkeit* itself was a sense of well-being, originating in the mind or soul and coloring one's physiological experience. A comfortably appointed room could foster a sense of *Gemütlichkeit*; but it was the symbolic associations of particular forms, materials, and colors – a room's aesthetic effect and emotional affect – that made it *gemütlich*. Hirth writes that if one asked a cultured inhabitant why he had arranged his room in a certain way, he would be far less likely to say "because the German Renaissance dictates that it be just so," than to say "because it delights me this way, because it goes together, and because it's beautiful, pleasant, cozy [*Gemütlich*], and cheerful" (Hirth 1880: 31). For Hirth, Munich's domestic design was not simply a process of applying Renaissance style to nineteenth-century interiors. Rather, it channeled the creative spirit or soul – the *Gemüt* – of the *altdeutsche Renaissance* that Hirth and his contemporaries understood as the key to reincarnating its affective genius and kindling the "heartwarming" glow of *Gemütlichkeit*.

Hirth viewed the Renaissance as a period when the objects of daily life had been held in high esteem, when even the smallest things were alive with artistic spirit (Hirth 1880: 15). But, Hirth claimed, this *Gemüt* of everyday things was rooted firmly in *Derbheit*. For Hirth the Renaissance was a time when materials seemed to possess a heightened "realness," which was emphasized in workmanship that foregrounded the defining qualities of individual materials (Hirth 1880: 20). Above all, Hirth prized natural materials in their natural state, and the material that conducted the pulse of Nature most directly into the bourgeois parlor was wood. The spirit of the wood, in its unrefined and unpredictable wildness, was manifested in the visual and tactile irregularities of its natural surface. And the German people, Hirth proposed, at home in the forest, loved natural wood for its personality and character, for its peculiarities and deformities – "grain, annual rings, knots," and all (Hirth 1880: 65). The forest offered the German interior more than texture: wood brought color into the *Wohnstube*; it was in fact *the* color of the *altdeutsche Renaissance* room, providing the platform for Hirth's "Principle of Brown," in which wood, now understood as color, dappled the German interior with all the varied tones of mellow autumn light: "warm, juicy colors … browns, brown-reds, brown-greens, and brown-yellows … shot through with warm rays" (Hirth 1880: 101, 63). Like the *Stube* that it lined and furnished, wood was "warm," both chromatically and in the traditional, comfortable, and familiar associations it evoked.

Wood was, for Hirth, both the principal color and primary material of the German interior. But for all its warmth, wood was still *derb*: its burls and figures were works of Nature rather than Art. To set the Munich dialectic of *Derbheit* and *Gemüt* in motion, then, Hirth studded his *Prinzip des Braunen* (Principle of Brown) with gem-like accents. These touches of brilliant color were exemplified in the otherwise woody *Seidlzimmer*: Hirth's descriptions of its "sap-green tile-stove," its "deep blue stoneware jug," and its "red-embroidered tablecloth" brought his monochrome print to polychrome life. Hirth felt that this sparing, selective use of bold, saturated color – those "glorious, raw tones that Nature lent to the Renaissance color-world" – was a distinctly northern practice, dating back to the rich *cloisons* that glowed from the surface of Jan van Eyck's early fifteenth-century panel paintings. The Renaissance had possessed "the right feeling for light and color," and it was Hirth's project to reawaken this feeling in nineteenth-century designers and dwellers (Hirth 1880: 16–17).

Although Hirth borrowed richly and openly from color theories of the first half of the nineteenth century (including Goethe's psychophysical *Farbenlehre* [Color Doctrine], Michel-Eugène Chevreul's theory of simultaneous color contrasts, and Hermann von Helmholtz's work on the distinction between light and pigment in color-mixing), by the time he was writing in the late 1800s, the choice of color in the domestic interior had become less about science and more about feeling.[8] But the nineteenth century's sustained investigation

into the affective, physiological power of color and its operation had laid the groundwork for the preoccupation with color in the design literature of Hirth's day. After the invention of the first chemical dye in 1856, intensely bright synthetic colors in previously unknown shades began to appear in women's fashions and domestic interiors.[9] By the 1870s, the new technology of color lithography, for which firms in Nuremberg and Munich were especially known, allowed homemakers to envision their domestic surroundings pulsating with vibrant carpets, rich upholstery, and brilliant wallpapers, as they thumbed through the latest taste manuals and pattern books. Though Hirth's "Principle of Brown" precluded him from advocating a rainbow scheme for the German interior, his vision of a revivified Renaissance was anything but antiquarian: each material in the new old-German room was alive with its own robust, indigenous color.

"Hearty Home Cooking": Riemerschmid's Dining Room for the Thieme House

Riemerschmid adapted the bold, complementary palettes of Munich's nineteenth-century neo-Renaissance, deploying their luminous shades in striking new ways. He extended Seidl's lively accents to clothe the walls and floor of his *Room of an Art Lover*, the modern interior that he displayed at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900 (Figure 7). With the Alpine reds of its carpet and its meadow-green wallpaper, this room – despite its Jugendstil tendrils – conveyed a sense of old-German *Gemüt* to which Riemerschmid's plain wooden *Musician's Chair* added the necessary dash of *Derbheit*. In the art lover's room, Riemerschmid reversed Seidl's proportions, exploding touches of color into fields and whittling broad expanses of wood down into a single, graceful reincarnation of a rustic prototype.

Riemerschmid's adaptation of Hirth's full-bodied green, blue, and red for his interiors around 1900 resonated with Hermann Muthesius, who after Paris 1900 began earnestly to search for a new *Volkskunst* – a modern art of the people that was identifiably German and so distinct from the soft, almost fragile colors and intricate, delicate, Rococo-influenced forms of French Art Nouveau. In contrast to their tremulous shell-pinks and dusty golds, Riemerschmid's colors were, according to Muthesius, like "hearty home cooking" (H. Muthesius 1904: 256).

Riemerschmid's meaty colors fortified the decor of Carl Thieme's *Speisezimmer*, the live-in family dining room – a somewhat upscale *Wohn- und Eßstube* – that Riemerschmid designed and installed at the Thiemes' Munich villa in 1902–3. After entering the house, one reached the *Speisezimmer* by passing first through a salon and next through a small reception area that connected the two larger rooms (Figure 8). This traditional enfilade emphasized the *Speisezimmer*'s private nature by situating it directly behind two more public spaces. Like the late medieval *Stube* and its subsequent reinterpretations, the Thiemes' *Speisezimmer* was not only situated at a protective

RICH. RIEMERSCHMID — MÜNCHEN. THÜR AUS DEM »ZIMMER EINES KUNST-FREUNDES«. AUSGEST. VOM »AUSSCHUSS FÜR KUNST IM HANDWERK.«

Figure 7
Richard Riemerschmid, *Room of an Art Lover*, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900. *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, 7 (Oct. 1900): 26.

Figure 8
Richard Riemerschmid, The Thieme House (view from the *Speisezimmer* into the reception area), designed in 1902/3. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany. 2013 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

remove from the street door, but functioned as a multipurpose living room, designed to accommodate work and play in addition to family dining. In his conception of this *Speisezimmer*, Riemerschmid had re-envisioned the old-fashioned *Wohnstube* for the twentieth century, while striving to maintain its hallmarks of physical and psychological comfort – plentiful light, warmth, and *wood* – throughout the process of transformation.

The *Speisezimmer*'s southern exposure meant that, like the old-German *Wohnstube*, it claimed the brightest natural light of any room on the villa's ground floor. But Riemerschmid improved on Nature's illumination by installing an artful arrangement of electric fixtures: two intersecting rings of small light bulbs were mounted directly into the ceiling and sheathed in glass petals, so that the bulb itself, extending daringly beyond the petals, formed the center of each burning blossom. These luminous lilies stemmed from a colorfully painted medallion stenciled with interlacing circlets of leafy vines. Positioned directly beneath the ceiling decoration, a large carpet (visible in the foreground of Figure 8), already brilliant in hearty Alpine reds, blues, greens, and golds, was set ablaze by the sparkling lights. This avant-garde textile was practically an abstract painting in its own

right: within a geometric frame patterned in blue and green stylized vines punctuated by diamond-shaped red buds, a central pool of volcanic red, orange, and yellow bubbles burst against the border's cooler vegetation. For each hue he employed, Riemerschmid provided both its warm and its cool tone, pairing these to approximate the effects of natural light. Riemerschmid's homage to Nature was supported not only by Hirth's vision of a Renaissance "color-world" borrowing its paints from Nature's palette, but also by the color theories of Bavarian physicist Wilhelm von Bezold, who, like Hirth, had been active in Munich during the 1870s. Bezold championed complementary colors as he found them in his natural surroundings, explaining that red "forms a good pair with either of the colors green or blue, which dominate in nature" (Bezold 1876: 195).[10] According to Bezold, the combination of red, blue, and green (green appearing most frequently in nature and red least frequently), when applied to interior decor, exerted a "magic influence … which a landscape covered with fresh green, under a cloudless sky, exercises upon every human being" (Bezold 1876: 196). In 1901, critic Karl Scheffler, too, acknowledged this natural color conjunction as working a kind of universal magic upon human beings – "it is all one needs," he writes, "to become happy enough to dance" (Scheffler 1901: 196).

Illuminated by the electric ceiling fixtures, the *Speisezimmer* carpet was not simply a material bearer of color, but a reflector and emitter of light, joining the two brass-clad columns that supported the room's arching entrance, the glinting brass hardware of the furniture, and the *Heizkörperverkleidung* – the glimmering brass plates strung together with glass beads – that covered the steam heating unit stationed opposite the south-facing windows, against the *Speisezimmer*'s north wall (see Figure 8, lower right). Riemerschmid's heating unit cover united the old-German *Stube*'s dual amenities of light and warmth in a single, practical, yet artistic, solution. Standing in for the *Stube*'s tile-stove, the raised, reflective surfaces of the heater's linked brass plates both assumed and enhanced the aesthetic function of the old tile-stove's shiny, lead-glazed tiles. As warm air passed through the brass curtain, the suspended plates swayed and clinked together, alerting the ear to the welcome emission of heat while simultaneously dispersing and activating light to cheer the heart and amuse the eye. The associations of warmth and camaraderie, which over several centuries had reflected from the motionless surface of the tile-stove, were now brought to life in the shifting, shimmering plates of Riemerschmid's modern heating unit as a direct result of its utilitarian function. The late medieval *Stube* had solved the problem of the dirty, smoky open fireplace by containing and concealing altogether the kinetic element of fire; but Riemerschmid's twentieth-century solution (while more hygienic still) resurrected the flicker and crackle of the living flame.

Although the modern steam heater had displaced the traditional tile-stove, tiles were still present in Riemerschmid's *Speisezimmer*.

Above built-in wooden benches, violet-glazed stoneware tiles circled the room at eye level before yielding to the smooth, unornamented upper wall. This arrangement patterned itself on Seidl's *Wohnstube* in several ways: the built-in wooden seating was a formally reductive version of the convention begun in the late medieval *Stube* and then quoted in the *Seidlzimmer*'s Renaissance-style benches; the simple whitewashed wall, too, had been a feature of the Alpine *Stube*, an element that Seidl had admired and employed repeatedly in his own interiors; and finally, the ceramic tiles, though stripped from their former comrade, the stove, and deployed instead as a modern, hygienic, and modestly ornamental wallcovering, formed at one of the Speisezimmer's corners a "wall-fountain" – the hand-washing basin familiar first from the late medieval *Stube* and again from its 1870s reincarnations.[11]

These diverse, yet harmonious interactions of color and light were more than enough to satisfy the requirements of *Gemüt*. But *Derbheit* was still palpably present in Riemerschmid's modernized *Wohnstube*, and its material representative was still natural wood – although Nature seemed now to be drawing so close to Art as to blur their distinctions. Muthesius commended Riemerschmid in 1904 for his "elevation of the plain surfaces of materials to artistic effect" and credited him with being the first modern designer to "allow the sheer loveliness of the wood-grain to be seen once more, and even accentuated in his furniture" (H. Muthesius 1904: 276). Riemerschmid's imposing mahogany sideboard, stationed on the *Speisezimmer*'s east wall, concretized and particularized Muthesius' assertion. The massive sideboard acted both as an extension and a culmination of the wooden benches that lined the *Speisezimmer*'s walls. Each cabinet door framed a unique set of intarsia panels, whose puzzle-like construction, meticulously executed by the Munich carpentry firm of Kohlbecker & Sohn, indeed accentuated the characteristic "loveliness" of Riemerschmid's wood grain. In one sense, the sideboard was undoubtedly *derb*: in addition to its simplified, rough-hammered hardware, its overall aesthetic impact was produced solely and inherently by the character of wood, complete with its natural grain, figures, and even its flaws. But the warm red glow of the mahogany and its intricate inlays, whose swirling, hypnotic configurations were crafted with masterful skill and precise calculation, refined and redefined "rough" Munich *Derbheit*, inflecting it with the "imagination and feeling" hitherto reserved for *Gemüt*.

This "gemütvoll" *Derbheit* made an unexpected and striking appearance in Riemerschmid's scheme for the Thiemes' salon, the *Speisezimmer*'s more elegant counterpart. Amidst the plush red upholstery and golden appliqués of the seating furniture and the glinting plates of the steam heater's brass curtain, the salon's stocky wooden wardrobe stood out like a hard fact (Figures 9 and 10). Hirth had argued that the very presence of materials as such defined the effect and affect of the interior: "massive constructions of timber,"

Figure 9
Richard Riemerschmid, The Thieme House (Salon), designed 1902/3. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany. 2013 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

for example, "in their powerful reality, excluded any representational elements" (Hirth 1880: 153). And compared with the mahogany sideboard's elaborately figured cupboards, the magnolia wardrobe's simple, flat doors were – especially in this showier context – shockingly *derb* and powerfully "real." But within the sober expanses of its plain wooden doors, the wardrobe's peering, opalescent "eyes" reflected the soul of the salon – its *Gemüt* – back upon its occupants. In conjunction with its "tough," defiant stance, these mother-of-pearl fragments instilled "imagination and feeling" directly *within* this model of *Derbheit*, synthesizing Munich's old-German dialectic in a single piece of modern furniture. While the wardrobe's *Derbheit* – its staunch material presence – made it hearty, it was this infusion of *Gemüt* that elevated heartiness to "heart and *soul*."

A Forest in the Living Room: Carl Thieme's Study and the Poetics of Wood

For Hermann Muthesius, all of Riemerschmid's Thieme interiors represented simple German *Volkskunst* – the art of the German people (H. Muthesius 1904: 283). But the *Herrenzimmer* that Riemerschmid

Figure 10
Richard Riemerschmid, wardrobe for the Thieme House Salon, designed 1902/3. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany. 2013 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

began to design for Carl Thieme in 1905 was arguably "simpler" and more overtly "German" than any of Riemerschmid's previous rooms for the Thieme family. In contrast to the salon and family living-dining room, with their colorfully painted accents, rich velvets, and intricately stained inlays, in the study Riemerschmid limited himself to three primary materials: brass, elephant leather, and wood. The *Herrenzimmer* was far woodier than either of the previous rooms: its built-in cabinetry and bookshelves grew out of floor-to-ceiling paneling in larch pine; the large wooden Renaissance-style desk abutted one wooden wall, while a broad, heavy wooden cupboard stood against the adjacent wall – where Dürer's portrait hung. The *Herrenzimmer* revived Hirth's image of the wood-loving, forest-dwelling German: it was here, as the politician and critic Friedrich Naumann observed, that the German forest seemed to have "moved into the German living room."[12] Hirth's "Principle of Brown" was hard at work in this man's room, where color was even scantier than it had been in Seidl's *Wohnstube* three decades earlier, and the naked pine wood harmonized with the natural leather upholstery. The subdued expanses of leather and wood were interrupted only by accents of brass; and as if to counter the room's otherwise earthy, woody tones, the entire space was crowned with a coffered brass ceiling illuminated by evenly spaced electric fixtures.

Had Riemerschmid chosen to coffer the *Herrenzimmer*'s ceiling in wood, the room's Renaissance-style back stools – nestled into its cozy built-in eating corner with wooden benches, where a wooden table covered in a white embroidered cloth awaited the visitor – would have harked effortlessly back to Seidl's 1870s *altdeutsche Renaissance Wohnstube*. But where Seidl's room had featured the Alpine convention of the whitewashed wall, Riemerschmid's study seemed to delve further into history for its point of reference: the grainy wood walls of Carl Thieme's room evoked the fully wood-lined incubating "box" of the fourteenth-century *Stube*. In fact, Dürer's meticulous rendering of the pine ceiling panels in St Jerome's study bears an uncanny resemblance to the pine wall panels in the 1906 photograph of Riemerschmid's modern study. Riemerschmid's massive work desk, too, seems to derive its form from the desk at which the industrious saint is bent over his wooden lectern. Both Dürer and Riemerschmid appear to have reveled in the tangible *Derbheit*, the characteristic roughness, of wood as the material of the German interior. "Here," wrote the Nuremberg critic Paul Johannes Rée in 1906, "Riemerschmid shows his poetic sensibility, which has much in common with what lives on in our folk songs. Like an old folk song, it calls us home. We sense that that which was old has renewed itself here, and is now forever young" (Rée 1906: 298).

The lively texture of Riemerschmid's revived *altdeutsche Renaissance* room was due not simply to the predominance of what Stefan Muthesius has called "plain pine," but to the way in

which that pine was worked. While the elements of the back stools were not produced as standardized components in a serial production process like that used in the fabrication of the *Machine Chair*, the presence of the modern machine was still felt throughout the construction of Carl Thieme's *Herrenzimmer*. An electric-powered surface planer had ensured the flat planes and neat corners of the back stools' seats and backs, while the stylized multiple-ball turnings on the legs had been crafted with the aid of an electric-powered lathe (Menke 1990: 71). The study's robust, brawny cupboard, with each of its four prominent bosses set unabashedly at the center of each square panel of its double-paneled doors, modeled an eye-catching effect of modern machine-assisted carpentry for which Riemerschmid received significant attention in the press surrounding the 1906 exhibition (Figure 11). The cupboard's pine surfaces were described in contemporary literature as having been "brushed," so that the wood's soft, smooth surface was scoured away and the denser, deeply textured wood grain beneath stood out in raw relief. One critic found the result similar to that of sandblasting; the visual impact of this new "brushed" wood was, however, antique: it looked like "a weathered signpost" (Gmelin 1906–7: 75).

The *Leipzig Illustrated Newspaper* noted how this modern technique exposed the expressive "soul" of the wood, drawing from it "all of the charms and idiosyncrasies that Nature has given it and exploiting them to artistic effect. It coaxes decoration out of the material itself, while at the same time laying bare its internal structure" (Menke 1990: 67). The implication that here decoration was no longer a process of applying, but instead of stripping away, was sustained by a second description of the grainy surface relief, now "entirely fused with its structural substrate." While the brass-clad ceiling acted as a superficial layer or "dress," the exposed wood grain was the wood's "bare skin" (Gmelin 1906–7: 75).

Riemerschmid's twentieth-century revival of the nineteenth-century's Renaissance-revival room had elicited an unmistakably Modernist response: that beauty resulted not from "dressing up," but revealed itself instead in the process of *un*dressing, in the stark material presence of the wood itself. The wood's bare skin was self-referential: it pointed to the real thing, the Kantian "thing in itself." For Muthesius, the characteristically textured surface of Riemerschmid's cupboard doors amounted to its "physiognomy": this downright *derb* surface communicated the cupboard's "defiant" personality (H. Muthesius 1904: 276). The way it looked was the way it felt. And the way it felt was the way it was. The tactile roughness of Riemerschmid's walls and furniture amounted to a palpable *Derbheit* – simple and rustic, like a weather-beaten wooden sign. But the *German Carpenter's Journal* checked any temptation to view Riemerschmid's room as naive, undesigned, or "artless." It tempered all allusions to *Derbheit* through a description of nothing less than *Gemüt*:

Figure 11
Richard Riemerschmid, cupboard for the Thieme House Study, designed 1905/6. Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich, Germany. 2013 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

One has become used to thinking of Riemerschmid as a modern, middle-class architect, whose work has no place in the Crown of Art, where the wondrous dreams of the "Thousand and One Nights" live; but in this study he delivers sufficient proof that his art transcends sheer material beauty and technique. Despite all fitness for purpose, comfort, and

> coziness, the room's ultimate effect is one of richness and ease. The suggestively hung likenesses of Richard Wagner and Dürer confirm above all that we find ourselves here in an Arcadia of music, painting, and science.[13]

Embracing not only the furnishings but also the room's interior architecture within the scope of its design, encompassing the aesthetic sensibilities of artist and client, and referring to the Renaissance as the touchstone of German artistic culture, Riemerschmid's *Herrenzimmer* design was not a simple example of *Kunstindustrie* (industrially produced applied art), as was his machine furniture, but instead of *Raumkunst*, spatial art or "room-art": the room itself was a work of art.

The Dresden exhibition catalog describes this new art form as a rapprochement of applied art and architecture, in which "applied art has become the art of interior design, it has become the technique of the comfortable room, it has become room-art [*Raumkunst*]" (Haenel 1906: 26–7). *Raumkunst* was the mirror of the inhabitant's peculiar nature, his thoughts and moods. The rooms in which he "worked and ate, made music and slept" should not be a "haphazard system of ceiling and walls, windows and doors, filled up with furniture and rugs, pictures and light fixtures; they should be an *organism* … they should retain the character of an individual artistic creation" (Haenel 1906: 24–5). This modern *Raumkunst* revitalized Hirth's vision of a German Renaissance everyday art (*Alltagskunst*) in which the natural materials that constituted each room burned with jewel-like colors, and art was embedded in daily life. As in the Renaissance, so in the age of the machine, "the modern man … will not have his art framed on the wall or packed up in nice clean files and conserved within drawers; instead, he will feel his art as the invigorating breath that breathes through his house and all of its housewares: art as room-art" (Haenel 1906: 27). Just as Hirth had believed of the Renaissance, again in the twentieth century, *Raumkunst* and *Alltagskunst* went hand in hand.

"From the Inside Out": Dürer's World Rebuilt

At home in Munich after the fanfare of the Dresden exhibition had subsided, the bare wood panels of Carl Thieme's *Herrenzimmer*, where no pictures hung, made Dresden's lithographs appear even more suggestive in retrospect. But why were images of Dürer and Wagner chosen to hang at the Dresden exhibition, and what, precisely, did they suggest? The *German Carpenter's Journal* interprets the selection of these portraits of German cultural icons as linking Riemerschmid's woody study to a more expansive national artistic culture, represented by literature, music, and fine art of the past. Dürer's *Self-portrait* of 1500 – a painting that, throughout its history, has been taken to mark the dawn of a new age – might also have hung in Riemerschmid's exhibited room as a symbol of cultural

rebirth, ripe for appropriation by twentieth-century German designers who wanted to renew and quite literally re-form the world of their forefathers. Dürer peered from Riemerschmid's wood-paneled wall as if overseeing the reconstruction of his world. But within the context of this spiritual and material renovation project, Dürer's likeness carried an even more pointed meaning for Riemerschmid's study, for its contents, and for the modern interior.

The breathtaking naturalism and painstaking detail of Dürer's *Self-portrait* have, ever since its creation, made it the object of compulsive fascination. In Dürer's time, it was reported that the painter's dog was once found licking the portrait's surface, having mistaken his master's likeness for the master himself. Remarkable to Renaissance and to modern eyes alike was the way that each strand of hair on the artist's head, as well as each blade of fur on the border of his coat, seemed to possess individual, authentic, material life. Art historian Joseph Koerner has explored the significance of hair and fur in the 1500 *Self-portrait*, drawing special attention to Dürer's sensuous fingering of his furry lapel. For Koerner, Dürer's touching of the voluptuous substance is a two-fold gesture: the touch is at once a reminder of the painting's dog-deceiving illusionism and a reference to the painter's own physical, material presence – the body as the self (Koerner 1993: 160–86).

Dürer points to what is (in his painter's mirror) directly before him: the thing in itself – or, in this case, *him*self. But "Dürer is absorbed not in what he sees but in what he touches," Koerner writes. "Touching the fur signals the sitter's interiority; it draws him inward toward his body as into his 'self'" (Koerner 1993: 160). Dürer's fingers touch and point all at once. Anatomically speaking, he points at his heart, the physical engine of his material self – the center of his bodily being. Like Riemerschmid's cupboard, whose smooth outer mantle was peeled back to uncover the wood's rough skin, Dürer's gesture of self-reference is disarmingly *derb*. To the cupboard's declaration, "I am nothing but wood," the man responds, "I am nothing but flesh." In the year 1500, however, as Koerner has shown, the heart was understood as more than a functional organ or a lump of flesh: it was the material housing of the spirit, or soul. By virtue of the mirror, which erected for the painter a real, physical barrier but which is dematerialized – invisible – for the viewer, matter and spirit are collapsed on the hard wood panel that constitutes the painting's surface. In his act of self-imaging, Dürer points simultaneously to what is before and what lies within. His gesture equates surface with substance. The "old-German" dialectic, at play in Riemerschmid's modern furniture, mimicked Dürer's motions, pointing now before, to the woody heart of *Derbheit*, and now within, to the ineffable soul of *Gemüt*. But Riemerschmid's modernist synthesis removes the mirror, the barrier of "likeness": the thing – body and soul – is in itself.

Animating this new "self" was the spirit of the machine. In Riemerschmid's *Herrenzimmer*, with Dürer's likeness as its emblem,

new-old furnishings "animated by the spirit of the machine" could "rebuild the world of Albrecht Dürer from the inside out – not in the sense of a 'Renaissance' of leftover, antediluvian notions, nor as an artificial rejuvenation of ossified social constructs, but as a rebirth of living naturalness" (Naumann 1906: 6). For Dürer, the natural world had been not simply that which he touched, but that which touched him: nature's objects, felt and internalized, gave life to his art. In comparing Riemerschmid with the "old master," Paul Rée writes that, as was the case with Dürer, it is the "nature of the things themselves" that give life to Riemerschmid's art (Rée 1906: 281–6). While Koerner stresses that "Dürer was conscious of his role as inventor of a new notion of art in Germany, one founded upon the authentic and irreducible presence of the artist in his works," Riemerschmid's new notion of German art arose not from his own artistic presence, however, but from the "authentic and irreducible presence" of the objects he designed (Koerner 1993: 186). His practical, modern artworks were not portraits of the artist who designed them, but of the *things themselves*. They eclipsed the presence of their creator to become themselves authentically, irreducibly present. But just as Riemerschmid's twentieth-century modernism breathed the Renaissance spirit of his sixteenth-century countryman, so, conversely, Dürer had glimpsed the modern "life" of the thing. In *The German Room of the Renaissance*, George Hirth cited Dürer's reflections on the artwork as something *Gemütvoll* – a product of the soul or heart – that must, paradoxically, be externalized in the mundane, often *derb* reality of the material world. The artwork was, in Dürer's words, a "new creature, which one creates in his heart, in the form of a thing" (Hirth 1880: 30).

Notes

1. For further discussion of the *Gründerzeit*'s impact on the design and production of German applied arts, see Heskett 1986: 13–18. Another valuable resource on the material culture of the *Gründerzeit* is Laufer and Ottomeyer 2008.
2. The Bayerischer Kunstgewerbeverein (Bavarian Applied-Arts Association) had been founded in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London. Its members included, among many others, the Munich painters Franz von Stuck and Franz von Lenbach.
3. Konrad Bedal employs *Der heilige Hieronymus* as a comparison in his essay on the *Stube*, Bedal 2007: 29.
4. The dining table, though present in period photographs of the exhibition room, is beyond the scope of the print reproduced in Figure 3.
5. Bucher 1876: 17 (translated and quoted in S. Muthesius 2003: 276).
6. Duncker 1876: 18 (translated and quoted in S. Muthesius 2003: 276).

7. Hirth augments the various editions of *Das deutsche Zimmer der Renaissance* throughout the 1880s and 1890s, adding sections on various periods of historical decor; the final edition, published in 1899, includes a special section on contemporary (i.e. non-historicist) interiors. See Hirth 1899.
8. Jakob von Falke's subsequent and better known work, *Die Kunst im Hause. Geschichte und kritisch-ästhetische Studien über die Decoration und Ausstattung der Wohnung* (Falke 1871), also discusses color in emotional rather than scientific terms. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Farbenlehre*, which also treated the emotional or psychological response to color, was published in 1810. Chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreul worked during the 1820s at the French Gobelins manufactory to perfect the colors of dyes used in its tapestries; he published his monumental study, *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés*, in 1839, and the work was translated into English as *The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours, and Their Applications to the Arts* in 1854. By the late 1850s, the work of German physicist and physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz had effectively eclipsed that of Chevreul. Helmholtz's fundamental article on color mixing was published in 1852 and soon translated into French. For more on these pioneers of color science, especially in its application to the arts, see John Gage, *Color and Meaning: Art, Science, and Symbolism* (Gage 1999).
9. Bright chemical dyes had begun to be manufactured from coal tar in the mid-nineteenth century. This was all much to the chagrin of William Morris, who worked obsessively to recreate the "faded" colors of bygone eras by redeveloping vegetable dyes, including indigo and madder, at his Staffordshire dyeworks – focusing especially on the development of dyes during 1875 and 1876 – and reinstating their use in his designs for printed textiles.
10. Bezold published his theory in German in 1874 and it was translated into English by 1876. See Wilhelm von Bezold, *The Theory of Color in Its Relation to Art and Art-Industry*, authorized American ed., rev. and enlarged, trans. S.R. Koehler, introd. and notes Edward C. Pickering (Boston: Prang and Co., 1876), 195.
11. Beate Menke gives a detailed account of the Thieme interiors in Menke 1990: 43–50.
12. Naumann's phrase is cited in Umbach 2009: 157, n. 41.
13. This passage is taken from a 1912 article discussing Riemerschmid's contribution to the 1906 Dresden exhibition. *Deutsche Tischlerzeitung*, 51 (1912): 404. Cited in Menke 1990: 70, n. 159.

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