

4-Bogen-Plakat
für Zigarettenpapier

Monster
Poster for
Cigarette Papers

KLINGER
WIEN



John Ruskin's prophetic soul divined in advance that the mechanization of the world, which he endeavored to nip in the bud, would one day shake it to its very foundations. The situation which he prophesied has now come about with all its consequences and the economic system of to-day will have to overcome these or be overcome by them.

Ruskin recognized the irrational nature of art and the rational nature of economics and he also knew that neither of these factors can exist without the other. Ruskin set up the principle that the irrational element in every work of art can only come about through the observance of the rational in the handling of the material concerned. He pointed to the fully irrational nature of the Gothic cathedral, which yet piles up the mighty masses of the edifice in rational construction.

William Morris, the socialist, in contrast to his predecessor, Ruskin, the irrationalist, set up the principle of the purely rationalistic basis of the machine-made. He did not attempt to stem himself against the encroaching mechanisation of the world, as Ruskin had done and comforted himself with the thought that the mediaeval, religious morality of handicraft would and could be imparted to the rotating machine.

Long after Ruskin and Morris, a third Englishman took up the fruitful ideas of these two and transformed them into action in the form of a body of immortal work; this man was Aubrey Beardsley.

This artist, with his roots in the world of the pure spirit, transmitted his work to his contemporaries and later ages by photo-mechanical means. Beardsley's irrational will to art was leagued—for the first time in all the history of art—with the pure rationalism of modern photo-mechanical technique.

The cultured man of to-day, beside himself, sees the whole world violated by the profit-hungry rationalism of an ignoble, stereotyped, mechanical economic system. He must fear that the threatened downfall of Western culture will become an accomplished fact unless the irrational element of pure art succeed at the last moment in asserting itself as a factor in the production of market values.

As for the matter in hand: the super-rational anti-intellectualism of the advertising expert has been the death of poster art—which once existed—and has killed all so-called advertising "art" with the same blow.