

# Osiris...Orivit...Orion...Urania...Gerhardi...Juventa. Kayserzinn...punch marks...designers

Much information has been used from the website of [www.senses-artnouveau.com](http://www.senses-artnouveau.com).

This website offers far more in depth detail and offers good pieces for sale.

Also helpful has been the website of - [www.zanida.nl](http://www.zanida.nl)

This article only attempts to give a small taste to encourage the perhaps novice collector to take their interest further. Examples have been found of some of the designers work which might or might not be typical but have been so attributed by others.

Names mentioned here outside of the article heading include –

Friedrich Adler	Peter Behrens	Engelbert Kayser (& J P )
Hugo Leven	Albin Muller	Hans Peter
Joseph Olbrich	Walter Scherf	Ferdinand Hubert Schmitz
Hubert Regout	Vctor Horta	Henri Van der Velde

## Art Nouveau – a short history

It all started in **1861** in England, the most industrialized country at the time, where William **Morris** in collaboration with other artists, created the Arts and Crafts Movement as a reaction to the mid-19th-century artistic styles.

Following socialist ideas, they wanted an art for everyone, all objects being of beauty and of use and had to be handmade. They did not completely succeed, as hand production was too expensive for the masses, but schools, exhibitions and magazines largely diffused those ideas and they created a favourable environment for the birth of **Art Nouveau**.

Many artists, architects, designers and intellectuals in all forms of decorative and visual arts, as well as cultural and avant-garde fields, explored the idea to create an "art of modern life".

The new Style was richly ornamental, characterised by curves and willowy lines. The painters, illustrators, jewellery and glassware designers explored symbolic or dreamlike themes, frequently of an erotic nature such as feminine figures in light dresses and evanescent landscapes, but also ornamental details, floral patterns and decorative elements being elevated to central focus points.

In **1893**, greatly influenced by the ideas of Morris, a young Belgian Architect **Victor Horta** , began to plan the first important house to be built in Art Nouveau Style : la Maison Tassel.

In 1894, also in Brussels, Henri **van de Velde** published the pamphlet "le Déblaiement

d'Art", in which he developed new and nearly revolutionary ideas relating to fine arts and decorative arts, whereas architecture and interior design had to rise to the status of a total work of art.

A year later in 1895, in Paris, the pioneer city of so many world affecting art forms, the name of the Movement -**Art Nouveau**- was finally settled in the French language. In particular because of the art gallery "La Maison de l'Art Nouveau", which was opened as a showroom for the new art by a Japanese art collector, Siegfried Bing.

## **"Osiris" - Walter Scherf & Co, Nuremberg, Germany**

Manufacturers of pewter produced under the trade name of 'Osiris' and sold by Liberty & Co at the turn of the century. Mark 'Osiris'. There are a large number of pieces elsewhere on this website which show pieces and thus designs for which Scherf and Osiris were known.

Some of this information appears elsewhere on this website but as interest in this has grown then this article attempts to put together a small picture of the business of Osiris rather than simply occasional pieces

### OSIRIS

The OSIRIS factory was founded in 1899 by father Friedrich August Scherf ( 1839-1922) and son Walter Scherf (1875 -1909). It was called the " Metallwarenfabrik Fur Kleinkunst Walter Scherf & co" in Nürnberg

The factory was very small. In the beginning they had two polish machines, three grinders, one lathe and an 8 PK steam machine.

Before Walter Scherf became head of OSIRIS, he worked at the firm ORIVIT, until 1899 .

He took some workers with him and some ideas .

From 1899 until 1909 the factory produced 1300 items .

They outnumbered the firm KAYSERZINN with some 300 items . The firm developed a new sort pewter in 1902: the so-called "ISIS" metal. It was more expensive to buy, but not better in quality.

The firm worked with great designers

such as : Peter Behrens

Joseph Maria Olbrich

Josef Hoffman

Friedrich Adler

Bruno Paul

Josef Wackerle

Hermann Gradl

Hermann Friling

Lorenz Hofelich

Richard Riemersmid

And of course "Walter Scherf"

They had won several prizes :

Certificate of honour in Turin( 1902)

Gold medal of Konig-Ludwig Price (1902)

Gold medal in ST Petersburg (1903/1904)

First and second prize in St. Louis, USA (1904)

Gold medal in Cape town South Africa (1904/1905)

Gold medal in Chistchurch New Zealand (1906/1907) and many certificates and honor medals

In the year 1906 they changed the name OSIRIS to "ISIS Werke Gmbh. kunstgewerblicher Erzeugnisse"

Because of bad management the firm was almost bankrupt and sadly in the year 1909 Walter Scherf took his own life. The end of "OSIRIS" -"ISIS" was in 1909

Here follow marks relating to this maker -





Neither for Liberty – both Osiris (as below) Tray above designed by Friedrich Adler



The right hand beaker is a Peter Behrens design



Fruit bowl by Osiris

## Joseph Olbrich Pewter Plate c 1907



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**“Kayserzinn”**

### **J.P. Kayser & Sons, Krefeld, Germany**

German metalwork firm founded in 1885 near Dusseldorf by Jean Kayser. From the mid 1890s they manufactured pewter Jugendstil objects such as ashtrays lamps, beakers, vases, tea and coffee sets best known as 'Kayserzinn'. Their main designer was Hugo Leven, a name to be compared with that of Liberty's main pewter designer, Archibald Knox. (others include Herman Fauser and Karl Geyer – they produced up to 800 different objects and were in business until about 1920.)

There are many illustrations of Kayser and Kayserzinn pieces in other articles on this website.

# J.P. Kayser & Sohn AG - KAYSERZINN

(1862-1925)

## German metalwork Company

In 1862 the Dusseldorf based Kayser family, already in the tin industry, opened a new foundry in the Bockum district of Krefeld. The firm reached its maximum size in 1899 with a workforce of 400.

The Krefeld foundry run by Jean Kayser was devoted to mass production, whereby the designs originated from the Cologne studio of Englebert Kayser.

At the world exhibitions in Paris (1900), Turin (1902), Dusseldorf and St.Louis (1904), the company enjoyed great success with its "Kayserzinn" or "Kayser pewter", a special lead-free alloy of tin and silver distinguished by its lasting gleam - success which it owed to its outstanding designers: Karl Geyer (1858-1912), Hermann Fauser(1874-1947), Karl Berghof(1881-1967) and others, but their main designer and artistic director was **Hugo LEVEN** (1874-1956), a name to be compared with that of Liberty's main pewter designer, **Archibald KNOX**.

The decors they designed were inspired by both floral French Art Nouveau and by linear **Jugendstil**.

It was the Kayser company's aim, through its use of the methods of mass production, to make artistically designed, contemporary Jugendstil objects of daily use (such as candlesticks, ashtrays, lamps, beakers, vases, tea and coffee sets) accessible to a broad selection of the public.

The artistic significance of Kayserzinn died with the death of Engelbert Kayser in 1911.

Kayserzinn objects in pewter are numbered from the (fictitious) number "4000" onwards and marked with the word "Kayserzinn". All objects were marked this way, either in a circular or oval frame, or horizontally. The model number "4000" was introduced in 1894-5 and the last, number "4999" was produced in 1925.

Major works:

Kayserzinn candlesticks by **Hugo LEVEN** ;

Kayserzinn candlesticks by **Joseph Maria OLBRICH**;

Kayserzinn **round tray with bees by Hugo LEVEN** ;

Kayserzinn 'bat' candelabra by **Hugo LEVEN**, c.1904.

# Hugo LEVEN

(1874-1956)

## German designer

Hugo Leven studied at the Art Academy in Dusseldorf and was soon active on the international market.

The items he designed (candlesticks, tableware, jewelry) are typical of the JUGENDSTIL style and are still in production.

Hugo Leven, in parallel with his position at the Zeichenakademie in Hanau, produced a large serie of elegant objects and jewelry in silver of very high quality all typical of the Jugendstil.

He became art director of the German metalware company J.P. Kayser & Sons, producing the famous pewtters Kayserzinn but worked also for the Kreuter Company in Hanau.

His innovative vision was to influence the students and but also the teachers of Hanau. Among his students many would have become part of the Jugendstil movement as: Wilhelm Wagenfeld, Christian Dell, Wiwen Nilsson and Herbert Zeitner.

While he was teaching the industrial way of producing objects, he himself favoured the unique piece handcrafted.

Almost all of his original works and papers disappeared in the World War II. Only fragments remain available today to understand and appreciate the great talent of Hugo Leven.

Major works:

KAYSERZINN by J.P. Kayser & Sons: candlestick.

KAYSERZINN by J.P. Kayser & Sons: 'bat' candelabra, c.1904.

KAYSERZINN by J.P. Kayser & Sons: round tray with bees.



A poor photo of J P Kayser (or more likely Englebert Kayser?) in his studio where prototype pieces were first modelled in plaster

## Josef Maria OLBRICH

(1867-1908)

### Austrian architect, interior designer and craftsman

Josef Maria Olbrich studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Vienna, Austria, before joining the workshop of Art Nouveau architect **Otto Wagner**. He later collaborated to the designs for the Vienna Subway Stations. In 1897, he became one of the founding members of the **Vienna Secession Movement**, which represents the beginning of "Modernism" in Austria, and he designed their exhibition building.

In 1899 he practiced as an architect and a teacher in Darmstadt, Germany. He worked there for the construction of the Artists' Colony of Mathildenhöhe, where he designed the workshops, exhibition hall and houses. In 1907, Joseph Maria Olbrich founded the German Werkbund in Munich, Germany.

Olbrich was one of the most representative and productive architect-designer of **Vienna Secession** and **Jugendstil**, the corresponding movements of **Art Nouveau** in Austria and Germany. He was also precursor of Expressionist architecture.

The buildings he designed to create total works of art, are functional, massive and dynamic at the same time; their traditional construction is enriched by original decorative elements and monumental sculptures; the façades are divided into different plans by light structures, arcades or multi-shaped windows. The designs of his furniture, crafts work and metalware, such as the famous **candelabra**, are expressive, rigorous and simple, decorated with original geometric details and harmonious forms.

Major works:

Architecture:

Secession Building, Vienna, Austria (1898)

Exhibition Hall, Houses and Workshops of Artists' Colony, Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, Germany (1900-1908)

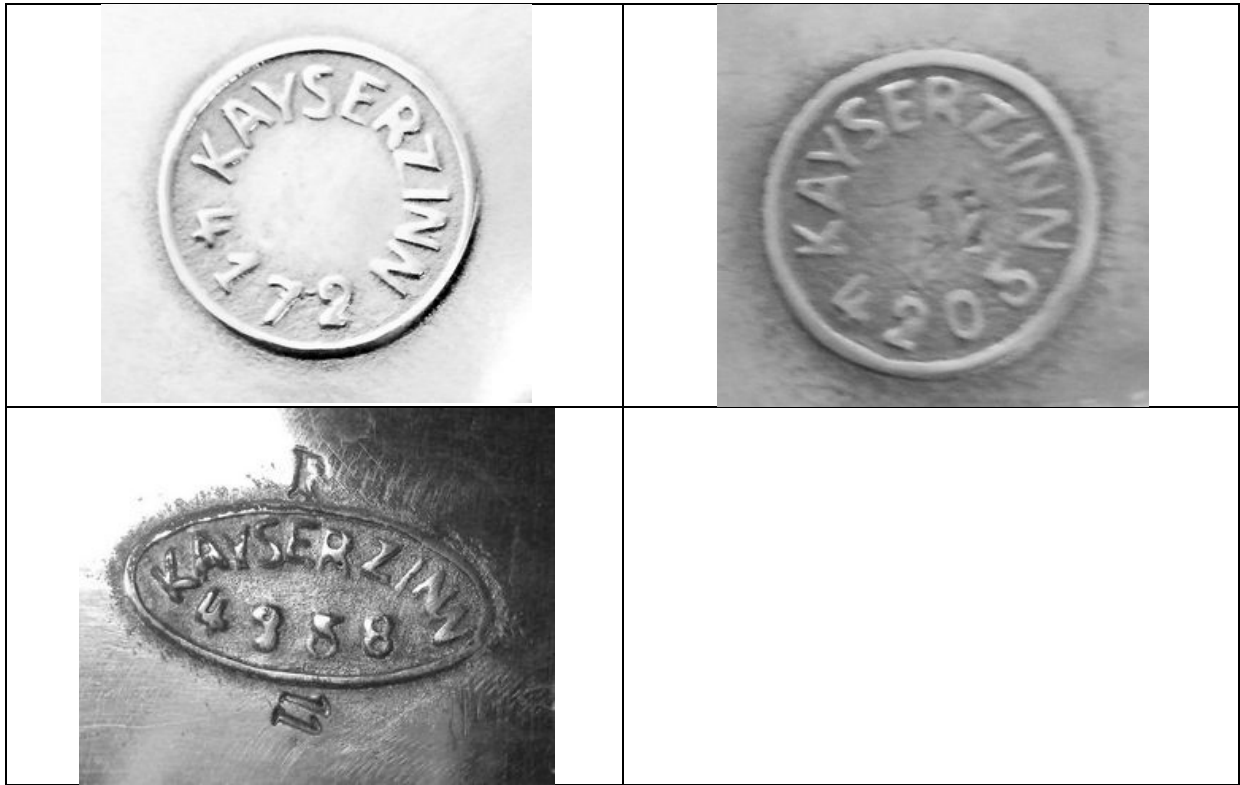
Metalwork:

**Josef Maria Olbrich's Candelabra**, pewter and silver (circa 1900)

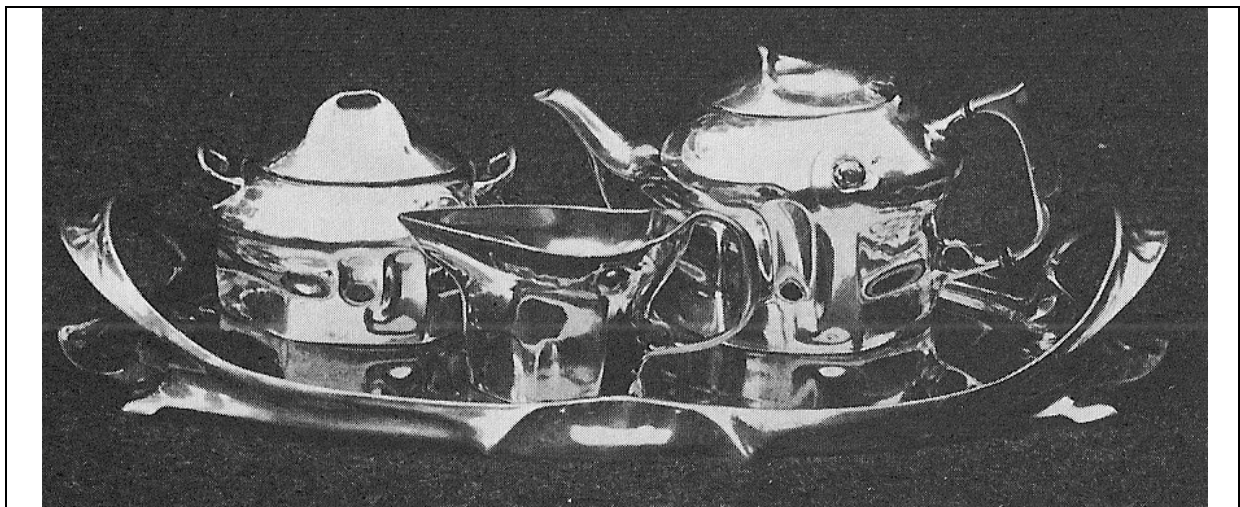
## Mark Used by J P Kayser before Kayserzinn



## Marks used on Kayserzinn Pewterware



## Hugo Leven Pewter c 1897



# Orion

The Merchant **Georg Friedrich Schmidt**, (1859-1938) founded, in 1903, the Commercial Art Metal Factory Orion in Nuremberg.

## The Art Commercial Hardware factory known as "Orion"

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The production included utility and decorative objects made of tin , copper and silver , and alloys of these metals . Similarities to products of the metal goods factory of Walter Scherf are apparent. This is due to the artistic collaboration of Friedrich Adler.

The "Art Industrial metal goods factory Orion" by Georg Friedrich Schmitt was only independant for about two and a half years. During this short period, about 250 models were produced. Orivit owned by WMF took over Orion.

From January 1906 to the outbreak of the War in 1914 Schmitt, Georg Friedrich worked for WMF.





Orion 197 by Friedrich Adler



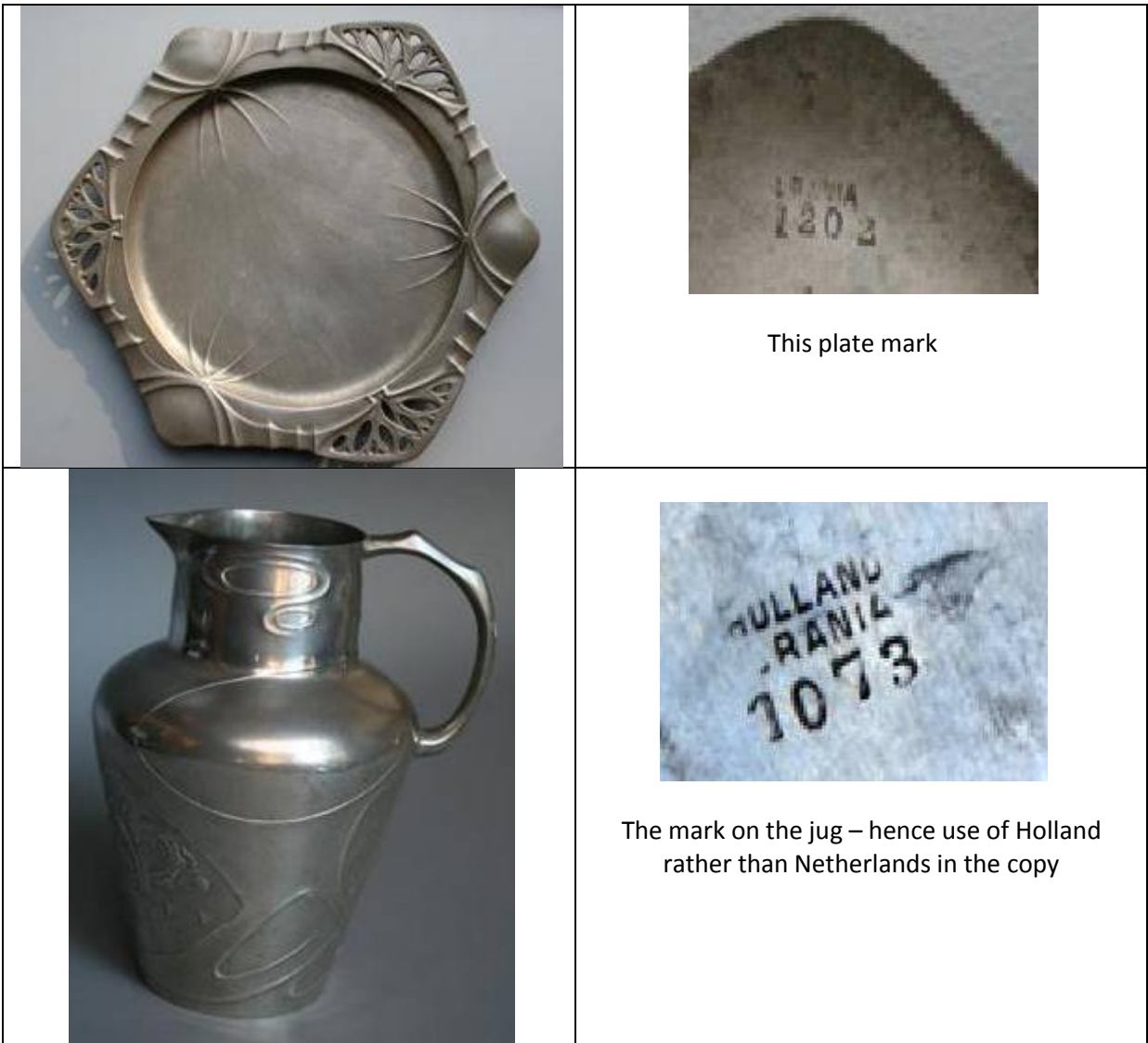
Orion 318



Orion by Friedrich Adler

## Urania – Maastricht, Holland, founded in 1902

Hubert Regout's original name for this business was "NV Kuntzinn and changed it to Urania in 1903. The factory closed in 1910. A key designer for them was Friedrich Adler



## URANIA (continued)

Rare Art Nouveau Pewter Flower Vase from the Dutch factory of Urania who used Friedrich Adler and Hans Peter amongst their designers. Measuring 11.5" high and 8" across the handles it is marked to the base – HOLLAND URANIA and the design number 1034. Produced early 1900s and repolished to the original condition.



Art Nouveau Pewter Candelabra from the Dutch factory of **Urania**. This rare and unusual piece depicts stylised Egyptian masks with headdress and long straight hair. They were imported into the UK by William Hutton & Sons of Sheffield and over stamped under the base with their own mark still retaining the Urania stock design number 1148. These are illustrated in the definitive book on Urania by the late Jan Kwint. Large at 10" tall and 6" across the arms and rare, these have been repolished to their original condition.





Art Nouveau designed Urania piece (perhaps a biscuit barrel)  
by Friedrich Adler



## Orivit – founder Ferdinand Hubert Schmitz, Cologne, in 1894

The Orivit name was first used in 1898 for silverplated pewterware.

By 1900 many other materials/products were so marked.

Designers included Herman Gradl (known for Grotesques, fish, creatures etc), Walter Sherf and Georges Coudray. The firm was taken over on the point of collapse in 1905 by WMF. The name continued for another 25 years.

Website [www.orivit.com](http://www.orivit.com) tells far more of this story.





### **Gerhardi & Co, Ludenscheid, Germany**

Traded as above from 1800 – 1930 although established before. From 1902 worked with renowned designers such as Albin Muller and Peter Behrens ( see Osiris for a small example of Behrens work)

Example of Gerhardi pewter Chalice attributed to Albin Muller c1902






### **Albin Muller illustration of Pewter c1905**



### **JUVENTA (1902 – 1908)**

**Hans Peter** a renowned designer in Esslingen Germany produced designs for WMF from 1884, and headed the handicraft department until 1889 when he returned to Esslingen and founded a Werkstatt für Kunstgewerbe.

This was taken over in the 1920s. The mark of 'Juventa prima metal' was likely used in the period 1902 – 1908. Many pieces were not marked.

	
	<p>This candlestick like many other pieces has no mark at all.</p>

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There were a number of other notable businesses similarly employed as to these detailed above. This article however is not intended to give complete coverage but simply to show a few of the makers and designers that this writer has come across. The websites quoted in this article, also in the WMF and the Liberty articles will be of considerable help and interest to those who would pursue this fascinating subject.

## Other marks found of makers unknown to this writer –

This website welcomes information from any readers who can identify these and perhaps add information for later posting to this section.



Gallia Meta – a French company with whom Christofle was a noted designer.



