J. L. M. Lauweriks and the Deutscher Werkbund

Lauweriks' design for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914 *Tinka Cöp - 4836685*

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Introduction

During the transition of the 19th century into the 20th century, architecture in Europe underwent significant change. In England developments regarding Arts and Crafts occurred after the Great Exhibition, also known as the Crystal Palace Exhibition, in London in 1851. The Arts and Crafts movement was a reaction against factory-produced items and works which people perceived as artificial, characterized by excessive ornamentation and without regard to the qualities of the materials used. Having seen these works in the Great Exhibition the movement aimed to reform design and decoration, going back to simplicity and appreciation of the design itself and the materials used. They also strived to improve education in arts, as it became evident during the Great Exhibition that art education was lacking. This appreciation of art eventually led to the comeback of trades- and gildsmen. In the Netherlands this development occurred much later, around 1880 when Kunstnijverheid turned into its own craft. Contrary to the craftsmen in England, the Dutch tried to search for a balance or understanding between art and fabrication, believing that in this age one could not exist without the other¹. Around this time, a lot of Dutch architects were still following the rules of neo-classicism for architectural renewal. A new style arose in the 1890s, inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, which took an entirely different take on renewing architecture. The style differentiated slightly per country. In France it was called Art Nouveau, Jugendstil in Germany and Nieuwe Kunst in the Netherlands. Art Nouveau mainly took its inspiration from nature, made use of asymmetrical ornamentation and explored new uses of materials such as iron and wood². Compared to Art Nouveau in France, Nieuwe Kunst was influenced more by Germany's Jugendstil, resulting in a more geometric and rational expression. The style was first primarily observed on objects or furniture, and later also transpired to architecture. This was not met without criticism, as a lot of architects at the time thought Art Nouveau, or Nieuwe Kunst, to be a 'treurige architectonische misgeboorte' as H.W. Mol wrote in the Architectura in 1900³. The style was also known as 'kronkelstijl', 'krullemiestijl' or *'macaronistijl'*⁴. It was however, the beginning of architectural and ornamental research dismissing neo-classicist limitations, which eventually led to the beginnings of standardisation in art and modernism as we know it.

A Dutch architect, artist, graphicus and designer who lived during this time of transition was Johannes Ludovicus Mattheus Lauweriks, who lived from 1864 until 1932. Lauweriks attended the Rijksnormaalschool voor Teekenonderwijzers in Amsterdam from 1883 until 1887, and also followed lessons at the Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in

¹Gans 1966, p. 10-11

² lbid, p. 25

³ Mol 1900, 'lets over Hedendaagsche Architectuur'

⁴ Gans 1966, p. 21

Amsterdam from 1889 until 1893⁵. Being schooled in drawing, Lauweriks started working at P. J. H. Cuypers' office in 1887. Here Lauweriks did not work on architectural design, but focused on the drawings for ornamentation⁶. Cuypers followed the neo-gothic style and did a lot of ecclesiastical work. Lauweriks met Karel de Bazel while working at Cuypers' office, and both became members of the Amsterdam Theosophical Society in 1894. They came to believe that 'the sea change of modernity signalled an awakening of cosmic consciousness⁷. Lauweriks henceforth based his designs on theosophy and developed his own systematic design method, with which he aimed to create a certain harmony in his works. This led Lauweriks and de Bazel to part with Cuypers in 1895, who was a very strict catholic and did not agree with their theosophic convictions⁸. Lauweriks and de Bazel established their own office 'Atelier voor Architectuur, Kunstniiverheid en Decoratieve Kunst', where Lauweriks did lots of furniture and graphic work. In 1900 the office ceases to exist, and Lauweriks starts working as a teacher at the Kunstnijverheidsschool in Haarlem. He works there until 1904, when he moves to Germany. In Germany Lauweriks holds various positions in education⁹, here he inspires not only students but also the director of the Kunstgewerbeschule in Düsseldorf, Peter Behrens¹⁰. When looking at his architectural designs, Lauweriks has numerous very productive years in Germany. He has to move back to the Netherlands in 1916, after the outbreak of the first World War.

While living in Germany, Lauweriks becomes a member of the Deutscher Werkbund. The Werkbund was founded in 1907 in München, and was originally influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in England. It did however, have a more open mind regarding industrialisation. The founders, consisting of artists, industrialists, politicians and intellectuals, strived towards a new industrial culture in which art, design and architecture was in line with modern industrialism and technology. Friedrich Naumann describes 8 design convictions on which the Werkbund was based in his work 'Deutsche Gewerbekunst'¹¹:

- 1. Authenticity of the used material. Materials should be used according to their qualities, no false substitutes are to be used.
- 2. Materials may be exploited significantly. Only if by doing so artistic purposes will be attained.
- 3. The emphasis of art is always on its use and function. This should be visible in the art, it is not supposed to conceal this.

⁵ Trappeniers 1979, p. 173

⁶ De Meijer 1929, p. 3

⁷ Henderson 1999, p. 1

⁸ De Meijer 1929, p. 3

⁹ Kunstgewerbeschule in Düsseldorf from 1904-1909, Staatliche Handfertigkeitsseminar in Hagen from 1909-1916

¹⁰ Tummers 1987, p. 12-14

¹¹ Naumann 1951, p. 152-154

- 4. Construction should always be visible. Hiding its construction would mean the deception of the public, and thus producing falsifications.
- 5. A room is considered as one whole. An artist should thus strive to reach a certain balance or harmony in its work to create this sense of whole.
- 6. Rejection of neo-styles. Elements of neo-styles are allowed, but sparingly. Naumann states: 'Sobald sie als Absicht und System auftritt, ist die schaffende Kunst zu Ende.' ('As soon as it appears as an intention and a system, creative art is over.')
- 7. The formal design language of German industrialisation is generally considered to be more naturalistic than geometrical. However, both were allowed and combining the two was regarded positively.
- 8. The use of lots of colours. This would show new technologies regarding colour production, or as Naumann calls it *'unseres chemischen Zeitaltars'*.

Lauweriks was invited to design an exhibition for the Deutscher Werkbund taking place in Cologne in 1914. Here the Deutscher Werkbund aimed to bring together all the avantgarde works made at the time, combining art, industry, and technology¹². Lauweriks was appointed a room in the main building, designed by Theodor Fischer, in which *Kunst im Handel, Kunstgewerbe* and *Altekunst* was to be exhibited. This was done for the Deutsche Museum für kunst in Handel und Gewerbe.

This history thesis will examine the extent in which Lauweriks' architectural and design principles, taking his work for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914 as a case study, align with those of the Deutscher Werkbund when looking at the broader thematic and stylistic trends represented in the exhibition. By analysing Lauweriks' design of the exhibition and researching his perception on art, design and architecture in a new industrial culture, the aim of this thesis is to discover the relation between Lauweriks and the Werkbund.

Multiple sources in which Mathieu Lauweriks is mentioned have been published over time, L. Gans mentions him in his work regarding the Dutch contribution to Art Nouveau around 1900¹³, S. R. Henderson has written an article discussing Lauweriks' and De Bazel's involvement in theosophy and architecture¹⁴, J. de Meijer published an article in the magazine *Wendingen* regarding Lauweriks' graphical work, metal work and architecture¹⁵, and M. Trappeniers gives a clear overview of Lauweriks' contribution to education¹⁶. However, not a lot has been written about Lauweriks specifically when compared to other artists and architects alive around the same time. The work of N. H. M.

¹² Rehorst 1913, 'Die Deutsche Werkbund Ausstellung Köln 1914'

¹³ Gans 1966, p. 85-86

¹⁴ Henderson 1999

¹⁵ De Meijer 1929

¹⁶ Trappeniers 1979

Tummers is one totally dedicated to Lauweriks' work, in which Tummers confidently states that he finds Lauweriks to be wholly underappreciated for his contributions to the arts and architecture. However, when one reads the critical review written by H. Searing regarding Tummers' work, this is put to doubt as she states: *'Tummers is perhaps overly anxious to prove his hero's priority and superiority'*¹⁷. Lauweriks also published quite some written works himself, most of them entertaining the subject of his design principles regarding systems. In multiple articles published in *Architectura, Bouw- en Sierkunst* and *Ring*¹⁸, Lauweriks writes about the importance of proportions of mathematical figures and how these should be portrayed in art and architecture. In the work of Tummers ¹⁹ and C. Zoon²⁰ these principles regarding systems are further explored.

F. Naumann gives a clear understanding of how the Deutscher Werkbund was established and what their aims were in his chapter 'Deutsche Gewerbekunst' in the Ausstellungsbriefe Berlin/Paris/Dresden/Düsseldorf 1896-1906, first published in 1951²¹. Multiple of the Werkbund's yearbooks, in which Ernst Jäckh writes annual reports regarding developments within the Werkbund, provide insight to both expectations²² and accomplishments²³ attained regarding the Cologne exhibition in 1914. The Werkbund's yearbook of 1913 gives an especially clear picture of the Werkbund's intentions for the exhibition that was to take place the year after. C. Rehorst dedicates an entire chapter to the planning of the exhibition²⁴. He mentions Lauweriks work a few times during the chapter, but never specifically goes into detail about his contribution. Sources that do go into detail about Lauweriks work for the exhibition are: A. Funk-Jones' chapter in a Lauweriks catalogue from Boymans-van Beuningen²⁵, and a chapter Tummers dedicates to the Cologne exhibition in his book²⁶. These texts however, do not provide complete insight into Lauweriks motivation. It is thus interesting to research the relation between Lauweriks and the Werkbund. What did Lauweriks contribute to the Werkbund? Did he share their particular vision on the new industrial culture that they tried to establish? And how did Lauweriks himself contribute to this vision?

Given the historical focus of this thesis, the research methods used will be in line with this focus. Foremost, the archive of Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam will be consulted to obtain primary sources regarding Lauweriks' design of the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in 1914. These sources will be analysed using image analysis. Secondly,

¹⁷ Searing 1973, p. 255

¹⁸ Lauweriks, 'De kwadratuur van den cirkel', 'Bouwkunst', 'het nut en doel der kunst' and 'Einen Beitrag zum Entwerfen auf systematischer Grundlage in der Architektur'

¹⁹ Tummers 1968, p. 66-67

²⁰ Zoon 1987, p. 32-53

²¹ Naumann 1951, p. 143-171

²² Jäckh 1913, p. 97-108

²³ Jäckh 1914, p. 87-102

²⁴ Rehorst 1913, p 86-96

²⁵ Funk-Jones 1987, p. 134-141

²⁶ Tummers 1968, p. 64-65

published literature, mainly books and articles, will be used to explore the multiple aspects related to the topic of Mathieu Lauweriks, his work, and the Deutscher Werkbund.

This thesis will entail three main chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter, the reason why and how the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914 took place will be explored and described. This will provide the necessary background information regarding the exhibition and Mathieu Lauweriks' role in it. The second chapter will contain a thorough analysis of Lauweriks' design principles and themes, illustrated by an explanation of how these principles and themes appeared in his work. This will be followed by a careful analysis of Lauweriks' design for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914. The design of the exhibition, the artistic disciplines involved and Lauweriks' vision on this will be explored. In the third chapter, Lauweriks' design for the Cologne exhibition will be placed in the context of the Deutscher Werkbund itself. The Werkbund's convictions regarding art and design in general and regarding the Cologne exhibition will be compared to Lauweriks' design principles and themes as shown in his work for the exhibition. Other broader thematic trends, mainly the famous Werkbunddiskussion, will also be taken into account in this comparison. In the conclusion a brief summary of the thesis will be given, as well as a presentation of its findings.

1. The Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914

In this first chapter, the reason why the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne was held in 1914 will be explored and described. A few key points will be considered: why the exhibition essentially took place, what the main goal or aim was that the Werkbund wanted to achieve by organising the exhibition, what kind of objects, designs or structures were actually exhibited and how Mathieu Lauweriks was included in the exhibition. This knowledge will provide the necessary background information regarding the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in 1914 on which the following chapters of this thesis will be based.

As stated in the main introduction, the Deutscher Werkbund was an association, often described as a work federation, that strived towards a new industrial culture in which art, design and architecture was in line with modern industrialism and technology. By establishing a culture in which the focus was once again on true art and craftmanship that emphasised function, transparency and made use of modern technologies, the Werkbund would cultivate a new and authentic artistic expression within the tumultuous period that was the industrial age. In 'Deutsche Gewerbekunst' F. Naumann clearly describes how the Deutscher Werkbund came to this conviction. Naumann states that the connection the gildsman, the entrepreneur and the artist all have to the essence of art diminishes progressively due to industrialisation. The industrialisation of art often meant that the cost-efficiency and production of a certain trade or product became more important than the art itself. This ensured that work was focused mainly on income, which distanced the gildsman, entrepreneur and the artist from the artistic side of their trade²⁷. Going back to craftmanship as it was before industrialisation was not possible according to Naumann. He states: 'Auch bei ihnen ist die Machine eingezogen' ('The machine has moved in with them too')²⁸, confirming that there is no way back from industrialism. A new form of art that was in line with modern industrialism and technology was necessary to advance. This is essentially why the Werkbund was called into being, to find out if real art was even possible within the modern industrial times. It also showcases why the collaboration between artistic individuals and commercial corporations was so important within the Werkbund movement.

²⁷ Naumann 1951, p. 146-147 'Es kann also die Industrialisierung des Kunsthandwerks leicht zur Kunstentseelung führen und hat dazu geführt, und zwar so sehr, daβ viele ernste Rufer gerufen haben: Zurück zum Handwerk, nicht zum modernen Kunsthandwerk, das eine Art Kunstpflanze ist, sondern zum Handwerk der alten Bauhütten und Kunstbruderschaften, zum guten, trotzigen nahrhaften und ehrenhaften Handwerk!'

²⁸ lbid, p. 147

The Deutscher Werkbund wanted to ensure that Germany would be internationally acclaimed for its new and authentic art. They wanted to acquire Germany a reputation for its industrial culture, for which the Werkbund would lay its foundation. Even though exhibitions would play a huge role in establishing this new reputation, they were not the Werkbund's main goal²⁹, they wanted to use exhibitions purely for commercial trade purposes. However, as Naumann points out, an art movement cannot exist without the participation of those for whom the work is done³⁰. With 'those' Naumann means the general population, who will participate in the work that is done by the Deutscher Werkbund through visiting exhibitions. The Cologne exhibition in 1914 was essentially being held to provide both the German population and other countries with an overview of all the German avant-garde works made at the time. This would prove to everyone that the German art was of the highest standard. Carl Rehorst, who was the Werkbund's representative in Cologne and designed the general site plan for the exhibition, substantiates this in the Werkbund's yearbook of 1913. He states that the exhibition in Cologne in 1914 will be worthy of the highest standard of German work, and that the exhibition will bring rich blessings to Germany³¹. Later on in his chapter he also states that the exhibition will be a deed of national and economic importance, that will help to conquer new trade areas on the world market³². The exhibition itself would be held on a 20 hectare plot of land along the banks of the Rhine, with multiple old trees and a beautiful view on Cologne. The location was provided by the city council, who would also benefit greatly from a successful exhibition, and thus spared no efforts in providing the Deutscher Werkbund with the necessary amenities or funds. Rehorst takes almost a whole page in his chapter on the exhibition to write about the people and organisations whose support (both financial and cultural) would ensure the success of the exhibition. Rehorst also states that this proves the importance and necessity of the exhibition itself³³.

The main goal or aim of the exhibition that the Werkbund wanted to achieve is very clearly spelled out by Rehorst:

'Man hat eben überall leicht anerkannt, daβ es sich bei unserer Ausstellung nicht um eine iener zahlrechen Ausstllungsunternehmungen handelt, die durch die Fülle der Darbietungen und durch eine Riesenausdehnung des Ausstellungskomplexes gewaltige Massen urteilsloser Besucher anzulocken

²⁹ Naumann 1951, p. 151

³⁰ Ibid, p. 144 'keine Kunstbewegung kann ohne die Teilnahme derer bestehen, für die die Arbeit geleistet wird.'

³¹ Rehorst 1913, p. 86 '..., werden wir ihm Jahre 1914 in Köln eine Ausstellung bekommen, die des hohen Standes der deutschen Arbeit würdig ist und reichen Segen bringen wird.'

³² Ibid, p. 96 'Das deutsche Volk aber möge in dieser Ausstellung eine Tat von hoher national-wirtschaftlicher Bedeutung erblicken, deren volles Gelingen unbedingt dazu beitragen muβ, deutscher Arbeit, deutschen Fleiβ und deutscher Kunst neue Abstatzgebiete auf dem Weltmarkte zu erobern!'

³³ Ibid, p.87 'Welche Bedeutung man in kultureller und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung unserer Ausstellung beimiβt, erhellt daraus, daβ auf Fürsprache des unsere Arbeiten in jeder Hinsicht auf'

bemüht sind, sondern daβ wir etwas Besonderes wollen und vollbringen: eine Heerschau über die besten Kräfte der deutschen Arbeit. Wir haben und wollen keinen anderen Clou unserer Ausstellung als die Qualität unseres Ausstellungsgutes: Qualität nach Material, Technik und Form, erzeugt durch Zusammenarbeit von Handwerk, Industrie und Handel mit de Künstler.'³⁴

This shows that even though the exhibition was being held to provide the German population and other countries with an overview of all the German works, the main goal that the Werkbund kept in mind was to showcase the best forces in German work at the time, specifically focusing on the quality of the exhibition itself. This stays in line with the Werkbund's ideas of focusing primarily on art itself, in this case the art of creating and designing an exhibition, instead of focusing on what could be achieved with the exhibition altogether. To ensure this quality, Rehorst mentions that the number of exhibitors will be limited, and the individual exhibitions will be smaller compared to those at other exhibitions. This makes the exhibition more expensive to organise as a whole, but to cope with this difficulty the Deutscher Werkbund informed all the exhibitors that the main focus should be on the success of the entire exhibition and not on individual income or gain. Additionally, the Deutscher Werkbund wanted to promote and honour the city of Cologne. Ernst Jäckh mentions this in his annual report on the Werkbund of the year 1912-1913. He states that the city of Cologne distinguishes the Deutscher Werkbund because of her trust (apparent from the made available amenities and funds), but that such trust does come with an obligation to give back 35 .

The specific German works that were to be exhibited in Cologne are precisely indicated by Rehorst in his chapter discussing the exhibition. He divides the works into six main categories³⁶:

- 1. Selected individual pieces from old and newer ages; these are meant to show the high standard that the industrial German works have been elevated to.
- 2. Special exhibitions by individual artists; these will accentuate through the work of which artists this high standard has been attained.
- 3. Art in trade and industry; this category is split into two sub-categories, individual presentations of product design (textiles, leather, paper, linoleum, press-work, photography, glass, metal, toys, musical instruments, precision instruments) and spatial design (small living rooms and apartments, representational rooms containing paintings and sculptures).
- 4. Specific artistic topics; architecture and urban design, ecclesiastical and burial art, horticulture, colours, art made by women, factory/workshop/office, traffic, art

³⁴ Rehorst 1913, p. 87-88

³⁵ Jäckh 1913, p. 105 'Die Stadt Köln zeichnet den Deutschen Werkbund durch ihr Vertrauen aus', followed by 'Solches Vertrauen verpflichtet'

³⁶ Rehorst 1913, p. 88-95

in commerce, sport, Rhine bathing establishment, house for the German colonies, stacked housing for the middle class, small residential building, new Lower Rhine village.

- 5. Artistic educational methods.
- 6. The Austrian house.

Rehorst also includes a drawn plan of the exhibition location, including the site, all the individual exhibition buildings and their artistic occupation.



Figure 1: Plan of the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition

Mathieu Lauweriks was invited to make the design for a room in the main building, in which Kunst im Handel, Kunstgewerbe and Altekunst was to be exhibited. This was done for the Deutsche Museum für kunst in Handel und Gewerbe. A specific reason why Lauweriks was asked for this exhibition proved difficult to find, since Lauweriks is not often mentioned in literature concerning this. An answer, however, can be derived from a few assumptions. Firstly, after Lauweriks moved to Germany in 1904, he had multiple very productive years in the country. He held various positions in artistic education and became well-known for his architectural works and his involvement in the Hagener Silberschmiede. When looking at texts published by the Deutscher Werkbund for any mention of Lauweriks one can find Karl Ernst Osthaus acknowledging him in a chapter written about the artist colony in Hagen in the Werkbund yearbook of 1912³⁷. Osthaus was an important figure in the development of Lauweriks' career. Here he mentions Lauweriks as one of the three excellent artists responsible for the design of the colony, alongside Henry van de Velde and Peter Behrens. It is not often that Lauweriks is mentioned alongside such 'big' names of his time. Osthaus also explicitly acknowledges the houses designed by Lauweriks. He states that these houses, compared to the houses designed by the other two artists, show more of the effectiveness of the guiding principles that were

³⁷ Osthaus 1912, p. 95

collectively agreed upon. Secondly, Lauweriks was already involved with the Deutsche Museum für kunst in Handel und Gewerbe. The museum, which was founded to collect and store all products, buildings (in the form of photographs) and documents of the modern art movement, wanted to cater to the need for commercial exhibitions by providing these with pre-assembled exhibitions. The exhibitions were a huge success in Germany and abroad. Karl Ernst Osthaus was the main director of the museum at the time, and Lauweriks was one of the training staff alongside Behrens, van de Velde and Hermann Muthesius³⁸. Thirdly, Lauweriks had previously already designed an exhibition for the Werkbund in Dresden in 1911 and provided the design for the Deutsche Museums exhibition in the world's exhibition in Ghent in 1913³⁹. Considering all of Lauweriks' work and involvement in Germany, and with Rehorst naming him as 'one of a few important artists' who would be used for spatial designs in the exhibition in Cologne⁴⁰, it becomes apparent that Mathieu Lauweriks was a well-known name in Germany around that time. He would have been a logical choice for the Werkbund to include in their 1914 exhibition.

The Deutscher Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in 1914 is, apart from famous works, perhaps most known for the *Werkbunddiskussion* or *Werkbundstreit* that arose during the course of the exhibition. The fundamental discussion, that had been a controversy within the Werkbund from its founding, was concerning the standardisation of art and artistic products. Henry van de Velde and Hermann Muthesius were the two leading figures, with Van de Velde prioritising individualism within art and Muthesius advocating for extensive standardisation to ensure higher quality⁴¹. This proved to be an unsolvable feat, which ultimately led to Van de Velde leaving the Werkbund in 1914. Tummers also goes into the Werkbund discussion in his work, describing system architecture as the beginning of standardisation and stating that the discussion was thus a very important moment in the development of system architecture⁴².

³⁸ Meyer-Schönbrunn 1912, p. 97-99

³⁹ Tummers 1968, p. 61

⁴⁰ Rehorst 1913, p. 96

⁴¹ Chronik des Deutschen Werkbundes 1907 bis 1932

⁴² Tummers 1968, p. 64-65 specifically 'Naar mijn mening betekende deze discussie een zeer belangrijk moment in de ontwikkeling van het ontwerpen op systeem.'

2. Lauweriks' design for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914

In this chapter, a good understanding of Mathieu Lauweriks' perception on art, design and architecture will first be attained by looking closely at literature informing on or describing Lauweriks' design principles and themes. This knowledge will then be used to carefully analyse Lauweriks' design for the Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe at the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914. The design choices Lauweriks made and his underlying intentions that he aimed to show through his design will be identified and further clarified.

Lauweriks' design approach underwent significant change throughout his career. From working at Cuypers' strictly catholic office to acquiring his theosophical convictions and eventually developing his own systematic design method. Cees Zoon describes the development of Lauweriks' design theory in his text Auf dem Wege zu einer monumentalen "Nieuwe Kunst" – Die Proportionslehre und Entwurfstheorie von J. L. Mathieu Lauweriks. He mentions one of the first versions of Lauweriks' theory of proportion and design, as described by Lauweriks himself in various published articles regarding his perception on art, design, and architecture. This theory was based on the five building principles according to Vitruvius, which he goes into in an article named Bouwkunst in number 8 of the magazine Architectura, published in 1900. Lauweriks mostly discusses how an architect should be able to arrange volumes of a building according to the available space, both artist and architect had to be able to control and command empty space in order to envision masses and shapes before the design process would start. Lauweriks emphasises that architects of the previous ages were masters in this, they understood their responsibility in commanding space, which is why they filled it with such beautiful works⁴³. Nature was a big influence in this conviction of Lauweriks, which becomes apparent when he states that every object made by nature is inherently in harmony with its surroundings. In nature, the mass that an object occupies is harmoniously and aesthetically in accordance with its surrounding masses or empty space. According to Lauweriks, an architect, artist or designer should thus aim to create designs that imitate nature in such manners. Objects in nature also do not have irregularities or unnecessary complications, and buildings should thus be simplistic, regular and predictable in their form. Lauweriks believed that this form should be based on geometrical and proportional figures. This becomes apparent in an article published earlier on in the same magazine. Lauweriks writes about the proportions of the circle, and how the circle is the base for the proportions of all other mathematical figures. He

⁴³ Lauweriks 1900, p. 269-271 'Bouwkunst'

emphasises how important these proportions were for antique buildings, and presses that these are what gave antique buildings heir greatness and power⁴⁴. This corresponds with Lauweriks earlier described conviction regarding the masterful artists of the previous ages. These convictions were all based on Lauweriks' theosophical beliefs. Zoon states that in theosophy, great importance is attached to geometrical and proportional systems as a means of expressing a higher order in art. This cosmic order, according to Lauweriks, could not be presented in a naturalistic manner, as many other theosophists believed, but could only be reproduced using geometric means because nature could not be depicted as such⁴⁵. Lauweriks believed art to be indispensable and narrowly connected to society and human life, he describes humanity as the main cause and purpose of art itself⁴⁶. Lauweriks also states that he does not see a difference between humanity, nature and art. He considers the three to be one and the same, and writes that art is a performance of the cosmic drama, wherein cosmic events are pictured eloquently and deeply convincing for humanity⁴⁷. Having established this view on art, Lauweriks shares his view on the artist itself. He describes the five characteristics of the artist⁴⁸:

- 1. The artist pursuits inner spiritualisation, striving towards an ideal of beauty and a rejection of all that is ugly.
- 2. The world is still an unworthy temple for beauty, that the artist itself serves
- 3. The artist cultivates his art, on an intellectual level included, and therefore slowly approaches real beauty.
- 4. The artist develops the capacity to suffer and struggle for his art.
- 5. The artist longs to find the ultimate goal (creating beauty), which may prove to be unattainable.

These characteristics show how Lauweriks believed the artist to strive towards a form of almost unattainable beauty, the artist being a sort of servant to the art itself.

The way in which Lauweriks aimed to design was via his own developed systematic design method. This method combined all the convictions Lauweriks had regarding art, design and architecture as described above. An article written by Lauweriks concerning this system architecture was published in Ring 1909, a magazine that he established himself. He writes:

'Diese Methode der wiederholten Einteilung hat ihr Beispiel in der Natur und giebt uns die allgemeine rythmische Grundlage, sozusagen den Einschlag und die Kette des Gewebes. Philosofisch genommen sind es die Homoämerien, die das

⁴⁴ Lauweriks 1900, p. 251-252 'De kwadratuur van den cirkel'

⁴⁵ Zoon 1987, p. 34-35

⁴⁶ Lauweriks 1906, p. 87, 95, 103, 112, 137, 163 'Het nut en doel der kunst'

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 95 'Kunst is eene opvoering van het kosmische drama, waarin voor den mensch in eenige pakkende beelden, bij wijze eener symboliek, het Kosmisch gebeuren in welsprekende, diep overtuigende handelingen wordt voorgelegd.'

⁴⁸ lbid, p. 163

Ganze zusammenstellen, wie im Kärperbau die Zellen. Diese Einheiten, oder Systemzellen, worauf das Gebäude wird aufgebaut, woraus sich der architektonische Organismus bildet, ist die allgemeine rythmische Basis, die immer vorhanden sein muss, und ohne welche das Entwerfen eines Gebäudes unmäglich ist, ebenso wie in einem natürlichen Organismus die Zelle unentbehrlich ist für dessen Aufbau.^{*49}

This evidently shows how Lauweriks' theosophical beliefs and his developed design method on the basis of system architecture are inherently connected. The chosen system or system cells, exemplified by the Einheiten, are repeated throughout the whole building, creating a general rhythm that the entire building is made out of. Zoon writes that for Lauweriks, this meant that the completion of a building should emerge from the same geometric system from which the framework had been developed.⁵⁰ Lauweriks believed that one cannot exist without the other. The building needs its system cells as much as the system cells need its building to make the design possible. By creating this connection between design system and the designed work or building, standing and lying parts were no longer strictly separated, the same system was to be used for the floor and for elevated surfaces. Lauweriks created one whole unit. Lauweriks' design of the World Exhibition in Ghent in 1913 is the best example of this, according to Zoon. 'Aus einem zentralen Körper, der die Einheit des Kosmos symbolisierte, verliefen Motive so wie alles zusammenbindende Bänder über die verschiedenen Flächen.' ('From a central body that symbolized the unity of the cosmos, motifs ran across the various surfaces like ribbons that tied everything together.')⁵¹ In his design, the spheres and lightbulbs symbolised the cosmic unity by being both the centre of space and the beginning and end point of the spatial band motifs running across the ceilings, walls and floors.



Figure 2: 3D impression of the design for the World Exhibition in Ghent in 1913, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks

⁴⁹ Lauweriks 1909, p. 25-35

⁵⁰ Zoon 1987, p. 35

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 50-51

Looking at the design Lauweriks made for the Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe at the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914, not much is written specifically about it in literature. Tummers has written a detailed description of the designed exhibition⁵², which will be used as a guideline for this analysis.

Lauweriks was appointed a room in the main exhibition building, originally designed by Theodor Fischer. The room was 14 metres in width and 44 metres in length. Within this room, Lauweriks had quite a difficult task in having to combine numerous things: Feinhals 'Art in the Tobacco Industry', wall decorations from Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and the hall for individual pieces⁵³. Lauweriks aimed to control the room from the inside out. Starting with the floor and gradually moving upwards, whereas in Ghent he aimed to control the room from the ceiling. To make the design, Lauweriks placed a 0,5 metre raster on the room. He then placed four points, all offset 5 metres of the wall, on two axes, essentially dividing the room into three sections. On the chosen points Lauweriks designed a systematic method that resulted in the whirls both present on the floor and walls of the exhibition room. This method consisted out of a module divided into four parts situated on the chosen points. Lauweriks drew the diagonals of squares of 12,5 centimetres, on which he drew another square sized $\sqrt{2} \times 12$,5 centimetres. The continuing of this pattern resulted into a rather linear whirl, in which an angle of 135 degrees was systematically made. The resulting plan of the design can be seen in the figure below.



Figure 3: Plan for Deutscher Werkbund Ausstellung in Cologne in 1914, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks

⁵² Tummers 1968, p. 64-65

⁵³ Funk-Jones 1987, p. 135

This movement, or whirl, was depicted on the floor at the four previously chosen points. On the corners that these whirls brought forth, Lauweriks set the pillars for his entrances, or portals, to the three different sections of the room. The whirls were also depicted vertically on the portals and the walls of the room. But instead of the linear form on the ground, Lauweriks drew the corners of the whirls on the walls as curves, resulting in a much more expressive form.



Figure 4: Working drawing of 3D impression for Deutscher Werkbund Ausstellung in Cologne in 1914, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks

The whole room was thus divided into three sections, the first being a room for *Kunst im Handel*, in which art for trade and commerce was exposed. Lauweriks made recesses in the walls and placed displays, the same which he designed for the exhibition in Ghent, spaciously throughout the room. The Feinhals exhibition was placed against the separation wall, which visitors had to pass either on the right or left to continue. Being led through the portal, visitors arrived into the next room, for *Kunstgewerbe*. Here they were guided along the exhibited art by the swirling patterns on the walls. Passing through the middle of the next portal, which was of a smaller size corresponding with the smaller size of the last room, visitors arrived in the room for *Alte Kunst*. Here the whirls were also continued on the back wall. It is clear that Lauweriks put great effort in how people moved through his design. He creates very interesting spaces in one single room. The portals function as passageways, where no art was displayed, building suspense on what was yet to come. Lauweriks commanded the space and movement admirably in his work.

In order to entirely cover the architectural expression of the room itself, Lauweriks covered the ceiling with a curtain fabric. This fabric was also part of the exhibited materials. When looking at his design drawings, it is evident that Lauweriks carefully considers how the fabric should be draped in order to support the movement in his design. He also designs the construction which supports the fabric. Among the design drawings, numerous studies on colour can also be found. Lauweriks used colour in addition to his design in order to create movement, with the colours of the room becoming darker further into the exhibition.



Figure 5: Colour study by J. L. M. Lauweriks



Figure 6: Colour study 3D impression, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks

3. Lauweriks' design in the context of the Deutscher Werkbund

In the final chapter of this thesis, Mathieu Lauweriks' design for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914 will be placed in the context of the Deutscher Werkbund itself. The convictions of the Werkbund towards art and design in general as well as the Cologne exhibition will be briefly repeated, whereafter these will be compared to Lauweriks' design principles and themes as shown in his work and design for the exhibition. The famous Werkbunddiskussion, as described in the first chapter, will also be taken into account in order to provide a necessary comparison to Lauweriks' work and principles. Lastly, the chapter will go into how the exhibition as a whole and Lauweriks' work for it were received at the time.

The Werkbund strived to create a new artistic expression that was in line with modern technologies and the industrial time. The design convictions with which the Werkbund aimed to do so can be summarised in a few points⁵⁴. Firstly, the emphasis of the created work was always on its use and function. Transparency was essential, the materials used had to be authentic in its form and construction had to be revealed in order to achieve this transparency in art and architecture. A room was to be considered as one whole, artists thus strived towards harmony and balance in their work. The style in which works were to be made was generally considered to be more naturalistic than geometrical, but both were allowed. Furthermore, the use of colours and avoiding neo-styles was important. Following these principles would ensure that art could advance with industrialisation. As the Werkbund wanted to provide Germany with a reputation for its industrial culture and promote German art as art of the highest quality and standard, exhibitions were held not only for commercial trade purposes but also to provide both the German population and other countries the opportunity to look at all the German works made. For the exhibition in Cologne in 1914 the main focus was not to attract as many visitors as possible but to ensure the quality of the exhibition itself. Only the best forces in German work were allowed to exhibit, and the quality concerning materials, technology and form was of the utmost importance.

The Werkbund's convictions align with those of Mathieu Lauweriks on various points. The first point being how the Werkbund states that a work, or room, should be considered as one harmonious unit. This is precisely what Lauweriks aimed to do in his works as well. Lauweriks created works that were harmonious in its distribution of space, regularity, and simplicity. One could say that by designing this way, Lauweriks focused solely on function just like the Werkbund did, however it seems that Lauweriks did this mainly because of

⁵⁴ Explained in more detail on p. 2-3

his theosophical beliefs. His theosophic background also led Lauweriks to the conviction that form should be based on geometrical and proportional figures, he thought nature could not be depicted in a naturalistic manner only. This aligns very convincingly with the Werkbund's conviction of a combined naturalistic and geometrical style. Lastly, Lauweriks believed the artist to always strive towards an ideal of beauty, both intellectually and in his work. The artist should reject all that is ugly. The Werkbund states similar things, declaring that focusing on real art and the beauty therein was of greater importance than producing a certain trade or product. In Lauweriks' design for the exhibition in Cologne these points can be seen for a fact, validating the corresponding convictions of Lauweriks and the Werkbund. Lauweriks designed an exhibition in which he took control of the entire space with his design, creating movement and suspense throughout the concatenation of exhibition rooms. He did this by creating different sized portals that led to equally different sized rooms. The whole design can thus definitely be considered a balanced and harmonious unit. The exhibition rooms and portals were completed with naturalistic looking whirls, although in reality they were entirely and very systematically based on geometrical figures. Lauweriks also makes use of modern technologies, he meticulously studied different colours to enhance his design. He also chose the to be exhibited fabric, of which the production is one of the technologies the Werkbund wanted to showcase, to use as ceiling coverage. According to Lauweriks selfdeveloped systematic design method, the completion of a building, work or in this case exhibition, should emerge from the same geometric system that the artist uses to develop the framework. In case of the Cologne exhibition, Lauweriks chooses a geometric system based on multiple rotating squares' diagonals, that ultimately result in the whirling pattern. Making use of such systematic design methods was not necessarily recognized by the Werkbund, however it could be seen the beginning of standardisation of art.

The famous *Werkbunddiskussion* took place during the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in 1914. The discussion, that proved to be fundamental for the Werkbund, was regarding the standardisation of art. A detailed overview of all that was discussed during this discussion is presented in *Die Werkbund-Arbeit der Zukunft*, a report on the entire meeting written by Hermann Muthesius for members of the Werkbund. Muthesius starts the discussion himself with a lecture based on 10 statements or guidelines, that are here summarised in short: Architecture, and thus the entirety of the Werkbund, is in need of standardisation, or *Typification*, in order to reestablish its significance and reacquire its valid, safe taste. This will create a general standard and convincing style, which will ensure German art and the Deutscher Werkbund of an effective impact abroad. Muthesius names Typification a result of *'einer heilsamen Konzentration'* (*'a result of an effective concentration'*)⁵⁵. Henry van de Velde responds with 10 counter-statements. He states that artists will, as long as they have an influence in the Werkbund, always protest

⁵⁵ Muthesius 1914, p. 31-48

against Typification. According to him, artists are individualistic creators, who do not want to be forced into only using generally valid forms or types⁵⁶. Muthesius is allowed a short response, but counters more detailed in his closing words at the end of the publication. He states that causing a disruption or debate within the Werkbund because of his lecture on Typification was not his intent at all. He never meant to impose something on the artist⁵⁷. Muthesius saw Typification as a means of unification for the Werkbund, and thought artistic development could do with a more technical approach regarding trade and economics⁵⁸. Researching Lauweriks opinion regarding the Werkbunddiskussion proved to be difficult. Tummers states that he finds it strange that Lauweriks did not attend the meeting, and never expressed himself on the matter⁵⁹. He believes that in Cologne people lacked the imagination to see that Typification would not be what ceased creativity, but would be a way of guiding creativity to a higher quality. This leaves one speculating that Lauweriks would have been in favour of Typification in the standardisation of art. As it was Lauweriks, who with his persistence use of systems throughout the entire design process showed that this did not encroach on his artistic expression or creativity at all. The type, or systematic method, chosen at the beginning of the design process was what gave the design its success and quality.

Lauweriks' work and his use of systematic architecture did not prove to be convincing for everyone. In a lecture Lauweriks gives in 1915, for the Genootschap Architectura et Amicitia, he explains his conviction of systematic architecture based on theosophy. He does this by explaining the design process of various works, made by students or himself. The writer reporting on the lecture, Wijdeveld, makes several remarks regarding Lauweriks' work for the exhibition in Cologne. He states that Lauweriks makes 'wild jumps' in his design, but still manages to create a harmonious entirety that is strangely attractive. Wijdeveld describes the general opinion of those in attendance to be divided regarding systematic architecture⁶⁰. In her chapter *Die Ausstellungsarchitekturen für das* "Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe" Anna-Christa Funk-Jones mentions various critics on Lauweriks' designed exhibitions in both Ghent and Cologne. According to Ludwig Sternaux the movement created on the walls of the exhibition in Ghent made the public seasick, which he finds incomprehensible. One can assume that he had similar criticism regarding the exhibition in Cologne. Adolf Behne, who according to Funk-Jones is better at appreciating quality, states that although he has respect for the imaginative and original intention, he cannot find a relating expression in the design⁶¹. Funk-Jones states that she believes Lauweriks to only achieve great achievements within

⁵⁶ Muthesius 1914, p. 49-51

⁵⁷ 'das mir nichts ferner gelegen hat, als Ihre Individualität in irgend einer Weise anzutasten'

⁵⁸ lbid, p. 101

⁵⁹ Tummers 1968, p. 65

⁶⁰ Wijdeveld 1915, p. 39-41' Harmonische organisatie in de bouwkunst, verslag over de voordracht van de heer J. L. M. Lauweriks'

⁶¹ Funk-Jones 1987, p. 134

the practical field when collaborating with other artists, or when presented with factual circumstances like limited funds or an already given architecture. In Cologne, where such factual circumstances were not present, Lauweriks realizes theosophical formal principles that create a lack of understanding among the public. For instance, the design was described as a 'theosophisches Karussell' by Max Creutz, the director of the Kölner Kunstgewerbe-Museums⁶². Funk-Jones does state that she believes Lauweriks design for the Cologne exhibition to be a valid and, for its time, early attempt at a uniform spatial design for exhibitions, despite all the objections to the work. The criticism does put in doubt a strong relation between Lauweriks and other Werkbund members. His conviction of systematic design methods might have been misunderstood by numerous people, and thus might have not gotten the appreciation it deserved. The Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in its entirety was very positively received, in Germany and abroad. Ernst Jäckh mentions various statements made about the exhibition in his chapter in the Werkbund yearbook of 1914. He specifically cites state councillor Dr. Albert, who expresses his belief that the Werkbund will reach all their goals regarding the exhibition in 1914⁶³. Jäckh concludes by stating the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne to be the first big public act of the Werkbund, describing it as a national work with international impact⁶⁴.

⁶² Funk-Jones 1987, p. 135

⁶³ Jäckh 1914, p. 96

⁶⁴ lbid, p. 101-102 'Köln – die Deutsche Werkbund Ausstellung Köln 1914 wird also die erste groβe öffentliche Tat des Deutschen Werkbundes, ein nationales Werk von internationaler Wirkung.'

Conclusion

This thesis aims to research to what extent Mathieu Lauweriks' architectural and design principles align with those of the Deutscher Werkbund, using Lauweriks' design for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914 and the broader thematic and stylistic trends represented in the exhibition as a case study. In the three main chapters of the thesis the Werkbund, Mathieu Lauweriks and the relation between the two have been researched to provide an answer to the research question.

The Deutscher Werkbund, of which Mathieu Lauweriks becomes a member wile living in Germany, strived towards a new industrial culture in which art, design and architecture was in line with modern industrialism and technology. Key design convictions included emphasising on use and function, transparency in the use of materials and construction, achieving harmony and balance in their work by considering a work or room as one whole, a preference for a more naturalistic than geometrical style or the combination of both, avoiding neo-styles and making use of colours. Following these design convictions the Werkbund aimed for the advancement of art with industrialisation. Thereby providing Germany and German art with a reputation for its industrial culture and quality.

The first chapter of the thesis explores the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914. The exhibition was being held to provide all visitors, from Germany and abroad, with an overview of all the German avant-garde works made at the time. This would show the high standard and quality of German art. The Werkbund's main goal was to prioritise the overall quality of the exhibition itself. Mathieu Lauweriks was invited to create the design for a room in the main building, in which Kunst im Handel, Kunstgewerbe and Altekunst was to be exhibited on behalf of the Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe. It can be assumed that Lauweriks' selection for designing this exhibition was because he was well-known in Germany at the time, he was involved with the Deutsche Museum already and because he had prior experience in designing exhibitions in Germany.

In the second chapter, Lauweriks' perception on art, design and architecture is researched by looking closely at Lauweriks' design principles and themes, which are all based on his theosophical beliefs. Lauweriks was convinced that the artist or architect had to be able to control and command empty space entirely in order to create masses and shapes in harmony with its surroundings. He therefore believed that nature should be imitated, since nature is inherently harmonious in its spatial distribution, regularity, and simplicity, which Lauweriks thought were imperative for art and architecture. Lauweriks rejected naturalistic forms, basing his designs on geometrical and proportional figures. He believed the artist to strive towards an ideal of beauty, rejecting all that is ugly and striving towards a form of almost unattainable beauty. Lauweriks' self-developed

systematic design method, based on his theosophical beliefs, involved selecting one geometric system at the start of a project and using it consistently throughout the entirety of the design process, resulting in one harmonious work. By analysing Lauweriks' design for the Werkbund exhibition in 1914, one can see how his chosen geometric system, based on multiple rotating squares' diagonals resulting in a whirling pattern, is used throughout the entirety of the design. His design is characterised by the movement that arises throughout the rooms, leading people from one space into another. Lauweriks commanded the space and movement admirably in his work.

The last chapter places Mathieu Lauweriks' design for the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914 in the broader context of the Deutscher Werkbund. Comparing the design convictions of the Werkbund and Lauweriks reveal alignment on several points. Both put emphasis on how a work, or room, should be considered as a harmonious entity. Lauweriks' focus on the harmonious distribution of space, regularity and simplicity in his design resonates with the Werkbund's focus on function and overall artistic expression. Furthermore, Lauweriks' theosophical beliefs led him to the use of geometrical and proportional figures, aligning with the Werkbund's conviction of a combined naturalistic and geometrical style. Lastly, Lauweriks and the Werkbund also share a commitment in striving towards an ideal beauty, rejecting all that is ugly in favour of artistic integrity. These aligning convictions are exemplified in Lauweriks' design for the Cologne exhibition. Although Lauweriks' systematic design approach may not have been recognized by the Werkbund, it does reflect the beginning of standardisation of art. The Werkbunddiskussion suggests at Lauweriks' potential support on this, since Lauweriks' work showed that by using a type, or systematic method, he could create high quality art without it encroaching on his artistic expression or creativity. Lauweriks' work for the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne did receive a lot of criticism, which could put in doubt a strong relation between Lauweriks and other Werkbund members, although it is also plausible that Lauweriks' design method might have been misunderstood.

This thesis can thus be concluded by stating that there is a strong relation between Mathieu Lauweriks and the Deutscher Werkbund when looking at their design principles and themes as shown in the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne in 1914. Lauweriks' relation with the Werkbund originates from their shared convictions regarding art and design. His work for the Cologne exhibition revealed mutual beliefs regarding their emphasis on function, harmony, and a combination of naturalistic and geometric styles. Despite Lauweriks' design receiving criticism, his work showed the potential for standardisation in art without compromising the creativity of the artist. While uncertainty regarding Lauweriks' opinion on the standardisation of art as discussed during the Werkbunddiskussion remains, his design for the Cologne exhibition showcases his original and innovative approach to the ongoing discourse within the Werkbund of the time.

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List of Figures

- Title page Made by Tinka Cöp, based on Lauweriks, J. L. M. (1913-1914). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Het Nieuwe Instituut. (LAUW27.25 in LAUW.110324945 Tentoonstelling Deutsche Werkbund te Keulen; tentoonstellingsruimte Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe, 1913-1914)
- p. 9 Figure 1: Plan of the Deutscher Werkbund Exhibition
 Rehorst, C. (1913). Die Deutsche Werkbundausstellung Köln 1914. *Die Kunst in Industrie und Handel: Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes 1913.* Eugen Diederichs.
- p. 13 Figure 2: 3D impression of the design for the World Exhibition in Ghent in 1913, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks
 Lauweriks, J. L. M. (1913). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Het Nieuwe Instituut. (LAUW26.12 in LAUW.110359264 Wereldtentoonstelling 1913 te Gent; interieur tentoonstellingsruimte Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe, 1 maart 26 april 1913)

 p. 14 Figure 3: Plan for Deutscher Werkbund Ausstellung in Cologne in 1914, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks
 Lauweriks, J. L. M. (1913-1914). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Het Nieuwe Instituut. (LAUW27.45 in LAUW.110324945 Tentoonstelling Deutsche Werkbund te Keulen; tentoonstellingsruimte Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe, 1913-1914)

- p. 15 Figure 4: Working drawing of 3D impression for Deutscher Werkbund Ausstellung in Cologne in 1914, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks Lauweriks, J. L. M. (1913-1914). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Het Nieuwe Instituut. (LAUW27.34 in LAUW.110324945 Tentoonstelling Deutsche Werkbund te Keulen; tentoonstellingsruimte Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe, 1913-1914)
- p. 16 Figure 5: Colour study by J. L. M. Lauweriks
 Lauweriks, J. L. M. (1913-1914). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Het Nieuwe
 Instituut. (LAUW27.20 in LAUW.110324945 Tentoonstelling Deutsche
 Werkbund te Keulen; tentoonstellingsruimte Deutsche Museum für Kunst
 in Handel und Gewerbe, 1913-1914)

 p. 16 Figure 6: Colour study 3D impression, drawn by J. L. M. Lauweriks Lauweriks, J. L. M. (1913-1914). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Het Nieuwe Instituut. (LAUW27.42 in LAUW.110324945 Tentoonstelling Deutsche Werkbund te Keulen; tentoonstellingsruimte Deutsche Museum für Kunst in Handel und Gewerbe, 1913-1914)