

**Before the Great 20th & 21st
Century Pandemics,
There Was This:**

Art At The Dresden Hygiene Exhibition 1911

Poster Stamps

Arthur H. Groten M.D.



During the late 1990s, my collection and exhibit of St. Helena had reached that point where there was little I could add. Soon it would be replaced by something else but I didn't know what. In desperation, I stopped by my friend Roger Riga's booth at one of the APS shows and said "I need something new to collect. Show me something I haven't seen before." He handed me a stockbook of miniature advertising labels which, with their amazing graphics, immediately caught my eye. "What are they?" I asked. "Poster stamps" he said. And I was off and running.

Here was an unknown (to me) category that I later began adding to my exhibits and which I

include in my designation "paraphilately" about which I have written for more than 20 years, including in these pages.

One of the first poster stamps I bought was the fabulous "Eye" by Franz von Stuck. It is such a striking image that I found and acquired an original that hangs in my dining room. (Figure 1) So here, 25 years after buying one of the stamps that started me on this path, is the story of that stamp.

The Third International Hygiene Exhibition (considered a World's Fair) was held from May 6 to October 31, 1911, following the success of two previous exhibitions in Germany in 1882 and 1903. Its prime mover was Konrad August Lingner (1861-1928) (Figure 2) who made his fortune with



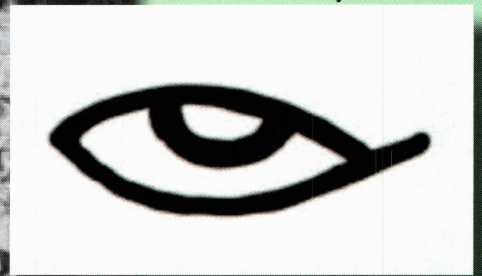
1) Franz von Stuck's poster for the Exhibition.

2) Konrad August Lingner, organizer of the Exhibition.

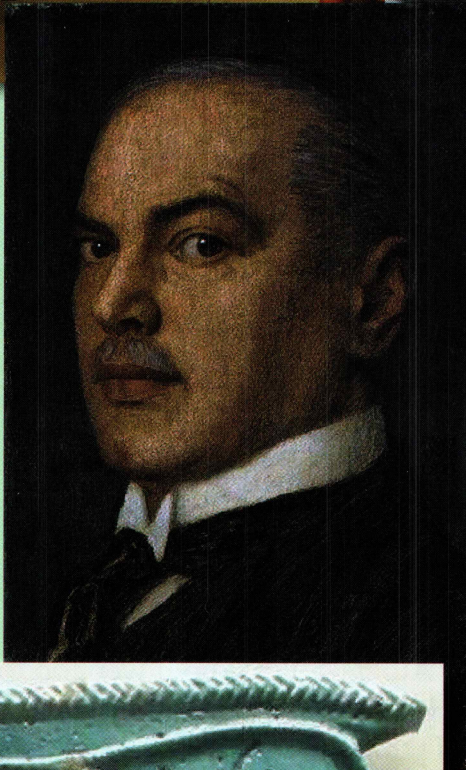


3) Adaptation of von Stuck's design for the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden.

7) Ancient Hebrew pictogram of the letter "ayin" which means "eye."



4) Franz von Stuck.



About the author...

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A respected radiologist who retired recently from several decades in practice in Poughkeepsie, New York, Art Groten combined his profession with the collection of poster stamps that, in this case, coincided with his career as a medical doctor. In this instance, the Hygiene exposition, attended by medical personnel from around the world in 1911, had very much to do with a subject familiar to millions of families throughout the world over the past three years.



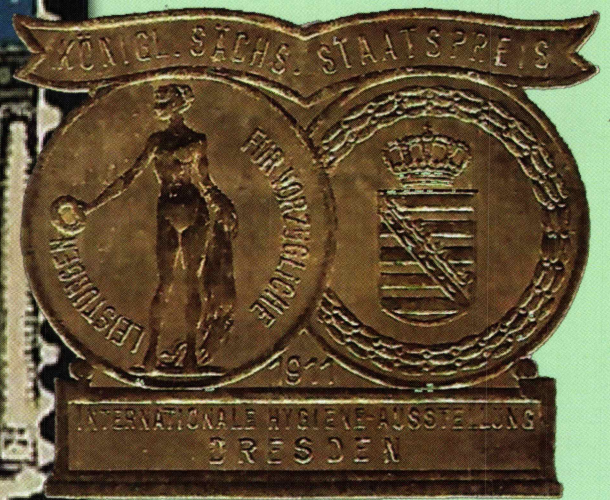
5) The Eye of Horus.



8) The rare English version of the poster stamp.



11) The official postmark of the Exhibition



12) One of seven styles of the official embossed metallic medal stamps.

his mouthwash product, Odol, the largest selling brand in Germany. The Fair was a huge success with 30 countries participating, more than 100 buildings built and 5 million visitors; it made a profit of 1 million Marks.

After the Exhibition, its contents became the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden. The von Stuck design was modified to promote it. It is known perforated in a small format and imperforate in a larger one. (Figure 3)

Lingner oversaw all the preparations and commissioned the very well-known Munich artist and designer Franz von Stuck (1863-1928) (Figure 4) to create the logo for the Exhibition. He began

teaching at the Munich Academy in 1895; among his students were Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and Josef Albers, all of whom went on to stellar careers. He was one of the founders of the Munich Secession which sought to “modernize” the arts, much as the Bauhaus did in the 1920s.

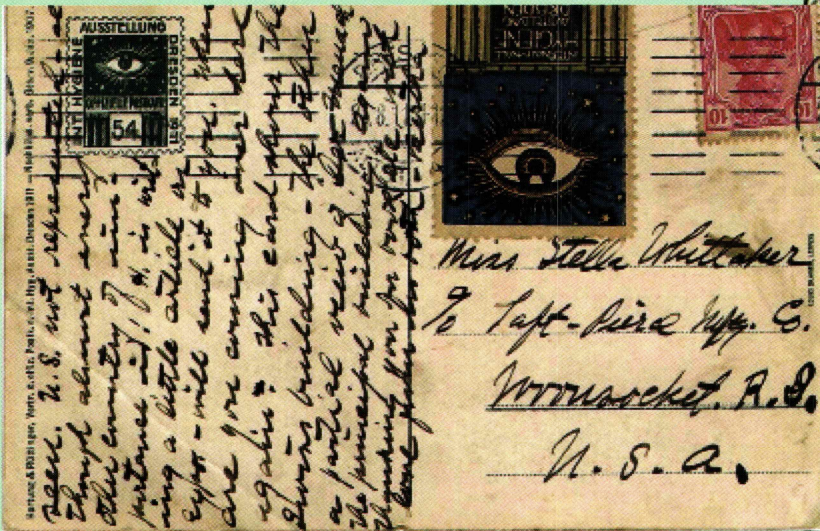
His mesmerizing creation featured the monumental Eye that dominated the design, so striking it was to have many iterations over the years. We shall see examples of some of them later. The original poster was printed by Meisenbach-Riffarth & Co. of Berlin.

This image reflected the subject of the Exhibition: *medicine and public health. Why did von*

6) The eye as a symbol on the reverse of the U.S. \$1 bill.



9) Use of the poster stamp on a postcard to the U.S.



10a&b) Front and back of an envelope with poster stamp used, properly, on the reverse.



Stuck use it? The eye, the “window of the soul,” is the most common body motif represented with many symbolic meanings as far back as the Phoenicians and Egyptians whose Eye of Horus reflected the magical restoration of Horus’s lost left eye and came to be associated with protection, health and restoration. (Figure 5) A second broad category of meanings concerns the All-Seeing Eye (of God) in its many manifestations, for good or evil; it is a key symbol of the Freemasons and appears on the reverse of the American \$1 bill. The pyramid symbolizes strength and durability. [Figure 6] And a third group relates to the eye as the center of visionary thinking, seeking to hold on

to an ideal vision of the future (according to the alchemists) and the ability to see and experience (reflected in the pictogram of the Hebrew letter “ayin”). (Figure 7)

The official stamp is a miniaturization of the actual poster. There are numerous shades of blue, from a paler to intensely dark, the latter being the scarcest. Further, it comes in three languages: German (common), French (scarce) and English (rare). (Figure 8) It was used on postcards (Figure 9) and envelopes. (Figures 10a&b) It was acceptable to put the label on the address side of a postcard but not a letter. There was an official cancel. (Fig 11)

Much ephemera promoted the Exhibition. Many were award stamps issued by the Committee. Collating my collection with Peter Hannes-Lehmann's in Germany and those listed in Stewart Gardiner and Steve Grieczek's monumental, *An Illustrated Catalogue of Exhibition and Event Poster Stamps*, published by the Cinderella Stamp Club of GB in 2014, I have found 11 official ones, the rest private (35).

Of the official stamps, there are seven different double medal styles on embossed metallic paper in various colors to signify Gold, Silver or Bronze medals. (Figure 12 is an example) In addition, there are four embossed types on regular paper, in many colors, usually red or blue, most specifying the awardee. The most often-seen designs are shown in Figures 13a-c. (I have no idea how many there are in the series).

Of the private issues, 35 made for the various companies specifying their participation at the venue have been identified. They often displayed their medal level and, most certainly, were issued after the Exhibition closed. While, as noted above, the official stamp was often used on postal material, I have yet to see a private one so used.

In keeping with the theme of the Exhibition, they can be divided into medical (7), other health-related (10) and miscellaneous, medical and health not being their primary product (17). Since one's diet was considered essential to good health, many restaurants displayed and served their fare. I will show three of the more graphically interesting ones. (Figures 14-16)

Ann aside, the field of "sports medicine" had not been formally recognized as such. The Exhibition helped push the idea that physical exercise and training, very popular among the Germans, were important to overall health. As a result, there are many poster stamps unrelated to the Exhibition, issued after it, that promote such products.

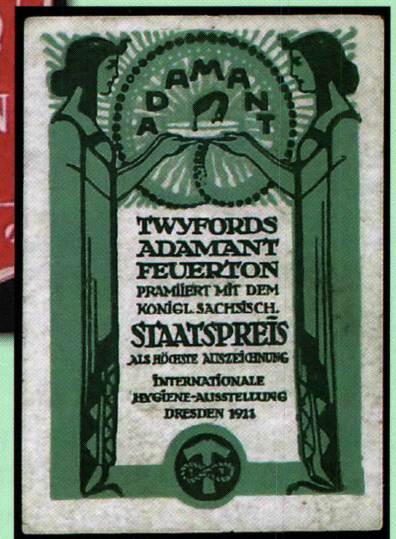
The most prolific ephemera was a long series of postcards, issued by the Exhibition, numbered on the reverse at the upper left, published by Hartung & Ruttinger. Postcard #1 is, not surprisingly, the official poster. (Figure 17) I don't know how many cards in the set; the highest number I have seen is #64, a lovely card by Gerler. (Figure 18)



13a-c) Three (of many) official embossed paper award stamps.



14) Twyford's Adamant Feuer-ton (fire bricks made for building safety).



In addition to single cards, they were available in fold-out booklets of 10 attached cards. [Figures 19a&b] The booklet shown here contains cards from #49 to #62 not in order nor are all the consecutive numbers present. There were, apparently, a number of such booklets. Whether they, too, had incomplete number runs is not known to me nor is the reason. Speculation seems pointless until other such booklets become available (to me).

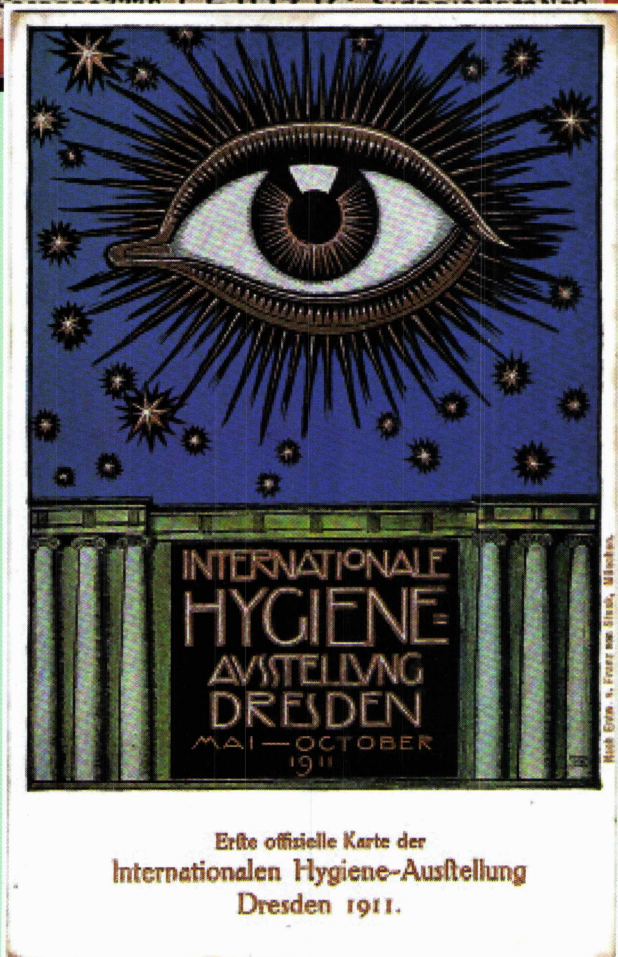


15) Beyrich's special enzyme milk for infants.



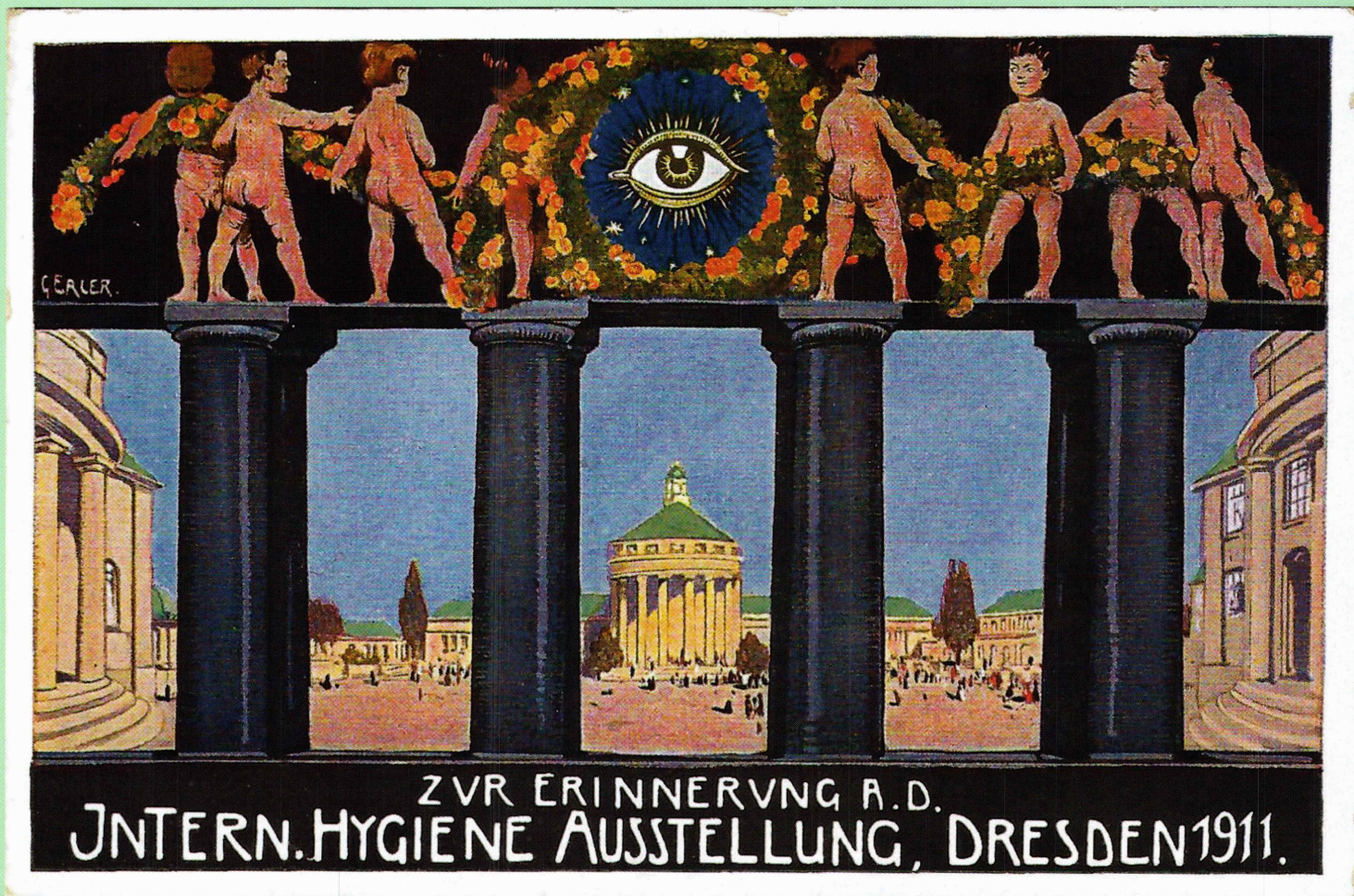
17) Official postcard #1
Figure captions (2)

16) Issued by H M A
(meaning unknown to me)



In addition, some of the booth-holders issued their own private "unofficial" cards, without inclusion of the Eye. (Figure 20a&b) In addition to these private cards, one might find trade cards (Figure 21) or even the Eye image on a cigarette card. (Figure 22a&b) All these noted their association with the Exhibition.

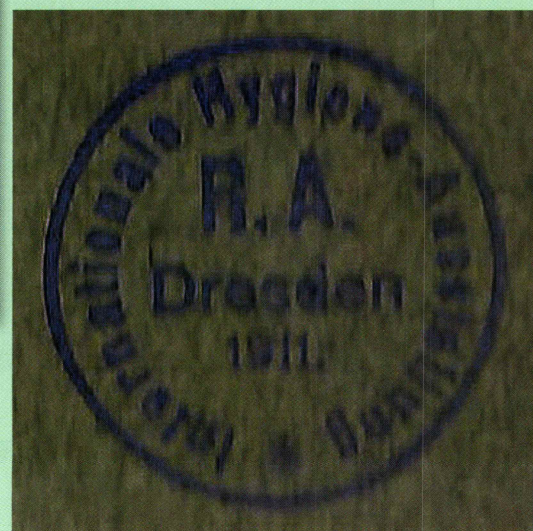
Good designs invite re-use, i.e. plagiarism, as in these two German examples, one for medication to treat drowsiness (Figure 23); the other, appropriately, for eyedrops. (Figure 24) They often crossed national borders: to Switzerland (for a hygiene periodical) (Figure 25), U.K. (for a cigarettes) (Figure 26) and, even, Argentina. (Figure 27)



18) Official postcard #64, the highest number card I have seen.



19a&b) Official cards could be purchased in folder of ten attached cards with a special purple handstamp on the reverse.

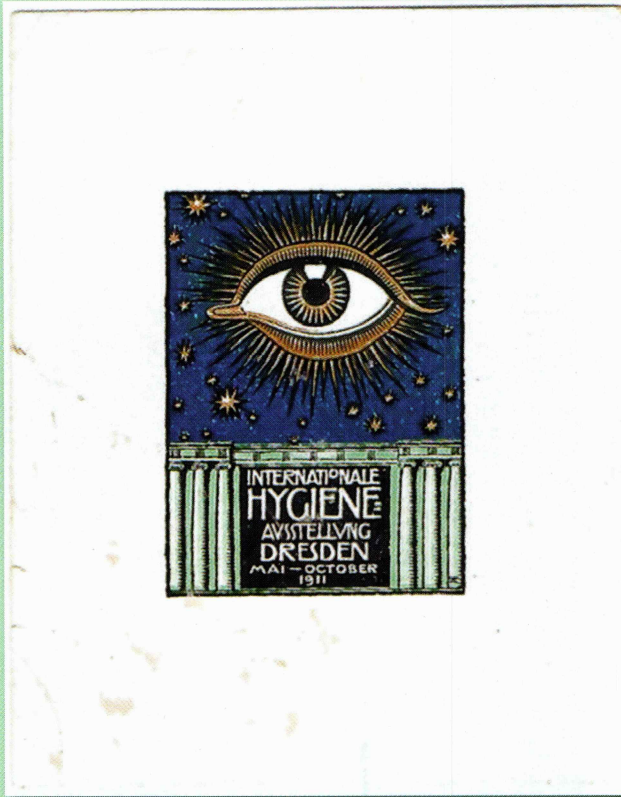




20a. Front of a private card for Jasmatzi Cigarettes (at a health exhibition!).



21) Trade card issued by Kathrein's Malzkaffee (non-caffeinated malt coffee made from malt), one of the largest makers of a very popular drink at the time.

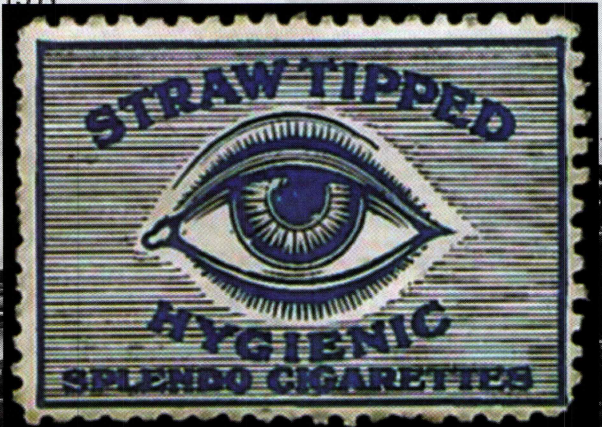


22a&b) As in the U.S., cigarette cards were a popular form of advertising, this example issued by Kios cigarette makers in Dresden.



24) Another plagiarism, this for eye drops.

26) A British company used the design for their Splendo cigarettes.

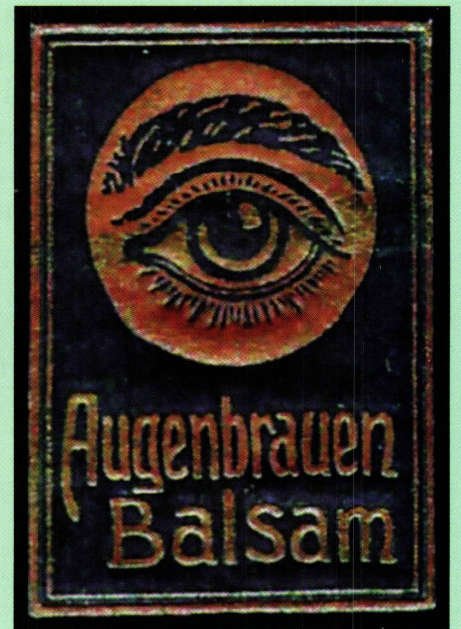


The busy front entrance to the 1911 entrance to the Dresden Hygiene Exhibition.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------|
| KIOS Cigaretten Dresden | Kurprinz | 3 Pfg. |
| | Fürsten | 4 " |
| | Weir-Macht | 5 " |
| | Auto-Klub | 6 " |
| | Aëro-Klub | 10 " |



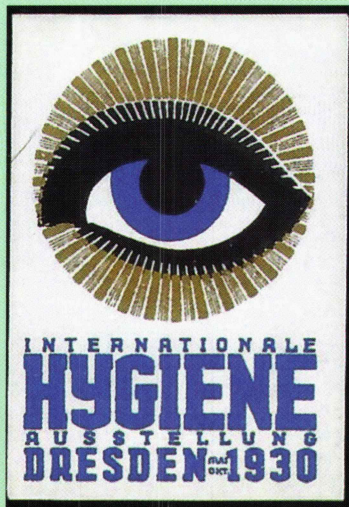
23) German plagiarism of von Stuck's design with multiples eyes, quite alluring.



24) German plagiarism of von Stuck's design with multiples eyes, quite alluring.

22a&b) As in the U.S., cigarette cards were a popular form of advertising, this example issued by Kios cigarette makers in Dresden.

28) Willi Petzold's 1930 adaptation of the von Stuck design.



29) Siemens's use of the Petzold eye for the 1930 Hygiene Exhibition.



30) A 1932 Swim Meet, promoting a healthy activity, used the updated design.



27) Lutz y Schulz, German manufacturers (of what?) in Buenos Aires must have been aware of the contemporary design back home.



31) The 50th anniversary of the 1911 Exhibition was held in Dresden in 1961, using Petzold's more modern design rather than von Stuck's classic one.



32) The German Hygiene Museum promoted itself using a matchbox label during the 1961 Exhibition.

Willy Petzold (1885-1978), in his design for the 1930 Dresden Hygiene Exposition, took von Stuck's image and modernized it. (Figure 28) Siemens, manufacturers of Roentgen (x-ray) equipment (still in business today), used the Petzold adaptation. (Figure 29) There are many fewer of

these private stamps than for the 1911 Exhibition. His Eye was used again for a 1932 swimming competition in Dresden [Figure 30]

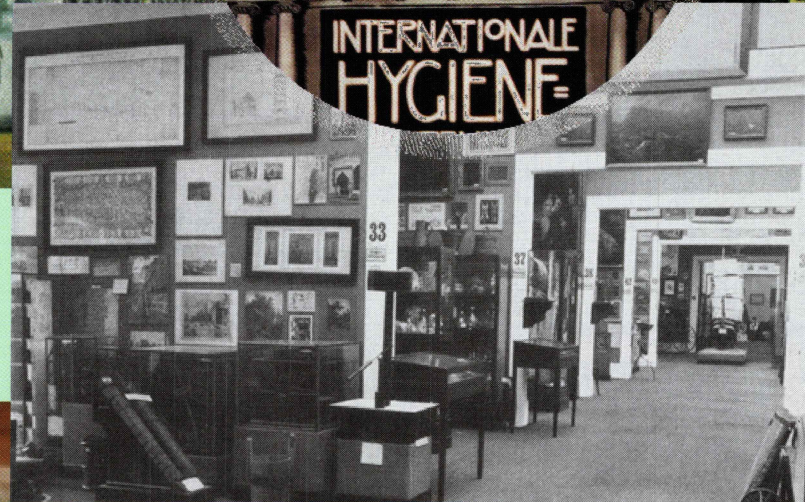
So famous was the 1911 Exhibition that its 50th anniversary was marked by yet another Hygiene Exhibition in 1961 (Figure 31) It also appears on



Above: The Russian Hygiene building at the Dresden Exhibition. Designed by architects from its mother country.

Right: Some of the display rooms at the 1911 Dresden Hygiene Exhibition.

Below: Hands-on working displays at Dresden's 21st century Hygiene Museum.



promotion (here a matchbox label) for the German Hygiene Museum mentioned above. (Figure 32)

This review of the 1911 Dresden Hygiene Exhibition and its influence will give you an idea of the depth to which one may go in studying a single stamp. That pursuit gives substance to not

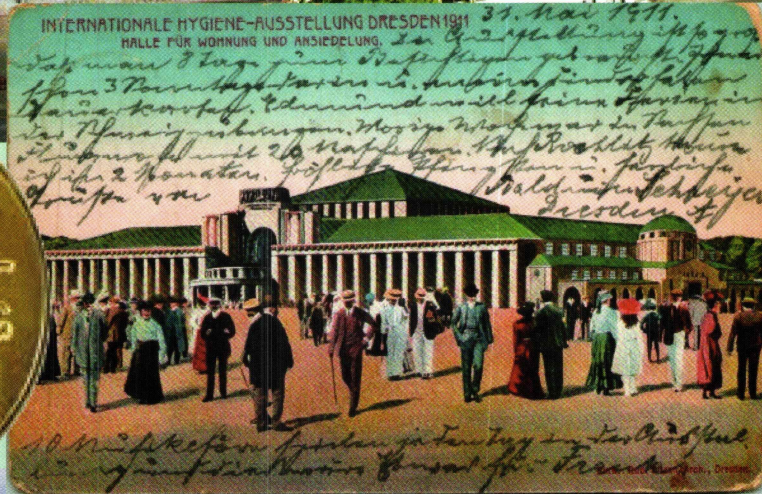
only the stamp but to the Exhibition itself and an insight into the concerns of the prevailing middle-class social milieu in the pre-WWI days. It wasn't until after the inflation period that such products were again readily available to the public. But that is another story.



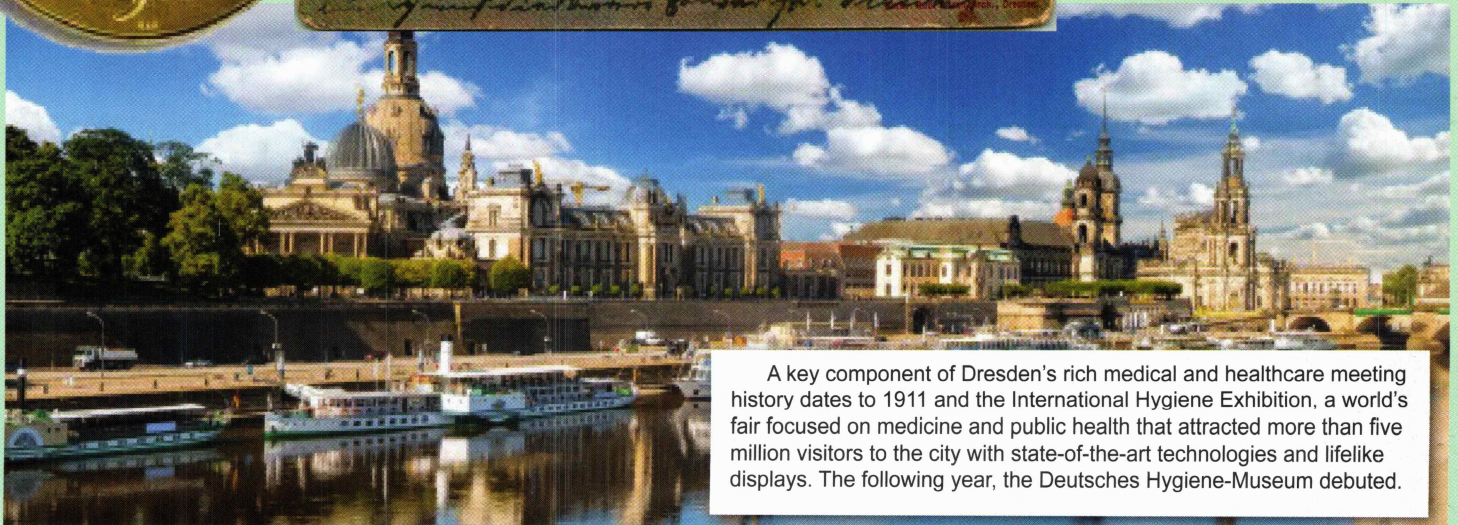
Above: the Republic of China's Pavilion at the Dresden Exhibition in 1911.



Above: Dresden's world-class international hygiene museum.



At left: A visitor to the exhibition used the reverse of his postcard to continue his or her message to the recipient. Dated at top on 31 Mar 1911.



A key component of Dresden's rich medical and healthcare meeting history dates to 1911 and the International Hygiene Exhibition, a world's fair focused on medicine and public health that attracted more than five million visitors to the city with state-of-the-art technologies and lifelike displays. The following year, the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum debuted.