Enter the Shoe
Design in the Making

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> *Fashion's decree of skirts of daring brevity has brought the foot into new and striking prominence. It cannot hide nor shirk.*[1]

From the 1920s onwards, the fashion shoe moved from the fringes to take centre stage in the European and North American shoe industry. For *Bally,* this development triggered a long process of adjustment. As we shall see, the period under examination (1930–1950) witnessed some controversial debates and radical steps. The focus of this chapter is the so-called *Création* department, in which *Bally* invested heavily. Who were the people behind the emergence of this new specialism?[2] What did the profession of shoe design involve? How did the designers work? What knowledge did they bring to the job and what new knowledge did they generate? With whom did they collaborate? How important was fashion in the years immediately before, during, and after the Second World War?

Sources

The study draws on four collections of material:

- The Design Archive, today housed in what was once the packing and dispatch area, with several tens of thousands of objects: women's, men's, and children's shoes, lasts, heels, and trimmings of all descriptions, as well as a number of "non-Bally" shoes from France, Italy, and Switzerland.[3]
- The two in-house magazines, *Mitteilungen der Bally-Schuhfabriken Aktiengesellschaft*[4] (issued by the holding company) and *Arola Hauszeitung* (issued by *Bally's* sales division). The 1930s saw the beginning of a huge rise in internal corporate communication. *Mitteilungen* had been ongoing since 1916 in the form of company announcements, but in late 1940 it was expanded into a true magazine with its own staff of writers, reporting on all the various, far-reaching activities of the company and quite obviously intended

not only for internal consumption. *Mitteilungen* was joined in 1931 by the *Arola Hauszeitung*, published by the sales organization of the same name, which covered sales-related topics.
- The Board Minutes. These are very detailed for the research period and cast a great deal of light on agreements and disagreements among the directors.
- The archive of *Ballyana* the foundation set up to preserve the history of the Bally family and the *Bally* company.[5] This is a separate legal entity from the company's Historical Archives, housed at a different location.

From *Modelleur* to Design Team

No other item of clothing has to cope with as many different and difficult stresses as the shoe—ranging from foot shape, body weight, and individual peculiarities of gait to the varying terrain underfoot. The competing demands of functionality, comfort, and fashion, coupled with the variety and unpredictability of the materials involved, make shoes extremely challenging from the point of view of design and manufacturing technology. The smallest discrepancies or alterations can have a huge influence on the fit, for example.[6] Not least for this reason, the switch to mechanization was not as swift as with other industrial products, and even after the industry had become almost fully mechanized, around the turn of the 20th century,[7] certain sections of the workflow were still very much the domain of the artisan. This was a time when new styles evolved from *within* the production process, not from a drawing board far removed from it; in short, design lay in the hands of the last- and patternmakers.[8] One of the most successful of these was Johann Hospodarsky (1862–1947), who designed the *Hospodarsky Sandal* for *Bally* in 1923. This was one of the company's most popular models, becoming a bestseller, particularly in the USA, where it was marketed as the *Swiss Sandal*, or *Happyland Sandal*. Indeed, 300,000 pairs had been sold by the late 1940s.[9]

In the then largely anonymous world of industrial shoe design, Hospodarsky was an exception, having a number of documents archived under his own name. He also wrote an account of the

course of his professional career. After a demanding and exploitative apprenticeship in the Bohemian city of Budějovice (better known by its German name, Budweis), he spent years travelling as a journeyman, followed by further training in Vienna, where he became familiar with the manufacture of women's shoes and learned the basics of last- and patternmaking at specialist cordwainer night classes.[10] It is from this period that a sort of workbook survives,[11] which provides an insight into the craft of shoemaking at the time. Along with anatomical drawings, it includes technical instructions for the construction and sizing of shoes and various basic patterns and prototype designs. Hospodarsky's work came to *Bally's* attention, so *Bally* brought him to Schönenwerd in 1889, where he would remain in charge of production for 40 years.[12] He was responsible for creating new styles and producing design drawings for serial production. Most of his designs were for high-cut shoes, elasticated boots, lace-up and buttoned boots and, for the British and German markets, low-cut women's shoes with elaborate decorative stitching[13] [FIG. 1].

[1] Pattern book
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; photo: Manuel Fabritz
© Bally)

Bally also has Johann Hospodarsky to thank for the earliest systemization of its shoe designs: each new model was consecutively numbered, and a full-size coloured paper cut-out of the design was pasted into a pattern book.[14] Later, an improved filing system was developed, with a numerical code and shoes arranged in product lines and product families.[15]

According to the company's own internal historiography, there was a radical shift just before the First World War towards "luxury shoes", accompanied by a shift towards the export market.[16] In 1912/13, seven designers and assistant designers with specialist training in shoe design were recruited from Germany and Austria, so that by the summer of 1914 *Bally* had "reached a high point in terms of fashion, promising great prospects for the future".[17] It was not until the following decade, however, that there was any consistent study of fashion or any systematic thought as to how to convert fashion ideas into industrial production processes. In 1929, the company board charged Max Bally with the task of making a "thorough study", whose purpose, amongst other things, was to clarify what exactly the company's "attitude to fashion" should be.[18]

An interest in or even awareness of fashion was by no means shared by all of *Bally's* competitors. Ten years later, at the

[II] Création (1951)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

1939 Swiss National Expo in Zürich, *Bally's* exhibits were still deemed "bizarre" and dismissed as "gimmickery".[19] But even many shoe manufacturers abroad felt no need to prioritize (fashionable) design. In a paper presented in 1942 to the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce,[20] the leather-goods designer John W. Waterer (1892–1977)[21] praised the outstanding skill of the stitchmen still surviving, even in industrial production, but noted at the same time a fundamental neglect of fashion accessories:[22]

There has been too much dabbling with the matter, usually exemplified in the purchase from itinerant vendors of drawings which are, more often than not, entirely altered in character in the factory; or else in leaving the job to the foreman who, excellent workman though he may be, cannot be expected to have or to acquire that intimate knowledge of fashion trends so essential to success. In any event, craftsmanship alone, although an essential attribute of art, is not art itself (although often mistaken for it): without the emotional urge to create, without something to express, even the finest craftsman tends to become little better than a machine. Designing to-day is the expert's job and a whole-time job at that. The designer's job should be to superintend the production of his or her ideas in the factory from their very

[III] Création (1951)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

inception, and obviously this can only come about if the designer is employed by the producer and is in close touch with all production departments.[23]

At *Bally* in the same period, design—*création,* in the company jargon—was already an "expert's job" [FIGS. II, III].

In the two photographs on the previous pages, the chief protagonists of *Création,* Max Matter, Heidy Studer-Welter, and Albert Eng, are seen posing with the objects which lay at the heart of the new concept of design: not merely shoes and lasts, but fashion magazines, colour charts, and pattern books. The photos date from 1951, the year of the company centenary, but the team had been in their posts as *créateurs* since 1943.

The oldest member of the team—Albert Eng (1888–1966)—had joined the firm as early as 1903, starting in the cutting room but soon moving up to learn about the basic procedures involved in the various stages of fabrication. When *Bally* transformed itself into "a company at the cutting edge of fashion"[24] in the 1930s, he went abroad for further training. Eng provided the interface with production and had the job of "inspiring the lastmaker, evaluating his work from the point of view of both fashion and technology, taking selected models from the design stage to production on the factory floor, from wooden last to leather garment".[25]

Heidy Studer-Welter (1903–1971)[26] had a special role in the male-dominated world of *Création*. As the daughter of one of the caterers at *Bally's* Kosthaus (the resplendent factory canteen building), she was *Bally*-born and bred. She began work in the department in 1942:

> Today Frau Studer represents the "womanly element" in *Création*. Working alongside her male colleagues she is a great asset to the department, bringing her good colour sense and her feminine understanding of special product categories such as evening and summer shoes. With great skill and energy, Frau Studer also oversees the tricky area of fashion shows […].[27]

Studer-Welter not only designed and organized fashion shows and special press viewings, she was also involved in organizing

Bally's representation at national and international expositions—from Mustermesse Basel to the 1939 National Expo in Zürich and the World Expos in Paris in 1937 and Brussels in 1958.[28] From 1948, she managed Studio Treize, *Bally's* pilot testing lab, and designed shoes for both *Bally Schuhfabriken AG* and its subdivision, *Bally Arola Schuh AG.*[29]

The appointment of Max Matter (1907–1978) as head of *Création* at *Bally* represents a milestone in design history at the company. Fritz Streuli, who until then had been in charge of both sales and *Création,* remained as Matter's superior; *Création* thus technically still fell under sales, but was now granted a higher status of its own (and a greater voice within the company organization).[30] Matter—a nephew of Max Bally—had joined the firm in 1927, working mainly in sales. In 1930 he moved to *Bally-Camsat* in Lyon, where he was employed in the patternmaking department, *Création,* and sales. Returning from occupied France in 1943, he was immediately put in charge of *Création* in Schönenwerd.[31] Matter's encounter with the couturier Robert Piguet was pivotal in the development of the *Création* department. It was essentially thanks to Piguet's influence that *haute couture* became the lodestar for *Bally's* shoe design.[32] By the time he retired in 1972, Matter had become the company's fashion director, as the position was known by then.[33]

The make-up of the first *Création* department also throws light on the company's training and recruitment practices. Since there was no specific professional training for shoe design in Switzerland, the company had a deliberate policy of keeping an eye out for (young) talent.[34] Such talent was nurtured by experienced professionals, like the aforementioned Johann Hospodarsky, who passed on their knowledge by means of in-house "specialist shoe courses". Quite often, however, experienced professionals were simply enticed away from other com–panies, for example Adolf Streit,[35] and possibly Fritz Kühni, who, having formerly been with the firm Hug,[36] from 1935 to 1965 worked in *Bally's Création* department. In matters of style, moreover, Max Bally, in particular, repeatedly turned to American companies for inspiration in the division of labour and corporate responsibilities.[37]

"Fashion Intermediaries"

In the decades when *Bally* was increasingly evolving into a producer of fashion shoes, fashion itself faced a hostile environment. It was largely excluded from the crucial modernist debates on (industrial) design.[38] When they paid any attention to fashion at all, modernist designers confined themselves, in both theory and practice, to strategies for doing away with it.[39] At best, classic men's shoes were appreciated, by Le Corbusier for example, as "modern object types".[40]

In Switzerland, the Swiss Association of Craftsmen (Schweizerischer Werkbund SWB), founded in 1913, played a leading role in anti-fashion discourse. However, its decidedly unmodish agenda (the "ennobling of industrial work in the interaction of art, industry, and craft through education, raising awareness, and influencing opinion […]")[41] had little influence on the demand-driven world of industry.[42]

So how did the shoe industry manage the transition from utilitarian products to hedonic goods? In this context, Regina Blaszczyk introduced the useful concept of "fashion intermediaries":

> [B]usiness professionals […] studied the marketplace, collected data about consumer taste, created products to meet public expectations, and promoted them.[43]

Max Bally (1880–1976), grandson of the firm's founder, was one such fashion intermediary:

> We only have to look at Bally's shoe collection of 50 years ago—something the museum in Schönenwerd allows us to do—and compare it with today's collection. The enormous change that is immediately obvious is the work of Mr Max Bally. Of course, he has had a whole series of creative colleagues working under him, but it was essentially Max Bally who issued the directives that are now being faithfully followed by capable employees. Through extremely hard work, Mr Bally made himself into a world expert on shoes, familiar with the smallest details of the shoe itself, the lasts, the design process, right through to manufacturing and sales.[44]

Max W. Wittstock, director of Arola AG, was probably not greatly exaggerating when he wrote this. From his position on the company board, Max Bally was not only the person mainly responsible for the fashionable orientation of the product range and the steady expansion of the *Création* department,[45] he also built up considerable technical expertise and a far-reaching network of contacts.

Design in the Making

How was the *Création* department itself structured and organized? Who were the main people involved?

There do not seem to have been any organization charts, policy papers, or the like; at any rate, none have survived. All we have is a single document, undated and unsigned, from the bequest of Fritz Streuli, director of *C.F. Bally Schuhfabriken AG*, containing a loose job description. This sets out what "the management of the *Création* department involves: preparing a work programme, collecting and disseminating new stylistic ideas (magazines, acquisition of other producers' designs in the form of drawings and pullovers [prototype sample shoe uppers], criticism and correction of designs, particularly from the point of view of taste".[46]

In the company's internal publications, on the other hand, there are many articles dealing with the design process in the broadest sense:

> Every work springs from an idea. This is particularly true of the manufacture of fashionable footwear. Every new model of shoe is synonymous with a new inspiration. In our case, the workshop where ideas are born is called the the *Création* department.
> If we seek out the *créateurs* in their "studio" with the purpose of learning all sorts of interesting things about their work, the very appearance of the workplace at once gives us a clue that we are dealing here with a highly *artistic* activity. The walls are strewn with sketches and images of every kind, while all sorts of different objects lie on the table: paper patterns, tubes of paint, wooden lasts, shoes, scraps of fabric, leather swatches, fashion magazines, etc. In other words, the artistic endeavour of "creating ideas" has left its mark on the workplace itself.[47]

Another topic often addressed and sometimes described in detail was the interaction between *Création,* sales, and patternmaking. In brief, new designs from *Création* were submitted to the sales teams or the sales manager, who checked the pullovers or last-drawings for technical feasibility and wearability, and signed them off—in other words, approved them for inclusion in the sample collection.[48] The last-drawings or pullovers of the selected models were then handed over to the patternmaking department, where the "modelleurs"[49] would convert them into cutting templates on a special type of last:

> Trustingly, the *créateur* puts it [the design for the shaft, A/N] into our hands, explaining the kernel of his idea, the key element, one might say, of his creation from the fashion point of view. This conversation between the *modelleur* and the *créateur* is necessary and important. It forms the solid connection between sales and patternmaking.[50]

Then came the so-called "*création* of the lasts", adapting or developing the three-dimensional template for production.

A great number of other sources, however, show that this well-ordered process was not always as clear-cut. In the 1930s and 1940s, *création* was an extremely dynamic process that not only produced individual shoes, as described above, but also had to generate a whole new type of knowledge. Changes in fashion had to be constantly detected and monitored in order to transform them into successful styles. In what follows, I give a (non-exhaustive) picture of the resources available to the *Création* department, which in a very short space of time grew to number sixteen people [FIG. IV].

Generating Knowledge[51]

The vital importance of keeping abreast of current fashions and future fashion trends[52] was clear to those in charge at *Bally,* at the latest from the moment when the company committed itself to producing "fashion shoes".

Fashion Reports

It was essential that the *créateurs,* last- and patternmakers, as well as sales staff also had access to current fashion news. From

Jubiläums-Album
Foto No. 1012

Bally-Schuhfabriken AG

Abteilung: Création Schönenwerd

1.	Schenker	Ernst
2.	Stirnemann	Jeannette
3.	Von Arx	Otto
4.	Weber	Erwin
5.	Matter	Max
6.	Eng	Albert
7.	Studer	Adelheid
8.	Gugelmann	Paul
9.	Lehmann	Robert
10.	Lack	Peter
11.	Buser	Walter
12.	Von Arx	Robert
13.	Pini	Peter
14.	Steiner	Fritz
15.	Kühni	Fritz
16.	Nünlist	Emil

[IV] Création (1951)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

the mid-1930s, "fashion" was increasingly mentioned in *Mitteilungen*, while from 1932 onwards the *Arola Hauszeitung* ran regular and detailed first-hand reports of current fashions from Paris, London, and New York (years, in fact, before *Annabelle,* the first Swiss fashion magazine, was launched). Particularly detailed reports were provided by Grete Trapp,[53] an experienced fashion journalist and collector who got to attend the Paris fashion shows.

Interest in fashion trends was not restricted to the European and North American centres of fashion. Within twenty years of the end of the First World War, *Bally* had increased its export activities manyfold, so that by 1937 it had a presence on every continent. Thanks to local representatives, information relevant to design and production was now flowing into Schönenwerd from all over the world. For example, from Baghdad:

> In Iraq, the hand-made shoe trade is flourishing. It delivers sandals and light-weight footwear within the shortest timescales and copies imported models with skill and without scruple. What the company Orosdi-Back orders from us, therefore, are those shoes which the local craft industry cannot produce well: largely pumps with very high heels […] our classic models […] in many variations, black, brown, blue, gold, and silver, with a variety of different ornaments. Particularly popular are styles with large, striking bows, which are not easy for local shoemakers to copy.[54]

The information gathered in Schönenwerd was not only critical for design and production at Swiss headquarters but was also disseminated within the company "to give a fashion lead to our factories abroad".[55]

Colours

From the second half of the 1920s onwards, not only did the variety of styles increase but *Bally* shoes also became multicoloured: black, brown, and cream were supplemented by a broad spectrum of colours. As early as 1926, Max Bally was arguing for colourful leather uppers and contemplating collaborating with the dye manufacturer Geigy.[56] Besides the complex process of leather dying, precise colour matching was of the

utmost importance. An American shoe manufacturer put the problem succinctly in 1921:

> The great difficulty of matching the emerald of the shoe with the emerald of the stocking tends to discourage even the most experienced shoppers. And brilliant shoes that *nearly* match the equally brilliant stockings are taboo in the wardrobes of the well dressed.[57]

Help was at hand with the standardization of the colour palette for the textile and clothing industry, a move which had been in progress for some time. The lead was taken by American organizations such as the Textile Color Card Association (TCCA), founded in 1915, which had already begun to compile seasonal colour charts for the industry during the First World War.[58] These seasonal colour collections were particularly popular with leather-goods manufacturers, whose products now had to match the clothing.[59]

Bally had been in contact with the TCCA, or more specifically its founder and director, Margaret Hayden Rorke, since the 1920s and had been making use of its services for years.[60] The advertising film *Frau Mode spielt auf!* (Lady Fashion Performs!),[61] screened in cinemas in 1939, shows just how aware *Bally* was of the importance of the "correct" colour choice: As long as Lady Fashion can keep playing the colour organ, the shoes produced are in harmony with the customers' overall appearance; if the instrument fails, however, out comes uncouth footwear that causes the mannequins to faint by the dozen.

Museum and Archive

The production of knowledge in the design department was based not only on the knowledge and subsequent material manifestation of current trends, but also on an understanding of the past. The truth of Jakob Tanner's remark that innovation must include a specific mixture of old and new in order to be palatable to the public[62] was borne out at *Bally*, where there was a highly developed awareness that the link between past and present was a necessary foundation for fashion-oriented design. When the museum was opened in 1942 in the "Rock Garden House", it was put under the auspices of the *Création* department.[63]

Housing a huge collection of objects and photographs that aimed to tell the entire world history of footwear,[64] it was no less important as a source of inspiration for designers.

In addition to the museum collection, with its mainly historical scope, the *Création* department also had the Design Archive at its disposal, a repository to which the latest designs were continually being added. (Incidentally, one man played a crucial role in building up both collections: the archivist and conservator Eduard Engensperger, who was curator of the Museum and the Archive until the 1960s.[65] Both collections came to be regarded by *Bally* as sources for corporate historiography since the 1960s at the latest.[66])

Both shoe collections served not only as often intangible "inspiration", but as tangible transmitters of knowledge:

> [W]e must not forget that design knowledge resides in *products* themselves: in the forms and materials and finishes which embody design attributes. Much everyday design work entails the use of precedents or previous exemplars—not because of laziness by the designer but because the exemplars actually contain knowledge of what the product should be.[67]

[v] Schuh-Création- und Modelliersalon Baden
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

Purchased Design

Despite the emphasis on the independence of the *Création* department, there is numerous and varied evidence of the acquisition of external designs—a practice that was widespread throughout the shoe industry at the time[68] and was also adopted at *Bally,* although to what extent it is hard to say. Various categories can, however, be distinguished [FIG. V].

There are, for example, well over a hundred designs from the Schuh-Création- und Modelliersalon Baden, all of them signed "E.H."[69] and dating from the 1940s. Most are for sturdy, everyday shoes, winter shoes, and house shoes. While Modelliersalon Baden seems to have mainly specialized in so-called "everyday" commodities, *Bally* also purchased intellectual-property rights for designs from famous design studios or design services, including Laboremus in Paris. One of the designers represented by Laboremus was Roger Vivier,[70] whose models *Bally* purchased for its exclusive *Madeleine* collection up until 1939.[71]

Bally not only bought in ready-made models, it also actively sought to collaborate with leading contemporary shoe designers. Most remarkable is its attempt to persuade Salvatore Ferragamo to enter into a "collaborative arrangement". Although Italy's entry into the war meant this plan had to be abandoned,[72] contact was nevertheless evidently maintained: in 1942, Salvatore Ferragamo visited the shoe museum in Schönenwerd; in April 1947, "in a personal letter" he offered "a new patent" and expressed his desire for "a visit by Mr Max Bally in person".[73] Possibly this was in connection with a new wedge heel that was discussed two months later by the board,[74] but it is impossible to determine whether this was indeed the case and whether the discussed heel was ever actually incorporated into a finished model.

The contacts that both *Bally Schuhfabriken AG* and Arola AG sought to establish with Salvatore Ferragamo also shine a light on certain essentially illegal practices that were nevertheless commonplace at the time. During the first visit by the team from *Bally* in 1940, Ferragamo obviously voiced a complaint about the Swiss shoe industry copying his designs. *Bally* retaliated:

> [W]e were able, however, to direct his attention to his own compatriots, who were more likely to be involved in such activities, producing imitations which could hardly be told apart from the originals, while, of course, our major ties with the fashion world lie with Paris, London, and New York.[75]

Ferragamo's criticism highlights a problem which remains highly contentious in industrial design to this day: the demarcation between inspiration and copying, or intellectual-property theft. The theft of *haute couture* designs was common practice. In fact, a real "counterfeit couture" existed in Paris,[76] which supplied less well-off clients in Europe and abroad with the latest fashions. Anne Sudrow remarked on something similar in the shoe industry:

> The main method employed by shoe companies for acquiring new designs was not developing styles of their own, but copying them. [...] The shoe industry relied on barely concealed design theft, mostly from abroad.[77]

Bally knew how to protect its intellectual property and did so actively. Its advertisements were usually accompanied by the words "designs protected by law", and it vigorously pursued the legal protection of both brand names and styles.

From the 1930s onwards, the firm employed its own lawyer to pursue "violations of the Bally trademark", reported instances of which occurred, for example, in 1931 in Germany, Romania, and Latvia alone.[78] While protection of the brand name was mostly necessary abroad, the protection of designs—pursued with great effort and expense—was mostly directed against competitors at home[79] [FIG. VI]. In the company archives are two huge files of registered designs: Volume III for the years 1939–1945 and Volume V for 1949–1952.[80] They contain collections of photographs, pasted in in date order, often showing just the pullover rather than the finished shoe. These volumes are not only one of the most reliable sources for the dating of individual shoes, but also a visual record of *Bally's* definition of fashion and fashionable footwear over time. The sheer number of designs registered is enormous: In 1939, for example, between

40 and 120 designs, mostly for ladies' shoes, were submitted almost every month to the Federal Office for Industrial Property (Eidgenössisches Amt für gewerbliches Eigenthum)—a total of more than 600 in a single year. The war years that followed saw no drop in output.[81] *Bally* did, however, have misgivings—at least from time to time—about the effectiveness or enforceability of their registrations, owing to "certain considerations" and "corporate friendships".[82]

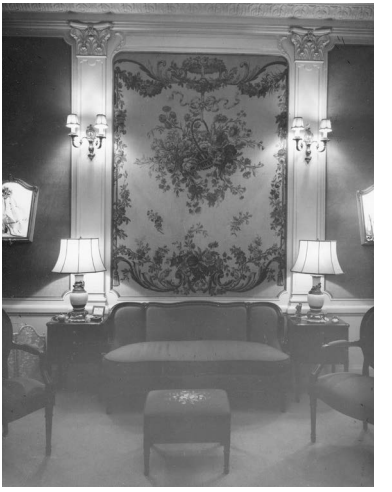
Studio XIII Haute Botterie. L'avant-garde de la mode pour la chaussure[83]

With its new focus on fashion footwear, *Bally* began to involve "creative clients"—i.e., certain selected retailers, such as Charles Doelker—in compiling its collections.[84] A further step in this direction was the opening of Studio Treize, one of the most interesting and radical attempts to discover what customers wanted through direct contact with the street. When the studio opened at an exclusive address off Zürich's Bahnhofstrasse in 1948, Max W. Wittstock explained that its purpose was to be an "experimental stage" for trying out new types and styles of shoes, colours, and heels. If successful, the ideas could then be applied "more widely".[85]

[VI] File of registered designs
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

The Zürich studio was probably intended as a sort of prototype; others followed in London, Paris, and New York. Some years later, Max Bally remarked:

Establishing a sample collection with as close to a 100 percent popularity rate as possible can only be done with maximum understanding, not only of clients' requirements, but also, more to the point, of the market situation in the relevant country.
Experience teaches us that it is only through studios that market conditions can be understood, and appropriate decisions reached. […] Our aim is that these studios, each in its own country, should undertake



[VII] Studio Treize (c. 1948)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

the sort of product surveys carried out by the sales organization and tell the factory what is wanted[86] [FIG. VII].

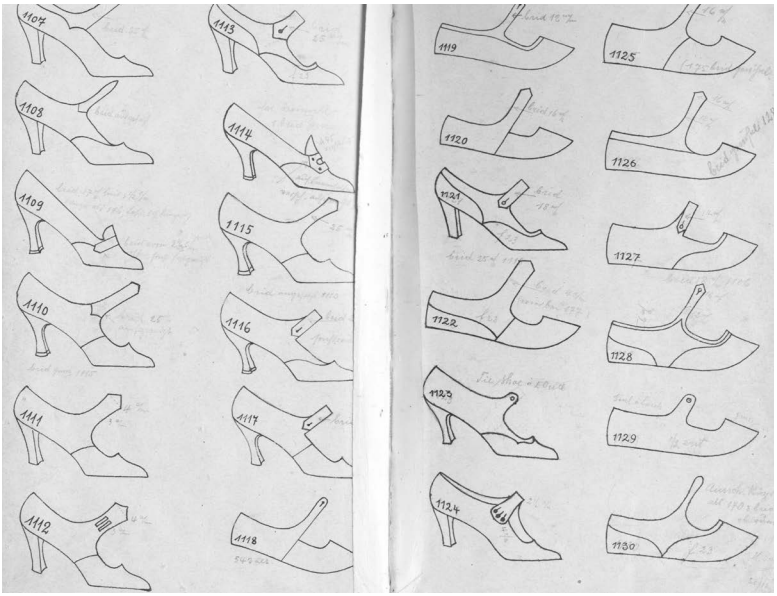
The studio was not only a laboratory for creative experimentation, however, but also a place of "haute botterie"—the equivalent, for shoes, of *haute couture*. Accordingly, the shop decor was luxurious. There were no rows of shelves, floor to ceiling, of the sort normally found behind the scenes at ordinary retail premises.[87] Shoes were presented in brightly lit, gold-framed display cases, individually, rather than in pairs, or in ensembles with matching handbags and scarves. Contextualized or, rather, staged in this way, the shoe was "de-commodified", stripped of any mercantile connotations, and turned into a precious object in its own right. With studio decor by the famous costumier and interior designer René Hubert,[88] the parallels with the Paris salons of the postwar era were unmistakeable. Jess Berry describes the way in which the postwar reassertion of traditional gender roles patently expressed itself, not only in the hyperfeminine fashions of Christian Dior, but also in couturiers' salons, where the decor was reminiscent of the aristocratic aesthetic of Louis XVI.[89] From the 1950s onwards, the ateliers that supplied these sales outlets also became increasingly visible to the public, thanks, amongst other things, to magazine articles. According to Berry, this was in order to display and enshrine the artistic and luxurious nature of *haute couture.*[90] Studio Treize imitated the Paris salons in this respect, too: a series of photographs shows Heidy Studer-Welter, who managed the studio on the Bärengasse for several years, at work designing shoes and giving fittings on the studio premises.

Studer-Welter was not the only woman to manage a studio. In fact, Max Bally wanted these exclusive salons to be mainly led by women—in their role as "fashion ladies" (a term he came up with in English):

Nowadays, these "fashion ladies" are particularly important. In the fashion world, the range of available colours is now near-infinite. At the same time, shoes are technically no longer shoes but simply soles with heels and a few little straps. So the concept of the shoe has to be made interesting by the combination of colours. […] It is

important to realize that, with shoes, **presentation** is vital. At Bally, we are therefore trying to increase our recruitment of "fashion ladies". Today we already have Frau Studer and Miss Williams working alongside each other. It is important for all our "fashion ladies" to work in close harmony. We need a real exchange of ideas in this area, so that we have **maximum consistency in our product range**.[91]

The role ascribed to women here involves both empowerment and confinement to contemporary stereotypes. The "fashion ladies" were to be barometers in the changing world of fashion and point the way for the collections—and therefore also profit margins. All this was based, however, on the premise that shoes "are technically no longer shoes", but only "soles with heels and a few little straps". In the male-dominated *Création* department, the comparatively important position of the "fashion lady" in the newly formulated design framework was predicated on the feminization of the shoe as an object; in other words, on a focus on the superficial with an implicit disregard of underlying structure and construction.

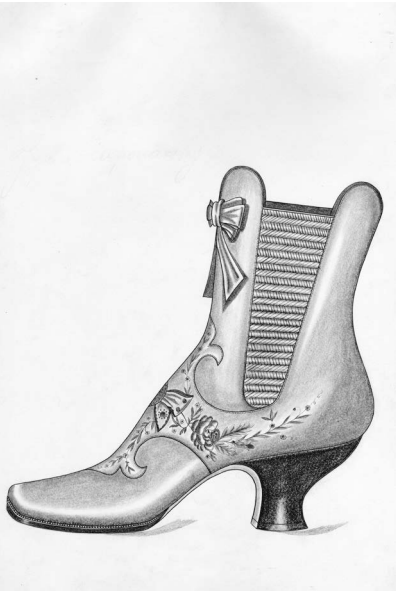


[XIII] Cutting templates (1908)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

The nature, extent, and duration of the influence exercised by the studios on shoe design could not be determined from the sources available. It was probably not without controversy, as an internal document written by Marc Oboussier in 1961 entitled "The Problems of the *Création* Department" suggests. A manager at *Bally* for many years, Oboussier maintained that "the New York studio bore very little fruit, the Zürich studio even less".[92]

Shoe Design—Fashion Design—Industrial Design

Industrialization is generally equated with automation and standardization. This was not entirely true of shoe production, however. At *Bally,* for example, although organized on the principle of division of labour, manufacture was initially entirely done by hand.[93] The first *Singer* sewing machines were installed in Schönenwerd in 1854; the *McKay* stitching machine, a milestone in mass production, was launched in 1868.[94] In the rapidly growing urban centres of Europe, specialist shoe shops had in fact emerged by as early as the second half of the 18th century, selling ready-made shoes in large numbers.



[IX] Shoe design (?) by Johann Hospodarsky (1885)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; © Bally)

Manufacture and sales were therefore no longer conducted under one roof, as they had been in traditional workshops.[95] The anecdote about the company's founder, Carl Franz Bally, bringing back twelve pairs of shoes from Paris for his wife without even knowing her shoe size, illustrates how commonplace ready-made shoe manufacture already was in the mid-19th century.[96] Creative design in industrial conditions—to which little attention has so far been devoted in the literature—remained primarily rooted in the time-honoured repertoire of shoe types whose forms did not change. Variety was created, if at all, through the use of different trimmings. This was as true of men's shoes as of women's.[97] The variations in surface design can be traced in the Design Archive. Shoe styles from the early decades of the 20th century differ from one another

[XA] Fritz Kühni, ideas scrapbook and designs (1930s)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; photo: © Ballyana)

mainly in their stitching, appliqué decorations, buckles, etc. In this period, parallels with *les grands bottiers* are evident. One of the best-known of these was Pietro (Pierre) Yantorny (1874–1936), "le bottier le plus cher du monde",[98] who from 1898 onwards supplied a wealthy European and American clientele with shoes of "classic style and artistic design".[99] *Bally's* 1907 appointment of Adolf Streit, an "experienced bottier",[100] trained in Paris, must have been in response to this strongly handcraft-oriented type of design.

By the 1920s, however, it was becoming clear that industrial mass production would soon overtake *les grands bottiers*. "The shoe that answers fashion's call"[101] was a matter for industry, which was far better equipped to transform the shoe from a functional object to a consumer product that followed and reflected changing fashions. The key was standardization, a route already tried and tested by protoindustrial enterprises, which were able to react to the twists and turns of fashion and, ultimately, to pre-empt them and determine their course.[102]

With the new focus on fashion, the requirements of shoe design altered, and, with them, the design profession itself. The shift in the knowledge base was striking: While the *modelleur* drew on a tried-and-tested repertoire, which meant, among other things, understanding and implementing the "knowledge implicit in the object itself",[103] the designer's knowledge base was different and much broader. Ties to the artisanal tradition loosened; the knowledge of producing by hand went into decline. In its place came knowledge of the latest fashions in modern urban centres abroad, trends in colour, style, and materials, and even the preferences and whims of the targeted clientele. The photographs [FIGS. II, III] of Max Matter and his team illustrate the type of resources they drew on: fashion magazines, colour and material charts, fashionable footwear. The *créateurs* were no longer required to master the craft of shoemaking *à fond*. At the same time, their self-perception also changed. *Bally's* internal publications liked to point out the freedom enjoyed by its designers, and the key role played by the "creation of ideas",[104] conjuring up the popular image of the artist's studio with its "walls strewn with sketches and images of every kind".[105] This idea of "artistic freedom" might have been a

myth, cultivated within the company and resonating with the contemporary discourse about the role and definition of creative design within industry. Nevertheless, a marked change in attitude is clear from the archives: While Johann Hospodarsky's illustrations are primarily carefully executed technical design drawings and reference anthologies on cuts and form, the sketches by Fritz Kühni (1908–2000), in all their colourful variety, are expressions of a creative *process*, intimately connected with the concept of modern design[106] [FIGS. IX, XA, XB, XC].

At *Bally*, the development of a contemporary concept of design within the industrial context was inseparably linked to fashion. By the late 1920s, the board of directors already believed that fashion was the key to commercial success—even if now and then it bemoaned the antics and vagaries of "fashion, which has an increasing tendency to move in a downwards direction, from hat and dress to shoes, and, once there, to make capricious demands for far too much choice and far too many changes".[107] Its faith in fashion was obviously not ill-founded: In 1934, after a few difficult years in the wake of the global economic crisis, *Bally* was able to increase its production considerably once again

[XB] Fritz Kühni, ideas scrapbook and designs (1930s)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; photo: © Ballyana)

and take on a further 850 workers.[108] This success was mainly ascribed to "contact with the [foreign] capitals of the fashion world".[109]

It is evident that the focus on fashion in the product range also had some negative results. It is true that Max Bally, the most passionate advocate of this new direction on the company board, encountered very little opposition, although there were probably some controversial debates around actual organizational implementation and possible financial risks. Most striking, however, is the practical criticism from the production department. This is where it becomes clear that the greater freedom and sense of independence enjoyed by the design department went hand in hand with a greater distance from the manufacturing process—sometimes with serious consequences. Even small changes in the construction of a shoe, or the introduction, for example, of new materials, could have adverse or even disastrous effects. In the present context there is room only for a few examples of this friction between design and production. In summary, it occurred in essentially three areas. Firstly, new materials presented difficulties, particularly during the war years.

[xc] Fritz Kühni, ideas scrapbook and designs (1930s)
(Historical Archives of Bally Schuhfabriken AG; photo: © Ballyana)

The *Création* department, which was enthusiastically designing shoes made from wood, cork, straw, "ersatz materials", etc., was confronted with a massive increase in the number of shoes being returned for repair: From late 1938 to early 1943 post-sale repair costs more than doubled, as *Bally* had to foot the bill for replacing defective jointed wooden soles, broken reclaimed-rubber soles, *zoccoli* cork soles, and cork wedge soles.[110] Secondly, producing shoes from these types of materials slowed down the normal production process. For example, the employee responsible for overseeing the production of lasts complained that his area's output was falling behind:

> One can see from this what a burden these fashion items are for the machinery. One has to remember that lasts are what make shoe production productive, whereas for each pair of wedges or cork soles produced you are only ever going to get one pair of shoes for sale.[111]

Thirdly, it was sometimes difficult or impossible for the styles demanded by fashion to be satisfactorily implemented by the production department at all. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the high, slender stilettoed heel presented particular problems. At first, *Bally* found that the only way to deal with the unsolved technical difficulties (the heels tended to break off easily) was communication: One tactic was to enclose a note with stiletto-heeled shoes saying that the factory could not accept any liability for broken heels, on the grounds that, "of course, the STILETTO heel is advertised as an adornment for the feet and not as an item for practical use".[112] Another approach was to instruct sales personnel to apply "tact and discretion" in advising "heavy and corpulent customers" and those "who obviously cannot wear this type of shoe with the necessary care and discernment" against ever purchasing them.[113]

"Bally Offers More"[114]

The emergence of product design in the 19th century was not only theoretically underpinned, reflected, and driven by manifestos, programmatic pamphlets, and scientific discoveries; industry itself, with its huge variety of practices and methods, was perhaps the most important protagonist.

Over the decades covered by this research, *Bally* found a way of positioning itself successfully in the increasingly fashion-oriented global market through the growth of its own *Création* department. By developing firm ties to the fashion system, with its specific procedures and knowledge base, *Bally* was able to free itself from the traditional design context and forge ahead with its own decidedly modern and independent style.

1 Vogue, vol. 57, no. 9, 1 May 1921, p. 3.
2 Although Bally also stocked a large and varied selection of men's shoes that were also increasingly obliged to satisfy fashion criteria (see Daniel Späti's essay in this volume, p. 77), I have chosen to concentrate here on women's fashion shoes, which were "Bally's speciality" ("Gedanken zur Entwicklung des Ballyschuhs", 24 November 1969, p. 1; Ballyana, Streuli Bequest M./P-SM/1).
3 It is unclear when and where the Design Archive was founded. According to Alfred Wildi, the display cases with prototypes were already in existence when he started work in Bally's Création department in the mid-1950s. At that time, they were housed in the "Haus zum Magazin" (email from Ursula Gut, 26 August 2019). According to Ursula Gut, who became curator of the museum in 1990 and of the Bally Archives in 2010, all the objects and documents still in existence were moved to their present location in 2009 (conversation with the author on 15 August 2019).
4 Renamed "Mitteilungen der Bally-Schuhfabriken A.-G." in June 1938 and "Mitteilungen der Bally Schuhfabriken AG Schönenwerd an ihr Personal" in January 1942.
5 www.ballyana.ch.
6 Fred J. Klaus recounts a telling anecdote illustrating this very problem, under the title "Die Chaussierprobe", Klaus 1985, pp. 22–24.
7 Riello 2006, p. 233.
8 For a concise description of workflows in the German shoe industry, see Sudrow 2010, p. 169.
9 Mitteilungen, vol. 7, no. 16, 15 July 1947, p. V.
10 Ibid., no. 15, 1 July 1947, p. III.
11 Folio without a shelf mark.
12 Mitteilungen, vol. 7, no. 15, 1 July 1947, p. IV.
13 Ibid., vol. 10, no. 7, 1 March 1950, p. II.
14 Ibid., no. 12, 15 May 1950, p. II.
15 Ibid., p. II.

16 Bally was not only the largest producer of shoes, but at certain times accounted for as much as 95 percent of Switzerland's shoe exports (Mitteilungen, no. 14, 15 April 1937, p. 4).
17 Mitteilungen, vol. 10, no. 7, 1 March 1950, p. III.
18 Board Minutes, 16 August 1929, p. 1.
19 Schweizerische Schuhmacher-Zeitung, vol. 65, no. 12, 15 June 1939, p. 182.
20 Waterer, John W.: "The Industrial Designer and Leather" in: Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, vol. 91, no. 4629 (25 December 1942), pp. 56–72.
21 http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/collections/design-archives/resources/rdis-at-britain-can-make-it,-1946/john-waterer (accessed 29 July 2019).
22 Waterer, John W.: "The Industrial Designer and Leather" in: Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, vol. 91, no. 4629 (25 December 1942), p. 61.
23 Ibid., pp. 62f. This analysis did not just apply to the situation in British industry. See Sudrow 2010, p. 168.
24 Mitteilungen, vol. 3, no. 19, 1 September 1943, p. VIII.
25 Ibid., vol. 13, no. 17, 1 September 1953, p. IX.
26 Her first name is spelled in a variety of ways in the sources: Heidy, Heidi, Adelheid.
27 Mitteilungen, vol. II, no. 9, 1 April 1942, pp. 11f.
This "role assignment" was also common in other industries; see, for example: Buckley, Cheryl: Potters and Paintresses. Women Designers in the Pottery Industry 1870–1955; London 1990.
28 Bally Arola Hauszeitung, vol. 31, no. 89, December 1962, p. 12.
Bally was a very frequent exhibitor at both national and international expos and trade fairs. On its landmark show at the 1939 Swiss National Expo in Zürich, see Katharina Tietze: "'A Fairy-Tale Affair …!' Bally Shoes at the Swiss National Exposition of 1939", p. 155 in this volume.
29 Ibid., p. 12.
30 Board Minutes no. 437/25.5.1943, p. 2; and no. 443/15 June 1943, p. 1.
31 Mitteilungen, vol. 12, no. 17, 1 September 1952, pp. 1f.
32 Neue Zürcher Zeitung, no. 463, 5 October 1971, p. 33.
33 Mitteilungen, vol. 32, no. 7/8, July/August 1972, p. 6.
34 For example, Othmar Gisi; see Mitteilungen, vol. I, 15 May 1941, p. VI.
35 Ibid., p. VIII.
36 Board Minutes no. 253/28 March 1938.
37 For example, Board Minutes no. 93/24 November 1936, pp. 3f.
38 See Schmelzer-Ziringer, Barbara: Mode Design Theorie; Vienna et al. 2015, pp. 21–36.

39 See Stern, Radu: Against Fashion. Clothing as Art, 1850–1930; Cambridge Mass. 2004; Loos, Adolf: "Damen Mode 1898" in: Gesammelte Schriften; Vienna 2010, pp. 175–181.
40 Breward 2016, p. 187.
41 Quoted in Gnägi, Thomas et al. (eds.): Gestaltung Werk Gesellschaft. 100 Jahre Schweizerischer Werkbund SWB; Zürich 2013, p. 53b.
42 Wild 2016, p. 121.
43 Blaszczyk 2008, p. 6.
44 Arola Hauszeitung, vol. 20, no. 58, December 1951, p. 3.
45 See, for example, Board Minutes no. 235/23.12.1937, p. 4.
46 Ballyana, Streuli Bequest, P-SM/1.
47 Mitteilungen, vol. 3, no. 4, 15 January 1943, p. IV.
48 Ibid., vol. 10, no. 6, 15 February 1950, pp. If.
49 The name by which Bally's designers were known.
50 Mitteilungen, vol. 10, no. 6, 15 February 1950, p. II.
51 I am expressly excluding "scientific market research" from this discussion; see Wild 2019, pp. 300–320. A separate study would be needed to investigate the influence of the US shoe and leather industry and its associated organizations. Particularly during the period covered by this study, there was a great deal of travel by all members of the company board.
52 On the history of the study of fashion trends, see Blaszczyk 2018, pp. 1–32.
53 For example, her first article written for the Arola Hauszeitung, no. 4, 1932, pp. 4–11.
54 Mitteilungen, vol. 1, 1 July 1941, p. II.
55 Board Minutes no. 219/24 April 1941, p. 4.
56 Board Minutes, 16 July 1926, p. 2.
57 Blumenthal, F.: Amalgamated Leather Companies; quoted in Blaszczyk 2012, p. 163.
58 Blaszczyk 2012 and 2018.
59 Blaszczyk 2012, p. 166.
60 Mitteilungen, vol. 4, no. 10, 15 April 1944, pp. 1f.; Arola Hauszeitung, vol. 18, no. 52, December 1949, p. 39.
61 On the economic context, see Roman Wild's essay in this volume, p. 21.
62 König 2009, p. 141.
63 When the board discussed financing the purchase of objects for the collection, they concluded by explicitly allocating the costs to the Création department (Board Minutes no. 16/15 June 1936).
64 https://www.aarauinfo.ch/entdecken/bally-schuhmuseum-sch%C3%B-6nenwerd (accessed 15 July 2019).

65 Mitteilungen, vol. 2, no. 6, 15 February 1942, p. VII; Mitteilungen, vol. 29, no. 2, February 1969, p. 2.
66 Mitteilungen, vol. 23, no. 4, April 1963, p. 11.
67 Cross 2007, p. 125.
68 For example, after his trip to the USA in 1936, Max Bally noted that most factories purchased sketches or pullovers (Board Minutes no. 93/24 November 1936, p. 4).
69 Loose-leaf folder without shelf mark.
70 Nenno 2016, p. 36.
71 Arola Hauszeitung, vol. 34, no. 98, December 1965, p. 11. For a detailed discussion, see Nenno 2016, pp. 35–46.
72 Arola Hauszeitung, no. 27, June 1940, p. 3. Although Salvatore Ferragamo is not actually named, he can be identified unambiguously from location details, etc.
73 Board Minutes no. 665/3 April 1947, pp. 2f.
74 Board Minutes no. 674/9 June 1947, p. 1.
75 Arola Hauszeitung, no. 27, June 1940, p. 4.
76 Hawes 2015 [1938], p. XX.
77 Sudrow 1910, p. 170.
78 Board Minutes no. 241/15 November 1931.
79 Board Minutes no. 367/24 November 1938, p. 2.
80 Shelf mark 101/14/385-2. The whereabouts of the missing volumes is unknown, as is whether this rate of registration was sustained after 1952. According to oral communication received by phone from the Swiss Patent Office (Eidgenössisches Institut für Geistiges Eigentum) on 15 January 2020, old records have not been digitalized and it would therefore be extremely time-consuming to clarify this question.
81 Numbers of registered designs: 1940: 391; 1941: 692; 1942: 590; 1943: 742; 1944: 305; 1945: 536.
82 Board Minutes no. 367/24 November 1938, pp. 2f.
83 Also: Studio Treize.
84 Oboussier, Marc: "Die Probleme der Kreationsabteilung", p. 2; Ballyana, P-SM/1, Streuli Bequest, p. 2.
85 Arola Hauszeitung, vol. 17, no. 49, December 1948, pp. 33f.
86 Bally, Max: "Eindrücke über die führenden USA Schuhunternehmen anlässlich meiner Herbstreise 1954" (Impressions of Leading US Shoe Companies Gleaned During My Trip of Autumn 1954, addressed to the dele-

gates and directors of the Bally Schuhfabriken AG), pp. 12–14; Ballyana, P-WB/7, Konglomerat 1573.

87 When they redesigned Bally's flagship store in London's New Bond Street, David Chipperfield Architects chose to incorporate a nostalgic evocation of these shelves. See https://davidchipperfield.com/project/bally_london_new_bond_street_flagship (accessed 24 September 2019).

88 Arola Hauszeitung, vol. 28, no. 80, September 1959, p. 39.

89 Berry 2018, pp. 23f.

90 Ibid., p. 24.

91 Bally, Max: Impressions of Leading US Shoe Companies Gleaned During My Trip of Autumn 1954, addressed to the delegates and directors of the Bally Schuhfabriken AG, pp. 12–14; Ballyana, P-WB/7, Konglomerat 1573.

92 Oboussier, Marc: "Die Probleme der Kreationsabteilung", p. 1; Ballyana, P-SM/1, Streuli Bequest.

93 Hundert Jahre Bally-Schuhe, 1951, p. 18.

94 Ibid., p. 28.

95 Riello 2006, pp. 12f.

96 Scalabrin 2009, pp. 109f.

97 Ibid. 2006, p. 77.

98 Bossan 2004, p. 84.

99 Ibid., p. 84.

100 Mitteilungen, vol. I, 15 May 1941, p. VIII.

101 Vogue, vol. 57, no. 9, 1 May 1921, p. 3.

102 Riello 2006, pp. 55f; Styles 1993, pp. 528f.

103 "[…] traditional crafts are based on the knowledge implicit within the object itself of how best to shape, make and use it. This is why craft-made products are usually copied very literally from one example to the next, from one generation to the next" (Cross 2007, p. 125).

104 Mitteilungen, vol. 3, no. 4, 15 Janaury 1943, p. IV.

105 Ibid., p. IV.

106 On the function of the sketch in the production of knowledge and understanding in design, see, for example, Cross 2007, p. 116.

107 Mitteilungen, no. 21, 1 August 1938, p. 2.

108 Ibid., no. 7, 1 January 1934, no page no.

109 Ibid., no. 8, 15 January 1934, no page no.

110 Board Minutes no. 436, 20 May 1943, appendix "Spezialprotokoll".

111 Board Minutes no. 293, 14 June 1938, p. 1.

112 Mitteilungen, vol. XV, no. 21, 1 November 1955, p. V.

113 Ibid., p. VI. The problem was solved by Roger Vivier at about the same time: He designed the "Skyscraper" for Christian Dior and used a type of steel developed by the munitions industry (Semmelhack 2008, p. 50).

114 Advertising slogan from the 1930s.