

ARTIS THEMED WALKS
SECESSION TAILORED TO
THE INQUISITIVE WALKER



BELGRADE

1 CITY – 5 BUILDINGS – COUNTLESS STORIES

THE MOSCOW HOTEL (1907)

1 Balkanska Street



The Moscow Hotel, built in 1905–1907 as the "Russia" Palace, owned by the Saint Petersburg-based "Rossiya" insurance company, is a representative example of the Secession style in Belgrade. Located downtown, in Terazije Square, on a parcel of land formerly belonging to Svetozar Vukadinović, the director of the Serbian Shipping Company in the early 20th century, it is one of the landmarks of the Serbian capital. The Moscow is a rare example of the Russian-style Art Nouveau outside Russia and also the most complex structure of this style from the beginning of the 20th century. Designed by architects Jovan Ilkić and Pavel Karlovich Bergstresser, it was one of the first structures in the Balkans built using reinforced concrete. In addition to the Rossiya insurance company offices, this five storeys high (ground floor and four floors above it) investment worth one million rubles also included a restaurant, shops and a 40-room hotel. It was the largest privately-owned building in Belgrade on the eve of World War I and the first one fully equipped with electrical lighting, its own elevator and steam heating.

The polychromatic yellowish-and-green façade of the Moscow Hotel was decorated using Zsolnay ceramics made in Pécs, while the expensive Swedish and Ripanj granites were used for the interior decorative plastic. Above the front entrance, the façade features a sculpture of a woman with three children personifying Russia. The most prominent section of the façade facing Terazije Square, modelled in green majolica, features the „Glorification of Russia” – a relief representation of the country's great economic and naval power.

The Moscow was inaugurated by King Petar I Karadjordjević on the 14th January 1908, marking the beginning of its exciting history. The hotel hosted many dignitaries and notables including Albert Einstein, Jean-Paul Sartre, Richard Nixon, Luciano Pavarotti, Roman Polanski, Garry Kasparov, Indira Gandhi, Alfred Hitchcock, Miloš Forman, Jack Nicholson, Princess Elizabeth Karadjordjević and Rebecca West.

Damaged in Belgrade bombing in 1941, the Moscow was renovated twice – first, in the seventies and the second time in the early 21st century. The Zsolnay factory in Pécs has preserved to this day the original moulds of ceramic façade ornamentation of this building. The Moscow Hotel was proclaimed a cultural monument of great importance in 1979. It is famous for its restaurant serving Serbian and French specialties ever since its opening, and for one of the best pastry shops in Belgrade.

Jovan Ilkić (1857–1917)

Jovan Ilkić, one of the most notable builders of modern Belgrade, majored in architecture in Vienna in 1883 in the class of the famous professor Teophil von Hansen. He was given his first task in Hansen's studio where he was working on the designs for the Vienna Parliament. Upon the invitation of King Milan Obrenović, he returned to Serbia to finalize the interior design of the Old Palace. In 1883–1889, he worked as an engineer at the Ministry of Construction. In 1910–1912, he was engaged in the construction of the Pelman factory in Budapest. His other works include designs of many private houses and public edifices in Belgrade, the Moscow Hotel and the National Assembly being the most representative buildings bearing Ilkić's signature. He died in 1917 in Neusiedl (Austria) in a camp for the Serbian intellectual elite.

Moscow Schnitte Cake – the Taste of Belgrade Secession

Secession can indeed have a particular taste to it. The positive proof is the famous cake made at the Moscow Hotel – the Moscow Schnitte. This colourful cake made of sour cherries, pineapple, almonds, hazelnuts and fine yellow buttercream, devised in 1974 by Anica Džepina, the pastry chef at this grand hotel, is one of those delicacies for which Antoine Carême, the prince among chefs, would have said that pastry making was the fifth, free artistic skill, closest to architecture. The Moscow Schnitte is considered a gastronomic heritage of Belgrade.



Jovan Ilkić



MILAN JOVANOVIĆ'S PHOTO STUDIO (1903) 42 Terazije Square

Although the influence of Secession on the façade of Milan Jovanović's photo studio can be perceived today only in details because the original structure was remodelled several times, this two-storey (ground floor + first floor) house in Kralja Milana Street is a unique witness to a true revolution in Belgrade in the early 20th century. Built in 1903 to the design of architect Milan Antonović, Jovanović's studio was the first building of such kind in Serbia. It used to have a glass roof and a glass façade letting an adequate amount of light into the photo studio on the upper floor. The ground floor included two shops. The balcony and the entrance gate featured a lavish Secession-style wrought iron railing. The façade features a particularly interesting plastic ornamentation detail above the entrance – two little angels in a photo studio. One is behind the camera and the other is sitting for him. Above this lovely scene there is a monogram of the royal photographer Milan Jovanović.

This building located in the immediate vicinity of the Old Palace was a Belgrade equivalent to Viennese photo studios of the same era. The Serbian elite wanted to have individual portraits and family photos with a signature of the photography master engaged by the ruling dynasty. As early as 1911, the back yard of Jovanović's studio hosted the Colosseum cinema opened by Kosta Šonda, the famous industrialist, chocolatier and confectioner. This is how art photography and motion pictures found themselves under the same, Secession roof.

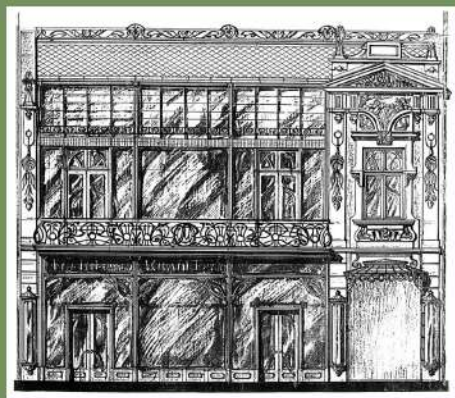
Degraded by numerous changes, Milan Jovanović's studio, proclaimed a cultural monument in 1992, is still awaiting complete, extensive restoration.

Milan Jovanović (1863–1944)

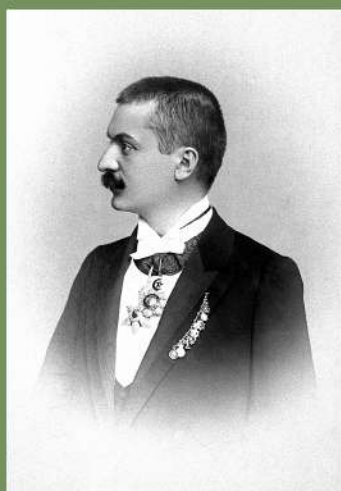
The first Serbian royal photographer Milan Jovanović was born to a Vršac-based family of the photographer Stevan Jovanović, as a younger brother of the famous painter Paja Jovanović. Ever since his childhood, he was learning his craft in his father's photo studio and further improved his skills in Vienna, Trieste, Munich and Paris. In the late eighties of the 19th century he opened his first studio in Belgrade and soon became a distinguished portrait master whose clients included the members of Obrenović and Karadjordjević dynasties. He made the largest collection of portraits of notable figures in the Kingdom of Serbia at the turn of the century. He was also a full-time photographer at the National Theatre. In addition to studio photography, he made fine vedute and panoramic landscape photographs of Belgrade and, thanks to his entrepreneurial flair, he was the first to transfer them to picture postcards. Interestingly, he never took a photo of the building in Terazije Square where his studio was located.

Milan Antonović (1850–1929)

Born in Belgrade, Milan Antonović was the first Serbian architect to own a private design studio. He studied in Zurich and Munich. Antonović ranks among those Serbian architects who mostly did Secession-style designs. Secessionist influence can be found in Antonović's designs of the building of the Society for the Embellishment of Vračar, the house of Dr Platon Papakostopoulos and Milan Jovanović's photo studio. He also designed the Grand Hotel entirely in Secessionist style; however, it was regrettably torn down in the meantime (it was in the location of the present-day Faculty of Philosophy). The Grand was considered one of the most exclusive hotels right up to World War II. Famous for its extravagant Secession-style restaurant, dining room and greenhouse, the Grand Hotel was one of Antonović's most successful designs. His authentic signature can be recognized on Zora and Anker buildings, as well as on many private houses and other public buildings in Belgrade.



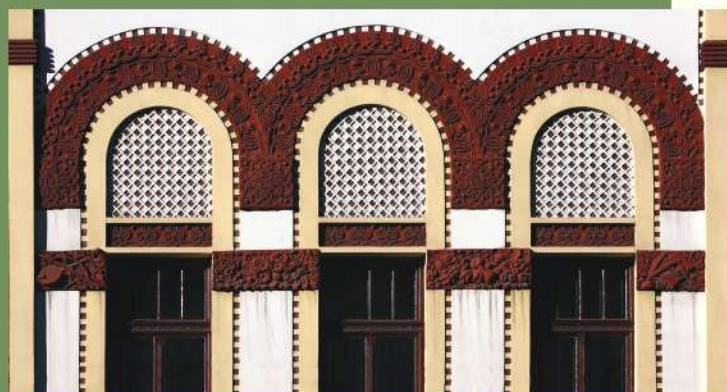
Milan
Antonović



Milan
Jovanović

EDUCATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SERBIA – HOUSE OF VUK'S FOUNDATION (1870–1912)

2 Kralja Milana Street



When the eminent architect Aleksandar Bugarski started the construction of a building on a private property of judge Dimitrije Mita Golubović in 1870, probably no one ever imagined what institutions and important figures this building would be hosting. It was fully completed in 1912 with the strong presence of the national version of Secession. In its long history, the building was the home to Russian Imperial Consulate, Serbian Institute for War Orphans, Ministry of Education, Art Department, Postal Administration, a school of foreign languages, and even a newspaper editorial office. Finally in 1988, it became the foundation house of the philologist, language reformer, collector of folk prose and poetry, and writer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864). However, it hosted the Ministry of Education for the longest stretch (1879–1952), which was crucial for the engagement of two distinguished representatives of Serbian Secession to redesign its façade and interior – architect Branko Tanazević and painter and decorator Dragutin Inkiostri Medenjak. The street façade reflects the influence of medieval ornamentation in the so called "Serbo-Byzantine" style. Under the accentuated central part featuring a three-section arched tympanum, there is a rich plastic decoration with interlacing patterns combined with floral motifs and geometric details. The coat of arms of the Kingdom of Serbia is featured above the entrance with two female faces to the left and right, which is so typical of Secession. The preserved parts of the interior, particularly the murals in the entrance hall, clearly indicate that Tanazević and Inkiostri had a different perception and interpretation of this art style. While Tanazević's source of inspiration was Serbian medieval art, Inkiostri produced a highly interesting combination of Alphonse Mucha's art posters and details taken from Serbian folk art – first of all, from garments and applied art items. Interestingly, Tanazević and Inkiostri were fierce opponents regarding the redesign because of their conflicting views on Serbian cultural heritage.

The House of Vuk's Foundation was proclaimed a cultural monument of great importance in 1979.

Education, History, Art and Faith

A native of Split, Dragutin Inkiostri Medenjak painted the entrance hall of the House of Vuk's Foundation in 1906–1907, at the time when the building was the seat of the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Serbia. The four female figures symbolize Education, History, Art and Faith. Inkiostri was obviously well-acquainted with Alphonse Mucha's Art Nouveau posters because the young women in his frescoes bear a striking resemblance to the models of the better known artist. Apart from the attributes and gestures strongly suggesting what these beauties are a personification of (Education is carrying a torch, History is writing a text on a stone column, Art is holding painting accessories

and Faith's arms are wide open in a praying position), the details on their clothes and jewelry, taken from traditional costumes and folk art, clearly show Serbian heritage. The decoration on pilasters surrounding the paintings are Inkiostri's authentic interpretation of Secession, combined with Serbian folk art heritage. The lowest section features a stylized green ceramic bowl marked with initials of the Ministry of Education. The middle section features an unusual, double-headed eagle in profile resembling a delicate chrysanthemum flower at first sight. A torch symbolizing enlightenment is painted on the top.

Interestingly enough, these frescoes were painted over, most probably after World War II, only to be carefully restored in 1997. Some preserved pieces of furniture used in the former Ministry of Education and designed by Dragutin Inkiostri are exhibited in the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade.

The Old Telephone Exchange located in Kosovska Street is the first building designed in the national Secession style. With this polychromatic façade style, architect Branko Tanazević, a pioneer in engineering which integrates distinctive national motifs into Secession elements, introduced a new, decorative function of stylized plastic of the Morava architectural school. Although the building itself was designed in academic style, its playful façade decorated with rose windows, chessboard and interlacing patterns leaves no doubt about the source of the architect's inspiration. Recognizing the Morava school ornamentation dating from the late 14th and the first half of the 15th century as representative examples of the national medieval architecture, Tanazević developed an authentic personal style, easily distinguishable among many prominent Belgrade architects at the turn of the century. The similarity of façade designs of the Ministry of Education building – the House of Vuk's Foundation – and the Old Telephone Exchange is obvious. The decorative element at the entrance of both buildings is particularly catching the eye since Tanazević repeated the combination of the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Serbia and the two female faces, characteristic of Secession. Arguably, these very faces emphasize the architect's efforts to unite European style trends and his own interpretation of motifs representative of the national architecture of the Middle Ages, as a period considered in Tanazević's time to be the pinnacle of Serbian state and creative power. The Old Telephone Exchange building in Kosovska Street ranks among the most important cultural assets of Serbian industrial heritage. It was protected as a cultural monument of great importance in 1981.

Branko Tanazević (1876–1945)

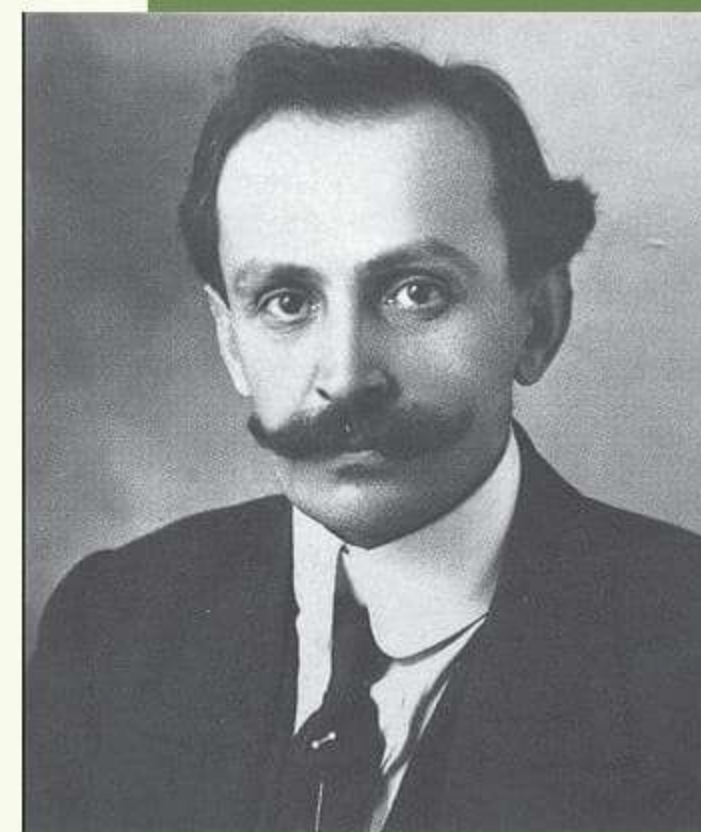
Born in Čakovo, in Banat, to the family closely connected to the first Serbian educator Dositej Obradović, Branko Tanazević was the founder of the national style in Serbian architecture. He graduated from the Faculty of Engineering in Belgrade, Department of Mechanical Engineering, and also received a degree in architecture studies in Munich. As a leading advocate of the national revival in architecture, Tanazević published his theoretical deliberations and ideas in specialized periodicals. Favouring a modern interpretation of cultural heritage, he mostly found his inspiration in the decorative plastic of medieval architectural styles. Producing a unique combination of the national style and Secession, Tanazević designed the Old Telephone Exchange in Kosovska Street, the façade of the Ministry of Education building – House of Vuk's Foundation, Town Hall in Kragujevac, as well as the Serbian pavilion for the 1911 Universal Exhibition in Turin. It is worth mentioning, however, that he designed private houses of respectable people in Belgrade using a distinct Secessionist style. Those included the Nikolić brothers' house at 11 Njegoševa Street and the home of Radisav Stojanović at 5 Stevana Sremca Street. During his long and prolific career, Tanazević was also a professor at the Architectural Department of the Faculty of Engineering in Belgrade where he taught ornamentation, decoration, modelling and town planning.

First "Hello" in Serbia

The modern world is inconceivable without phones, internet and other modern means of communication. However, in the past, Belgraders were not delighted with the idea of having a telephone set in their homes. Panta Mihajlović, a representative of the German company "Siemens-Halske" and a close friend of Nikola Tesla's, therefore tried to persuade the army minister of the Kingdom of Serbia, Teša Nikolić, to replace his fast messengers on horseback with a much more efficient telephone. The skeptical minister rather opposed the idea, but on 14th March 1883 he spoke the historic "hallo" on the telephone installed in the office above the kafana (type of local bistro) "Tri lista duvana" (Three Tobacco Leaves) in Miloša Velikog Street, just about a hundred meters away from the place where the first telephone exchange in Serbia would be built 25 years later.

OLD TELEPHONE EXCHANGE BUILDING (1908)

47 Kosovska Street



Branko Tanazević



The house of Jovan Cvijić, the famous geographer, university professor and president of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, was built to his own design in 1905. A simple structure consisting of a basement, upper ground floor and a garden transforms into quite a treasure chest when one steps inside. The interior of this present-day museum dedicated to the relentless researcher was designed and completed, in consultation with Cvijić, by Dragutin Inkiostri Medenjak, a pioneer in the national style of Serbian applied arts. From the painted walls, to polychromatic wood carvings, to furniture and decorative details, Inkiostri skillfully combined the principles of Secession, and of the Renaissance and Classicism as well, using original folk fabrics, embroidery, kilims and other precious materials Cvijić brought home from his research expeditions in Herzegovina, Bosnia, Šumadija, eastern Serbia, Macedonia. Inspired by Cvijić's collection of handicrafts and by all other items he himself collected while travelling all over the Balkan Peninsula, Inkiostri created a private space of an eminent scholar so as to reflect his professional occupation and to show the beauty of folk art following the principles of the trendy Secession style. It is hard to tell what catches the visitor's eye the most in this space that was turned into a memorial museum in 1967. Is it the wall paintings, or the furniture upholstered with hand-woven fabrics, curtains, decorative cushions and fine wood carvings, or the display of almost 1.500 exhibits from Cvijić's legacy, a testimony to an exciting, fruitful life of an extraordinary man?

Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927)

Jovan Cvijić was one of the pioneers of Serbian science, the founder of the Serbian Geographical Society, president of The Serbian Royal Academy, a professor and the rector of the University of Belgrade, an honorary doctor of the Sorbonne and the Charles University in Prague. He studied social and physical geography, geomorphology, ethnography, geology, anthropology and history. He is considered the founder of Serbian geography. Cvijić became interested in science while studying at the Grand School (which later evolved into the university) when he wrote a paper titled "A Contribution to Our Geographical Terminology". He continued his scientific pursuits as a high-school teacher and a Viennese student when he did research on karst formations in the eastern Serbia, Istria and along the Adriatic coast. Based on these observations, he wrote many papers and his doctoral dissertation. He dedicated his whole life to exploring Serbia and the Balkan Peninsula. While engaged in intensive scientific work over a period of more than thirty years, he published several hundreds of papers, including his most important work, "The Balkan Peninsula".

Dragutin Inkiostri Medenjak (1866–1942)

Born in Split as Carlo Luca Ferdinando Inchiostri, to his Italian father and Serbian mother, he changed his name to Dragutin and added his mother's surname Medenjak to his father's family name when he came to the Kingdom of Serbia in the early 20th century. A multitalented artist, Dragutin Inkiostri was the founder of total design in the Balkans, uniquely advocating one of the key principles of Secession – art as a lifestyle. He gained basic knowledge from his architect father and later on received his education in Florence. As a proponent of the national style, Inkiostri travelled all over the Balkans, studying folk art above all else. He was engaged in painting, wood carving, decorating, textile and furniture design, and photography. For many years he worked as a set designer, decorator and designer at the National Theatre in Belgrade. He designed the interior and furniture for the Ministry of Education building (House of Vuk's Foundation), the home of Djordje Vajfert, the houses of Jovan Cvijić and Djordje Genčić, and many other public and private buildings. He passed his extensive knowledge in folk ornamentation and artistic crafts to the students of School of Arts and Crafts for many years. He is considered the father of modern design in Serbia.

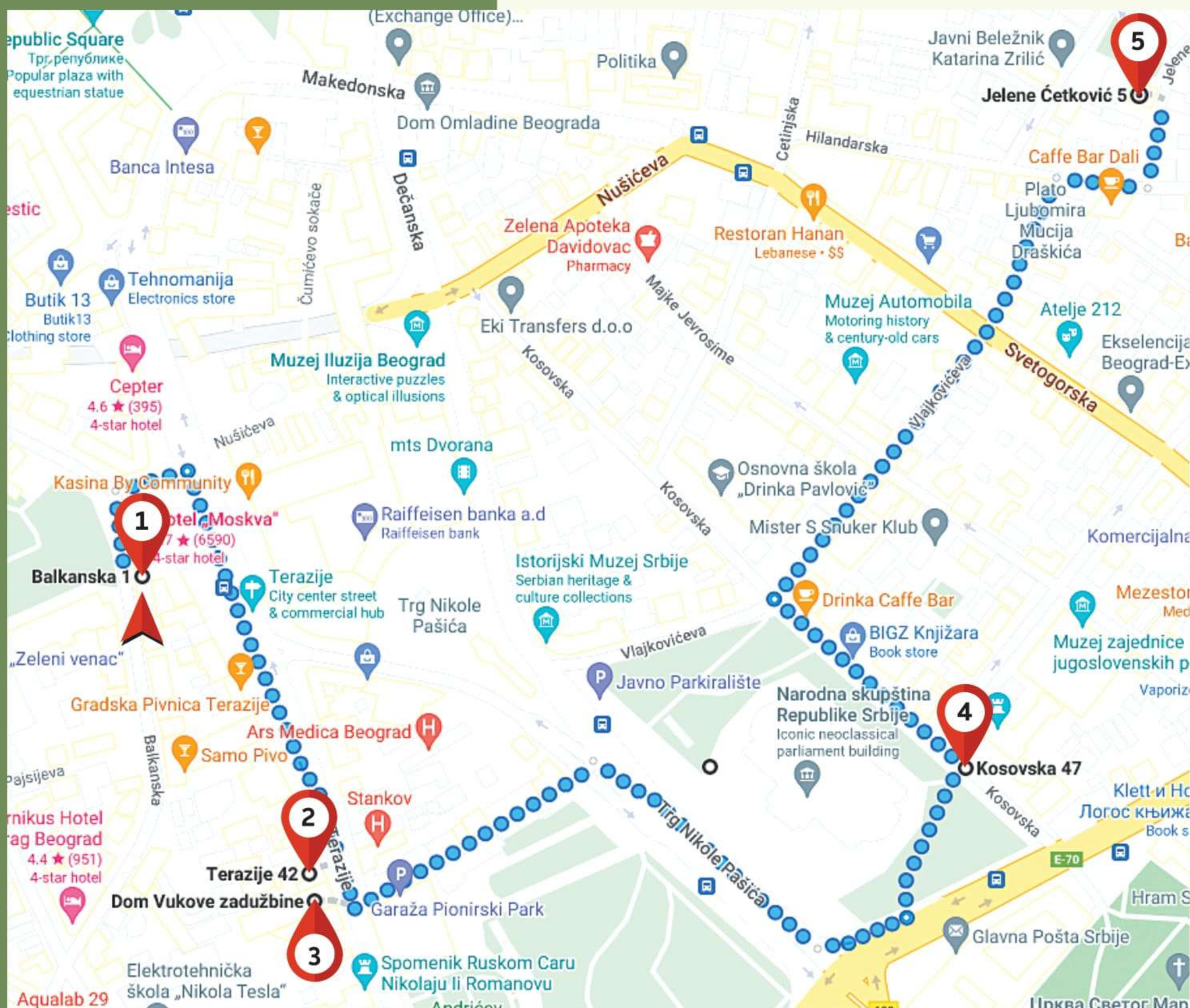
THE INTERIOR OF JOVAN CVJIĆ'S HOUSE-MUSEUM

Jelene Ćetković Street

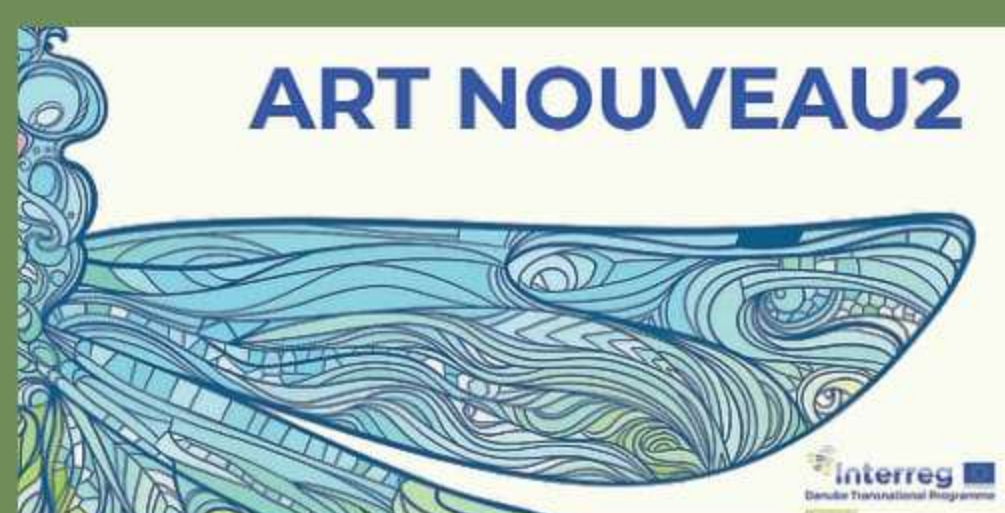


Dragutin
Inkiostri
Medenjak

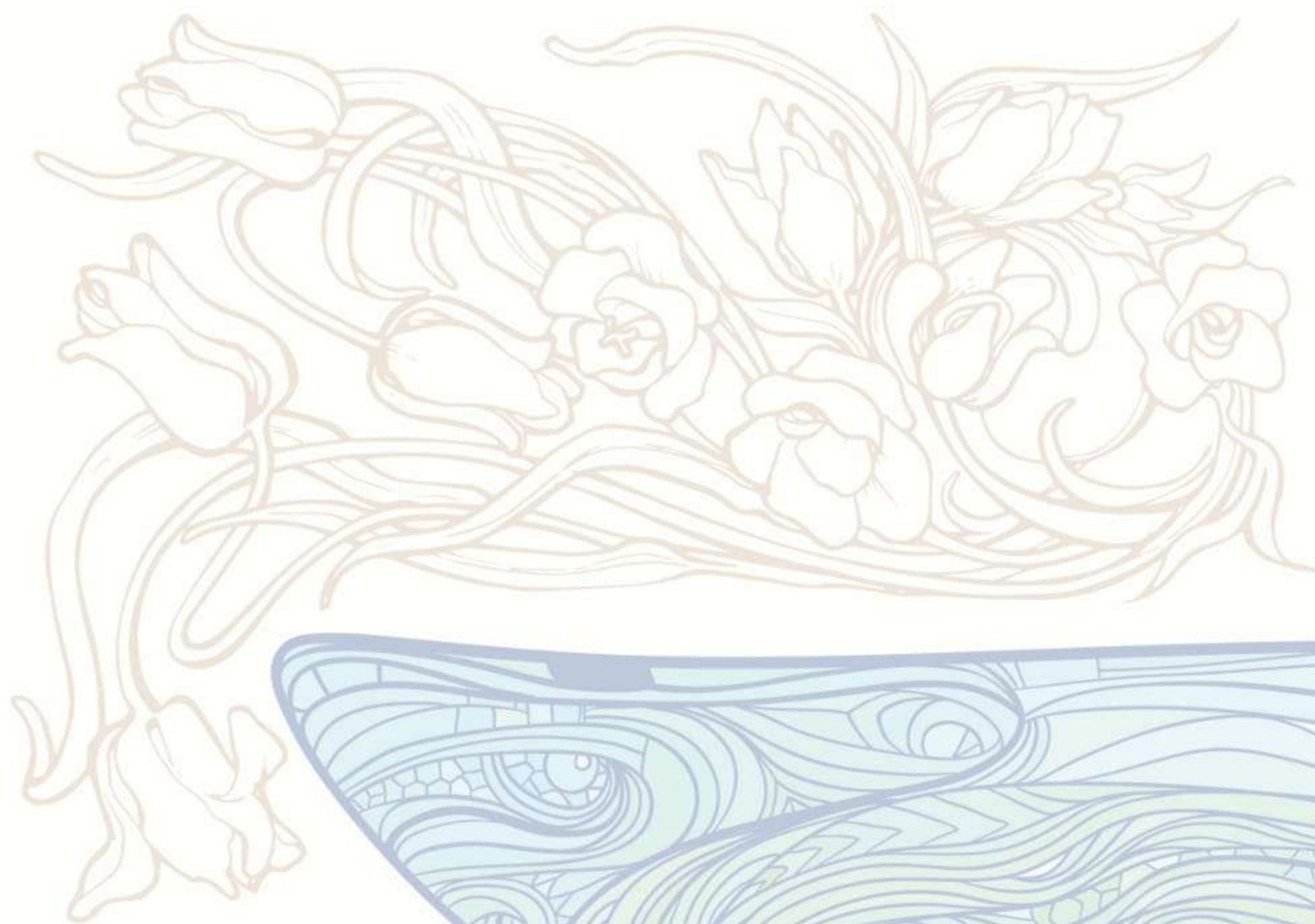




Brochures on themed walks inspired by the Secession heritage in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Subotica are available for free download from Republic institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments website at www.heritage.gov.rs and Artis Center website at www.artiscenter.com.



An original concept of Artis Center, the "Secession Tailored to the Inquisitive Walker" programme has been carried out within the project Art Nouveau 2 – *Strengthening the Danube Region's cultural identity by building on common heritage of Art Nouveau*, where Republic institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments features as a project partner, and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia as an affiliate partner.



Artis Themed Walks

SECESSION TAILORED TO THE INQUISITIVE WALKER

Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica

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