

# RAFAEL BORDALO PINHEIRO AMONG FOREIGN MODERNISTS

18

Because they are contemporaneous, the output from Caldas da Rainha, which is difficult to integrate with the other Portuguese tiles, is presented alongside Art Nouveau and foreign Modernist tiles.

During the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, there was a considerable growth worldwide in the production of artistic tiles, favoured by the Romantic, Art Nouveau and Decorative Arts movements that developed across Europe (United Kingdom, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain and Italy) and the United States and Japan.

Probably of German origin is the beautiful set of tiles on display that associate Art Nouveau with Rococo suggestions [101-1010], and a strange pattern inspired in tanned leather linings or “guadamecis” [101-1302].

Of all the foreign tiles of the period, the most common in Portugal was produced in Valencia at the beginning of the 20th century, which is used widely in shops, façades and building entrances. A trait of this product is in the use of plates that are larger than the tiles commonly produced in Portugal, their low gloss finish and the intensive use of floral elements, with an example of this the beautiful half-wall panel with plates with flower bouquets at their centre with borders filled with naturalist-style floral elements [101-1789]; a pattern less common with floral and ribbon motifs [101-3239], that also have two borders [101-1217 and 101-3258]; as well as a double frieze [101-3257]. All these works betray some Art Nouveau influence, at times incorporating elements that are specific to that style, such as undulating ribbons of a half-wall panel [101-169]; the female heads of another, which are often used in bakeries [101-1268]; and some densely coloured and beautifully decorated borders, such as one with a row of carnations [101-1230], and another with stylised plants [101-1915 and 101-1916]. An Art Nouveau tile, using the *cuerda seca* technique, was produced in Seville [101-412].

Included in this section is a very varied collection of eclectic, Art Nouveau and Art Deco tiles made in a number of countries, including France, the UK, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Japan, following a range of techniques from manual painting, relief and moulding, piping, *cuerda seca*, airbrushing and stamping, as well as some examples of industrially manufactured tiles.



101-1004



101-1010



101-1130



101-1134



101-412



101-1168

Despite already being an important centre for ceramics, Caldas da Rainha gained special notoriety with the Fábrica de Faianças das Caldas da Rainha, which was opened in 1884 by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro (1846-1905). Bordalo Pinheiro was the most famous Portuguese caricaturist of the 19th century, before becoming an equally famous creator of various kinds of ceramics, which reflected the cultural and political atmosphere of the time with exceptional acuity. His art floated between eclecticism, historicism, revivalism and naturalism. Then later, after the Paris Exhibition of 1900, he was considered one of the main people to introduce Art Nouveau to Portugal.

Many of his historicist recreations were inspired by the tiles of Mudéjar Seville, which were used widely in Portugal in the 15th and 16th centuries, but with the original colour separators transformed into decorative reliefs, such as the beautiful 2x2 tile pattern of geometric loops, produced both in *cuerda seca* and *aresta*, with a similar border, in a large panel formed by three different plates [101-806, 101-807 and 101-1280]; the single tile pattern with Mudéjar ribbons also created in *cuerda seca* and *aresta* [101-894]; and the pattern with a central flower in the Renaissance style and of *aresta* origin [101-939].

Bordalo Pinheiro also created a range of naturalist-style tiles, some inspired by the traditional crockery of Caldas da Rainha and based on Palissy and other more personal models, some of a surprising simplicity, such as the tiles with straw bales and *Chufa* [101-898]. One of the most original naturalist creations is the ornamental corner with vines, vine leaves and a bunch of grapes, all bound by a frame of reeds [101-583]. Other examples are more sophisticated and expressive, including those that show the heads of cats over cabbage leaves with collars and rattles serving as the centre and corner of the pattern [101-1107], reflecting both the artist's caricaturist tendency and the representation of his favourite animal, and which is also a reflection of Art Nouveau.

Bordalo Pinheiro's Art Nouveaux works are his most elaborate and original, for the conciseness of their design and the exceptional quality of the moulds and glazes used, as evidenced by the metallic dark brown and black backgrounds. The most delicate creation of this style can be found in the wonderful *Water lilies and frogs pattern* [101-587] and in the *Locusts* [101-624] and *Butterflies* [101-585] friezes. A beautiful Art Nouveau relief was made in this factory by the sculptor and ceramist Costa Motta Sobrinho [101-1220 and 101-1221].

The Berardo Collection brings together a vast number of Bordalo Pinheiro pieces, which are on display at the Aliança Underground Museum in Sangalhos.



101-806



101-802



101-583



101-584



101-587