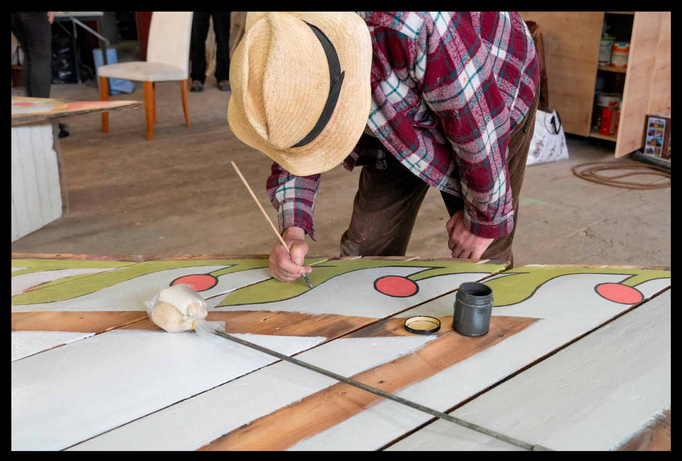
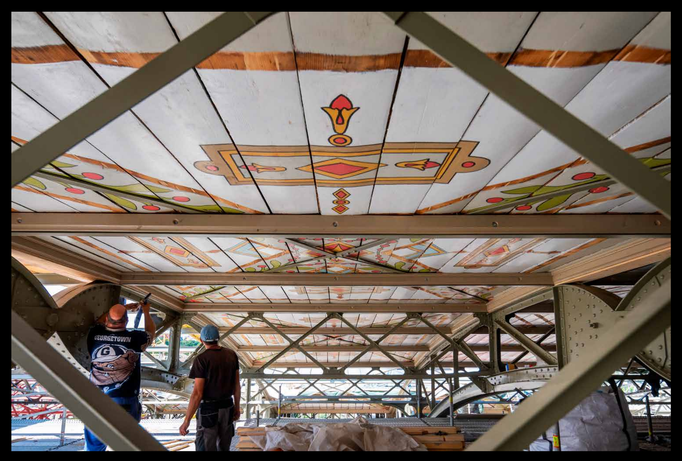
Magic with a Green Branch

What color were the interiors and façade of the Industrial Palace originally? It is impossible to say with one hundred percent certainty. Although people began experimenting with color photography in the 19th century, black-and-white photography still reigned supreme during the Jubilee Centennial Exhibition of 1891. Nevertheless, even the oldest photographs reveal important clues. They show that the Palace's façade was not as colorful as visitors might remember from the recent past. Plaster samplings before the restoration confirmed this, allowing the building to regain its ochre tones and unified, dignified appearance.

The individual stucco ornaments from the Right Wing had to be thoroughly repaired first. Silicone molds were then made from them, and the resulting casts were installed on the walls of the newly constructed Left Wing.

The wooden ceiling of the Central Hall, composed of 70 panels and a total of 1,232 large boards, was also returned to its 1891 appearance. After being dismantled, carpenters worked their magic on them in the workshop, repairing cracks and replacing damaged sections with new wood. Painters then brought each panel back to its original luster. But the true magic happened when the boards were reinstalled under the palace roof: the painted ceiling now once again harmonizes perfectly with the decorative steel structure and colorful stained glass. This is best seen in a single detail – a green branch with red berries. This motif creates ornaments on the wood, but it also climbs along the steel vault and glass panels. Masters of three different crafts color-coordinated this motif, resurrecting the original, long-forgotten vision of the palace's creators.





The ceiling had to be dismantled board by board, with each piece labeled with a numerical code to preserve its exact order and position – a total of 77 panels containing 16 boards each.

Green branches can be found on the ceiling, in the stained-glass windows, and as ornaments on the steel structure.

Did you know...?

- How was the exterior decoration of the burned-down Left Wing restored? Since precise drawings did not survive, plasterers had to copy the design from the Right Wing.
- A royal message – the motif of the St. Wenceslas Crown is also present on the wooden ceiling of the Central Hall. During Emperor Franz Joseph I's visit to the exhibition grounds, Czechs literally reminded him at every turn of his unfulfilled promise to be crowned King of Bohemia.

Photo Jiří Šebek

Industrial Palace Na Výstaviští Architecture Na Výstaviští Reconstruction Na Výstaviští I ❤ Na Výstaviští