

THE NAKED TRUTH

Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka and Other Scandals

13 May through 22 August 2005

Press Conference: 12 May 2005 – 9:15 a.m.

Opening: 12 May 2005 – 7:00 p.m.

From 13 May through 22 August 2005 the Leopold Museum presents the controversial show "The Naked Truth", which highlights the scandals aroused by nakedness in painting and graphic art around 1900. In a stagnating social order based on feudal Catholic tradition, showing nakedness for its own sake met with decided resistance. Among the 180 artworks being shown are many key works of the period around 1900, with Hans Makart, Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Richard Gerstl, Oskar Kokoschka and Anton Kolig. The Leopold Museum has integrated 25 of its most important works into the show. Curator is Tobias Natter. Prof. Rudolf Leopold is strongly involved in the concept of the show.

Without exaggeration one can say it is the most important show about this time and this issue since "Traum und Wirklichkeit" 1985. After showing the exhibition in the Kunsthalle Schirn, the pictures are coming back to the place where all happened and will also show some extra attractions: for the first time Schiele's scandalous graphic "Die Traumbeschaute" from New York's Metropolitan Museum will be shown in Europe. The sensations of the exhibition's Vienna showing are the installation of reproductions of the lost faculty paintings by Gustav Klimt in the aula of the Vienna University's main building.

The show will be accompanied by an extraordinary program of events: tours led by artists and celebrities, lectures on topics in the cultural sciences relating to the period around 1900, film screenings and several unusual surprises await the public. Endeavours will also be made to link the exhibition with other locations in Vienna, e.g. those which were the scenes of pertinent events.

A scandal painting has also given the exhibition its name: the scandal surrounding Gustav Klimt's "faculty paintings" for the aula of the Vienna University animated debate in the Viennese art scene for almost a decade. Commissioned in 1894, Klimt submitted designs for the three paintings "Jurisprudence", "Philosophy" and "Medicine", which were to serve as allegories of the faculties and decorate the aula of the Vienna University. Instead of applause, his submissions were greeted with ridicule and bitter criticism: in addition to content-related issues, the first use of art nouveau ornamentation in such large dimensions and the depiction of a nude pregnant woman resulted in the paintings' rejection by the commissioning body. Eventually Klimt himself bought back the paintings in 1905. In 1899 he answered his ultraconservative critics with the painting "The Naked Truth", in which a nude woman holds up a mirror to the world.

The exhibition begins with Hans Makart's history paintings, in which nudity is used provocatively and set before lavish historical backdrops. These paintings were met with widespread recognition in the art scene. However, the public reacted very differently to paintings by the new generation of artists. Under the heading "Authority and Conflict", four prominent incidents are presented. The artists involved were Gustav Klimt, Oskar Kokoschka, Egon Schiele and the architect Adolf Loos, all four of whom came more or less into conflict with the law on account of their artworks. Further subject areas of the exhibition include "The Artist as a Martyr" and the "War of the Sexes": Oskar

Kokoschka and Alma Mahler, Egon Schiele and Wally Neuzil, Richard Gerstl and Mathilde Schönberg – on numerous occasions, rumours and actual dramas developed around young Viennese painters and their models and/or lovers.

Visitors can look forward with certainty to an interesting exhibition, one which also deals with themes closely related to the masterworks of the Sammlung Leopold.

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13 May through 22 August 2005

Exhibition Location: Leopold Museum, Museumsplatz 1 in the MQ, 1070 Vienna

Curator: Tobias Natter

Press Conference: 12 May 2005, 11:00 a.m.

Opening: 13 May 2005, 7:00 p.m.

Opening Hours: Daily (except Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Holidays 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

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Press Downloads: www.leopoldmuseum.org/service/html/presseservice.php

Catalogue: The Naked Truth – Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka and Other Scandals. Edited by Tobias G. Natter and Max Hollein. With a foreword by Max Hollein and texts by Bernd Apke, Christina von Braun, Doris Guth, Andreas Mayer, Tobias G. Natter. In German and English editions, ca. 290 pages, ca. 170 colour and 30 black-and-white illustrations. Prestel Verlag, Munich, Berlin, London, New York, 2005, ISBN 3-7913-6030-2 (German), ISBN 3-7913-6031-0 (English), EUR 29.80.

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An extensive agenda of educational programs and special events is offered!
The exhibition at the Leopold Museum Vienna is presented in co-operation with the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (on view there from 28 January through 24 April 2005).