



VIENNA 1900

New Presentation of the Collection Leopold



EGON SCHIELE, Liegender Knabe (Erich Lederer), Detail, 1913 © Leopold Museum, Wien

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The Leopold Museum is presenting a totally reconfigured exhibition of Viennese art at the turn of the century. Titled **Vienna 1900. From the Leopold Collection**, this reassembly of core areas of the Leopold Museum's collection will be curated in an unconventional and surprising manner by the project's managers Diethart Leopold and Peter Weinhäupl, in close collaboration with Rudolf and Elisabeth Leopold.

The Jugendstil, Vienna's Art Nouveau movement, endeavoured to encompass all areas of life within a so-called "gesamtkunstwerk" ("total work of art"). Its main exponents **Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser** and **Josef Hoffmann** are synonymous with the art of the Vienna Secession around 1900. This new presentation of the Leopold Museum's holdings – complemented by several significant works on loan – features the works from the Vienna Secession together with paintings and prints from Expressionism to the end of the First World War (**Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka, Anton Kolig, Herbert Boeckl and many others**) as well as several fascinating examples of Wiener Werkstätte design. Furniture, silver, glass and jewellery are presented together with paintings and graphics, showing what could be termed the most exciting era in the history of Viennese art as a unique aesthetic experience.

The unconventional manner in which this exhibition covering an entire floor of the museum is set up, opens exciting vistas for those well-versed in the subject and a **compact introduction** to the theme and the epoch to those new to "Vienna around 1900". While it will help tourists gain valuable insights into the spirit of Vienna around 1900, the local public will have the opportunity to rediscover the Leopold Collection's holdings from the turn of the century.

Emphasizing his close relationship to the Leopold Collection, curator **Dr. Diethard Leopold** says, **"I grew up with the collection; I know it to the core, better than most others."** *Dir. Mag. Peter Weinhäupl*, on the other hand, stresses the importance of providing the visitor more information, **designing a more attractive exhibition architecture** and, if possible, also including new media art in the collection. According to Mr. Weinhäupl, "The visit to the museum should be just as enjoyable an experience as looking at the artworks." The artworks have been partially put together in the form of installations and the light shafts have been converted into "active areas", thus integrating them into exhibition's architecture. Different levels of the building, ramps, partition walls, etc. contribute to a novel experience of the exhibition spaces.

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“Austrian art from the beginning of the twentieth century has been a strong influence for on generations of artists until today. The Leopold Museum holds a large number of works from this period, to which an entire show has been dedicated. **As partners of the Leopold Museum,** we are very pleased to support this exhibition,” says **Director General Dr. Günther Geyer, Wiener Städtische Versicherung AG** Vienna Insurance Group.

For **Dr. Maria Rennhofer Cultural Head of Ö1**, the exhibition’s main focus “Vienna Around 1900” covers **“an important chapter in Austria’s art history, no other Austrian museum has a comparable collection of this era.** It takes us back to the roots of twentieth century Austrian art and reminds us of its international status.” Maria Rennhofer also addresses the fact “that the collection has repeatedly inspired engagement with the chequered history of the twentieth century and its effect on the fates of former art owners and collectors.”

The exhibition is on level 4, the topmost floor of the museum. Its position offers a splendid visual link to “Vienna around 1900”. The **view from the panorama windows** – from the Art History Museum to the New Hofburg – put **Vienna’s Ringstrasse in an overall context.** The decision to build some of the city’s famous Art Nouveau buildings was made in the course of the urban renewal in the last third of the nineteenth century. Dr. Peter Weinhäupl has conceived a central information room, which also contains a lounge-like platform that provides unique views of late nineteenth-century buildings and the Museum Quartier’s new architecture. City maps, historical photographs and films presented in this exhibition space document the **groundbreaking achievements of Vienna’s architects** around 1900 – from **Otto Wagner to Adolf Loos.**

Relevance to our times, cross connections to related themes or parallels between the art in Vienna around 1900 and other styles are the integrative elements in the exhibition’s concept. A **search object** is placed in each room. How these objects relate to the exhibition is explained in a folder as well in the last room. These exhibits are a wonderful instrument for building up suspense and a superb pedagogical tool for the exhibition’s art education programme.

In a way, “Vienna at the turn of the century” was also a **“programme for a hundred years”** as the achievements of art around 1900 have been a lasting influence on twentieth century art. The **floral elements of the Secession and Jugendstil are just as sensitive and playful** as the **furniture designed by the Wiener Werkstätte** is cool and sophisticated. The exhibition clearly communicates this **“evolution in taste”** which began around 1900. Expressionism’s profundity (**Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka, Richard Gerstl**) is equally highlighted as the influences of **psychoanalysis** on the “undiscovered

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country of the soul” and the exploration of “sex and character”. The grand furnishings of the aristocracy was the motive to provide information about the historical background and social movements in the last days of the monarchy. The end of the First World War concludes the exhibition.

The presentation in the new rooms is based on an informal chronology of “the end of taste”. The exhibits are arranged thematically around the most important artistic inventions from what can be termed as the most fertile era in the history of Austrian art.

“SECESSION” ROOM

This room is focused on the generation of artists preceding the Secessionists. Among them were doyens like **Hans Makart** (1840-1884) or the main proponent of Atmospheric Expressionism and the father of the femme fatale Alma Mahler, **Emil Jakob Schindler** (1842-1892), **Theodor von Hörmann** (1840-1916), **Olga Wisinger-Florian** (1844-1926) and **Carl Moll** (1891-1945), the founding father of the Secession. Schindler painted the „Poplar-lined Avenue near Plankenberg” („Die Pappelallee bei Plankenberg”, 1890) during his summer vacations with his students at Plankenberg in Lower Austria. Also Carl Moll was a student of Emil Jakob Schindler. His atmospheric painting “Winter at the Hohe Warte” (“Winter auf der Hohe Warte”, 1912/14) goes a step beyond plein-air painting. Its square format, choice of view and cursory brushwork make this picture a typical example of Viennese painting at the beginning of the twentieth century. The central piece in this room is a slender, elegant table by **Josef Hoffmann** (1870-1956), the founder of the Wiener Werkstätte. Its design follows the Secession’s motto “To the Time its Art. To Art its Freedom”, coined by the art critic Ludwig Hevesi, and is in stark contrast to Altdeutsch furniture from the end of the nineteenth century. Placed on the table is a distinctive putto by **Michael Powolny** (1871/1954), the founder of the porcelain firm Wiener Keramik. Historic/sociological information from fin-de-siècle literature, for instance, inspires the visitor to find out more about the most fertile ground of the era. The emphasis here lies on the emergence of a “culture of sentiment” (Gefühlskultur), which resulted from political weakness. The majestically presented work drawing by **Kolo Moser** (1868-1918) for the Engelsfenster (Window of the Angels) exemplifies that stylisation was also prevalent in the field of sacral art. Posters announcing Secession exhibitions or the Kaiser-Jubiläums-Huldigungs-Festzuges (Procession in the Emperor’s honour, 1908) by **Ferdinand Ludwig Graf** (1868-1932) are great achievements of graphic art at the turn of the century.

SEARCH OBJECTS: Two rock’n’roll posters by **Clifford C. Seeley** and **Wes Wilson** from the 1960s. These artists, whose work is an integral part of the Fine Arts Museum San Francisco, borrow formal structures from the Jugendstil. The Secession-style dreamy, floral, elements can be seen as antecedents of the so-called Flower Power hippie movement.

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“KOLO MOSER” ROOM

Ver Sacrum, the Jugendstil art magazine (brought out by the Association of Austrian Fine Artists, 1899-1903), posters, paintings and furniture, among others, show the oeuvre of the all-round artist **Kolo Moser** (1868-1918). Works by several other artists (such as the parody of *Ver Sacrum* – “*Quer Sacrum*” by painter and illustrator **Berthold Löffler** (1874-1960), who was Oskar Kokoschka’s teacher, texts and photographs all bring alive the days of the Secession years.

SEARCH OBJECT: **Gerda Leopold**, “*Struktur*”, colour lithography – the formal arrangement of the structural construction of a bridge, which the artist who lives in Berlin – and is the daughter of the collector Rudolf Leopold – based her painting on, shows a process that resembles the Secessionist style: the concrete object vanishes behind its purely formal, almost entirely abstract structure.

“GUSTAV KLIMT” ROOM

The art of **Gustav Klimt** (1862-1918) is the epitome of Art Nouveau in Vienna. His painting *Death and Life* “**Tod und Leben (Der Tod und die Liebe)**” 1910/1915, is central to this room dedicated to him. Klimt was already a renowned artist when the dispute about his “**Faculty Paintings**” (Philosophy, Jurisprudence, Medicine), which he painted between 1900 and 1903, broke out. He finally bought back these paintings and turned down every subsequent state commission. Also on exhibit are large reproductions of two paintings that fell victim to fire at Immendorf Castle in 1945 with accompanying information about them.

This section also includes photographs of Klimt’s studio and references to the relationship between Jugendstil and Japanese art (Japonism period). The links between music and philosophy assume concrete form in an audio-environment where the visitor can listen to the fourth and fifth movements of **Gustav Mahler’s** (1860-1911) **Third Symphony** in which, among others, also parts of Zarathustra’s *Nachtwandlerlied* by **Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844-1900) were set to music.

SEARCH OBJECT: **Ukiyo-e**, eighteenth and the nineteenth century Japanese woodcuts were particularly desirable collector items among fin-de-siècle artist. These even adorned a half-wall in Klimt’s last studio (see info-text on “Japonism”). Although Klimt’s own originals were not available for this exhibition, almost all of them share the flatness of plane and emphasis on contours. These aesthetic principles were an important influence in the genesis of modern European art.

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“PSYCHOANALYSIS” ROOM

Works by artists like Gustav Klimt, Alfred Kubin (1877-1959), Egon Schiele (1890-1918), Hans Böhler (1884-1961), Ludwig Heinrich Jungnickel (1881-1965) and Leopold Blauensteiner (1880-1947) exemplify the themes of **Sexuality, dreams, the unconscious** and introspection. *Sigmund Freud's* (1861-1951) **Psychoanalysis** is the conceptual background of this section. Schiele's "Selbstseher" or Death and Man, a double self-portrait, Kolo Moser's "The Lovers" and erotic drawings by other artists (Klimt, Blauensteiner) lure us to the "Undiscovered Country" of the soul and sexuality. A figure called "Kneeling Youth" by *George Minne* (1866-1941) is re-staged in the middle of the room as an expression of ambivalent psychological states. Originally, a group of these youths standing around a fountain, the symbol for Mother, was shown at an exhibition at the Secession. Alfred Kubin's drawings, on the other hand, are impressive depictions of nightmares and are linked to Sigmund Freud's book on "dream interpretation", which he completed in 1899 (Freud changed the date to 1900 so that it would be the first book of the new century). A showcase contains books published at the time, including an edition of Freud's Interpretation of Dreams.

SEARCH OBJECT: **Two African Masks** from the Congo and Dogon. The manner in which the human face, placed within a strongly geometrical outline (oval, rectangle, triangle, etc), is abstracted to a few striking features fascinated not only Picasso but also Schiele, who unconsciously incorporated these aspects in several drawings and paintings. Schiele, however, did not own any African masks. The formal vocabulary and the archetypical iconography of African tribal art were certainly in the air in those days. The mask definitely played a major role in psychoanalysis and in the modern forms of therapy founded on it: be it a protective hiding place or rigid expression of the "character armour", or a medium for expressing and embodying the super personal and spiritual.

“CITY AND ARCHITECTURE” ROOM

This room shows **Vienna around 1900 as an urban phenomenon**. A lounge especially designed for this purpose incorporates the large panorama windows in the room to allow the visitor to take in the information about the times and the city of Vienna, its development, its architecture and its social life in a relaxed atmosphere. A short film shows the most prominent examples of Vienna's Jugendstil architecture.

Rapid **increase in population** is addressed here in equal terms as the social problems or the distinctiveness that resulted from the city's expansion. Also part of the theme are the new segments of the population such as the numerous migrant workers employed in the brick factories in southern Vienna, the so-called "Ziegelböhmern" (Brick-Bohemians), with whose help the grand buildings on the Ringstrasse were built.

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SEARCH OBJECT: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Glasgow School of Art, Photograph. This building was realized in 1897 and was to influence European architecture significantly. The contrast between the enclosed and blocklike method of construction with a fractured surface texture – together a charming example of geometric rigidity – became a paradigm for Secessionism.

“WIENER WERKSTÄTTE” ROOM

The diversity of production at the Wiener Werkstätte (founded in 1897) is vividly illustrated in this room. Simplicity and function were placed above Foundation period decoration. The products of the Wiener Werkstätte were richly decorated, with attention to every aesthetic detail. Adolf Loos and Karl Kraus fiercely criticised the WW. Furniture, decorative paintings, various products like vases, silver jewellery and glasses are as much part of the presentation as a variety of furniture as, for example, Josef Hoffmann’s Sitzmaschine (Sitting Machine) from 1905 or a stool, also by him, from Emilie Flöge’s living room.

SEARCH OBJECT: Three objects from **Carl Auböck’s studio**, Vienna: a sake bottle-like vase, a stylised sake cup and an ashtray. While clarity in abstract form, and careful choice and treatment of material link Auböck’s studio with the Wiener Werkstätte, a different design philosophy becomes apparent here in the endeavour to expand distribution by simplifying and economising production and to be less elitist than its more famous counterpart that was always looking out for profit.

“RICHARD GERSTL, MATHILDE AND ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG” ROOM

The tragic love story of **Richard Gerstl** (1883-1908) and **Mathilde Schönberg** is presented here for the first time in an open and compelling form. References to the friendship between Gerstl and the composer **Arnold Schönberg** (1874-1951) can also be found here. Unrequited love and social isolation led the 25 year-old Gerstl to commit suicide on 3 November 1908. The year 2008 marks his hundredth death anniversary.

Visitors can listen to movements 3 and 4 from Arnold Schönberg’s Quartet in F sharp Minor at a column in the room. This is among the compositions in which Schönberg tried to come to terms with the dramatic events of 1908. Two poems by **Stefan George** (1868-1933) serve as lyrics for the soprano in the same Quartet, which could be read as a text about the tragic three-way relationship. A six-legged table designed by **Adolf Loos** (1870-1933) occupies the centre of the room.

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SEARCH OBJECT: Photo from **Günther Brus'** "Körperaktion". The artist's use of his own body shows a certain line of development from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1950s and beyond. While the body was once a harbinger of joyful creativity and wisdom (Richard Gerstl, "Self-portrait with a Blue Background", 1904/05), it became the bearer of suffering and isolation (Richard Gerstl, "The Nude Artist in Standing Position", 1908) just a few years later. In this performance, the Vienna Actionist uses his own body to show the constrictions imposed by prevailing conditions, but also the prospect of overcoming these; he thus becomes a mirror of society.

"EXPRESSIONISM – KOKOSCHKA AND SCHIELE" ROOM

In contrast to the Wiener Werkstätte's aesthetic and symbolist tendencies, this room shows the naked truth about the creature that is man – watercolours by Egon Schiele, drawings by Hans Böhler and Ludwig Heinrich Jungnickel as well as the dramatic fates of lovers, and Oskar Kokoschka's lithographs. The latter's most beautiful landscape "Tre Croci" in the Dolomites and Schiele's "Liebespaar" ("The Lovers") are juxtaposed against each other in this room. Kokoschka's radical posters such as "Pietà" (poster created for the open-air summer theatre at the 1909 Kunstschau) mercilessly expose the innermost recesses of the human soul.

SEARCH OBJECT: Photograph by **Lisa Bufano** from the series "The Charm of Harm" by Gerhard Aba. As in Expressionist works, these photographs also represent the agony of the human being trapped in its body. However, Aba and Bufano address this theme with a degree of tragicomic irony in their work. Nevertheless, the choice of theme does not mean that formal criteria are ignored in the composition. To the contrary, these played an equally important role in Austrian Expressionism as they do in the works of the Viennese photographers.

"THE FIRST WORLD WAR – END OF AN ERA" ROOM

In the last room, the show metaphorically culminates in the **First World War**, which also meant the end of an era. **Antiwar paintings** by **Albin Egger-Lienz** (1868-1926), works by **Anton Kolig** (1886-1950) and **Herbert Boeckl** (1894-1966), which anticipate the art of the interwar years. Photographs of the war as well as the biographies of individual artists, etc. conclude the exhibition. Otto Wagner (1853-1918), Egon Schiele, Kolo Moser and Gustav Klimt, who was a major influence on Viennese art around 1900, died in the year 1918, a year of both end and renewal. This involuntary new beginning opened the path to new currents in art. The works of Kolig, Boeckl and Kubin form a bridge to the art of the interwar years. The connection between poetry and philosophy becomes concrete in a diary entry made by **Ludwig Wittgenstein** (1889-1951) in 1914. Wittgenstein's diary entry and his biography (Ray Monk) reveal that Wittgenstein wan-

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ted to meet the poet **Georg Trakl** (1887-1914). However, their meeting never took place for the latter died just then under mysterious circumstances, either because he had committed suicide or as the result of drug consumption. A selection of scenes from the apocalyptic **"Last Days of Mankind"** by Karl Kraus (1887-1956) are included in the show in the form of an audio-play performed by Helmut Qualtinger. Also on display are documentary films of the **funeral of Emperor Franz Josef I** (1839-1916) in 1916, or scenes from the World War. Photos of the First World War from the Fritz Simak collection complete the image of a time when a flourishing culture ended with the collapse of an era, which was also a time for new beginnings. New prospects began to bud when Austria was declared a Republic, bringing with them the promise of democracy. However, the dream was to end two decades later, when the Nazis marched into the country ...

SEARCH OBJECT: **Heinrich Heuer** "Guillotine" – a surrealist painting with collage-like elements like falling bodies, targets etc. depict the threats of war. But above all, these template-like forms convey the loss of humane qualities in an environment full of violence.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours can be booked in various languages

Price per ticket € 3,-

1 Guide + max. 25 persons € 70,-

1 Guide/evenings from 6 p.m. € 105,-

Free Guided Tour (in German)

Sundays and Holidays 3.30 p.m.

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Audio-guides are available in German, English, Italian and French.

OPENING

Daily except Tuesday from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Closed on Tuesday

Thursday 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

www.leopoldmuseum.org

ADDRESSES

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PRICES

Adults € 10,-

School children and students € 6.50

SeniorInnen € 7.50

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