

Press Release

TEACHING KLIMT **Studies at the School of Arts and Crafts**

Press Conference	Tuesday, 2 November 2021, 10 a.m. Registration required at presse@MAK.at The “2.5G” rule is to be observed for participation: vaccinated, recovered, tested (PCR, not older than 48 hours). Wearing a FFP2 mask is obligatory during the entire visit to the museum.
Opening	Tuesday, 2 November 2021, 7 p.m., free admission
Exhibition Venue	Central Space MAK DESIGN LAB MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	3 November 2021 – 13 March 2022
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–9 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) is one of the most vibrant personalities of the arts Austria has ever given rise to. As an important representative of Viennese Art Nouveau and one of the internationally most renowned Austrian painters, he is considered a genius with a worldwide reputation. Hardly any artist has been published on so extensively. Ever more surprising is the fact that the significant influence Klimt’s student days and his teachers at the Viennese School of Arts and Crafts had on his oeuvre have so far barely been reviewed. With the exhibition *TEACHING KLIMT: Studies at the School of Arts and Crafts*, the MAK is performing pioneering work by addressing the importance of the student years for this artist of the century.

“I learned everything from him,” Gustav Klimt allegedly once said about Ferdinand Laufberger (1829–1881), his professor at the School of Arts and Crafts. Laufberger, whom Klimt admired throughout his entire life, was one of the most important professors at the School of Arts and Crafts, which presented a modern education program highly superior to the studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. Laufberger, who had partly been trained in Paris in the early 1860s and there had already made contact with Impressionism, passed his highly precise genre painting on to Klimt. From Laufberger but also from Michael Rieser (1828–1905), the artist behind the high altar mosaic at the Schottenkirche in

Vienna (1880), Klimt learned to draw and paint with great detail and accuracy, almost photo-realistically. This absolute precision plays a significant role in his entire work. It is characteristic of Klimt's genius that he developed his free innovations on the basis of a perfect academic education.

Almost all his teachers left traces in the oeuvre of the master student and later world star, Gustav Klimt: The use of gold in religious images by Michael Rieser, for example, still left traces in "The Lady in Gold." Ludwig Minnigerode (1847–1930) inspired him as an excellent portrait painter, the influence of the flower painter Friedrich Sturm (1823–1898) can still be recognized in the blossoms around Sonja Knips portrayed by Klimt.

In eleven chapters, the exhibition *TEACHING KLIMT: Studies at the School of Arts and Crafts* delves into the works of the teachers who were important for Klimt and correlate them to Klimt's oeuvre.

The early works presented exemplarily in the exhibition span from the student's drawings to one of his "master pieces," the painting *The Fable* (1883). Here, the founding of the "Malerkompanie" [painter company] (1879)—together with his fellow student Franz Matsch (1861–1942) and his brother Ernst Klimt (1864–1892), who also studied at the School of Arts and Crafts—, with strong support from Rudolf von Eitelberger (1817–1885) and the teachers at the School of Arts and Crafts, is especially significant. As the founder of the School of Arts and Crafts, an art historian, leading art theorist of the era of the Ringstraße, and chairman of the supervisory board of the School of Arts and Crafts, Rudolf von Eitelberger was a role model for all artists at the time, surely also for young Klimt.

Experts agree on the fact that the student years had a much greater impact on Klimt than this is usually the case for artists. A particular aim of the exhibition is to shed light on the fact that Klimt's teachers were not only educators but that they themselves were also important artists. They all executed commissioned works for public buildings on the Ringstraße, on and in private buildings, and also abroad. Michael Rieser and Ferdinand Laufberger contributed to the interior of the Votivkirche. Laufberger's figural and decorative major works are (partly lost) sgraffito cycles in the courtyards of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and on the façades of the MAK. Laufberger also worked in Germany, for example for architect Paul Wallot, the constructor of the building of the Berlin Reichstag (today's parliament).

Beyond the teachers, the exhibition also focuses on the artists Klimt was inspired by: first and foremost, Anselm von Feuerbach (1829–1880), who worked in Vienna at the time. Furthermore, symbolists like Hans von Marées (1837–1887) and Pierre Puvis de

Chavannes (1824–1898). These—at the time highly progressive—artists formed principles of design that were closely tied to the surface of the image and consequently overcame the spacious, theatrical illusionism of, for example, Hans Makart (1840–1884) and salon painting in favor of pre-Modernism.

The exhibition closes with the chapter “fading out” which shows Klimt as he had matured through his education. Two prominent examples from the MAK Collection—the poster for the music and theater festival of the City of Vienna (1893), which Klimt designed with his brother Ernst, and the poster for the 1st Exhibition of the Secession (1898), which counts as the symbol of Viennese Modernism par excellence—mark the highest and final point of the museum’s research on Klimt’s student years.

The approximately 180 presented objects, 18 of which are works by Gustav Klimt, are from the extensive collection of the MAK as well as from other Viennese museums, private collections, and from national and international lenders. In the context of this exhibition, the MAK, which is considered to be a center of competence on Viennese Modernism, reviewed, digitalized, and restored the estate of Ferdinand Laufberger comprising about 600 pages.

Press photos for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://mak.at/en/press).

Press Data

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Guest Curator	Otmar Rychlik
MAK Curator	Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel, Head, MAK Library and Works on Paper Collection/Archive
Graphic Design	Maria Anna Friedl
Publication	Otmar Rychlik, <i>Gustav Klimts Lehrer 1876–1882. Sieben Jahre an der Kunstgewerbeschule</i> , Edition Kunst Agentur, Vienna 2021, German, ca. 220 Seiten, € 42
Supporting Program	Exhibition Tours Every Sunday 4 p.m. Please register at https://mak.at/teachingklimt Curator-Guided Tours with Otmar Rychlik Tuesday, 18 January 2022, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, 8 March 2022, 6:30 p.m. Please register at https://mak.at/teachingklimt Online Zoom Talk <i>MAK Dialogues</i>

Tuesday, 16 November 2021, 6:30 p.m.
Curator Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel in conversation with
Guest Curator and Art Historian Otmar Rychlik and
Art Historian Julia Rüdiger
More information and participation at
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89873598085>

Guided Tour
WEDNESDAYS at the MAK
Wednesday, 17 November 2021, 3 p.m.
Please register at <https://mak.at/teachingklimt>

MAK Admission

€ 14 / Reduced € 11 / Family Ticket € 15
Every Tuesday 6–9 p.m.: admission € 6
Free admission for children and teens under 19

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Vienna, 2 November 2021